

An unidentified lay teacher helps pack the last articles left behind by three sisters of the Adorers of Blood of Christ, who have returned to their Pennsylvania motherhouse.

Most Precious Blood

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"That was the first I'd heard of it," said Carol Altieri, a parent of two Most Precious Blood students. "I was looking forward to my son having one of the sisters for fourth grade. As far as I was concerned, I was not upset about anything they had done. I was always very happy with them. If I wasn't why would I have my kids there?"

"I'm really sad about it," said Pam DiMarco, whose two grandchildren attend the school. "I think we're losing something."

Less surprised, but equally dismayed was Ginny Piccone, a member of the school's Education Committee. A few families had clashed with the sisters over the past several years, she recalled. "I honestly think it was about three people who were just not willing to listen and

the films' irreverent treatment of what ought

Even the film's title is blasphemous, accord-

ing to Mary Kelly, a member of the Legion of

Mary. "It's trying to make something trivial

out of something profound," she said.

'Hail Mary'

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to be considered sacred.

reason things out," she said. "You're always going to have people who disagree with the running of a school. But the majority did appreciate them and the way they ran the school. All the sisters really cared about the

"It's too bad more people didn't know sooner," she added. "I felt bad because I didn't get the chance to tell them the majority were behind-them?

Father Mahon, who replaced Father David Bonin, CPPS, as pastor only last month, said he didn't fully understand what Sister Ann Louise was implying in her letter. "She might think I'm well aware of what went on before, but I'm not," he said. "We're the same community. If there had been any hard times with

day. The Vatican announced its solidarity with demonstrators and several days later, Pope John Paul II is reported to have led thousands in a rosary of atonement for insults the film inflicts on the Blessed Mother.

Finally, after the Rome theater was raided and its manager beaten, director Godard asked that the film be withdrawn.

In the United States, thousands of people have signed petitions and protested to try and prevent the film's showings in New York,

Several film critics have charged that such demonstrations only succeed in generating milthe sisters, I would think I'd have heard about

it.
"If there is a parent who can't work in cooperation with our particular way of life in school or parish, they will just have to leave the school," he added.

Besides disagreements with some families, Piccone believes distance from the motherhouse, Sister Agatha's poor health, and changing times may also have been factors in the sisters' decision. As early as last January, parishioners were aware that Sister Joy, who taught the eighth grade, would eventually be leaving the school to pursue another type of ministry.

"Sisters are really getting out of the teaching line," Piccone said. "And the visiting sisters would always comment that this was the farthest assignment from the motherhouse. I surmised that they might not be around too much longer."

Even without the sisters, Father Mahon assured parishioners Sunday that "there will not be one minute when the quality of education here will be minimized.

"The impossible is being asked of us — to maintain a Catholic school . . . In ourselves, we can't do it. It is Christ Himself who has empowered us," he said.

Stubborn determination has been a hallmark of Most Precious Blood School ever since Father Sebastian Contegiacomo constructed the four-room building in 1956 and students equipped it by collecting premium stamps.

In 1968, parishioners routed diocesan plans to close the school because of low enrollment and double grades. When they learned of the plan, protestors bombarded the local newspapers with letters, picketed the Diocesan

lions of dollars worth of free publicity for what might otherwise be an obscure film. Father William Lum, one of the Catholic chaptains at the University of Rochester, agrees.

"By itself, this film would attract neither much attention nor a large audience," Father Lum wrote in a statement released Monday. "Mr Macaluso's public protests have guaranteed extensive publicity for the film and a large audience for its showing."

By attempting to prevent the film's showing, Macaluso has made the issue involved one of academic freedom rather than a question of whether or not the film is blasphemous, por-

Pastoral Center, Hormer Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's residence Sacred Heart Cathedral, and even the airpor where Monsignor William Roche, then sug vintendent of diocesan schools, was due [] make an appearance.

Diocesan educat in officials finally agreed to work with schoo staff to build a model program at Most Premous Blood by increasing staff and impleme (sing such innovations as team teaching and in ungraded program.

Until 1969, the school was staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph (** Rochester, Then, claiming other pressing of immitments, the remaining 20 sisters withdrew: They were replaced by the Adorers of the Blchd of Christ, who staffed the school until la week.

Between now antifall, candidates to replace the principal and to chers will be screened by the diocesan Divis in of Education and referred to Father Mation for his approval. "The division's primary & incern is maintaining quality education at the school; said Father George Norton, di besan communications

Father Mahon hapes that another order of sisters may eventually be found to serve at the school. But that is not likely to happen this

"It is very late in the summer to invite an order to take over's school," Father Norton said. "I don't think that would be realistic to expect for this year

Meanwhile, Mos Precious Blood's Education Committee has already decided to raise tuition next year in order to cover the higher cost of a lay admir strator and teachers. "It is going to be harder for some people," Piccone said. "But we've alvers been strong and stuck together. None of 💡 is going to give up."

nographic or even a Taality production, Father Lum said.

this film, its conter-

But according

"In doing so, Mr. Macaluso has succeeded in creating a situati in which every member of the academic cor/munity must support the cause of academic reedom no matter how much he or she mig - otherwise disagree with or its message?

Macaluso and other demonstrators, silen connotes approval. "We have to look at this com the point of view of what Jesus and th' Apostles did," he said. "They denounced it e Pharisees!"

"Hail Mary" has consistently drawn protests Boston and Los Angeles. and picketers throughout Europe and the United States. In Rome, 100 demonstrators managed to delay the film's premiere by one

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