

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Diocese calls for faithful to work against abortion

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

The Diocese of Rochester has decided to make abortion and related topics such as cloning priority issues in the coming year. The decision was made in response to recent regional meetings between diocesan officials and representatives of parishes and social-justice groups to determine the diocesan public-policy agenda.

In an interview in her office at the Pastoral Center in Gates, Jann Armantrout, diocesan life-issues coordinator, listed a number of ways the diocese has been and will be promoting the pro-life cause. She stressed that a number of these activities were already in the works prior to the meetings with activists. Among the actions being planned are the following:

- A gathering at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 7, at Irondequoit's St. Thomas the Apostle parish center to organize a large presence at the Jan. 22, 2003, March for Life in Washington, D.C. Armantrout and Marvin Mich, director of Catholic Family Center's Social Policy and Research office, met with diocesan pro-life activists at Rochester's St. Mary's Church June 20. Armantrout said many participants expressed interest in increasing diocesan participation at this 30th-anniversary event.

- A call for diocesan Catholics to write letters to their congressional representatives in support of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, which would outlaw late-term abortions. The bill was passed in the House July 24, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops released a statement applauding its passage. If passed in the Senate, the president has indicated he will sign the bill. Information on the bill is available on the Web at [nchla.org/pba.html](http://nchla.org/pba.html).

- A mailing to parishes of folders with information and suggested activities from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 2002 Respect Life Program. The folders include liturgy guides for Respect Life Sunday Oct. 6, as well as Jan. 22, 2003, the 30th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion nationally. The folders also contain information on natural family planning, euthanasia, cloning, terrorism and other life issues.

Mary Jo Maurer, a pro-life activist from St. Thomas, said she and other pro-life proponents were pleased that the diocese was promoting pro-life activities in the next year. Maurer was among a group of activists who earlier this year had sent a letter to Bishop Matthew H. Clark criticizing legislative agendas developed over recent years by the Diocesan Public Policy Committee.

In an interview with the *Courier*, Maurer said the letter was prompted by the activists' perception that abortion was taking a back seat to other social-justice issues. The sheer number of abortions — an estimated 4,000 a day — call out for a greater emphasis on the issue of abortion, she said. Pro-life activists believe this issue should be in the forefront of diocesan activity every year.

"If (the government) was executing 4,000 guilty people, you wouldn't be able to contain the outcry," she said.

Armantrout said she understood the frustration of pro-life activists, but pointed out such signs of hope as the fact that two-thirds of diocesan parishes have signed on to the "Pledge for Life," which commits parishes to help women in crisis pregnancies. She added that the diocese's Project Rachel ministry program for women and men affected by abortion is



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer

## Sanctuary House opens its doors

Susan Bennett, director of homeless and housing services for Catholic Family Center, sits in one of the rooms at Sanctuary House, CFC's new 16-bedroom emergency shelter for women and children. The shelter officially opened Tuesday, July 30.

reputed to be one of the best of its kind in the nation.

Armantrout also noted that abortion is related to so many issues now — cloning, stem cell research, hospital mergers between Catholic and secular institutions — that the diocese is fighting battles against abortion all the time, even if the issue in question might not seem directly related to abortion at first glance.

Maurer said she appreciated Armantrout's view and added that that is precisely why she felt the diocese should make it a priority issue every year. As abortion has gained acceptance, this has been followed by a growing acceptance of embryo harvesting and other evils, she said.

"The truth is the insanity of abortion leaves the door open for all these things," she said.

## Obituary

### Sr. Wolter; food service manager

Sister of St. Joseph Irene Wolter, 88, died at St. Joseph Convent Infirmery on June 21, 2002.

Sister Irene, a graduate of Nazareth Academy, received her bachelor's degree in home economics from Marywood College, Pa. She also held degrees in home economics and food service management from Columbia and Cornell Universities.

She served at the motherhouse until she became cafeteria supervisor at Nazareth College in 1946, a position she held until her retirement in 1987 due to failing health.

Sister Irene is predeceased by her brothers, Joseph, William and Eugene; and her sisters, Loretta Wood and Helen Blake. She is survived by her sisters, Sister Paul Margaret, SSJ; Lucille (Fred) Sauers; Ruth (Robert) Bard; sisters-in-law, Rita, Evelyn and Robie Wolter; brother-in-law, John Wood; and nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews and her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Her funeral liturgy was celebrated in the motherhouse chapel on June 24. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Contributions in her memory may be made to St. Joseph's Convent Infirmery.

—Lou Litzenberger

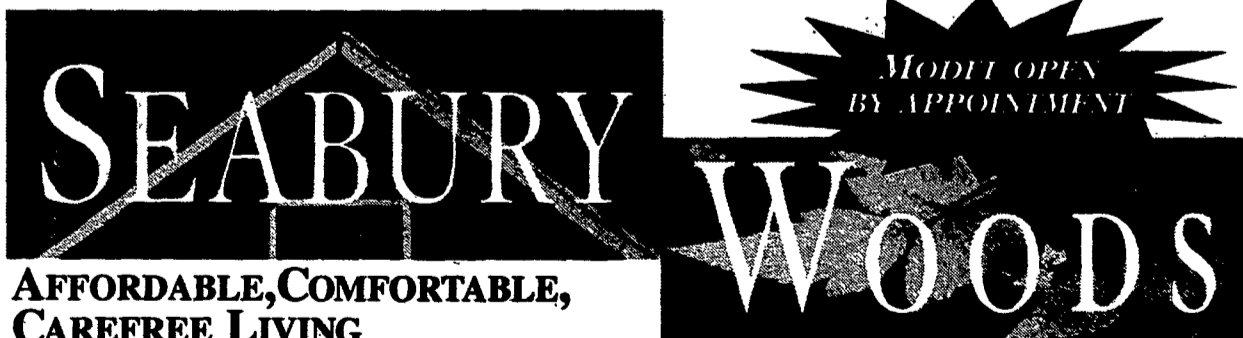
## Recognizing

• The Nazareth Schools has presented Sister Seraphine Herbat, SSJ, with its 2002 Luminous Award and Richard P. Ditruff its 2002 Lux Award. The awards are given to alumni of Nazareth Hall and Nazareth Academy who have exemplified the school's mission through their efforts in community service, leadership and volunteerism. Sister Herbat is a 1947 graduate of Nazareth Academy and is a president and executive director of the School of the Holy Childhood in Rochester. Ditruff is a 1945 graduate of Nazareth Hall and is retired as president of Mertel Donohue.

• Stephanie Blackburn, who recently finished her junior year at Our Lady of Mercy High School in Rochester, was named the recipient of the 2002-2003 Varsity Volunteer Program Award from Camp Good Days and Special Times. She received a \$1,000 savings bond and gift package. Stephanie Nixon, who recently finished her junior year at Nazareth Academy, was an award alternate and received a \$500 savings bond and gift package.

• Sister Joan Sobala, congregational vice president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, received the Communication Achievement Award from Postprandial Toastmasters at its annual recognition banquet June 19. The organization, the largest of 20 local Toastmasters chapters in the area, chooses an outstanding non-Toastmaster communicator each year who speaks or works on behalf of a worthwhile cause. Sister Sobala is a member of both St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Mendon and the St. Felix/St. Francis Cluster in Phelps. Also at the banquet, Tom Prisk, a parishioner of St. Anne Parish in Rochester, won the Toastmaster of the Year Award.

• A banner designed by Nazareth College professor Catherine Kirby will accompany NASA astronaut Lt. Col. Pamela Melroy into outer space in August. Melroy, a Boston, Kentucky, graduate, is venturing into space to do assembly work on the International Space Station. Kirby designed the banner, which is 3 feet by 5 feet and incorporates the Nazareth College's "Heart of Excellence" theme. Melroy received an honorary degree from Nazareth when she served as the commencement speaker at the school in May 2001.



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