



Singers of song

Sabbath services at a Rochester synagogue were the scene for an unusual Marian Year celebration focusing on the heritage of Hebrew women. See page 7.



Winning wrestlers

Wrestlers at McQuoid Jesuit continue to win year after year, even though most of them have never traveled before coming to the all-boys school. See page 9.

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Diocese mulls new proposal on city church

Society issues plan for Holy Redeemer

By Richard A. Kiley

The Landmark Society of Western New York has presented the Diocese of Rochester with a second proposal for use of Holy Redeemer Church, while those opposed to the church's demolition continue their battle to save the historic structure.

Although details of the proposal have not been made public, Father William B. Leone, pastor of Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier, said the Landmark Society's offer is being "seriously looked at" even as the diocese negotiates with the City School District, which has expressed interest in using the school building at the intersection of Hudson and Clifford avenues.

"Diocesan officials and parish trustees will be sitting down with the City School District later this week, and I was told by Father (John M.) Mulligan that negotiations with the City School District and the parish are at a delicate stage right now," Father Leone said.

Father Mulligan, director of the diocesan Division of Urban Services, refused to comment on any of the latest developments concerning Holy Redeemer Church.

The diocese has solicited estimates on repairs needed to bring the school up to code, finding that the effort would cost \$546,000.

If the city school district agrees to take over the school, the fate of the church structure would remain in the hands of the diocese.

"The city certainly couldn't take on the responsibility for that; there's so much sentiment there," Father Leone said. "If (the church) has to come down, it's going to fall upon the parish and the diocese."

"That's not going to sit well with the Landmark Society, but I think the Church did its job. Populations have changed, situations have changed. We're spending a lot of money on a building we don't use."

The Landmark Society's latest offer follows the diocese's rejection of another proposal earlier this month. In that proposal, the society outlined plans to purchase an option on the entire parcel of land at Holy Redeemer — the church, rectory, school building and heating plant. Two other buildings in the Holy Redeemer complex — the convent and the former Concordia Hall — are no longer owned by the parish.

Although he declined to provide details of the plan in lieu of negotiations with diocesan officials, Henry McCartney, executive director of the Landmark Society of Western New York, said the organization is "looking toward possibly forming a developmental center in the school" and then will seek social service agencies to occupy the church, in order to reinforce "what's going on in the school building."

Father Leone said the Landmark Society offered the diocese \$4,000 to pay taxes and liability insurance for six months while the society sought a buyer for the property. But diocesan officials rejected the measure because "once you accept money you become limited in what you can do," the priest remarked.

According to Father Leone, the new Landmark Society proposal outlines plans for purchasing the church and subdividing the remaining parcel of land, something the priest said the diocese tried to do and



Bonnie Trabold/Courier-Journal

NOSE TO NOSE — Father Conrad Sundholm chides one of pet birds for attacking his glasses. The Auburn pastor finds his feathered friends to be the housemates in today's underpopulated rectories, and so many birds now reside at Holy Family rectory that he has lost count. Despite the warning (right), most members of Father Sundholm's avian family are quite well-mannered. For story and more photos, see pages 10 and 11.

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couldn't.

Father Leone said the parcel had been offered for sale through Nothnagle for six months, and at that time the pastor was informed that the land had to be sold as a single unit.

Father Leone, who has been pastor of Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier since 1980, added that Landmark Society officials have since informed him that the land could, in fact, be subdivided. "We're getting two different messages," Father Leone said. "Maybe (the Landmark Society) knows somebody we don't."

"I heard about the problem with subdividing," McCartney remarked during a phone interview Monday, Feb. 1. He said the Landmark Society had investigated city zoning regulations, learning that the land could be subdivided for sale but not for leasing purposes. "So we don't think there is a problem with subdividing the parcel," he said.

That information was confirmed Tuesday, Feb. 2, by John Spochlof, director of zoning for the city.

What could be a dilemma, however, is the need to comply with zoning ordinances that require parcels to be divided in terms of parking and other facilities.

"Generally, when you subdivide property you want to make sure the residual parcels can provide (users) with whatever needs they may have," Spochlof said. "Parking could be provided on sight or it could be leased on an adjoining parcel nearby. Property is subdivided all the time."

While the dialogue continues among the diocese, the Landmark Society and the City School District, Friends of Holy Redeemer — a group of Rochester-area citizens trying to save the 110-year-old church — are trying to keep the issue alive in the neighborhood by starting a postcard campaign to Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

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