

Priests, religious mark jubilees

CATHOLICS, MUSLIMS TO CONDUCT JOINT EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Catholics and Muslims are teaming for a series of gatherings to explore how their respective faiths address such topics as childbirth and conception, major rites of passage, sexuality, marriage, divorce, aging, death and the afterlife.

"Beginnings and Endings as Seen through Muslim and Catholic Eyes" will run on the following Wednesdays: Sept 8, 15, 22, 29 and Oct 6. All sessions are free and open to the public, and run from 7:30-9 p.m. At each session, a Muslim and a Catholic will make presentations; audience participation and dialogue will be encouraged.

The Sept. 8, 15 and 22 sessions will be held at the Bishop Dennis W. Hickey Conference Center at the diocesan Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, Gates; the last two sessions will be held at the Islamic Center of Rochester, 727 Westfall Road, Brighton.

The following is a schedule of session dates and topics:

- **Sept. 8: "Conception and Childhood"** — Attitudes of Islam and Catholic Christianity about life in the womb, abortion, children and child rearing and the role of informed conscience.

- **Sept. 15: "Youth and Growing Up"** — Catholic and Muslim views on education of the young; balancing discipline with permissiveness; rites of passage; handling emerging sexuality and gender issues; handling conflicts with surrounding culture; religious education; and conscience formation.

- **Sept. 22: "Marriage"** — Muslim and Catholic beliefs on the purpose and meaning of marriage; connection between marriage and the larger community; rites and their meaning; divorce.

- **Sept. 29: "Aging, Dying, and Death"** — Two faiths' views on the aging process, illness, loss, incapacity, end-of-life issues, funeral rites and mourning.

- **Oct. 6: "The Afterlife"** — Beliefs of Islam and Catholicism about the life to come and how those beliefs affect the present.

The series is sponsored by the Muslim-Catholic Alliance, the committee appointed to oversee implementation of the Muslim-Catholic Agreement of Understanding signed by the Diocese of Rochester and Islamic officials in May 2003.

After publication of its annual milestones and vocations issue in May, the *Catholic Courier* learned about several other priests and religious with ties to the Diocese of Rochester who are also celebrating jubilees this year.

50 YEARS

Msgr. Edward S. Wright recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination. A Rochester native, he attended St. Boniface School, Aquinas Institute, and St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries, all in Rochester. He was ordained in 1954 and has since served as assistant pastor and pastor at several churches in Illinois. In 1970 he was founding pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in North Aurora, Ill., where he served until his retirement in June 2004. He has also served as vicar forane of the Aurora Deanery and chaplain of the School Sisters of St. Francis in Rockford, Ill.

Father William G. Geiger, C.S.S.R., will soon celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a Redemptorist priest. The son of the late George and Gertrude Geiger of Rochester, Father Geiger attended high school and college at St. Mary Seminary in North East, Pa. He has served for many years as a pastor and has also been involved in prison ministry and preaching parish missions. Father Geiger will celebrate his jubilee on Sept. 12 at Notre Dame

Retreat House in Canandaigua.

Father Francis J. McNamara, SJ, entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1941 and was ordained at Fordham University in June 1954 by Cardinal Francis J. Spellman. Father McNamara has dedicated most of his vocation to education as teacher, school counselor, and alumni director.

Father McNamara taught at McQuaid Jesuit High School in Rochester from 1956-59, then moved to Brooklyn Preparatory School, where he stayed until 1967. That year, he moved to St. Peter's Preparatory School in Jersey City, N.J., where he remained until 1977, when he joined the staff of Regis High School in Manhattan. In 1981, he returned to St. Peter's Preparatory School until 1985, when, as he puts it, he returned to McQuaid and "God's country." He was a school counselor at McQuaid until 1995, when he took up his current role as the school's alumni director. Over the years, Father McNamara has ministered through Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter. He also helps out almost every weekend at Holy Ghost Parish in Gates and occasionally at Our Mother of Sorrows Parish in Greece. Throughout his vocation, he has especially enjoyed dealing with young people, as "they're the hope of the future."

Father Gilbert John De Ritis, M.M., recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a

Maryknoll priest. A native of Rochester, Father De Ritis attended St. Augustine's School, graduated from Aquinas Institute in 1945 and attended St. Andrew's Seminary in his home city before entering the Maryknoll order in 1949. After his ordination in 1954, Father De Ritis served in South America for 23 years before returning to the United States to do mission education and promotion work in Houston, Texas, and Buffalo, N.Y. Between 1981 and his retirement in 1994, Father De Ritis served in Chile and Hawaii, and is currently living in California.

25 YEARS

Brother James P. Hamilton, CFC, recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of his profession of vows. Brother Hamilton grew up in St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Irondequoit and graduated from St. Thomas the Apostle Grammar School and Bishop Kearney High School in Irondequoit. He joined the Congregation of Christian Brothers on Sept. 8, 1978, and professed his vows the following year. He earned a master's degree in theological studies from St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vt., and has taught at high schools in New York City, Florida and New Jersey. Brother Hamilton is the son of Elizabeth and Kenneth Hamilton, who belong to St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.

Prizes await respondents to reader survey

The *Catholic Courier* currently is conducting a readership survey to gauge the newspaper's progress since switching to a monthly-weekly-Web format earlier this year. Management is particularly interested in the views of the 70,000 new readers who began receiving the paper in April.

To encourage readers to spend 15 to 20 minutes completing the survey, the *Courier* is offering the following prizes: a full-year family membership to Chili Country Club (\$855 value); two Delta Chelsea Toronto weekend getaway packages (\$400 value); 10 20-GB iPods (\$300 value); five pairs of round-trip fast-ferry tickets to Toronto on The Breeze (\$160 value); and coupons for free video rentals, courtesy of Wegmans. All eligible survey respondents will be entered in drawings for these prizes.

Karen M. Franz, the newspaper's general manager/editor, explained that the *Courier* conducted readership surveys every few years be-

tween 1980 and 2003 to take the pulse of the 45,000 or so Catholics who received the paper during that period. "But we really have no information on the opinions and interests of new *Courier* recipients," she said.

The paper's staff also is especially interested in hearing from readers who live outside of Monroe County, added Jennifer Ficaglia, the *Courier's* assistant editor.

"Since we now produce regionalized weekly publications, it is imperative that we learn what our readers in the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier think," Ficaglia said. "Are we providing adequate, varied coverage of people, events and activities outside of Monroe County? What are we doing right, and how can we improve? We really need Finger Lakes and Southern Tier readers to help us answer these questions and help us improve our service to them by completing the survey."

The survey's secondary purpose is to garner information the *Courier's*

advertising staff can use to obtain additional advertising support, Franz said. She noted that advertising revenues offset the costs of producing and distributing the *Courier*, thus holding down fees to parishes and direct subscribers.

"Readers' responses to the shopping/purchasing questions in our survey will offer invaluable insight into their spending habits. This will enable the advertising department to form strategic partnerships with advertisers who best satisfy the needs of our readers," said Dan Zollo, the *Courier's* advertising director.

The survey can be accessed at www.pulseresearch.com/catholic_courier or from an advertising link found on every page of *Catholic Courier.com*.

The confidential survey is being administered by the independent firm Pulse Research, based in Oregon. Pulse will report data to the *Courier* in the aggregate only, meaning that no individual's information will be identifiable.