

## DIOCESAN NEWS

## Pro-life activist priest to lead program in Tier

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

The recent murder of a Buffalo abortion provider did not benefit the pro-life movement, according to activist Father Peter West.

"We condemn it unequivocally. The end does not justify the means," said Father West, referring to the Oct. 23 shooting death of Dr. Barnett Slepian.

"I think it's important to get the word out than we condemn the shooting of the abortion doctor, that the people who did it were not pro-life," Father West stated in a telephone interview.

Father West is scheduled to visit the Southern Tier for a series of ecumenical pro-life events, set for Nov. 6-10, and involving a number of volunteer coordinators from area Catholic churches. He represents Priests for Life, a national association based in Staten Island that seeks to protect human life in all forms. The organization includes priests, deacons and lay people.

Father West acknowledged that the threat of further violence may now loom because of the recent incident in Buffalo.

"That's a possibility. But we have to continue our peaceful work, even though that is happening around us," Father West said.

Although he denounces the act of abortion, Father West said he welcomes women who have had abortions, and doctors who have performed them, into the pro-life movement.

"We never condemn anyone who was involved in an abortion decision," Father West said.

The 39-year-old priest has been a pro-life activist since 1986 and was ordained in 1991. His presentations in the Southern Tier, he said, will focus on abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment.

In addition, Father West will emphasize

abstinence to young Catholics by conducting seminars at Holy Family Junior High and Intermediate schools, Elmira Notre Dame High School and St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads. In delivering this plea for chastity, Father West said he reminds students that they're not alone in the challenge to withstand peer pressure and media messages promoting premarital sexual activity.

"We can all use some encouragement," Father West said. "The majority of the people accept what I have to say. They're good kids."

The weekend's calendar of public events is as follows:

- Nov. 6 – Youth rally with Father West, 6:30-9 p.m., Elmira YMCA, 425 Pennsylvania Ave.; hour of adoration and reparation, 10-11 p.m., Dominican Monastery chapel, 1310 W. Church St., Elmira.

- Nov. 7 – Prayer breakfast with Father West, "How to Teach Abstinence and Chastity Without Promoting Sex Education," 8:30-10:30 a.m., Hamilton Hall, Elmira College; holy hour and penance service, noon-1:30 p.m., St. Anthony's Church, West Washington Ave. and North Main St., Elmira; simultaneous Protestant service, noon-1:30 p.m., Southside Christian & Missionary Alliance Church, 130 W. Henry Ave., Elmira; dinner with Father West, 7 p.m., Beeman's Family Restaurant, 1846 Grand Central Ave., Elmira Heights.

- Nov. 8 – Car Caravan for Life, 1:30 p.m., meet at parking lot of Church of St. Mary Our Mother, Westinghouse Road, Horseheads.

- Nov. 9 – Mass for the Never-Born, 7 p.m., Dominican Monastery chapel, Elmira.

In addition, Father West will serve as homilist at all weekend liturgies (Nov. 7 at 5 p.m. and Nov. 8 at 7, 9 and 11 a.m.) at Church of St. Mary Our Mother.

Rachel Lee, event coordinator, said the

ideas for these events grew out of a conversation she had this past summer with Elizabeth Berliner, principal of Holy Family Junior High School, regarding the possibility of a pro-life speaker coming to the school.

"People were enthusiastic from the beginning," said Lee, a parishioner at Church of the Epiphany in Sayre, Pa., who operates a dermatology practice in Elmira.

Lee added that the ecumenical participation came about due to the involvement of Chemung County Right to Life, which she said contains a large Protestant membership.

"The thing just snowballed," added Dick

McGill, an organizer of the Nov. 8 car caravan. He is a parishioner in Elmira's St. Casimir/St. Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Community and a member of Chemung County Right to Life.

McGill noted that the car caravan will include rosary recitation at Planned Parenthood facilities in Corning, Horseheads and Elmira, as well as Deluxe Book Bargains on Lake Street in Elmira – the city's only adult bookstore. The caravan will conclude at a memorial to the unborn child in Elmira's Ss. Peter and Paul Cemetery.

"The emphasis (for the weekend) is on education and prayer, not anything confrontational," McGill remarked.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

## A pledge for life

Mary Klebes, left, assistant director of Problem Pregnancy Help Center, Inc., talks with Mary Burke of the diocesan Parish Pro Life Network after a press conference Nov. 2 at St. Leo's Church, Hilton. The Diocese of Rochester's "Faith Community Pledge for Life" program, which cooperates with agencies such as Problem Pregnancy Help Center, Birthright and Crisis Pregnancy Services, announced nearly 40 parishes have signed the pledge to help women in crisis pregnancies. Sharon Corcoran of St. Leo's, the first Monroe County church to sign the pledge, said the community should know, "Help is available as nearby as your Catholic church." The Pledge for Life is coordinated by the Consistent Life Ethic office and supported by the Thanks Giving Appeal.

## Thomas G. Donohue, 78; musician

Thomas G. Donohue of Conesus, a noted liturgical musician who served several parishes as well as other diocesan institutions, died Oct. 17, 1998, of injuries he suffered in an automobile accident. He was 78.

Mr. Donohue, a Rochester native, was the son of George and May Grady Donohue. He graduated from Aquinas Institute and earned a bachelor's degree in music from the Eastman School of Music in 1943. He later received a master of divinity degree from St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester.

Over the course of 50 years, Mr. Donohue served as organist and choirmaster at the following parishes: St. Margaret Mary's, Irondequoit; St. Mary's, Rochester; St. Agnes, Avon; and at St. Anne, Rochester, a position he held at the time of his death.

His daughter, Sarah Zulauf, sings in the choir at St. Anne Church, and said her father was a devout Catholic as well as a devoted musician.

"He was always reminding us that we were doing this for the greater glory of God," she said of his choir direction.

Mr. Donohue also directed the Thomas Donohue Chapel Choir, which performed locally as well as on National Public Radio. He was a longtime member and past dean of the Rochester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Mr. Donohue taught piano, organ and music theory at the Eastman School of Music, and also taught at St. Bernard's, Bishop Kearney High School, Aquinas, King's Preparatory and St. Margaret Mary School.

In addition to his daughter Sarah, Mr. Donohue is survived by his wife of 48 years, Mary Hawkins Donohue; children Stephen (Brenda) Donohue, Raymond (Deborah) Donohue, Kathleen (Stephen) Robinson, and Margaret (John) Rudolph, as well as numerous grandchildren.

A funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Anne's Oct. 21. Interment took place at Union Cemetery, Livonia.

## Obituaries

### Msgr. Sullivan; WWII vet, pastor

Msgr. Joseph J. Sullivan, a World War II veteran and Vatican news correspondent, and later pastor of three Finger Lakes parishes, died Oct. 31, 1998, after a long illness. He was 86.

Msgr. Sullivan was born in Rochester and grew up in St. Monica's Parish. He attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries, and was ordained in 1938 by Bishop James E. Kearney.

Msgr. Sullivan was assistant pastor of St. Michael's Church in Penn Yan (1938-40) and Sacred Heart Pro-Cathedral in Rochester (1940-43). He then served for four years as chaplain in the U.S. Army Air Force.

In 1947, Msgr. Sullivan began an eight-year stint as a full-time correspondent for the National Catholic Welfare Conference News Service. In 1953, while stationed in Rome, he was raised to the rank of papal chamberlain, with the title of Very Reverend Monsignor, by Pope Pius XII.

Msgr. Sullivan returned to the Rochester Diocese in 1955 and began 28 years of parish duty. He was pastor at Holy Cross, Ovid (1955-58); St. Michael's, Penn Yan (1958-68); and Holy Family, Auburn (1968-83).

In an April 1998 interview with the *Catholic Courier* – on the occasion of his

60th anniversary in the priesthood – Msgr. Sullivan remarked that he favored parish duty over his prestigious position in the Catholic press.

"I didn't set out on the glory road. I wanted to be a parish priest," Msgr. Sullivan said.

"He very much wanted to be in pastoral work again," his sister, Mary Carey, remarked. "He enjoyed it before he went into the service. He enjoyed being around people. He had a wonderful sense of humor."

Upon his 1983 retirement, Msgr. Sullivan moved to a private residence in Seneca Falls and served as chaplain at Mercy Rehabilitation Center in Auburn. In 1990 he moved to the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary in Pittsford, and resided there until his death.

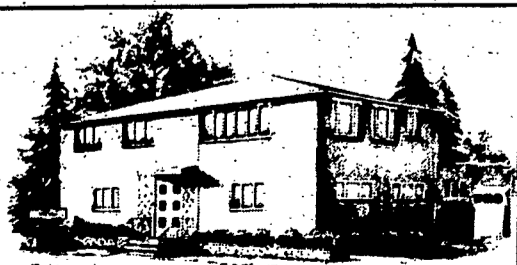
In addition to his sister, Msgr. Sullivan is survived by his brother, Bernard (Mia); as well as nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

A Mass of the High Priest for Msgr. Sullivan was celebrated Nov. 3, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse. His funeral Mass was scheduled for Nov. 4 at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield. Interment was to take place at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

– Mike Latona

### Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home

1270 Norton Street  
544-5000



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