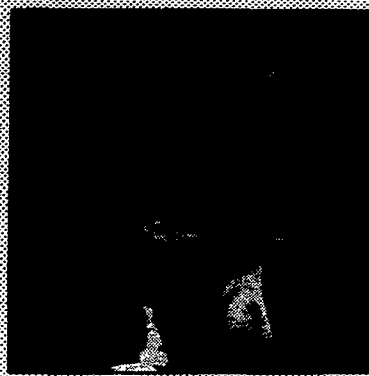




Ruling ramifications

The three-year-old Supreme Court ruling ordering public school remedial teachers out of parochial classrooms has engendered a host of responses from diocesan schools. Page 8.



Conquering Crusaders

Elmira Notre Dame nipped Newark Valley in a key divisional football game last Friday night, marking the first time the Crusaders have ever beaten the mighty Cardinals. Page 16.

COURIER-JOURNAL

Catholic Diocese of Rochester

50 Cents

Thursday, October 13, 1988

24 Pages

Detroit archdiocese reels from parish-closing plan

Detroit (NC) — The Detroit Archdiocese will close 46 parishes, more than 40 percent of the city's Catholic churches — if a major reorganization plan recommended by two archdiocesan committees is put into practice.

The Urban Advisory Board and Implementation Committee outlined their recommendations during an archdiocesan-wide telebriefing September 28.

The committees, formed last year to strengthen the church in urban areas in light of falling parish enrollment, declining priest numbers and rising costs recommended:

- Closing 45 Detroit parishes and one rectory in nearby River Rouge;
- Designating two parishes as shrines;
- Establishing five new parishes; and
- Giving preference to minority leadership in parishes, especially blacks and Hispanics, particularly in the formation of new parishes out of the merger of existing parishes.

In closing 46 parishes and opening five others, the total number of parishes in the city would drop from 111 to 70.

Church historian Monsignor John Tracy Ellis told the *Detroit Free Press*, "I don't think you could find a single historical parallel to this." Parish closings are occurring in other dioceses, he said, "but nowhere near these numbers."

The parishes studied by the committees are in the city of Detroit, and in Hamtramck and Highland Park, both located within the boundaries of Detroit. The recommendations proposed no changes in Highland Park, Hamtramck or the four parishes within the central business district in downtown Detroit.

Parishes may ask for hearings to review their status. Such hearings will be held in late-October, November and December, and Cardinal Edmund C. Szoka of Detroit is expected to make a final decision concerning the closings in January.

In an interview with *The Michigan Catho-*

For reaction to the Detroit parish closings, see page 5.

lic, archdiocesan newspaper, Auxiliary Bishop Patrick R. Cooney, who headed the task force on the church in the city, stressed that the recommendations "very possibly could change" as a result of the hearings. "And even when finalized, the cardinal may choose not to follow" those recommendations.

"I'm not sure I'd bet a lot of money that things will eventually go the way of the recommendations. I doubt it will. It's possible, based on the hearings and other happenings since the study began, that a recommendation may be thrown out," Bishop Cooney said.

The recommendations follow four years of study on the viability of city churches. The committees considered each parish's ministerial service, the number of available clergy, the parish's financial state, geographical location and the condition of the parish buildings. The committees did not visit the parishes.

The committees' study concentrated on 112 parishes in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park and St. Ambrose Parish in Grosse Pointe park. St. Ambrose's parish school is located in Detroit.

The committees also recommended the establishment of five new parishes in Detroit, possibly with a new name at the site of parishioners' choosing, with the merger of several small parishes.

The closing of a parish does not necessarily mean that the parish school will also close, according to Bishop Cooney.

He said no decision has been made on the disposal of buildings, since no final decisions on closings have been made. The bishop said he expected some properties would be sold, leased or used by other archdiocesan or community groups.



AP LaserPhoto
Father Charles D. Denys, 68, who has celebrated the sacraments at Detroit's Our Lady of Sorrows Church for 15 years, is praying for a way to save the church from closing under the archdiocese's proposed reorganization plan. On Friday, Sept. 30, Father Denys celebrated Mass at the church with only one parishioner attending.

Diocese announces changes in priestly formation program

By Lee Strong

The Diocese of Rochester has unveiled plans to revamp its priestly formation program, replacing the deacon-internship year that followed completion of seminary training with a pastoral-internship year between the third and fourth year of theological studies.

In addition, the 10-week summer parish pastoral experience that normally took place between the third and fourth years of theology will be moved to the summer after first theol-

ogy. The clinical pastoral program will continue to take place during the summer between second and third theology.

The new plan also calls for each class of priests to be ordained as a group at Sacred Heart Cathedral instead of individually at the parishes where the priest candidates served their deacon internship year, as is the current practice. Ordination to the priesthood will now take place within a month of ordination to the diaconate, rather than a year later as under the present format.

The changes will go into effect for all seminarians in 1989, and will not affect the two priest candidates now serving their deacon internship years, Deacons Michael A. McHale and Michael R. Brown.

"The purpose of the pastoral internship year is to provide a realistic pastoral setting for seminarians preparing for the priesthood," said Bishop Matthew H. Clark. The year will allow the seminarian to discern his vocation and, in addition, the bishop said, "will provide the Church of Rochester with another opportunity to observe the seminarian interacting in a pastoral setting before the seminarian is called and committed to Holy Orders."

The new program is the product of two years of development by Father Thomas J. Valenti, director of seminarians, and Father Michael F. Conboy, director of interns. The program, which is modeled after similar programs in other dioceses, includes input from priests,

seminarians and deacon interns.

"The program provides the seminarian with some hands-on experience with pastoral life," noted Father Conboy. "It will give him a chance to put some flesh on what he's been studying."

"When (seminarians) go to a parish now for one summer, they barely get their feet wet," Father Valenti said. "I think a full year in contact with pastoral ministry will give them a chance to more fully evaluate what pastoral ministry is like." The internship year will also enable the future priests to become more familiar with the nature of priestly ministry within the diocese, Father Valenti noted. "Because our seminarians study outside our diocese, a full year in a parish rather than just a summer will enable them to become more familiar with issues of the local Church — to develop a sense of diocesan identity," he said.

Father Conboy also pointed out that the year will give the diocese an additional opportunity to evaluate the candidate before he is ordained.

"It gives the Church a chance to better assess that the candidate is well qualified to be one of its presbytery," he said. The diocese, he added, will be better able to look at each candidate and determine "is this person going to be well qualified to assume a role of leadership in the faith community?"

The new program replaces one introduced in 1970 by then-Bishop of Rochester Joseph

L. Hogan. Under that program, a priest candidate would complete theological studies, be ordained a deacon, then be assigned as a deacon intern in a parish. After a year, the deacon would be ordained as priest at the parish in which he served.

"It was felt that if the deacon was ordained in the community in which he served, he was being called forth from the community," Father Conboy explained, noting that the parish ordinations had a more practical goal as well: to help encourage vocations to the priesthood. This expectation was not realized, he noted.

The idea of calling priests forth from the parish community and ordaining them in that community remains valid, Father Conboy said. But the new program emphasizes a different aspect of priestly ministry.

"The priest is in service to the Church community as a whole," he said. "Sacred Heart Cathedral is a symbol of the Church community, and so ordaining the candidates at the cathedral symbolizes their service to the community."

Father Valenti pointed out that under the former system, ordination took place in the parish in which the deacon had just served a year's internship, and where he had established a relationship with the parish community. Under the new plan, the priest candidates will have been away from the parishes in which they

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