



Mark Dade gives books to Immaculate principal Ms. Eleanore Volpe.

Redeemer School. Both the pastor and associate, Msgr. Joseph Vogt and Father Paul Schnacky, are leaving. School materials will be sold.

Standing as they are between the traditional past and an uncertain future, the principals sought to evaluate the achievements of their schools. Sister Norbert Gutacher commended the integration of Holy Redeemer School. "We were one-third black, one-third Spanish, and one-third white. A third of our students were non-Catholic. We got along well." Sister Marie Louise said that the schools had offered "quality Christian education with Christian values and very individualized instruction." Ms. Volpe claimed that Immaculate offered the black community the option of a private education.

For the CICIP principals the question, "What next?" raised feelings for what has been. Sister Marie Louise criticized the Pastoral Office saying, "When they complete their study of the problems in the inner-city they'll realize what we have and what we have had." She said too that the closing of the schools had caused a loss of credibility in the Church in the innercity community. "The poor are the first cut and the last served," she charged.

Ms. Volpe stated that, "The loss of a good educational center can have very broad ramifications in an area like this." She said that any ministries developed to fill the gap left by the closing of the schools should be careful not to duplicate already existing services, and should be meaningful to those they are intended to help without being tinged with patronization. Sister Norbert said that she wished the Church would consider evangelization.

Sister Betty Ostas noted that both she and St. Michael's had gone through the school-closing experience before, Sister Betty at St. Francis Xavier School and St. Michael's in 1972, when the nature of the school was changed. She praised the response of parents and teachers to the crisis and said that the closing seemed to reestablish parish concern for the school, a feeling lost while the school was under CICIP administration.

CICIP executive director Mrs. Walker was able to talk more definitely of what may happen in the future. She noted that Msgr. George Cocuzzi, as vicar of urban ministry, would coordinate the activities of 27 center city parishes, not just the six innercity churches. She reported that she is currently working on program proposals. One would expand the day care center at St. Bridget's School to accommodate 50 children. A second would establish an advocacy program for the 1,150 former innercity

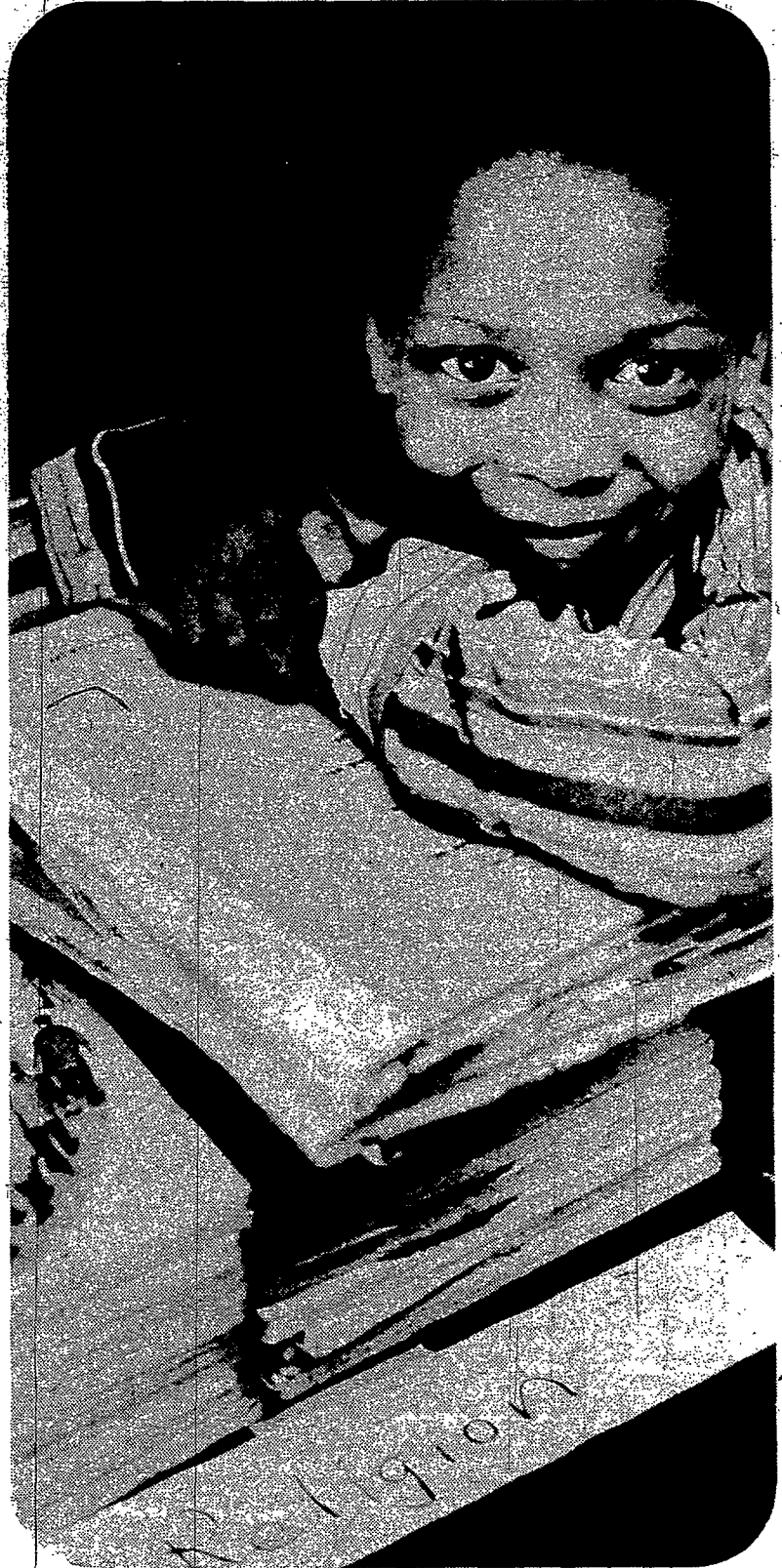
parochial school children, from 500 families, now in the public schools. The advocates, one black and one Spanish, would work with the Rochester Board of Education. A third is for a seminar sensitizing teachers, who will be working with more minority children as a result of the CICIP schools closing, to the special needs of these children. The seminar is scheduled for late September. It is expected that more than 350 teachers will attend. Funding is pending.

Regardless of what the future holds, that last week of school a CICIP first grader paid his school a genuine tribute. "What do you like best about going to school here?" he was asked.

"The teachers teach us right! I can read!" he exclaimed.

"This school is like wow! Right on!" an older boy interpreted.

Or so it was.



Michael Frost rests after collecting books at Immaculate.

Photos by Susan McKinney
Text by Bonita Baldwin



First grader, Jessica Contreras.



Mrs. Pat Walker considers future.



Immaculate Conception students enjoy posing.