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FOX VALLEY FAITH

SPREADING THE GOSPEL

New community of religious women focuses on aiding young people



Sister Maria Lucia Stella Maris kneels at the altar at St. Pius X Roman Catholic church as Mother Mary Catherine adds the scapular to her habit May 1 in Appleton. The service established the Missionaries of the Word, which is a new religious community of women who will teach young people about Jesus. WM. GLASHEEN/POST-CRESCENT MEDIA

By Holly Meyer | Post-Crescent Media

If a young soul wanders, Mother Mary Catherine has dedicated her to life to shepherding it back on the path to heaven.

She is trying to save souls as the founder and mother superior of a newly formed community of Roman Catholic religious women within the Diocese of Green Bay. They're called the Missionaries of the Word and their focus is to bring the Gospel to teens and young adults, which can be a volatile age for faith.

"I always consider it like rebounding them back into the court," Mother Mary Catherine said. "We see it as such a teetering time of you can either go one way or the other. If you have the truth, you really can make a whole different choice. And those choices and those values, I remember from my education days, are what build your character and that's what shapes the whole direction of your life."

See MISSION, Page A6



Mother Mary Catherine (from left), Sister Maria Lucia Stella Maris and Sister Marie Bernadette of the Sacred Heart celebrate at the end of the Mass at St. Pius X Roman Catholic church that established the Missionaries of the Word. WM. GLASHEEN/POST-CRESCENT MEDIA

FAITH AND VALUES

Reporter Holly Meyer explores trends in the Fox Valley's faith community. If you have a story idea, contact her at 920-993-1000, ext. 426, or hmeyer@postcrescent.com. Follow her on Twitter @HollyAMeyer.

MORE PHOTOS

See additional images related to the Missionaries of the Word on Page A7 and at postcrescent.com.



Dianna Siveny Kandi Siveny

Shooting defendants to be freed from jail

Judge decides trials for mother, daughter delayed too long

By Ariel Cheung
Post-Crescent Media

APPLETON — The mother and daughter accused of conspiring to murder Lara Plamann in 2007 will be released from jail next week after a judge ruled Tuesday that prosecutors violated their right to a speedy trial.

Attorneys for Dianna and Kandi Siveny said prosecutors delayed the case by failing to provide evidence to the defense in a timely manner. During a motions hearing Tuesday, Outagamie County Judge Nancy Krueger chastised the district attorney's office for the delays.

"Essentially, what I want to tell the state is enough is enough," Krueger said. "The state was clearly negligent in handling the discovery process here, and the defense is at a great disadvantage, and frankly, there's no way they can be properly prepared to proceed."

The Sivenys filed requests for speedy trials in January, and state law dictates those trials must begin within 90 days of the request. Otherwise, the defendants must be released from custody.

The consequence of deliberately violating a defendant's constitutional right to a speedy trial is dismissal of the case, but the judge said that prosecutors' negligence did not rise to that level.

The women had been scheduled to stand trial in May and June. Dianna Siveny's trial is

See SHOOTING, Page A6

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Stadium district future unclear beyond 2015

Lambeau Field funding source will need review

By Paul Srubas
Gannett Wisconsin Media

GREEN BAY — Brown County's 0.5 percent sales tax to fund Lambeau Field im-

provements will expire no later than the end of 2015 and possibly as soon as Sept. 30, 2015, according to the executive director of the group that manages the Packer Stadium Tax.

Patrick Webb, executive director of the Green Bay/Brown County Professional Football Stadium District, provided the county board's

Executive Committee with an update Monday evening on the projected end of the district sales tax and the future of the district itself.

While nothing would prevent Brown County from enacting its own sales tax for its own benefit, the Packer Stadium Tax comes to a definite close when the stadium district board meets its legisla-

tively mandated responsibilities.

Webb said those responsibilities include paying off the bonds, which was done in 2011, and establishing a fund that will pay for maintenance of the stadium through the end of the Green Bay Packers' current lease in 2031.

See LAMBEAU, Page A6



INDEX BUSINESS A9 | CLASSIFIED D8 | COMICS C2 | CROSSWORD D9 | LIFE C1 | LOTTERIES D2 | OBITUARIES C8 | SPORTS D1 | TV C3 | VIEWS A10

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Mission

Continued from Page A1

Green Bay Diocese Bishop David Ricken, who established the Missionaries of the Word on May 1 during a Mass at St. Pius X church in Appleton, said igniting the faith in young adults can make them strong believers for life. The small community of sisters, now marked by their blue habits, are trying to do just that by working in the spirit of New Evangelization, a movement within the Catholic Church to reintroduce the faith to those who no longer practice.

"We have a couple of generations of Catholics who haven't been really engaged in their faith. Part of that is all the pressure from the culture, but part of it as well is that we haven't done a very good job of really making disciples, you know real followers of Jesus, of our Catholic people," Ricken said. "We can see that so many people that fall away from the church eventually wind up falling away from God. Some of them go to other churches, but oftentimes they just quit and they get farther and farther away from God. So a person's soul can wind up in trouble with all kinds of problems if they've excluded God or neglected God."

Ricken said people are created as finite beings that are all going to die, but a part of each person — the soul — lives forever and has an eternal destiny. Those who knowingly and willingly reject God are destined for hell, Ricken said, while those who accept God will find their

way into purgatory — a state of purification — and heaven. Christians and Catholics are supposed to be continuously working at getting to heaven.

The sisters help invite Jesus into the hearts and minds of people through their examples of joy, happiness and living in community, Ricken said.

Living in community

Mother Mary Catherine, 51, and the two novices, Sister Maria Lucia Stella Maris, 23, and Sister Marie Bernadette of the Sacred Heart, 22, are living together at St. Joseph Formation Center at Kangaroo Lake in Door County. The sisters work with Catholic Youth Expeditions, an outdoor ministry for teen and young adults, which also is based at the formation center. Another young woman, Erin Schuessler, has joined the Missionaries of the Word as a postulant, the period of discernment before the novitiate.

The women have been working with Catholic Youth Expeditions and its founder and director, the Rev. Quinn Mann, for several years.

The premise of the outdoor ministry is to teach young people how to pray and create a deeper, more meaningful relationship with Jesus while enjoying the outdoors and community. It comes at a time when the teens and 20-somethings are searching for answers.

"I think with a lot of youth and young adults there's a lot of anxiety, a lot of stress and a lot of worry," Mann said. "And this anxiety of what am I going to do, where am I going to go, who am I going

to meet and that's really just a derivative of fear. Jesus said 'be not afraid.' I think it's helping take away the fear of the unknown and actually accepting that."

It was Mann's ministry and Catholic Youth Expeditions that inspired Mother Mary Catherine, then Margaret Peggy Duemling, to talk to the bishop about starting the community. Her asthma forced her to leave the the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa's religious congregation. After several years of working at a Catholic school in Menomonee Falls, she was still figuring out where God was calling her to serve. Under the guidance of her spiritual director, she was pondering something completely new that would make women of these times feel alive. Then-Milwaukee Archbishop Timothy Dolan told her to meet with Ricken and Mann.

"I came up and met Father Quinn and after we talked for about an hour and a half, it was just like the strongest kind of something came in my heart that this is the way, walk in it. Go," Mother Mary Catherine said.

Ricken told her to pray and discern whether it was the direction God was leading her, a process that lasted until 2012. At that time, she and a few other women began living in community and discerning together, splitting time between St. Pius X in Appleton and the formation center.

The private community existed until May 1, when Mother Mary Catherine took her new religious name and professed her final religious vows of

chastity, obedience and poverty during the Mass at St. Pius X. Sister Lucia and Sister Bernadette also entered the community's novitiate, a two-year period of discernment and prayer that is meant to test them.

The call

Ricken, who has responsibility to make sure the call to religious life and the creation of a new community is genuine and true, said time is a key part of the process.

"Sometimes people can glamorize the religious life, romanticize it and you have to sort that out. Is this an authentic call from God or is this somebody that's in love with the dream more than they are with the reality. It's a reality, it's beautiful, very attractive but it's also dead real," Ricken said.

Mann, along with Catholic Youth Expeditions and the Missionaries of the Word, are the lead agents of New Evangelization in the diocese, which will soon embark on a six-year journey toward a stronger discipleship, Ricken said.

"They're kind of learning how to live this out in a deeper way and I'm hoping to kind of learn from them and their experience how we can kind of adapt some of the things they're doing for youth for our parishes," Ricken said.

While they may be religious women, Mother Mary Catherine says she and the novices are just like other women who enjoy the outdoors and have loving families. She grew up in Hartland, loves horseback riding and swimming, and was in a serious relationship before she

chose her vocation.

"I'm just a normal, 100 percent, independent American woman, and all these women are too. They're the same. They just love life," Mother Mary Catherine said. "I think some people stereotype that, A) we can't find a man or B) you're just over religious-ized. It's just so totally different. A call comes from God and you can't deny it. That invitation is full of so much love. And you have a choice and you're free."

Religious life does mean sacrifice, including trading one's personal family for a much bigger one. Those who accept God's invitation enter into the mysterious and supernatural relationship with great joy and love.

"I guess you just can't say no to him because he's so loving. I've never been able to say no to him so far and it just produces more and more joy in me anytime I don't say no," Mother Mary Catherine said. "It's a gift and it's a mystery. It's hard to explain it more than that. It's like you yourself don't even understand it. And you can't bury it or run from it because it's always there."

The future

Catholic Youth Expeditions was one of catalysts that drew the two novices to the Missionaries of the Word and Mother Mary Catherine.

Sister Lucia, then known as Anya Gadamus, is from Ashland and felt the call to religious life from a young age. After her freshman year in college, she signed up to be a part of Catholic Youth Expeditions' summer ministry team.

"It's not something that is only the work; vocation is essentially to be with the Lord to be his, and so you can only do that when you are immersed in prayer and so the opportunity to be in Catholic Youth Expeditions gave me that time to pray and to really discern," Sister Lucia said. "It takes time to let that unfold right, because it's a relationship with Christ and so to see how the Lord is calling you. He speaks differently than a normal man would that you can see come kneel on one knee and present you with a ring."

The call to religious life surprised Germantown native Sarah Schueller, now called Sister Bernadette. She was a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison when she felt that pull and applied for Catholic Youth Expeditions' summer staff.

"I would have never guessed in my whole entire life that I would be a sister," Sister Bernadette said, "though I had, had a reconversion in college and it really jump-started my prayer life and my relationship with the Lord. At CYE, I really fell in love with Jesus."

Mother Mary Catherine does not know if the community will continue to grow or stay the same, but she's confident God will guide them in the right direction.

"I don't know what the future holds, but I feel very peaceful that we're doing what we're supposed to be doing right now," Mother Mary Catherine said.

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Shooting

Continued from Page A1

now scheduled to start Aug. 25, and Kandi Siveny's trial is scheduled to begin Sept. 29.

As conditions of bond, Krueger ordered that both defendants be equipped with GPS monitors and report to law enforcement officials on weekdays. Krueger also ordered they have no contact with state witnesses or the victim's family.

Before the defendants can be released from jail, they must notify authorities where they will live. Kandi Siveny indicated she intends to return to Minnesota and Diane Siveny will live in the Appleton area. They also must maintain absolute sobriety and submit to random drug testing.

Krueger based her decision on testimony from

two hearings last week, when Outagamie County Sheriff's Department investigators focusing on missing evidence. The defense grilled the officers about Kandi Siveny's cellphone records, which show the phone did not leave Minneapolis during a three-day period surrounding Plamann's death.

Investigators used the phone's contact list to match witnesses to calls made during the time-frame of Plamann's murder in 2007, but never asked the witnesses if they were on the phone with Kandi Siveny at the time.

Krueger also took issue with payments investigators made to witnesses that were not disclosed, destroyed maps that witnesses drew to assist with the investigation and unreported police contact with witnesses.

"I don't find that de-

struction (of the maps) was done in bad faith, although I will note that it was clearly not good police procedure," Krueger said. "There were payments to witnesses that should have been in the police reports. And those payments, whether it was for a soda, whether it was for a pack of cigarettes or a meal, are important as it relates to the defense."

Investigators testified last week that witnesses were given small meals or cigarettes, and the investigators did not include those details in reports or reimbursement requests.

Defense attorneys Daniel Sanders and Daniel Kaminsky asked the judge to dismiss the charges, arguing that the prosecution's delays were a violation of the Sivenys' constitutional right to a speedy trial. They also said the missing evidence and destroyed maps meant they

couldn't adequately prepare a defense.

Kandi Siveny, 35, is accused of fatally shooting Plamann in Greenville on Oct. 17, 2007, after police said her mother offered a friend \$5,000 to carry out the murder. Dianna Siveny, 55, was Plamann's longtime domestic partner.

The friend, Rosie Campbell, confessed to police in February 2013, resulting in the arrest of the Sivenys on homicide charges, the criminal complaint stated.

The Sivenys will return to court June 3. The judge order prosecutors to provide any additional evidence to the defense by that time, along with supplemental reports about payments made to witnesses and the trips made to other states.

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Lambeau

Continued from Page A1

"Nobody can end it until we meet those obligations, and nobody can continue it," Webb said of the tax.

The district was set up by state law after Brown County voters in fall of 2000 approved a plan to fund improvements to Lambeau Field with the 0.5 percent sales tax. When the tax produces the \$92 million to cover its maintenance responsibilities, the district board has several decisions to make, including whether the board itself will continue to operate and what would need to happen if the tax generates more money than is needed.

Webb has stated any excess money should be returned to Brown County's taxing entities, and he would like to see it paid

back annually, but legislation as it is written seems to require it be paid back in a lump sum when the Packers' lease expires.

Webb said the board is about a year away from being able to certify that it has set aside enough money to meet its legislatively mandated responsibilities. State statute says the tax will be terminated "after the last day of the calendar quarter that is at least 120 days" after certification that sufficient money is collected.

The tax supported renovations done in 2003, and the district has aside about \$50 million so far. The tax produces about \$20 million annually. No study has been done, but at least a quarter of that annual income likely comes from outside Brown County, Webb said.

— Paul Srubas writes for Press-Gazette Media, Green Bay.

Living Proof

I'm **KAYCIE HELEIN** of Menasha. I try to live in the moment — both on and off my yoga mat. It has taught me how to quiet my mind and accept the things I can't change. But when I was diagnosed with **BREAST CANCER** I feared what I have been taught to accept: uncertainty. The team at St. Elizabeth Hospital Cancer Center quickly calmed my fears. My **NURSE NAVIGATOR** guided me through the process and my **GENETIC COUNSELOR** armed me with knowledge and peace of mind. I'm living proof that expert doctors, leading-edge technology and personalized care make Affinity **THE LEADER IN CANCER CARE.**

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