

Seneca Falls  
hosts a crowd  
- Pages 3, 5



Should teens  
have guns?  
- Pages 6-7



Parishioners bond  
at St. Stanislaus  
- Page 12



# Catholic Courier

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 109 NO. 44 ■ THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1998 ■ 75¢ ■ 12 PAGES

## Caring *about* crime in



**F**ather Lawrence Murphy walked up to a police officer one Sunday after Mass at Holy Rosary Church in Rochester, put his hand on the officer's shoulder and nearly recoiled. All he felt, he said, "was a solid piece of metal."

That seemed to impress him more than the minor disturbance in his church the officer had come to handle.

"It's a different kind of policing out there," the pastor said. "I knew police officers wear it (bullet-proof vest), but it became very, very obvious to me. It's a shame it has to be that way."

The neighborhood is "wracked with drug use," Father Murphy said, adding, "I think every parish in the inner city is concerned about violence, drugs and prostitution."

And as a faith community, the church should strive to make its people safe, he said.

Parishioners in various parts of the diocese are currently striving to make their communities safer, taking part in such efforts as marches, neighborhood watch groups and police-endorsed crime prevention programs.

Father Murphy and his parishioners, for example, are hoping an informal pilot program, with more police walking and riding in the northwest city neighborhood this spring and summer, will lessen crime that has many of them scared to leave their houses. At the same time, as residents and police get to know one another, they say, they care more about one another.

The increased patrols are a response to Holy Rosary parishioners and other residents' requests through Interfaith Action, a federation of 12 Catholic and Protestant churches in Monroe County dedicated to community organizing. In the last two years, The federation has conducted surveys and one-on-one conversations with people in the parish boundaries.

The boundaries encompass about 4,200 homes from Seneca Parkway south to Emerson Street, and west from the Genesee River to Curlew Street. Two police sections, Lake and Maple, cover the area.

According to Interfaith Action President James Patrick-Maxwell, initial surveys showed safety as one of the biggest concerns among area residents.

The Holy Rosary parishioner's own home has been broken into five times in 10 years, he said, the last time just before Christmas a year ago.

"I'm not giving the bad guys the opportunity to make the neighborhood worse," he declared. "I selected this area to live in. I like this area. It's a good area to live in. It's a good-area to bring up children. The schools are superb."

Continued on page 2



Father Lawrence Murphy discusses crime with Rochester Police Department Lt. Gerald Smith, top, June 22 at Holy Rosary School. Officer Patrick Plano, right, conducts a roundtable discussion with some residents of the Holy Rosary neighborhood.

Story by  
Kathleen Schwar

Photos by  
Greg Francis