

DIOCESAN NEWS

Deacon tells of hopeful hearts among Cubans

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — As he sat in the kitchen of his Jay Street home, Deacon Nemesio Martinez recalled the faces of Cuban people excited to see Pope John Paul II visit their island nation Jan. 21-25.

"I think (the people's) impression was that everything in Cuba was going to change ...," he said. He summed up the pope's message to the Cuban people: "He was not there to destroy the system, but to make it better."

Deacon Martinez traveled to Cuba on Jan. 20 with more than 400 U.S. Catholics led by Cardinal John O'Connor, archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York. The deacon was also among hundreds of thousands of people who assembled Jan. 25 in the Plaza of the Revolution in Cuba's capital, Havana, to hear the pontiff celebrate the final public Mass of his trip to Cuba.

"People were so open, so cheerful," Deacon Martinez remembered of the crowds at the Mass. "They were singing left and right. People were looking for spiritual food, and the pope really fed them."

The deacon, a native of Puerto Rico, shared the story of his trip to Cuba with the *Catholic Courier* Feb. 2. A chaplain at Livingston County Correctional Facility in Sonyea, Deacon Martinez also serves Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Michael's parishes, both of the Community of Hope cluster in Rochester.

Deacon Martinez said he's wanted to go to Cuba ever since he and his wife, Brunilda, got to know Cuban refugees they helped to resettle in Rochester a few years ago. Brunilda is religious education coordinator at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Rochester.

In addition to seeing the pope twice, Deacon Martinez said he traveled extensively throughout Havana. He recalled one man who charged only \$30 to drive the deacon around all day. By the end of his trip there, Deacon Martinez had so befriended the Cuban man that he gave him most of the clothes — many of them new — that he had taken to Cuba.

"I think almost everyone left behind something," he said, recalling how many of his fellow delegates took medicines, for example, to give to the Cubans.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer
Deacon Nemesio Martinez visited Cuba when Pope John Paul II was there Jan. 21-25.

The Diocese of Rochester was among many groups donating to Cubans during the papal visit. The diocese gave \$400 to an effort to distribute 2 million catechisms, 2 million copies of St. Luke's Gospel and other printed materials, according to Kathleen Cannon, diocesan synod coordinator. The

effort was organized by the Northeast Hispanic Catholic Center, a not-for-profit Hispanic pastoral leadership formation institute in New York City.

Deacon Martinez pointed out that many people who went to Cuba to see the pope not only took donations, but also went out of their way to befriend Cubans who served them in hotels and restaurants. Many visitors invited the locals to dinner, he said.

"We didn't go as tourists," the deacon commented. "We were Christians. We were there with a mission."

He added that the Cubans returned the kindnesses with great hospitality. Deacon Martinez said he got lost one day in Havana, and was deluged with offers from people who invited him in to have coffee and use their phones to get a cab.

He also said that he came back agreeing with the pope's call on the United States to end its economic embargo against the island. The embargo doesn't seem to be hurting Fidel Castro, Cuba's communist leader, Deacon Martinez said.

"Fidel Castro eats breakfast, lunch and supper," the deacon said, "but there are people there who only eat one time a day."

Agency secures funding for several housing projects in diocese

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Residents began moving into the Union Meadows Apartments in North Chili, Monroe County, this month.

The \$4.4-million complex is just one of several projects coming to fruition for Providence Housing Development Corporation. Providence, established in 1994 as an affiliate of diocesan Catholic Charities, specializes in low-income housing.

The Union Meadows complex features 32 units for families, 12 units for senior citizens and four for handicapped.

"People like the designs; they have the appearance of a more traditional town home," said Maggie Bringewatt, Providence's executive director. She said that all

apartments should be occupied by April.

The project is being developed through Providence, which is a non-profit organization; state and county funding; a for-profit developer; and the financial community.

Bringewatt added that because of the positive response to Union Meadows, Providence is looking into construction of a similar complex in the town of Henrietta.

Elsewhere in Monroe County, ground will be broken this spring for a housing project on Brown Street in Rochester's 19th Ward. The Providence-sponsored project will consist of 15 units.

In Elmira, meanwhile, Providence has worked with Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier to secure a \$767,900 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to build a 12-

unit apartment complex for senior citizens with mental disabilities. The project will be located on Powell Street and is scheduled to begin construction this fall.

Tony Barbaro, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, commented that the project will provide "housing and supportive services to a very fragile population in our community."

Also in Elmira, Providence has helped secure funds for a 10-family housing project and a 40-unit senior citizen apartment complex.

The housing project will be located on Sullivan Street. According to Bringewatt, two units are completed and the others will be constructed over a two-year period.

Meanwhile, the senior citizen complex is set to begin construction this spring. It

will be located near St. Joseph's Hospital.

Bringewatt added that Providence has applied for state funding toward renovation of the former YMCA building on Church Street in Elmira.

And in the Finger Lakes, Providence has helped arrange for a \$110,000 federal grant to convert a former YMCA facility on Castle Street in Geneva into apartments.

"Providence Housing has made significant progress in meeting the goals outlined for it," Bringewatt said. "We're entering another stage in the life of the organization."

Obituary

Father Francis Feeney; founded Irondequoit parish

Father Francis M. Feeney, founding pastor of St. James Parish, died Jan. 31, 1998, at Rochester General Hospital. He was 89.

Born in Rochester, Father Feeney grew up in Corpus Christi Parish. He was ordained in 1933.

Father Feeney served as assistant pastor at Rochester's Blessed Sacrament Church (1933-40), curate at Rochester's Holy Apostles Church (1940-1941) assistant pastor at Hornell's St. Ignatius Loyola Church (1941) and assistant pastor at Greece's St. Charles Borromeo Church (1941-49).

In 1949 he became the first pastor of St. James Church, in southeast Irondequoit. He oversaw construction of the current church facility and the former school.

Rita Lee, who joined St. James in its first year, recalled that Father Feeney worked hard to establish the parish community.

"He visited every single house in the area. It took him over a year," remarked Lee, who now serves as St. James' secretary.

Upon retiring in 1979, Father Feeney moved to Holy Spirit Parish in Penfield. Father Frederick W. Bush, pastor of Holy Spirit, noted that Father Feeney remained active during his retirement by celebrating daily Mass, serving as homilist every third Sunday and visiting the infirm.

In addition, Father Bush noted that Father Feeney enjoyed being the designated pitcher — right up until last summer — for the annual altar servers' softball game.

Father Feeney also maintained contact with people at St. James, Lee added.

"St. James was still very much a part of him," Lee remarked.

It was during one of his many minister-

al efforts — bringing Eucharist to a homebound person — when Father Feeney suffered a fall down a stairway Jan. 31 that caused his death.

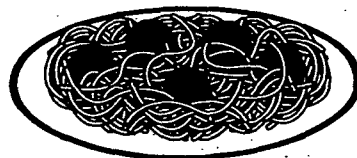
Father Feeney is survived by a brother-in-law, Joseph Skelly; nieces, Mary E. (Carl) Traxler, Regina R. (Dick) Daniell, and Judith A. (Steve) Dundas; and grandnieces, grandnephews and cousins.

A Mass of the High Priest for Father Feeney was scheduled for Feb. 3 at Holy Spirit Church. Father John M. Mulligan, diocesan vicar general, was to serve as celebrant and Father Bush as the homilist. Fa-

ther Feeney's funeral Mass was set for Feb. 4 at Holy Spirit, with Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey as celebrant and Msgr. J. Emmett Murphy as homilist. Interment was to be at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

— Mike Latona

MR. DOMINICS AT THE LAKE



Fine Italian Cuisine

Delicious appetizers, soups, veal dishes, vegetarian, chicken, fish, and homemade pasta

10% Senior Discount
Serving Lunch & Dinner

4699 Lake Ave
(716) 865-4630

BOSDYK'S

Restaurant & Cocktail Lounge

Entertainment in
the Lounge
Tuesday-Saturday Nights



\$1.00 off Appetizers
Martini and Manhattan
Special \$1.85

430 Spencerport Road
(Corner of Long Pond)
716-247-7690

LAMPUGHTER Restaurant

She deserves
something
special
on
Valentine's
Day



831 Fetzner Rd.
Corner of Maiden Lane
Down the road
from the Greece Marriott
225-2500