



CNS
This painting titled "Virgin Mary" by artist Chris Ofili has aroused the ire of Catholic leaders and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York.

NY cardinal criticizes art show

By Tracy Early
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK— Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York and Bishop Thomas V. Daily of Brooklyn criticized contents of an exhibition scheduled for Oct. 2-Jan. 9 at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

The exhibition, which features young British artists and was previously shown in London and Berlin, includes a portrayal of Mary with cutouts from pornographic magazines and shellacked clumps of elephant dung.

The work is by Chris Ofili, who is identified as a Catholic and was quoted in *The New York Times* Sept. 23 as saying the portrayal is "simply a hip-hop version" of the

"sexually charged" paintings of Mary that had become familiar to him in his own Catholic background.

In a homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral Sept. 26, Cardinal O'Connor called it "profound irreverence for our Blessed Mother."

"I am saddened," he said, "at what appears to me to be an attack not only on our Blessed Mother, honored by hundreds of millions of people throughout the world, Christian and Muslim, but one must ask if it is not an attack on religion itself and in a special way on the Catholic Church."

The exhibition, which a museum release called "an attempt to define a generation of artists and their diverse artistic vision," includes 90 works by 40 artists acquired in the 1990s by Charles Saatchi, a London ad-

vertising executive and major art collector.

Other works drawing comment include Damien Hirst's animals such as pigs and sharks in formaldehyde-filled glass containers, and explorations of "sexual identity" in "multibodied and multibody-part figures" by Jake and Dinos Chapman.

The Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, criticized the exhibit Sept. 26, saying Ofili's piece was a "squalid icon" that not only offended religious sensibilities but artistic ones. It called the exhibit an example of "bourgeois decadence" supported by the world of high finance.

Rudolph W. Giuliani, mayor of New York and a Catholic born in Brooklyn, threatened Sept. 22 to stop city subsidies to

Continued on page 10



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Inside This Week



**New hymns win
2000 competition**
Composers' music
a match for Jubilee
— Page 4



**Charities' woman
is rising STAR**
Young adult enjoys
working with elders
— Page 12

**This isn't your
parents' CYO**
Athletics are only
one part of picture
— Page 7



Agencies answer call to serve

Refugees from Kosovo and Sudan seeking new homes.

Hungry people in Geneva looking for a meal to eat.

Uninsured people in Elmira searching for health care.

Teenagers in Livingston County yearning for the guidance of mentors.

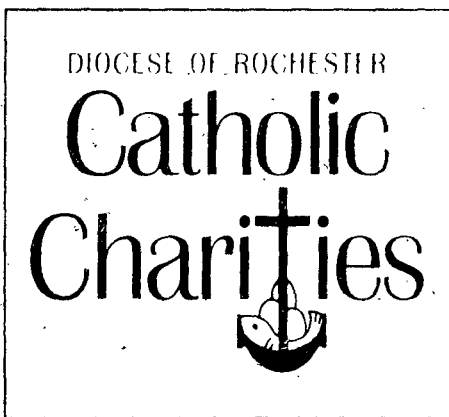
These are among the 80,000 people the Diocese of Rochester's Catholic Charities helps each year through various programs in the diocese's 12 counties.

And from Thursday, Sept. 30, to Monday, Oct. 4, representatives of diocese's social-service agencies will share the stories of their work, and hear those of their colleagues nationwide, at the annual Catholic Charities USA convention at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. The convention's theme is "Images of Our Roots — Visions of Our Future."

Diocesan Catholic Charities belongs to CCUSA, the national membership network of Catholic Charities agencies that is currently the country's largest private provider of social services. CCUSA members aided more than 10.5 million people in 1997, according to an annual report.

Diocesan Catholic Charities officials see the convention — which is expected to draw more than 800 people from across the country — as a unique opportunity to highlight their own agencies' work, and a chance to stir interest in the community for a possible major fundraising campaign.

Anthony T. Barbaro, executive director



of Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, said a quarter of his staff will be attending the convention.

"A lot of folks will work in an organization and do their job, but not have a real context of their work," he said. "(The convention's) a chance to rub shoulders ... to catch the spirit of Catholic Charities."

A regional approach

In addition to offices that serve the diocese as a whole (see list on Page 10), Diocesan Catholic Charities has four regional offices that serve particular areas of the diocese: Catholic Family Center, located in Rochester, which serves Monroe and Wayne counties; Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, which serves Cayuga, Wayne, Ontario, Seneca and Yates counties; Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, which serves Chemung, Schuyler,

Tioga, Steuben and Tompkins counties; and Catholic Charities of Livingston County.

Also considered a regional office is Catholic Charities Community & Residential Services, which serves such groups as people with developmental disabilities, those with traumatic brain injuries and individuals with HIV and their families.

Diocesan Catholic Charities receives funding from a wide variety of government and private sources, including the annual Diocesan Thanks Giving Appeal. A major portion of Catholic Charities' work is done through contracts with various government entities to provide services — an arrangement that reaches back to the early part of the century, according to Jack Balinsky, director and president of diocesan Catholic Charities.

What follows is a brief overview of each regional agency, along with comments from the agency's director on its ongoing and newest work:

Family center

Catholic Family Center serves the largest number of clients of any of the Diocesan Catholic Charities agencies — more than 45,000 in 1998 alone. CFC boasts more than 50 programs including programs assisting the homeless, the elderly, immigrants, refugees, teenagers, people recovering from addiction, and people who need counseling and other ser-

Continued on page 10