

DIOCESAN NEWS

Professor: Christians and Jews need to talk

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant Editor

BRIGHTON — Jews and Christians have been linked throughout history, and both are here to stay, a visiting professor stated March 23. "Theologically speaking, God wants us to be around, relating to one another," observed Anthony Saldarini, of Boston College.

Saldarini, known for his studies in Jewish-Christian relations, spoke to about 150 Jews and Christians gathered at Temple B'rith Kodesh. His talk was jointly sponsored by the Rochester Catholic Diocese and Rochester Kollel: The Temple B'rith Kodesh Center for Lifelong Jewish Exploration. He also spoke the next day at the Annual Clergy Institute, cosponsored by the diocese and the Jewish Chautauqua Society.

Both events came at a time when Catholic parishes are observing Lent and will soon be presenting the story of Jesus' death, which for years perpetuated blame on and hatred of "the Jews."

Father Bill Darling, pastor of St. Salome's Parish, Irondequoit, was among the 70 clergy who attended the clergy institute,

which he said addressed certain preaching questions.

"I think in reference to using Scriptures of the Passion narratives, I will be much more sensitive, so people understand better that it was not a response of Jews as a whole or Jews of today, but a specific group, leaders against Jesus at the time in Jerusalem," he said.

"I don't think we've footnoted or clarified enough that this is not taken as a key, not to hate the Jews, present or past, not blame the Jews," he added.

Saldarini couldn't have agreed more.

"I'm talking to the 'converted' here," he said to the congregation March 23. "But if you took all the Christians in the Rochester area, you'd find a lot of older, unenlightened views."

He urged that Christians get to know the more recent history of Jews, since the advent of Christianity 2,000 years ago.

In the early first century, Christians and Jews worked closely together, discussing things, arguing, "sometimes getting along and sometimes not, but living a growing relationship," he said. But dissent, conflict and an estrangement of Jewish and Christian communities have marked the centuries



Mike Mergen/Photo intern

Rabbi Laurence Kotok of Temple B'rith Kodesh, Brighton, left, and Father Bill Darling of St. Salome's Parish, Irondequoit, talk at the clergy institute at the temple March 24.

between then and the post-World War II era, Saldarini said.

Since World War II Catholic teaching has made it clear that Christianity did not replace Judaism, which is an authentic religion, he said. So why is there still a need to urge dialogue?

The belief in "supercession," that Christianity was a fulfillment or replacement for Judaism, is still commonly held, he maintained.

"It is fairly common among Christians who haven't thought things through today," he said. For one thing, the New Testament contains some anti-polemic literature some Christians believe they should adhere to today, he said. But it was written during specific moments in history and should not be taken as a guide for today.

"When I was a boy, Jesus was a Christian," added Saldarini, who is in his 50s. "In many places, he still is."

Today, he said the fact that Jesus was a Galilean Jew should guide Jews and Chris-

tians in how they think about Jesus and Jewish-Christian relations. Otherwise, Christians deny their origins in Israel and their own history, he said.

"And in a certain sense they deny the God who loved and protected both Israel and the Christian Church," he declared.

Despite statements by Pope John Paul II and other theologians that have furthered Jewish-Christian understanding, he said, a new theology is needed to make a belief in supercession impossible. The New Testament authors' views were underdeveloped, without having "dotted all the i's and crossed all the t's," he said.

"I think Christians need to remember that the same God who sent Jesus Christ, whom Christians are devoted to, also preserved the Jewish community, which did not become followers," he said. "It looks to me that's the way God wants it; we were meant to work together and interact in a messy world where we don't always know what's going on."

Still time to give to the TGA

By Rob Cullivan
Staff Writer

With three months left to go in the 1999-2000 Thanks Giving Appeal, the Diocese of Rochester is preparing to send letters at the end of April to previous donors who have not yet given this year, according to Jennifer Myszka, diocesan director of annual giving.

Myszka said the letters will emphasize that donors have time to give to the appeal, which ends June 30. With a goal of \$5.2 million, the TGA is the primary source of funding for diocesan offices and programs.

In a March 20 diocesan statement, Bishop Matthew H. Clark urged the faithful to step up to the donor plate.

"The Thanks Giving Appeal is critical to the future of our church and allows us to better serve our parishes and faith communities," he said.

To date, donors have pledged \$4.9 million to the this year's appeal, Myszka said, noting that this is the same figure reached at this time last year. Interestingly, however, 49,000 donors so far have committed to give to the fund this year compared to 52,000 at the same time last year, she said. This decline is offset by an increase of \$2.00 in the size of this year's average gift received so far as compared to last year's average.



Noting that the TGA donor pool has steadily decreased over the last 10 years, Myszka said, "As the numbers of donors decline, the average gift has gone up. We're incredibly grateful."

In talking with pastors, TGA volunteers and others, the diocese has determined that the donor pool is shrinking for a number of reasons. Among them, Myszka said, are the growing ranks of older Catholics who are no longer able to give because they now live on fixed incomes. She added that competition from other charities for donor dollars as well as people's desire to give directly to their parishes rather than to the diocese also factor into donor decline.

In an effort to stabilize the donor pool, Myszka said her office is currently exploring ways to better promote the appeal next year. Donors often respond to the personal stories of those helped by a charity, and getting the word out through various media about people who have benefited from a TGA-funded program may be a goal next year, she said.

Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following parish appointments, effective June 27.

Father John Mulligan, vicar general, to pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral, succeeding Father Thomas Mull. Father Mulligan served as moderator of the Pastoral Center, 1988-1998, and as pastor of Most Precious Blood Parish since 1998.

Father Lawrence V. Murphy to pastor of Most Precious Blood concurrent with his pastoral duties at Holy Rosary Parish.

Father Kevin McKenna, chancellor and director of legal affairs, to pastor of St. Cecilia's Church, succeeding Father Walter Cushing, who is retiring.

Father Lance Gonyo to pastor of Church of the Epiphany in Sodus and St. Rose of Lima in Sodus Point, from temporary administrator.

Father William Laird to pastor of Sacred Heart and St. Ann's in Auburn, succeeding Father P. Paul Brennan, who is


retiring. Father Laird is currently a judge in the Tribunal and sacramental minister at St. Vincent de Paul in Churchville.

Father John Gagnier to pastor of St. Dominic's in Shortsville succeeding Father William J. Cosgrove, who is retiring. Father Gagnier is currently parochial vicar at Our Mother of Sorrows in Greece.

Father Alexander Bradshaw to pastor of Our Mother of Sorrows in Greece, succeeding Father Thomas Statt, who is retiring. Father Bradshaw is currently serving as pastor at Holy Ghost Church in Gates.

Father Robert Kennedy to pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Rochester, succeeding Father Bruce F. Ammering, who retired in February. Father Kennedy is currently coordinator of student formation at St. Bernard's Institute.

Sister Diane Dennie, SSJ, to pastoral administrator at St. Bridget's/St. Joseph's Church in East Bloomfield. Sr. Diane is currently serving as pastoral associate at St. John of Rochester in Fairport.



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