

Blessed Trinity's Success Story

Auburn — The story behind Blessed Trinity's successful first year began more than a year before the school opened on Sept. 5, 1973, to 769 students. Sister Walter Anne O'Malley, SSJ, principal, attributes much of Blessed Trinity's success to planning and to a spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm shown by the faculty and picked up by the students as they made the school their own.

"When a vision perceived was strong enough, broad enough, and thought through enough — support was given, challenges were met, ideals were shared, and a dream became a living, vibrant reality," she said.

Blessed Trinity School is the result of the merger of St. Alphonsus, Holy Family and

Sacred Heart schools. The name for the school, located in what was once St. Alphonsus, was chosen by the students from all three schools as a symbol of unity.

Students were kept informed of the various steps leading to the Certificate of Incorporation on December 14, 1973. Guests to the school were introduced and their mission was explained to help students share in the school's progress and emerging identification.

There were frequent communications to parents, open house, and Home School Association speakers, including Dr. James Knox, superintendent of schools for the Auburn district, and Father Daniel Brent, diocesan school superintendent. The

principal and teachers were available for conferences.

Parents were able to monitor the New York State department of education's experimental project, ICEIT, (Improving Cost Effectiveness in Instruction Through Technology) conducted at Blessed Trinity. The project attempts to design programs to serve students through television and teacher aides.

James Anderson, project ICEIT evaluator, commended the principal and staff for "quality of leadership, sense of community and dedication which made Blessed Trinity an exceptional learning environment."

Students were introduced to new classmates as room assignment was not along parish

lines. The first few weeks students sought out old classmates, then made new friends.

The principal indicated the larger student population better prepared the graduating class for the greater numbers at the high school. More students meant increased competition, but there was the security of old friends during the transition.

A newspaper initiated in the Spring, formation of a student council and the election process contributed to the birth of school spirit. Sister Walter Anne felt that the graduation class's request for a class ring as a symbol of Blessed Trinity to carry with them signified that Blessed Trinity had become more than just a physical reality.

Sister Walter Anne was appointed principal at the first board meeting in November 1972. While principal at St. Alphonsus, she worked with the two other school principals to assure the smooth transfer, program development and continuity in curriculum.

Job applicants were interviewed, room use and equipment needs determined. The faculty of the three schools began to plan curriculum in April for the following fall. Initial discussion dealt with goals and objectives, then focused on implementation of program to assure comprehensive curriculum based on up to date educational philosophy. Departmental meetings continued through the summer.

Consolidation increased audio visual and book resources for the library as well as other equipment. Increased student population permitted greater flexibility in grouping students. A larger faculty provided greater potential for teacher cooperation and sharing of ideas. Through departmentalization, teachers had more opportunity to teach their specialities.

In-service training for lay

teachers in religious education content and methods offered by Sister Patricia Pullman SSJ, assistant superintendent of religious instruction, was conducted in the spring before the school opened.

The junior high religious instruction is handled by the sisters on a cycle basis, with each student taking seven short courses during the year. The priests from the three parishes are involved in the religious education program on a scheduled, rotating basis for each grade level making classroom celebrations and liturgies more feasible. First Friday Mass is concelebrated.

With the addition to the staff of a guidance counselor for academic planning, the guidance program was expanded to include classroom guidance programs and individual counseling. The school psychologist has increased testing, especially in the lower grades.

Physical education is available to all students. The Home School Association has underwritten cost of the fourth grade swim program. The remedial work program was expanded.

This year the school hopes to expand the music program by hiring a parttime music teacher. Increased use of audio visual aides and expansion of the scheduled parent-teacher conferences is also expected.

Parish identity is retained through parish sponsored sports and cheerleading events. Altar boys serve in home parishes. Parental involvement in sacramental programs and celebrations are conducted on the parish level.

Enrollment figures for the coming year are not yet final. Students may be registered by contacting Blessed Trinity School. Registration is open beyond the three parishes if tuition requirements are met.



New Administrators

Sister Roberta Tierney, SSND, [left] has been named deputy superintendent of schools replacing Sam Musso who was appointed principal of St. Charles Borromeo School. Previously she held the position of assistant superintendent for curriculum. Sister Boniface Roeger, SSJ, [center], former principal of Our Lady of Lourdes School, is the new assistant superintendent for instruction. She replaces Sister Cyril who will become principal of Pius X. Sister Edwardine Weaver, RSM, [right], will fill the part time position of co-ordinator for curriculum and will also continue her work as principal at St. James where she has been stationed for the past five years.

Chemung County Schools Unique

Elmira — The Chemung County Catholic School System is unique in the diocese. Its grammar schools, no longer strictly "parochial," and with grade six, seventh and eighth graders are taught in a single, separate school.

St. Patrick's Junior High School was the first junior high school in the diocese. Under the Chemung County Catholic School System, nine Catholic schools were merged into five schools with their seventh and eighth graders attending St. Patrick's. Since its doors opened four years ago this September, Sister Claire Francis has been at its helm as principal.

Sister Claire Francis is still as enthusiastic about the two-year junior high school as she was the first day she came to the educational institution.

Although a drop of from five to 10 students is expected in the school's enrollment, Sister Claire Francis said the 330 to 335

students expected to be coming to the school this year is a good student population to work with. She said the maximum number of the students for an ideal enrollment is 360.

"I feel that the junior high program has worked out very well with most of the parents very satisfied with it. I was enthusiastic when I first took on this assignment and I still feel very enthusiastic about the program," the principal said.

She said the greatest advantage to the system, which is unique to the area of Catholic education, is it provides "a much better educational program for children when they are entering the most difficult years of their lives."

The teachers at the junior high school specialize in one or two courses instead of teaching all the study requirements.

Sister Claire Francis believes the biggest plus factor for the

junior high program in the Catholic school system "is the religious aspect. We stress the religious aspect very strongly. This is the period when the children start to really question their religion.

"To help them we offer days of renewal plus we have Mass three or four days a week. We also have wonderful cooperation with many of the priests in the area and in addition to our own guidance counselor they also offer counseling services anytime a student might want to use them," she said.

Sister Claire Francis believes the school offers "a better religion program because the teachers are operating it for the good of the students."

The school also offers a well-rounded sports program, both on intramural and inter-school levels. "We can offer a complete sports program and have a varsity basketball team, which I might add had an undefeated season last year, that plays the public junior high schools in the area. We also have physical education classes."

The principal said it would be very difficult if impossible to have such a sports program if the students were in separate grammar schools running from grades one through eight.

Sister Claire Francis also said she doesn't believe that the school is just teaching 300 plus students. "With these students we are reaching out into the entire Elmira community. The sports program, plus our student council exchanges with the public junior

high schools, lets us reach out into the community."

Educationally the Catholic junior high school offers contracts for students to sign with their teachers. Under the contract system the student and teacher agree on how much the student should learn and absorb. Each contract is different for each student and it reduces peer group competition.

The school also offers rotating class schedules, which the students wouldn't normally become exposed to until high school if the junior school had not been formed.

The faculty comprises 13 teachers, four teacher aides, two of whom are paid from Title One funds. There is also a full time assistant principal and secretary working at the school.

The cost per child to attend the school depends on two factors. If the student's parents are

members of one of the parishes sponsoring the local Catholic educational system, the fee is \$60 a year, plus a \$5 academic charge.

For parents who are not members of a sponsoring parish, the cost is \$480 a year, but that figure is negotiable depending on individual financial situations.

"The \$480 can be discussed with the principal to see if it can be reduced. That is dependent on financial condition, but I would point out we are very understanding," Sister Claire Francis said.

Parents still have time to enroll their children in the junior high school.

To enroll, parents must contact the school and request a registration card. When it is completed, a meeting is arranged with Sister Claire Francis to discuss enrolling the child in the junior high school.

Gabriel Richard Offers Courses

The Gabriel Richard Institute will begin Fall classes in two Rochester area locations.

A series of ten weekly classes will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 17 at the Laurelton United Presbyterian Church, Empire Blvd. and Helendale Rd., and on Sept. 19 at Our Mother of Sorrows Church, 5000 Mt. Read Blvd.

The institute, which is non-profit and non-sectarian helps

people discover their hidden talents, gain more self confidence and become more effective.

Free demonstrations will be held at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 11 at the Laurelton Church and on Sept. 12 at Mother of Sorrows.

For more information call Carolyn Epps at 482-0908; Nick Presutti at 377-4417; or Rich Morales at 377-6865.

Increase Noted In McQuaid's Freshman Class

An increase of 13 per cent in freshman enrollment at McQuaid Jesuit High School was reported this week by the principal, Father Leon J. Hogenkamp, SJ. He said the entering class would account for about 200 of the 770 boys registered in grades 8-12.

Father Hogenkamp announced that St. John Fisher College would give degree credit for certain senior-level courses completed by McQuaid graduates entering Fisher. Courses in psychology, calculus and 12th year mathematics have been accepted, and others may be added,

he said. John Roselli, who has been on the staff for several years, has been named vice principal. New faculty members include two newly ordained Jesuit priests, Fathers James Curry and Lawrence Wroblewski; Gary Jones, Ian Robertson and Mark Forget. All hold masters' degrees.

The students, Father Hogenkamp said, are drawn from 25 school districts in four counties. Registration and orientation are scheduled for Sept. 3-5.