

# DIOCESAN NEWS

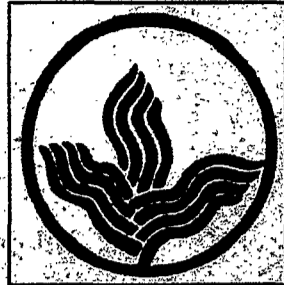
## Call To Action chapter arrives in Rochester

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff Writer

A new Rochester chapter has joined the Upstate Call To Action Network. The network is dedicated to advancing various reforms in the Catholic Church — notably, ordination of married persons and women and re-examination church teachings on artificial contraception and human sexuality, including homosexuality.

Other chapters exist in Buffalo, Syracuse and Albany. The network is informally affiliated with Call To Action USA, which is based in Chicago and espouses similar goals. The controversial group has drawn both support and opposition from U.S. bishops.

The Rochester CTA chapter's members have held three meetings at St. John the Evangelist Church on Humboldt Street in Rochester since November, according to Father William V. Spilly, pastor, and a member of the new chapter's leadership committee. He said the group's first official meeting on Jan. 23 drew more than 75



people. The leadership committee includes Gloria Ulterino, former director of the Diocesan Office on Women in Church and Society, and Father Enrique Cadena, former parochial vicar of Corpus Christi Church, Rochester, and current associate pastor of Spiritus Christi.

Father Spilly added that the group has informed Bishop Matthew H. Clark of its existence and wants to work with the bishop in a constructive, non-adversarial manner.

"We intend to work with him, and, if needs be, challenge him," Father Spilly said.

But Father Joseph A. Hart, diocesan vicar general and Pastoral Office moderator, said the Rochester CTA chapter's stated desire to work with the bishop was under-

cut by the fact the chapter includes members of Spiritus Christi — a Rochester church founded by former parishioners of Corpus Christi Church, Rochester. Spiritus is considered by the diocese to have excommunicated itself from the wider church. Spiritus members belong to a non-Catholic church, yet want to reform Catholicism, Father Hart said.

"You can't have it both ways," he said. "(CTA) is not an ecumenical group. We have a whole group of Catholic parishes that are open to work with (Spiritus members) if they really want to work for reform of the church from within."

But Father Spilly said that the Rochester CTA chapter did not apply "litmus tests" to its members, and that the chapter included both members of Spiritus Christi as well as Catholics from various diocesan parishes. About 30 percent of the chapter's members are from Spiritus Christi, Father Cadena said.

Father Spilly said that diocesan Catholics who helped form the chapter were concerned about the fallout from the

controversy over Corpus Christi in Rochester in 1998 and 1999. In August 1998, Bishop Clark removed Father James B. Callan from his position as Corpus administrator because of his ongoing defiance of church teachings on women's liturgical roles, intercommunion with non-Catholics and ministry to homosexuals. In subsequent months, hundreds of parishioners who supported Father Callan left Corpus to form Spiritus Christi.

Father Spilly added that CTA members were united in their concern that the "progressive" positions advocated by Corpus under Father Callan's leadership were no longer being advanced.

"Maybe Corpus Christi went too fast, too soon, and we wanted to see these issues come about in the church by working in the church," Father Spilly said.

The next CTA Rochester chapter meeting will be held Sunday, March 5, from 1-3 p.m. in St. John's Church hall.

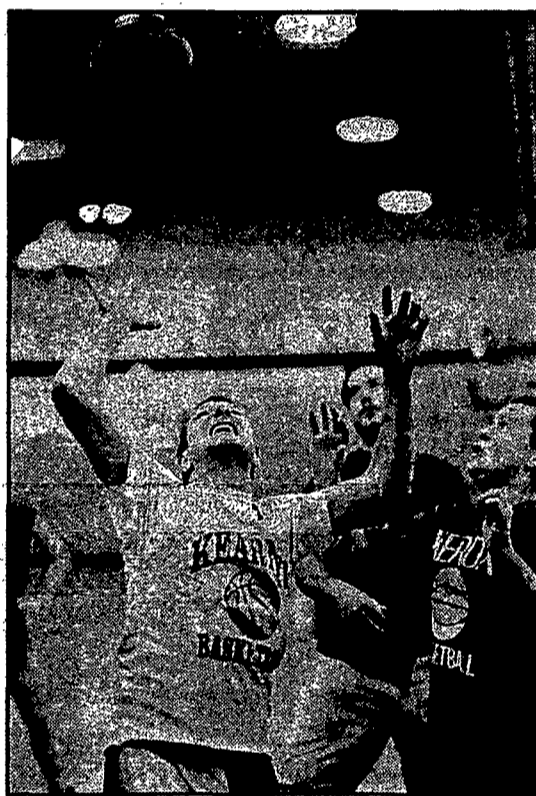
Father Spilly said the Rochester CTA chapter has more than 350 people on its mailing list, including diocesan priests, religious priests, and members of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of Mercy.

In its first major public event, the Rochester CTA chapter has joined its fellow network chapters to sponsor two appearances at the University of Rochester by Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, Sister Gramick and Father Robert Nugent, SDS, co-founded New Ways Ministry in Maryland to serve gay and lesbian Catholics.

However, in July 1999, the Vatican ordered the two to end their ministry work. It cited various criticisms of the duo's approach to ministering to gays and lesbians, including claims the pair undermined the church teaching that homosexual activity is immoral. Both Sister Gramick and Father Nugent have strongly disputed the Vatican's findings about their work.

Sister Gramick will speak at the university's Bausch & Lomb Hall at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 16. She will also participate in a roundtable discussion at the Wells-Brown Reading Room of the university's Rush Rhees Library at noon Friday, March 17. Her appearances in Rochester are part of an upstate tour, Father Spilly said, adding that Sister Gramick is a logical choice for a CTA event.

"We would see her as someone who is reform-minded in the church, in terms of ministering to gays and lesbians, and we would support her," he said.



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer



At left, physical education teacher John Kleehammer and eighth-grader Dennis Milford attempt to grab a rebound at Northeastern Catholic Junior High School's annual Students vs. Faculty Basketball Game on Jan. 29. The teachers won the 10th annual game, 57-55. Above, substitute teacher and former student teacher William Paleologopoulos drives to the basket between Dennis and Renee Dixon, also an eighth-grader.

### Students get lesson on court

## Father Ammering retires from Blessed Sacrament

Father Bruce Ammering, pastor of Rochester's Blessed Sacrament Church since 1983, has stepped down from his pastorate effective Feb. 1.

The 73-year-old Father Ammering has retired due to health reasons. Priest retirements normally don't take effect until June 30, the end of the diocesan year.

However, Father Ammering said he plans to stay active in retirement. He has moved to a private residence and will provide spiritual care at the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Infirmary. In addition, he will assist on weekends at St. Jerome's Church in East Rochester.

Father Michael Conboy, diocesan di-

rector of priest personnel, said a search has already begun for Father Ammering's replacement at Blessed Sacrament.

Father Ammering, a Rochester native, grew up in St. Monica's Parish. He attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries.

He was ordained June 5, 1954, by Bishop James E. Kearney. He served as assistant priest at St. Patrick's Church, Owego; the former St. Aloysius, Auburn; and St. Mary's, Waterloo. From 1958-63 he was chaplain of Monroe Community Hospital and assistant at St. Anne Church, both in Rochester. He became full-time chaplain of Monroe Community Hospital in 1963,

and remained in that position for the next 20 years.

Father Ammering's ensuing assignment, also, turned out to be a lengthy one. When he moved to Blessed Sacrament in 1983, he began the only pastorate of his priesthood.

Father Ammering remarked that Blessed Sacrament, at Monroe Avenue and Oxford Street, was an ideal place to serve as pastor.

"I've loved my 17 years here," Father Ammering said. "It's been a wonderful 17 years, it really has. They're just great people."

- Mike Latona

## Obituary

### Brother Michael Hughes, 80; remembered in priest's diary

Brother Michael, born Robert Emmitt Hughes in Brooklyn, died Jan. 14, 2000, from complications of Parkinson's disease.

Brother Michael, 80, was a member of the Abbey of the Genesee Trappist community for 40 years. He professed his solemn vows March 19, 1966.

He had worked on the abbey's grounds, and in its laundry, bakery and garage, where he was head mechanic until 1985.

Brother Michael often drew biblical parallels in a fundamentalistic manner to explain everyday phenomena, his Trappist brothers said. Befuddled once at misplacing a bolt for an engine, he used his fa-

vorite phrase, "Now Lord, if I was where you are, I'd help you."

The brothers also tell of an encounter with the late Father Henri Nouwen, who stayed at the monastery for seven months in 1974-75.

The priest was returning the backhoe to the garage, they wrote to the *Catholic Courier*. "Only he had forgotten to lower the boom sufficiently (typical Henri), so he smashed up the door. Usually that meant a healthy dose of Brooklynese but Henri was our honored guest and an author."

Instead, Brother Michael smiled and quoted from the Book of Revelation: "The

tail of the dragon swept the stars from the heavens." He added, "Events like this always help me to remember the Bible better."

Father Nouwen wrote of the incident in his 1976 book, *The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery*. Brother Michael also was featured in a "PM" Magazine TV show in 1982.

Brother Michael had served in the U.S. Army and in such places as North Africa and Italy during World War II. He later did landscaping at an estate and worked on the New York State Thruway.

He was buried in the Abbey cemetery.

She deserves something special on Valentine's Day

**LAMPIGNATER**  
Lunch Dinner  
Tues. - Fri. Mon. - Sat.  
Creekside Plaza  
831 Fetzner Road  
At the corner of Maiden Lane,  
down the road from Greece Marriall  
**225-2500**