

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## St. Sheen? Priest appointed to explore cause

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff Writer

Rival to Milton Berle in the 1950s for TV popularity.

World-renowned author, radio broadcaster and evangelizer.

Now, some Catholics want to add "canonized saint" to the resume of the late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, who headed the Diocese of Rochester from 1966-69.

"By all means," said Father Michael C. Hogan, when asked if the church leader deserved to join the church's canon of saints. He served as the former bishop of Rochester's secretary. "He was very much a man of prayer. He had a lot of vision and concern for the poor."

Father Hogan, priest-in-residence at St. John of Rochester Church, Fairport, said he supported New York's City Cardinal John J. O'Connor preliminary approval given to consideration of efforts to initiate the cause of sainthood for Archbishop Sheen. The cardinal announced his approval last month. Bishop Sheen was named a titular archbishop after leaving Rochester in 1969 and went to New York City, where he died in 1979. Father Hogan's brother, retired Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, was Bishop Sheen's successor.

To be canonized a saint, at least two miracles have to be attributed to the candidate's heavenly intercession. Additionally, the church must find that the person lived an exemplary life of holiness

and virtue and was obedient to the church. Canonization is a complex process that involves a detailed investigation of a person's life that can take many years, even centuries. A canonized saint is considered by the church to live in heaven and may be publicly invoked for devotion.

The cause of sainthood must be initiated in the diocese where the candidate died, according to Father Andrew Apostoli, CFR, vicar of St. Felix Friary in Yonkers. Cardinal O'Connor named the priest coordinator of Bishop Sheen's sainthood cause. Father Apostoli, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, is currently gathering data from various people on Bishop Sheen's life.

"A lot of people are responding positively that Bishop Sheen was a holy man," Father Apostoli said in a phone interview from Yonkers. "We are beginning to hear from people whose lives were converted by him ... or people who were just touched by him very deeply."

Father Apostoli said he knew of two families whose members are currently praying for Bishop Sheen's intercession on behalf of relatives desiring miraculous healings. He added that Cardinal O'Connor, 80, has stated that if enough information is gathered pointing to a good case for sainthood, whoever succeeds him as archbishop can decide whether to officially approve a postulator. The postulator would begin the formal process

necessary to declare Bishop Sheen a saint. Such a process would include an extensive examination of all Bishop Sheen's writings, tapes, letters and videos, Father Apostoli said, to see whether these works were orthodox. Final approval of a candidate's canonization resides with the Vatican.

Father Apostoli was himself ordained a priest by Bishop Sheen at Immaculate Heart of Mary Friary in Geneva in 1967. He said he remembered the late church leader fondly, especially since he, Father Apostoli, was the only priest ordained at the time.

"(Bishop Sheen) said, 'It's a great thing for a bishop to ordain someone because he has 'sons in Christ.' I always refer to (Bishop Sheen) as my 'father in Christ.'"

The prime mover behind the sainthood cause for the celebrity cleric is the Archbishop Fulton John Sheen Foundation, based in the later bishop's hometown of El Paso, Ill. The foundation, founded in 1998 by lay Catholics, promotes the bishop's work in the media, and Father Apostoli is a board member. The foundation is asking that any letters, photos, or documentation regarding the archbishop — as well as reports of spiritual and physical favors obtained through private intercession — be sent to: The Archbishop Fulton John Sheen Foundation Cause c/o The Sheen Foundation, P.O. Box 313, El Paso, IL 61738.

Foundation co-founder Gregory J.

Ladd of Highland, Ind., is a voting member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, which picks the music industry's Grammy winners. He is also a member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, which awards the Emmys, three of which were given to Bishop Sheen for his 1950s TV series "Life Is Worth Living." Ladd said he wants the archbishop to someday be considered a patron saint of mass media.

"When Bishop Sheen first used the television he saw it as ... a learning tool and a means of cultural transformation," Ladd said in a phone interview.

Father Hogan acknowledged that although he thinks Bishop Sheen should be canonized, the late leader was not perfect. For example, he said, Bishop Sheen didn't always work well with church committees and groups. Father Hogan added that Bishop Sheen was sometimes criticized by those who didn't know him personally for his theatricality. Yet, an ability to use the limelight effectively was simply one of Bishop Sheen's gifts, Father Hogan said.

"He never did anything, that I could see, out of vainglory or just to seek attention," Father Hogan said.

Father Hogan also pointed out that he could think of one especially compelling reason the Bishop Sheen should be canonized for sainthood.

"One of the greatest aspects of his faith is that he had to put up with me for three years," Father Hogan said with a laugh.

## St. Bridget's scholars



Mergen Mike/Photo Intern

St. Bridget's Church in Rochester awarded its year 2000 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Awards Jan. 9 in a ceremony celebrating the life of Dr. King. Left, Jacqueline Campbell, St. Bridget's youth minister, leads the choir in song. Above, twins Crystal and Christina Hanna perform a liturgical dance. Scholarships were awarded Brian Kimble of Odyssey High School, Greece Central School District, and Lindsey Greene, Pittsford-Sutherland High School. An eighth-grade early recognition plaque went to Erica Smith of Pittsford Middle School.

## Deacon Thomas J. Jewell accused of theft in Gates

Deacon Thomas J. Jewell of St. Patrick's Church, Victor, has been accused of allegedly stealing more than \$6,000 from St. Helen's Church in Gates, where he served as director of worship from 1993 to 1998.

Deacon Jewell was released after a Dec. 21 arraignment on felony charges of third-degree burglary and third-degree grand larceny before Judge John J. Pisaturo in Gates Town Court. The case has been referred to a Monroe County grand jury.

Father John A. Firpo, pastor of St. Helen's, said the parish contacted Gates police after its own investigation in September revealed "irregularity" in Sunday collections over a series of weeks. The priest declined to explain what led the police and parish to investigate Deacon Jewell.

"I'm saddened by all these events," Father Firpo said.

Deacon Jewell has been placed on administrative leave by the diocese, according to Meg CHaides, business manager at St. Patrick's. She added that parishioners were shocked by the allegations.

"They're surprised," she said. "He was a great gift to our community."

- Rob Cullivan

## Obituary

### Gertrude Chanler, 85; long-time benefactor of the church and arts

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff Writer

Gertrude Laughlin Chanler, a behind-the-scenes benefactor of the church and the arts, died on Dec. 17, 1999, at her home in Geneseo. She was 85.

For years, Mrs. Chanler quietly gave money to several arts groups and charities as well as her parish, St. Mary's in Geneseo, and St. Bernard's Institute in Rochester.

"She never traded on (the fact) that she knew lots of important people," Father William J. Gordinier, St. Mary's pastor, said.

Those sentiments were shared by Sister Patricia A. Schoelles, SSJ, president of St.

Bernard's.

"Gertrude Chanler embodied a deep and true Catholicism which spilled over into generous support of many aspects of church life," Sister Schoelles said. "St. Bernard's Institute has benefited enormously because of her willingness to believe in our mission and support us over many years."

In 1991, St. Bernard's honored Mrs. Chanler for her support at a dinner whose theme was "A Celebration of Catholic Women."

Mrs. Chanler was born in London, England, the daughter of a diplomat who was heir to the Laughlin steel fortune. She lived with her family in Greece, Spain and Washington, D.C., before coming to

Geneseo in 1937 after marrying Hubert W. Chanler, a naval officer and Geneseo native. Mrs. Chanler was home at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii the day it was bombed by the Japanese — Dec. 7, 1941 — and she did not hear from her husband for a few days after the bombing.

Mrs. Chanler and her children were soon evacuated from Hawaii. After the war, the Chanlers lived in Rome, Italy, and elsewhere until the rear admiral retired from the Navy in 1952. The couple then returned to Geneseo for good. Rear Adm. Chanler died in 1974.

Mrs. Chanler is survived by eight children: Elizabeth Chatwin of Oxfordshire, England; John (Sheila) and Oliver, both of Geneseo; Adrian (Sue) of Charlotte,

S.C.; Felicity Young of Lenox, Mass.; Alexander (Carole) of Andover, Mass.; Gay Chanler and Alida (Dan) Dierker, both of Flagstaff, Ariz.; 13 grandchildren; and a number of nieces and nephews.

Her son Oliver, remembered his mother as a woman of deep faith.

"I don't think she imposed her faith on anyone else," he said. "She led more by example in her religion."

Bishop Matthew H. Clark celebrated a funeral Mass Dec. 21 at St. Felicity Chapel (Mrs. Chanler's private chapel) at Geneseo, with Father Alban Boulwood, OSB, abbot emeritus of St. Anselm's Abbey, Washington, D.C., and Father Gordinier concelebrating. Interment took place at St. Mary's Cemetery, Geneseo.