

DIOCESAN NEWS

Acclaimed theologian will lead retreat in Tioga

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Did you ever, in trying to locate a misplaced item, check numerous spots only to find the item right under your nose?

Edwina Gateley asserts that the same holds true in our relationships with God.

"God just needs to be recognized; God doesn't need to be found. A 5-year-old child can discover God or recognize God," Gateley asserted in a telephone interview.

"God is not King and Lord and all that stuff, you don't have to be amazed at God's presence," she went on. "God is. It's so simple, and we want to make God complicated. But we don't even need words. We just need to be open."

Gateley, an internationally acclaimed activist, author, poet and theologian, will discuss this and other spiritual themes when she leads a weekend retreat Sept. 22-23 in Tioga County. The retreat, to be held at St. Margaret Mary Church in Apalachin, is dubbed "A Weekend With Edwina Gateley." The event is sponsored by the Tioga Regional Center, an adult faith formation and leadership training center that opened in 1999.

Gateley said it's important to recognize that God is within us, not "the old image of being patriarchal and far away up in the sky. God, I think, journeys with us constantly, is impregnated in us."

Gateley said she hopes retreat participants will tap the God within them to

bring about positive change.

"People are trying to understand how they can become a holy people, what spirituality means today in a disconnected society. We have so many problems in our world today, so many problems that we feel helpless about. People are finding it difficult to feel they can make a difference," Gateley remarked. "(But) there is leaven in this body, this bread, this people. What we have to do is understand how to make it rise."

First we must undergo our own spiritual transformation, she said. "It's really about trying to help people understand they do have the design within their very being, rather than without. This is the only way we're going to change the world, to change ourselves and our understanding of spirituality," she commented.

As an example, Gateley cited her extensive ministry to women with histories of prostitution and drug abuse.

"These people could be outside the religious experience, feeling they don't belong. Coming from my perspective, I see God within them — undiscovered and untouched, waiting to rise in their lives," Gateley said. "My task, because I believe that God is there, is to surface God in them ... the love and compassion that we treat each other with can unleash in that person a feeling of, 'I'm okay, I'm not scum.'"

Gateley, 56, has a long track record of activism. Born in Lancaster, England, Gateley worked from 1964-68 as a teacher

and lay missionary in Uganda. In 1969 she founded the Volunteer Missionary Movement in England. The movement now has centers in Scotland and the United States as well.

Sixteen years ago, Gateley founded Genesis House in Chicago. The house provides hospitality and advocacy for women who have been involved in prostitution. This ministry has been publicly commended by many dignitaries, including President Bill Clinton and the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

Genesis House was featured in *Time* magazine in November 1998. The article noted that Genesis House was experiencing financial hardship, yet Gateley now says that "they're doing much better. They've stabilized a bit as news spread."

Gateley has resided in Erie, Pa., the past four years, and maintains a close association with the Benedictine nuns in that diocese. She has an adopted son Niall, who is 8 years old.

In addition to giving lectures and retreats, Gateley is currently working on her ninth book. Though she no longer lives

in Chicago, Gateley stays actively involved in Genesis House. She serves on the board of directors, and recently hosted 11 women from Genesis House who traveled from Chicago to Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in Erie.

Her appearance in Tioga County is being planned by volunteers from the six parishes associated with Tioga Regional Center. They are St. Margaret Mary, the host site; St. James, Waverly; St. Pius X, Van Etten; and the three churches in the Tioga Catholic Community cluster: St. Patrick's, Owego; St. John the Evangelist, Newark Valley; and St. Francis, Catatonk.

Barbara Klassen, director of Tioga Regional Center, said she hopes that "A Weekend With ..." will become an annual event, with a prominent guest speaker each year.

EDITORS' NOTE: "A Weekend With Edwina Gateley" will be held Sept. 22, from 7-9 p.m.; and Sept. 23, from 8:30-4 p.m. Both programs are open to all. Single-day or two-day registrations are available. Overnight lodging is available. To register, call 607/689-0427.

Priest-activist wins award; Project Rachel plans events

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Project Rachel — which serves as a healing ministry for women who have had abortions — will offer a pair of first-time retreats, and volunteer training as well, in the upcoming months.

In addition, a key leader of Project Rachel, Father James E. Hewes, is being honored this month for his extensive contributions to pro-life causes.

Father Hewes, pastor of St. John the Evangelist/St. Patrick parishes in Clyde and Savannah, is this year's recipient of the Dr. Leo Holmsten Human Life Award. He will be honored during a Sept. 19 banquet at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Rochester. Bishop Matthew H. Clark is scheduled to attend the banquet.

The award, begun in 1997, is named for the late Dr. Leo Holmsten, a former abortion provider and Planned Parenthood medical director who became an ardent pro-life activist. The honor is sponsored by the Rochester Area Right to Life Committee Inc., and cosponsored by numerous Catholic and other pro-life groups.

"I am quite humbled," Father Hewes said of the award. "I really think what's being acknowledged is the work of Project Rachel more than me."

Father Hewes, 53, was one of the original Rochester Area Right to Life board members in 1968. That group later formed Birthright of Rochester, which assists women in crisis pregnancy situations.

Father Hewes was ordained a diocesan priest in 1974, and served as chair of the diocesan Human Life Commission from 1977-84. He became involved in Project Rachel after it came to the Rochester Diocese in 1996, and has led training for Project Rachel volunteers since 1998. In addition, Father Hewes actively engaged SUNY Geneseo students in pro-life causes while serving as Catholic chaplain at the college from 1987 to 1999.

Father Hewes will serve on the leadership team for two Rachel's Vineyard retreats, which will make their debut in the

Rochester Diocese Sept. 22-24 and Dec. 1-3. In addition, the priest will lead training for Project Rachel staff Oct. 3-4, when individuals will be trained as phone counselors, spiritual advisers and therapists.

Project Rachel, which originated in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in the mid-1980s, offers one-on-one counseling for women who have had abortions. Rachel's Vineyard retreats, which were begun about 10 years ago, incorporate Project Rachel aspects into a group setting. The retreats are open to both men and women.

"You can have the support of a group, and share with people who have had a similar experience," said Sister Delores Monahan, SSJ, one of the Rachel's Vineyard leaders who was trained in part by attending a similar retreat. "Many of the people coming said they felt they'd been forgiven by God but were unable to forgive themselves. They would come on Friday and be nervous and afraid, but when they would leave on Sunday, even though they still had a lot to work through, there was still a peace and acceptance and self-forgiveness."

Joining Sister Monahan and Father Hewes as Rachel's Vineyard retreat leaders will be Sister Mary Lynch, SSJ; Father Anthony Mugavero, pastor of St. Bridget's Parish in Rochester; and Betsy MacKinnon.

EDITORS' NOTE: The Leo Holmsten Human Life Award Committee annual dinner will take place Sept. 19 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 70 State St., Rochester, with reception at 5:45 p.m. and dinner at 6:30. For ticket information, call 716/621-4690.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats will take place Sept. 22-24 and Dec. 1-3 at a Rochester-area prayer center (organizers asked that the location be withheld to protect the privacy of participants). Call 716/368-3204 for details.

Project Rachel training will be held Oct. 3, from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, 215 E. Church St., Elmira; and Oct. 4, from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at St. Bernard's Institute, 1100 S. Goodman St., Rochester. For details, call Jann Armantrout, diocesan life issues coordinator, at 716/328-3210, ext. 304, or e-mail her at armantrout@dor.org.



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

First day of first grade

Christine Roberts' first-grade class returns to St. Rita's School in Webster after a tour of the church on the first day of school, Sept. 5. Roberts, a new teacher at St. Rita's, wanted her students to be familiar with their surroundings.

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