

DIOCESAN NEWS

Parishioners will bear Olympic torch

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant editor

Mercy Sister Rosemary Sherman, who's run races for nearly 20 years, routinely has nightmares before a race. Recently she dreamed that the Sisters of Mercy were lined up on Blossom Road by their motherhouse waiting for her to run past them bearing the Olympic flame.

"And here I am on East Avenue!" she lamented. "I had a dream I ran by the Sisters of St. Joseph motherhouse."

Sister Sherman, 50, of St. Louis Parish, Pittsford, is one of more than 7,000 people throughout the country chosen to carry the Olympic flame, being passed from torch to torch as it makes its way across 46 states to Salt Lake City for opening ceremonies Feb. 8. The flame was brought to Atlanta from Athens Dec. 4.

A public celebration is planned Dec. 31 in Manhattan Square Park during the Rochester portion of the torch relay.

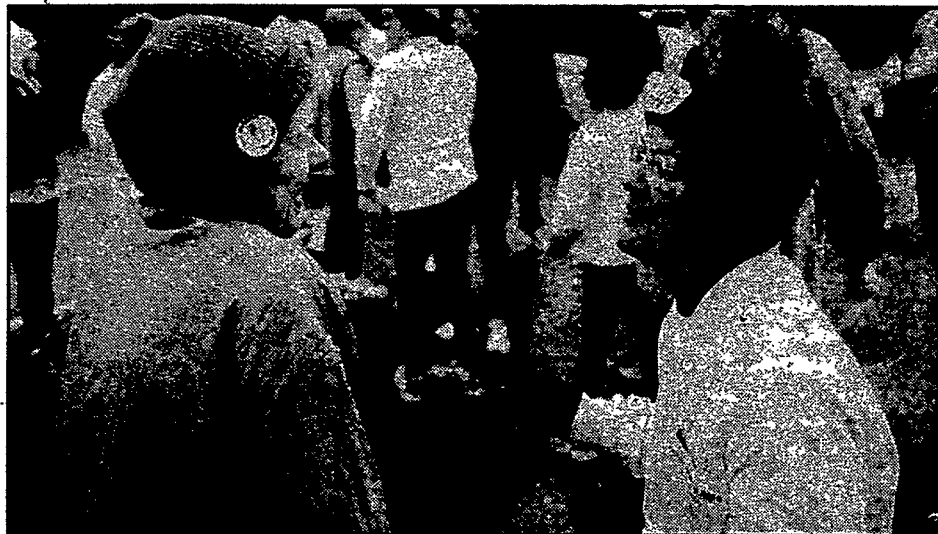
Several other diocesan parishioners are among New Yorkers who will carry the torch on its way Dec. 31 through Syracuse, Seneca Falls and Rochester to Buffalo. They include Michael Apostolakis of Church of the Transfiguration, Pittsford; Jon Shay of St. Mary's, Dansville; and Terry and Tara Golisano of Church of the Assumption, Fairport.

Each will carry the flame two-tenths of a mile along its journey.

"This is extra special, I'm sure, to everybody because of everything the country has been through since Sept. 11," said Shay, 59. "I'm really excited about it."

Like many others, he had had no idea who nominated him. Eventually he learned it was a good friend and fellow businessman Bob Sinclair. Shay, a longtime Rotarian, owns Main Tire Exchange. Nominations included essays on how the nominee inspires others in the community.

Siena Catholic Academy seventh-grader Maggie Shaffer prodded her mom, JoEllen



Karin von Voigtlander/Photo intern

Sister Rosemary Sherman talks with her friend Janet Courtright before a race at Webster Park Dec. 9. She has run more than 1,000 miles this year, and will end the year carrying the Olympic torch.

Shaffer of St. Ambrose Parish, into nominating Sister Sherman, Maggie's aunt, in March. When the Federal Express package arrived in late summer to announce the nomination, Sister Sherman called her sister, Shaffer, and said, "You won't believe what I got in the mail."

Sister Sherman said she planned to jog if her assigned route is icy. "I want to savor the moment," she said. "At that moment I will be the only person entrusted with the Olympic flame. Then when I watch them light the cauldron on TV I will be able to say at one point I had that flame."

Sister Sylvester Gehl reminded Sister Sherman that Dec. 31 is the feast of Silvester I, and said she would pray that he take good care of her.

"I wasn't thinking of that," Sister Sherman said. "It is the last day of one year, the beginning of a new year. And what a way to start a new year."

For the Golisanos it will also be a way to celebrate a year-long remission of Hodgkin's disease for Tara, 20. She and her mom, Terry, will walk as a pair.

Terry nominated her daughter for the relay after she had finished chemotherapy. Her daughter had raised \$2,500 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

"She is a very faithful person and that got her through it," Terry said. Tara

worked in Assumption's office for three years, and now works with children in a special-education program and at Wegmans in Perinton. Her mother, a dental hygienist, is coordinator for a weekly ecumenical dinner program at Assumption.

The two attended a training session for the relay in Buffalo this fall. "They give you a fake torch of cardboard to show how heavy it is," Terry said, explaining the torch weighs about 3½ pounds. "It's heavier than you'd think it would be. They want us to hold it over our heads if possible."

The two purchased their torches, at \$335 each. "We got those because we'll never get another chance to do that," she said.

While in Buffalo, mother and daughter also had their picture taken with Olympic speed skater David Jansen.

Bob Golisano, father and husband, got in on that.

He'll take on the job of photographer for his family during the relay Dec. 31. Numerous friends and family members also plan to line the route once they learn where to station themselves.

Golisano coached CYO for 30 years at parishes including St. Stanislaus and Assumption. He said his wife and daughter "can coach themselves," however.

"They don't need my smart remarks. I'm just going along for the ride."

Driver pleads guilty in fatal priest accident

Philip R. Johnson, 54, of Fayette, pleaded guilty Dec. 4 to criminally negligent homicide and driving while intoxicated in the death of Father Brian Jeffers. On July 22, the van Johnson was driving struck a motorcycle being driven by 37-year-old Father Jeffers, who died early July 23 at Strong Memorial Hospital.

Johnson pleaded guilty at an arraignment in Seneca County Court. According to District Attorney Donna M. Cathy, he admitted that while driving north on Route 96 in the Town of Fayette he crossed into the southbound lane and struck Father Jeffers' southbound motorcycle. Cathy said Johnson's blood alcohol at the time was .20 percent, .10 percent is evidence of intoxication.

Cathy had filed the criminally negligent homicide charge in the Town of Fayette Court Nov. 6, after consultation with New York State Police in light of accident reconstruction and vehicle examination reports. The DWI and traffic violation charges were against Johnson July 20.

Sentencing is set for Jan. 22. Johnson could face up to four years in prison. He is free on his own recognizance.

Father Jeffers, who had been ordained in 1982, was on leave from April while reportedly recovering from a heart attack. He had served Good Shepherd Catholic Community in Cayuga County as pastor for two years. He also had been a parochial vicar at St. Stephen's Parish, Geneva, from 1995-98, and priest intern at St. Mary's Parish, Canandaigua, from 1997-98.

Kathleen Schwar

Huddle in fourth place

Molly Huddle, a senior at Emma Notre Dame High School, finished her memorable cross-country season by placing fourth at the Foot Locker National Championship Dec. 8.

Huddle posted a personal best time of 17 minutes, 19.59 seconds over 3.1 miles at Oak Branch Golf Course, located at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida. By finishing in the top five among 32 competitors, Huddle earned first team All-America honors. The winning time of 16:24 was posted by Amber Trotter of Redwood Valley, Calif.

The national championships, which were held for both girls and boys, featured the top eight runners from each of four regions across the country. Huddle had qualified for the national race by earning a second place finish at the Northeast Regionals Nov. 24 in New York City.

Earlier this fall, Huddle captured the state Class D and Federation (all public, private and New York City schools) championships. This was the first year that Huddle had competed in scholastic cross-country.

Mike Latona

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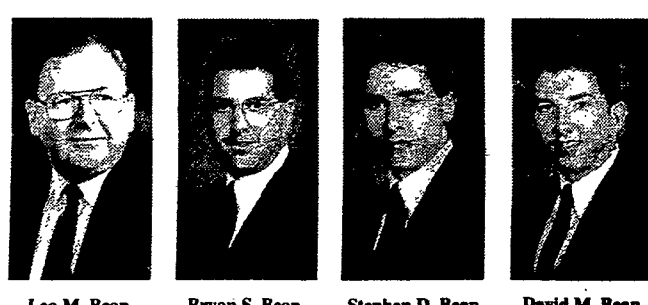
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