

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Event promotes women's ordination

By Liza R. Mugnolo  
Editorial intern

ROCHESTER — An "International Conference on Ordaining Women in the Catholic Church" drew about 200 people to the Sheraton Four Points Hotel for a day of workshops, July 21.

The conference, which ran July 20-23, also included services and a trip to the Women's Rights Museum in Seneca Falls. It was co-sponsored by Spiritus Christi Church, Catholics Speak Out, the International Movement We Are Church, and the Women's Ordination Conference. The conference — entitled "Women's Ordination 2000. How? When? Why?" — was organized by the Women's Ordination Committee at Spiritus Christi, the break-away church formed by former members of Corpus Christi Parish.

The conference was not affiliated with the Diocese of Rochester or any diocesan parish.

Among the featured speakers was Sister Maureen Fiedler, SL, coordinator of Catholics Speak Out. Keynote speaker was French activist Elfriede Harth, who described limitations on women's roles in the Catholic Church as "symbolic violence against women."

Harth, a Roman Catholic, has been a leader in Women's Ordination Worldwide and International Movement We Are Church, and helped obtain 2.5 million signatures on a European We Are Church referendum calling for major church reforms.

She broke her talk into three segments, "the social role of religion, the meaning of revelation and the social meaning of the human body." Among Harth's key points was her assertion that giving the most authoritative church roles only to males causes a great impression of inferiority among women and an imbalance between the genders in society. She said it also works against the sense of belonging that is so vital to a faith community.

Harth added that the Bible does not discriminate against women who, like men, are created in the image and likeness of God.

Harth said she is striving to see equality achieved in the church, as well as a democratic approach that would include the election of priests and bishops; married clergy; and more liberal views toward ho-



John Powell/Photo intern

Maggie Englert (left) and Madison Spade from Irondequoit explore the Women's Rights Museum in Seneca Falls, where the International Conference on Ordaining Women in the Catholic Church held an event July 22.

mosexual people and sex within and outside of marriage.

Denise Donato, family minister at Spiritus Christi, also addressed the gathering, saying she felt an "overwhelming sense of being called." She said that she was among many women in the last 2,000 years who have felt summoned by a divine force to a priestly role but could not answer it in the way that male Catholics could. "I felt angry that I didn't have that same opportunity," Donato remarked.

On July 22, conference-goers signed a "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions Pertaining to the Ordination of Women in the Roman Catholic Church" at the Women's Rights Museum in Seneca Falls. Written by Spiritus Christi members, the document resolves that "women and men are equal — intended so by their Creator; and the highest good of the people of God demands that they should be recognized as such."

ra. Although he is not currently at the parish, he is due to return in mid-August. Father Msemwa is a priest of the Diocese of Tanga, Tanzania.

Also, Family Camp was mistakenly identified in a July 20 *Courier* story as being a diocesan program. The camp is actually a former diocesan program that now operates independently.

It also states "it is pre-eminently the Roman Catholic Church's duty to encourage women to speak, teach and pastor in all religious assemblies." The document is to be sent to the church's bishops.

Pope John Paul II in 1994 issued an apostolic letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, in which he declared that the church does not have the authority to ordain women. The issue is not open to debate among Catholics, he has also stated. In his apostolic letter, he said, "The presence and the role of women in the life and mission of the church, although not linked to the ministerial priesthood, remain absolutely necessary and irreplaceable."

A Vatican statement issued Nov. 18, 1995, explained that the church's teaching was founded on the written word of God, had been constantly preserved and applied in the tradition of the church, and was set forth infallibly.

In May 1998 the pope delivered an *ad limina* address, "Priests, Their Life and Ministry," in which he discussed women's roles. "As bishops, you must explain to the faithful why the church does not have authority to ordain women to the ministerial priesthood, at the same time making clear why this is not a question of the equality of persons or of their God-given rights," he said.

The Diocese of Rochester declined to comment on the women's ordination conference.

## Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following appointments:

**Father James Hewes**, to pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Clyde, and St. Patrick Parish, Savannah, from parochial vicar of the Roman Catholic Community of Geneva, effective June 27. He succeeds Father Leo Reinhardt, now pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Ithaca.

**Deacon Greg Kiley**, to chaplain at Five Points Correctional Facility, Romulus, from Cayuga Correctional Facility, effective July 13.

**Father Joseph McGaffrey**, to part-time chaplain at Butler Correctional Facilities, Red Creek, and Auburn Correctional Facility, from pastor, St. Anthony/St. Patrick Cluster, Elmira, effective July 26.

**Father John Dillon**, to chaplain at Cayuga Correctional Facility, Moravia, from Auburn and Butler correctional facilities, effective July 16.

## Recognizing

★ Four parishes honored the following people for their service to God and community at the Greater Rochester Community of Churches' "Faith In Action Celebration" June 8 in Rochester: **Dr. Denise Mack**, pastoral associate for the Catholic Communities of St. Anne, Palmyra, and St. Gregory, Marion; **Patricia Curtis** and **Sister Chris J. Treichel**, OSF, pastoral associates at St. John the Evangelist, Rochester; and **Sister Barbara Kuhn**, SSJ, director of St. Peter's Kitchen at St. Peter and Paul, Rochester.

★ **James Ditzel**, a science teacher at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Brighton, has received the annual "Excellence in Secondary School Teaching" award from the University of Rochester Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development. The award recognizes the winner's thorough knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject taught, the teaching of well-organized and imaginative lessons, and the establishment of a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.

★ **Dr. Esther Denaro Maltese**, director of Undergraduate Secondary Education at Nazareth College, Rochester, has been named "2000 Woman of the Year" by the Italian American Community Center of Rochester. The award recognizes her outstanding leadership and collegiality in the field of education in the greater Rochester community.

### Clarification, correction

One name should be added to the list of foreign priests serving in the diocese that ran in the July 20 *Catholic Courier*. The list accompanied a story about these priests.

Father Severine S. Msemwa assists at the St. Casimir/St. Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Community, in Elmi-

ra. Although he is not currently at the parish, he is due to return in mid-August. Father Msemwa is a priest of the Diocese of Tanga, Tanzania.

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