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State Told: Heating Crisis First Priority

Albany — An immediate solution to the problem of people who cannot meet their fuel bills must be the first priority for the state administration and Legislature, the State Catholic Conference has declared.

In letters to Gov. Carey and the State Legislature, Charles J. Tobin, general counsel to the conference, urged that legislative efforts to deal with home heating this winter give primary attention to those residents who will be affected the most by soaring fuel costs.

Tobin commended the governor and Legislature for convening a special session on this possible crisis.

"We have examined the many proposals that have emanated from the governor's office, the Senate and the Assembly," Tobin said, "and a number of these proposals are of great potential benefit to all residents." Included in such proposals are the elimination of the sales tax on home heating fuels, a tax credit plan, cost controls, consumer protections, a plan to prevent price gouging, conservation incentives, and others. The conference feels that although these proposals may be important in the overall energy program, they do not address the immediate problem.

"This problem lies with those thousands of families who live on low and fixed income," Tobin said. "It is these people who will suffer the most this year and it is toward their needs that the state should focus its concern."

Among those mentioned were the public assistance recipient, the Supplemental Security Income recipient, the aged, and the working poor, whose incomes exclude them from eligibility under federal programs.

The conference urged that a number of points be recognized by the lawmakers:

—The federal fuel program will reach less than one quarter of the eligible families;

—Direct grants should be available to all families whose incomes fall below 125 per cent of the poverty level;

—Assistance should be given to those families who are slightly above the poverty level;

—Increased state aid should be given to localities to encourage expanded use of EAA and EAF funds for fuel emergencies;

—Grants to Public Assistance and SSI recipients should cover costs for all forms of home heating;

—Assistance should be given to help families meet increased winter-related expenses other than heating, such as blankets, clothing, repairs to heating equipment or windows and temporary shelter.

New Church Dedicated

See special pullout section.

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Horseheads — An air of anticipation was evident among the parishioners of St. Mary Our Mother who filled the parish chapel and gym before the dedication of their new church Saturday night.

That anticipation came after four years of planning and a year of construction. The dedication ceremony began in the chapel, and then Bishop Matthew H. Clark unlocked the new church's doors and led the 1,500 persons present into their new house of worship.

As they entered the church, most were seeing the fruits of their labor and dedication for the first time.

The 25-minute procession was accompanied by repeated singing of the Processional Psalm by a choir made up of members of the parish's four choirs.

New beginnings was the dominant theme in the ceremony. The congregation moved from the parish's old worship space to the new, and dedicated it. Bishop Clark placed relics in the altar, and, following the homily, the altar and church were dedicated. After Communion, the Blessed Sacrament was placed in the tabernacle for the first time, and the sanctuary lamp was lit. What had previously been a building under construction became the worship center for St. Mary Our Mother Parish.

In his homily, Bishop Clark said it is "a pleasure to be with you tonight."

He pointed out that in the Mass' three readings, religious communities undertook a

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Photos by Martin Toombs



Bishop Clark, above, anoints the altar of the new St. Mary Our Mother Church during dedication ceremonies Saturday night. Assisting are, from left, Deacon Frederick Campbell, Father John Firpo and Father Charles Latus. At left, Father Bartholomew O'Brien, St. Mary Our Mother pastor, anoints a cross on the wall of the church.

Vatican Deficit: \$20.24 Million

Vatican City — The 120 cardinals assembled for an extraordinary meeting with Pope John Paul II were told last Friday that the Church is running a deficit of \$20.24 million this year.

In a written statement issued at the end of the five-day meeting, the Vatican declared that its income "is not nearly enough to cover the expenses of the central government of the Church and of the Office of Universal Charity of the Pope."

The cardinals urged that expenses be held down and pledged that they "will stand fraternally close to the Holy Father in his efforts to seek a solution."

Indications were that wealthy countries such as the United States and West Germany would increase their contributions to the central church government.

But the issue of church finances was not the only topic for the cardinals; they also were scheduled to discuss

the Roman Curia and the Church's role in modern culture.

The cardinals broke up into five language groups (Latin, French, Spanish, English and Italian) to discuss the three topics.

The Curia report was given by Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, Vatican secretary of state, and the modern culture presentation was to be made by Cardinal Gabriele-Marie Garrone, prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

It was unofficially reported that the cardinals discussed the possibility of abolishing or consolidating some Curia departments. The Pope in his concluding speech Friday told the cardinals that their proposals for restructuring the Curia would be "taken fully into account."

The pontiff also scored the "fables and myths" that have been circulated about the Church's financial means, saying they have done "considerable harm."