

DIOCESAN NEWS

Greece 'visionary' warns of coming tribulations

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Sometime in the not-too-distant future, an Antichrist, allied with an anti-pope, will take over the world and persecute those who refuse to worship him, according to John Leary Jr., a parishioner at Holy Name of Jesus in Greece.

Leary shared these warnings, many of which literally echo those in the Book of Revelation, with almost 300 people at a rosary group meeting Sept. 9 at Rochester's Corpus Christi Church.

The married father of three children, Leary has claimed in books, and in speeches like the one at Corpus, that Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints have been appearing to him daily since July 1993.

Leary said he sees Christ and the saints in locutions, or interior mental visions. He generally experiences these phenomena following his daily reception of the Eucharist or during visits to perpetual adoration sites in the diocese.

Leary has authored two books, and a third just being published, all called *Prepare for the Tribulation and the Era of Peace*. The books are daily diaries that report what Jesus and the saints have told him, Leary claimed. They detail a future era of trial for Christians that will end in the Antichrist's defeat and a renewal of the earth.

All three volumes of Leary's diaries have come out this year. Leary noted in a follow-up phone interview with the *Catholic Courier*. So far, he said, 25,000 copies have been

sold of the first two volumes.

Leary has sought, but has not obtained, official church approval of his books, from Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

Father Timothy Brown, secretary to Bishop Clark, said the bishop had no official comment on Leary's claims.

"His visions fall into the category of personal revelations, which the church does not review," Father Brown said.

Leary stressed that he would stop speaking on what he claims he hears from the Lord if he were told to do so by church authorities. He has spoken in other states and overseas, and has plans to speak in several other states this year. Currently, Leary is not slated to speak anywhere else in the diocese, he said.

Leary said he would cooperate with any psychological evaluation of himself if it were requested by church authorities.

A chemist at Eastman Kodak Co., Leary has been holding weekly prayer meetings in his Greece home for several years. The meetings have become so popular that he will be moving them to Holy Name of Jesus Church this week, according to Holy Name's pastor, Father John V. Rosse.

Father Rosse vouched for Leary's character, although he expressed mixed emotions about the messages. He said Leary is an active parishioner, a daily communicant, a loyal Catholic, and a good family man.

"There's — nothing flamboyant about him at all," said Father Rosse of Leary. "As a person, he's a fine gentleman."

Leary's spiritual adviser, Father Leo Klem, CSB, a retired professor of modern languages at St. John Fisher College, also vouched for Leary's character. He noted that Leary is a devout Catholic and that he has tested him spiritually, although the priest declined to

elaborate on how he did so, citing confidentiality concerns.

Father Klem added that he believes Leary is not attempting to defraud the public, nor to satisfy any personal ambition in publishing his locutions.

"After a careful and prayerful reading of the hundreds of pages in this book," Father Klem wrote in a preface to the first volume, "I have not found anything contrary to the



authentic teaching of the Roman Catholic Church."

Leary pointed out that he earns no profits from the books. He returns the 10 percent he would earn from book sales to his publisher, Queenship Publishing Company in Santa Barbara, Calif., to help discount the price of the books, he said.

In his speech, and in his books, Leary predicted dire consequences for a world that has turned its back on God and embraced materialism and self-love. However, he cautioned his listeners not to become caught up in the disasters he claimed are coming, but, rather, to focus on prayer, fasting, repentance and good works.

"The more people can pray and change their ways of living, (the more) this will lessen the chastisements," he told the Corpus crowd.

Leary predicted famine, a threat of war in the coming years, the rise of an Antichrist, the exile of Pope John Paul II and persecution of Christians.

The Antichrist will rule the world for a short period of time, and then be driven from the earth by the Lord, he said. Those faithful to God during the tribulation will then live in a renewed earth, he said.

EDITORS' NOTE: Leary's books can be ordered through Queenship Publishing Company, P.O. Box 42028 Santa Barbara, Calif., 93140-2028, or by calling 800/647-9882. They are also available at Logos Bookstore, 1600 W. Ridge Road, Greece, and at The Catholic Shop, 696 South Ave., Rochester.

Diocese to consult group on ministry to homosexuals, families

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

The diocese has established a collaborative relationship with Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry, a pastoral support group for homosexual Catholics' families.

"The diocese will turn to the CG&LFM for advice and assistance regarding pastoral ministry to gay and lesbian people and their families," stated Father John Mulligan, diocesan vicar general. An announcement was sent to diocesan pastoral and parish leaders Sept. 11.

The ministry is convened by Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata of St. Mary's Church, who are active in national and local groups for homosexuals, their families and friends.

The announcement also noted that Karen Rinefierd, diocesan coordinator of young adult, adult and family faith formation, will be diocesan liaison to CG&LFM. Rinefierd said the collaboration embodies the diocese's desire to reach out to Catholic families with homosexual children.

"There has been little church talk with them about this part of their lives," she said of such families. "Often the families take that to mean that they're not wanted."

In an interview, Father Mulligan echoed Rinefierd's point.

"I think it was increasingly evident that this was a very, very painful issue with a lot of people," Father Mulligan said. "We felt more and more that we had to open a channel of communication."

In its first formal collaborative effort, the ministry and the diocese are co-sponsoring a "Day of Reflection for Catholic Parents of Gay & Lesbian Sons & Daughters," 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave., Rochester.

The day will include presentations, small and large group discussions, a video showing and a Mass. The fee for participants is \$15 per person or \$25 per couple. Space is limited and the registration deadline is Oct. 10. Brochures and more information are available by calling 716/271-7363.

Facilitators for the day are the Lopatas; Sister Kay Heverin, SSJ, pastoral associate at Sacred Heart Cathedral; Father Robert Kennedy, assistant professor of liturgical studies at St. Bernard's Institute; Cheryl Lee, an educator and conflict resolution facilitator who works with homosexuals and their families; Sister Dorothy Loeb, RSM, who has worked with homosexual Catholics for 21 years; and Father Gary Tyman, Newman Community chaplain at the University of Rochester.

CG&LFM consists of a core group of seven people, according to Casey Lopata. Diocesan officials had discussed forming a collaborative relationship with the group in the last six months, Rinefierd reported.

The ministry is affiliated with the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian & Gay Ministries, based in Oakland, Calif., Lopata said.

CG&LFM was formed in 1992 by the Lopatas out of concern for Catholics like themselves who have a homosexual child. The Lopatas said they have an adult son

who told them more than a decade ago that he was homosexual.

"Our mission is to advocate for pastoral support of gay and lesbian families," Casey Lopata said.

CG&LFM bases its ministry on such church documents as the 1986 letter issued by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith titled "On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," Lopata said.

The document stressed that while the church considers homosexual activity to be sinful, it does not consider homosexual orientation to be sinful. The document also called the church to extend its pastoral ministry to homosexual Catholics, Lopata noted, adding that Catholic parents often do not know where to turn when they find out a son or daughter is homosexual.

"Silence is the biggest problem," Lopata said. "We would like to give pastoral support to whoever needs it when they need it."

Obituary

Sister Barbara Anne Zimmer; served Bath parish

Despite several health-related difficulties in recent years, Sister Barbara Anne Zimmer, RSM, continued answering her call to service.

"She visited the sick in the hospitals, in the nursing homes and at their homes. — cane and all, walker and all," her brother, Father Edward A. Zimmer, noted.

Sister Barbara, the parish visitor at St. Mary's Church in Bath for the past nine years, died suddenly on Sept. 1, 1996, at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester. She was 65.

Sister Barbara, known formerly as Sister Mary Agnita, was a Rochester native. She entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1949 out of Blessed Sacrament Parish. She was a graduate of Our Lady of Mercy High School and Nazareth College of Rochester.

Sister Barbara taught for 19 years at Catholic schools in Monroe County: St. John the Evangelist (Humboldt Street); St.

James; Holy Cross; St. Charles Borromeo; Good Shepherd; and Annunciation.

After moving to the Southern Tier in 1970, Sister Barbara taught at St. Mary's School in Corning; Corning Catholic School South; and St. Mary's School in Bath.

Ill health forced Sister Barbara to relinquish her teaching duties. As parish visitor at St. Mary's in Bath, she worked alongside her sister, Sister Mary Agnes Zimmer, RSM. Sister Mary Agnes, who died in 1995, served at the Steuben County parish for nearly two decades, first as principal of St. Mary's School and then as religious education administrator.

Father Zimmer noted that Sister Barbara endured two bouts with cancer and a heart attack, yet maintained her ministry within the parish.

"She was a tough little lady. She really surprised all the family," remarked Father

Zimmer, a retired diocesan priest who resides at Rochester's St. John the Evangelist Church (Humboldt Street). "We discovered an inner strength we really didn't know she had."

In addition to Father Zimmer, Sister Barbara is survived by her brother and sister-in-law, Nelson J. and Ellen Zimmer; brother and sister-in-law, Raymond A. and Murlyn Zimmer; sister-in-law, Shirley Zimmer; several cousins, nieces and nephews; and her sisters in the congregation of Mercy.

A funeral Mass for Sister Barbara was held Sept. 5 at St. Mary's Church in Bath. Father Zimmer was the principal celebrant. Interment was at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Bath.

Memorial donations may be made to the Sisters of Mercy, 1437 Blossom Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14610.

— Mike Latona

Memorial Mass slated for Fr. Daniel J. O'Shea

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate a memorial Mass for Father Daniel O'Shea at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 2, at St. Boniface Church, 330 Gregory St., Rochester.

Father O'Shea died Sept. 1, 1996. A reception at the Catholic Worker/St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, 402 South Ave., will follow the Mass.

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