

DIOCESAN NEWS

Judge ponders abortion protest restrictions

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

A federal judge was expected to decide by April 15 whether to keep pro-life protesters 60 feet away from abortion clinics and other health facilities in Western New York, according to Tony Adams, a lawyer for two Rochester-area pro-life activists.

The request for a temporary restraining order came in U.S. District Judge Richard J. Arcara's chambers in Buffalo on April 8, from New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. Spitzer made it on behalf of a number of plaintiffs, including Planned Parenthood and the Pro-Choice Network of Western New York.

The plaintiffs also want protesters barred from using megaphones or loudspeakers to make "excessive noise" within 1,000 feet of clinics and other health facilities.

The requests accompanied a suit filed March 24 by the attorney general against more than 70 pro-life protesters. The suit asks the court to permanently enjoin the activists named from coming within 60 feet of any place in Western New York — including Rochester — where abortions are performed.

The judge is expected to make his decision prior to "Operation Save America," a major pro-life protest organized by Operation Rescue National, and slated for Buffalo and Rochester April 18-25. Operation



A federal judge may decide this week to restrict pro-life protests, like the one pictured above, that are slated for April 18-25 in Buffalo and Rochester.

Save America organizers said they will picket abortion clinics, schools, hospitals and sexually oriented businesses.

Officials with the attorney general's office have stated that Spitzer is seeking the injunction to stem any potential violence at the protests. However, Adams said he believes that the injunction will violate the constitutional rights of both his clients and other defendants.

"This really is an effort to punish people

for exercising their First Amendment rights," Adams told the *Catholic Courier*.

Adams is representing Bob and Amy Dorscheid, pro-life activists from the Diocese of Rochester. Bob Dorscheid is a member of the Diocesan Consistent Life Ethic Network Awards and Grants Committee.

Operation Save America has drawn both criticism and support in the Rochester area. On April 11, a two-page advertisement appeared in the *Rochester Democrat and*

Chronicle titled "Save Our Civility." The ad was signed by hundreds of Rochester-area residents, and cites violence against abortion doctors and clinics as reasons why Operation Save America should be cancelled.

The ad was signed by such officials as Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson, U.S. Rep. Lonise M. Slaughter, and New York State Assemblywoman Susan John, as well as Sister Beth LeValley, SSJ, director of community economics for the ecumenical Greater Rochester Community of Churches.

But Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued a statement March 29 criticizing the "Save Our Civility" petition, saying it unfairly presumes pro-life protests create a climate for violence. The bishop also joined five other New York state bishops and Cardinal John O'Connor, archbishop of New York City, April 1 in signing a statement criticizing Spitzer's lawsuit.

"At the heart of his lawsuit are presumptive allegations that the named persons will violate the law simply because they have spoken against abortion in the past," the bishops said.

"Such unjust and arbitrary accusations not only hurt and violate the rights of those accused," their statement read, "but also may have a chilling effect on all who cherish their Constitutionally-protected First Amendment rights to speech, assembly and expression."

Pastor: Quiet woman's bequest will help parishioners gather

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

Mary Gertrude Cora, a member of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Auburn, came alone to church.

Father Robert Beligotti described the late parishioner in a bulletin this spring saying, "She used to sit near the center aisle about half way down on the left side of our church. She usually attended the 10:30 Sunday (M)ass. She would come forward to (C)ommunion in her humble unassuming way, wearing her bright blue coat and with a smile on her face."

Cora, as it turns out, willed her parish of 13 years \$100,000 — plus whatever proceeds result from the sale of her Auburn house. Father Beligotti has earmarked it for a new parish hall with portable religious education classrooms, if all goes well.

"We certainly welcome the generosity of this good woman," he said. With this latest donation added to money from the sale of the old school and church, and the impending sale of the St. Clare Faith Formation House, he said, it is possible the parish will not need a fund drive for a new hall. He added the project could cost \$1 million.

"She'd talked about a facility once we sold the school, and said we need a place to

gather," the pastor recalled, "I had no idea she had any of this money, first of all, and that it would be willed to us and the house besides."

Cora, who was 87 when she died Sept. 24, taught history and science for 37 years at Central High School, Auburn. Unmarried, she was survived by a sister-in-law and a few close friends.

"She'd write me notes now and then," Father Beligotti recalled. One time he was preparing children for their first Communion and held a service to introduce them to the program.

"A week later I received a note from Gert that said, 'Now Father, be sure and teach the children reverence for the Eucharist. I see children chewing gum, who do not even pray after Communion.'

"She was a teacher, remember. She was always teaching. I wish I had saved the notes. It would be a lovely tribute to put the notes up."

Her passion was not only educating, but also supporting children, her activities showed.

Mary Ann Giacona, who gave the readings at her funeral, was a youth ministry coordinator at St. Francis when she came to know Cora a couple of years ago.

She chose Cora — rather, felt led by God

to choose Cora — as her first "Saintly Senior" to profile in her youth ministry newsletter. The profiles attempted to help bridge the gap between the old and young. So she went to Cora's small home in an older part of town. Once she persuaded Cora to go along with it, she learned a number of things — the Auburn native liked to knit and crochet; her favorite movie was "Good Morning Miss Dove."

Her favorite Bible story: the Good Samaritan.

She cited the Mass in English as a notable change in church history promoting positive growth.

And she had no dislikes. "That's how she was. She was a very peaceful lady," Giacona said.

The values most needed today, Cora had said, were respect for life and tolerance for all races.

And her best advice to youth was "to have respect for themselves and all people," Giacona recalled.

It was "a given" that Cora would always pray for the parish's youth, Giacona said. She also helped pay their way to national youth conventions.

"She would just be there when you needed her."

Cora also called Giacona to contribute an antique cedar chest for an auction for the youth's trip, and later got others to donate items.

"When I went to her funeral I was overcome by some sadness, there was a very limited number of people there," Giacona said. She was troubled that so few came to honor someone "so beautiful like this, very humble."

"Then I saw — isn't that how Christ died too?"

Appointments

The diocese has announced the following priest appointments, effective June 29 unless otherwise noted:

• **Father John H. Hayes**, to pastor, St. Joseph's Church, Livonia, from administrator, Holy Cross Church, Dryden/Freeville.

• **Father Donald J. Curtiss**, to parochial vicar, four city west parishes — Holy Apostles, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Francis of Assisi, and Ss. Peter and Paul, Rochester, from chaplain, Strong Memorial Hospital, April 1.

• **Father David P. Simon**, to pastor, St. Paul Church, Webster, from pastor, St. Margaret Mary Church, Apalachin.

• **Father Peter Enyan-Boadu**, to pastor, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Brockport, from parochial vicar, Church of the Holy Cross, Charlotte.

• **Father Robert O'Neill**, to pastor, St. Christopher's, North Chili, from ad-

ministrator.

• **Father Brian Jeffers**, to pastor, Southern Cayuga Catholic Community (St. Patrick, Aurora; St. Joseph, Cayuga; Our Lady of the Lake, King Ferry; St. Patrick, Moravia; St. Bernard, Scipio Center; and St. Michael, Union Springs), from administrator.

• **Father William Graf**, to pastor, Church of the Resurrection, Fairport, from administrator.

• **Father Charles Manning**, to pastor, Holy Name of Jesus, Greece, from administrator.

• **Father Foster Rogers**, to pastor, St. Pius the Tenth, Chili, from administrator.

• **Father Lee Chase**, to pastor, St. Thomas More, Brighton, from administrator.

• **Father Charles J. Latus**, to pastor, St. Rita's Church, Webster, from temporary administrator.

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