

Educators gather, reaffirm mission

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

While many of their students were enjoying a day off Oct. 10, hundreds of educators from diocesan Catholic schools gathered at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center for their annual Superintendent's Conference Day.

The theme of the event was "Building a Faith-Filled Future One Child at a Time." Sister Elizabeth Meegan, OP, diocesan superintendent of schools, reinforced the theme by saying although educators often speak of their classes, they also see each individual child rather than just a conglomerate.

Father William Graf, pastor of Church of the Resurrection Parish in Fairport, gave the keynote address, "Putting 'Catholic' into a

Catholic School." Father Graf, who is also a professor of religious studies at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, has had more than 60 years of experience with Catholic schools, including many years as a Catholic-school student from second grade through his 1960 graduation from St. Bernard's Seminary.

Father Graf said that he often looks for answers in the stories of Jesus. For example, he said, Jesus welcomed and cared for the children, the sick and those not welcome by most of society. Jesus could heal people not just of their physical ailments, he said, but of their loneliness or sense of worthlessness.

"Jesus comes to heal us. I daresay that as you and I look over 20, 30 or 15 kids in our classroom that every single one of them needs to be

healed. We are a source of healing," Father Graf said.

Father Graf said that it's important to remember that not only does Jesus heal, but he also died for his people.

"We are loved so much that we have Jesus, who dies on a cross. That, to my mind, is the most important thing that you and I can keep in mind," Father Graf said.

If the teachers at a Catholic school are enthusiastic about their faith, he said he believes the students will pick up that faith along with the reading, writing and arithmetic they learn in school. Father Graf said that in his experience, children are naturally open to learning but can be turned off if their teachers lack enthusiasm. The best way for educators to teach, he added, is by example.

"The Catholic school is not a building, the Catholic school is the community. Every single one of us within that community — teachers, principals, secretaries, janitors, students, parents, all of us — are a community of believers. We preach most eloquently not by the words, the lesson plans, but by how we live out our

lives," Father Graf said.

Along with living out the faith, Father Graf also believes that teaching children to read and think critically is important, so that as they grow up, they will be able to make up their own minds about the issues they're faced with.

"It (the keynote) just reaffirms everything that I believe and seek to implement in my own school, and certainly others do as well," said Vilma Goetting, principal of Bishop Hogan Catholic Academy in Rochester. "It's an opportunity to know that we're all together and searching to provide for our children."

Theresa Hanna, fifth-grade teacher at St. Boniface School in Rochester, said the conference helps reinforce the connection between Catholic educators and their mission. The vendors and workshop sessions also help teachers find out what's new in the world of education, she said.

"It's good for our own development, and it's a wonderful opportunity to network with so many teachers and professionals," Goetting said.

Works of Love starts third year in diocese

Numerous events are being held throughout the diocese this month to mark the start of the third annual Works of Love program.

The program, sponsored by diocesan Catholic Charities, is a year-round initiative that promotes education about the Catholic Church's social-justice teaching by organizing projects to help those in need, and also provides educational resources.

Works of Love events are being organized by:

- **Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Community**, where the social-ministry committee is holding a series of sales to assist Work of Human Hands, a partnership between Catholic Relief Services and the SERRV International fair-trade organization.

- **Elmira Notre Dame High School**, which has scheduled various volunteer activities.

- **Catholic Charities Samaritan Center of Chemung County**, which is collaborating with St. Joseph's Hospital Auxiliary in hosting a "Mom's Morning Out" Oct. 29.

- **Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Rochester**, which will hold a youth-group pajama party Oct. 25 to collect food and funds for the parish food pantry.

- **St. Anne's Parish, Rochester**, where the grades 4-6 religious-education classes will have a neighborhood cleanup day.

- **Holy Trinity School in Webster**, which is collecting items for the Trinity House of Hope.

— Mike Latona

Radio station begins fund drive

Rochester's WHIC 1460-AM, the first all-Catholic radio station in Monroe County, will hold its fall fund drive Oct. 22-24 in association with Catholic Radio Association and the Eternal World Television Network's radio network. The drive will run from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day.

Anyone calling in a pledge by 6 p.m. Oct. 24 will be entered into a drawing for an all-expenses paid cruise for two to the Bahamas. The pledge drive will close at 8 p.m. that evening with the drawing.

The theme of the Jan. 25-29

cruise is "Modern Day Saints With Us." Father Michael Volino, parochial vicar at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Greece, will be the spiritual director, celebrating daily Mass, leading prayer sessions and giving talks on the saints.

The fund drive will feature some of EWTN's top hosts. Local affiliates, including WHIC, will have time every hour to promote their own programs and needs.

Pledges may be made by calling 866/972-3469. For more information, visit the WHIC Web site at www.holyfamily.ws.

Racial Justice Workshop

Sponsored by the Office of Black Ministry,
Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester

"Working Towards A More Catholic Christian Community"

Saturday, November 15th

10am to 3pm

Pastoral Center, Bishop Hickey Conference Room
1150 Buffalo Rd. (rear parking lot)

Presenter

Donna Mostiller
Director of Human Resources
YWCA, Buffalo, NY

Workshop Goals

- To create awareness around the issue of racial injustice.
- To learn effective strategies to address the issue of racism with our faith communities.

This one-day workshop is designed to help participants become more knowledgeable about racism. The

workshop will provide historical, religious, and sociological overviews of racism. In addition, the participants will be involved in interactive activities that will help them understand the impact of racism on individuals and organizations.

Continental breakfast and lunch provided; free will donation

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before Friday, November 7, 2003.