



When it's all over, Elaine smiles up at Mike.



Daddy studies his youngest daughter.

IE TO LIFE

Mike and Elaine hope to have a fourth child. The question of where that baby and others like him will be born hangs in the air at St. Mary's. The hospital may be forced to close its OB department.

The Genesee Region Health Planning Council has decided to close one Rochester area obstetrical unit. A 1971 cost study for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommended that for greatest efficiency obstetrical services in urban areas be consolidated to produce more than 1,500 live births per year for each unit with maximum of 30 minutes home to hospital driving time. The Planning Council is using this study to support its decision to close one unit, but local cost studies have not been conducted.

In 1973 St. Mary's was the only Rochester hospital whose live births (1,305) totaled less than 1,500. In spite of this, Jo Grant of the public relations department cites four main reasons unique to St. Mary's that argue against closing its OB unit.

First, St. Mary's is the only Catholic hospital with an obstetrical department between Syracuse and Buffalo. Rochester area Catholics, 50 per cent of the total population, ought to have the option, she says, of having their children in a Catholic hospital which takes a moral stand in refusing to perform abortions and sterilizations. Mrs. Grant says that St. Mary's has lost some patients because of this stand.

A study conducted by St. Mary's showed that per-reimbursements by Blue Cross and Medicaid were less at St. Mary's. Mrs. Grant reports that the cost per day in maternity departments at other hospitals may be as much as \$60 or \$70 more than the cost at St. Mary's.

Thirdly, St. Mary's is the only hospital in the inner city and wishes to continue serving its neighborhood. Finally, St. Mary's is the only hospital west of the Genesee River until reaching Brockport.

The decision of the Genesee Region Health Planning Council will be made by April 1. If St. Mary's closes, Dr. Iuppa says that physicians like himself and families like the Voorheis's will "have to start all over again" at another hospital.

Photos by Susan McKinney
Text by Bonita Baldwin



Elaine and Mike Voorheis dress baby Amanda and then head home to the rest of the family.

