

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Christmas year-round



The Doyle family — six adult siblings, their spouses and their 11 collective children — “adopted” a family for Christmas through Catholic Family Center. (At right) Hunter Doyle, 4, wraps a gift for the “adopted family” Dec. 15 as his mom, Julie Doyle, and his brother, Mac Hofford, 12, look on. Amy Doyle and her daughter Meghan, 6 months, joined the efforts at Julie’s Pittsford home. (Above) Gunnar Doyle, 2, cuts wrapping paper. The Doyles offered to help the family — a mother and six children — year-round with more presents and hand-me-down clothing.



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

## End of holidays brings relief for the grieving

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Warm memories of holiday gatherings are, perhaps, still fresh in many people’s minds.

But anyone coping with a major loss may be genuinely relieved that the holidays have now passed, according to one clinical social worker.

“Grief kind of preempts the livelier, celebrative things. I would actually think the post-Christmas time might be easier,” said Beth Struever, whose practice is based in Rochester.

Struever said that the early winter months offer a comparatively relaxed pace that people who are grieving might prefer.

“The real Christmas message is, new beginnings and transcendence. Don’t disconnect from people, but allow for whatever it is that renews you — rather than eat, drink and be merry,” Struever suggested.

Indeed, people in various stages of grief are unlikely to be singing “’Tis the season to be jolly” at the holidays and shortly thereafter. “This ‘peace on earth’ and love, love, love brings out the cynic in some of us. You need to be very kind to yourself and give yourself permission to grieve,” Struever remarked. “Let yourself be. Don’t hassle yourself about what you can or can’t be.”

Just before Christmas, on Dec. 18, Struever spoke to a gathering of 20 people at St. Mary’s Church. Her talk, “When Holidays Hurt,” offered tips for coping with grief at holiday time. Struever drew heavily on personal experience by recalling her

first Christmas without her second husband, who died in 1982 after a long illness.

“I had family and friends around me. I had everything going for me — and it didn’t matter,” Struever recalled. “I could hardly draw a breath. Not seeing an end to that level of pain was new to me.”

Struever said she was hesitant to attend holiday gatherings, fearing she would burst into tears. As time went on, she said, she realized the need to “find my way back to Christmas,” keeping in mind that the holiday would never be the same. So she dropped some holiday traditions that had involved her husband, but kept others.

Along with the loss of loved ones, Struever noted that anyone who has recently lost a marriage, friendship or job is susceptible to increased pain at the holidays. It is the time to seek out people who understand the struggle, Struever advised. Supporters should offer lots of hugs and a willingness to listen, rather than try to fix the problem, she added.

“Many of my clients say that friends and family tell them, ‘Why can’t you move on? Why can’t you just let go?’” she remarked. “Respect for my process, and respect for other people’s process, is very important.”

Struever said it’s not a good idea to go through the grieving process alone: “You need to be with at least one or two people; even us introverts, do. ‘No friends’ is not good. TV and radio is not your friend, it’s noise in the home.”

There’s no general time frame for a person to find happiness again, Struever said. She did advise that if significant time has

passed and a person’s grief still hasn’t subsided, it might be time to consult a clergy member or professional counselor.

Struever said she realized her own grief was diminishing once she was able to focus again on other people, rather than her own misery. “If you can love, you can come back to life,” she said. “With a pet, a baby — no matter how it starts, it needs to start.”

Her Dec. 18 program, part of the Downtown Community Forum series at St. Mary’s Parish, was one of several efforts in the diocese last month to embrace people struggling with loss.

In Canandaigua, the bereavement support group at St. Mary’s Parish held a candlelight service Dec. 14. Those who attended brought photos of their deceased loved ones.

“Holidays bring a lot of reflection to the family gatherings. There’s always the empty place at the table, and that’s more profound at the holidays,” said Peg Dietz, the Canandaigua group’s co-facilitator. She has been a member of the bereavement group for four years, following the death of her son-in-law in 1995 and of her husband one year after that.

In the Tioga Catholic Community, the cluster’s bereavement support group hosted a “Longest Night Memorial” Dec. 21 at St. Patrick’s Church in Owego. According to Betty D’Arcy, pastoral associate, the service is named for falling on the winter solstice, the shortest day of sunlight of the year. The third-year event included a candlelight memorial for the deceased, along with music and poetry recitals.

### Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following pastoral appointments, which were effective Jan. 1.

• **Father Edward Golden**, to sabbatical at Discart, Dingle, County Kerry, Ireland, from pastor of Church of the Assumption, Fairport.

• **Father Gary Tyman**, to temporary administrator of Church of the Assumption, Fairport, from parochial vicar.

• **Father Robert L. Beligotti**, to the chaplaincy of Monroe Community Hospital, with duties as sacramental minister at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Scottsville. He resigned Nov. 30 as pastor, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Auburn.

• **Father Ralph Fraats**, to retirement after 29 years of priestly service in the diocese, from parochial vicar of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Irondequoit.

Colleen Donnellan, a team member with Beginning Experience in Rochester, said that bereavement groups provide support and understanding at the holidays that may otherwise be hard to come by.

“Much as other people try to include you, they don’t really know what to do with you,” said Donnellan, a parishioner at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Greece. Beginning Experience, she said, offers numerous retreats and seminars throughout the year for people who are divorced, separated or widowed.

## Obituary

### Father Charles Adams, OFM, 87; served at Fairport’s Assumption

Father Charles Adams, OFM, a Rochester native who served in both the academic and pastoral fields, died Dec. 3, 2000, in St. Petersburg, Fla. He was 87.

Father Adams was the son of the late Edward Adams and Elizabeth (Erb) Adams and christened “John.” He attended Holy Apostles School, Rochester, from 1918-26, and then Aquinas Institute, Rochester, from 1926-30. He graduated from St. Bonaventure College (now University) in 1934 with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry, and obtained a master’s degree in the same field from St. Bonaventure in 1948.

He professed his final vows as a

Franciscan in August 1940, and was ordained a priest in October the same year in Washington, D.C. He served as a professor of chemistry at Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y., from 1941-52, and then as associate professor of chemistry at St. Bonaventure University from 1952-73. From 1973-83, he served as an assistant at St. Stephen’s Parish, Croghan, N.Y.

He returned to the Diocese of Rochester in 1983 to serve as an assistant at Assumption of Our Lady Parish, Fairport, from 1983-96. While there, he performed a host of duties, according to Father Edward Golden, Assumption’s pastor from 1991 to 2000. Father Golden

added that Father Adams taught parish adult education courses on such subjects as church teachings and Scripture.

“He was just generally available to parishioners, just generally helpful and charitable,” Father Golden said.

From 1996-99, he served as senior associate friar at Holy Cross Parish, Callicoon, N.Y. He then retired to St. Anthony Friary in St. Petersburg, where he remained until his death.

His funeral Mass was celebrated on Dec. 9 in Holy Cross Church, Callicoon, and interment followed at Holy Cross Cemetery. Assumption celebrated a memorial Mass for him Dec. 16.

In addition to nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews and a great-great nephew, Father Adams is survived by his sisters-in-law Agnes Adams and Dorothy May of Rochester; uncles, John A. Erb of Rochester, Father Charles G. Erb, SVD, of Techny, Ill.; his cousins Father Raymond Quetchenbach, SVD, also of Techny; Father Francis J. Erb, a retired priest who assists at Rochester diocesan parishes; Sister Helen Marie Yockel, SSPS, of Techny; Sister Gertrude Erb, RSM, pastoral associate of St. Ambrose Parish, Rochester; and Deacon John G. Erb of the Community of Hope in Rochester.

—Rob Cullivan