

DIOCESAN NEWS

Fr. Drinan will examine church-state controversy

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Former U.S. Congressman Father Stephen F. Drinan, S.J., one of the most controversial and outspoken U.S. priests to have stepped onto the public stage, will be speaking at Ridgmont County Club, 3717 Ridge Road West, Rochester, on Friday, Oct. 13 at 7:30 p.m.

His speech is free and open to the public, although seating is limited, and is sponsored by the Rochester Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a religious liberty/civil rights advocacy group.

Father Drinan will address various religious liberty questions, including concerns about the recent decision by the Supreme Court in 1997 overturning the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The act sought to protect people from government encroachment on religious practice. It had been passed in response to an earlier Supreme Court decision upholding the firing of a government employee for using a Native American religious ritual.

A Democratic congressional representative from Massachusetts from 1971-81, Father Drinan made his name as one of Congress' most liberal members, an opponent of militarism, racism and hunger. The priest also courted controversy by seemingly, according to his critics, simultaneously decrying abortion and supporting it legally.

As for his current concerns, the priest said he is working with other activists to end the use of child labor around the world, and sweatshop abuses. He also continues to speak out against the death penalty.

Father Drinan did not run for reelection in 1981 because the Holy See had issued a general order the year before calling all priests to leave political office. Father Drinan recollected that decision in a phone interview from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., where he is a law professor specializing in constitutional law, legal ethics and international human rights.

The Jesuit priest, and regular columnist for the Kansas City, Mo.-based *National Catholic Reporter*, said he had long ago come to terms with the Vatican's decision to put priests out of political office. He noted that as a Jesuit, he has taken a special vow of obedience to the pope.

"The church is a very big body with 800,000 priests, and someone has to be in charge," he said.

He added that he saw the wisdom in the Vatican's move when a Brazilian cleric noted that many right-wing military officers in his country had brothers who were priests and that if they were allowed to run for office, liberal Catholics and clergy would be hard-pressed to support them.

But even in his post-congressional career, Father Drinan can still be a lightning rod for criticism. In particular, he was attacked by many Catholic leaders in 1996 when he upheld in a *New York Times* column President Bill Clinton's veto of a congressional ban on partial-birth abortion, a late-term abortion method. At the behest of church authorities, he later issued a statement clarifying his position, but Father Drinan said he still believes the congressional ban was bad law from a constitutional viewpoint. He also questioned whether it was a good idea to "recriminalize" abortion in a pluralistic country where the right of privacy has become so widely accepted.

He added that he considers abortion to be close to "infanticide," as the church held in its Second Vatican Council documents, but said that not enough is being done to ask why so many women — including Catholics — are willing to abort each year. He also said that the fathers of aborted babies are consistently overlooked, and that abortion has allowed men to escape responsibility for preventing unwanted pregnancies.

"Why don't we nail the men who do it?" he asked rhetorically. "There are men involved in every single (abortion), and nobody even knows their names. I think the public officials should talk about that."

Information on the priest's Friday talk may be obtained by calling 716/392-9441.

Obituaries

Fr. Didas, edited order's magazine

Father James Farrell Didas, a retired Josephite priest born in Rochester, died at St. Joseph Manor in Baltimore Aug. 29, 2000, after a brief illness. He was 91.

Father Didas served 67 years in ministry as a parish priest, magazine editor, seminary rector and hospital chaplain.

He attended Sacred Heart School in Perkinsville and Wayland High School. Before entering the Josephite Seminary in Washington, D.C., he attended St. Andrew Preparatory Seminary and St. Bernard Seminary in Rochester.

He was ordained to the priesthood June 13, 1933, at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. He served at two Delaware parishes until 1942, when he was made editor of the Josephite magazine, *The Colored Harvest*, lat-

er renamed the *Josephite Harvest*.

In 1960 he was assigned as rector at St. Joseph Seminary in Washington. In 1966 he was elected consultant to the Josephite superior general and returned to Baltimore, where he also was made director of the Josephite Mission Office. In 1971, he began transitional assignments as assistant pastor at two parishes and chaplain at South Baltimore General Hospital. He moved to St. Joseph Manor retirement residence in 1973.

The Josephite Society is the only American society of male religious dedicated exclusively to evangelization in the African-American community.

Father Didas is survived by two nieces, Mary Ellen Smith of Dansville and Beverly Couer of Rochester.

Sr. Mary Reinagel, SSND; teacher

Sister Mary Reinagel (Sister Adelia), SSND, 94, died Aug. 2, 2000, at the Lourdes Health Center in Wilton, Conn.

Born in Buffalo, she graduated from Nazareth College in 1942 with a bachelor's degree in education. She taught at Rochester's St. Michael middle and junior high schools and was a pastoral care worker at St. Boniface Church, Rochester from 1979 to 1984.

Sister Reinagel taught for a total of 50

years in Maryland, Puerto Rico and New York. She also served in a ministry to the elderly in Rochester, Bridgeport and at the Elderly Congregational Services in Villa Notre Dame in the Caguas Diocese, Puerto Rico. She retired in 1991, but continued her outreach work.

Her funeral Mass was celebrated at the School Sisters of Notre Dame mother-house chapel in Wilton and interment was in St. Mary's Cemetery, Bethel.



John Powell/Photo intern

Memorial service

Father Kenneth Sherman, presbyter of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Melkite Greek Church in Gates, distributes Communion Oct. 5 during a Divine Liturgy and memorial service held in memory of the late Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, who died Oct. 6, 1999. About 120 people attended. Father Sherman came to know Bishop Hickey, certified to celebrate bi-ritual services, through religious occasions as well as their similar interests — including railroad history.

Christian Brothers mark jubilees

Two men with ties to the Diocese of Rochester were among nine Christian Brothers honored for their golden jubilees with an Oct. 7 Mass, reception and dinner in New Rochelle, N.Y., where the order's Eastern American Province is headquartered.

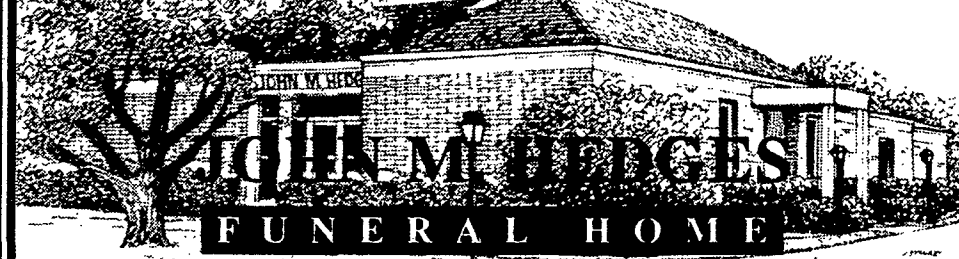
Brother John A. Reidy taught at Bishop Kearney High School in Irondequoit from 1973 to 1991. A native of New Rochelle, he has degrees from Iona College and Fordham University. A member of the Christian Brothers since 1950, he has served at several high schools in the New York City area. Since 1996, he has been assigned to New Rochelle's Iona College Community at Kingsboro Com-

munity College.

Brother James E. Roepke, a native of New York City, taught at Bishop Kearney from 1992-1993. After joining the Christian Brothers in 1949, he served at numerous elementary, high school and preparatory schools in and around New York City, several times as principal. He has degrees from Iona College, St. John's University and the Catholic University of America. He currently is superior of the Christian Brothers' community at All Hallows Institute in the Bronx.

A liturgy for the nine jubilarians was planned in Holy Family Church in New Rochelle, with Father Kevin J. Molloy of St. John's, Newfoundland, celebrating.

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