

DIOCESAN NEWS

Catholics lobby on death penalty, other issues

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Almost 1,000 Catholics from around New York state, including several bishops, were slated to descend upon the New York State Legislature's offices on Tuesday, March 13, to lobby on behalf of various issues near and dear to the heart of the church.

Those Catholics include 100 from throughout the Diocese of Rochester, according to Judy Taylor, communications manager for Diocesan Catholic Charities. Such Catholics include representatives of the staffs of parishes, schools and church-affiliated agencies as well as volunteers and clients.

Due to scheduling conflicts, Bishop Matthew H. Clark did not plan to attend the annual Public Policy Forum. The forum is sponsored by the New York State Catholic Conference based in Albany.

Forum participants attend workshops on various issues at the beginning of the day, and then buttonhole legislators from their regions on issues.

Increasing funding for drug rehabilitation programs is the key issue for John Hemmers, primary therapist at Freedom House, a long-term residential treatment facility for 30 men affiliated with Catholic Family Center in Rochester. Hemmers said he would take the message to legislators that many addicts can become criminals who wind up in prison where they cost more money to house than they would in a drug program. Additionally, he said, they are released from prison, many have not dealt with their addictions,

and then often return to prison costing taxpayers even more money.

"It would do the taxpayers better to pay less and get more, than to pay more and get less," he said regarding drug treatment funding.

Among the other concerns the diocesan delegation was taking to state legislators was a desire for a moratorium on the death penalty in New York state, Taylor said. She added that since February, more than 7,200 signatures have been collected at various diocesan sites, including 38 parishes, on petitions calling for a moratorium on capital trials and executions at both the state and federal level.

Increasing the minimum wage, improving the living standards of farmworkers and providing affordable health insurance to all are other issues of concern to the 26-member Diocesan Public Policy Committee. The committee determines public policy priorities annually for the diocese, Taylor noted. The committee supports the state Catholic conference's agenda as well, she said.

Cardinal Edward Egan, archbishop of New York City, was slated to meet with Gov. George Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver during the day. According to conference officials, the cardinal was to discuss bills recently passed in the Assembly mandating that employers' health plans cover artificial contraception and infertility treatments that violate Catholic teachings.

The state's bishops, including the cardinal and Bishop Clark, have publicly stated their strong opposition to the bills. A

Senate version of the contraception bill allows employers to opt out of offering such coverage for reasons of religious belief, and that bill is considered more acceptable to state Catholic leaders. Other issues of concern to the state's Catholic leaders are the following:

- Modifying the state's sentencing laws for people convicted of drug offenses.
- Increasing the reimbursements that non-public schools, including Catholic ones, receive for academic services schools are mandated by the state to provide to students.
- Enactment of the "Unborn Victims of Violence Act," which criminalizes the intentional homicide or assault of an unborn child.

- Expansion of such support services for poor, working families as child care, housing, transportation, health coverage and the earned income tax credit.

- Remediating the shortages of teachers, nurses, home-health aides and human service workers.

- Meeting such needs of rural New Yorkers as education, health care, employment and social services.

Taylor said information on the diocesan and statewide church's position on legislative issues can be obtained through her office by calling 716/328-3228, 800/388-7177, ext. 303. Information on the New York Catholic Conference can be obtained at the Web site www.nyscatholic-conference.org.



Church welcomes the elect



David Wallace/Photo intern

(Above) Bishop Matthew H. Clark greets Jodi Morgenthaler of St. Mary's Parish of Auburn, as a member of the elect during the Rites of Election March 11 at Church of the Immaculate Conception, Ithaca. (Left) Mackenzie Moore, 7, of Ss. Peter and Paul of Elmira signs the Book of the Elect, as Joanne Church of the Roman Catholic Community of Geneva watches. The book, with names from across the diocese, will be stored at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Catholic Family Center March 16 gala to honor bishop

Bishop Matthew H. Clark is this year's honoree at the Catholic Family Center's St. Patrick's Day Charity Gala. He will receive the 2001 CFC award during the festivities Friday, March 16, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rochester.

As of March 12, 590 reservations had been made, according to Margy Riemer, manager of community relations for Catholic Family Center.

"That is a sell-out crowd and the largest we ever had," she said.

Traditionally the gala raises about \$85,000 for CFC programs and services, she said.

Among previous recipients of the award are: Frank and Mary Lou Stotz,

past honorary chairs of the gala and supporters of not only the center, but also other community charitable organizations; Monroe County Sheriff Andrew Meloni; Roger Kober, retired chairman/CEO of Rochester Gas & Electric Corp.; Jerry Carr, president of operations for Frontier Corp.; and R. Wayne LeChase, president/CEO of LeChase Construction Services LLC. The award and gala were instituted in 1992.

"The award really goes to someone or someones who show an exemplary spirit of devotion to the many human-service organizations in the Rochester area," Riemer said. "And certainly Bishop Clark personifies that."

Aquinas hockey drops state final; AQ, Nazareth hoops fall in quarterfinals

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Terrific seasons by Aquinas Institute hockey, Aquinas boys' basketball, and Nazareth Academy girls' basketball were all recently halted by losses in state tournament play.

Aquinas hockey reached the state Division 2 championship game before losing to Salmon River, 3-1, on March 11 at the Utica Memorial Auditorium. AQ had advanced to the title game with a 5-1 semifinal win over Glens Falls on March 9 in Utica. This marked the third state final in four years for the Little Irish, who ended their 2000-01 season with a 20-7 record.

AQ boys' basketball was stopped in its bid for a state title by Williamsville East, 71-67, in a Class B quarterfinal game on March 10 at Rochester's Blue Cross Arena. The Little Irish had advanced by stopping previously unbeaten Livonia, 66-55, in a state qualifier game on March 8 at Blue Cross Arena. Aquinas posted a 22-3 record this season, winning its second straight Section 5 Class BB title.

Nazareth (22-3) battled hard but lost to a more experienced Iroquois team, 53-47, in a state Class B quarterfinal game on March 11 at SUNY College at Brockport. This was the program's first trip to the

state tournament in school history. The Lasers got there by crushing Palmyra-Macedon, 47-33, in a qualifier game on March 9 at Webster High School.

Salmon River 3, AQ 1

The Little Irish met their match against the Shamrocks, who outshot AQ by a 34-6 margin. Goalie Ben Collins helped keep the game close with 31 saves. Brian Collins, Ben's cousin, scored AQ's only goal in the final seconds of the second period to close the margin to 2-1.

In the semifinal win over Glens Falls, AQ's offense was powered by Mario Nucci, with two goals and one assist; and linemates Justin Wilson and Ryan LaSchomb, with one goal and two assists each. Ryan Gage added the team's other goal and Ben Collins made 24 saves.

A senior who was in his first year as AQ's full-time goalie, Ben Collins felt good about the effort he put forth in these crucial contests.

"The pressure's on in games like that. But I was mentally prepared for it," he remarked. "I'm pleased with my play and I'm very pleased with the play of everybody on this team."

Though the Irish fell short of a state title, he pointed out that AQ began the season as a largely inexperienced squad. But

the Irish won their fifth straight Section 5 title and came within one game of their third state championship in four years.

"For having a young team I thought it was unbelievable — a miracle we could get so far," he said.

Williamsville E. 71, AQ 67

Aquinas held a 51-49 edge over the Flames after three quarters, but the Little Irish went without a basket for the first six minutes of the final period. They trailed by 11 points and then rallied to within one, 68-67, before falling short. Jemel Williams and Mark Magliocco led AQ with 14 points each, while Kevin McMahan and Tom Joy added 13 and 12 points, respectively.

Aquinas was coming off an impressive victory over Livonia, which brought a 23-0 record into the Class B state-qualifier contest. But the Irish went up 28-23 at halftime and extended their lead to 12 points, 47-35, after three quarters. Williams and McMahan tied for team-high scoring honors with 21 points each.

"We knew they were undefeated and we just wanted to get through that qualifier," Williams said.

Earlier this winter the Irish captured their second consecutive Section 5 Class BB title, giving Williams, a senior forward, a nice send-off.

"People don't usually get a chance to repeat, to end up your career saying you got two sectionals," Williams remarked.

Iroquois 53, Nazareth 47

Nazareth was unable to hold a 26-23 halftime lead against the Chiefs. The score was tied 38-38 after three quarters and Iroquois went up 47-38 to complete a 15-2 run. Meghan Dahlman led the Lasers with 19 points and Nicole Lockhart also scored in double figures, finishing with 12.

In the state-qualifier win over Palmyra-Macedon two days earlier, the Lasers outscored the Red Raiders in every quarter. Dahlman and Stephanie Herbst led the way with 16 and 11 points, respectively.

Dahlman, a sophomore center, averaged 18.4 points and 9.1 rebounds this season. Herbst, a junior guard, averaged 9.4 points; and Lockhart, a freshman forward, averaged 9.3.

This season, Nazareth won its second sectional Class B title in three years. However, the success surpassed Coach Chris Belmont's expectations because none of his top three scorers were seniors.

"The team's goal was to win sectionals, and I thought they were a year or two away. Maybe I should listen to them more often. They had a different idea, I guess," Belmont joked. "It's been a pleasant surprise."