

Few changes found in compensation package

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

Few changes are contained in the Diocese of Rochester's Compensation package for the 1994-95 fiscal year, which went into effect July 1, 1994.

The package includes a 3-percent across-the-board raise for laity, religious and priests; a 4-percent increase for employees of the Pastoral Center; extension of the Employee Assistance Program to more employees; a reimbursement rate of \$.29 per mile for auto travel; and a 25/75 employee/employer split of health-insurance costs for all lay employees.

In addition, the package includes notice that a new Parish Compensation Program will be introduced for implementation in the 1995-96 fiscal year. This program is the result of a 10-month study of salaries and benefits for a variety of support positions in parish and school ministry.

According to Mary Kessler, director of diocesan Human Resources, parish and school supervisory personnel will be invited to training and information sessions about the program in late July. These sessions will help them prepare for using the program in their parishes and schools.

The annual compensation package covers priests, women religious, lay school employees, and lay parish ministers and employees. It includes set fees and salaries for priests, women religious and teachers; benefits for all employees; and recommended guidelines for fees paid to musicians.

This year's compensation package contains few major changes, Kessler acknowledged.

The difference of one percentage point between the pay increases for Pastoral Center employees and all other employees was designed to compensate for the fact that Pastoral Center employees received lower raises in the last two years than did other diocesan employees, due to shortfalls in the Thanks Giving Appeal.

The Employee Assistance Program had been available to Pastoral Center employees, Monroe County school personnel, priests and deacons. The pro-

gram is now being offered lay parish ministers and employees, and school teachers, administrators and support staff outside Monroe County.

Under the program, employees, their families and any members of their households are eligible to receive confidential assistance with a wide variety of life issues, including dealing with stress, crisis counseling, and elder-care concerns.

"Our employees have really expressed gratitude that we have extended this benefit," Kessler reported.

Through the 1993-94 fiscal year, the system for payment of lay employees'

health insurance had previously been two-tiered, with employees hired before 1989 paying a smaller percentage than did those hired after 1989. The percentage of health-insurance cost contributed by employees hired prior to 1989 has been increased gradually over the last several years, so that in fiscal 1994-95, they — like employees hired after 1989 — will be contributing 25 percent of the cost.

The forthcoming Parish Compensation Program is the result of a study of diocesan salary and benefits conducted by William Daly, director of consultative services for the National Associa-

tion of Church Personnel Administrators.

That study began in September, 1993, with meetings between Daly and representatives of the various types of employees in the diocese. It concluded in May, 1994, with the submission of "Parish Personnel Compensation Study" to diocesan officials.

Kessler pointed out that the overall study actually consisted of two evaluations, one of Pastoral Center positions, and one of parish personnel. Daly used a set of criteria to evaluate each position at the Pastoral Center, or each type of position found in parishes.

Those criteria included such factors as span of responsibility, work environment, impact on diocesan operations and mission, the amount of problem solving required, and the necessary know-how, Kessler explained.

Daly also considered salary and benefits paid to workers in comparable positions by other not-for-profit agencies locally and in other dioceses.

The study showed that most Pastoral Center employees receive salaries comparable to those in the other organizations considered, Kessler reported. It also showed that the diocesan benefits package was generally better than those found in these organizations. Thus, the diocese did not need to make many changes.

The parish portion of the study took longer, Kessler acknowledged. Job descriptions had to be developed, including ones for such previously unexamined positions as day-care coordinators and teachers; and office helpers.

Because of the amount of work still to be done on the parish level, release of the program was delayed until after implementation of the compensation package for fiscal 1994-95, so as to avoid pressuring parish and school officials, Kessler said.

The report, which includes ranges for salaries, will be reviewed during workshops for supervisors later in July Kessler said. The supervisors will also be told how to make use of the report's data.

During the next year, parishes and school officials can look at the jobs under their supervision, see where they fall in terms of pay and benefits for comparable positions, and assess what, if any, changes need to be made.

Kessler said the guidelines can be readily applied to new positions. "But for present positions," she said, "some which might not have job descriptions, we have to tread carefully."

Any pay-equity issues are to be dealt with beginning with the 1995-96 compensation package, which will be expanded to include more jobs, Kessler said.

She cautioned that the guidelines will present salary ranges, and that the actual decisions concerning pay "will be made at the parish level. What we want (is) to make sure is it's consistent."

"There's lots of flexibility built into the system," Kessler continued, "but also safeguards for pastors who might not know the market range."



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Facelift continues

During a June 26 dedication of the new Garden of the Sepulchre at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, 2461 Lake Ave., Rochester, Father Thomas P. Mull blessed an eight-foot-high granite sepulchre and closing stone symbolizing Christ's resurrection. The pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral also blessed a bronze pieta and Stations of the Cross during the service. Prior to the blessing, Father Mull celebrated the cemetery's annual Field Mass outside All Souls Chapel.

School buses will carry Catholic pupils

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A proposal to eliminate yellow school-bus transportation for Catholic and other nonpublic high school students has been withdrawn by the Rochester City School District.

In exchange for the district's agreement to continue yellow school-bus service for nonpublic-school students, the City of Rochester has agreed to restructure the repayment schedule of a loan made to the district in 1990, according to Bill Sullivan, City Council chief of staff.

The school district's board of education had proposed eliminating yellow school-bus transportation for nonpublic school students next year as a means of reducing the district's budget. The measure would have yielded \$260,000 in net savings for the school district, according to Ward Jenkins, director of pupil transportation.

Under the cost-cutting measure, the district would have provided nonpublic school students with Regional Transit Service bus passes in lieu of school-bus service, Jenkins said, adding that RTS buses run regularly throughout the city and its suburbs.

But Sullivan pointed out that a num-

ber of nonpublic school parents had contacted the City Council to complain about the potential disruption and inconvenience that would be caused by the elimination of yellow school-bus service.

"One gentleman said, 'My son is going to have to be at Midtown (shopping mall) at 6:05 a.m.,"' Sullivan recalled.

On June 16, Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. and City Council President Lois J. Geiss offered the school district a deal to restructure repayment schedule on the \$3.7 million loan. The deal was outlined in a letter sent to Archie Curry, president of the board of education. Sullivan faxed a copy of that letter to the *Catholic Courier*.

"As you know, many parents choose to send their children to nonpublic schools for a variety of reasons," Johnson and Geiss wrote to Curry. "Among these reasons is a level of dissatisfaction with the public schools. The availability of these alternative schools is, in many cases, the only reason these families have remained in the city. It is our belief that your decision will cause many of these families to leave the city, a situation that is not acceptable."

The letter noted that the city was willing to restructure the loan's repayment schedule in order to ensure that funds

would be available to continue the yellow school-bus service.

The city made the \$3.7 million loan to enable the school district to make changes in its transportation program. The district was to repay the loan within six years, paying \$670,000 in each of the first five years, and \$350,000 in the sixth year, according to an official in the mayor's office.

The school district has already repaid \$2.01 million on the loan, the official remarked. Under the restructuring agreement between the board and the city, the loan balance of \$1.69 million will be repaid over a four-year period, with three yearly installments of \$420,000, and a final installment of \$430,000, the official concluded.

In return for the new repayment schedule, the school board agreed to propose no "substantive changes" in the transportation program for the life of the loan, according to a press release sent by fax to the *Catholic Courier* in mid-June.

Jenkins estimated that his office received about 30 calls regarding the proposal to eliminate yellow school buses. About 1,000 nonpublic high school students are served by the city's yellow school-bus system, he said.

St. Mary's plans festival

CANANDAIGUA — St. Mary's Parish, 95 North Main St., will present its annual parish festival over two weekends between July 14 and 23.

The events begin with a lawn sale from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 14 and 15. A picnic and auction is scheduled to begin 6 p.m. July 16, and a barbecue is slated for noon to 6 p.m. on the 17th.

From July 21-23, the festival celebration — featuring rides, games, a country store and food booths — will take place from 6-12 p.m., with a children's matinee planned for noon to 5 p.m. on July 23.