

Shaken parish to continue bingo

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Two masked gunmen robbed the Sunday-night bingo game and wounded a parking lot attendant June 11 as they fled Holy Family Church recreation hall, 899 Jay St.

The guard, Clarence Rizzo, 58, of 189 Wilder St., was listed in "guarded" condition in the Intensive Care Unit at Strong Memorial Hospital as of press time June 13. According to hospital officials, he suffered neck and chest injuries.

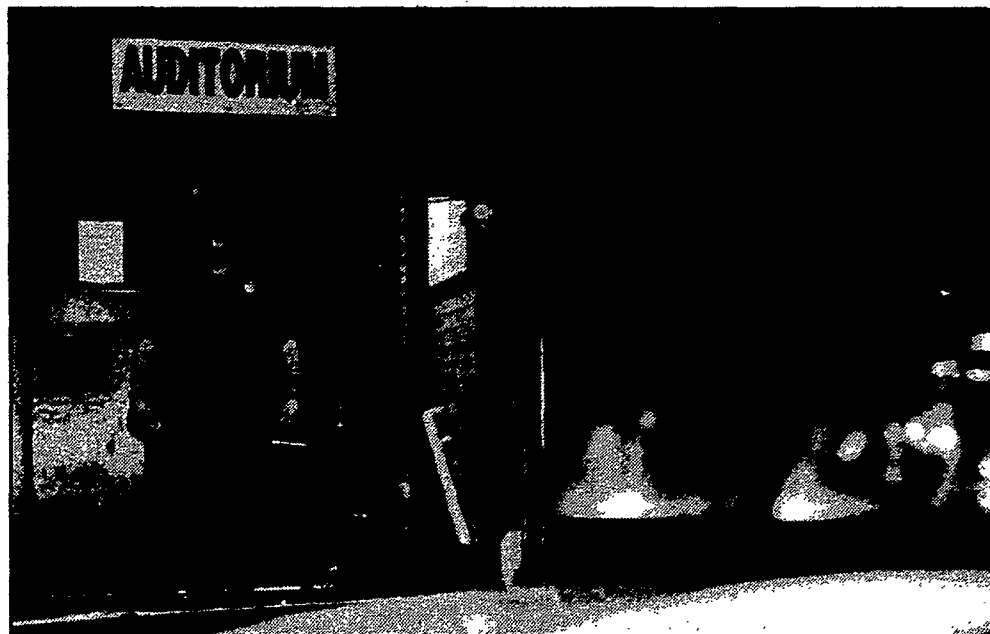
Father Michael J. Schramel, Holy Family's pastor, was calling the bingo game's numbers when the robbery occurred.

According to Father Schramel, two masked gunmen apparently entered the recreation hall unnoticed at approximately 7:50 p.m. — 20 minutes after the game began, and just 10 minutes before the doors are normally locked for security reasons.

Father Schramel then said he heard what he thought was a firecracker being set off by someone in the neighborhood "until I actually saw one of them jump up on the stage." He then realized that what he had actually heard was one of the gunmen firing a shot into the ceiling.

The gunman who jumped onto the stage then took the cashier's box containing the prize money to be awarded that evening — Father Schramel estimated the amount at \$1,750 because some prizes had already been awarded — and the two men began to flee the hall.

At that point, Father Schramel reported, Rizzo began coming into the



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

A Rochester police officer leaves the side entrance to Holy Family Church's bingo hall. After holding up the hall June 11, two gunmen shot an unarmed parking lot attendant and fled with prize money.

building from the church parking lot. The Holy Ghost parishioner normally guards the lot during bingo games to keep cars from being vandalized, the pastor explained.

One of the gunmen then shot Rizzo, Father Schramel said, and the two men escaped in a waiting car.

Officer Mike Mazzeo of the Rochester Police Department's Maple Section said witnesses were able to give a partial description of the getaway car. The investigation is continuing, he added, and police are hoping that people with more information will call investigators at 716/428-7270.

The robbery's circumstances are

troubling to police officials, Mazzeo acknowledged.

"It concerns us that these guys were brazen enough to go into a bingo session with 200 to 300 people," Mazzeo said.

Father Schramel said all bingo players in attendance Sunday night were given their money back after the incident. Although parish officials will explore added security measures, he said the Sunday-night bingo game will continue.

"We don't have a choice not to not do (bingo games)," Father Schramel concluded. "We can't survive financially without it."

Parish to celebrate Fr. Marvin's career

IRONDEQUOIT — Parishioners at St. Ambrose Church, 25 Empire Blvd., will honor Father James J. Marvin with a reception on the parish grounds following the 11:30 a.m. Mass Sunday, June 25. The celebration will conclude at 4 p.m.

In addition to being St. Ambrose's pastor for 24 years, Father Marvin served as the diocese's first Thanks Giving Appeal director. After retiring at the end of this month, he plans to serve the diocese in a variety of volunteer capacities.

All of Father Marvin's friends, as well as current and former St. Ambrose parishioners, are invited to attend the celebration. Food and beverages will be available. For information, call 716/288-5000.

St. Monica's 1955 class to hold reunion July 8

ROCHESTER — St. Monica School's Class of 1955 is holding a reunion at the Party House, 677 Beahan Road, on July 8, and is looking for the following alumni: Richard Albrecht, Nancy Brackley, Robert Burke, Patricia Clark, William Doherty, Martin Dowling, Donna Gleason, Janice LeFontain, Robert Pannani, Sandra Partridge and Judith Morgan.

If anyone can locate these graduates, call Kay Kramer Blake at St. Paul the Tenth rectory between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily at 716/247-2566.

Two orders will pull priests from parishes in June of '96

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Due to the shortage of priests in their respective orders, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts and the Redemptorist Fathers have announced that they will leave the Rochester diocese next June.

The diocese announced the orders' decisions to leave in a June 15 statement.

Father David P. Reid, SS.CC., a priest of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, currently serves as pastor of Rochester's St. Francis of Assisi/Ss. Peter and Paul Parish Cluster, which formed last year. Prior to the cluster's formation, Father Reid had served for five years as Ss. Peter and Paul's pastor. He will become pastor of a parish in New Bedford, Mass., next June.

"I was a bit surprised with that particular appointment," Father Reid said. "I was hoping that we would be able to stay in Rochester."

Three Redemptorist priests serve at Our Lady of Victory/St. Joseph Church, also located in the city. They are: Father Thomas Loftus, C.Ss.R., pastor, as well as Fathers Leo Dunn, C.Ss.R., and James Cannon, C.Ss.R., who are both semi-retired but who assist at the parish.

Redemptorist officials stressed that even though the order's parish-based priests will be leaving the diocese, Redemptorists will continue to oversee the Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua.

In a phone interview last week, Father George Keaveney, Redemptorist Superior for the Baltimore Province, which encompasses Rochester, said he did not know at this time where the three Redemptorists from Our Lady of Victory/St. Joseph will be assigned.

Father Loftus said his order would announce the assignments after it elects

a new provincial superior during Lent next year.

Noting that Redemptorists may serve only two consecutive, three-year terms at one assignment, the city pastor said he was slated to leave his parish next year anyway because he would have completed his six years there. Nonetheless, he expressed sadness over his order's decision to leave the diocese, where its members have served since 1836.

"It's with great reluctance," he said of his order's departure, "but we just don't have the men."

Father Keaveney reported that 130 of the order's 280 priests are 60 years of age or older.

"We no longer have the manpower," he said.

He added that his order — like many others serving the church today — is re-

turning to its original charism, or calling, and will use whatever priests it has to serve "the poor and most abandoned."

Father Reid explained that, like the Redemptorists, the Sacred Hearts also wish to return to their original charism and concentrate more on such missionary areas as Africa and Asia.

In the diocesan statement, Bishop Matthew H. Clark thanked both orders for their many years of service to the diocese.

"The people of our diocese and I share the sadness of both communities and the parishes affected," he said. "Yet we understand this result of the prayerful discernment by these congregations, and thus I accede to their requests with deep gratitude."

Both Our Lady of Victory/St. Joseph and St. Francis of Assisi/Ss. Peter and

Paul Parish Cluster will begin conducting "parish vitality studies" to determine their respective futures, according to Father Peter C. Clifford, outgoing diocesan director of Parish Support Ministries.

The study measures a parish's life using five criteria: community, worship, lifelong faith formation, service and administration.

"It's not a pass-or-flunk-type of test as much as a measure of what (parishes) do," Father Clifford said.

The study instructs parishes to form a "Parish Task Force for Self Study" consisting of 24 to 30 people who will be divided into smaller groups — each of which will study one of the five criteria. A parish may also choose to form a smaller task force of 10-14 people to study all five areas together, the study states.

Bishop Clark to ordain Nigerian to priesthood

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

PIFFARD — Bishop Matthew H. Clark will ordain Deacon Bertrand Chukwudi Oko, OCSO, to the priesthood at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 20, at the Abbey of the Genesee, 3258 River Road.

The public service will include liturgical dancing and instruments from Deacon Oko's native Nigeria.

Deacon Oko, who prefers to be known as "Brother Oko," will celebrate his first Mass at the Cistercian abbey on Sunday, June 25, at 9:50 a.m.

A native of Enugu, Nigeria, Brother Oko has lived at the Abbey of the Genesee since last year. He is currently completing a master's degree in systematic theology at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, N.Y., outside of Buffalo. He stayed at the abbey from 1982-84,

and now resides there during vacations.

Next year Brother Oko hopes to return to Mount Calvary Monastery in Awhum, Nigeria, where he served his postulancy and novitiate, made his simple vows in May of 1980, and professed his solemn vows Oct. 3, 1992.

Brother Oko said he entered religious life because, since childhood, "I always wanted to be close to God and be of service to my neighbors and a witness to people."

His desire to become a priest was reinforced one day when he was a student walking home and met his father on the road. Brother Oko told his father that he wanted to contribute to the reception for a newly ordained priest. He said his father whispered in his ear, "It would be good for you to consider becoming a priest."

The Cistercians attracted him, he

said, because, when he came in contact with the order, he discovered "the fervor, the God-consciousness was so real I could almost touch it."

Brother Oko entered Mount Calvary in 1977, and eventually came to the Abbey of the Genesee for advanced studies because the Piffard abbey is the mother monastery to the one in Nigeria. His stay at the abbey has helped him with his own sense of vocation, Brother Oko said.

"Seeing how the monks here take seriously their vocation — that is an encouraging example for me," Brother Oko said.

Moreover, Brother Oko said, "Here at the abbey, I'm so unconditionally and openly accepted it's OK for me to simply be myself. That's helped me very much with getting in touch with the meaning of my life in Christ."