

DIOCESAN NEWS

Three-week Fatima pilgrim statue visit begins

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

"The Lady's coming."

That's what Vivian Ripton of St. Louis Church, Pittsford, has been telling people. She's coordinating an Aug. 1-22 visit to the Rochester Diocese of the U.S. National Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

During its Rochester sojourn, the statue will be taken to more than 22 sites including churches, a nursing home, a home for the dying, Planned Parenthood offices as part of a pro-life march and the Problem Pregnancy Help Center.

"We know that honoring Mary will give us the blessings we need," Ripton said, adding, "I think it will bring a lot of people together."

The statue's procession to sites in Monroe, Livingston, Wayne and Ontario counties will kick off at St. Louis Church, Pittsford; it will conclude at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester.

The visit comes 80 years after reports of Mary appearing to three children at Fatima, Portugal. The statue is one of 20 blessed in 1967 by Pope Paul VI in Fatima before they were sent out for peace pilgrimages. Ever since, the 40-inch-tall, rosewood statue des-

ignated for the United States has been taken to dioceses across the country.

The World Apostolate of Fatima, or Blue Army USA, is official custodian for it.

The same statue was last in the diocese in 1991, at Holy Trinity Church, Webster, and St. Alphonsus Church, Auburn, according to Guido Del Rose, then-custodian of the statue. It also had been at St. Anne Church, Rochester, and St. Francis Church, Auburn, in 1989. Both years, he said, the visits were allowed by the Blue Army of Syracuse, which had arranged for it to be at the Sacred Heart Congress in Syracuse.

Mary Kelly, president of the Rochester diocesan Blue Army, and a parishioner at St. John of Rochester, initiated the current diocesan visit — the most extensive since April 1984, when it was taken to 25 sites, mostly churches, from Hilton to Owego. The Blue Army and Knights of Columbus and their Knights' color guards are working together to escort and present the statue during the current visit.

Highlights of the visit will include:

- Friday, Aug. 1 — 7:45 a.m. first Friday exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Louis Church; a children's living rosary about 10 a.m. outside; a Knights' escort of the statue into church at 10:30 a.m.; 11 a.m.

Mass said by Fathers Albert Shamon and John Reddington; noon-3 p.m. exposition and visits to statue; 3 p.m. chaplet of mercy; 5:15 p.m. Mass; 7 p.m. Benediction; 7:30 p.m. procession from church. Worshipers are asked to bring hankies to wave.

- Sunday, Aug. 3 — St. Anthony of Padua Church. Rosary recitation at 10 a.m. in Vietnamese, English and Italian; procession around Jones Square; noon Mass at St. Anthony's, with Fathers Louis Nhien and Dan McMullin celebrating. Picnic to follow.

- Saturday, Aug. 9 — The statue will be at the head of a pro-life procession to Planned Parenthood of Rochester & the Genesee Valley, 114 University Ave., Rochester. Organizing begins at 9 a.m. at St. Joseph's Park off Clinton Avenue.

- Friday, Aug. 15 — Masses in Latin (noon), English (5 p.m.) and Polish (7:30 p.m.) at St. Stanislaus Church, Norton Street at Hudson Avenue, Rochester.

- Sunday, Aug. 17 — St. Michael's Church, Lyons, will have "one of the big celebrations, all day long," Ripton said. Plans include a 10:15 a.m. procession into church, 10:30 a.m. Mass, 11:30 a.m. talk by Keith Downs, statue custodian; noon Angelus; 1 p.m. scriptural rosary; 2 p.m. private con-

fessions; 2:30 p.m. sorrowful mysteries; 3 p.m. chaplet; 3:45 p.m. Benediction; 4 p.m. music; 6 p.m. living rosary; 6:30 p.m. talk by Downs; 7 p.m. refreshments.

- Friday, Aug. 22 — Beginning at noon at Sacred Heart Cathedral: living rosary, glorious mysteries; 5:30 p.m. Mass followed by refreshments.

Kelly said the sites chosen resulted from notices sent last fall to every parish in the diocese asking if they would like the statue at their parishes. Those that said they did were included in the scheduling.

Preparation activities at the churches have included special rosary recitations, sharing of a Fatima video, and sales of Our Lady of Fatima T-shirts and religious articles and literature.

Ripton said special ceremonies will include consecration of churches to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, chaplet services and investiture of the brown scapular—the scapular of Mount Carmel—for anyone interested in wearing the scapular, as a sign of devotion and protection. More information is available from Ripton at 716/387-9662.

"I think it is just an honor to have the privilege to work for Mary," she said.

"Our mother has promised — if we just say the rosary, she will protect us."

Obituary

Father Raymond G. Heisel, at 87

By Staff writers

According to two close friends, Father Raymond G. Heisel wasn't as imposing as his 6-foot-4-inch frame might have suggested.

Father Heisel died July 22, 1997, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Infirmary, Pittsford, after a bout with colon and liver cancer. He was 87.

"I never saw him get angry," said Father Kevin McKenna, chancellor for the Diocese of Rochester. "He was very patient."

"He was very gracious," recalled Father Paul Wohlrab, a retired priest at St. John the Evangelist Church, Spencerport. "He was always ready to help people; he was very accommodating."

During his 62 years as a priest, Father Heisel served parishes throughout the diocese and logged two tours as a military chaplain. Also, he remained quite visible in retirement at Our Mother of Sorrows Church, Greece.

"He always referred to Mother of Sorrows as his Shangri-La, and how happy he was here — because he was very active," said Father Thomas R. Statt, pastor. "The people of the parish loved him."

His activities spread through the church and beyond, to the Latta Road Nursing Home, for example, where he regularly said Mass.

Father Heisel was born Feb. 19, 1910, and grew up in Rochester's Holy Family Parish. He attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries and was ordained a priest in 1935.

He was assistant at St. John the Baptist Church, Elmira (1935-42) and Rochester's St. Anne Church (1942-43) and Our Lady of Good Counsel Church (1943-44).

Father Heisel then served in the Pacific in World War II as a chaplain with the U.S. Army First Calvary Division (1944-46). He returned to Rochester as assistant pastor at St. Andrew's Church (1946-50), and then served as an Army chaplain in the North Atlantic (1950-53).

He spent three more years as assistant at St. Andrew's before his first pastorate, at Holy Angels Church in Nunda and Holy Name in Groveland (1956-58). Subsequent pastorates included St. John the Baptist, Elmira (1958-61); Holy Trinity, Webster (1961-69); and St. Margaret Mary, Irondequoit (1969-77). He was also a diocesan consultant (1972-77).

Father Heisel was associate pastor at St.



Mary's, Dansville (1978-79) and St. Anne, Rochester (1979-80) before retiring to Our Mother of Sorrows in July 1980.

In January 1981, Father Statt became pastor at Our Mother of Sorrows. As he settled into his first pastorate, he said, he valued Father Heisel as a sounding board. He also enjoyed the priest's dry sense of humor.

"Just look back at the things written in the *Courier* over the years. He and (Father) Paul Cuddy were a team. Paul would write one thing (in his column) and Ray would write another and point out where he was wrong," he said with a laugh, explaining that Father Heisel's responses were among his many letters to the editor.

Karen Franz, *Courier* general manager/editor, added, "Whenever the editorial page would become contentious, Father Heisel had sort of a sixth sense. He would send in a letter that would make people stop and think, 'Is this what it's really about?' He injected some humor in a gentle way, and redirected conversation to a more Christian level."

Father McKenna recalled learning much under Father Heisel during his first priest assignment, at St. Margaret Mary.

"His organization, his being so conscientious and sensitive to people's needs — he was a great help to me," Father McKenna remarked. He, too, noted Father Heisel's humor — he'd describe himself to children as "a high priest" because of his lanky frame.

Father Heisel had a penchant for frequent correspondence with a wide range of people, Father McKenna noted.

"He always made it a point to keep in contact, even when there were no longer any formal associations. He was very conscious of his friendships," he said.

Father Wohlrab added that these efforts also extended to men who had left the priesthood, as "a special ministry of his."

A Mass of the High Priest for Father Heisel was celebrated July 24 at Our Mother of Sorrows, where his funeral Mass was celebrated July 25. Interment was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery's priest plot.

Father Heisel is survived by his brother, George (Rosemary) Heisel of Canandaigua; and nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Memorial donations may be made to Our Mother of Sorrows Church, 5000 Mt. Read Blvd., Rochester, N.Y. 14612.

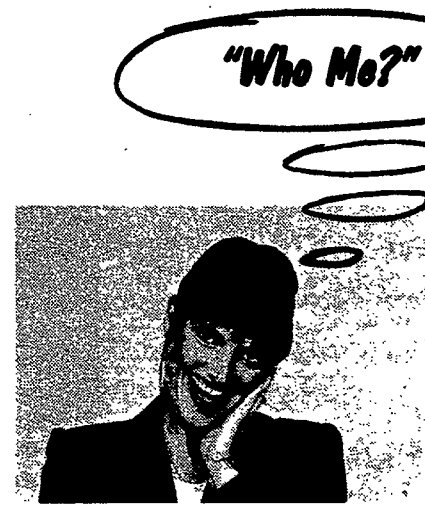


Kurt Brownell

Deacons convene

The 1997 Region II Deacon Convocation drew 211 deacons and their wives from New York and Canada July 25-27 to Nazareth College, Pittsford.. (Second from right) Father Thomas McKenna, CM, of the De Paul Novitiate in Philadelphia, principal speaker, meets with (from left) Tab Charbonneau and Lucy Verschurea of Toronto, Jack MacNeil of Halifax and his wife Marie.

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