

Cyclists highlight poverty

Local journey supports nationwide bike trek

Courtney Burns/Catholic Courier

On July 27, a group of cyclists from the Diocese of Rochester began a local leg of a statewide trek designed to call attention to the plight of the impoverished in New York and around the country.

The statewide bike ride from Lockport to Albany — which involved participants from the dioceses of Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse and Albany — was scheduled in support of a nationwide bike trip called Brake the Cycle of Poverty. Sponsored by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, that event began in San Francisco, Calif., on June 1 and will end in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 1.

Since the national tour is not passing through upstate or western New York, Ruth Putnam, who coordinates the Works of Love program for Catholic Charities in the Rochester Diocese, organized the local support ride. In February she began planning the ride through the diocese, which began in Brockport July 27 and ended in Auburn July 29.

On each day of the ride, participants stopped at various sites in Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Seneca and Cayuga counties to learn about local efforts to break the cycle of poverty. Scarlett Emerson, parish and community development director for Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, helped Putnam organize stops for the riders in Wayne, Cayuga, Seneca and Ontario counties.

Cyclists were in high spirits after the July 27 portion of the ride, which began in Brockport and ended at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Gates.

"I particularly enjoy riding for a cause," said Donna Walker, a parishioner of St. Margaret Mary in Irondequoit.

Walker noted that before the ride began, the group attended a Spanish Mass at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, where migrant workers who had assembled there raised their hands to bless the cyclists before they set off.

Putnam said the ride is a perfect tie-in to Catholic Charities' year-long focus on poverty and its consequences.

"I have no illusions that this ride will make a dent in poverty," she added. "I think it will start a conversation about poverty and it will take a lot of work to keep that going."

Many of the stops the riders made along the way were at facilities that



Leila Navidi/Catholic Courier

Sixteen-year-old Jason Herring (left) and Mike Fredericks leave the Pastoral Center in Gates July 28 during a local ride to support the nationwide Brake the Cycle of Poverty bike trip.



Jay Reeder (right) and Bob Fries check over last-minute details before leaving the Pastoral Center July 28.

have received CCHD grants, according to Marvin Mich of Rochester's Catholic Family Center.

Seventy-five percent of funds donated to CCHD — an anti-poverty, social-justice program organized by the U.S. Catholic bishops — goes to the national office in Washington, D.C., to support projects designated at the national level; the remaining 25 percent stays in the diocese to be divided among local organizations, said Mich, who noted that it has been

his task this year to choose recipients of local CCHD grants. One recipient, the Farmworker Women's Institute in Newark, arranged a dinner for the riders on the night of July 28. The institute provides a place for female migrant workers to come together and establish a sense of community, Mich said.

On the afternoon of July 28, riders stopped at Pittsford's Saints Place, a food shelter Putnam termed a perfect indicator of "poverty in the midst of affluence."

As the riders pedaled through the City of Rochester July 28, they stopped at such facilities as St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center, Women's Coffee Connection and Catholic Family Center. On July 29 the riders on their way to Auburn stopped at Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes and several parishes. Along the way, riders heard about how various organizations are attempting to end poverty.

About 20 bicyclists participated during each day of the ride, with most of them heading home at the end of the trip July 29. But one man, 47-year-old Jay Reeder, a parishioner of St. Anne Church in Rochester, traveled on to Albany. Reeder, an avid cyclist, planned to deliver a message about poverty in New York and suggestions for reducing it to Gov. George Pataki.

"I want to gain a perspective on the poverty in our area," said Reeder. "It really is a cycle and you just have to break it."

BISHOPS' ABUSE BOARD ASSESSES ITS FIRST YEAR

CHICAGO (CNS) — The work of the National Review Board established by the U.S. bishops last year "has proceeded uninterrupted and with continued vigor and independence," the board said in an evaluation of its first year.

The board thanked former Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, who resigned as board chairman in June for "leadership in the early stages of our formation."

Most of the report, released July 29, updated the status of six major goals set for the board when it was established.

Among the tasks left undone the report said, was the commissioning of a comprehensive report analyzing the "causes and context" of the clergy sex abuse crisis. That project "will require several years to complete and cost upwards of \$4 million," the board said.

BISHOP TIMLIN OF SCRANTON RESIGNS

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, papal nuncio to the United States, announced July 25 that Pope John Paul II has accepted the resignation of Bishop James C. Timlin of Scranton, Pa., and has named Auxiliary Bishop Joseph F. Martino of Philadelphia to succeed him.

Bishop Timlin, 75, was born in Scranton and ordained to the priesthood in 1951. He was appointed an auxiliary bishop of Scranton in 1976 and was named to head the diocese eight years later. Joseph F. Martino was born in Philadelphia May 1, 1946, and was ordained a bishop in 1996.

COPYRIGHTING ATTEMPT CRITICIZED BY PRIEST

COCHIN, India (CNS) — An Indian church official has criticized a move by the Missionaries of Charity to copyright their founder's name.

"Seeking copyright on the nun's name is like parenting Jesus Christ," Father Paul Thekkat, spokesman of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church

Sister Nirmala Joshi, superior general of the congregation Mother Teresa founded, said in a July 9 statement that the nuns are seeking "legal protection" for their founder's name and the congregation's name and logo.