

POPE'S 100TH TRIP WILL BE TO CROATIA

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The 100th foreign trip of Pope John Paul II's pontificate will take him across the Adriatic Sea to Croatia to beatify a 20th-century nun and to celebrate liturgies in four towns.

The centerpiece of the June 5-9 trip will be the June 6 beatification of Sister Maria Petkovic, founder of the Daughters of Mercy. The Croatian nun, who lived 1892-1966, will be beatified in Dubrovnik.

INFORMED CONSENT

ABORTION LAW ENACTED

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — Indiana's 1995 informed consent law aimed at educating women about abortion procedures, risks and alternatives went into effect April 30, and an eight-year legal battle waged against it came to an end.

Opponents of the measure were against its requirements that women seeking abortions wait 18 hours before getting the procedure and also receive counseling in person from medical personnel. They also argued it was unconstitutional.

In his ruling, Marion Superior Court Judge Gerald Zore called the law "a reasonable effort to encourage informed consent based on reflective thought in the abortion context."

BISHOPS ISSUE PLAN TO BOOST VOCATIONS

OTTAWA (CNS) — The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has published a pastoral plan to boost vocations to the ordained ministry and consecrated life in North America.

The document was the result of the Third Continental Congress on Vocations, held in Montreal in April 2002. The plan, published by the CCCB, was issued jointly by the Canadian and U.S. bishops' conferences.

The CCCB said the plan is "a reflection and a guide for practical action, proposing strategies and answers to the question, 'How do we create and establish a vocations culture throughout the church in North America?'" The plan lists practical suggestions for bishops and community leaders of institutes for consecrated life, as well as members of the clergy and religious, parents and many others in the Christian community.

Ordination day is June 14

Hornell native awaits 'wonderful' ceremony

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

More than once during a recent interview, Deacon Mark Brewer used the word "bittersweet."



The sweet part is that Deacon Brewer's ordination to the diocesan priesthood will take place next month. The bitter part is that his mother, Nancy, won't be at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral to witness it.

Mrs. Brewer did get to see her son ordained a transitional deacon on March 2 at his home parish of St. Ann's in Hornell. But she died nine days later after a long battle with cancer.

"I miss my mother terribly, yet I feel as strong as ever about my conviction of moving on to June 14. I want to be a priest for the Diocese of Rochester," Deacon Brewer said.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will officiate at his Saturday, June 14, ordination beginning at 10:30 a.m. at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral. "It's going to be a wonderful day. I am so excited about seeing my entire world together under one roof, people from all parts of my life," Deacon Brewer said. "It just speaks to that common experience of all being of one faith."

Deacon Brewer will also celebrate his Mass of Thanksgiving at 10 a.m. on June 15, at St. Ann's in Hornell. He will then move to St. Mary's Parish in Canandaigua, where he has been appointed parochial vicar under Father Thomas Mull, pastor.

Deacon Brewer, 39, is a 1982 graduate of Hornell High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from St. Bonaventure University in 1986, then a master's in business administration from Hofstra University in 1988.

He returned to Hornell and became a budget analyst at St. James Mercy Hospital in 1988, later rising to assistant controller and then controller. In 1992 he became the hospital's director of materials management/purchasing, a position he was to hold for the next four years.

It was during this stretch that Deacon Brewer began sensing that he was headed for a major life change. "I just wasn't real happy," he said of his career. "I was OK, but knew it was not my lifelong vocation."

In 1994 Deacon Brewer attended a



File photo

Mark Brewer stands before Bishop Matthew H. Clark during his diaconal ordination at St. Ann Church in Hornell March 2.

retreat that spurred him toward greater involvement at St. Ann's. After Father Jim Jaeger became pastor in 1995, Deacon Brewer assisted him with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program and in so doing got a close-up view of the priestly life.

"We developed a nice friendship. I got to basically shadow him when he'd go to the hospital visiting patients, making sick calls. I saw how much he enjoyed his priesthood," Deacon Brewer recalled.

In 1996 Deacon Brewer resigned from St. James Mercy to enter Beckett Hall, the diocesan pre-theology program. Two years later he began seminary studies at the American College in Louvain, Belgium.

He served his pastoral year at St. Rita's Parish in Webster from June 2000 to May 2001. Deacon Brewer described St. Rita's pastor, Father Charles Latus, as "a wonderful man — a great example of priesthood the way he works with people. He's very empowering."

Deacon Brewer performed pastoral care training during the summer of 2001 at Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital. In August 2001, after two years in Louvain, he transferred to Theological College at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., so he could be closer to his mother.

Mrs. Brewer's health deteriorated over this past Christmas season. Her son said he had considered taking time off from the seminary, but "I think if I had done that it would have hurt my parents very badly. The relatives all said, 'You need to go back.'

It was a big lesson in trust ... there were doubts, dark moments. I really had to call upon my faith and friends."

Deacon Brewer has managed to keep pace with his studies despite his mother's death. "I'm glad that things have turned out as well as they have," he said.

Parental influence factored significantly into the path he has chosen, Deacon Brewer remarked: "From the very beginning my parents had such lives of service," he said, noting that his father, Jerry, has frequently and willingly done home repairs for family and friends. And his mother was a noted volunteer — "in Little League, Cub Scouts, band. Anything we were involved in, she was involved in."

Now Deacon Brewer will be carrying on that spirit of service in his role as a diocesan priest. He said he's been consistently encouraged by friends, family and the general public, despite the widely reported sexual-abuse scandal of the past year.

"I haven't really had any negative reactions. My diaconate ordination had 700 people; that just speaks very typically of the people of God," he said. "It's still a very hope-filled and faith-filled church."

Deacon Brewer said he'll relish the chance to experience that hope and faith in his priestly ministry.

"Communicating with people at a level of faith is just so different," he said. "They open up in areas that are just very private and very sacred. The priest is in such a privileged situation."