

Catholics plan to open private school this fall

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

GATES — A group of Catholics concerned about the availability of Catholic school education in Monroe County has created a private school independent of the Rochester diocese.

The Archangel School will be located in a wing at the Rochester Christian Academy, 1612 Buffalo Road. The K-6 school will open this fall.

According to its mission statement, the school's purpose is "to develop Catholic boys and girls intellectually, morally, socially and spiritually."

Organizers predict that the school will eventually add a junior high program. Further, they are hoping to open additional private schools — and perhaps even a high school — in Monroe County.

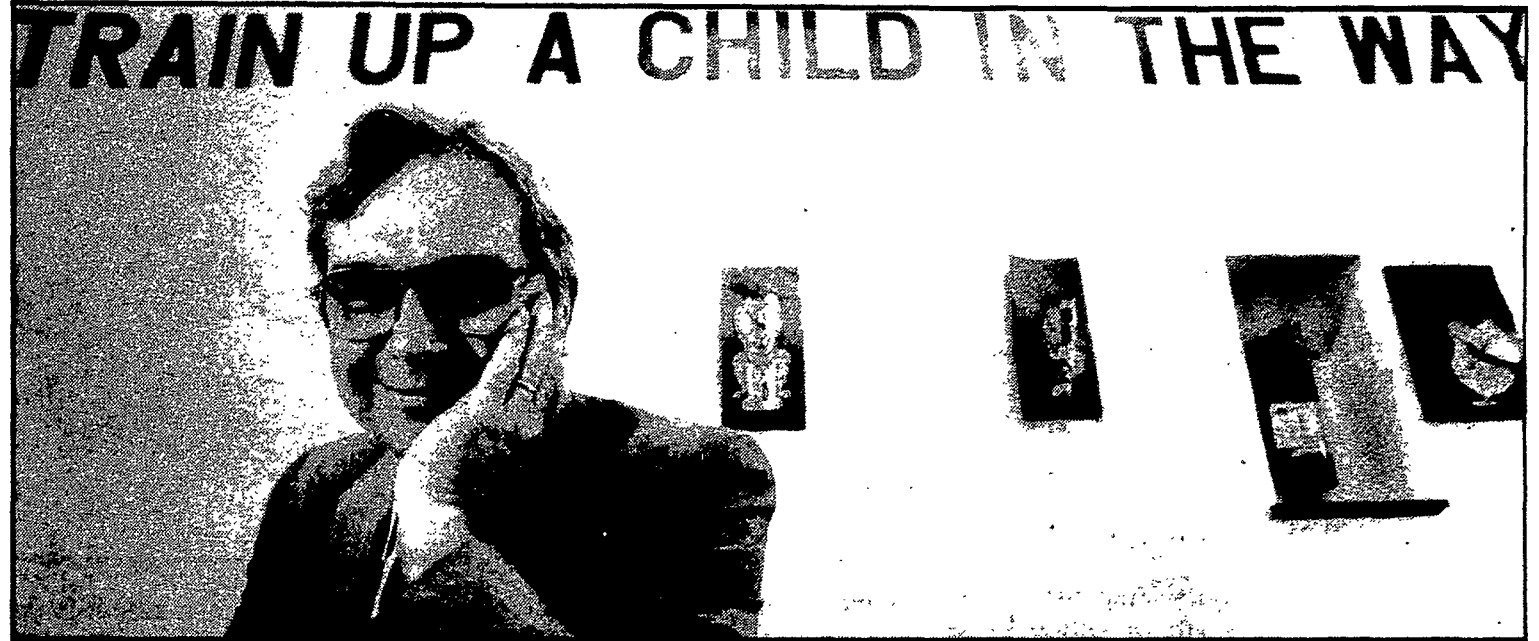
"The reason we started the school is in anticipation of things that we heard about future closings of Catholic schools," explained Michael Macaluso Jr., director of the committee that created the school. "We want to provide an alternative to public school, a school that will teach the Catholic faith."

Archangel's curriculum will incorporate traditional Catholic teachings, including Catholic-school-style discipline, Macaluso said.

The school, however, cannot be considered a Catholic institution, noted Father George R. Norton, public information officer for the Diocese of Rochester.

"They can't call it Catholic without permission of the proper church authority, which is (Bishop Matthew H. Clark)," Father Norton said. "To my knowledge, they have not contacted anyone in the bishop's office or the Catholic School Office."

Macaluso acknowledged that his committee had not contacted diocesan officials. He said, however, that the



Michael Macaluso Jr. serves as director of the founding committee at The Archangel School, which will be located in a wing at the Rochester Christian Academy, Gates.

group was an offshoot of the Alliance for Catholic Education or ACE, which has spoken out in the past against Catholic school reorganization in Monroe County.

Nevertheless, Macaluso said, Archangel school is not intended to compete against the diocesan Catholic school system. Rather, he explained, their goal is to draw students from public schools and students currently being taught at home.

The faculty will consist of a principal, three full-time teachers, two part-time teachers and four volunteer teachers. All faculty members will have to adhere to traditional Catholic beliefs in their teaching and lifestyle, and the professional staff will have to possess New York state teacher certification, Macaluso said.

The school, he added, will be accredited by the Gates Chili Central School District.

The school committee is currently considering several curricula that teach traditional Catholic values, Macaluso said.

According to Archangel's mission statement, students will be presented with "the authentic teaching of the Church," and spiritual reading appropriate for their age levels. The statement reads that the curriculum also is intended to "instill Christian tastes for art, music, drama, literature and leisure activities ... and thereby give them a healthy disdain for the sorts of vulgar entertainment they are likely to encounter."

The mission statement continues, "Books written by Modernist Catholics and spiritual techniques inimical to traditional Catholicism (New Age, hypnosis, Eastern mysticism, psychoanalysis, etc.) will be forbidden and pupils will be warned of the dangers of such practices and be pre-

pared to resist them when encountered."

Annual tuition will be \$1,250 for the first child from a family and \$850 for a second sibling. All subsequent children from the same family will attend the school free.

The school's inaugural registration is scheduled for July 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Rochester Christian Academy.

Macaluso noted that tuition and fundraising efforts will provide approximately half of the estimated \$110,000 needed during the school's first year. The remaining sum has already been raised through individual and business donations, he reported.

Archangel School will provide a model for opening additional schools in the future, Macaluso predicted.

"We have found such an interest that we're planning to grow," he said. "We're hoping to do this all over Monroe County."

Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Money woes could cause interfaith jail ministry to close

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry is experiencing a financial crisis agency leaders claim could close the organization by late summer.

RIJM, which draws support from 14 religious organizations, including the Diocese of Rochester, must raise \$13,000 by September. If the ministry — which began working with prisoners 20 years ago — fails to raise the necessary funds, the agency will be unable to pay its remaining bills for 1992, according to RIJM's leaders.

A reduction in anticipated state funding combined with a general drop-off in donations from churches and individuals created the financial crisis, ministry leaders said.

"I know that there have been (contribution) drop-offs in other not-for-profit organizations," commented Donna M. Marbach, chairwoman of RIJM's board of directors. "Unfortunately, the incarcerated population becomes a population that you can easily not give to."

RIJM's \$64,000 budget for 1992 covers salaries for two staff people; training and maintenance of 60 volunteers; rental costs and office expenses for space at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St.; a quarterly newsletter; and various forms of assistance to area prisoners.

RIJM currently works with 260 individuals in the Monroe County prison system, according to the Rev. Ran-

dolph Fields, executive director.

Generally, funding for about 80 percent of the ministry's budget comes from approximately 600 Rochester-area churches, religious groups and private donors, according to R. Bruce Colburn, RIJM's assistant director. The Diocese of Rochester contributed \$4,000 in 1992, Rev. Fields said.

Donations from some churches and individuals, however, have been reduced significantly or completely stopped, according to Colburn and Fields. Both leaders blamed the country's economic woes for slowing down contributions to the ministry.

"I think a lot of churches are feeling the pinch and don't have the money," Colburn said.

In addition to the drop-off in contributions to RIJM, the ministry had included an anticipated \$15,000 worth of state funding for its 1992 budget, according to Marbach.

In the wake of the 1991 state budget crisis, however, the state legislature initially froze and then restored funding, but at a reduced figure of \$13,000. Hence, RIJM now must contend with having planned its budget for more state funding than it will actually receive, Marbach said.

In an effort to alleviate this crisis, Marbach sent out letters to RIJM's supporters last month. She asked supporters to send a minimum contribution of \$25 to help end the ministry's financial woes.

"If all our friends would each send \$25, we could raise the \$13,000 we

need tomorrow!" the letter stated. "And go to your church, synagogue, temple or organization to urge its support as well."


So far, the emergency appeal has yielded almost \$2,000 in new contributions, ministry leaders said.

According to its summer newsletter, RIJM also plans to participate in a variety of charitable events to raise funds.

The ministry, for example, is selling \$10 shopping certificates for use at a

private pre-opening sale on Aug. 11, at McCurdy's new store in the Irondequoit Mall. RIJM receives the \$10 fee from the certificates, which make the holder eligible for various discounts. For every certificate McCurdy's redeems from RIJM, the ministry receives an additional \$1.

EDITORS' NOTE — Call 716/325-1942 for information on RIJM. Donations may be sent to Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, N.Y. 14614.



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