

Brother Walsh

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spent an unusual amount of time in one place for a Christian Brother.

"He's been 18 years in Rochester, and he's in need of a sabbatical and a renewal program," Brother Hennessy said. The superintendent pointed out that the provincial had first suggested Brother Walsh consider leaving his current position last August. As part of Brother Walsh's sabbatical, he will leave for Rome, Italy, in January, 1992, to spend time in spiritual renewal, Brother Walsh said.

Brother Walsh noted that the positions he held prior to taking on the superintendent's job prepared him for the task of working on Catholic schools' reorganization. The superintendent served as principal of Notre Dame-Bishop Gibbons High School in Schenectady from 1985-86, and as principal of Rochester's Bishop Kearney High School from 1972-85.

"I spent seven years grappling with all the problems that come with declining enrollment and higher costs," Brother Walsh said of his principalships. He said that the major lessons he learned from those experiences were: "Go with the flow. Don't panic. Any change takes time."

Such lessons would have done anybody in the brother's position well, considering the fact that several schools, mostly in northeastern Monroe County, were closed as part of the reorganization process over the last two years. The reorganization was often greeted with vehement protests by parents and parish officials, creating an atmosphere that would have been difficult for anyone to work in, according to one official who worked with Brother Walsh.

"I wish him all the best," remarked William Pickett, president of St. John Fisher College in Rochester and chairman of the now-defunct Commission of Reorganization of Catholic Schools. "He's been superintendent during some turbulent times." Brother Walsh showed

"unswerving commitment" to the reorganization process, Pickett observed.

"I enjoyed working with (Brother) Brian," Pickett said. "I found him to be informed, to be committed and to give himself unstintingly to the work of reorganization."

Brother Walsh's superior expressed similar sentiments about the superintendent. "(Brother) Brian's knowledge of the Catholic schools in our diocese and his ability to see many possibilities in the future that we can do are things that are going to be missed," commented Sister Mary Ann Binsack, RSM, director of the Dio-

cesan Division of Education.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark also noted that he would miss Brother Walsh. "(Brother) Brian has served us well in these past four years," he said in a statement released by the diocese. "I am sorry to lose the benefits of his talents, but I recognize the educational needs of the Christian Brothers as they too plan for the future."

Brother Walsh said his future after the end of next June lies in honing his computer skills. "You get kind of spoiled when you have your secretary (working on a computer) for you," he joked.

As for a possible teaching position, the

superintendent asserted his ability to take on any new position. "I have a pretty big ego, and I'm a wonderful teacher and I can teach about any kid," he said, adding, "and I'll stand by that."

Sister Binsack said the diocese would be advertising nationally for a new superintendent, and said that a search committee would be formed in the future. She said that she would be consulting with school principals to draw up a new job description because the school system has changed from a parish-based one to a quadrant-based one since Brother Walsh came aboard.

Federation

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three years after disbanding amid controversy in 1986. At that time, retiring federation leaders complained of a lack of enthusiasm among school principals and of a lack of participation by school parents. The federation also felt it lacked support at the diocesan level.

The federation was reformed at the behest of Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, diocesan superintendent of schools, who noted the need for a revived federation that would lobby legislators on behalf of Catholic schools.

When the federation reformed last year, the diocese named as adviser to the group Sister Joseph Gilmary Russell, SSJ, assistant superintendent for personnel in the diocesan Division of Education. No diocesan liaison had been established to work with the prior organization.

Sister Russell said the federation had spent the last 12 months or so attempting to discern its purpose. "Last year was really a transition time where (the federation members) came together to get a perspective on where they want to go and what they want to do," she said.

Zaleski remarked that during the next year, the federation plans to lobby for more government aid to Catholic schools. She noted that Catholic schools were heartened when this year's state budget allocated 80 percent of funds for school asbestos cleanup to private schools, following lobbying efforts by the state parents' federation.

That legislative victory had no practical

effect on diocesan schools because none are slated for asbestos removal. But it is an example of what one school principal saw as the purpose of a parents' group.

"As far as legislation is concerned, this is the group that can make things happen," said Steve Schockow, principal of St. John the Evangelist in Spencerport and chairman of the Rochester Federation of Catholic School Administrators.

According to a report issued by the state federation in September, the parents' group will lobby during the next year on such issues as increased textbook aid, library resources and computer software for Catholic schools. The state federation also plans to support a bill calling for parental notification and consent for minors' abortions.

So far, 25 people have become active members of the federation, which named

its board of directors last October, Zaleski said. But the group could always use more volunteers, she noted.

"Anybody who does volunteer work is never happy with the amount of volunteers," she joked.

Future plans for the local federation include mailing introductory letters to all politicians throughout the diocese; sponsoring a scholarship program for diocesan students; running an essay contest next spring with an educational bond as a prize; and the creation of a "wish book" whereby all diocesan schools would compile their material needs in a book that would be published and distributed to possible donors.

The Rochester federation will also be hosting the state federation's conference in February, 1991, Zaleski said.

Pregnancy

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counselor then provides the woman with information about public assistance, the Mom and Baby Fund of Catholic Family Center/St. Mary Hospital, and such shelter programs as Melita, Bethany and Sojourner houses.

The woman is also told about the assistance the center can provide during and after the pregnancy, Amato noted.

"We are here as a support system to walk her through this hand-in-hand," Amato said. "That's the reason, for me, that the center is open."

Amato said that one of her goals is to set up a one-on-one support system for the

women. She is also trying to arrange for families to take in women who need shelter and support. Another project, she said, is to create a support group made up of pregnant women.

As a result of the counseling, Amato said, a number of women had opted not to have abortions. "We have gotten feedback from the girls who have changed their minds after leaving here," she said.

Buonemani pointed out, however, that the center's staff does not pressure women who are considering abortion. "If a girl says she will still abort, we do everything we can possible do for her, and we pray for her," he said. "It's up to her."

"We want this to be an oasis," Amato observed. "When a girl comes here, we want her to feel that she can rest here."

The fact that the center is now largely staffed and supported by Catholics will be a plus, Long acknowledged.

"There's probably 50, 60 Catholics involved with this now who were not involved in pro-life work before," Long observed. "It's the first Catholic center of this sort, run by lay leadership, that I'm aware of. It's a ground-breaking effort that provides a good model."

Buonemani said that while the center is not officially Catholic, its Catholic orientation has made it "a magnet for Catholics."

Like Long, Buonemani pointed out that many people now involved with the center had not formally been involved with pro-life activities. "People are being drawn into the issue because the center is Catholic," he said.

EDITORS' NOTE: As a benefit for the Problem Pregnancy Health Center, Loretta Doyle will perform a Christmas concert Dec. 2 at Corpus Christi Church, 80 Prince St. The 2:30 p.m. concert is free. Donations for the center will be accepted.

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