

Plan calls for closing of schools

ROCHESTER — Holy Ghost and Most Precious Blood schools would close at the end of the 1992-93 school year under the final proposal the Southwest Quadrant Governance Board has submitted to the diocese.

Both Holy Ghost, 220 Coldwater Road in Gates, and Most Precious Blood, 219 Stenson St. in Rochester, would close their doors in June, 1993 if the plan receives a favorable review by the Christian Formation and Education Council and the approval of Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

Bishop Clark is expected to decide on the plan in January, according to Constance Truesdale, diocesan schools spokeswoman.

The Southwest Quadrant Governance Board decided to adopt the plan Monday night, Nov. 30, during a meeting at St. Monica's School, 841 Genesee St. The decision was announced in a press release on Tuesday, Dec. 1.

The board first proposed the closings in October. Under the plan, kindergarten-to-sixth-grade programs would be housed at four schools: Holy Family; St. Pius the Tenth; St. Helen, Gates; and St. Theodore, Spencerport.

All Saints, the quadrant's junior high, would remain at St. Theodore's, its current location.

St. Monica's, which serves inner-city children, would remain open as pre-K-8 school and receive diocesan funding because it serves a "special mission," according to language contained in the board's original proposal.

Casey Swanson, chairwoman of the quadrant board, cited declining enrollment and fiscal concerns as the reasons behind the final decision to recommend the closings.

Swanson also noted that the board felt the student populations at each school could transfer as groups to other quadrant schools, limiting the disruption caused by the closings.

Holy Ghost students, for example, could transfer as a group to St. Pius, she said, and Most Precious Blood's student body could fit in as a group at either Holy Family or St. Helen's.

She emphasized, however, that parents will be free to send their children to any quadrant school.

As for parental concerns over potential overcrowding at All Saints Junior High in 1993, Swanson said that the board would wait to see how many students register there before deciding whether the school needs additional classrooms.

Because the combined number of sixth- and seventh-graders in the quadrant currently exceeds the number of available seats at All Saints, many parents had criticized the board for not planning to use other school buildings to accommodate junior high students.

Swanson added that classroom expansion may not be necessary at All Saints for the 1993-94 school year, but she pointed out that the board would consider expansion in the future should the need arise.

— Rob Cullivan

Drive is key to southeast proposal

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A proposal to establish a junior high at St. Thomas More Parish, 2617 East Ave., would cost about \$500,000 to implement, according to Michael Perrotta, chairman of the Southeast Quadrant Governance Board's planning committee.

Released publicly two days before Thanksgiving, the board's plan calls for the establishment of a capital drive committee, which would raise funds for the construction of eight additional classrooms at St. Thomas More by the fall of 1994.

The quadrant's proposal contains a contingency provision, however, stating that if the capital campaign should fail to raise the necessary funds to implement the proposal, the quadrant would then continue to operate junior highs at St. Thomas More and at St. Joseph's in Penfield.

Thomas E. Schoenwetter, chairman of the board's finance committee and a St. Joseph's representative, said the contingency provision allows the board to "put to bed once and for all" the debate over whether it should es-

tablish a single-site junior high or a two-site junior high program. Should the lack of funding make it difficult to create a single-site program, the board now has an option it can exercise, he explained.

"I didn't want to get six months or a year from now and have to go back to the drawing board again," he said.

The governance board would like to phase in the junior high's establishment over a two-year period.

In fall, 1993, Southeastern Catholic Junior High would open at St. Thomas More School in Brighton. Meanwhile, St. Joseph's in Penfield would offer two sections of seventh- and eighth-grades through the end of the school year.

Then in the fall of 1994, Southeastern Catholic Junior High would be expanded by eight classrooms to accommodate all the quadrant's junior high students.

Under the plan, the board would hire a principal administrator to oversee junior high programs at Southeastern and St. Joseph's.

Of the 11 quadrant schools, only Corpus Christi School at Blessed Sacrament in Rochester would remain a

K-8 institution, though the proposal allows for the possibility of merging that school's junior high with Southeastern in the fall, 1994.

Perrotta said the board allowed for a two-year expansion period simply because St. Thomas More does not currently offer enough classroom space to accommodate all the quadrant's junior-high students.

The board's proposal has experienced some changes since it was first released in September of this year. The original proposal called for the establishment of a centralized junior high at Brighton's Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Rhinecliff and Imperial Drives.

That proposal was met with heated opposition at parents' meetings, and eventually led to the resignation of one board member who complained that the board had actually wanted two sites, but gave in to diocesan pressure for a one-site plan. However, other board members, including Perrotta, dismissed those charges.

The board commissioned a survey in October to assess parishioners' concerns throughout the quadrant about the single-site proposal. Out of 3,500

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Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor
Mary Tabone (left) and Maureen Keegan (right) were among four volunteers from St. Paul's Parish in Webster who spent part of the day Nov. 23 at the diocesan Pastoral Center, stuffing binders for the Synod.

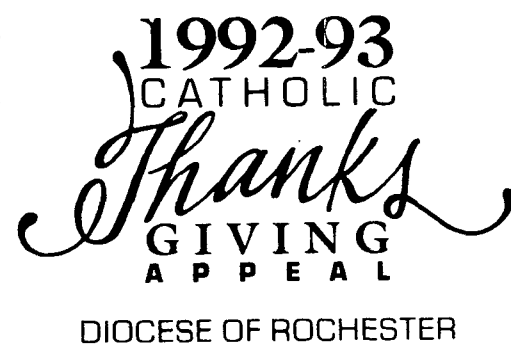
Volunteers, TGA funds help fuel Synod

ROCHESTER — Funding from this year's Thanks Giving Appeal and a generous volunteer labor force are two elements forming the lifeblood of the Diocesan Synod Office, according to Father Joseph A. Hart, synod director.

The diocesan Synod is scheduled for October, 1993.

Father Hart said the 1992-93 synod office budget of \$103,726 encompasses the following items:

- Two salaries for the office's full-time employees, Father Hart and Marcella Holtz, assistant director.
- Printing of 31,000, 32-page discussion booklets.
- Printing and binding of 1,800 sets of 75 binders for delegates to the regional synods.
- Printing of 110,000 quarterly newsletter inserts for diocesan parish bulletins.
- About \$250 per month in postage.
- About \$90 per month in tele-



phone bills.

The synod office also established an "800" telephone line so synod team members would not hesitate to contact the office with any questions.

"It allows them to keep in good contact with us without having to go to their parish or absorbing the cost themselves," Father Hart said of the free telephone line.

But the synod director added that

his budget actually disguises hundreds of hours of unpaid labor performed each week by about 30 volunteers who work with the office. Indeed, the diocesan Synod would be virtually impossible to pull off unless volunteers gave between three to four hours daily for three to four days a week, he observed.

The synod office also benefits from donated items, the director said. He noted, for example, that Regional Recycling & Resource Recovery, Inc., a Rochester-based company, gave the office about half the binders the diocese will use for its regional delegates.

The goal for the 1992-93 Thanks Giving Appeal has been set at \$4.145 million, Bishop Matthew H. Clark announced Oct. 26. Bishop Clark noted that the goal for the TGA — the Rochester diocese's chief source of income — represents 61 percent of the diocese's overall budget of \$6,779,858.

— Rob Cullivan