

Mixed reaction greets changes in southwest

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Reaction to the Southwest Juridic Council's Dec. 7 decision to amend the Southwest Quadrant Governance Board's proposed schools reorganization plan ranged from shock and anger to acquiescence and approval.

The amended plan's supporters noted it stabilizes the quadrant by providing for junior high expansion.

But opponents charged that the process by which the decision was made betrayed those who believed that the diocese would listen to the quadrant governance board and school parents.

The Juridic Council's proposal outlined the following changes for the quadrant:

- Most Precious Blood — currently a pre-kindergarten-to-sixth grade program — will become a pre-K-2 program in September, 1993. The governance board's original proposal had recommended to close the school.
- As originally proposed by the governance board, Holy Ghost School will close in June, 1993.
- St. Theodore's K-6 program will be eliminated in 1994, making way for an expanded All Saints Catholic Junior High — which currently shares the same building. The governance board had originally called for both schools to remain at the site.

In particular, opponents and supporters of the Juridic Council's changes cited the proposal to close St. Theodore's K-6 program in June, 1994, in their comments.

Casey Swanson, chairwoman of the quadrant governance board, said the Juridic Council's decision damaged the image of quadrant governance boards' authority in the eyes of school parents.

"I think it makes it very difficult to make people think there's anything credible about them," she said.

The decision stunned St. Theodore's parents, according to Charlot DiLucia, whose son is a fourth-grader at the Catholic school in Gates.

"It had a very numbing effect on the

school," commented DiLucia.

DiLucia added that the Juridic Council's decision angered parents because it overruled the governance board's recommendation to keep St. Theodore's open. She said many parents now perceive the board's informational meetings with parents this fall as "a smokescreen."

Jim Landers, also a St. Theodore's parent, expressed similar sentiments. He termed a centralized junior high program such as All Saints a "pet project" of Bishop Matthew H. Clark for which St. Theodore's was "sacrificed."

Landers also criticized supporters of Holy Ghost and Most Precious Blood schools for continually calling on the governance board to address the potential overcrowding situation at All Saints in 1993. Many parents expressed concern at the meetings that All Saints would not have enough room to accommodate all the quadrant's junior high students next year.

"I think in their desperation to save their schools, they took us right down with them," he said.

Timothy W. Dwyer, diocesan superintendent of schools, emphasized that the Juridic Council had to take into account parents' concerns about potential overcrowding at the junior high.

"I think to not address the issue would not have served any purpose," Dwyer said.

The schools superintendent added that the decision to close St. Theodore's did not come "totally out of the blue," and that parents and quadrant board representatives were aware of the potential need for All Saints to expand.

Even DiLucia acknowledged that the decision did not completely surprise her.

"When they put the junior high in St. Theodore's, I personally felt that it was a matter of time before they took over the whole building," she said.

Mary E. Caffrey, principal of All Saints, noted that the decision to expand her school will benefit the quadrant in the long run, and she expressed hope that "this is the last re-

Rally for victims in Bosnia



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor
(Above) Saleem Abdur Rahman, a member of the Islamic Center of Rochester, was among more than two dozen demonstrators from various faiths who marched to the Liberty Pole Dec. 10 to protest atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The group sang, prayed and read a petition signed by numerous area religious leaders, including Bishop Matthew H. Clark. The petition calls for an end to all the killing in the former Yugoslavia.

configuration in the southwest."

Despite repeated attempts to reach officials at St. Theodore's School, no phone calls were returned to the *Catholic Courier* by its Tuesday, Dec. 15 deadline.

As for the decision to keep Most Precious Blood open as a pre-K-2 program, Cindy Blair, the president of the school's Parent/Teacher Association noted that the move gave her mixed feelings because her daughter attends sixth grade.

"I'm happy that we have a building, but I'm sad my daughter won't be there," she said.

Most Precious Blood's pastor, Father William Graf, also expressed support

for the decision. He added, however, that until Bishop Clark gives his final approval, there is no point considering the plan final.

"It changed once — it may change again," he said.

Holy Ghost's Home School Association and parish council are also waiting to see if the bishop makes any changes in the proposal before throwing in the towel, according to Pam Buehler, HSA convener. Officials in both groups were planning to write to the diocese to express their opposition to the school's closing, she said.

She said that Holy Ghost could grow more, pointing out that the school registered 27 new families this year.

Quadrant junior high approved

ROCHESTER — The Southeast Juridic Council has approved a plan to establish a Catholic junior high school at Brighton's St. Thomas More Parish in the fall of 1993.

The council approved the plan at its meeting on Monday night, Dec. 14. The Southeast Quadrant Governance Board submitted the plan to the council in November.

The proposal now awaits approval from the Christian Formation and Education Council, which was slated to meet this week, according to Timothy W. Dwyer, diocesan superintendent of schools.

Under the plan, St. Joseph's School in Penfield would house two sections of grades seven and eight in 1993-94. Then, in the fall of 1994, Brighton's Southeastern Catholic Junior High would expand by eight classrooms to accommodate students from St. Joseph's junior high program, which will be eliminated.

A committee charged to raise funds for the expansion of Southeastern Catholic Junior High at St. Thomas More will be established in January.

The plan, however, contains a provision stating that if the capital campaign fails to raise the funds necessary to implement the proposal, the quadrant would then continue to operate junior highs at both St. Thomas More

and St. Joseph's schools.

The plan also calls for expanded pre-kindergarten programs at Catholic schools in Henrietta, Brighton, Rochester and Webster for September, 1993, and in Penfield for September, 1994.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will make his final decision on the proposal next month.

— Rob Cullivan

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Bishop to dedicate church
PITTSFORD — Bishop Matthew H. Clark will dedicate the new church and administration building at Transfiguration Church, 50 W. Bloomfield Road, this Saturday, Dec. 19, at 5 p.m.
The new church, which seats about 700 worshippers, features a large baptismal pool to be used for immersion baptisms, according to Father Gerald Appelby, pastor.
Ground was broken on the \$1.8 million project in August, 1991, and dozens of volunteers have contributed to the project's success, the pastor said.
The architectural firm of Miller and Anderson designed the edifice, which was constructed by D'Agostino General Contractors.