



Tom and Kathy admire newly born Leigh Catherine

## 'Birthing Room' Offers 'Homelike' Delivery

When Kathy and Tom Dessauer of Fletcher Road, Pittsford were planning for the birth of their third child, they kept hoping that the new "alternative birthing center" at St. Mary's Hospital would be ready in time.

"I was really hopeful," said Kathy, "and asked my doctor about the birthing room every time I saw him."

As it turned out, Leigh Katherine Dessauer was the first baby to be born in the new birthing center. She entered the world at 4:30 a.m. on Sept. 8, 1977. Coincidentally, the date marked the 120th anniversary of St. Mary's service to the community.

The center was introduced by St. Mary's to offer the alternative of a "homelike" delivery while still providing optimal care for mother and child through immediately available resources of a modern hospital.

In a traditional hospital obstetric unit a woman can expect to experience labor, delivery and recovery in three different rooms.

Transfer of the patient from labor to delivery room occurs at a critical time in the labor process. The move can be disturbing and disruptive to the woman in normal labor at a time when she should be as relaxed and as comfortable as possible. In many units she may even have to transfer from the labor bed to a stirrup-equipped delivery table.

The delivery room is really an operating room, with bright overhead lights, tiled walls, anesthesia machine and sterile utensils. It can be a life-saving resource for both mother and child in the case of problem pregnancies, and complications. Fortunately however, 95 per cent of pregnant women experience normal, uncomplicated births.

In recent years, a growing number of couples like the Dessauers have been opting for an alternative to the traditional hospital delivery. Many choose home delivery in the belief that birth is a social rather than a medical

experience—an experience that should be shared by all family members and in familiar surroundings.

Dr. Bruce Iuppa, chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at St. Mary's, believes that a hospital centered alternative birthing facility is a wiser choice than home delivery. Even an apparently normal pregnancy is not without risk, he points out. "What happens to an infant at the moment of birth may have a life-long effect. Prolonged oxygen deprivation can cause brain damage to the child. A massive and unexpected hemorrhage can be fatal to the mother before she can reach the hospital. Rather than reject the safety of a hospital delivery for the social advantages of home birth it seems far wiser to combine the best of both in the hospital birthing room," he believes.

The alternative birthing center at St. Mary's is a converted labor room adjacent to the delivery rooms. Cheerful wallpaper covers the walls. Coordinated drapes adorn the windows. There are hanging lamps and plants. Furniture includes a large lounge chair, tables and a comfortable bed.

The Dessauers are quite pleased with their experience in the birthing room. "It was so quiet and beautiful and we passed her around for a time before the nurse wrapped a blanket around her," Kathy remembers.

"It was an easy birth for Kathy because she was so relaxed and comfortable. Thirty minutes after serious labor began we were playing

with our new baby. The birthing room experience was wonderful. I'm glad we had the opportunity," Tom says.

Not all pregnant women should or want to have their babies in an alternative environment. Candidates for this type of birth should experience an uncomplicated pregnancy, complete childbirth education classes, be generally healthy, have adequate prenatal care and the support of family and physician, Dr. Iuppa says.

But for many women, the birthing room is a welcome alternative to traditional hospital obstetric care. "At St. Mary's the alternative birthing center is an important community resource and we are making it available to any woman whose physician has obstetric privileges at any Rochester hospital," Dr. Iuppa says.

### Schedule Change

Immaculate Conception Parish in Rochester announced a new winter months Mass schedule this week. Starting November 27 Sunday Masses will be at 7 and 11 a.m.

### WYALUSING

A bus trip to Wyalusing, Pa., is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 3. Reservations may be made with Mrs. Angelina Marcanio at 254-3485 or through 865-7891.

## St. Bernard's Names Board Chairpersons

At the recent meeting of the Board of Trustees of St. Bernard's Seminary, Bishop Joseph Hogan named the following board members as chairpersons of the various board committees.

Named as chairperson of the Committee on Academic Affairs was Dr. Alice L. Foley, former president of Nazareth College of Rochester. Dr. Ronald F. Proud, vice-president for Student Development at St. John Fisher College, will chair the Committee on Student Affairs.

Business and Finance will be chaired by Norbert Schickel of Ithaca. He is a partner with the firms of Eastwood Commons Development Co., Schickel Design Development Co., and Fairview Associates and Fairview Manor in Ithaca.

R. Allen Lewis, vice-president and trust officer of Lincoln First Bank of Rochester, will chair the Development Committee. Mrs. Daniel G. Kennedy of Rochester, an honorary trustee of the University of Rochester and a member of the Board of Trustees of the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House, will chair the Committee on Nominations and By-Laws. Bishop Hogan also has

named John J. Considine as acting chairman of the board. Considine is a member of the Lines, Williams, Osborn and Beck law firm in Rochester and is secretary of the Bar Association.

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