



Greg Francis/Staff photographer
 Mary Meffi, holding a coffin, left, a parishioner of St. Cecilia's Church, Irondequoit, participates in a protest on the first floor of the U.S. District Courthouse in Buffalo April 19.

Group protests peacefully

By Rob Cullivan
 Staff writer

BUFFALO — Given all the hoopla that anticipated it, "Operation Save America," a pro-life, anti-pornography and anti-homosexual-behavior series of demonstrations, began in comparatively mild fashion.

Protests at various sites in Buffalo were conducted in peaceful, though spirited fashion, under the watchful eye of dozens of police. As of Tuesday afternoon, April 20, no arrests of any protesters had been reported.

On the morning of April 20, the *Catholic Courier* interviewed the Rev. Mike Warren of Brighton Presbyterian Church, a protest participant, via his cell phone in Buffalo. The minister said he

was with more than 100 protesters as well as several pro-choice counter-demonstrators on the sidewalk across the street from Womenservices, an abortion clinic where Dr. Barnett Slepian worked prior to being fatally shot last October while he was at home.

"We're just mingling together here," Rev. Warren said of the pro-life and pro-choice demonstrators. "There's a lot of talking back and forth going on."

On Monday, April 19, the *Courier* visited the clinic site, which was heavily guarded by police who refused to allow the press to come near the clinic. One state police official said a few protesters had shown up and picketed across the street early in the day. The *Courier* also tried to interview a clinic official but

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Campus ministry's changing face

In Father Jim Hewes' 12 years as SUNY Geneseo's director of campus ministry, he has helped guide students toward careers in youth ministry, mission work, religious vocations and even campus ministry itself.

"People very often solidify their vocation at a college campus. And very often it's seeing the model of a priest," Father Hewes said.

However, Father Hewes will be leaving Geneseo at the end of June for a parish assignment. Diocesan policy generally calls for priests to move to a new position upon completing two six-year terms.

His position will be partially filled by a lay person, leaving only three diocesan priests serving as full-time ministers at colleges in the Rochester Diocese. They are Father Joseph Catani at Rochester Institute of Technology; Father Michael Mahler at Cornell University; and Father Brian Cool, who will leave as co-pastor at St. Michael's/St. Andrew's parishes in Penn Yan and Dundee to replace Father Gary Tyman at the University of Rochester. (St. John Fisher College's full-time director of campus ministry, Father Paul English, CSB, is an order priest.)

Father Hewes noted that Geneseo is the most recent of several colleges in the diocese that have lost the availability of full-time campus priests. In recent years, Father Hewes said, SUNY Brockport and Ithaca colleges have experienced similar losses.

Colleges are not much different than other ministries that are being depleted of priests, said Edmund Franchi, executive director of the Catholic Campus Ministry Association.

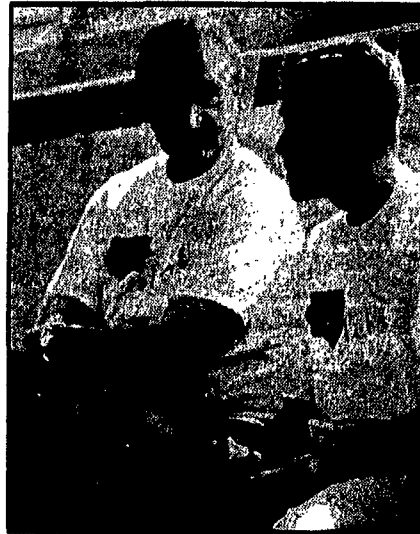
"That's the way just about anything has gone in the church," Franchi commented in a telephone interview from Dayton, Ohio, where CCMA is based.

"The college campuses are experiencing less availability of priests, just as are the churches. The fact is, we're going to have to be very creative," added Sister Kathleen Weider, director of campus ministry at Nazareth College since 1989.

Mary-Lynn Sindoni, 20, who represented Ithaca College during last year's Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium meetings, is well aware of the priest shortage. Her Tompkins County planning group was faced with a reduction of two priests for that area by July 1, 1999.



Deacon Leo Aman, left, and Nazareth College freshman Kevin Brown clean a food service window April 15, in the cafeteria of St. Michael School, Newark, during Nazareth's Service Day when students and staff go out into the community to perform service projects.



Deacon Leo Aman, left, chats with Nazareth student Nate Baker during a lunch break while visiting St. Michael School.

"It's really difficult, because everybody wants to have that (priest) support," said Sindoni, a sophomore at Ithaca whose home parish is St. Lawrence in Greece.

"I think everybody has to bear some of the loss," Father Hewes said.

Does this mean that campus ministry is wilting away? Far from it, said Bill Olsen, diocesan director of human resources. With qualified and enthusiastic

lay people, Olsen predicted that campus ministry will remain a vital part of the college experience in the Rochester Diocese.

Olsen said that of the 21 colleges in this diocese, there's a "wild fluctuation" in the level of staffing from campus to campus. One of his top goals since he began his diocesan position in 1997 has been to make sure that each campus is sufficiently staffed.

"The church can play a strong role in the development of a young person. To take a short-sighted view of that is not beneficial to church or society," Olsen commented.

The most common emerging model, Olsen said, is for lay people to assume the bulk of campus ministry duty with priests in supporting roles — primarily as sacramental ministers.

"Campus ministry is expanding, but the role the priest plays is declining and now has to be understood differently," said William Pickett, diocesan director of planning and former president of St. John Fisher College.

"The shortage of priests necessitates more of an assumption of parish duties. Campus ministry is going to be just a part of what a parish priest is going to have to pick up," agreed Deacon Leo Aman, campus minister at Nazareth College since 1993.

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