

Ordination slated June 12

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

SEMINARIANS INSTALLED AS READER, ACOLYTE

Two diocesan seminarians received the rites of reader and acolyte during the Feb. 2 Institution of Readers and Acolytes at Catholic University of America's Theological College in Washington, D.C. Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, apostolic nuncio to the United States, presided at the institution.

Jeffrey Tunncliff of St. Mary's of the Lake Parish in Watkins Glen, a second-year seminarian, received the Rite of Acolyte. First-year seminarian Paul Flansburg of Rochester's Blessed Sacrament Parish received the Rite of Reader.

OPEN HOUSE MARKS BISHOP'S ANNIVERSARY

GATES — The public is invited to the diocesan Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, from 2 to 4 p.m. June 13 for an open house and reception for Bishop Matthew H. Clark, who is celebrating his 25th anniversary as Bishop of Rochester.

Guests should enter the Pastoral Center building through the Bishop Dennis W. Hickey Conference Center doors, located at the rear of the building.

PRO-LIFERS SILENT AT PRO-ABORTION MARCH

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Vastly outnumbered by the hundreds of thousands taking part in the April 25 March for Women's Lives in Washington, pro-life groups conducted a largely silent witness along the march route.

About 90 people, including many members of American Collegians for Life, lined one sidewalk near the start of the march route bearing signs and wearing T-shirts with a pro-life message.

CORRECTION

A story in the *Catholic Courier Weekly's* April 24-25 Monroe County edition incorrectly listed contact information for details about the May 8 HOPE conference at Henrietta's Guardian Angels Parish. For information, call Peggy Cunningham at 585/293-3337 or e-mail her at peggycunningham@yahoo.com.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will ordain Deacon William G. Coffas to the priesthood at 10:30 a.m. June 12 at Rochester's St. Ambrose Church.

Following ordination, Deacon Coffas, 33, will serve as priest-intern at Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Community, which comprises faith communities in Dundee, Naples, Rushville, Penn Yan, Prattsburgh and Stanley.

A native of the Rochester suburb of Irondequoit, Deacon Coffas grew up attending St. Ambrose Church. He noted that he had an interest in the priesthood even as a boy.

"I'd entertain company on Sunday afternoons as my mom was getting dinner," he said. "I would play priest for them. I would picture myself on the altar, even as a child."

He added that he was attracted to the priesthood because of its sacred nature.

"I just had a really deep sense that this was a holy thing," he said. "It was something different than any other thing you would do."

Deacon Coffas noted that he was attracted to politics as well, serving as student-government president during high school, and said public service appealed to some of the same aspirations that led him to priesthood.

"I think there is within me a desire to serve people in a public way, to represent them, to intervene for them," he said.

Among those inspiring his vocation, Deacon Coffas listed Father Thomas Mull, who served at St. Ambrose from 1976 to 1982 and currently is pastor of St. Mary Parish in



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Deacon William Coffas — shown inside his home parish, St. Ambrose in Rochester — will be ordained to the diocesan priesthood on June 12.

Canandaigua. Deacon Coffas also said his sister, Carol, inspired him to serve the church when he worked with her in music ministry at St. Ambrose.

"Just seeing her and her role as minister got me more into seeing what happens behind the scenes of the church," Deacon Coffas said.

He graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in communications. Following graduation, he worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor with people who had brain injuries. One of his clients actually moved him toward serious consideration of priesthood by asking Deacon Coffas what he wanted to do with his

life. That conversation made him realize that he was seeking a dimension of service that was different than the one in which he was then engaged, Deacon Coffas said.

"While I was helping (clients) on a physical level ... there was a part of me that wanted to help them on a spiritual level," he said.

Deacon Coffas said he also was impressed by the priests who ministered to his father as he struggled with a terminal illness before dying in 1996. "I could see that God was doing very powerful works through (priests), and I guess I wanted to be a part of that."

Deacon Coffas entered the Diocese of Rochester's pre-theology program at Becket Hall in Rochester in 1997. From May 2001 to May 2002 he spent his pastoral year at St. Mary's Parish in Auburn. In addition to obtaining a master's degree in divinity at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., over the last two years, Deacon Coffas also served during his seminary training at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester; St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Mendon; St. Thomas More Parish in Brighton; and St. Helen's Parish in Gates.

Being able to provide the sacraments for his fellow Catholics would be a major force in his priestly career, he remarked.

"Pastoral ministry, for me, is what I look forward to the most," Deacon Coffas said. "Being with the people during their ordinary and extraordinary moments in life — leading them in prayer during the daily Mass; presiding at their marriages; anointing them when they're sick; baptizing them when they come into the faith."

Seminarian step closer to priesthood

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will ordain John Loncle during the transitional diaconate during a 10:30 a.m. Mass May 22 at St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua. The ordination will bring Loncle, 39, one step closer to priestly ordination in June 2005.

Loncle, a member of Fairport's St. John of Rochester Parish, currently is completing his third year of studies at Theological College at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. After completing his studies at Becket Hall — the diocesan pre-theology program — and at Nazareth and St. John Fisher colleges in Rochester, he entered Theological College in the fall of 2000. In the spring of 2001, he served at a Washington, D.C., Mis-

sionaries of Charity hospice and care facility that serves men, some of whom have HIV and AIDS. In the summer of 2001, he served at St. Helen's Parish in Gates.

In June 2002 Loncle began serving his pastoral year at St. Mary's Parish in Canandaigua under the supervision of Father Thomas Mull, pastor, and in May 2003 he spent four months completing a unit of clinical pastoral education at Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital. He has been assisting at St. Andrew by the Bay Parish in Annapolis, Md., and this past year has served another Annapolis parish while completing his studies.

"This coming summer, I will re-

turn to serve the wonderful people at St. Mary's in Canandaigua. Next year I will return to my studies at the Theological College for my fourth and final year," Loncle said.

Before entering the priestly formation program, Loncle was an usher, reader and eucharistic minister at his-home parish. Since entering the formation program, he's continued to serve in those ministries — at various parishes — and said he has become involved in "pretty much every aspect of parish ministry." He has also ministered in home and hospital visitation, youth and social-justice ministry, parish committees, religious education and pastoral planning.

— Jennifer Burke