

COURIER-JOURNAL

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2 Sections

Report Is Criticized In Elmira

(Special to Courier-Journal)

Elmira — Reaction here to the release of a survey-report from the Rochester diocesan schools' office suggesting that Chemung County be "a testing ground" for consolidation of schools and parishes ranged from confusion over the intent of the announcement to anger at its specific contents.

Area pastors refused to be quoted immediately after the report came but were unanimous in their feeling that the proposals should have been presented privately to the priests of the county for a judgment about the value of a public announcement.

Msgr. Philip McGhan, pastor of SS. Peter and Paul's Church and Father Edward J. Foy, pastor of St. Cecelia's (two churches which the report recommended for closing) issued a joint statement deploring the confusion caused by the announcement.

"Many proposals which at this time are only in the beginning stage seem to be taken as definite decision by our people. Consequently we strongly believe that the permission of the pastors of Elmira should have been given on the advisability of the news release at this time."

Father Joseph Egan, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, in his pulpit on Sunday read a long letter he had sent to Bishop Hogan concerning the Donovan Report. Regretting that "the survival of this parish has been called into question," he asked his people not to hold the Bishop personally responsible for the report or its implications.

"Let me express to you my sorrow over the anguish you must have felt to learn that the demolition of this parish was even thought of let alone presented as worthy of serious consideration," he told his congregation at all the Sunday Masses.

"I hasten to reassure you that the Bishop is still a sane man capable of recognizing a silly suggestion when he sees one."

A more temperate tone was taken by Father William Tobin, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church whose pulpit remarks on the report asked his people to reject rumors and inaccurate judgments.

"I hope that every church in our county will remain open: each one is serving a great number of people. Surveys are acceptable means of learning facts and opinions but they are only the beginnings of discussion and hearings before final decisions are made."

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**Sunday Mass
On TV
Watch Ch. 10,
Rochester
at 8:30 A.M.
every Sunday.**



Comfort and Hope

Ellen Marie Meerdink, a Rochester pediatric nurse, comforts a young Tunisian patient aboard the S. S. HOPE, a hospital ship, in Tunis, Tunisia. Miss Meerdink served as a staff member of the floating medical center which completed its Tunisian mission July 14.

Miss Meerdink is a parishioner of St. Ambrose Church, Rochester, and graduated from Our Lady of Mercy High School. She received her nursing education at St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira. She also served with the HOPE team in Colombia. (HOPE photograph)

The Bishop Speaks



My Dear People:

Recently I preached a homily at the opening of the Chapter of the Sisters of St. Joseph. May I share with you all a few excerpts from that talk which reflect my thoughts on the role of women religious in the Church today:—

Consecrated religious lives have been a part of the Church from the earliest centuries. I suppose the question might be asked: "Are you essential to the Church?" I would hate to think of what the Church would be without the congregations of dedicated women.

There is nothing in the initial charter of the Church — an unalterable charter given to it by Christ Himself—which says anything particular about religious communities, be they men or women. . . . If you are not essential to the Church, let me say that I think you are very necessary. The Church would be much less than she has been, or is, without you.

The hierarchical structure of the Church reflects the orderli-

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