

DIOCESAN NEWS

Administrators stress need for black ministries

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — If there's a word that makes black Catholic administrators anxious, it's "multicultural," according to several who attended the annual fall meeting of the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators.

The NABCA meeting, held Sept. 15-19 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, drew 48 people, according to Jacquelyn Dobson, outgoing diocesan director of the Office of Black Ministries. Dobson is leaving her position Sept. 24.

The agenda consisted primarily of various NABCA business concerns, as well as reports from groups and committees. NABCA members also visited such diocesan sites as the House of Mercy, an outreach center operated by the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester.

A group of NABCA members spoke about their concerns — and primarily focused on multiculturalism — in a roundtable interview Sept. 15.

The administrators noted that more and more dioceses are moving away from having offices specifically devoted to serving the needs of African-American Catholics. Instead, dioceses are creating or have created multicultural offices devoted to serving the needs of black, Hispanic and Asian Catholics.

In fact, Ralph McCloud, NABCA's president, estimated that while a decade ago nearly all African-American ministry offices operated independently in dioceses, today that percentage is about 75, with the rest under the auspices of multicultural ministry directors.

"We're concerned about raising indigenous leadership in the Catholic Church and, frequently, when we create these multicultural offices, an African-American is not put in charge," said Dr. Hilbert D. Stanley, executive director of the National Black Catholic Congress.

Vanessa Griffin-Campbell, director of African American Catholic Ministry for



Mike Mergers/Photo Intern

Earl Oliver Jr. of Dallas, Texas, right, and Ralph McCloud of Fort Worth, Texas, help paint Rochester's House of Mercy Sept. 18. Below, Ronald Landfair of Lansing, Mich., directs his son Ronnie during the project taken on by visiting black Catholic administrators.

the Diocese of Cleveland, said black Catholics — who number more than 2 million nationwide — are worried that their concerns will be lumped in along with the concerns of the much larger minority group of Hispanics in the U.S. church.

The administrators said one way of alleviating such fears is to designate offices specifically for black Catholic ministry that could operate under the umbrella of a diocese's multicultural ministries.

"Every group should have an ... area within that multicultural umbrella, and (it) should not be thought of as a melting pot," added M. Annette Mandley-Turner, executive director of the Office of Multicultural Ministry for the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky.

In addition to articulating their fears of being put on the church's "back burner" by a multicultural approach, as one administrator put it, the administrators also said that even existing black ministry offices are often underfunded, lack real de-



cision-making authority, and/or are staffed solely by volunteers. These characteristics send the signal to black Catholics that they are unwelcome in their own church, the administrators said.

Taking that point further, McCloud said something as simple as regularly scheduling meeting times to accommodate black Catholics' work schedules could let African-Americans know the church cares about them. Scheduling meetings in the middle of the day may suit the church's current crop of administrators and board members, but for black Catholics working all day — especially working class and poor Catholics — evening meetings are often more convenient, he said.

Black Catholics also would like to see African-Americans do more than head black ministry offices in the church, according to McCloud, who also directs the Office of African-American Ministries for the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas.

The church needs to realize that there are many black Catholics qualified for leadership positions, and dioceses should actively recruit and train black Catholics for administrative positions, he said. He noted that fewer than a handful of NABCA's 78 members run offices that are not related to black ministry.

"In many cases, in churches across the country, you won't find any African-Americans there unless they have a mop or a broom," he added.

On that note, Meyer J. Chambers, director of the Office for Black Catholics in the Archdiocese of Boston, said if the church does not take seriously the concerns of black Catholics, black Catholics may leave the church.

"Right now, the Catholic Church is losing too many of its saints, too many of its black people, to other churches, or to non-religion," he said.

"There are many of us who have just enough of the Catholic faith not to go anywhere else," McCloud said.

Assumption to host fundraiser for boy facing transplant

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

Brett Jones, 12, would like just to spend his days attending Martha Brown Middle School in Fairport, and maybe write a book of stories about his family's favorite recipes.

But for now, he is out of school, his time scheduled around an aggressive chemotherapy regimen. Brett has been undergoing treatment since July 1998, for T-cell leukemia, a high risk form of acute lymphocytic leukemia.

And within five weeks he may be at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York for a bone marrow transplant, once a donor is determined.

"He's a very brave, courageous young man," said Sheila Cody, pastoral minister at Church of the Assumption in Fairport, where Brett and his mom, Amy Jones, are parishioners. "He's certainly been an inspiration to his family and friends and the community in terms of dealing with this illness."

To help with the anticipated expenses of his treatment, friends are planning a silent auction/Western Harvest Jamboree at Assumption, 20 East Ave., Friday, Oct. 8.

Brett himself is a giving person, Cody said. She recalled that a couple years ago, just before his illness, Brett initiated a project to help the needy. He and some friends threw a Christmas party and collected more than 1,000 food items as an admission fee.

"To be that young and to have that kind of concern ..." she said.

He's also kept his spirits up.

"It's wonderful when Brett is feeling good, he entertains us all with his musical talents," said Dr. Barbara Asselin, pediatric hematologist/oncologist at Children's Hospital at Strong. "Did he sing for you?"

"The race is on: Can we get him well enough to transplant before he comes out of remission," Asselin added.

How much the transplant will cost is unknown, depending on such factors as the medical attention needed, Asselin noted. There will also be medication costs, co-payments, costs family members will incur in staying with Brett, and more. Also, the actual coverage insurance will provide is yet to be determined.

"There are just incredible hidden costs we also are trying to get a handle on," she said.

The community has been generous in its prayers and raising funds, said Barbara Leoncavallo, a close family friend active in coordinating the auction.

"That's how we'll make the bulk of our money," Leoncavallo said. "So far we have everything from a leather jacket to dinner for four at Christmas time at a home in Naples."

Donations also include such sports items as a football signed by Doug Flutie, fencing lessons, a signed Joe DiMaggio photograph; theater tickets; and dance lessons.

More donations are needed, she said, particularly of new items. They may be made by calling her at 716/385-1069, or Robert Verrone at 325-3821.

Tickets for the auction are \$20 and are available at Hobby House Toys, Perinton Square Mall, and from Jan Cleveland,

223-3968, and at the door. The auction is scheduled for 6:30-10:30 p.m. Oct. 8. Local country music singer Julie Dunlap and her band will perform.

"At this point in time, this is preparatory for our needs," acknowledged Brett's grandmother, Phyllis Jones. She said the family has been able to meet the costs of her grandson's illness and "we are not suffering in any way, shape or form from debt. But we do not know what lies

ahead. ... We were forewarned to be prepared."

Cody noted that Brett's family, including his mother, an aunt from New York who is staying with the family, uncles and grandparents have all pulled together during his illness.

"There's always someone at the hospital with him when he goes in for treatment," Leoncavallo added. "People stay with him 24 hours a day."

Catholic Charities Week proclaimed for Sept. 27-Oct. 3

The week of Sept. 27-Oct. 3 is being declared Catholic Charities Week in Rochester and Monroe County.

Rochester Mayor William Johnson and Monroe County Executive Jack Doyle were to sign a proclamation Sept. 22 at Rochester's City Hall, in recognition of the 1999 Catholic Charities USA annual conference to take place Sept. 30-Oct. 4 in Rochester.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark and clients from local Catholic Charities agencies were expected to speak at the signing.

The conference is expected to draw more than 1,000 people from the

Rochester area and across the country will set common goals, according to Judy Taylor, spokeswoman for the conference.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa; Millard Fuller, founder and president of Habitat for Humanity; and Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, executive director of BENETVISION: a Resource Center for Contemporary Spirituality, will speak. Workshops will cover a myriad of topics regarding adoption, housing, children, refugees, aging, health, criminal justice and more.

For more information about the conference, call Pat Fox at 716/262-7003.

Southern Tier Hospice starts up "Friends of Hospice" drive

Southern Tier Hospice is beginning its annual fund drive, "Friends of Hospice."

Southern Tier Hospice is a non-profit program providing hospice services for residents of Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties. Two interdisciplinary teams, in Elmira and Hornell, provide physician services, home care nursing, social work, spiritual care and bereavement

counseling. The program also offers education regarding hospice and other end-of-life issues.

Tax-deductible contributions may be made to Southern Tier Hospice. Donations may be mailed to 224 W. Water St., Elmira, N.Y., 14901-2926. For further details, call 607/734-1570 or 1/800/734-1570.