Reuters/CNS

Cardinal Bernard Law is expected to take recommendations from his Commission for the Protection of Children to the bishops' meeting in Dallas.

Bishops' meeting opens in Dallas

By Jerry Filteau Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Three key issues face the U.S. bishops as they meet to deal with clergy sexual abuse of minors — aiding the victims, dealing firmly with clerical offenders and protecting children.

One major question remained unresolved before the June 13-15 meeting in Dallas: Would the bishops adopt a universal zero-tolerance policy, or would they allow some extremely limited exceptions for apparently reformed one-time past offenders?

They plainly planned to give notice that laicization will be requested for a priest who molests a child in the future and that the same fate awaits those with more than one admitted or proven accusation in the past.

In an era of high divorce rates and marrying at later ages, single adults are a growing segment of the popula-

Nora Bradbury-Haehl.

education are tailored to families.

tion. The Catholic Church has yet to catch up to this trend, contends

as the norm. In actuality, that's so few people's reality," said Bradbury-Haehl, diocesan coordinator of young-adult ministry.

parish life. "Whether it's their own perception or the reality, often

single people go to Mass on Sunday and they feel like they're sur-

rounded by families," Bradbury-Haehl said. Compounding this feel-

ing, she added, is the fact that sacramental programs and religious

"In society and church, we tend to think of married-with-children

Consequently, singles may feel relegated to the periphery of

When the current crisis began in Boston in January, Cardinal Bernard F. Law spelled out a strict policy that not even a one-time past offender will be allowed to hold any church post again.

After receiving a draft report June 6 from the Cardinal's Commission for the Protection of Children — a blue-ribbon group formed to advise him on sex abuse policy — he endorsed what he called "the commission's strong recommendation for a zero-tolerance policy with no exceptions."

Cardinals William H. Keeler of Baltimore and Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles are among top churchmen who have said they will seek an across-the-board policy with no exceptions.

Cardinal Adam J. Maida of Detroit expressed concern about a blanket policy allowing no exceptions but also said the exception clause as drafted is confusing and "has to be more clearly explained, or taken out altogether."

He and others suggested that something like a life of seclusion and penance in a monastery could be an alternative to defrocking for at least some priests who have molested children.

Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of St. Paul-Minneapolis, chairman of the committee that drafted the policy, said an exception clause appeared to represent a minority position among the bishops, but the committee included it in the draft in order to put it on the table for debate.

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago threw out a challenge at a press conference

Continued on page 6



Catholic Courier

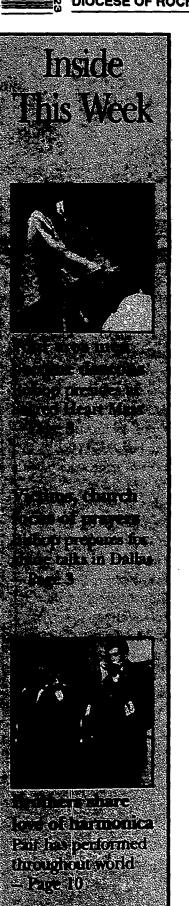
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

VOL. 113 NO. 35

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2002

75¢

16 PAGES





"There aren't a lot of natural opportunities in parishes for singles. We're very child-focused," she remarked.

Church-based ministries

A limited number of parish-based singles groups does exist in the Diocese of Rochester. One such ministry began in 1991, after Anne — who was newly divorced at the time and had two small children — asked Sister Whalen how she could link up with Catholics in similar situations.

"There wasn't anything," Anne recalled.

Continued on page 14

STORY BY MIKE LATONA . ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA JEANNE RIVERS