

## The laying of the miter



AP/Wide World Photos

### Pope ordains 13 bishops

During a Jan. 6 ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope John Paul II puts his miter on then-Monsignor Edward J. Slattery's head during a ceremony in which the pontiff ordained 13 new bishops. Bishop Slattery was named the new bishop of Tulsa, Okla. The pope called each of the bishops by name before laying his hands on their heads in a gesture of blessing and consecration. The pope called on the new bishops from 13 nations to bring Christ's gift of light to all individuals and nations.

## Archdiocese: No room in the city for soup kitchen

By Dana Drezek  
Catholic News Service

HARTFORD, Conn. — A recent decision by Hartford Archbishop Daniel A. Cronin not to approve plans to place a soup kitchen in a downtown church has left the city divided over the needs of the poor and the needs of the city.

Hartford Mayor Michael P. Peters offered to help create an alternative plan that would satisfy all parties involved.

The controversy began last fall when a soup kitchen run by the House of Bread, a 14-year-old agency serving the city's poor, asked the archbishop for permission to move from their current location to the basement of St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church, located across from the Hartford Civic Center in the city's downtown section.

Archbishop Cronin rejected the proposal, saying such a downtown soup kitchen would not necessarily serve the needy any better and could deter potential developers from moving into the city, thus hindering efforts to revitalize that part of Hartford.

When reports of the archbishop's decision appeared in national news media during the Christmas season, tensions erupted between those who agree with the archbishop and those who do not.

Many people claim that the needs of the poor are more important than the need for downtown development and, therefore, the soup kitchen should be welcomed at the site.

But Monsignor Charles Daly, archdiocesan fiscal officer, said Archbishop Cronin's position on the issue actually reflects his deep concern and compassion for the poor.

"The basic question is not, 'Do we help the poor?' but 'What is the best way to help the poor,'" Monsignor Daly said in a statement. "All things considered, the archbishop believes that his decision in this matter is a sound one. It reflects good stewardship. It represents a continuing concern for the poor and all the other members of the community."

Before Archbishop Cronin decided not to approve the soup kitchen proposal, he consulted with several "individuals who are knowledgeable and concerned, and who have major commitments to downtown Hartford," Mon-

signor Daly said.

Those people had advised him that placing a soup kitchen at St. Patrick-St. Anthony's could put an unnecessary burden on clients who would eat their meals there, he added.

"They felt that with all the vacant buildings in Hartford, another location could be found that would serve the hungry/poor just as well, and perhaps better, by being closer to their homes, and would not be a deterrent in the revitalization of downtown Hartford," Monsignor Daly said.

Mayor Peters agreed with the archbishop's assessment of the situation, saying it would be better to place a soup kitchen in an area of the city that has a greater demand for such a facility.

"Nobody lives downtown. It doesn't make any sense to draw (poor) people downtown who don't live there to use the facility," the mayor told the *Catholic Transcript*, Hartford's archdiocesan newspaper.

But William Farley, chairman of the House of Bread trustees, disagreed that the poor don't live in the downtown area and, therefore, that there is no need for a soup kitchen.

He said that while walking into St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church each morning for the 7 a.m. Mass, he has spotted many House of Bread clients walking by the church on their way to the soup kitchen for breakfast. Currently, House of Bread — located three blocks from St. Patrick-St. Anthony — serves breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday.

"It seems to me that we have a tendency, all of us as society, to want to marginalize the poor and to push them off out of the way," Farley said.

The controversy prompted a heated debate among local residents.

On his Dec. 27 program, WDRC radio talk show host Brad Davis, denounced Archbishop Cronin's decision and urged others to call the chancery office in protest. The chancery received hundreds of calls from people who were angered by the decision.

But radio talk show host Jeff Katz, who addressed the topic on radio station WCCC Dec. 28, offered support for the archbishop. "Obviously, (the archbishop) has devoted his life to caring for others," said Katz. "I agree with him."

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