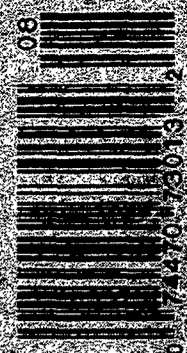


CATHOLIC COURIER

Diocese of Rochester Thursday, February 28, 1991 50¢ 24 pages/2 sections

War nearing end?

As news reports from Washington and Saudi Arabia raise hopes for an end to fighting in the Persian Gulf region (page 4), Catholic hospitals in the Diocese of Rochester are prepared to assist in the treatment of military casualties (page 3).



Perceived bias rooted in geography

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

In one corner of the Southern Tier, the people have a joke about officials of the Diocese of Rochester.

"The joke down here," noted Father Joseph P. McCaffrey, "is (that) it's twice as far from Rochester to here as it is from here to Rochester."

Father McCaffrey is pastor of St. John Parish, Newark Valley, and St. Francis Parish, Catatunk — parishes at the southeastern edge of what he described as a "lopsided" diocese, and thus among the most distant from the Pastoral Center in Rochester.

Yet the sentiment behind the joke Father McCaffrey related surfaces again and again throughout the diocese, especially in areas distant from the see city.

People in those outlying regions sometimes say the diocesan administration — often referred to simply as the "diocese" or "Buffalo Road" — neglects parishes outside Monroe County.

The most recent evidence of this sense of neglect can be found in a study of the diocese conducted between June, 1989 and April, 1990, by the Winters Group, a Rochester consulting firm.

Although 51 percent of the 500 diocesan clergy and staff members responding to the survey said the needs of the overall Catholic community were being addressed, only 17 percent of respondents said the needs of parishioners outside Monroe County were being addressed.

This apparent contradiction came as a surprise to Bishop Matthew H. Clark. "I am honestly puzzled by it," he acknowledged. "Maybe we have one of those instances where the results don't fit the experienced reality."

The finding also hit home with Father John M. Mulligan, vicar general of the diocese and moderator of the Pastoral Center.

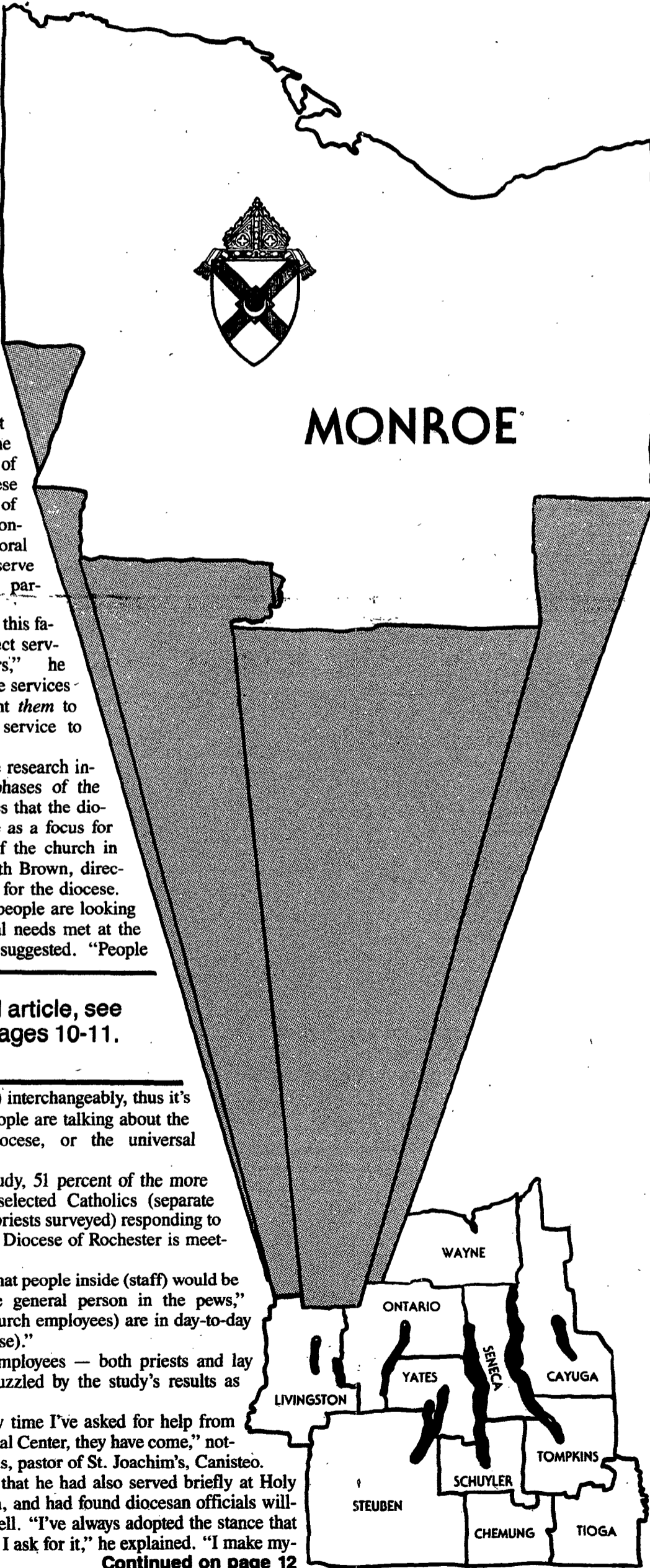
"I really feel we're doing better outside Monroe County than we're sometimes given credit for," Father Mulligan said. He pointed out that prior to joining the diocesan administration, he worked in parishes outside the Rochester area — serving in Ithaca, Corning, Auburn and Geneva — and had always found diocesan officials helpful.

Father Mulligan pointed out that whatever underlies the negative assessment of how well the diocese meets the needs of parishioners outside Monroe County, the Pastoral Center's task is to serve parish staffs, not parishioners.

"We don't really see this facility as providing direct service to parishioners," he explained. "We provide services to parish staffs. I want them to carry out the direct service to parishioners."

Indeed, some of the research involved in the early phases of the Winters' study indicates that the diocese may simply serve as a focus for negative perceptions of the church in general, noted Elizabeth Brown, director of communications for the diocese.

"What we think is people are looking at having their spiritual needs met at the parish level," Brown suggested. "People



For a related article, see
Insight — pages 10-11.

use the term ("church") interchangeably, thus it's hard to tell whether people are talking about the local church, the diocese, or the universal church."

According to the study, 51 percent of the more than 1,500 randomly selected Catholics (separate from the 500 staff and priests surveyed) responding to the survey feel that the Diocese of Rochester is meeting people's needs.

"It's not surprising that people inside (staff) would be more critical than the general person in the pews," Brown observed. "(Church employees) are in day-to-day contact (with the diocese)."

Yet some church employees — both priests and lay workers — also are puzzled by the study's results as well.

"I must say that any time I've asked for help from any people in the Pastoral Center, they have come," noted Father Stephen Kraus, pastor of St. Joachim's, Canisteo.

Father Kraus noted that he had also served briefly at Holy Cross Parish in Dryden, and had found diocesan officials willing to travel there as well. "I've always adopted the stance that when I want something I ask for it," he explained. "I make my-

Continued on page 12

Roman Catholic Church of Rochester Mission and Goals 1991-1993

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; the Lord has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Luke 4:18-19

We joyfully embrace our baptismal call to worship God, to preach the good news of Christ, to build up the community of faith and hope in the Holy Spirit, and to serve those in need. As pilgrims nourished by the Eucharist for our journey of faith, we work with other churches and with all who seek harmony within our human family to advance the reign of God. Continuing our diocese's century-old tradition of courage and creativity, and responding to the Second Vatican Council's call for the ongoing conversion of the Church, we strive to meet the needs of our community in this time and this place.

Interpreting the signs of the time, we set forth these primary goals for the next two years:

- to convene a broad-based Synod to chart our future course
- to create comprehensive faith development programs for all ages and cultures
- to provide human care services and to advocate for social reform
- to provide well-qualified pastoral ministers to serve our faith communities