

Local-area boards prepare to oversee WICP

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — In continuing efforts to implement the Well Integrated Catechetical Plan (WICP) — the diocesan-wide program for cradle-to-grave religious education — the Diocese of Rochester has begun training 11 boards to oversee the plan outside Monroe County.

On July 1, the 11 panels — called Local Area Christian Education and Formation Boards — will assume responsibility for directing all 10 WICP components in the Finger Lakes, Southern Tier and Genesee Valley clusters. The 10 WICP components



Kellie Mc Cann/Photo intern

CARIBBEAN MASS — Father Paul Jervis was guest homilist June 14 for an African-American Caribbean Mass at Rochester's Immaculate Conception Church. About 100 people attended the Mass. Father Jervis, associate pastor of St. Fortunata Parish in Brooklyn, is a native of Guyana.

McQuaid Jesuit president plans to leave position in September

ROCHESTER — After four years as president of McQuaid Jesuit High School, Father Daniel J. O'Brien, SJ, announced June 12 that he is resigning the post, effective in September.

"I have enjoyed very much my association with the teachers and students of McQuaid over the past four years," Father O'Brien said in a prepared press statement.

Asked during a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier* to explain his departure from McQuaid, Father O'Brien replied, "I think it's basically time for me to move on to do something else."

He said he is considering several prospective assignments and will announce his decision when he leaves McQuaid before the start of the new school year.

Also June 12, McQuaid's Board of Trustees announced that Father James

range from adult education to youth ministry to Catholic schools.

On March 5, 1992, the Commission on Clusters — formed in the fall of 1989 to oversee the WICP planning process in the clusters — recommended that Bishop Matthew H. Clark accept implementation plans developed by the commission and local planning groups that had been meeting since 1987.

Those plans had been developed according to guidelines established in the Transitional Framework Plan prepared by the commission and approved by Bishop Clark on June 5, 1991.

In a March 30 letter, Bishop Clark approved the implementation plans as well as the commission's recommendation that local-area boards be formed by June, 1992.

The transitional framework plan states that these local-area boards are "responsible for overseeing the Well-Integrated Catechetical Plan in the local area(s)."

Included in the local-area plans Bishop Clark approved March 30 are provisions that all Catholic schools in the clusters remain open for the 1992-93 school year.

Those provisions required that three schools meet certain minimum criteria in order to remain open for the upcoming school year. All succeeded in doing so, according to Sister Mary Ann Binsack, RSM, director of diocesan Faith Development Ministry.

St. Agnes School in Avon and St. Michael's School in Penn Yan were required to have a minimum of 15 stu-

dents per teacher for the 1992-93 school year. Both schools met this goal.

A third school, St. Patrick's School, Owego, remained open after representatives from the local area met with members of the Catholic School Office and the Commission on Clusters to determine the school's viability, Sister Binsack reported.

Looking into the future, Immaculate Conception School in Ithaca must achieve a combined enrollment of at least 45 students in grades six through eight during the 1993-94 school year as a condition for those grades to remain open beyond June, 1993.

The local-area plans were developed by representatives from parishes and schools in each of the local areas, then approved by the Commission on Clusters.

Bishop Clark cautioned in his March 30 letter that, "These plans are but the beginning of a process of continually assessing the total educational needs of the local area."

According to the 1991 framework plan, each local-area board will have two standing committees — one for Catholic schools and one for catechetics (religious education) — that will do the bulk of the work. The boards may create additional committees as needed.

The local-area boards — which have already been formed — consist of one elected representative from each parish within the local areas. Each board also includes one pastor, principal, catechetical leader and youth minister elected by their respective constituencies.

The boards are charged with exam-

ining needs and recommending priorities for educational ministry in the local areas; reviewing local-area budget and organizational plans; coordinating the sharing of resources in the local areas; appointing school principals; and developing financial policies and procedures for the schools.

The local-area boards will ultimately report to Bishop Clark through the Diocesan Christian Formation and Education Council. In addition, they will submit periodic evaluations to the cluster executive committees.

These executive committees — to be appointed by Bishop Clark in the fall — will consist of the chairmen of the local-area boards, an alternate from the boards, a pastor with an on-site school, a pastor without an on-site school, a principal, a catechetical leader and a youth minister.

Unlike Monroe County's quadrant boards, which at this time only oversee Catholic schools, Sister Binsack said the local-area boards will consider all aspects of Christian education in their regions. The ideal, she said, is for people in each community to have access to all 10 WICP components.

As part of their considerations, the boards will look at how parishes in the local area can share resources — financial, physical and human — to best provide Christian education, Sister Binsack said.

She added that the diocese "will work with local areas rather than individual parishes."

As the local-area boards go into operation, the Commission on Clusters will cease to exist at the end of June, Sister Binsack said.

Groups show interest in former seminary

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Representatives of several religious groups and social agencies are interested in using the former St. Bernard's Seminary on Lake Avenue as a common meeting and working environment.

Since its closing in 1981, the old seminary, 2260 Lake Ave., was sold to Eastman Kodak Company. Now a group of religious and social agency leaders are seeking to lease or purchase the former seminary and its 22 acres from Kodak in order to establish a center for interreligious activity and

social ministry to be known as the Multicultural InterFaith Center.

"We had this vision that it would be great if we had one place where a number of people from different faiths can meet under one roof," said Richard Streeter, who, along with Bonita Hindman, director of grants and programs for the Rochester Area Foundation, Inc., envisioned the idea for the center.

Hindman and Streeter, who have worked together in the past on church issues, both emphasized that they were pursuing the center out of private interest and were not affiliated with any denomination or group other than the newly incorporated interfaith center.

Streeter and Hindman both belong to the Interfaith Forum, a group of Rochester-area representatives from 28 faiths and religions — including Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Judaism and some Eastern faiths.

Since its formation in January, 1991, the forum has been meeting at the Islamic Center, 727 Westfall Road. In addition to the Islamic Center and the forum, nearly two dozen groups are interested in sharing space at the former seminary. According to Streeter, those groups include Flower City Habitat for Humanity, the Judicial Process Commission, Catholic Family Center and the Freddie Thomas Foundation.

In particular, many of the denominations and agencies are interested in the center because sharing of office machines and space could mean cutting operating and rental costs, Streeter said.

Ideally, it would cost an agency about \$7 per square foot of office space

to operate in the old seminary, whereas many agencies spend anywhere from \$12-\$14 to operate in their current locations, he added.

Mark Fursman, business manager at Kodak's corporate real estate office, said his company welcomed the idea of an interfaith center at the former seminary. Although High Technology of Rochester, Inc., is housed at the site, most of the building space is currently unoccupied, he said.

Fursman concluded that discussions on a potential lease and/or purchase agreement were still pending with the center's representatives.

Streeter predicted that the Multicultural Interfaith Center would probably seek a five-year lease of the St. Bernard's property, with an option to buy.

He noted that the former seminary site would be an ideal location for the MultiCultural InterFaith Center because it is well known in the Rochester area, making it easy to find.

In addition, the old seminary buildings offer plenty of space for such programs as early childhood learning and the various social ministries important to each group, he said.

For example, many church agencies, currently stretched thin with the growing demands for social services, could combine financial and staffing efforts at the center, Streeter observed. Such collaboration has become more attractive to not-for-profit groups in the wake of declining governmental and foundational funding for social programs, he said.

In addition, ample parking space — often at a premium in many areas of the city — would be provided for many paid and volunteer staffs, Streeter concluded.