

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Outreach experts criticize reforms

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — About 80 protesters — including several Catholics who work with the poor — showed their disdain for welfare reform as they picketed outside the Monroe County Department of Social Services offices the afternoon of March 6.

"It's about time that we as a people did something about the wealthy and the powerful who run this land and make the rich richer and the poor poorer," said Sister Grace Miller, RSM, director of the House of Mercy, an outreach center in the city operated by the Sisters of Mercy.

According to the DSS, Gov. Pataki issued a welfare plan in November that includes such provisions as compelling public assistance recipients to undergo drug tests; gradually cutting cash benefits to recipients by 45 percent over four years; allowing counties to issue vouchers instead of cash for food and clothing; and allowing recipients to earn more money than is currently allowed before losing benefits.

Among sponsors of the protest were several parishes and ministries affiliated with the Catholic Church, including the House of Mercy; Pax Christi Rochester, a Catholic peace organization; St. Martin's Place, a soup kitchen operated on the grounds of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Rochester; St. Bridget's, Corpus Christi and Our Lady of Perpetual Help parishes in Rochester, and Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brighton.

In addition to the Catholic groups, Protestant churches, secular peace and poverty advocacy organizations, environmentalists and socialists also participated in the demonstration. The demonstrators marched from the DSS offices to nearby Monroe Community Hospital and Monroe Correctional Facility in blustery snowy weather. They did so to voice objections not only to welfare reform, but also to the county's proposed jail expansion, the proposed sale of the community hospital, and "corporate welfare," or tax breaks and grants to the business community.

Meanwhile, Catholic parishes that provide food to low-income people are seeing a rise in demand for such services, according to the rough draft of a report issued



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Sister Grace Miller, RSM, (left center) joined about 80 demonstrators March 6 in Rochester, to protest welfare reform and other issues.

Feb. 7 by Diocesan Catholic Charities. The report expresses concern that cuts in welfare benefits are coming at a time when demands for private and church agency services appear to be increasing.

The report compiles statistics from 13 diocesan parishes and organizations that provide food, clothing, shelter and other services to the poor, according to its author, Christopher R. Wilkins, Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier's director of development in Steuben County.

Titled "Operation Alert Statistical Report," the document looks at both Catholic and ecumenical service providers supported by Catholic parishes from July to December of last year. The report found that several service providers found atypical increases in demands for their services last year, Wilkins said.

For example, the report points out that food pantries in Monroe County saw the demand for food increase by 17 percent from October 1995 to October 1996. The report states that no seasonal or cyclical causes could be found to explain the increased demand, and most of the food was eaten by children and non-elderly adults.

"There's really been a distressing number of food requests," Wilkins said.

He added that many unemployed able-bodied single adults with no children are slated to lose food stamp benefits this month. The federal welfare reform bill limits adults to receiving food stamps three months every three years. Exceptions are made for those who work 20 hours per week at either a job or a government-approved program. Wilkins noted that in Monroe County, between 1,300 and 1,600 such adults are expected to become ineligible for food stamps in 1997.

Wilkins added that Catholic Charities will continue to monitor demands on service providers across the diocese throughout this year.

As the church's service providers anticipate the full effect of welfare reform, Gov. Pataki and the state legislature will attempt in the next several weeks to create legislation to carry out the federal welfare changes passed last year by Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton.

In part, the federal bill ended the right of individuals and families to receive cash assistance from the federal government, and replaced that system with block grants to states that have wide discretion in creating their own welfare programs.

Citizens interested in welfare reform should not delay writing or calling their legislators, according to Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, a Rochester Democrat who represents the 132nd District.

"I don't think any kind of lobbying goes unnoticed," he said.

Morelle, who co-chairs the assembly's task force on welfare reform, made his remarks at a forum on the issue Feb. 27 at Strong Museum in Rochester, sponsored by the Urban League of Rochester. Wilkins was also a participant at the forum.

The state must come up with its welfare reform plan by the end of June, Morelle said, but anyone interested in commenting on welfare reform should contact their legislators no later than April, Morelle said.

## Frontier gift creates chair at Nazareth

Nazareth College officials have announced plans to create a chair of urban education at the college in cooperation with Frontier Corporation. Frontier is donating \$450,000 for the chair.

"The establishment of this chair will ensure that Nazareth students, for years to come, will have an improved awareness and understanding of the specific needs of urban education — tools that will in turn help them shape young lives," Rose Marie Beston, Nazareth president, said in a written statement released Feb. 25.

"This is an investment that will pay innumerable and invaluable dividends to the Rochester community," she stated.

The college may hire someone with proven leadership in urban education, or move someone at Nazareth into the chair, or bring in a visiting professor, according to Anne Reed, vice president for development and college relations. It also may offer in-service training to teachers. Nazareth will be working with Frontier on such details — which include defining the job description as well as what "urban education" entails.

"Unfortunately, the way our society is constructed, urban children are at-risk children," Reed said. "They are most vulnerable to falling through the cracks or getting lost in the system." A high percentage of such children already come into contact with a Nazareth graduate at urban schools, she said, because of the high concentration of graduates — in such fields as teaching, social work or speech therapy — in Rochester as well as other city schools in New York state.

Frontier's commitment will begin in 1998, and brings the college's first comprehensive capital campaign to more than \$6.3 million of its \$10 million goal. The campaign was publicly launched May 1, 1996.

"Frontier's decision to endow a full chair in education reflects our recognition of the outstanding success Nazareth has had in developing teachers for the Rochester area for almost 75 years," B.J. Mann, Frontier's manager of corporate contributions, stated in the Feb. 25 release. "This collaboration between Frontier and Nazareth will bring critically needed resources to serve at-risk children and their families."

## Lambs of Christ go on trial June 9

Prosecutors and defense attorneys have agreed to a June 9 date for the Rochester trial of 11 Lambs of Christ abortion protesters on federal charges of blocking entrances to the offices of Planned Parenthood of Rochester and the Genesee Valley.

Long Island attorney John J. Broderick, who is representing 10 of the accused, while his son James represents the 11th, said the 11 will be tried in U.S. District Judge David G. Larimer's court. The protesters are charged with violating FACE, the 1994 Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, and will plead not guilty, Broderick said.

The charges stem from a Dec. 7, 1996, protest during which the 11 protesters blocked entrances to Planned Parenthood of Rochester in various ways.

One chained himself to the engine of a car that was brought to the main entrance and disabled. Another glued his forehead and hands to the clinic's rear door. Two locked their necks together with bicycle locks across a doorway. Others chained themselves to the building or locked their arms or legs inside a boxlike contraption at the staff entrance.

The 11 were originally arrested and charged under local laws and had a preliminary appearance in city court Dec. 9. The local charges were dropped after federal authorities decided to bring charges under FACE.

Under the local charges they could have faced up to 90 days in prison. Under the charges they could face up to six months.

— Rob Cullivan

Imported Specialties • Seafood and Smoked Fish

### PITTSFORD FISH MARKET

510 Monroe Avenue (near Goodman)

SPECIALTY SAUSAGES  
EUROPEAN STYLE  
COLD CUTS

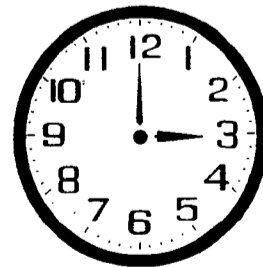
**FOR ALL YOUR SEAFOOD NEEDS DURING LENT**

OPEN 7 DAYS • 271-1780

**Special: Farm-raised catfish \$3.99**

DAILY SPECIALS ON OUR FRESH & SMOKED FISH

Hot Fish to Go Nick Vasalos Fresh Fish Live Lobster Frozen Seafood



**TIME FLIES - BUT MONEY FLIES FASTER!**

The average 65 year old can expect to live until age 87!  
To make sure that **your money will last** as long as you do,  
Call 227-6075 today for your **free analysis.**

Eileen J. Trott, CFP

**Certified Financial Planner**