

Catholics protest  
Iraq embargo  
- Page 3



Youths take a look  
at legal age limits  
- Pages 6-7



Parish revs up  
in Sodus area  
- Page 12



# Catholic Courier

DIocese OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 108 NO. 40 ■ THURSDAY, July 17, 1997 ■ 75¢ ■ 12 PAGES

## Questions whirl over the Word

**H**e summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them: "If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in my steps."

Many church-goers mentally translate this version of Mark 8:34 — from the official 1970 *Lectionary for Mass* used in the United States — to apply to both males and females.

However, Sister Eileen Schuller, OSU, a professor and Dead Sea Scrolls scholar at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, said this is not so automatic for all people. For many, she noted, "man" is no longer an inclusive word.

Consequently, across Canada — and in several parishes in the Rochester Diocese — parishioners hear a different version of Mark 8:34 at Mass: *Jesus called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

"We are dealing with key texts," said Sister Schuller, who was on the committee that prepared the Canadian lectionary — the book of selected Scripture readings proclaimed in church.

The question of "how a living language works" has important theological implications, she said. Because of the way language has changed over time, even in the last 20-30 years, there can be an ambiguity in how the word of God is heard.

"It has to do with how language changes in a culture," she said. "In the norms for school, in public discourse, journalism, newspapers, the use of 'man' in general terms is not the practice."

Canada in 1992 published a lectionary based on the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible — the version that U.S. bishops planned to use, as well as their own revised New American Bible, as a basis for a lectionary to replace the 1970 one in this country.

"The decision was made that (the NRSV of 1989) best met the needs of the church," Sister Schuller said, explaining that it incorporates the most recent scholarship of biblical manuscripts, and makes the language more inclusive.

Yet the Canadian lectionary was authorized by the Canadian bishops only for use in their country. Use of it in United States "is not licit. It is not in keeping with the discipline of the church," according to Father James Moroney, executive director of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy.

### Still waiting

In 1992 the U.S. bishops sent their own inclusive language lectionary — which uses inclusive terms for people, but not for God — to the Vatican for confirmation. After five years and no confirmation, seven cardinals went to Rome in December to urge a conclusion. A subsequent Vatican-U.S. group worked out a different version of the lectionary. The U.S. bishops debated this version at their June 19-21 meeting.

The bishops are currently conducting a mail ballot on this compromise Sunday *Lectionary for Mass*. A two-thirds consensus of the bishops is needed for approval. The results are expected by the second week of August.

The bishops stipulated that the text would be temporary, however, and that they would revisit the issue in five years.

Sharp differences arose during their June debate.

According to Catholic News Service reports, Bishop Matthew H. Clark called the compromise text "inconsistent and arbitrary." The bishop, who is on vacation this month away from the diocese, also said the process leading to rejection of the original U.S. text raised questions about "the pastoral competence and authority of our (bishops') conference and the weight the Holy See gives to those ... who lobby against the work of our conference."

Continued on page 10

Story by Kathleen Schwar

Photo illustration by Matthew Scott and Zoe Maves

