



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

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

Continued from Page 1

"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

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 kids."

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Finally, after the Rome theater was raided and its manager beaten, director Godard asked that the film be withdrawn.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

Several film critics have charged that such demonstrations only succeed in generating mil-

lions of dollars worth of free publicity for what might otherwise be an obscure film.

By itself, this film would attract neither much attention nor a large audience," Father Lum wrote in a statement released Monday.

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-

tionographic or even a quality production, Father Lum said.

"In doing so, Mr. Macaluso has succeeded in creating a situation in which every member of the academic community must support the cause of academic freedom no matter how much he or she might otherwise disagree with this film, its content or its message."

But according to demonstrators, silence connotes approval. "We have to look at this from the point of view of what Jesus and the Apostles did," he said. "They denounced the Pharisees."

Diocesan education officials finally agreed to work with school staff to build a model program at Most Precious Blood by increasing staff and implementing such innovations as team teaching and an ungraded program.

Until 1969, the school was staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester. Then, claiming other pressing commitments, the remaining 20 sisters withdrew. They were replaced by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, who staffed the school until last week.

Between now and fall, candidates to replace the principal and teachers will be screened by the diocesan Division of Education and referred to Father Mahon for his approval. "The division's primary concern is maintaining quality education at the school," said Father George Norton, diocesan communications director.

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

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

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

## 'Hail Mary'

Continued from Page 3

the films' irreverent treatment of what ought to be considered sacred.

Even the film's title is blasphemous, according 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" has consistently drawn protests 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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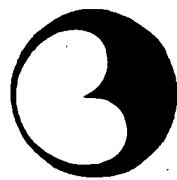
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