

# to Life!

## Homes provide solace in final days

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

MENDON — Benincasa, a home for the terminally ill, will hold an open house from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 6. The home is at 3880 Rush Mendon Road.

The open house marks the culmination of months of effort by parishioners at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Mendon, along with area non-Catholics, said Father Charles J. Latus, pastor.

"I've been a priest for 28 years," Father Latus said, "and I've never seen anything that I've been involved in with such a wide response from people."

Father Latus said supporters had raised more than \$55,000 for the home, which takes its name from the surname of St. Catherine's family. He added that the home has garnered \$150,000 worth of in-kind donations such as plumbing fixtures and furniture from area businesses and supporters.

"I really feel for my own people — and the community — a lot of pride for what they've accomplished," Father Latus said.

Beverly Clark, executive director of Benincasa, said 400 people have been officially invited to the open house, but added that the general public is welcome as well. She also encouraged anyone interested in more information about the home to call 716/624-8070.

Clark noted that 150 people have helped to renovate the home, a manse that was donated by Mendon Presbyterian Church, located next door. The home is being operated in cooperation with the Presbyterian church and with St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Mendon.

Clark said four years ago, her husband, Deacon Gary Clark, suggested they go to Father Latus and propose that the parish help to establish the home. So the Clarks went to the pastor, with whom they were great friends, and made their proposal — but not before they all said a prayer together, she said.

"Anything started with prayer is never going to go wrong," she re-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Judy Mincher (left) and Mary Ann Gollin (right), members of the Benincasa advisory board, help ready the home for the dying for its Oct. 6 open house.

called her husband telling her.

A garden outside the resulting Benincasa will be a memorial to Deacon Clark, who died a year ago, she said. She added that donations for the house in her husband's name have amounted to \$30,000.

Organizers of the home agreed with Clark that their prayers for its success have yielded much more fruit than could have been possible had they not called on the Lord for help.

"To see something that was prayed about, and to see prayers answered like that so concretely is overwhelming," commented Sister Karen Dietz, SSJ, director of religious education at St. Catherine's.

Benincasa features two rooms for terminally ill residents; an interfaith chapel; a lending library

with books on illness, spirituality and grieving; and a counseling room, according to Lori LaSalle, a St. Catherine's parishioner and the house manager.

"We may do memorial services," she added.

One member of the clergy who has committed to helping out residents and their families is the Rev. Lauri Craig, a minister with the Genesee Valley Association of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Craig, who has worked with grieving families, said places like Benincasa can make the end of a relative's life feel as special to one's family as its beginning.

"This is a ministry, it's not just a house," she said of Benincasa. "It's a time of great privilege being with someone as they face God."

Benincasa is slated to take its

first resident in mid-October, LaSalle and Clark said, adding that 70 people from all three churches have been trained to be volunteer care-givers.

Benincasa is the latest of a handful of homes for the dying to open in the diocese. Such homes as Elisha House, a joint effort of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and St. Augustine's Parish, and Isaiah House, operated by Corpus Christi Parish, both in Rochester, have served the terminally ill for several years now. And two new potential homes for the dying are on the horizon.

One such facility will be called Journey Home and is being established by a group of Catholics from parishes in Greece, and Protestants, according to Karen Materise, executive co-director. Materise said Journey Home will probably open in late 1997 or early 1998 in a leased house in Greece.

"It's really coming together," she said of the efforts of the 20-member group working on the home's establishment. "The community support is there."

She added that Journey Home's organizers are sponsoring a fundraising evening performance of Neil Simon's "Plaza Suite" at the Brookhouse in Greece on Oct. 18. Tickets are \$25, she said, and those interested in the play or the home may call her at 716/227-8137.

Catholics in Victor are also working with Protestants to establish a home for the dying that has been named Serenity House, according to Dorothy Partington, a parishioner at St. Patrick's in Victor who serves on the home's steering committee. The group has already found a site for the home in a building owned by St. Patrick's Parish, and is looking for an architect to draw plans for renovation, she said.

She added that her committee hopes to open the home by September 1997, and that people interested in volunteering to help should call 716/934-5043.

### RU-486 approval draws criticisms

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Food and Drug Administration's tentative approval of the RU-486 abortion pill Sept. 18 drew denunciations from abortion opponents for its fast-track review.

The FDA said the French system of pills to induce abortion is safe and effective when used under a doctor's supervision and that final approval is contingent upon further information about manufacturing and labeling. The drug could be on the market early next year.

"This is a sad occasion for American women when the agency they trust to screen drugs acts on the administration's directive to put approval of RU-486 on a fast track," said Gail Quinn, executive director of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

RU-486 uses a combination of the drug misoprostol, which is already available in this country for other purposes, and the drug mifepristone, known as RU-486, for its French developer, Roussel Uclaf.

One pill is taken to stop the pregnancy, followed two days later by a pill that causes strong uterine contractions to expel the baby. If the dead baby is not expelled, surgery is required. It has been used by an estimated 200,000 European women.

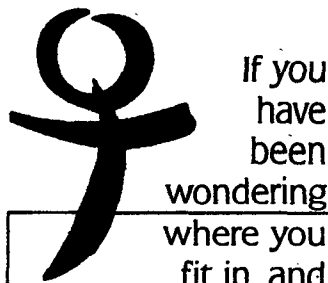
The National Right to Life Committee estimated that it patterns mirror those of France, about one-third of the 1.5 million abortions performed annually in the United States will be chemical abortions. Based on the rate of hemorrhaging requiring surgery found in early U.S. test results, more than 10,000 women per year of that 500,000 should expect to have complications requiring surgery.

**We support the  
Consistent Life  
Ethic!**



*Famous for Quality  
Sausage & Meat Products  
since 1880*

**ZWEIGLE'S INC.** 546-1740  
651 Plymouth Avenue North, Rochester, New York



If you have been wondering where you fit in, and thought you were all alone in your Pro-Woman, Pro-Life philosophy, consider this your personal invitation to join...

*"The most consistent place to come home to..."*

**feminists  
FOR LIFE**  
OF NEW YORK

PO Box 592  
Pittsford, NY 14534  
(716) 234-5416

The Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Rochester  
announces  
the beginning of

*project  
Rachel.*

A diocesan outreach for women and men hurting from abortion, to help those suffering from related emotional and spiritual wounds.

Call Toll-Free  
**1-888-972-2434**  
**[1-888-9-RACHEL]**

Confidentiality and anonymity assured