

Police learn ID of priest who saved woman

Maura Rossi/CNS

CLIFTON, N.J. — Clifton police now know the identity of the "mystery" priest who saved a 20-year-old woman from being abducted July 7.

Police said he is a parish priest in Essex County in the Diocese of Paterson (N.J.) who has asked that neither the police nor the Newark Archdiocese release his name.

According to police, the clerical good Samaritan came to headquarters and identified himself after reading in newspaper accounts of the event that he could be an important witness in efforts to track down the assailant and would-be abductor.

The woman, who was walking along Route 3 East in Clifton to her job in a nearby mall, told police that the assailant was sexually manhandling her and trying to push her into his blue car when the priest pulled over and walked toward her, asking what was going on.

At that point, she said, the assailant jumped back in his car and drove away, but not before knocking out of her hand the pen she was using to try to write down his license plate number.

The woman gave detailed descriptions of both the assailant and the priest. She said the priest calmed her down, drove her to her job and left without identifying himself.

Police said the priest told them, "I only did what I thought I should do."

"I don't think too many people would do what he did," Clifton Capt. Robert Rowan, a detective, said of the priest's action.

"It was good of him to come in. He has been very helpful and cooperative," said Clifton Detective Douglas Miller in a telephone interview with *The Beacon*, newspaper of the Paterson Diocese. Clifton, approximately 10 miles from New York City, is located in the diocese.

The search was still on for the assailant, he said.

"He was able to get the woman to safety and stop a situation. He's happy about that. He just prefers at this point that he go back to normal," according to James Goodness, spokesman for the archdiocese.

Cyclists finish poverty ride

Mark Pattison/CNS

WASHINGTON — Any weariness the "Brake the Cycle of Poverty" riders might have had after completing the last leg of a 3,832-mile cross-country trip was more than offset by the joyous welcome they received from hundreds of well-wishers at the end of their 61-day journey Aug. 1.

The trip, an initiative of the U.S. bishops' Catholic Campaign for Human Development, visited 12 states and 32 dioceses, with riders in more than 50 parish programs participating along the way. A core group of a couple dozen riders made the entire trip.

At St. Anthony Church in Washington, the last stop a few blocks away from the finish, riders were treated to a solidarity ride that had Bishop George V. Murray of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, CCHD chairman, and Father Robert Vitillo, CCHD executive director, among the participants.

At the U.S. bishops' headquarters building in Washington, their ultimate destination, the riders found family and friends waiting for them, as well as reporters, building staff, beneficiaries of CCHD grant money, and a fresh supply of drinks and carbohydrates to replenish their depleted stores.

CCHD staffer Alicia Bondanella saluted the "Brake the Cycle" riders in a welcoming ceremony. "They are living embodiment of what we are trying to accomplish," she said.

Aja Wood, 24, development coordinator at Food and Friends, a CCHD



Nancy Wiechec/CNS

Louis Terzo embraces fellow cyclist Bob King, both of Manchester, Conn., after finishing a short leg of the "Brake the Cycle of Poverty" tour Aug. 1 in Washington. The tour highlighted how poverty affects Americans.

grant recipient, said CCHD money helps the organization teach poor women about cooking, food preparation, food safety and nutrition skills.

Representatives of Action in Montgomery, an interfaith network of two dozen Christian and Jewish congregations in Montgomery County, Md., also turned out to welcome the riders.

Since its founding in 1999, Action in Montgomery has convinced the county government to dedicate 2.5 percent of county property taxes to affordable housing — \$16 million

this year, according to Judy Walser. The next goal is to get the county to commit \$35 million to building permanent classrooms to relieve school overcrowding.

At a press conference following the event, Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., president of the U.S. bishops' conference, said the riders "heard God's call to bring the 'good news' of human dignity and empowerment to poor and low-income people and who experienced God's grace and beauty as they rode through the hills and valleys of this great nation of ours."

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