

# Gala honors institute, retiring president

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

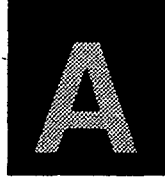
It was a feast of music and memory at Old St. Mary's Church yesterday (Sunday). Friends gathered for a dual purpose: to celebrate the 100th anniversary of St. Bernard's Seminary — since 1981 St. Bernard's Institute — and to pay tribute to Father Sebastian Falcone, recently retired from the presidency of St. Bernard's.

Choral music was provided by choirs from St. Louis, Pittsford; St. Bridget's, Holy Cross and Third Presbyterian of Rochester; and by a bell choir, the Ecumeni Bells from Greece and Webster churches. Solo performances were offered by Barbara Staropoli, SSJ, and Derrick Smith. And we in the congregation participated in some of the hymns. Supporting all of us were wonderful artists who played organ and cello, flute and violin, viola, piano and tambourine.

The memories were provided by the central and critical role St. Bernard's has held in the last 100 years of history of our diocese and by the monumental contribution Sebastian Falcone has made to that institution during his years as professor and president.

It was the fond dream of Bernard J. McQuaid, the founding bishop of our diocese, that we should have a seminary for the training of excellent priests to serve the people of God in this region. It was very much a part of that same vision that St. Bernard's should belong to and be supported by every family in the diocese. McQuaid's dream, born early in his ministry here, was realized in 1893 — 25 years after the foundation of the Diocese of Rochester. Throughout its history St. Bernard's Seminary both enjoyed the support of the people and expressed the commitment of this diocese to the highest quality training for its pastoral ministers.

A variety of circumstances — including shifting vocational patterns and financial pressures — led to



## LONG THE WAY

a decision to close the seminary program in 1981. St. Bernard's Seminary became St. Bernard's Institute and moved to its present site on the campus of Colgate Rochester Divinity Schools (CRDS). In that setting, St. Bernard's keeps its independence and identity as a Roman Catholic school of theology and ministry, but is associated with CRDS by a covenant agreement. This allows a rich ecumenical setting for theological enterprise benefiting both institutions.

I am deeply happy — for many reasons — that we still have the rich resource of St. Bernard's Institute within our diocese. But the strongest reason is that SBI will allow us to maintain and express within our local church what has been a constant throughout the history of our diocese: a commitment to highest quality education and formation for our pastoral ministers. As you know so well, we'll need to extend that commitment in the future to a range of ministers and ministries undreamed of in the past.

That brings me back to our dear friend, Sebastian

Falcone. When he was honored yesterday, Father Joe Brennan, Sister Mary Sullivan, Dr. David Lortscher and Dr. James Evans each spoke of some aspect of Sebastian's contribution to the life of St. Bernard's through his years of generous service. Their words were rich and lavish because Sebastian's service is rich and lavish. All of us appreciated the words of those speakers yesterday. As I remember them the next morning, I identify some aspects of this person's life and ministry which remain with me:

1) His commitment to biblical and theological study and his witness to that enterprise express in our age the dream of McQuaid for us.

2) Sebastian's love for his students, so evident in the classroom, extended far beyond the classroom and through the years in countless acts of generous service — most of them known only to the recipients of his kindness.

3) It is difficult to imagine the transition from seminary to institute ever happening without his leadership. I don't mean just in the doing; I mean the vision of church and the love for ministry that impelled him.

As it moves into its second century of service, St. Bernard's Institute will be critical to our capacity to provide excellent initial and ongoing education for pastoral ministers who will serve our local church.

In the short run, SBI is conducting a process by which to identify a successor to Sebastian as president of the institution. While that is taking place, we are blessed to have Dr. Chuck Meder serving as interim president. Chuck recently retired after a distinguished career as president of Finger Lakes Community College.

In the long run we work to strengthen SBI, to make it better known as a valuable resource in our community. As this year of celebration continues, I hope you will become better acquainted with the St. Bernard's community.

Peace to all.

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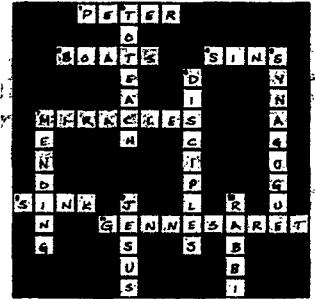
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Answer Key



A new monthly calendar will appear in the Catholic Courier on the last Thursday of each month.

**THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS**  
**WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?**  
The following prayer was dictated by Our Lord to Sister Josefa Menendez at Poitiers, France, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 3, 1921, with the instruction: "Josefa! Repeat these words every day."

**JESUS PRAYER FOR HIS PRIESTS**

O Jesus, by Thy most loving Heart, I implore Thee to inflame with zeal for Thy love and glory all the priests of the world, all missionaries and those whose office it is to preach Thy word, that on fire with holy zeal, they may snatch souls from the devil and lead them into the shelter of Thy Heart, where for ever they may glorify Thee.

Imprimatur: E. Morrogh Bernard, Vic. Gen. Westmonasterii, May 5, 1953

Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him on behalf of His Priests.

**APRIL, 1993**  
**DIocese of ROCHESTER, NY**

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