

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Parish reaches out to kidney patient

By Mike Latona  
Staff Writer

GREECE — Alex DiPasquale had endured four surgeries over a 10-day stretch. Already forced to retire from politics due to a long-standing kidney condition, he had just learned from his doctors that he couldn't continue as a college professor. To top it all off, his marriage was ending.

"When I got out of the hospital, I felt abandoned, alone," DiPasquale recalled.

A self-described "intermittent churchgoer" for much of his adult life, DiPasquale found himself reaching for the phone one night in 1993, calling St. Lawrence Church in search of a priest.

The pastor, Father Frank Falletta, invited him to come right over, and DiPasquale spent the next two hours emptying his soul — "most of that time crying," he said.

DiPasquale emerged from the conversation with a sense of hope, however. "The guidance he gave me changed the whole course of my life, so much for the better. I have great family and great friends, and I count Father Falletta chief among those friends," DiPasquale said.

More recently, others at St. Lawrence have sought to help DiPasquale — this time in a physical sense, through the donation of a kidney.

DiPasquale, who turns 52 next month, has endured nearly 40 surgeries, including three unsuccessful transplants. He's been on a waiting list for a cadaveric (deceased person's) kidney for 15 years.

Recent medical advances, DiPasquale said, have made possible a new procedure involving a live donor. The only initial requirements for a donor are to be in very good health and have the same blood type as the recipient. DiPasquale is type O.

Three St. Lawrence parishioners have come forward as potential donors; two have been disqualified as suitable matches and the third is in the process of being tested. DiPasquale explained that he is a difficult match because he has a very high level of antibodies — which caused his other three transplants to fail — and because his system is already weakened from so many years of kidney disease.

Even so, DiPasquale is deeply appreciative of the would-be donors' effort. Donating a kidney, although generally a safe procedure, poses such potential complications as allergy to anesthesia, infection and a temporarily collapsed lung.

"These three people and their willingness, they will forever be in my prayers," DiPasquale said. "I will be forever thankful they had the altruism based on their Christian moral life. This is taking it to the nth degree."

He remains optimistic that a match will emerge for him and, at the very least, that "people will get very interested in organ



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Alex DiPasquale of Greece laughs with students in a Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults class at St. Lawrence School Feb. 12. DiPasquale, who has kidney disease, is in need of a kidney transplant. Several of DiPasquale's fellow parishioners at St. Lawrence Church have offered to donate an organ to him.

donation in general, all the wonderful things that could be accomplished."

DiPasquale was 27 when he was diagnosed with kidney disease. He determinedly remained in politics, despite spending 15 hours a week on dialysis treatment. "I put a lot of emphasis on my career — I had to," he said. "People would look at me as a dialysis patient and say, 'He can't do this and he can't do that.'"

DiPasquale served as Monroe County's assistant executive from 1972 to 1988, and was later head of the Department of Public Works in the town of Greece.

He then taught at the State University of New York College at Brockport, and was working toward his doctorate in political science and public administration in 1993 when deteriorating health and his personal life knocked him down — hard.

That's when DiPasquale — who had joined St. Lawrence four years earlier — went to Father Falletta, even though the two did not know each other well.

"When anyone comes looking for help from the church, you do your best to help them out," the pastor remarked. DiPasquale, he recalled, offered to help the parish as well: "He was saying, 'Is there anything I can do?' And I said, 'Well, what can you do?'"

DiPasquale became the part-time parish manager in 1994 and has thrived in the position, managing the budget for one of the diocese's largest parishes. "He is a very well-organized person — so organized, it makes me sick," Father Falletta said with a laugh.

DiPasquale also volunteers as coordi-

nator of St. Lawrence's Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program and as an usher. In addition, he stops inside the church nearly every day to pray.

Gone is the driven nature that marked his young adulthood. "Now I have a greater appreciation for life," he said. "Before, I wanted to *achieve* something. What I realize now, instead of achieving great things through politics and government, I can do a lot of good for people in a lot of small ways, one person at a time. I guess this is a path God led me on. Right now, I'm where I'm supposed to be."

A bad reaction to medication in the 1980s left DiPasquale with a slight loss of balance, and a stroke in the late 1990s caused a partial loss of vision and nerve damage in his legs. Meanwhile, his second wife, Barbara, has battled breast cancer during the last year, undergoing a mastectomy plus radiation and chemotherapy treatments.

But rather than curse the world, DiPasquale said he feels "very, very fortunate," noting that when he was first treated for kidney disease, he was only given six to eight years to live.

"I never expected to live 25 years on dialysis, to be honest with you," he said.

He still goes for treatment three afternoons per week, and strives to stay fit by going to the YMCA and playing golf. The rest, DiPasquale said, is up to his maker.

"I put my faith in God," he said. "He's gotten me through 25 years of dialysis, 38 surgeries and God knows how many procedures. I just go day-to-day with his help and guidance."

## Recognizing

\* Sabrina McMillin-Lobo and Lauren Parker, third-grade students at Our Mother of Sorrows School in Greece, each received cameras Jan. 28 from the George Eastman House in Rochester as prizes for their winning entries in the "George Eastman Gingerbread House Essay Contest." The students were among only three winners in the entire Rochester metropolitan area. Sabrina wrote about peace and harmony in a house decorated with candies; Lauren wrote about a miniature family living creatively in a tiny house.

\* Ten students from Our Lady of Mercy High School in Brighton won awards in the Finger Lakes Region Scholastic Art Awards 2002 on Feb. 2. The annual show includes 450 works from 84 area schools and will be displayed at the Rochester Institute of Technology's Bevier Gallery through Feb. 20. Three students earned Gold Key awards, and their work will be entered in a juried national show in New York City at the conclusion of the Finger Lakes show. Gold Key recipients are: Elizabeth Hamilton, a junior from Rochester; Kristina McIntyre, an eighth-grader from Webster; and Jennifer Pearsall, a junior from Fairport. Silver Key awards went to: Chelsea Bonosky, a freshman from Fairport; Laura Moore, a senior from Pittsford; Megan Murray, a senior from Fairport; and Jacalyn Stolt, a junior from Pittsford. Jurors' Choice awards were won by Heather Kloc, a junior from Rochester; Sarah Lytle, a senior from Victor; and Krysta Mathias, a senior from Webster.

\* Meanwhile, the artwork of Mercy seniors Teresa M. Groeninger, Hannah Olson and Allison Role has been chosen to appear in the textbook *Creating in Christian Ministry* to be published this year by St. Mary's Press in Winona, Minn.

\* A \$500 grant funded through the Exxon Mobil Education Alliance program will be used to enhance science, math and technology programs at St. Michael's School in Penn Yan. The grant was awarded to the school Jan. 23, and may be used to purchase software for classrooms, teaching equipment and to fund educational presentations.

\* David M. Rodriguez, a senior at McQuaid Jesuit High School in Rochester, was recently named one of 4,200 Hispanic students chosen as scholars in the National Hispanic Recognition Program. The names of all the scholars have been released to colleges and universities nationwide to encourage them to seek out talented Hispanic students as candidates for admission.

\* Meanwhile, McQuaid's 2001 art and literary magazine, the *Keynotes*, received a Gold/All New York ranking from the Empire State Scholastic Press Association in the overall Literary Magazine Category, and a Most-Improved Publication in New York State in the Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines by the National Council of Teachers of English. The magazine's editors all graduated in June of last year: Thomas Combe of Penfield; and Michael Hanford, Terrence Lester and Michael Pomeroy, all of Pittsford. ESSPA also gave awards to the following 2001 graduates: Kenneth Camann of Fairport, Gold Award for Best Fiction; Evan Cummings of Rochester, Silver Award for Best Specialized Content; and Hanford, Bronze Award for Best Photograph.

**Logan's** FROM 50 TO 1000 PEOPLE SINCE 1955  
FOR PRIVATE PARTIES  
3 DISTINCTIVE DINING ROOMS  
SPACIOUS PRIVATE • COCKTAIL LOUNGES  
Banquets • Weddings  
Retirement Parties • Dinner Dances  
Sales Promotion Dinners • Clam Bakes • Buffets  
**R&R O'Connor's**  
1420 Scottsville Rd. • Rochester  
Phone: (585) 235-6978

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)  
Vol. 113 No. 19, Feb. 21, 2002  
Published weekly except the first Thursday in January and the last Thursday in December. Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY 14624, 585/328-4340. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, NY.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, PO Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624.

**Catholic Family Center**  
**Pregnant? Need Help?**  
Catholic Family Center's Pregnancy Hotline  
CALL 1-800-CARE-002  
25 Franklin Street • Sibley Tower Building, 7th Floor  
Rochester, New York 14604-1007 • 716-546-7220  
www.cfcrochester.org

The Mystical Touring Company & Christ the King Elementary School  
presents  
**The Lion King**  
on Saturday March 2nd, 2002  
at Princess of Whales Theatre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
\$124.00/per person  
Please call with any questions:  
LINDA ZALESKI 585.544.4694