

DIOCESAN NEWS

City, suburban parishes may forge partnerships

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GREECE — Suburban residents are rich and snobbish, and when they're not afraid of the city, they're indifferent to the plight of its poor.

City residents take drugs, commit crimes and live on welfare because they don't want to work.

If these sound like stereotypes, it's because they are, according to Janet McNally, co-chairwoman of the social ministry committee at Church of the Good Shepherd in Henrietta, and Sister Kay Schwenzer, RSM, pastoral associate of St. Michael's Church in Rochester.

In a Nov. 2 assembly of social ministry committees from city and suburban parishes, both women acknowledged that some of their fellow parishioners held such views. And both women spoke about how such stereotypes limit relationships between Catholics in the city and the suburbs.

"We need to get to know each other as people," Sister Schwenzer said, a point echoed by McNally.

"We could build a sense of what we have in common," McNally. "We're all raising kids. We're both living in a complex world."

The convening of social ministry committees from Monroe County parishes was held at St. John the Evangelist Parish Center, 2400 W. Ridge Road.

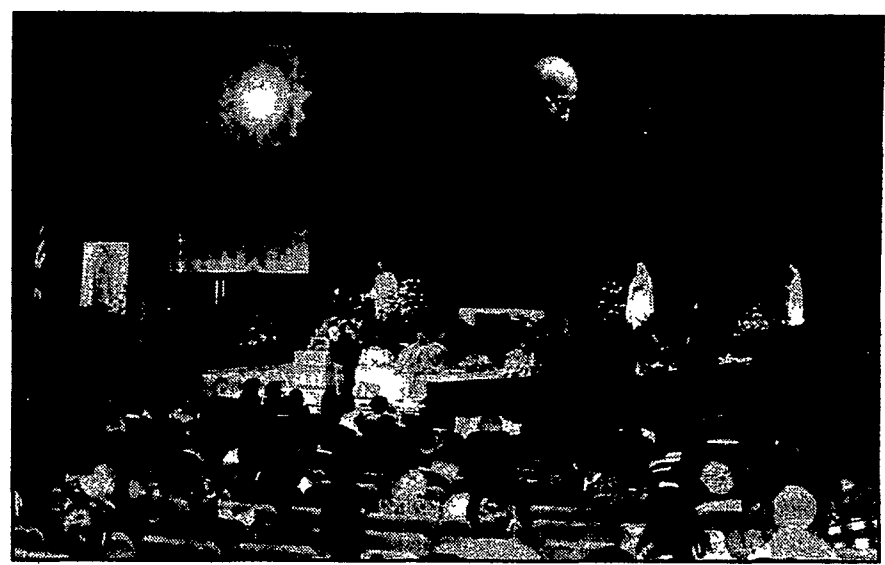
Representatives from 42 parishes in Monroe County attended, according to Joanne Corcimiglia, chairman of the

parish council at St. Peter and Paul Church in Rochester, and one of several diocesan social ministry activists who organized the meeting.

The convening's purpose was to foster partnerships between urban and suburban parishes, Corcimiglia said. According to a "vision statement" the convening's organizers distributed at the meeting, such partnerships have become common in dioceses throughout the nation struggling with the decline of urban Catholic churches and the growing gap between them and the affluent suburban church.

Although many suburban and urban parishes have developed various relationships, especially since the 1993 Diocesan Synod, diocesan parishes still tend to be somewhat insular in outlook, Corcimiglia said. The convening was designed, in part, to point out that suburban parishes often have real ministerial needs despite their relative affluence, and that urban parishes have strengths despite often being financially strapped, she and other participants noted.

Participants were grouped randomly with one another during one session of the convening, and spoke about the gifts and needs of their individual parishes. Several representatives of suburban parishes pointed out their strengths in such areas as youth ministry, tithing and financial support of outreach ministries in the city. Many representatives of city parishes noted their strengths in community activism, vibrant liturgies and outreach work. Both suburban and urban parishes stressed the need for more vol-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Lauding Our Lady

Father Albert Shamon speaks to a crowd of more than 800 people at the 3rd Annual New York State Marian Conference on Nov. 2 at the Theater on the Ridge, Rochester. Father Shamon was among the featured speakers at the conference, which also included a Mass, confessions, an adoration chapel, healing service, youth program, rosary and Benediction.

unteers in all their ministries.

Representatives from all the parishes will work on forming partnerships with one another over the next few months, Corcimiglia said. They were asked to speak about the partnership concept with their pastors, parish pastoral council members, and other parish leaders, through flyers, bulletin articles, at Masses or one-on-one with parishioners.

"The social ministry committees ... have the enthusiasm to go back to the parishes and get people fired up," Corcimiglia said.

Parishes will report on the progress of their partnerships at a follow-up meeting in February, she said.

St. Michael's has already slated meetings with representatives of Good Shepherd and Church of the Holy Name of Jesus in Greece, Sister Schwenzer said. She noted that she hopes to collaborate with suburban Catholics on such issues as the effect of welfare reform on impoverished legal immigrants in the city.

McNally said her parish could learn how better to incorporate cultural differences in its activities from St. Michael's.

Obituary

Father William Tobin, at 88; served many years in Elmira parishes

Father William D. Tobin, a longtime priest at two Southern Tier churches, died Oct. 29, 1996, at St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira. He was 88.

Father Tobin had resided in retirement for the past 18 years at Elmira's St. Charles Borromeo Church. His previous 13 years were spent as pastor of Elmira's St. John the Baptist Church.

Father Tobin was born in 1908. He attended St. Mary's school in Elmira; Elmira Free Academy; Niagara University; and

St. Bernard's Seminary. He was ordained in 1934.

Between 1934 and 1950, Father Tobin served as assistant pastor at St. Thomas Church in Summerville; St. Anthony's Church in Rochester; St. Mary's Church in Auburn; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Rochester; St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua; and St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Hornell. He was also a chaplain in the United States Naval Reserve.

He also served concurrently as pastor

at St. Bernard's Church in Scipio Center and St. Isaac Jogues Chapel in Fleming; concurrently as pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Red Creek and St. Patrick's Church in Cato; as assistant pastor and temporary administrator at St. Patrick's Church in Corning; and as pastor at St. John the Baptist in Elmira.

Father Joseph T. Gaynor recalled that Father Tobin was an avid sportsman who especially enjoyed golf. Father Gaynor also described Father Tobin as a priest who specialized in ministering to the infirm.

"It seems to me he was very good with

the sick. I think that was one of the high points of his ministry," said Father Gaynor, who resides at St. Alphonsus Church in Auburn. He was pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church when Father Tobin retired to that parish in 1978.

A funeral Mass for Father Tobin was celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark Nov. 2, at St. Charles Borromeo Church. Interment was at St. Peter and Paul Cemetery in Elmira.

Father Tobin is survived by a nephew, Michael Tobin of Elmira.

— Mike Latona

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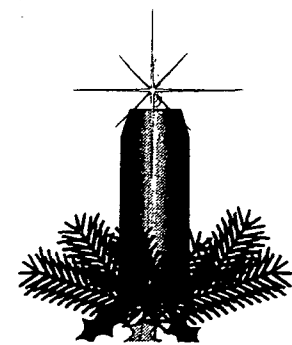
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