

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Pro-life march attracts hundreds

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Mary Ellen Dunning said she could have let her three children stay home and watch Saturday-morning programs. Instead, she exposed them to issues surrounding abortion by bringing them to a pro-life demonstration.

"This is reality, and people keep it hush-hush," Dunning said as she held her 11-month-old son, Michael. "It makes me feel very sad that people aren't educated enough to see what's happening."

Dunning, from St. Jude's Church in Gates, was one of more than 300 people who braved a cold rain to participate in a pro-life march in downtown Rochester Oct. 19.

The march began at St. Joseph's Park, proceeded to the Liberty Pole, then down Main Street and Prince Street before ending at the Planned Parenthood offices on University Avenue.

Once there, Father Norman U. Weslin, OS, led the marchers in an hour of hymns and rosary recitation as participants faced the Planned Parenthood building. Many marchers brandished signs protesting abortions arranged through Planned Parenthood. Several of those signs displayed images of dead fetuses.

Police were on duty along the march route and at Planned Parenthood. The only assistance they were called upon to provide was when Planned Parenthood officials asked them to keep protesters on the sidewalk and off the Planned Parenthood property.

Planned Parenthood employees escorted young women who entered the facility from the parking lot. Demonstrators shouted to the women in an effort to turn them against the possibility of abortion, imploring them to "choose life." However, no prolonged verbal exchanges took place.

Father Weslin, founder of the Lambs of Christ pro-life movement, told the *Catholic Courier* that the demonstrators succeeded in their goal of staging a low-key demonstration.

"This sends a message to the killing industry ... in a peaceful, prayerful, nonviolent way; with no risk of arrest, and using the power of the rosary to stop the killing," Father Weslin said.

Carol Love, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Rochester and the Genesee Valley, agreed that the demon-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

In spite of the cold and rain, more than 300 people took part in a pro-life march to Rochester's Planned Parenthood offices Oct. 19.

stration was restrained.

"Generally speaking, the people were fairly quiet and peaceful. There were a large number of people and it was a respectful group," she said.

Love added that her only complaint was that demonstrators blocked the driveway, making it difficult for vehicles to enter and exit the facility.

There were no counter-protesters at the rally, and Love said she did not intend to escalate the possibility of violence by advocating for pro-choice demonstrators.

"Our priority is our patients, not the protesters," she said. "Our energy needs to go into helping the patients, not into organizing protests and counter-protests."

Once the demonstration concluded, marchers returned to St. Joseph's Park. Most of them remained for a 12:10 p.m. Mass at Our Lady of Victory Church. The Mass was concelebrated by Father Weslin and Father Winfried M. Kellner, pastor of Our Lady of Victory.

Father Weslin told the *Catholic Courier* that he was pleased with the turnout.

"That's good Catholics you have in Rochester," he said. "You have some strong people here."

Father Weslin said he plans to stage future demonstrations in Rochester and other parts of the diocese.

Rob Pokalsky, a Penfield resident, was among a small group of demonstrators at the Oct. 19 protest who regularly picket



Father Norman U. Weslin, OS, a visiting priest, leads protesters in reciting the rosary and singing hymns.

the Planned Parenthood building on Saturdays. He said he was heartened by such a strong turnout for the march.

"It was wonderful, with the weather, to have so many people," Pokalsky remarked.

Pokalsky emphasized that protesters do not wish to pass judgment against the employees and clients at Planned Parenthood.

"We don't claim to be any better than those people," said Pokalsky, a Catholic who is not affiliated with a parish. "The distinction in Scripture is to hate the sin and love the sinner."

## Agency names a new director

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester has appointed Tim McMahon as executive director for its subsidiary, Catholic Charities of Livingston County, 10 Clinton St., Mt. Morris.

A 28-year veteran of social work supervision and program administration, most recently McMahon supervised family care, placement and respite services for the Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Office, as well as the agency's community services teams in Livingston and Wyoming counties.

A native of Rochester, McMahon attended St. Augustine's School and graduated from McQuaid Jesuit High School in 1962. He received a bachelor's degree in sociology from St. John Fisher College in 1966, and a master's degree from Syracuse University School of Social Work in 1986.

"This is the first Catholic Charities office in this diocese to exclusively serve a rural region," McMahon said in a statement released this month by Catholic Charities. "I look forward to putting my experience to work in collaboration with agency staff as well as other community service providers and the local parishes to address the unique needs and gaps in service in our county."

The Livingston County agency provides emergency assistance, outreach programs, advocacy services and a variety of other services to residents and to the 11 Livingston parishes.

## Appointments

The Diocese of Rochester has announced the following appointments, effective Nov. 30:

Father Michael Schramel, from pastor of Holy Family Parish, Rochester, to pastor of St. Ambrose Parish, Rochester.

Father Stanley Kacprzak, from parochial vicar, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Greece, to pastor, Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Greece.

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