

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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For Southern Tier

Bishop Dedicates Social Ministry Office.

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — More than 400 persons participated in the prayer service dedicating the new Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry (STOSM) at St. Peter and Paul Church Sunday, June 29.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark read and signed an establishment document for the office during the service, which included a presentation of the office's board of directors, staff and volunteers.

The first to speak was

Father Charles Mulligan, diocesan Director of Social Ministry, who noted that the variable weather he encountered on the trip to Elmira was symbolic of the work toward founding the office. He noted that the new organization will make it possible for the people of the five counties to "take over the leadership" for social ministry in their area.

Maurice Tierney, Catholic Charities director, noted that the office will be able to provide services which haven't been available in the Southern Tier, or in Elmira

since Catholic Family Services closed there.

And Stanley Douglas, chairman of the STOSM Board of Directors, in calling on Bishop Clark to commission the office, noted that it was "fitting and proper" that the dedication be conducted in St. Peter and Paul Church on its patronal feast, as the parish is the mother church of Elmira.

Douglas introduced the current board members, and explained that the goal is to bring the board to 21 members representing "each

and every county" by the end of the year.

And when Douglas introduced the staff, sustained applause greeted Father Neil Miller, office director. Office volunteers also had their names read and were asked to stand.

Bishop Clark added his thanks to those expressed earlier for the work that had gone into forming the new office.

Referring to the reading from Matthew which was part of the service, Bishop Clark noted that the feeding of the 5,000 happened just after Jesus had heard that His cousin, John the Baptist, had been killed. Christ sought a quiet place, he noted, but was followed by disciples who were "broken and hungry" themselves for the "good news." He preached.

Although troubled Himself, Jesus acted on the lack of those following Him, Bishop Clark pointed out. When some food was offered, he noted, the gifts were "magnified and deepened" and made it possible to feed all those there.

The story, he noted, is a prefiguring of the Church, where there is "always room for one more."

He also referred to a meeting between Paul and Peter reported in Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Paul wanted to "make sure the course I was pursuing was not in vain," he wrote. Peter had one stipulation for him, he reported, that he be "mindful of the poor," something he felt he had been doing and would continue.

That story, Bishop Clark related, is part of the daily office.

"May we who gather today be conscious of the needs of the poor," Bishop Clark concluded, and "be strengthened in our faith which must always be" the foundation of our "commitment to God's people."

Following the prayer service, those attending moved to the new organization's offices in St. Peter and Paul School. Bishop Clark then blessed the offices, and Douglas placed the establishment decree on the wall.



Bishop Clark blessing the Social Ministry offices in St. Peter and Paul School, while as many as could of those attending the event filled the school hall.



The staff of the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry as they were introduced to those attending the prayer service June 29; from left, Father Neil Miller, Giovina Caroscio, Sister Judith Reger, SSJ, and Sister Rosaria Hughes, RSM.

Bishop Joins Parish For Feast

Elmira — The feast of St. Peter and Paul provided the occasion for Bishop Matthew H. Clark to visit St. Peter and Paul Parish Saturday, June 28, for a Mass and parish dinner.

And Bishop Clark related that just two days previously, he and his secretary, Father

Charles Latus, had walked across St. Peter's Square in Rome, and between the statues of St. Peter and St. Paul, to offer a Mass in St. Peter's, marking the first anniversary of his installation as bishop of Rochester.

He also told the

parishioners that his bishop's ring bore three figures; a central one of the risen Christ, flanked by St. Peter and St. Paul, with their traditional symbols.

Bishop Clark called on those attending not to regard Peter and Paul as "historical figures that have no bearing on our lives today," but rather as persons similar to ourselves, trying to follow Christ.

The feast of St. Peter and Paul is a feast in "which we are realistic," he stated, knowing that there is no magic about the two men.

He called on parishioners to be "signs of hope, and pass on to your friends" the lessons that can be learned through the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Bishop Clark concelebrated the Mass with Father Richard O'Connell, St. Peter and Paul pastor.

Following the Mass, Bishop Clark greeted many parishioners as they left the church.

A parish dinner followed in the school.



Bishop Clark greets one of the younger parishioners of St. Peter and Paul Church during his visit to the parish June 28.

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