

First convocation stresses dialogue

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Approximately 30 people participated Oct. 21 in the first in a series of diocesan-sponsored semiannual convocations on ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

Discussions ranged from how the interfaith community responded to the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to how Eastern-rite and Latin-rite Catholics can better understand one another. Participants also discussed how to better attract Orthodox and evangelical Christians to ecumenical activities.

Opening with a prayer service in Ukrainian and English, the event took place at Irondequoit's St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Church, a parish of the Byzantine-rite Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of Stamford, Conn., comprising churches in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island. Most of the world's Catholics, including members of the Diocese of Rochester, belong to the Latin or Roman Rite.

Eastern-rite Catholics, including parishioners at St. Josaphat's, acknowledge the pope as their universal leader, but have somewhat different liturgical practices from their Roman Catholic counterparts.

The convocation was designed to update participants on what's happening in the diocese's ecumenical and interreligious efforts. The convocation's first presenter, Father Kiril Angelov, pastor at St. Josaphat's, urged more education among Roman Catholics about Eastern-rite Catholics.

"If we are brothers and sisters in Christ, it will be better to know every member of the family," he said.

He noted that before his assignment to St. Josaphat's in June of this year, he had served as a pastor in other states and continually found Roman Catholics to be ignorant of Eastern-rite traditions. For example, he often had to inform catechists in Roman Catholic schools that Eastern-rite children attending those schools did not need confirmation instruction. That's because they simultaneously are confirmed, baptized and initiated into first Eucharist as children, he said.

Convocation presenters also reported on several developments in recent months, including the following:

- In August, the Diocese of

Rochester appointed Joseph A. Pocius Jr. to serve as its first-ever official representative to Eastern Orthodox Christian Communities. Pocius attends both St. Josaphat's and St. Louis Church in Pittsford. He distributed a list of Eastern Christian churches in the Rochester area, and urged greater personal contact between Catholic and Orthodox clergy.

- J. Patrick O'Connor represents the diocese to the Christian/Muslim Commission and the Interfaith Forum, an interreligious group. He noted that contacts between Christians, Muslims and Jews that had developed before Sept. 11, 2001, proved to be valuable afterward. Many interfaith dialogues took place in the Rochester area after the attacks, he said, adding that interfaith activists also organized a candlelight vigil in Rochester on the first anniversary of the attacks.

"Such activities accomplished two major goals," he said. "One, considerable reduction of fear and mistrust of our Muslim neighbors, and two, greatly improving the trust and acceptance of the Christian community by Muslims."

He also noted that Pope John Paul II has highlighted the importance of Christian-Muslim dialogue, stressing the fact that both Christians and Muslims believe in one God of peace.

Father Joseph Marcoux, parochial vicar of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester who has studied Islam in the past year, also urged Catholics to learn more about the Koran, Islam's holy book, from Muslims themselves.

- Sister of St. Joseph Susan Nowak, who chairs the Christian/Jewish Commission, said that Jews and Christians have held a number of dialogues in the past year. In a follow-up interview, she noted one such dialogue took place between Catholics and Jewish representatives on how they were coping with the respective crises in their communities — Catholics with the abuse scandals, and Jews with the suicide attacks in Israel and the growth in anti-Semitism.

The next convocation is slated for May 5, 2003, at a location yet to be named. It is likely to be a Jewish or Islamic site, according to Bernard Grizard, director of diocesan Parish Support Ministries and coordinator of its Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs office.



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Seeking guidance

Brothers Michael and Philip Solorzano kneel during the Red Mass at Rochester's Our Lady of Victory Church Oct. 18. The Mass was planned to request divine assistance on behalf of judges, lawyers and others associated with the legal community.

Aquinas faculty to vote on union

Faculty members at Rochester's Aquinas Institute are slated to vote the afternoon of Nov. 14 on whether to join a union.

If approved, the union, known as the Aquinas Faculty Association, would be affiliated with New York State United Teachers, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers and the AFL-CIO.

Controversy erupted at Aquinas Oct. 9 when it became public that Robert B. Wegman, chairman of Wegmans Food Markets Inc., had decided to delay a \$10 million gift to the school pending the teachers' decision on unionization. Wegman did not publicly comment on his decision.

The next day, Aquinas announced that its president, Patrick Hanley,

had left his position, but school officials would not disclose whether he had been fired or left voluntarily. However, the school stressed that Hanley's departure was not related to the controversy over Wegman's gift. The board of trustees appointed a team headed by alumnus Michael R. Daley to oversee the school until a president is named.

In May of this year, the school had announced that Wegman's gift would finance building renovations, construction of a building addition for a fine arts center, and enhancement of the school's scholarship endowment. Wegman and his wife, Peggy, have given more than \$32 million to Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rochester.

— Rob Cullivan

ely
sary
(NS)
If sug-
hysterics
Oct. 16, he
that had
for four
the pope
ge would
arly, the
o Christ
ed inter-
seen as
ayers
gone its
times of
society
s promo-
nican or-
what it
er of the
nts in its
ve it be-
ernative
ns of the
ying the
s count-
knotted
the bibl-
al Mary
gradual
century
tradition
in Mary
Dominic
century
ans, and
votion to
heresy,
ularized
am de la
ry as he
fraterni-
Europe-
prayers,
mber of
of Mary
mediat-
V, a Do-
formula
hysterics
e" of 10
ber and
ber
KE
RIES
r catalog
ecial
ry offer
PANY
Y 12181
O
com