

PARENTING

Reflections on the Gospel



Mike Mergen/Photo Intern

Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, right, guest speaker, and Pat Fox, local coordinator for the Catholic Charities USA annual convention, peruse a Jubilee contest display Oct. 3 at the Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, where the annual convention was held. Diocesan Catholic school grades five-eight submitted art, poetry and essays on the call to love one's neighbor, for the Catholic Charities contest. The archbishop later wrote out answers to questions from Tommy Carpenter, a St. Louis School fifth-grader in Pittsford. Responding to the question of what a boy could do to help the world, the archbishop wrote, "Be the best you can be — celebrate diversity and oppose injustice whenever you can."

Peace begins at home, workshop leader says

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant Editor

Many diocesan families have taken the "Family Pledge of Nonviolence," issued through their parishes during the past couple of years.

Next month they will be able to meet with the people behind it — Kathy and Jim McGinnis, of the Families Against Violence Advocacy Network. An interfaith collaboration of 21 organizations is bringing the McGinnises to Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church, Brighton, Nov. 12-13. The Catholic Family Center, the diocese and parishes are among the sponsors.

The couple will teach about peacemaking within families and in the world, and conduct leadership training for community groups.

The family pledge goes to the heart of what society needs, Kathy McGinnis said, from her office in St. Louis, Mo. It centers on affirming self and family, listening and refraining from using derogatory words.

Families who take the pledge (see below) have each member sign it and set a time to check their progress once a month.

McGinnis also suggests that each family set regular times for a family meeting, to affirm one another and make joint decisions, such as what to buy, and discuss important issues in their lives.

"It's not a real stretch to show kids if you can sit down in the classroom or with the family or church, and talk through tough issues, then it's possible for countries to do the same thing," she said.

For example, she said, "I remember one of our kids brought to meeting that she wanted to quit piano lessons, she hated it. These are the kind of things that can become long harangues in a family, with parents yelling, 'Did you practice? Why not?' and having kids sneaking out and not going to piano lessons.

"If you can talk about it and children can really verbalize their feelings, it could mean the child eventually quits lessons, it could mean the child says, 'I hate the kind of music I'm playing.' Is there a way of getting a different kind of music? It could be as simple as that."

Taking a pledge, she said, is a tool for families, and helps them commit themselves to nonviolence. She estimated 200,000 to 300,000 families have signed the family pledge.

"Rather than feeling a lack of hope, they can feel empowered — 'We did something, our school did something, our church did something,'" she said.

"We literally have a copy on our fridge," said Maura Sweeney, young-adult minister at St. Dominic's Parish, Shortsville. "It's good. It's kind of a daily reminder there, to communicate better, to listen."

Thanks to a diocesan Consistent Life Ethic grant last year, Sweeney bought 250 copies of a booklet accompanying the pledge for St. Dominic's and three other churches in the area's ecumenical council.

Peggy Ruscio, chairperson of the social-ministry committee for the Naples/Prattsburg Catholic Community, was active in helping bring the McGinnises to Rochester. She explained that she's interested in helping start an ecumenical, community anti-violence program.

"I think anyone can improve, become a more peaceful person and improve the way they relate to others," she commented.

Kathy and Jim McGinnis have worked at peacemaking for more than 30 years. Jim founded the Interfaith Institute for Peace and Justice in 1970. The Parenting for Peace and Justice Network developed out of that 10 years later and, in turn, led to the Families Against Violence Advocacy Network three years ago.

The institute began over concerns about the Vietnam War, as well as racial injustice, McGinnis said. Although statistics indicate certain violent crimes may be on the wane today, she remains concerned, and also cited the prevalence of violence in a wide range of such media as television, videos, movies, and video and computer games.

EDITORS' NOTE: Fees vary for the Nov. 12-13 programs, depending upon the numbers attending, and on which workshops are chosen. Information is available from Ann Emmans, 716/343-5457, and Joseph Kenney, 716/262-7020. Registration deadline is Friday, Oct. 29.

The Family Pledge of Nonviolence

Making peace must start within ourselves and in our families. Each of us, members of the ___ family, commit ourselves as best we can to become nonviolent and peaceable people:

- To Respect Self and Others — To respect myself; to affirm others; and to avoid uncaring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks, and self-destructive behavior

- To Communicate Better — To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to express my anger, and to work at solving problems peacefully

- To Listen — To listen carefully to others, especially those who disagree with me, and to consider others' feelings and needs rather than insist on having my own way

- To Forgive — To apologize and make amends when I have hurt another, to forgive others, and to keep from holding grudges

- To Respect Nature — To treat the environment and all living things, including our pets, with respect and care

- To Play Creatively — To select entertainment and toys that support our family's values and to avoid entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny, or acceptable

- To Be Courageous — To challenge violence in all its forms...whether at home, at school, at work, or in the community, and to stand with others treated unfairly.

Events

◎ **SAT, OCT. 23 — Storytelling:** "Tales to Chill Your Bones." Children's Center Secret Room, Rochester Central Library, 115 South Ave., ages 6-8, 2-2:30 p.m.; ages 9 up, 2:45-3:30 p.m.; free; 716/428-8150.

◎ **OCT. 23-24, 30-31 — Family fun:** hayrides, mazes, feed the animals; Long Acre Farms, Macedon; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; 315/986-4202.

◎ **OCT. 23, 30 — Story time:** Ages 2-5, conducted by Irondequoit Public Library, Irondequoit Mall's Irondequoit Square; 11 a.m.; 1 p.m.; 716/336-6062 or 716/336-6060.

◎ **SUN, OCT. 24 — Concert:** Irish Children's Program; Fiddler's Green, 4653 Lake Ave., Rochester; 1-8 p.m.; advance/door tickets adults \$6/8, children \$3/5, family pak \$15/20; 716/225-8550.

◎ **OCT. 28-31 — Haunted house:** Ages 6-13; Edgerton Community Center, 41 Backus St., Rochester; 6-8:30 p.m.; free; 716/428-6769 after 3 p.m.

◎ **OCT. 28-31 — Halloween party:** Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq.,

Rochester; ages 9 up visit Monster Market; Fri. 5-8 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; under 9 trick or treat with Mother Goose daily; 716/263-2700.

◎ **OCT. 29, 30, 31 — Play:** "The Littlest Witch"; Rochester Children's Theatre, School of the Arts, 45 Prince St., Rochester; Fri. 7 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m., 2 p.m., Sun. 2 p.m.; adults \$10/11, children \$8/9; 716/271-7870.

◎ **SUN, OCT. 31 — WalkAbout:** to benefit Al. Sigl. Center, inside Marketplace Mall; breakfast, giveaways, entertainment, prizes; 8:30 a.m.; to register call 716/442-4100, ext. 8944 or e-mail cclark@alsiglcenter.org.

◎ **SUN, OCT. 31 — Haunted house:** at George Eastman House, 900 East Ave., Rochester; 1-4 p.m.; activities included with museum admission of \$6.50/adult, \$5/seniors, \$2.50 ages 5-12, free under 5.

◎ **WED, NOV. 3 — Puppet show:** Mrs. McPuppet; Strong Museum, One Manhattan Square, Rochester; 10 a.m.; for preschoolers; 716/263-2700.

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