



Views and reviews

Long lines of viewers and mixed reactions from reviewers greeted the premiere of "The Last Temptation of Christ" despite — or some say because of — protests against the film. Page 5.



Seeking God's face

In his new book on contemplative prayer, Monsignor William H. Shannon challenges the Church's post-Reformation understanding of prayer and the individual's relationship with God. Page 7.

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Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION — Bishop Matthew H. Clark holds the chalice aloft as concelebrant Father Dennis Sewar looks on during the August 15 diocesan ceremony concluding the Marian Year. The special Mass took place at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Fairport.

St. Joseph's Hospital to merge with Arnot-Ogden

By Richard A. Kiley

In a move that could set a national precedent, the boards of St. Joseph's and Arnot-Ogden Memorial hospitals last week approved the Elmira Hospital Committee's unanimous recommendation to consolidate.

Officials of the two hospitals agreed to the proposed merger after meeting separately last Wednesday afternoon, August 10. N. Jackson Learned, St. Joseph's Hospital board chairman, made the announcement at a news conference at St. Joseph's Thursday night, August 11, on behalf of himself and Edward B. Hoffman, Arnot-Ogden board chairman and hospital attorney.

The proposal calls for consolidation of the two hospitals into a 500-bed facility in the two existing buildings. Although officials say each

hospital will retain its own identity, the institutions will be governed by one board, one management, one financial agency and one medical staff.

"This is definitely an historic thing. Nationally, we know of no such arrangement between a Catholic hospital and a non-sectarian hospital," said Deacon Stanley Douglas, community relations director at St. Joseph's Hospital. "Our Catholic identity was not negotiable. That's how strong the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester feel about this."

Douglas said that such religious and philosophical issues as abortion and sterilization procedures were never a problem for hospital officials. As a Catholic institution, St. Joseph's Hospital does not perform abortions, and Arnot-Ogden has not done them in near-

ly two years. Arnot-Ogden does, however, perform sterilizations.

"We can not impose on them our values, principles and morals," Douglas said, adding that many of the principles adhered to by Arnot-Ogden officials "are similar to ours."

Further emphasizing the point that the hospital will not compromise its "Catholicity," Douglas said that the hospitals will establish a board — with reserve powers — especially concerned with issues related to canonical law. "That board will be accountable to the bishop of Rochester," Douglas said.

The agreement between the two hospitals came after 20 months of study and negotiations. Officials of both hospitals were acting upon a strong recommendation to consolidate by the Elmira Hospitals Committee, which is composed of hospital administrators, board members and physicians in the Elmira area.

Dr. James J. Norton, chairman of the committee, said that decisions were based on the issue of quality patient care, and predicted that the consolidation of the two hospitals will provide a broader scope of patient care and hospital services to both the local population and people of neighboring communities.

"On one hand, we were faced with consolidating two institutions in order to preserve the high quality of care that has been traditional in Elmira, while increasing efficiency, controlling costs and avoiding unnecessary duplication of services," said Norton, a well-known Schuyler County surgeon and general practitioner who retired in January of 1987.

"On the other hand, and at the same time, we had the stimulating opportunity to launch a new era of health care in the area and create a solid hospital system capable of responding to the medical needs of the larger community, seen and unforeseen."

As part of the merger of the two hospitals, Arnot-Ogden President Anthony J. Cooper has announced a \$16 million project to enhance the maternity ward at Arnot-Ogden. The Arnot-Ogden unit has been the only maternity ward in Elmira since St. Joseph's closed its maternity ward in March.



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira has announced plans to form a consolidated 500-bed facility with Arnot-Ogden Memorial Hospital.

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