

DIOCESAN NEWS

Sacred Heart convocation set in August

The 1997 National Sacred Heart Convocation will take place Aug. 22-24 at the Radisson Plaza in the Hotel Syracuse in Syracuse.

Sponsored by the Sacred Heart Center in Syracuse, the convocation is in response to Pope John Paul II's call for Catholics to reflect on Jesus Christ this year in preparation for the church's third millennium. The pope made the call for such reflection in his 1994 pastoral letter "As the Third Millennium Draws Near."

The convocation's 11 speakers include Father Benedict Groeschel, CFR, director of the Office for Spiritual Development for the Archdiocese of New York City; Timothy T. O'Donnell, STD, president of Christendom College in Virginia and a frequent guest lecturer on the Eternal Word Television Network; and Father Albert J.M. Shamon, administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel near Auburn and a weekly *Catholic Courier* columnist.

The convocation will begin with a procession bearing the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima at 3 p.m. Aug. 22. Bishop James M. Moynihan — formerly a priest of the Diocese of Rochester — will celebrate the convocation's concluding Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse at 11:30 a.m. Aug. 24.

"I hope that the Convocation... will serve to deepen the devotion that all of us should have toward Our Lord in His sacred humanity," Bishop Moynihan said in press statement.

In addition to the speakers and other events, the convocation will feature ongoing eucharistic adoration, along with tables displaying catechetical works on the Sacred Heart.

Early registration for the convocation costs \$80 per person, or \$75 per person in groups of five or more, and must be received by May 31. Registration thereafter costs \$90 per person and must be received by Aug. 1. Cost includes dinners and receptions.

For information, call 1-800-851-5320, or write to: Sacred Heart Center, 4791 W. Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse, N.Y. 13215.

EDITORS' NOTE: The pilgrim statue will also be in the Diocese of Rochester Aug. 1-22. During that time, it will be at 22 different churches. Details about the visit will be published in a future edition of the Courier.

Bishop's stances knocked, praised

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

PITTSFORD — During a morning speech at Church of the Transfiguration May 7, Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton talked about a wide range of issues: the unjust use of wealth, the immorality of nuclear weapons and the influence of mass media in promoting, as the pope has stated, "a culture of death."

However, during a question/answer session following his speech, every questioner except one made comments about the Detroit auxiliary bishop's controversial position on homosexuality.

The bishop may well have been expecting such questions, given the fact he recently called for gay and lesbian clergy to "come out." Bishop Gumbleton issued his call at a New Ways Ministries Conference in Pittsburgh in March. Bishop Matthew H. Clark also spoke at the conference.

While here last week, Bishop Gumbleton also spoke at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Mendon May 6. His talks were sponsored by St. Bernard Institute's "On the Road" catechetical program in collaboration with Transfiguration and St. Catherine's as well as the parishes of St. Joseph's, Rush; Good Shepherd, Henrietta; St. Louis, Pittsford; and St. Jerome's, East Rochester.

During his talk at Transfiguration, titled "A Church in Search of Justice — What does it mean to be an inclusive church," Bishop Gumbleton decried violence against homosexuals. He emphasized that the church preaches that homosexual orientation is no sin, a statement he backed up by referring to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

During the question/answer session, he added that the church needs to listen to gay and lesbian Catholics who are struggling with the church teachings that homosexual acts are sinful, which is also stated in the catechism. Not all homosexuals feel they can live the celibate lives to which the church's teaching calls them, he said. Hence, some homosexuals may be better off living in stable, committed relationships rather than indulging in promiscuity, he explained.

"I think the church has to learn more before we start making definitive answers for everybody," he said.

The bishop commented that the church has changed its stance on a number of issues throughout the centuries. For example, he claimed, the church endorsed slavery for centuries before condemning it. And some early church leaders considered any sex act sinful — including those undertaken by married couples, he said. It is only in recent times that the church has come to truly celebrate married heterosexual sex, he said.

"We haven't achieved a full understand-



Kurt Brownell

Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton spoke about justice issues at St. Catherine of Siena Church, Mendon, on May 6.

ing of sexuality," Bishop Gumbleton said.

Although one questioner praised the bishop for his stance, two other questioners took an opposite view. Both men distributed leaflets questioning, "Is Sodomy No Longer a Sin?" outside the church. The leaflets criticized Bishop Gumbleton's and Bishop Clark's participation in the New Ways Ministries conference.

One of the protesters said the two bishops were undermining the faithful's understanding of the sinfulness of homosexual acts.

"Oral and anal sex are sinful," said Michael F. Brennan, one of the leafleteers. He also expressed concern that, by their statements, the two bishops were mislead-

ing young people into considering homosexual activity.

In addition to addressing the church's stance on homosexuality, Bishop Gumbleton — who was the founding president of the Catholic peace group Pax Christi USA — also talked on the following issues in his speech:

Nuclear weapons — "If we really want to carry out Jesus' command to love, then we have to be opposed to ... the building of nuclear carriers and destroyers," he said.

Physician-assisted suicide — The bishop noted that support for it stems from an aversion to suffering that is contradictory to Christ's message.

"Take up your cross and follow me and enter into your suffering — that's the message of Jesus, but most of our people don't accept it," he said.

Excessive wealth — He emphasized that most of the world's people are poor while a small minority possesses most of the world's riches.

"To live like Dives with Lazarus at the gates is not even perceived as sin," the bishop said. He was referring to Jesus' parable about the rich man who went to hell when he died because he had neglected a beggar outside his estate on earth.

Abortion — People say that the U.S. bishops don't do enough about abortion, but it's an issue the church's leaders constantly address, he said. However, many U.S. Catholics support legalized abortion, he said, pointing out the difficulty of outlawing the practice. Abortion won't end until people's hearts are converted, he noted.

"No one is forced to have an abortion (in the United States)," he said. "I feel my mission as a preacher is to convert people not to choose it."

Scouts confer awards on Bishop Clark, other local supporters

The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting presented Bishop Matthew H. Clark with the St. George Emblem at its 50th anniversary banquet April 20 at the Burgundy Basin Inn, Pittsford.

The St. George Emblem is the highest award granted an adult scouter. Bishop Clark was recognized for his interest and promotion of scouting units under Catholic auspices.

Also honored at the banquet were Father John DeSocio, Beverly V. Donovan, Earl Knabb, Barbara Robbins, James Trybalski and Don Whitcomb, who all received the Bronze Pelican Emblem; Sally A. Capurso, Kathleen G. Coon, Helena Kessler, Dorothy Smith and Helen Vanderwerker, who all received the Elizabeth Anne Seton Medal; and Erika Schmitz, who was awarded the St. Anne Medal.

Women Needed for Hormone Therapy Research

As they search for the combinations of hormone replacement therapy that are both safe and effective, the Reproductive Endocrinology Unit and Menopause Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center seek women to participate in a study.

Volunteers must be healthy, post-menopausal women between the ages of 40 and 65. After a physical examination, women will be randomized to one of 8 treatment groups and receive various combinations of an FDA-approved estrogen and/or progestin, or placebo.

During this one-year study, volunteers are seen every three months. Benefits to volunteers include free Pap smears and lab tests, free mammogram, and possible relief of menopausal symptoms based on the medication(s) they receive. Compensation of \$450 is available. Women who have had a hysterectomy are not eligible.

Women interested in participating can call Wanda Rivers at 275-7891.

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