

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Convening highlights Hispanic migrants' faith

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

SHORTSVILLE — As a faculty member at the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, Texas, Sister Rosa Maria Icaza, CCVI, has seen a lot of cross-cultural misinterpretation.

Sister Icaza, of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, described one such incident to 50 people at an April 24 convening on Catholic ministry to Hispanic migrants. The convening, at St. Dominic's Church, opened a three-day event sponsored by St. Bernard's Institute in Rochester.

Sister Icaza said a Texan school principal told her once that a Mexican mother became upset and took her child home with her after the principal complimented the child on her height. The principal then called the mother for an explanation. The mother told the principal that she had treated her child like an animal, Sister Icaza said.

Apparently the principal had held her hand, palm down, over the child, to indicate how tall she was. But in Mexico, that is the way one measures an animal, Sister Icaza said. The principal didn't know that Mexicans measure the height of someone by holding their hand *sideways*, thumb up, over the person, she added.

Such incidents, even those of a seemingly innocuous nature, point to a larger need for cross-cultural studies and communication, said Sister Icaza and her colleagues from the Mexican American Cultural Center: Roberto Pina, a program coordinator, and Irma Corretjer de Nolla, off-campus project director. Founded in 1972, the center prepares pastoral leadership throughout the country to work with Hispanic Catholics.



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Father Philip Billotte of the Naples/Prattsburg Catholic Community talks with Marilu Aguilar, an administrative assistant from Corpus Christi Church, Rochester, April 24 during a St. Bernard's Institute conference on ministry to migrants.

All three center employees spoke about Hispanic contributions to the church, and what church ministers could do for Catholic farmworkers who speak Spanish.

Those attending the three-day convening included farmworkers, and lay, religious and clerical church members from this diocese, and from the dioceses of Buffalo and Syracuse, according to Sister Patricia Schoelles, SSJ, president of St. Bernard's.

About 80 people attended the convening's final event, dinner at Sunrise Hill

Inn in Farmington, Sister Schoelles said. The dinner featured Bishop Henry Mansell of Buffalo, who spoke on the church's responsibility to migrants.

Meanwhile, migrant farmworkers and their advocates are looking to raise their voices on labor issues next week in Albany. Along with the Diocese of Rochester's joint migrant ministry with the Diocese of Buffalo, religious and secular groups across New York have slated a "Farmworker Advocacy Day" at the state capitol on Tuesday, May 6.

About 500 people, including many farmworkers and Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, are expected to attend, according to Carolyn Mow, advocacy coordinator for Mid-Hudson Catskill Rural and Migrant Ministry, an ecumenical organization in Poughkeepsie.

Sister Beverly Baker, SSJ, coordinator of the Migrant Education Program at the State University of New York College at Brockport, plans to take 45 people from the campus and community to Albany, she said.

Mow said the participants will lobby state legislators for two labor laws. One would guarantee at least one day of rest for farmworkers during a seven-day work week, she said, adding that no such law currently exists.

The other law would mandate portable toilets and washing facilities in the fields for farmworkers, she said. Currently, federal law requires only that farms with 11 or more employees have such facilities, she said, but the proposed state law would require such facilities even on farms with 10 or less farmworkers, she said.

## A Church in Search of Justice

An Evening of Reflection with Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit

Bishop Gumbleton will explore a number of controversial issues confronting Catholics today: end-of-life choices,



poverty, genetics, welfare reform, homosexuality, and cloning. In order to reflect on a consistent ethic of life, he will present the Catholic tradition on these issues and paint his vision for how Catholics can work toward a more just world order.

Tuesday, May 6th  
7:30 p.m.  
St. Catherine of Siena Church, Mendon, NY  
Tickets \$5 at the Door

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## Father James Cosgrove, Waterloo, to retire

Father James R. Cosgrove, who has been pastor of St. Mary's Parish, Waterloo, since 1985 and formerly served several other parishes, will retire from active ministry in June, shortly after he turns 70 on May 26.

"I did like every place I've been," he told the *Catholic Courier* after his retirement plans recently became official.

While in Waterloo, Father Cosgrove said he has concentrated on keeping St. Mary's School going. "The school is not just a school in itself," he said. He pointed out that it touches many parishioners' lives and contributes to the success of the church's religious-education program.

With regard to the responsibilities for such operations, he said, the buck has to stop someplace. But it isn't with him.

"No, I pass it on to God. He's gotten everything and he's done a good job," the priest said.

Raised in St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, Hornell, Father Cosgrove did not enter St. Andrew's Seminary until his second

year of high school.

He recalled that before then, "I thought to myself 'I don't know what I want to be, but I don't want to be a priest.'"

But the call came.

"God is a joker," he remarked.

While he thanks God for his vocation, he observed of his call, "That's what people can't understand, and neither can we. If priests can't understand it, neither can anyone else."

Father Cosgrove was ordained June 2, 1951, by Bishop James E. Kearney at Sacred Heart Cathedral. He served as assistant pastor at St. Helen's, Rochester (1951-56); St. Michael's, Newark (1956-60); Holy Rosary, Rochester (1960-64); St. Francis of Assisi, Rochester (1964-66); and Blessed Sacrament, Rochester (1966-70). He became pastor of Holy Angels in Nunda and Holy Name in Groveland in 1970, and then St. Mary's 15 years later.

Father Cosgrove would like to retire to the Rochester area, near his sister Patri-

cia Dunning of Chili, and assist in local parishes.

But, then, he said, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans."

St. Mary's will hold a June 8 reception in the school hall, after Mass at 3 p.m., to honor its pastor of 12 years. Anything more was out of the question.

Father Cosgrove commented, "I just don't go for that stuff."

—Kathleen Schwarz

### Correction

On page 3A of the April 17 *Catholic Courier*, an incorrect location was given for the 15th-year reunion dinner of the 1982 class of permanent deacons.

The celebration will be held Saturday, May 3. It will begin with a 5 p.m. Mass at St. John of Rochester Church in Perinton, followed by a dinner at the Lodge at Woodcliff in Perinton.

The *Courier* regrets the error.

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