

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Ash Wednesday



David Wallace/Photo intern

Father Thomas H. Wheeland burns palms at an Ash Wednesday service Feb. 28 at Holy Cross Church, Charlotte. All Fridays in Lent are days of abstaining from meat for people at least 14 years old. Good Friday is a fast day for ages 18-59; one full meal and two smaller meals that do not equal one full meal may be eaten. Acts of penance are encouraged during Lent.

## Sister Binsack named first diocesan lay vice-chancellor

Sister Mary Ann Binsack, RSM, will become the Rochester Diocese's first lay person and woman vice chancellor effective June 26. She will be administrator of Bishop Matthew H. Clark's office.

Sister Binsack will succeed Father Timothy Brown, who has served in a similar position since 1996. He will be reassigned this spring to a new position.

An estimated 38 women serve as chancellor or vice chancellor out of 228 positions, according to Mary Ann Walsh, associate director of communications for the United States Catholic Conference.

Canon law was revised in 1983 and did away with the requirement the chancellor be a priest. It permits the bishop to appoint a lay person, religious or cleric.

Sister Binsack's work will involve coordinating the secretarial operation of the bishop's office, including handling travel schedules and correspondence for the bishop. She also will provide professional support to the bishop by coordinating his appearances throughout the diocese.

Sister Binsack's experience includes 19 years at the Pastoral Center, and 30 years overall in working in the diocese.

"I'm probably one of the few people that really like administration and enjoy doing it," she commented. "It was a tough decision though, I had to take my name out of the election process here."

Sister Binsack has been a councilor for the past four years for the Sisters of Mercy, and planned to run for re-election. As such, she has been part of a decision-making team that manages religious and corporate sides of the community. She is chair of the Task Force for Future Leadership Structures for the Mercy sisters' regional communities of Rochester, Erie, Pittsburgh and Buffalo.

She has been a teacher; part-time executive secretary of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (1975-79); director of the diocesan Office of Religious Education (1981-89) and diocesan director of faith forma-

tion (1989-97).

Sister Binsack restructured the Office of Education to the Office of Faith Development Ministry and worked with St. Bernard's Institute to transfer continuing edu-



cation personnel and programs to SBI. She also restructured the Office of Religious Education to include two satellite offices and a focus on adult-centered catechesis.

"I am looking forward to working with the bishop and his staff," she said, adding that she likes the "concept of working with church and society."

"We are very pleased Sr. Mary Ann has accepted this position," Bishop Clark stated in a March 2 press release. "Her vast experience, her dedication and character, and the wonderful gifts and talents she brings to this position will make working with her a pleasure."

- Kathleen Schwarz

## Brother: Family farm decline threatens everyone

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Most people may have no contact with family farmers. But the nation's decreasing number of independent farmers should concern everyone, according to Brother David Andrews, CSC, executive director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

As fewer and fewer companies control the food market, the nation's food supply could become more susceptible to problems consumers expect when large companies control the distribution of other products, he said. Higher food prices and possible food shortages may be in store, he noted.

"If we don't like what we have in the hospital system with managed care, I don't think we'll like managed food," Brother Andrews said. He argued that consumers are better off when many independent farmers, food processors and food wholesalers thrive, better ensuring food quality and a stable food supply.

Founded in the 1920s, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference is affiliated with the United States Catholic Conference, the organizational arm of the U.S. bishops. Brother Andrews represented the rural life conference March 2-5 at the 99th annual National Farmers Union Convention at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel. It was a return visit for the Holy Cross brother, who chaired the English Department at the now-closed Cardinal Mooney High School in Greece from 1970-72.

The Farmer's Union is a national federation comprising almost 300,000 farm and

ranch families.

The convention featured several speakers including Robert Kennedy Jr., a clean-water advocate, and son of the assassinated U.S. Sen. Bobby Kennedy.

Brother Andrews was among nationally known Catholic and Protestant leaders invited by the federation to share concerns at two sessions devoted to church-related issues.

"Churches and taverns are the last ones to shut out the lights when towns close," he said in a post-convention interview. He pointed out that as family farmers deal with foreclosures and other financial pressures, "church ministers are on the front lines in hearing up-close and personal stories of crisis."

Those points were echoed by Clay Pederson, administrative vice president of the Farmers Union. Domestic violence, substance abuse and divorce have all increased substantially in the rural United States in the past 20 years, he and the Holy Cross brother said.

"We're seeing an absolute crumbling of institutions in rural America including churches," Pederson commented during a post-convention interview.

Pederson and Brother Andrews said convention participants were united in their concern that the concentration of food production in a few corporate hands has led to the degradation of farmland, the increase in animal-borne illnesses, and the pollution of the nation's water supply. Brother Andrews added that the Catholic bishops in the nation's southern states have become so concerned about the abuses connected with the poultry industry that they issued a

pastoral letter on the industry last fall titled "Voices and Choices" (which can be seen on the Internet at <http://www.americancatholic.org/News/PoultryPastoral/default.asp>).

Brother Andrews also spoke of "eating is a moral act," which is also the title of informational fliers the conference began producing for parishes nationwide last fall. The fliers are an attempt to make suburban and urban Catholics more aware that what they buy in supermarkets — where a few food companies control most products — is linked to who grows, processes and packages their food. One flier, for example, outlines an "Eater's Bill of Rights" and lists, for example: the right to safe food; the right to food with labels for genetic modification; the right to food produced under socially just circumstances; and the right to know the conditions of their food's production.

Another flier outlines actions parishes and churches can take to strengthen family farmers. Suggestions include using church parking lots and halls for farmer's markets that deliver food directly to consumers; encouraging community institutions to buy directly from local farmers; supporting the humane treatment of animals; and supporting anti-trust activity in food production.

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**EDITORS' NOTE:** To learn more about the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, visit the Web site at <http://www.ncrlc.com>; e-mail the conference at [ncrlc@aol.com](mailto:ncrlc@aol.com); or call 515/270-2634. The conference will provide parishes with a packet of six "Eating Is A Moral Act" fliers at \$1.50 per packet.



### GERMAN MONTH

at the Lamplighter Restaurant

Every March and September the Lamplighter Restaurant features German specialties for lunch and dinner. This is a list of specials the restaurant will be offering for March 2001.

- Potato Pancakes  
Served with sour cream and applesauce
- Cabbage Soup  
made the old fashion way
- Sauerbraten  
Choice marinated beef, slow roasted and served in its own natural au jus
- Knockwurst  
Spicy German sausage
- Rouladen  
Choice rolled beef stuffed with bacon, pickles and onions
- Wiener Schnitzel  
Lightly breaded choice veal

**Regular continental menu also available including Angus Beef, Fresh Seafood and Italian Specialties.**

Lunch: Tuesday-Friday 11:30 to 2:00  
Dinner: Monday-Thursday 4:30 to 10:00  
Friday and Saturday till 11:00

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