

# 'They Had to Say Yes' To St. Mary's Hospital

By JOHN DASH

"In all fairness, they had to say yes," a jubilant Sister DeChantal LaRow declared last week after the vote by the executive committee of the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA) which assures St. Mary's Hospital that state-imposed financial sanctions will not be forthcoming against its obstetrical unit.

Sister DeChantal is the administrator of the hospital and the chairman of its board of directors.

The question of closing St. Mary's obstetrical unit has been the subject of controversy and debate for more than two years.

Last Tuesday's vote, taken by the FLHSA, defeated a motion that would have recommended the State Commissioner of Health order the closing of the unit within 30 days.

The FLHSA and its predecessor organizations had been mandated by the state to cut costs of health care - delivery in the Rochester area by studying hospital costs and bed occupancies, and determining from those factors if any hospital's services could be eliminated.

In the course of those studies, St. Mary's was

chosen, among the six Rochester area hospitals, as the one whose obstetrical services could be terminated.

St. Mary's is also the only Catholic hospital in the city of Rochester.

At last week's meeting of the executive committee of the FLHSA Sister DeChantal and a number of supporters of the hospital addressed the committee on the value of the hospital's obstetrical unit to Rochester's West Side and to the city's Catholic-community.

After nearly two hours of debate among the members of the committee on a motion to close the obstetrical unit, and on motions to cast secret ballots and to decertify obstetrical beds in all five urban hospitals, St. Mary's Hospital emerged the winner.

After the vote, Sister DeChantal worried that the FLHSA would look to another hospital to close its obstetrical services. "That, too would be unfair," she said. The FLHSA should devise other criteria for keeping hospital costs down, she noted.

Sympathizing with the FLHSA for the difficulty of carrying out its mandate, she also cautioned "When

you see the state as a whole, Rochester doesn't have the (hospital costs) problems."

Sister DeChantal feels that it was the quality of the care at St. Mary's obstetrical unit and the relatively low fees it charges that were the deciding factors in the executive committee's vote.

Repeatedly in the debate surrounding the question, St. Mary's has asserted itself as an institution which "values the sacredness of human life, from conception to death." Abortions and contraceptive sterilizations are not performed at the facility.

## NFP Session Set July 8

A Natural Family Planning session for diocesan couples will begin at 7:30 p.m., Friday, July 8, at Guardian Angels School, 2061 East Henrietta Road.

Two NFP teaching couples, Bill and Bobbie Jackson and Ed and Maxine McDonald will conduct the session. Following the first meeting there will be a followup meeting about six weeks later and periodic sessions thereafter.

A fee of \$15 for book and materials will be charged. Couples must register beforehand by calling the Office of Family Life at 546-3630.

## Anointing Mass

The annual Mass of Anointing for shut-ins, the infirm, those with chronic diseases, and senior citizens, is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 26 at Holy Apostles Church, 530 Lyell Ave. Transportation is available and a ramp for wheelchair patients will be furnished. For further information call 2547170.



## Ice Cream Social

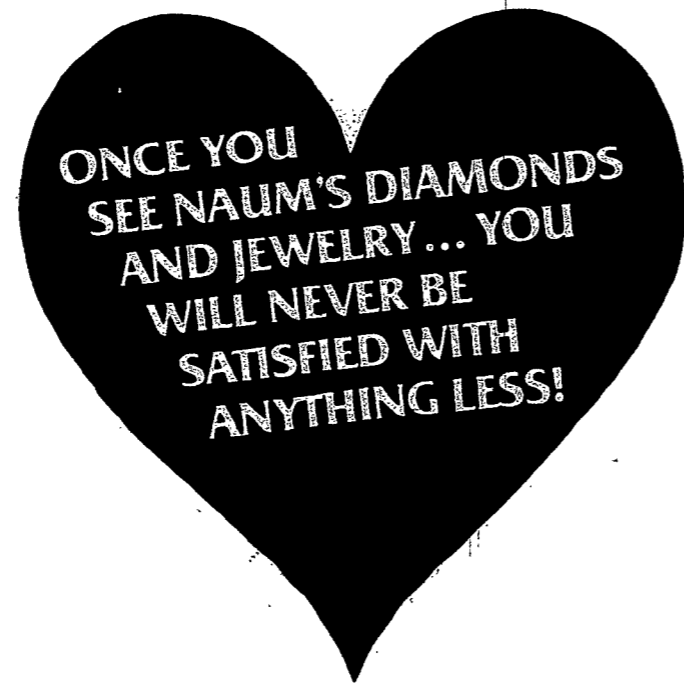
Richard Sutton, Charles Clark and Patricia Van Niel were among those scooping ice cream at St. Margaret Mary's Ice Cream Social recently. Gerard McCabe and his daughter Megan await a taste of the confection. Proceeds from the event, which also featured a sing along, a band concert, a bake sale and a used book sale, went to buy equipment for the school.

## PLEA FOR HELP

Food reserves at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality are dwindling, and there is "dire need" of canned goods, the Rev. Mr. Dan O'Shea said last week. He sent around a notice for publication in parish bulletins asking for donations. The hospitality house, at 402 South Ave., feeds 60 to 80 people a day. Deacon O'Shea can be reached there, at 232-3262.

## Gerould's Pharmacies

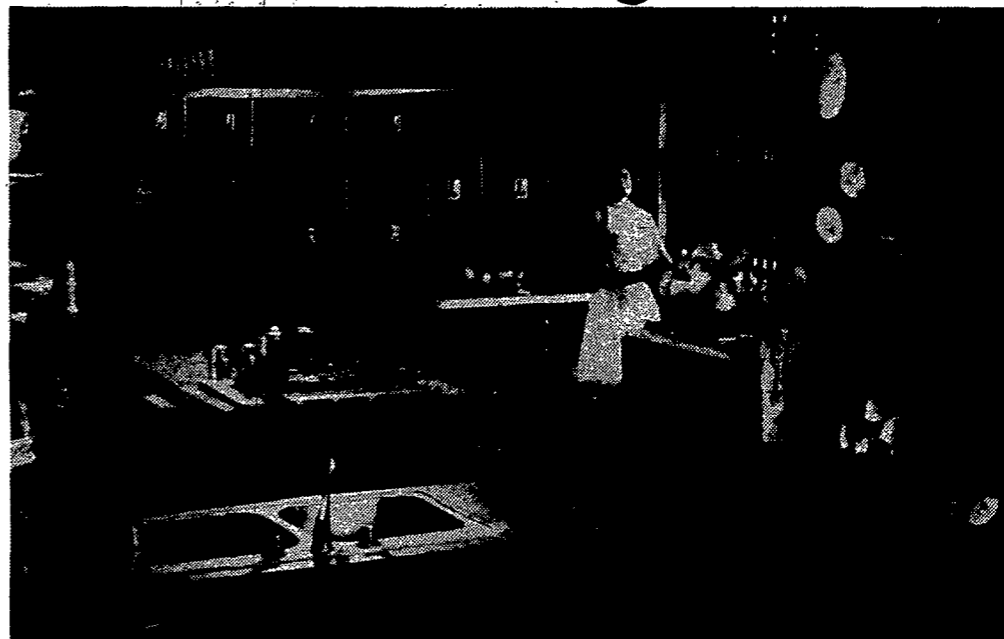
S. Main St. and Church & Hoffman Elmira  
Delivery Service  
733-6696



## Chicken Barbecue

Scipio Center - St. Bernard's Parish here has scheduled a Father's Day Chicken Barbecue for Sunday, June 19 from 12-5 p.m.

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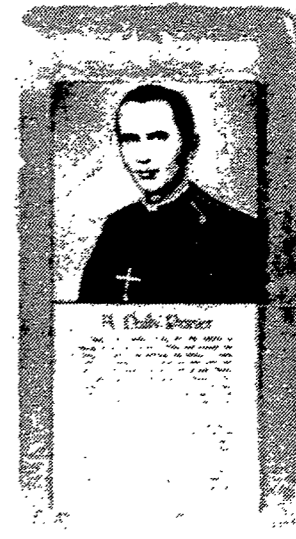
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