



Semifinal shootout



Our Lady of Mercy gave Shenendehowa all it could handle in the state Class A soccer semifinals before the Monarchs eventually lost 1-0 in a dramatic shootout at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Page 12.

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FRATERNAL ORDERS



Catholic Daughters of the Americas gathered in front of the Basilica in Rome after they were received by Pope Pius XI.

Catholic single-sex groups struggle for members, new sense of direction in modern-day society

By Lee Strong, Staff writer

In 1938, John Schneider decided he needed to do a little more for his spiritual life.

So he joined the Rochester district of the Knights of St. John.

"Being a young man when I did join, and being a Catholic, it was something to keep me on the straight and narrow," recalled Schneider, a parishioner at Rochester's St. Michael's Church.

"It kept me close to the Catholic faith," he added. "It would have been very easy to slip off to the side."

Ellen Reynolds joined the Catholic Daughters of America in 1946 simply because a neighbor in Waterloo invited her to do so.

Yet the St. Mary's parishioner said she has gotten more out of her 45-year association with the Catholic Daughters than just neighborhood socializing.



Knights of Columbus
Father Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882 in New Haven, Conn.

"It showed me how to appreciate more in my life," Reynolds said. "It showed me how to appreciate life."

Schneider and Reynolds joined Catholic single-sex — or fraternal — organizations at a time when such groups were growing and thriving.

By the 1960s, Catholic fraternal organizations had grown to a combined membership of more than 2 million. The various groups were integral parts of parish and church life in the United States, providing a wide range of entertainment and social activities, charity work, and ceremonial functions.

Today, however, membership in most of these organizations is declining. The Catholic Daughters of America, for example, have watched their numbers across the United States decline from 170,000 to 144,000 between 1986 and 1991.

Only the Knights of Columbus are growing in numbers, having topped in 1991 the 1.5-million mark — the largest membership figure in the group's history.

The rank and file of many fraternal organizations

Continued on page 18