

## DIOCESAN NEWS

## Professor sees God within tragedy

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Where was God on Sept. 11, 2001? The answer to that question will be as varied as the people asked, according to Dr. Maureen A. Tilley, holder of the William H. Shannon Chair in Catholic Studies at Nazareth College in Rochester.

Tilley made her remarks during an April 18 lecture titled "9/11, 311 and 411: Making History and Imaging God" in the Otto A. Shults Community Center at Nazareth College in Rochester. A religious studies professor at the University of Dayton, Tilley specializes in religious history and has authored articles and books in her area of study. Her chair at Nazareth was named in honor of Msgr. William H. Shannon, professor emeritus of religious studies at Nazareth and an internationally known Thomas Merton scholar.

"The meaning of 9/11 was not just the physical reality of the day ... and the psychological response," she said. "(History) is the record that we make over which we have some, albeit limited, control."

Tilley said much of the debate over the meaning of Sept. 11 echoes previous debates among Jews and Christians over various disasters. And there are many parallels between how people have viewed wars and "evil figures" in past centuries, and how they have viewed them in the last decade, she said.

For example, various figures in history characterized as evil by Christians and Jews have reportedly suffered and died from painful illnesses. Similarly, Tilley said, news reports for a time dwelled on the fact that Osama bin Laden appeared to be suffering from kidney disease when videotapes of him appeared.

Meanwhile, Sept. 11 caused many people to define evil, good and God's will in a manner that reflected their own beliefs, she said. For example, some right-wing Christians thought God was punishing America for its promotion of same-sex marriages and homosexuality by "lifting the veil of protection" that had shielded the nation from foreign assault in the past, she said. Leftist citizens who thought the nation was suffering for its economic and cultural imperialism in the Third World offered another type of punishment scenario, emphasizing that the terrorists targeted the World Trade Center, a symbol of American economic dominance.

Similarly, people in the past have struggled to find reasons why calamities have befallen their nations, she said. Some ear-



Reuters/CNS

**Franciscan Father Brian Jordan, standing with laborers and emergency workers Oct. 4, blesses a cross of steel beams recovered from the World Trade Center rubble.**

ly Christians asked why God allowed repeated persecutions of the church by the Roman Empire, she said. One interpretation held that God allowed multiple persecutions so that those who had abandoned their faith under duress in previous persecutions might have another chance to suffer for it during the next one.

When Rome granted religious tolerance to Christians in 311, some Christians saw this not as a blessing from God, but as an example of the church selling out to an evil, pagan empire, Tilley noted. For example, the Donatists, a schismatic North African movement of Christians, were persecuted for a time by the Roman Emperor Constantine with the support of the Catholics. As persecuted Christians, the Donatists saw themselves as the true inheritors of the Christian faith that brought persecution to their forbears, she said.

St. Augustine brought forth an interpretation of God's will and providence that was more complicated than any reward-punishment scenario, she noted. In

410, when Rome was sacked by the Visigoths, some Christians once again saw the event as a punishment of one kind or another.

St. Augustine responded in 411 by beginning to write *The City of God*, which contrasted the City of Man, comprising those who are selfish and evil, against God's city, comprising the selfless and good. Free will gives all human beings the potential to live in either city, St. Augustine maintained, and a person's choice in this matter would not necessarily be rewarded or punished in this life. According to Tilley, St. Augustine explained that "What happened to Rome was neither reward nor punishment. Governments come and go."

She added that St. Augustine saw original sin as continually warping humanity. However, God's grace gives humanity reason to hope, she added. "We're not alone in this struggle," Tilley said.

Because people are made in God's image, God was present in the World Trade Center Sept. 11 in the guise of such selfless people as Franciscan Father Mychal Judge, a New York City Fire Department chaplain who was among the first fatalities of the attacks, she said. She added that other such heroes included Avremel Zelmanowitz, who could have escaped the collapse of the towers but chose to stay and comfort a quadriplegic co-worker who was unable to escape, and hence was killed himself. Other heroes include victims' relatives who are currently lobbying the U.S. Congress to aid the families of victims of U.S. bombing in Afghanistan.

"The question was not 'Where was God on 9/11?', but who was God," Tilley said. She added that only time will tell how history ultimately records the meaning of the attacks.

"How the story turns out depends on God and us."

## Obituary

## Fr. L. James Callan; was pastor of Irondequoit parish

Father Luke James Callan, a priest of the Diocese of Rochester for 57 years, died April 15, 2002, at St. Ann's Home in Rochester after a long illness. He was 82.

A native of Rochester, Father Callan was baptized and confirmed at Corpus Christi Church in Rochester. He completed his theological studies at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries, and was ordained on March 17, 1945.

Following his ordination, Father Callan served as associate pastor at several parishes: Holy Rosary, Rochester; Ss. Peter and Paul and St. Patrick, both in Elmira; St. John the Evangelist, Clyde; St. Patrick, Savannah; and St. Louis, Pittsford. In 1955 Father Callan became chaplain of Rochester State Hospital (now known as Rochester Psychiatric Center), where he directed efforts to build St. Jude's Chapel, which was completed in 1969. In 1982, he was appointed pastor of Irondequoit's St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, which he served until his retirement in 1995.

"Father Callan made it very clear that his spirituality centered on Christ and the Eucharist," said David Higbee, religious edu-



cation director at St. Thomas the Apostle, and Father Callan's friend and power of attorney. "He was a deep student of history with a broad interest in the humanities.

These things, together formed his vision for the Catholic Church in modern times."

Father Robert Bradler, who became pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle when Father Callan retired in 1995, remembers his predecessor as a traditional and orthodox priest who was also a very kind and gentle man.

St. Thomas the Apostle parishioners continue to benefit today from Father Callan's dedication to the Eucharist, Father Bradler said. In 1992, Father Callan created a eucharistic adoration chapel to which parishioners are very faithful in visiting.

"Many blessings have come from it," Father Bradler said.

Patients at Rochester Psychiatric Center also continue to benefit from Father Callan's efforts in establishing St. Jude's

Chapel during the late 1960s. According to an article in a 1968 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, then known as the *Courier-Journal*, the hospital's population included 1,500 Catholics at the time.

Until the chapel was built, the hospital had no dedicated worship space, said Deacon Brian McNulty, who teaches English and social studies in the hospital's children's services department. Deacon McNulty began teaching at the hospital a few years before Father Callan was reassigned to St. Thomas the Apostle.

"It is a very nice, serviceable space sitting in the middle of the campus with views all around it," Deacon McNulty said of the chapel. "It's been used constantly since it was open. People still use it, thanks to Father Callan's drive to have a nice worship space."

Father Callan's body lay in state at St. Thomas the Apostle on Friday, April 19. Bishop Matthew H. Clark presided at a funeral Mass at the Irondequoit church the same day. Interment was at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

—Jennifer Ficaglia

## Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has made the following pastoral leadership appointments, which become effective June 25:

**Father Gerald Appelby** to sacramental minister, St. Agnes, Avon, upon his retirement as pastor of Church of the Transfiguration, Pittsford.

**Father Michael J. Bausch** to pastor, Church of the Transfiguration, Pittsford, from pastor, Good Shepherd Church, Henrietta.

**Father Paul A. Bonacci** to pastor, St. Mary of the Lake, Watkins Glen, and St. Benedict, Odessa, from priest administrator of those parishes.

**Father Peter J. DeBellis** to pastor, St. Francis of Assisi, Auburn, with concurrent duties in the diocesan Hispanic Ministry. Father DeBellis is currently parochial vicar for the Roman Catholic Communities of Geneva.

**Father Peter A. Deckman** to pastor, St. Michael/Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rochester, from pastor, St. Francis of Assisi, Auburn. Father Deckman will succeed Father Neil Miller, who is retiring.

**Father Douglas DellaPietra** to pastor, Good Shepherd, Henrietta, from parochial vicar, St. Mary, Canandaigua.

**Rev. Mr. James Fennessy** to newly ordained priest at the Roman Catholic Communities of Geneva. He will be ordained on Saturday, June 22.

**Sister Marie Suzanne Hoffman, SSJ**, to pastoral administrator, St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin, from temporary pastoral administrator there.

**Ms. Deborah Housel** to pastoral administrator, St. Michael, Lyons, from pastoral associate, St. Michael, Newark. Housel will succeed Father William Barrett, who is retiring.

**Father Stephen Lape** to parochial vicar, St. Mary, Auburn, with concurrent duties as sacramental minister at St. Joseph, Rush. Father Lape is currently priest intern at Church of the Good Shepherd, Henrietta.

**Father William B. Leone** to pastor, St. Anne, Rochester, from pastor, Northern Cayuga Cluster.

**Mr. John Loncle** to serve his pastoral year at St. Mary, Canandaigua, under the supervision of Father Thomas Mull.

**Father Dennis J. Shaw** to pastor, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel/St. Francis Xavier/Holy Redeemer, from pastor, Community of Hope Parishes. This assignment was due to a Planning Group reconfiguration.

**Father Felician Sierotowicz** to sacramental minister, St. Michael, Lyons, with concurrent duties at Mercy Rehabilitation Center, Auburn. Father Sierotowicz is currently sacramental minister for Good Shepherd Catholic Community, Cayuga County.

**Father Michael J. Volino**, to parochial vicar, St. John the Evangelist, Greece, from parochial vicar, St. Lawrence, Greece.

**MAKE ROSARIES**  
Call for our catalog and special introductory offer  
**LEWIS & COMPANY**  
P.O. Box 268-K Troy, NY 12181  
**800-342-2400**  
www.rosaryparts.com

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)  
Vol. 113 No. 28, April 25, 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: 1136 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY 14624, 585/529-9530. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, NY.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, PO Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624.