

DIOCESAN NEWS

Leaders say expanded gambling is dicey move

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

The New York State Catholic Conference greeted with dismay provisions to expand legalized gambling included in an appropriations bill that both houses of the New York State Legislature passed Oct. 25.

The bill authorizes six new Indian-run casinos, the installation of electronic slot machines at racetracks and the inclusion of New York in the multi-state Powerball lottery. Three of the Indian-run casinos would be operated in western New York and three would be located in the Catskills.

The expansion of legalized gambling may lead to increases in gambling addic-



tions and amounts to the state preying on low-income people who may spend limited income on gambling, the state's Catholic leaders argued.

"The church doesn't say that gambling in and of itself is immoral ...," said Dennis Poust, the conference's associate director, in a phone interview from Albany. "But we don't feel the state should be partner in fostering the addictions of its citizens."

Poust added that it was "somewhat shameful" that gambling supporters had argued that the economic distress suffered by the state following the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center justified expanding gambling. One such argument was made by Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno who was quoted in the Albany Times-Union Oct. 25 as saying that the state "desperately needed revenue" in the wake of the attacks.

State leaders have estimated that the attacks will cost New York's state treasury \$9 billion in lost taxes over the next two years, and gambling supporters argued that expanded gambling will help the state recover lost revenue. However, tax revenue from expanded gambling in the state won't appear in large amounts for two to three years, long after the state has lost substantial revenue, said Sen. Richard Dollinger, a parishioner at St. Thomas More Parish in Brighton, who voted against the bill.

"As far as I'm concerned, that's the grossest manipulation of the World Trade Center tragedy, to sell gambling," he said.

Poust added that the state had been talking about expanding legalized gambling before Sept. 11, so the argument that the effects of the attacks somehow justified a pro-gambling move by the state was disingenuous. He noted that the conference's interim executive director, Richard E. Barnes, had sent a Sept. 7 letter to Gov. George E. Pataki and the legislature opposing the kind of gambling expansion the legislature approved last week.

The appropriations bill actually contained a wide variety of measures, with expanded gambling among them. Because

the bill covered so many funding targets other than gambling, including education and economic development, many members of the legislature opposed to gambling nonetheless said they felt pressured to vote for it, Poust said. The Senate approved the bill 52-8, and the Assembly approved the bill 92-41.

Additionally, the Senate also passed a constitutional resolution 50-10 that would allow for the operation of casinos by non-Indians anywhere in the state as long as they are approved by local voters, the governor and the legislature. The constitutional resolution would need approval from the Assembly as well as two more votes of approval by two separately elected legislatures and approval in a voter referendum.

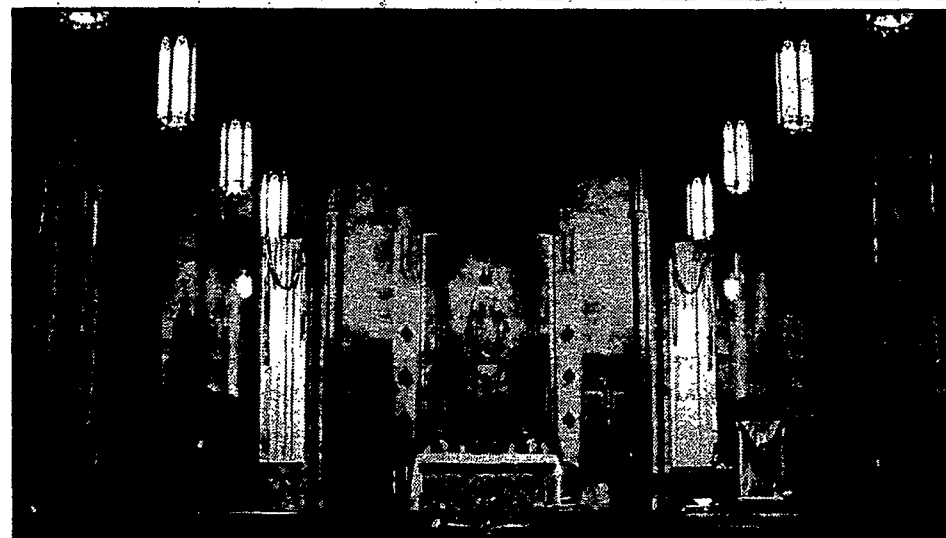
Poust dismissed comments reported by anonymous official sources in *The New York Times* Oct. 20 that not-for-profits like Catholic Charities would benefit from expanded gambling because a portion of the tax revenues it generates would go to fund such organizations' programs.

"The gambling-enabling legislation does not dedicate any revenues to not-for-profits," he said, adding the bulk of the revenue will end up going into the state's general funding for all programs. "I want to stress that this whole idea of funding not-for-profits with gambling revenue is not accurate."

He added that tying gambling expansion to funding for not-for-profits was a "part of the sales pitch" of the bill's supporters because so many not-for-profit programs were underfunded or not funded at all in a budget appropriations bill passed last August.

"It's almost insulting that it would be tied to gambling," Poust said of not-for-profit funding.

"Our opposition to this unprecedented expansion of legalized gambling is not going to be influenced by vague promises of funding for not-for-profits, which the state has an obligation to fund with or without gambling revenue," he added.



File photo

An interior view of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester.

Conferees discuss cathedrals

By Gene Stowe
Catholic News Service

NOTRE DAME, Ind. — A team approach won broad support for a \$4 million renovation of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, speakers at a conference said.

Leaders of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend told participants at a church architecture symposium at the University of Notre Dame that sensitive planning won over initial opposition to the changes at the cathedral. Some 2,000 people signed petitions against the project at first, but a strategy of listening sessions and program planning led to a finished project with near-universal approval.

"It was the work of a wonderful team," Bishop John M. D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend said Oct. 22 at the symposium on "Cathedrals for a New Century."

The Oct. 21-23 symposium, sponsored by the Institute for Church Life and the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (Henkels Grant), was organized by the University of Notre Dame's theology department and the School of Architecture.

The three-day event included talks by prelates, theologians and architects as well as presentations of new and recently refurbished cathedrals and planned cathedrals.

Father John Mulligan, a Diocese of Rochester vicar general, is also pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral, which is slated for renovation by 2004. He attended the conference with retired architect David Miller, a parishioner at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brighton, and co-chairman of the

Sacred Heart renovation committee's Architect Selection and Construction Review Committee. In an interview Oct. 25, Father Mulligan said he and Miller talked about the process the diocese has undertaken to renovate the cathedral. Father Mulligan added that a proposed master plan for renovating the cathedral and the parish campus may be released in late December or early January.

Prior to attending the conference, Father Mulligan said he had also been pondering creating a committee made up, in part, of civic and ecumenical representatives, to discuss how the cathedral can better serve as a center of community activity. Already, he said, parish facilities are used by a number of community groups.

"I think what we don't want is to create a bunch of spaces that are only used three hours a week," he said.

Response to renovation plans usually divides a group, with about one-third opposed, one-third in favor and one-third in the middle, said Father Michael Driscoll, a member of the symposium planning committee. The Fort Wayne project is a model of how to broaden support, he said.

"In selling a liturgical renewal, the three most important factors are process, process, process," Father Driscoll said. "The team process bore great fruit. It was a project that was owned by a lot of people."

The project accomplished its goal, Bishop D'Arcy said, which was "to preserve the beauty but to make it all accessible to the reformed liturgy, which is participation."

Includes reporting by Rob Cullivan.

Franciscan notes golden jubilee

Father John Richardson, an Elmira native, celebrated his 50th anniversary as a Franciscan Sept. 29 at St. Mary's Parish in Oberburg, N.Y., where he is pastor.

Father Richardson, 73, grew up in Elmira's St. Mary Parish. He was received into the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor in 1950. He made his first profession of vows in 1951 and his solemn profession in 1954 before being ordained to the priesthood June 11, 1956.

Father Richardson — who is commonly known as "Father Gus" — has served at St. Mary's in Oberburg, Sullivan County, since 1995. He is noted for his ministry to teenagers through the local Catholic Youth Organization.

"I've had some wonderful assignments, very interesting assignments. I've loved them all," Father Richardson said. "It's great to be a Franciscan, it really is."

Upon completing his studies in 1958, Father Richardson became a missionary in Estado de Goias, Brazil, where he served

for eight years as a parish pastor and college English/religion professor.

From 1966-68 he served at St. Anthony's Shrine in Boston, where he was also part-time chaplain at the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

In 1968 he moved to the VA Center in West Haven, Conn., where he served as chief of chaplain service until 1989. In 1978 he was appointed a lecturer in psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine.

From 1989-92 Father Richardson served at St. Francis Chapel in Providence, R.I. That was followed by three more years of service with the Franciscan order in New York City.

Father Richardson is a member of the Knights of Columbus and was a Paul Harris Fellow in the West Haven Rotary Club. He is the brother of Mercy Sister Therese Richardson, a staff member at Mercy Prayer Center in Rochester.

— Mike Latona

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Wed., Nov. 7, RPO Community Concert - 7:30 pm

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