

The Three Schools... A History

The three parish schools in the news during the past week are a legacy from a pre-melting pot era. The Catholic churches of Rochester a century and more ago were focal points in homogeneous settlements of European immigrants.

St. Bridget's School was opened by the Irish of Rochester in 1854. It began in the pastor's barn, 14 years before the Diocese of Rochester was established.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School was built into the first church put up by the Italian people of the Ontario-North street neighborhood, in 1909.

The 45-year gap between the two parishes has been narrowed in the accelerating aging process that began with the post-World War II flight to the suburbs. Most

of the prosperous descendants of poor immigrants have left both areas to the poor who came north in numbers in the fifties, from the South and Puerto Rico.

During the school year just ended enrollment in both schools was about one third of what it had been in the late sixties.

St. Bridget's and Mt. Carmel, now to be closed, survived the first round of school consolidation planned in January, 1973, by the Council of Inner-City Parishes.

St. Michael's, also in an area suffering the afflictions of urban decay survived by changing. The school was to house a junior high school fed by the grade schools of the inner city parishes. The arrangement would last at least five years, the planners thought.

A decision to abandon the year-old junior high in favor of kindergarten through sixth grade at St. Michael's accompanied the decision to close St. Bridget's and Mt. Carmel.

St. Michael's was built in 1898, the second school in a German parish established in 1872. The original parish, an offshoot of the German community centered in St. Joseph's and Holy Redeemer, extended from Gorham Street to Lake Ontario, but it had only 200 families—the Butterhole farmers. In 1903, nevertheless, the school had 1,000 pupils. That was its high spot.

For these three parishes, 1968 was a year of decision, or of decisions made and altered or undone.

The people of St. Michael's were retrenching in the face of a threat that the school's end was imminent.

During the feverish days of February, 1968, St. Bridget's was taken from its people, then restored by decision of Bishop Fulton Sheen, who wanted the federal government to build low-cost housing on the site.

That summer, Father Gennaro Ventura, then pastor of Mt. Carmel, proposed that his parish school be discontinued in favor of a comprehensive program of religious and social education for entire families. The people voted, however, to keep the school, trimmed of its top and bottom grades.

St. Bridget's Father Francis Vogt, reacting to Bishop Sheen's housing plan, had voiced a popular view. "The school is the most important thing in the neighborhood. If we can give the children a good education, that's the most important thing we can do."

For the past 10 years and more, the two parishes have been the focus of varied social service programs, some of them school-connected, many directed by outside agencies.

In the beginning, the St. Bridget area was known as Dublin. All the names on the original parish lists were Irish. The first church was erected on a \$25 lot, and the grammar school met in the pastor's barn, across Hand Street.

After the present church was built in 1872, the old one was remodeled into a school that opened in 1875 with 300 pupils taught by six Sisters of St. Joseph.

that doubled the school's capacity.

Summer classes for under-achievers and for Spanish speaking children, pre-school sessions and day camps have been held there. As recently as last summer there was talk of an economical, new building that would have recreation and education facilities for the entire neighborhood.

Mt. Carmel parish put up a new church in 1929, and in 1951 conducted a drive for \$100,000 to modernize the school. The fund

drive was not a total success, but parishioners pitched in and got the work done, only to see the building gutted by flames in November, 1953. Again, volunteers came forward to clean out the wreckage and to prepare the old Cathedral High School building for temporary use. Seven city buses carried more than 400 Mt. Carmel pupils across town from November until April. Meanwhile a drive for \$150,000 was over-subscribed, and a new school was built within the old walls.

But that was 20 years ago.

Geneva Capuchins Leaving Diocese

Geneva — The Capuchin Fathers are closing their Geneva house and will leave the diocese as soon as they can complete arrangements for the disposition of their property, Father Cyprian Rosen reported last week.

Father Cyprian, who has worked full time for the Diocesan Tribunal for the past four years, has been recalled by his order to become superior and director of a seminarians' residence in Mahwah, N.J. The appointment is effective July 8.

The others still here are Fathers Leopold and Camillus Protomastro, OFM Cap. Father Leopold has been chaplain at Hobart and William Smith Colleges since 1967 and is a chaplain also at the army depot south of here. His brother is prefect of formation for the entire Province of the Stigmata, of St. Francis, headquartered in New Jersey. The two are from Hoboken.

Father Cyprian is a native of Little Falls. He came here in 1965, on completion of canon law studies at Catholic University of America. Early in his stay, he joined the Tribunal as a volunteer, "when I went in to discuss a

case, and they discovered I had a canon law degree," he said last week.

The Capuchins opened the Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in 1949 on a Lochland Road estate. This was operated as a minor seminary until 1964, then as a major seminary. Students remaining in 1967 were transferred to St. Bernard's in Rochester, and the priests later moved to smaller quarters in the city.

Throughout their quarter-century here, the Capuchins have assisted in parish and diocesan work. Fathers Leopold and Cyprian ran an adult religious education program for the diocese for several seasons.

The Geneva priests and those of St. Fidelis Friary at Interlaken belong to separate provinces of the same order. St. Fidelis was set up from Garrison, N.Y. — St. Mary's Province. The original Geneva foundation was staffed by a group that worked mainly with Italian immigrants, according to Father Cyprian, and was "national, not territorial." The jurisdiction of the Stigmata Province is a recent development, he said.

Minnesota Welfare Covers Fetuses in Last Three Months

St. Paul, Minn. [RNS] — Fetuses have been eligible for welfare in Minnesota since April 1, under a 1974 law that went through the 1974 state legislature with little notice.

The regulation allows a woman to claim a fetus as a dependent during the last three months of pregnancy, and in the event of a stillborn delivery could continue to collect benefits for one month.

At a public hearing on the new regulation conducted by the

HOPE FUNDS

The Hike for Hope allocations committee will accept funding applications from local youth-oriented charities through Wednesday, July 31. Application forms may be obtained from the committee at 808 Temple Building, Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Additional information may be obtained from Jim Froehler at 546-8190.

RTL SPEAKER

Euthanasia in the Nursery will be Mrs. Jeanne Sweeney's topic at a Right to Life discussion slated for 7:30 p.m. on July 10, at St. Ambrose School. Mrs. Sweeney is a registered nurse.

Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, no one spoke against the general concept of declaring a six-month-old fetus a child, but a representative of Minnesotans Concerned for Life urged the department to go a step further and refuse to pay medical bills of women who have abortions.

"It's not consistent to have this regulation that protects the welfare of the mother and child and then pay for elective abortions which kill the child," said James Beattie of Forest Lake, Minn.

Welfare Department representatives said abortions are covered in medical assistance programs only during the first two trimesters, while the new regulation qualifies the fetus for welfare only during the third trimester.

A department spokesman said later the department cannot prohibit use of funds for abortions as Mr. Beattie suggested. Federal law requires payment for all medical services that are authorized by state law, and abortion is one of those authorized, he said.

"We have no choice but to pay them," the spokesman said.



Investiture

As a symbol of his new responsibility as chairman of the St. Salome Parish Council, Donald Stoffel receives a wooden cross from Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty. Others installed as council members in a recent ceremony are Donald Lario, Priscilla Kitzel, William Boller, James Georger, Joseph Gillen, Leo Hickey, Jack Kennedy, Rosalia Loritz, Raymond Walle, Betty Scheffel, Sister Lucille and Joseph Stocklein.

All RG&E Offices Will Be Closed July 4

To celebrate Independence Day, all Rochester Gas and Electric offices will be closed on July 4. Our Main Office at 89 East Avenue will remain closed on Friday and Saturday, July 5 and 6.

In case of emergency call 546-1100. Crews will be standing by for your assistance.

The Joseph Avenue and the Bull's Head Plaza offices will reopen on July 5 for business as usual. They will be open on Friday from 9 PM to 6 PM and on Saturday from 9 AM to 6 PM.

We hope you enjoy the holiday weekend.



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