

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Priest: Opposition mounting to combat school

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Although the U.S. Congress has twice voted against closing the School of the Americas, the SOA's best-known opponent, Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois, is becoming more and more optimistic that the U.S. Army combat school's days are numbered.

Father Bourgeois spoke before 35 people, and later with the *Catholic Courier*, at the Interfaith Center on the University of Rochester campus May 17. His speech was sponsored by Returned Latin American Missionaries, a group of diocesan-based priests and nuns who served in Latin America.

Opposition to the school — located at Fort Benning, Ga. — is slowly growing across the country, according to Father Bourgeois, himself a former Latin American missionary priest. He explained that opponents of the school, which has trained 60,000 Latin American soldiers since 1946, now include "traditional" Catholics who are more politically conservative than some of his supporters have been.

"Grassroots Catholics, traditional Catholics — when they learn about (SOA), they respond," he said.

Father Bourgeois claimed he received "lots and lots" of letters from readers of *Catholic Digest* since he wrote an article that was published in the periodical in April. The article detailed the priest's reasons for



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

### Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois

opposing the school, and his imprisonment in a federal prison for civil disobedience at Fort Benning.

Father Bourgeois founded "SOA Watch" to document SOA's training methods and the activities of its graduates, a number of whom have been implicated in human rights violations, he said. Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, assassinated in 1980, and six Salvadoran Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and daughter — all murdered in 1989 — were killed by SOA graduates, he said.

Other graduates include Manuel Noriega, former Panamanian dictator who is

currently serving a sentence in a U.S. prison for drug trafficking, and Hugo Banzer Suarez, former dictator of Bolivia whose government authored the "Banzer plan," he said.

According to Penny Lernoux's 1980 book *Cry of the People*, the Banzer plan was designed in the 1970s to subvert the church's work with the poor. It used propaganda and legal persecution aimed at making the various church elements look like fronts for Marxism, she wrote. Several other Latin American governments reportedly copied the plan, Lernoux stated.

Father Bourgeois — who was forced to leave Bolivia under the Banzer regime because of his human rights work there — has made it part of his mission to inform U.S. Catholics that a number of the school's graduates have targeted church leaders and workers for murder and repression. Catholic members of Congress have also expressed their indignation to him about the record of SOA's graduates and their treatment of church workers and missionaries, he said.

"A lot of members of Congress ... know about the persecution of the church in Latin America," he said.

Father Bourgeois added that his cause received a boost last September when the Pentagon acknowledged that manuals teaching torture and execution techniques were used at the SOA from 1982 to 1992. The Pentagon has since claimed such training has ended, and that human rights in-

struction is taking place at SOA. But the revelation nonetheless prompted several congressional leaders and such newspapers as *The New York Times* to call for the school's closing.

The *Courier* asked the priest if closing the school would simply allow the U.S. Army to disperse its Latin American training throughout its bases — thus making it harder for opponents to track. Father Bourgeois replied that the SOA is a potent symbol of U.S. cooperation with repressive Latin American militaries. SOA graduates maintain lifelong friendships with U.S. military and government leaders, he said, and closing the school might loosen the U.S. military's coziness with Latin America's elite.

"That will be much more difficult to sustain," he said.

Father Bourgeois added that bills calling for the school's closing have been introduced in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives this session.

In addition to his appearance at UR, Father Bourgeois also spoke at the Catholic Worker's St. Joseph House of Hospitality in Rochester May 16, where he drew 40 people. The priest also spoke at the State University of New York College at Geneseo in the evening of May 17, where he received the Outstanding Peacemaker Award from Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace. Sixty people attended the priest's Geneseo appearance, according to Dr. Arnold Matlin, a founder of GVCP.

## Fundraising banquet nets \$25,000 for consistent life ethic

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Approximately \$25,000 was raised at a May 10 banquet sponsored by the diocesan consistent life ethic office.

According to Suzanne Schnittman, diocesan consistent life ethic coordinator, the \$25,000 net proceeds represented a \$2,000 increase over last year's inaugural banquet. This year's gala, held at Rochester's Harro East Ballroom, attracted 278 participants.

Schnittman said that the proceeds will benefit organizations in the diocese that promote consistent life ethic ideals.

In addition, five people were honored at the banquet with Vita Awards. Bishop Matthew H. Clark lauded these recipients,

chosen from among 34 nominees, for their commitment to promoting the consistent life ethic. Vita Award honorees, along with their designated donor organizations, are:

- Flora Appleton, a parishioner at St. Patrick's Church in Macedon. She serves as a comfort care nurse and is also a social justice activist who lobbies legislators on a number of life issues. Award designation: Crisis Pregnancy Center in Palmyra and the House of John in Clifton Springs.

- Father Paul English, CSB, Catholic chaplain at St. John Fisher College. He has worked for peace through such groups as Common Ground, Pax Christi and Project Rachel. Award designation: Hope Hall, Gates.

- Sister Janet Korn, RSM, director of

Catherine McAuley Housing, a facility for single mothers and their young children. Sister Korn also ministered for 16 years as a missionary worker in Chile. Award designation: Catherine McAuley Housing.

- Father Anthony Mugavero, pastor of St. Bridget's Church in Rochester. He has long been outspoken in his defense of the unborn, and has participated in many pro-life demonstrations. Award designation: Problem Pregnancy Help Center, Rochester.

- Mark Scibilia-Carver, a parishioner at St. James Church in Trumansburg. He has been involved in consistent life ethic issues through his affiliation with the Catholic Worker and Pax Christi. Award designation: Bethany House and St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, Rochester,

and Birthright Ithaca.

Schnittman noted that Vita Award recipients do not necessarily have to be high-profile community figures.

"(Vita Awards) show what good role models there are. They're just folks, and they're everywhere," Schnittman stated.

The consistent life ethic office was established in 1995 to carry out diocesan Synod goal number two: to build a culture that affirms and defends life from conception to death through education, personal service and public advocacy.

Proponents of this ethic seek to defend all people against abortion, capital punishment, economic injustice, euthanasia, violence and war.

## Obituary

### Sister Cecilia Wiseman, SSJ; taught school 41 years

Sister Cecilia Wiseman, SSJ, who taught in diocesan schools for 41 years, died in St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary in Pittsford on April 18, 1997.

A native of Bantry, County Cork, Ireland, Sister Cecilia (formerly known as Sister Eamon) entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from Holy Rosary Church in Rochester in 1939. She was a graduate of Nazareth Normal School and Nazareth College.

In 1945, Sister Cecilia began her teach-

ing career, starting at Corpus Christi School in Rochester. She subsequently taught at the following schools: St. Lucy, Holy Apostles, Holy Rosary, Blessed Sacrament and Sacred Heart Cathedral, all in Rochester; St. Theodore's, Gates; and St. Casimir and St. Anthony in Elmira.

According to a statement from her order, she enjoyed teaching children "... and they enjoyed her wonderful Irish wit."

Sister Cecilia is survived by nieces,

nephews and the Sisters of St. Joseph. A funeral Mass was celebrated by Father Thomas Mull in her order's motherhouse chapel in Rochester April 20. Father Mull was assisted by Msgr. William Shannon, Msgr. Emmett Murphy, Father Donald Curtiss and Father Joseph Donovan.

### Father John Hayes dies

Father John S. Hayes, former rector of Sacred Heart Cathedral, died May 20, 1997, at St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary following a long illness. He was 82.

Father Hayes will lie in state at the SSJ Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave., Pittsford, May 22. That night, Bishop Matthew H. Clark is scheduled to celebrate a 7:30 p.m. funeral Mass for him in the motherhouse chapel.



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