

CONTINUED...

Prison

Continued from page 1

"I'm just trying to change my life back around, and maybe this is what was missing," Angelo said.

Following the men's Mass, two inmates approached Father Carriero and gave him their names and cell locations, asking if he would stay in touch. Indeed, after the women's Mass, Father Carriero returned to the men's jail and granted the sacrament of penance for John, 37. They walked slowly up and down a hall as John wrung his hands and bowed his head while quietly making confession. He and Father Carriero then exchanged a hug.

Father Carriero, a longtime guidance counselor at McQuaid Jesuit High School, celebrates Mass two Sundays per month at the Monroe County Jail. When he started performing this ministry 10 years ago, he noted, four priests from McQuaid rotated the jail's Mass schedule.

These days, however, Father Carriero is the only priest with a regular presence at the jail — meaning that on at least two Sundays a month, there is no Mass at all.

This illustrates the challenge of maintaining sacramental coverage, with increasingly fewer priests available, at state and county prisons in the Rochester Diocese. As of late June, there will be only three priests — two of them diocesan — serving as full-time Catholic prison chaplains. According to Bill Olsen, diocesan director of human resources, a priest presence exists at all 10 state prisons within diocesan boundaries, but coverage is limited at most of them. Full-time chaplaincies are instead filled by deacons and lay people.

County jails, Olsen added, receive even less chaplaincy coverage. None of the county jails in the diocese have regular Sunday Mass or paid chaplains' positions.

Father James Hayes, chief of chaplains for the state Department of Correctional Services, noted that priest chaplains were plentiful in years past, but the declining number of priests has taken its toll.

"Every diocese is really grappling with this right now," Father Hayes said in a telephone interview from Albany. "I sympathize very much with the bishops who are trying to make choices."

Father Vincent Panepinto, for instance, is leaving his prison chaplaincy to become pastor at Rochester's Corpus Christi Parish. He is replacing Father Daniel McMullin, who's taking over the pastorate at St. Mary's in Genesee from the retiring Father William Gordinier. This year, there are five priest retirements but only one priest ordination in the diocese.

Father Panepinto has been a full-time prison chaplain since 1991, most recently



Father John Carriero, SJ, blesses inmates during Mass at the Monroe County Jail May 20.

serving at the Willard Drug Treatment Center while also providing sacramental coverage at Five Points Correctional Facility in Romulus. Although Olsen said the diocese is attempting to replace Father Panepinto with a full-time priest, no appointment has yet been made.

This concerns Deacon Gregory Kiley, chaplain at Willard. While deacons, nuns and other lay people can adequately fill many aspects of chaplaincies, he said, none may celebrate Mass or issue the sacraments of penance and of the sick.

"Now inmates are people who can fall through the cracks," said Deacon Kiley, a full-time prison chaplain since 1989.

New York law provides for one state-paid, full-time chaplain to serve every 400 Catholics at state prisons. Those people are recommended by each diocese for state approval. Federal prisons have similar provisions, though there are no federal facilities located in the Rochester Diocese.

In state facilities, Olsen said, an evolving model for sacramental coverage is for the diocese to designate a parish priest for a few hours per week. That priest is paid by the state as well. The diocesan bishop retains the right to reassign a full- or part-time priest chaplain at any time, Olsen noted.

Olsen said the diocese strives, but isn't always able, to provide Mass every Sunday at state prisons. The problem, he said, "is if we're covering prisons with local priests whose weekend Mass schedule is already above diocesan guidelines (of three Sunday Masses)." Instead, Olsen said, priests might celebrate prison Masses on weekdays.

Chaplaincies at county jails, Father Hayes said, are determined by county governments. "Some are well looked after, and some are poorly looked after. A priest might volunteer once a month. A lot of rural counties probably do not have a chaplain

assigned to them," Father Hayes remarked.

Olsen said that Monroe County Jail is the only county facility in the Rochester Diocese with Catholic chaplains. Two of those men, Deacon William Baker and Deacon Brian Mahoney, are unpaid; they volunteer there as part of their diaconal ministry. Father Carriero is paid on a stipend basis by the County of Monroe.

The Rochester Diocese appears to have creative alternatives to priest chaplaincies: Father Hayes said Rochester is the only diocese in the state with full-time lay chaplains other than nuns. This is the prevailing model in Chemung County, where Peter Ladley and Michael Stanley are full-time chaplains at Elmira Correctional and Reception Center, and Theresa Stanley serves full-time at Southport Correctional Facility.

Also to fill the voids, Father Hayes said, volunteer groups have risen significantly across the state in recent years. They include music-ministry groups such as Sister Del Santo's, as well as Bible-study groups. Bishop Matthew H. Clark himself volunteers at Monroe County Jail — he has celebrated Mass there on Christmas Day nearly every year since becoming bishop of Rochester in 1979.

"Volunteers are one of the great blessings. Without them, we couldn't run the programs we run," Father Hayes said.

Worthy of ministry

Because prison chaplains serve all kinds of criminals, including murderers, Father Panepinto noted that a percentage of the public doesn't see ministry as something prisoners even deserve.

"There is an attitude in this country, also among Catholics, of 'Why bother having priests go to the prisons,'" he said.

Father Panepinto said he hopes to become involved at Monroe County Jail after

settling in at Corpus Christi Church, saying it's his duty as a Catholic Christian to minister to prisoners. He quoted Matthew 25, which says, in part, "I was ... in prison and you visited me."

Meanwhile, Father Hayes cited Luke 24, where Dismas, the repentant criminal, is promised a place in Paradise by Jesus as they are being crucified. In prisons, Father Hayes said, "I've seen lives totally turned around."

Father Carriero, also, uses Bible passages to help explain his involvement in prison duty: Matthew 9, where Jesus states "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do"; and Luke 15, which says, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who have no need of repentance."

On the other hand, Deacon Kiley noted that some prisoners may try taking advantage of chaplains — for instance, being allowed to use a telephone when they're not supposed to. Another challenge, he said, is for him to spread messages of love and compassion when he knows they're not easily applicable in a prisoner's environment.

"Kindness is taken for weakness. If they (outwardly) treat each other like brothers, it blows up in their face," Deacon Kiley said.

Shawn, 35, who had been imprisoned for six months at the Monroe County Jail, revealed scars he said he got from defending himself. Asked if jail conditions are as tough as in movie and television portrayals, he said, "This is real close except you don't get that sense of smell. The stench in here is terrible."

Shawn said weekly Mass is vital for him to cope. "I'm surrounded by the baddest of the bad, and when you eat, drink and sleep with that, you need an hour away," he said.

Kelly, 32, the expectant mother from the Monroe County Jail, said she'd spent many of her days crying and praying in her cell.

"You have to pray here, have some kind of spirituality. Or you go nuts," said Kelly, who added that she's been "in and out of jail" for eight years.

It requires special people to minister in these circumstances, Olsen said: "They're not dealing with the positive aspects of life. Some of these prisoners have done horrible things; the prison minister has to look through that and see the inner core."

Father Panepinto said he has often been the first person to help a prisoner "recover from a lifestyle, a way of thinking, fears and anger that made him act in such a way, maybe from a childhood where physical or sexual abuse was never dealt with."

Kelly said she deeply appreciates the Catholic chaplains and volunteers at Monroe County Jail: "These people let you know you can keep holding your head up. They've all been beautiful people."

COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL

Announcements

ADOPTIONS The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 716-328-4340. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

Miscellaneous

LOOKING FOR A HOME: I'm a 1 1/2 year old, female, lab/mix in need of a new home. I'm well behaved, and am definitely an inside dog. My biggest asset is I like to cuddle, but love to jump and play, and be a home watcher. I'm great with kids, but because of my energy level, they should be 7 years or older. If you want a true companion give me a call at 716/225-6033.

Card of Thanks

ST. JUDE THANK YOU for all your help.

EMPLOYMENT

Business Opportunity

International company honored for its humanitarian efforts is expanding in our area. Learn how you can earn a substantial part or full time income while helping others.
Call now 1-800-484-7099
CODE 5960

Help Wanted

There are elderly people in our community who are having difficulty dealing with the day-to-day tasks of personal care, laundry, meal preparation and light cleaning. If you want to help, we can provide you the skills you need to be the person who can make a big difference in the quality of their lives! Our Home Health Aide Training Program will prepare you help these clients meet the challenges they face with dignity — enabling them to safely remain in their homes. Interested? You can be part of "The Team!" We have a training schedule that will meet your needs! We can be reached Monday-Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm at Rural/Metro Medical Services (716) 546-2393

SERVICES

Ceiling Repair

TEXTURED/SWIRLED CEILINGS: 9' x 12' ceiling only \$59! Water damaged, stained, poorly textured/swirled ceilings repaired, re-textured, re-painted, or made flat again. Any size drywall/plaster wall repairs. No job too small. 716/392-5076.

Masonry

MASONRY REPAIRS: All types. Brick and cement step repairs. Brick, block, concrete, patchwork. 40 years experience. Al Meyvis Sr. 716-323-1007.

Moving and Hauling

K-D Moving & Storage, Inc.
Experience in office, household moving and deliveries.
Big or Small, We do them All!
473-6610/473-4357
23 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607
NYDOT#9657

SERVICES

Painting & Wallcovering

AL MEYVIS, JR.: Painting interior/exterior. Basement walls repaired/painted/wet basements. Carpentry, powerwashing, decks, etc. All types home repairs. Small jobs welcome. (I do all my own work. No sub-contractors.) Certified. 392-4435, 323-2876.

BURG-MASTER PAINTING/PAPERHANGING, textured ceilings, walls, ceilings repaired, rugs shampooed. Insured, powerwashing. Dan Burgmaster, 716/663-0827.

Need a classified?
e-mail
advertising@rochester.courier.com

Home Improvement

Ask yourself is your repairman too expensive, unreliable, unpredictable?

#1 IN REPAIRS

- Roof
- Gutter
- Chimney
- Masonry
- Siding
- Doors
- Windows
- Carpentry
- Insulation
- Ventilation
- Chimney Liners
- Basement Walls
- Painted/Repaired
- Water Proofed
- Gutters Cleaned

TOP-TO-BOTTOM
EXPERT EVALUATION • FULLY INSURED
FREE ESTIMATES • GUARANTEED • SENIOR DISCOUNT
Since 1988
Johnathon A. Geer
338-9865
For 24 Hour Emergencies, Call 764-8204
www.toptobtm.com