

Brother Walsh resigns from post

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, diocesan superintendent of schools since July, 1986, announced Monday, Nov. 19, that he will resign from his post, effective July 1, 1991.

Brother Walsh will undoubtedly be remembered mostly for having served as superintendent of schools during the several controversial school closings and grade reconfigurations that marked the reorganization of Catholic schools in Monroe County. He was philosophical when asked about his decision to leave.

"I chose a lifestyle as a religious," he said. "I said to this group of people,

'Here's my time, my talent and my treasure — Use it any way you want.'"

In a letter announcing his resignation to diocesan school principals, the superintendent quoted U.S. statesman Dean Acheson in explaining his thoughts: "to give up a position of responsibility is to die a little."

One principal responded to news of the superintendent's resignation by echoing the letter's sentiments. "Personally I've had positive dealings with him, and I think he'll be a loss to the Rochester diocese," said Sister Elaine Englert, SSJ, principal of St. Theodore's School.

Brother Walsh's provincial, Brother Paul Hennessy, CFC, noted that Brother Walsh was the first Christian Brother to

hold a position as a diocesan schools superintendent. Another brother held an assistant schools superintendent's position once, he said. In such a capacity, Brother Walsh was an exception to the rule that Christian Brothers work solely in institutions administered by Christian Brothers, Brother Hennessy said.

After taking a one-year sabbatical, Brother Walsh will be assigned to a Christian Brothers' school, Brother Hennessy noted, adding that Brother Walsh's five years as superintendent was a standard length of time for the congregation members' assignments. The provincial also pointed out that Brother Walsh had

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Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, diocesan superintendent of schools since July, 1986, will leave the post effective July 1, 1991.

Jail ministry director leaving to study in Washington

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — After 10 years at the helm of Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, Inc., Sister Barbara A. Moore, RSM, summed up her opinion of the U.S. criminal-justice system in one sentence: "It is neither just nor a system."

Bringing some sense of hope and sense of mercy to hundreds of inmates caught in that system — through their own fault or the fault of others — has been the mission of the silver-haired woman religious since she left a position as pastoral assistant at St. Monica's Parish in 1980.

The 56-year-old Sister Moore plans to leave her position as executive director of RIJM at the end of November. In January, she will move to a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C., where she will study at Washington Theological Seminary, an ecumenical consortium offering Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian and Roman Catholic studies.

Sister Moore noted that her future studies will expand an interest in ecumenism she developed at RIJM.

"I see this place as enriching my understanding of the ecumenical movement," she said of the RIJM offices at Downtown Presbyterian Church. The executive director commented that 150 churches and synagogues contribute to the ministry and that meeting so many members of other faiths has profoundly affected her.

"I have seen such goodness," she said. "No one has a corner on truth and goodness. To meet the different clergy and congregations ... to sense their commitment ... It's like seeing another face of



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Sister Barbara Moore, RSM, executive director of the Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry for 10 years, will leave the ministry at the end of November.

God."

It seems fitting that the Sister of Mercy sees God's face in others, since she alluded to being inspired by Matthew's Gospel account of the last judgment, in which Jesus praises those who visited Him — as present in others — in prison.

"I'm convinced that churches and synagogues must be in these places where other people don't want to be," she said of her work in prisons, adding that she now reads St. Matthew's words in light of her experience. She said she interprets the verse as saying not "when I was in prison, you came in and preached," but rather

emphasizing, "you didn't change my life around; you didn't bring anything. You were just present."

Indeed, a sense of camaraderie is often all the RIJM volunteers can offer to an inmate, she observed. "Very often, there's not a thing we can do for somebody," she said, illustrating her point by recalling times that she's worked with people sentenced to long-term or life imprisonment.

Sister Moore said she knew some history of the difficulties inmates faced in the U.S. penal system before taking on the executive directorship of RIJM. Yet, she said counseling inmates opened her eyes to several aspects of the system that contradicted the ideals of fairness under law the system was supposed to embody.

"If you are white and have money, (the system) works better for you," she said, adding, "(and) the whole question of

speedy trial and presumed innocence — I don't think they have them." Sister Moore noted that several inmates in Monroe County jail are there simply because they don't have the bail money to get out.

"It's not right that people are being held on bail that's relatively low," she said, pointing out that some prisoners are sitting in jail because they can't raise as little as \$250 in bail. "They get punished for their poverty," she said.

Sister Moore observed that in an effort to combat the problem, RIJM seeks out members of the community who are willing to donate bail money. "A considerable number of people have been moved out of the system because somebody took the time to raise them bail," she said.

She has spent a considerable amount of time raising awareness of RIJM's work and educating people on the penal system. "In 10 years, I've been out in the community 500 times," Sister Moore said. "We teach and preach and lecture. We go to churches and synagogues to talk about needs of prisoners."

Those efforts have paid off in a mailing list that has grown since 1980 from 150 addresses to 1,150. RIJM has also raised about \$500,000 for its work since Sister Moore took over.

But rather than blow her own horn, Sister Moore said her directorship has shed light on her own weaknesses. "It's made me much slower in my judgments (of other people)," she said.

The job has also transformed her reading of Scripture, she said. "You can't read the Psalms the same way once you've been inside of a prison," Sister Moore said, noting that the Bible's words about oppression and suffering occupy a particular place in her heart now. "I think my understanding of God is (of) one who relies more and more on us to alleviate the suffering of others."

Federation envisions new role supporting Catholic education

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Dec. 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and like the promise of new life that date bespeaks, the Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents hopes a workshop scheduled that day will help school parents conceive a new role for themselves in the 1990s.

"We're the only federation in New York state that was asked by our diocese to promote it," federation president Linda Zaleski remarked about the workshop. Scheduled to take place between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Seton Junior High on Rhinecliff Drive, the event is entitled "Parents/Promoters."

The workshop will be presented by Sister Carol Cimino, SSJ, associate director of Catholic School Administrators Association of New York State and former development director at Nazareth Academy.

"Parents/Promoters" — which is open to all diocesan school parents — has a three-

fold purpose, according to a release from CSAANYS:

- to train parents to seek within their own community ways to make their school known to more people.
- to explore methods of attracting more students to the school, while maintaining a stable enrollment.
- to provide participants with a set of materials useful for recruitment planning.

Each school that participates in the workshop will receive a compendium of recruitment materials to use in long-range planning. CSAANYS is charging a \$5 registration fee for the workshop, with a \$2.50 refund at the door. Parents are asked to register for the workshop through their Catholic school principals before a Dec. 1 registration deadline.

The workshop is probably the most visible effort the Rochester federation has made since it was reformed more than a year ago.

The federation had lain dormant for

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