

DIOCESAN NEWS

Healing minister speaks at Marian Conference

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — With the flair of a seasoned lecturer, Eileen George speaks forcefully to audiences about her devotion to God.

But offstage, George admitted that she shudders at being in the public eye.

"Before I went on, I was sick to my stomach. But once I was out there, the Holy Spirit took over," she said shortly after speaking at the fifth annual Rochester Marian Conference. The conference took place Oct. 3 at Theater on the Ridge.

George, a resident of Millbury, Mass., said she greatly favors performing household chores over public speaking. But she feels that her work is not so much a personal choice as God's will.

"I go out because of God and obedience to my Father. Then I can't wait to get home," George told the *Catholic Courier*.

George said she also lectured in poor physical health due to her ongoing battle with cancer, which has now extended over 15 years. Despite her cancer and her stage fright, however, she has gained worldwide acclaim as a speaker, retreat leader and conductor of a healing ministry. The 70-year-old great-grandmother began her ministry in the early 1980s and has written four books since then.

"It's the grace of God. I try not to think of where my health system is at," George said.

George said that her healing services are different from many others because she does not lay hands on people. Rather, she walks up and down aisles and speaks to individuals who have come for healing.

"I can call them by name, even though I've never met them in my life," she said. George added that she can also name the afflictions for which people seek healing. These seemingly miraculous powers, she said, are "not me. It's God."

She noted that her ministry is largely accepted by Catholic clergy, and that she has led retreats for priests "all over the world."

One of these priests is Father Albert



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Eileen George, acclaimed retreat leader and healing minister, speaks during the fifth annual Rochester Marian Conference in Rochester Oct. 3. She received a standing ovation after her talk.

Shamon, administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel in Fleming. While attending a 1993 retreat given by George near Philadelphia, he recalled, she approached him during a healing service.

"She pointed a finger at me and said, 'Your knees are going to be healed,'" Father Shamon said. He added that he didn't think George had prior knowledge of his knee trouble.

Six months later, Father Shamon said, he underwent surgery to have his knees replaced. He now uses them without pain, and acknowledged that George was right on the mark with her prediction.

"She has almost a direct line to Jesus, to

the Holy Spirit, to God the Father," Father Shamon said.

Although she didn't perform public healings at the Rochester Marian Conference, George did receive a standing ovation after her 45-minute lecture. Her down-to-earth speaking style included many references to God as "Daddy," and a description of the Stations of the Cross as "the greatest love story of all."

George repeatedly implored her audience to seek true fulfillment by turning inward to God.

"Holiness isn't way out on a limb, it's within us. We have to find that quiet spot where Jesus dwells," George said. "Some

of us will be restless people until the day we die; we'll always be looking for something else. (But) God is right at your fingertips."

George also implored the Marian Conference attendees to model holiness through kind actions, not through self-righteousness.

"(God) didn't want us to be pompous and arrogant. Jesus never was," George said. "Do we let people come to us or are we afraid to, because we have a holier-than-thou attitude?"

George added that daily Mass attendance, and praying the rosary, will bring satisfaction that cannot be found in the material world.

"I wouldn't trade one bead of my rosary for all the gold in the whole world," she declared.

George will return to upstate New York Oct. 16-18 when she speaks at the Convention in the Holy Spirit in Syracuse. She added that she plans to continue her ministry "as long as God keeps speaking to me about it."

Other speakers at the one-day Marian Conference included master of ceremonies David Parkes, an internationally known singer from Ireland; and Ivan Dragicevic, one of six visionaries from Medjugorje who began receiving alleged visions from Mary in 1981.

Also appearing were Father Stephen Barnham, a Melkite Greek priest who conducts a healing ministry of his own; Larry and Joetta Lewis, who in 1997 founded an international ministry of reconciliation called *One Body*; and Father Shamon.

According to Nelson Acquilano, a member of the Marian Conference's steering committee, approximately 2,000 people attended the event — about double last year's total.

"The people have recognized a need for this more now," said Acquilano, a parishioner at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield.

Diocese to announce Corpus administrator

ROCHESTER — Bishop Matthew H. Clark was slated to talk about his decision to reassign Father Jim Callan, at a 7 p.m. public meeting at Corpus Christi Church on Oct. 6, according to Elizabeth Brown, diocesan director of communications.

The bishop was also expected to outline his expectations for the parish's new administrator, who will be announced sometime the week of Oct. 11-17, Brown said. She added that the bishop also planned to

field questions at the Oct. 6 meeting.

Brown said the bishop intended to meet with Corpus staff members prior to the public meeting to discuss the same matters.

Bishop Clark announced in August that he was removing Father Callan from his position as administrator of the parish. The bishop cited Father Callan's continuing defiance of church law on women's liturgical roles, intercommunion with non-

Catholics and ministry to gays as the reasons for the priest's removal.

Father Callan is currently serving a temporary assignment at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Elmira. A diocesan-appointed interim administrative team is currently overseeing Corpus.

One member of the original transition team, Father Enrique Cadena, associate pastor at Corpus, resigned from his position on the team in late September, citing his inability to reconcile his support for the parish's values with his duties as a member of the transition team.

— Rob Cullivan

Ward to appear in court Oct. 26

GREECE — Stephen M. Ward, a former assistant principal at Aquinas Institute who has pleaded not guilty to sex abuse charges, is slated to appear in Greece Town Court on Monday, Oct. 26, at 1 p.m.

Ward resigned as assistant principal at Aquinas in early September, according to the school's president, Patrick A. Hanley. Hanley declined further comment on Ward's resignation.

Ward was arrested by Greece police Aug. 19, and charged with second-degree

misdemeanor sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child. The alleged incident did not take place on Aquinas' property, nor in relation to a school activity. The alleged incident also took place with a boy between ages 17 and 11, according to the police. The alleged victim was not a student at the school.

Each charge carries a penalty of a \$1,000 fine and/or up to one year in jail. Ward remains free pending his next appearance.

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Appointment

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has appointed Father Jeremiah P. Moynihan, pastor of St. Ignatius Loyola Church, Hornell, as pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Elmira, effective Oct. 26.

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Correction

In the Oct. 1 edition of the *Catholic Courier*, the story, "Nobel nominee calls church to nonviolence," on page 2A, incorrectly stated that a mission to be led by Father Emmanuel Charles McCarthy would take place at Holy Spirit Church in Penfield.

Actually, the mission will take place at St. Rita's Parish Center, 1008 Maple Drive, Webster, Saturday, Nov. 6, from 7 to 9 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 7, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Father McCarthy will also celebrate a Mass at the church at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.

The *Courier* regrets the error.

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