

DIOCESAN NEWS

Doctors group will be a forum

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant editor

Doctors in the Rochester Diocese are expected to gather next month to review results of a survey and set the stage for a new organization of Catholic physicians.

"It's happening," said Father John A. Firpo, pastor of St. Helen's Parish, Gates. "We are doing it thoughtfully and with the best interest of the doctors and the Catholic Church."

A Sept. 20 meeting was postponed and a new date is being set, he said.

Father Firpo, appointed by Bishop Matthew H. Clark as diocesan liaison to the project, said a steering committee sent a survey last fall to 1,400 Catholic and non-Catholic physicians in the Finger Lakes-Monroe County area. The response from about 200 physicians was heartening, he said, even "phenomenal" given busy schedules today.

He noted that 97 percent of doctors responding strongly agreed that they make efforts to reflect on the ethical implications of the health care they provide. Among ethical concerns they reported facing were the fair distribution of health-care services and end-of-life issues, he said.

On the steering committee are Dr. Jack McIntyre, head of psychiatry at Unity Health System; Dr. Marguerite Dynski, SSJ, assistant professor of surgery and director of medical students and physician assistants at ViaHealth-Rochester General Hospital; Dr. Ruth Lawrence, a nationally-known lactation specialist, of the University of Rochester Medical Center; Dr. Joseph Sallipante, an internal medicine physician; Betsy MacKinnon of Unity Health System; and Marvin Mich, director of social policy and research at Catholic Family Center of Rochester.

Formation of a new Catholic physicians group is intended to create a forum for open dialogue on ethics as related to health-care services and an arena in which physicians can share fellowship. The organization also is intended to assist the larger Catholic community with struggles related to health-care experiences and their faith, where appropriate, or to serve as a "think tank," according to Father Firpo.

Dr. Lawrence added that the group could possibly provide a registry of Catholic doctors.

Currently, if people wish to find a Catholic physician, Father Firpo suggested, "I think it's always wise to contact their parish ministers, to see if there are Catholic doctors within the parishes and ask them if they know of any regarding a speciality, whether psychiatry or podiatry or whatever it is."

The former Catholic Physicians Guild operating in the diocese changed its name in 1997 to the St. Luke's Medical Association and disassociated itself with the diocese. That move followed a disagreement over Bishop Matthew H. Clark's "compassionate treatment of homosexuality."

The current president of St. Luke's is Dr. Joseph DiPoalo Sr., an internal-medicine physician, who said his group has 20 to 25 members. St. Luke's is associated with the national Catholic Medical Association, now headed by Dr. Michael Aiello, former president of St. Luke's and formerly of Rochester. Dr. DiPoalo also sits on the diocese's Consistent Life Ethic Committee.

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)
Vol. 111 No. 50, September 21, 2000
Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.
Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.



John Powell/Photo Intern

Memory walk

Arnie and Mary Jane Gissin of Rochester walk along the Erie Canal path during the Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk on Sept. 17 in Rochester. The seventh annual walk raised \$78,000 for the association's Rochester chapter. It included 35 teams with more than 600 participants. Proceeds will support education, advocacy, support and research programs.

Obituary

Sister Joan of Arc Pero, SSJ, dies at 100

Sister Joan of Arc Pero of the Sisters of St. Joseph died Aug. 12, 2000, one week short of her 101st birthday.

She was a native of Rochester and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in 1918. She was a graduate of Nazareth High School and earned a teacher's degree from Nazareth Normal School.

Sister Joan of Arc taught in the parochial schools of the diocese for 61 years. Among the schools in which she taught were: Blessed Sacrament, St. Patrick Cathedral, Nazareth Hall, St. Agnes Institute, Sacred Heart, Holy Apostles, Holy Rosary, all of Rochester; St.

Mary, Canandaigua; St. Agnes, Avon; Immaculate Conception, Ithaca; and St. Patrick, Mt. Morris.

Sister Joan of Arc attended business school and helped provide secretarial support in some schools, at a time when some schools did not have secretaries. Of all the schools in which she taught, her favorite was said to be St. Patrick, Mt. Morris, where she worked 21 years, her longest time at any of the schools.

In 1999 Sister Joan of Arc celebrated two milestones — her 100th birthday and 80 years of religious life. She said she did not envision living to 100 but in her own words, "It's been a long time to live, but

look at all I would have missed had I died young."

Sister Joan of Arc is survived by her sister, Rhea Englert; her sister-in-law, Renata Pero of Rochester; nieces, nephews, cousins and her sisters in the congregation.

Msgr. William H. Shannon celebrated her funeral Mass, assisted by Father Bruce Ammering, in the motherhouse chapel Aug. 16.

Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Contributions may be made in her memory to St. Joseph Convent Infirmary, 4095 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14618-3798.

Recognizing

★ Susan Bielat, an English teacher at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Brighton, has been recognized as an "Outstanding Educator" by the University of Rochester. Bielat was nominated for the honor by 1999 Mercy graduate Heather Eysaman of Pittsford. "Mrs. Bielat made English senior year the best ever," Eysaman said. "She treated us like adults and taught in the same manner. What we read and discussed was helpful

and worthwhile not only academically but personally."

★ Catholic Family Center's Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) has received a gift of \$500 from the Rochester Press-Radio Club's Children Charities Committee. The gift was given to assist the CYO in its work with young people which covers such areas as career preparation, conflict resolution training, decision-making and leadership skills.

★ Ji-Yoen Choi, 28, organist at St.

Joseph's Church, Penfield, won first prize in the National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance, held in Seattle, Wash., in July. As winner, Choi received a \$2,000 cash prize and will produce a recording on the Naxos label. She will also present 40-50 organ recitals all over the country for two years, and will be managed by Karen McFarlane Artists, an internationally known firm that manages famous organists worldwide.

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