

DIOCESAN NEWS

Panel: Listen, advocate for teens being abused

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — According to a panel of experts gathered at St. Mary's Church Oct. 21, Monroe County is no different than the rest of the country: One in three teenagers is involved in an abusive relationship.

"If I had a dime for every time I heard a young girl say, 'It's so cute that he's jealous ...' commented Linda Bean of Alternatives for Battered Women, "because if he wasn't jealous it meant he didn't really care about me or was committed to me."

Young girls especially want the boyfriend who showers them with constant attention, not seeing that it may not be about caring, but control, she said.

Bean was part of a Downtown Community Forum on, "Helping Young Women Develop Healthy Relationships — the Religious Community Responds to Domestic Violence." The event was held to observe Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Adults in church, school, medical and the community at large have a responsibility to both boys and girls to show and teach them healthy relationships, panelists said. It is important, they agreed, that adults listen to youth.

Panel members were Kathryn Iacovangelo, youth officer for the Brighton Police Department; Monroe County Family Court Judge Anthony Sciolino, a permanent deacon; the Rev. Valerie Smith, an American Baptist minister and chaplain at St. Joseph's Villa; and Bean, coordinator of ABW's Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program.

Violence has been an American tradition, Deacon Sciolino said, and domestic violence "is a real significant societal problem. It's not just a poor person problem, it's not just an inner city problem. It is an endemic problem in the community."

Officer Iacovangelo testified to that, saying she'd grown up with an abusive father who was a well-respected medical doctor in her community but who was verbally, mentally and sometimes physically violent.

She and her brother would call their mother from a pay phone at school every day to see if she was OK. One day the school nurse asked her what was going on.

"Then she shook me like a rag doll and said you horrid little girl ... how could you ever talk about your father like that," Iacovangelo recalled.

She added that she never talked about her father again until her mother left the home with her children, and got them into counseling.

By the time a person reaches the court, Deacon Sciolino said, the damage has occurred, and "All we can do is react to the situation."

He said he's seeing people who were themselves abused now in court for abusing their children. And Bean said ABW is sheltering women whose mothers who had been sheltered by ABW to escape abuse.

"Kids are what they learn," Deacon Sciolino said. "The problem of violence is intergenerational."

Adults should not only listen, they said but also be advocates who can refer young people to someone who can help.

Rev. Smith said most people realize that often people in abusive relationships suffer low self-esteem, fear of failing and fear of rejection.

"It's time for us to get down and get dirty," Rev. Smith said. "We have to listen to the music they are listening to, watch the videos they are watching ... The words may make your ears ring, but you must sit down and listen. Because to them, it's representative of their culture."

"We are dealing with a different generation ... we really must take time to understand, we must hear people from different communities. We must understand how it's best to understand. It's not about diversity. It's about competence. How competent am I to listen to somebody who's different?"

And the approach to a teen matters, she said:

"If I shake my finger at you, (say) shame on you, then I'm just taking power away," said Rev. Smith. Rather, she suggested "I

put my hand on your shoulder and say 'Why don't you tell me how you got to this point.'"

In the United States, a woman is physically abused every nine seconds; four women die each day as a result of domestic violence, according to ABW.

In its own county survey last fall, ABW learned only 17 percent of teenagers thought they were involved in abusive relationships, Bean commented. But ABW had the survey analyzed and discovered the figure to be 34 percent — similar to a national survey of teens.

They must be taught about the subtle cues and early warning signs, she said. ABW suggests they ask themselves: Are you afraid of your partner's temper, anger or jealousy; are you afraid to hurt your partner's feelings; do you apologize to

yourself or others for your partner's behavior; have you been hit, kicked, shoved or had things thrown at you by your partner; do you change plans to please your partner; drink heavily or use drugs; or have you been pushed into having sex.

Teens look to adults to be allies, Bean said.

"I think we can all learn from our teens and be better advocates for them by listening to them," she added.

EDITORS' NOTE: Numbers to call for help include — Alternatives for Battered Women, 716/232-7353; Catholic Youth Organization, 716/232-2420 or 454-2030; Domestic Violence Program, Yates, Seneca and Ontario counties, 800/695-0390; Domestic Violence Intervention Program, Cayuga County, 800/253-3358. And in cases of danger, 911.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

St. George's marks 90 years

Father Dominic Mockevicius leads a procession from the St. George Parish rectory to the church for a Mass marking the 90th anniversary of the Rochester parish Oct. 25. To his right is Bishop Paulius Baltakis, the bishop of Lithuanian clergy outside Lithuania. They are passing a wayside shrine, similar to those common in the Lithuanian countryside.

Bishop recovering at home after angioplasty operation

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

ROCHESTER — Bishop Matthew H. Clark is recuperating at Sacred Heart Cathedral rectory following successful angioplasty surgery Oct. 21 to clear two partly blocked arteries.

He'd undergone surgery to install a pacemaker just two days before the angioplasty.

The bishop, 61, returned home Oct. 23, and doctors expect him to fully recover by the end of November. He will gradually return to duties during November, according to Father Joseph Hart, vicar general and moderator of the Pastoral Center.

Father Hart and his fellow vicar general, Father John Mulligan, are overseeing the day-to-day operations of the diocese.

"We'll keep him out of the loop for a little bit, but we keep elaborate notes so that we'll catch him up as soon as he begins to feel better," Father Hart explained.

During a press conference Oct. 21, Dr. Gerry Gacioch, the cardiologist who performed the angioplasty, said of the bishop, "He is just the ideal patient. His spirits are very positive."

The doctor explained that the 2½-hour procedure involved making a small incision in the bishop's leg and inserting a catheter into the femoral artery. The catheter was then guided with the help of X-ray images to one of the affected arteries near the heart. A second catheter containing a small balloon was inserted into the first catheter and when the second catheter reached the affected area, the balloon was inflated to compress the blockage. A stent — a stainless steel coil — was then inserted to help support the artery walls. The procedure

was done twice, to treat both affected arteries.

During the procedures, Gacioch noted, Bishop Clark was awake, conversing with the surgical team about the Buffalo Bills and the New York Yankees, asking about their families, and humming along with a Beethoven tape being played.

Gacioch, a member of Church of the Transfiguration Parish, Pittsford, explained that the bishop's pacemaker aided the operation, as it helped support his heart's rhythm.

"It made my procedure much easier and much safer," the doctor said.

The pacemaker had been installed Oct. 19 to help correct an irregular heartbeat, a condition doctors first detected in the bishop in 1996.

Doctors discovered the two partly blocked arteries — one by 70 percent, the other 60 percent — Oct. 20 during an angiogram performed at Park Ridge Hospital after the pacemaker insertion. Bishop Clark had been taken to Park Ridge Oct. 16 after suffering dizziness and chest pains while playing racquetball. Bishop Clark was transferred from Park Ridge to Rochester General Oct. 20 after the blockages were detected.

Gacioch pointed out that the irregular heartbeat and the partial blockage were two separate conditions.

He also said that the bishop's prognosis is good.

"His heart function is normal," Gacioch said.

He noted that in terms of diet and physical activity, Bishop Clark was already doing what he should be doing.

"He actually meets all guidelines," Ga-

cioch said. "What I tell my patients is I'd like them to do the equivalent of an hour of exercise five days a week. He already does that."

He cautioned, however, that there is a 20-25 percent chance that the arteries will begin to clog again, and that angioplasty may have to be repeated.

"Unfortunately, with coronary disease, he's not cured of this, this just helps manage the problem," Gacioch explained.

Thus Bishop Clark will have to undergo regular checkups and periodic stress tests.

He noted that the bishop should be able to return to his regular activities, including running and exercise, in a week or two.

Father Hart said, however, that he and other diocesan officials are urging Bishop Clark to take it slowly.

Obituary

Anna Billotte; mother of pastor

Anna E. Billotte, a longtime parishioner at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Corning, and mother of Father Philip Billotte, died Oct. 14, 1998, at Bethany Village in Horseheads following a long illness. She was 89.

Mrs. Billotte was an active volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul, one of the four churches in the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community. She was a native of Frenchville, Pa.

Mrs. Billotte was predeceased by her husband, Hilary. She is survived by Father Billotte, pastor of St. Januarius and St. Patrick's churches in Naples and Prattsburg. She is also survived by her sons,

"As a precautionary measure, we've cleared his schedule up to Thanksgiving," Father Hart said. "There are two active vicars general. Between Father Mulligan and myself we've got things covered."

In the meantime, he acknowledged, the bishop's illness is an occasion for drawing public attention to heart problems — and perhaps inspire people to have any heart difficulties checked out.

In addition, the problems help to remind people know that Bishop Clark is like them, he suggested.

"It lets everybody know even the bishop has illness and difficulties," Father Hart said, adding, "Just so that they will see his humanness and the fact that he can appreciate their sufferings and pain at the same time."

Robert (Sonja), and Francis (Linda); daughters, Margaret (Martin) Lapp, Gladys (Gerald) Krantz, Mary (Lawrence) Linehan, Patricia (Roy) Lincort, and Catherine (James) Yorico; 11 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

A funeral Mass for Mrs. Billotte took place Oct. 19 at St. Vincent de Paul Church, with Father Billotte serving as celebrant. Interment was at St. Mary of the Assumption Cemetery in Frenchville.

Donations in Mrs. Billotte's memory can be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 274 N. Goodman St. Box 71, Suite 401-Village Gate, Rochester, N.Y., 14607.