

## COURT REFUSES TO HEAR O'NEILL LAWSUIT APPEAL

On Sept. 21, the New York State Court of Appeals declined to hear an appeal of a lower court's decision to dismiss a lawsuit against the Diocese of Rochester and Robert O'Neill, a former diocesan priest accused of sexual abuse.

The court made no comment as to why it made its decision.

In May 2003, State Supreme Court Justice Robert Lunn ruled in Rochester that the applicable statute of limitations had expired for the 10 plaintiffs, who were seeking unspecified damages.

O'Neill retired in 2001. Bishop Matthew H. Clark removed him from all ministry on May 2, 2002, due to allegations that O'Neill had committed sexual abuse in the past.

Doug Mandelaro, diocesan spokesman, urged victims of sexual abuse to contact the diocese for assistance.

"As always, we urge that any person who has been a victim of abuse by a person working for the church to call our victims' advocates so that we can provide help and guidance," Mandelaro said. The advocates are Barbara Pedeville, who may be reached at 585/328-3228, ext. 1215, or Father Robert Ring, who may be reached at 315/730-0882."

— Rob Cullivan

## SEVEN HONORED FOR COMMITMENT TO LIFE

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will present the Vita Award to seven individuals who have shown exemplary commitment to the protection of human life from conception through natural death.

The awards will be given during the ninth annual Consistent Life Ethic Dinner and Awards Presentation Oct. 27 in the parish hall of Victor's St. Patrick Church.

This year's winners are Joanne and Gerry Corcimiglia of Corpus Christi Parish in Rochester; Colleen Knauf of St. Louis Parish in Pittsford; Maggie and Bob Lagonegro of St. Anthony/St. Patrick Parish in Elmira; Geraldine Oftedahl of St. Thomas More Parish in Rochester; and Peggy Ruscio of St. Januarius Parish in Naples.

For tickets, call 585/328-3210, ext. 1303, or 800/388-7177, ext. 1303.

# Migrants get identification

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

SODUS — Hundreds of Mexican migrants living throughout the Rochester Diocese came to Church of the Epiphany Sept. 25 to obtain Mexican consular identification cards.

The Mexicans came to obtain the cards with the assistance of several representatives of the Mexican Consulate, who had traveled to the church from their office in New York City. The cards identify the bearers as Mexican nationals residing in the United States, and will allow the Mexicans to more easily travel from the U.S. to Mexico, according to Norberto Terrazas, consul for legal protection of Mexican citizens. He added that the card contains security features making it highly difficult to duplicate.

Sandra Rojas, coordinator of the Diocese of Rochester's Hispanic Migrant Ministry in Monroe County, said many of the Mexicans have no form of official identification, which can create legal difficulties both in the U.S. and Mexico.

"They are invisible in this country," Rojas said of the Mexicans, many of them employed as farm workers. "They need identification to prove who they are, to open a bank account; to cash a check; when the police stop them."

Rojas noted that the registration effort was a cooperative venture between the Mexican Consulate and several diocesan officials, including Father Jesús Flores, diocesan coordinator for migrant ministry and sacramental minister at St. Mary's of the Lake in Ontario; Carmelite Sister Luci Romero, Hispanic Migrant Ministry coordinator for Wayne County; and Xochitil Palacios, Hispanic Migrant Ministry coordinator for Yates



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Mexican natives line up in the parish center at Sodus' Church of the Epiphany Sept. 25 to have their identification documents copied by volunteers from diocesan Hispanic Migrant Ministry and verified by officials from the Mexican Consulate.

and Ontario counties. Migrant ministry operates under the auspices of diocesan Parish Support Ministries.

Father Lance Gonyo, pastor of Church of the Epiphany, noted that many Sodus-area migrants attend a Spanish Mass at the parish.

"Our community has always been very supportive of the migrant community," he said.

Rodrigo Gomez, 16, came to obtain the cards with his family members, who are registered aliens and have been farm workers in Brockport for the past five years, he said.

"We're mostly working to get a better life," he said, noting his mother and aunt were formerly employed as domestic workers in Mexico. "The pay was better here."

His mother said she wanted the Mexican card so she could open a

bank account in this country. The family members eventually want to become U.S. citizens, Rodrigo said.

Librada Paz, who holds dual U.S. and Mexican citizenships, said that even after 15 years of going back and forth between her two countries, she still needed the Mexican consular card. Having the card will make it easier for her to travel to Mexico to see family members, she said. Paz likened the consular card she was obtaining to a passport, and said she appreciated the fact that consulate representatives traveled so far to aid her and other Mexicans.

"It takes time to go to New York City," she said. "Now that (consulate representatives) are here, it's great for us."

Sister Romero called the migrants a "community of hope" being served by the church.

"We're energized — a people of faith," she said.

## Bishop receives national honor

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry recently honored Bishop Matthew H. Clark for outstanding service to the cause of youth ministry during the past six years.

This month Bishop Clark will finish his second three-year term as episcopal liaison to NFCYM on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Dr. Robert McCarty, executive director of NFCYM, and Sister Eileen McCann, CSJ, made a presentation honoring the bishop during the Diocese of Rochester Catholic Charities All-Boards gathering in Waterloo in late September. Sister

McCann is the director of youth ministry for the Diocese of Syracuse and a member of the NFCYM board.

"Bishop Clark has been a model of collaboration and has been a source of inspiration and energy for our youth and for all of us," McCarty said.

"I am grateful not only for this kind honor by NFCYM, but very thankful for the marvelous experience of working with their leadership team and the young people these last six years," Bishop Clark said. "I am always inspired by their faith and energy, and awed by the promise they bring to the future."

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