

Local News

Christ the King parish council wants school to stay

By Rob Cullivan

IRONDEQUOIT — Confusion over the meaning of the word "classroom" may have led to a proposed closing of Christ the King Parish school.

At a meeting in the parish center gymnasium, Thursday, Jan. 19, Christ the King representatives attempted to persuade diocesan education officials to reject the Northeast Quadrant Planning Board's proposal to close the parish school. Fifty-nine parishioners, mostly members of the parish council, were present, along with four representatives from the diocesan department of general education.

Christ the King is one of six schools slated to close within the next two years under a plan developed by the planning board, one of nine groups charged with reorganizing Monroe County's Catholic school system. The board has recommended the June, 1990, closings of Christ the King, Annunciation in Rochester and St. James in Irondequoit. It calls for Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Neri in Rochester and St. Salome in Irondequoit to close in June, 1989, and the establishment by September of 1990 of a junior high for the quadrant on the premises of Bishop Kearney High School.

Parish council members challenged several of the conclusions reached by the Center for Governmental Research, which prepared the planning board's proposal, most notably the view that the school did not have enough rooms to accommodate an increase in student enrollment following a consolidation of the quadrant's schools.

At the beginning of the meeting, Sister Tierney said the quadrant "absolutely needed 85 classrooms" for grades kindergarten through six, and that the diocese was planning for 100. After reconfiguration, the planning board's proposal calls for the quadrant's seven remaining schools to house grades kindergarten through six. Sister Tierney noted that each grade would be divided into two sections. One more room would be needed for a pre-K program, necessitating a total of 15 classrooms in each school.

Diocesan officials' attempt to explain why the school had been targeted for closing was hampered by the absence of Alan Taddiken, the CGR's principal analyst who developed the planning board's proposal. Sister Roberta Tierney, diocesan director of education, apologized for Taddiken's absence, saying she had only tentatively confirmed the meeting's date with him. When contacted on Tuesday, Jan. 24, Taddiken said he would be meeting with parish representatives on Friday, Jan. 27.

Taddiken said the information he had been given on the school indicated that it contained only 10 classrooms, ruling it out from consideration as an elementary school. But Tony Mordaci, chairman of the Christ the King's Catholic school committee, said that the parish had interpreted the planning board's request for information on the number of classrooms in the school to mean only classrooms currently in use. Thus, he said, he did not include potential classroom space in the calculation.

At the meeting, Mordaci narrated a slide pre-

sentation, demonstrating that the school has 15 additional rooms that could be used for classes. "We don't have any closets that we are calling classrooms," he remarked.

A report the parish council distributed at the Jan. 19 meeting stated that nine classrooms were currently being used to house grades kindergarten through eighth. Seven more rooms — five meeting rooms, a reading room and a future kitchen — were identified as potential classrooms.

In an interview on Friday, Jan. 20, Sister Tierney agreed that Christ the King had enough rooms to accommodate 15 classes.

According to Taddiken, the CGR used eight criteria to determine which of the quadrant's buildings would be used as schools following the consolidation. These criteria were: location; building condition; building size; amenities such as playgrounds and gymnasiums; access to transportation; the building's potential for re-use should its school close; contingency space; and the building's role in the overall balance of the quadrant.

Mordaci's presentation examined Christ the King in the light of the proposal's criteria and cited the following arguments:

- The school, located at 445 Kings Highway, is located on a main busline and sequestered from main roads.
- The school building (including the parish center completed last year) is the most modern facility in the quadrant.
- The school offers several amenities including a 14 acre campus, an attached church and a

separate library.

- The school is not located near any major malls.

The school has several programs, including computer, art and music classes. Mordaci also argued that the parish's growing neighborhood needed the school. Three housing subdivisions — Eastman Estates, Eastman Hills and Park View Estates — are currently being developed within the parish boundaries. Approximately 300 new housing units will be built in the next three years, according to Peter C. Pecor, an Irondequoit town councilman and school parent.

In addition to the three projects, Pecor estimated that as many as 100 more housing units could be built on vacant land within the parish boundaries. Donna Difabio, an assistant planner for Irondequoit, confirmed Pecor's estimates.

Diocesan officials said they were impressed by the parish's presentation. "I think it's a very professional presentation that covered all the areas," said Brother Brian Walsh, superintendent of schools. Asked whether the parish presentation would persuade the diocese to keep the school open, he said, "At this point, anything is possible."

Evelyn J. Kirst, assistant superintendent for curriculum, said the planning board's proposal would have to be re-examined in light of the number of potential classrooms that the parish cited.

The planning board's proposal, along with input from each targeted parish school, is currently being reviewed by diocesan officials.

League announces award for high school students

The League of Women Voters Rochester Metro recently announced its sponsorship of the 1988-89 Citizenship Award Project for Monroe County public and private high school students in grades 10 through 12.

U.S. Savings Bonds with a total value of \$600 and certificates of honor will be awarded to students who plan and carry out projects that demonstrate involvement with government, politics or current issues. The deadline for completed entries is Monday, May 1, 1989.

Call the league office at 716/232-3380 for information on how to qualify and for project assistance.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, political organization, that endeavors to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

Fire inspections completed

The Diocese of Rochester's Department of General Education has announced that the annual inspection of diocesan elementary and secondary schools has been completed for the 1988-1989 school year. The report is available at each school's office.

Agency seeks homes for dogs

Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Inc. needs families or individuals to raise dogs to be trained as guides for the blind. Labrador Retriever pups will be ready for placement in qualified homes in early February.

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Courier-Journal to survey readers

By Karen M. Franz

Two thousand *Courier-Journal* subscribers will receive an "extra edition" this week.

That edition, a four-page readership survey, is being mailed to one in every 20 *Courier-Journal* subscribers in an effort to gauge reader perceptions about the paper and develop a profile of reader demographics.

The diocesan Department of Information Services — which maintains the *Courier-Journal's* subscriber list — produced the scientific, 2,000-reader sampling by programming the diocesan computer system to select every 20th name on the C-J subscriber list. Thus, the 2,000 subscribers can respond to the survey with total anonymity and with the knowledge that their responses are essential to this project, because they statistically represent those of 20 other subscribers.

Data obtained through the survey will assist the editorial department in producing a publication that meets reader needs and preferences, and will help the advertising department sell advertisements, which pay a large portion of the *Courier-Journal's* cost.

The survey is being conducted by Larry Lowe, chairman of the marketing department at Valdosta State College in Valdosta, Georgia. Dr. Lowe, who previously taught at Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland, has already conducted successful studies for *The Catholic Review*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and *The Dialogue*, newspaper of the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware.

Newspapers — both secular and religious — typically conduct readership surveys every year or two to determine whether the publication's content is suited to current subscriber preferences and whether the subscriber population has changed.

The last *Courier-Journal* readership survey was conducted in 1981, during the tenure of former general manager Anthony Costello and former editor Carmen Viglucci. Since the publication has changed substantially in the intervening years, the data obtained at that time is out of date.

Up-to-date information is essential to the continuing quality of any publication. If, for example, a survey were to reveal that the average age of subscribers had

risen since the last survey was conducted, all departments of the publication would need to respond to this trend.

The editorial department would need to consider whether enough of its content was geared to senior citizens, and whether the size and style of type used in the publication should be changed to make reading easier. The advertising department might, likewise, need to shift its sales emphasis toward more appropriate types of advertisers — concentrating on banks rather than children's stores, on travel agents rather than sporting-goods suppliers.

In a letter accompanying the survey, Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, general manager of the *Courier-Journal* has assured respondents that their comments will be taken seriously. A summary of the survey results — expected to be available by mid-February — will be published in an upcoming issue.

The survey being mailed out this week contains 40 questions and takes 10-15 minutes to complete. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes are provided for convenient return of the completed surveys.

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