

Former seminary to house seniors

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Rochester City Council last week gave the go-ahead to Conifer Development Corp. and Park Ridge Health Systems to spend \$13 million to convert the former St. Bernard's Seminary complex into apartments for low- and moderate-income seniors.

The project will also allow Park Ridge to operate an adult day-care facility in the complex.

City Council approved an \$800,000 loan Sept. 13 to help get the project underway.

As part of the agreement with the City of Rochester, the complex will receive an 18-year property tax exemption on the 22-acre former St. Bernard's site. During that span, the city will receive 10 percent of the rentals collected after utility costs have been subtracted.

According to John Oster, a vice president at Conifer, the project's first phase will involve renovating the upper floors of the four-building complex's "north building" into 59 apartments. Those apartments are scheduled to be ready for residents by next summer. Meanwhile, the

building's bottom floor will be renovated to house the adult day-care facility to serve approximately 50 people.

The project's second phase, which will get underway in the spring of 1996, will involve renovating the complex's other three buildings to create an additional 87 apartments to bring the total number of units to 146.

Oster said work would begin on the north building, because much of the preliminary work had already been done in that structure after Eastman Kodak Company purchased the former seminary from the Rochester diocese in 1982.

The seminary was closed by the diocese in 1981, at which time St. Bernard's Institute was created to provide graduate theological education in the diocese.

Oster said marketing studies have shown a need for low- and moderate-income senior housing in Rochester — an assessment echoed by Robert Barrows, assistant director for housing with the City of Rochester.

"There is currently an unmet need for senior citizen housing — based on census statistics and the Community Development Corporation," Barrows said.

A second reason for the city to get in-

involved with the project is because of the historical significance of the former seminary building — which was dedicated in 1893 and is listed as an historic landmark.

"This is a community resource," Barrows said. "It's a prominent site in the community that we'd like to see preserved. We want to see it reutilized as an asset."

According to Barrows, the cost for the apartments will vary — studio apartments will be available for \$373 per month, while some of the two-bedroom units will cost \$542. Eligibility will be based on income and family size. The income range for a single person would be \$15,900 to \$19,000; for two people, \$18,150 to \$21,700.

Warren Hern, senior vice president at Park Ridge, said Park Ridge became involved in the project because, "we thought it was an excellent location."

Park Ridge is already involved with providing senior housing — the agency manages more than 280 units — and currently operates two adult day-care programs, Hern said. The St. Bernard's project will allow the health-care agency to expand its services even more, he added.



S. John Wilkin/Staff Photographer

BLESSED PIPES — Choirmaster Thomas G. Donohue (far left) leads the St. Anne's Church Choir during an evening of prayer and blessing of the new pipe organ at the Rochester city church, 1600 Mt. Hope Ave. Bishop Matthew H. Clark, the Knights of Columbus Color Guard, and visiting clergy also attended the dedication also marking the 65th anniversary of the 'renewed church' on Sept. 17.

Diocesan delegation voices welfare-reform concerns

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

Bishop Matthew H. Clark and a delegation from the Rochester diocese enjoyed a rare privilege in Washington, D.C. last week.

Joined by three other New York state bishops and representatives from Catholic Charities U.S.A. as well as the U.S. Catholic Conference, the group was in the chambers of Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan Wednesday, Sept. 13, as the U.S. Senate was voting to eliminate the "family cap" from welfare legislation. The cap would have denied additional payments to unwed mothers who have more children while receiving public assistance.

The family cap was one of the issues that had brought the delegation to the nation's capital in the first place.

"It was quite a memorable experience to be in Senator Moynihan's office, and to be with Senators Moynihan and D'Amato at the time that the Democratic amendment was being voted on," Bishop Clark observed.

Both Moynihan and D'Amato joined 64 other senators in voting to reject the cap.

Moreover, the delegation enjoyed success later in the week in achieving its two other goals for the one-day visit: the retention of funding for child-care assistance in the welfare package, and keeping funding for the Food Stamp Program separate from welfare block grants to states.

Any exhilaration over the successes,

however, was tempered by recognition of the fight still ahead, observed Jack Balinsky, director of diocesan Catholic Charities and a delegation member.

"Unless President Clinton vetoes this (legislation), the very notion that we built the Social Security system on is out that window," Balinsky warned.

That notion, Balinsky continued, is that of entitlements.

Since 1965, the welfare system has been based on the principle that, if one met the economic means test, one could receive aid, Balinsky explained. The current bill places a five-year lifetime limit on receiving benefits. The fear, he explained, is that, in the years ahead, people will be cut loose from social services and will not have the assistance they will need to make ends meet.

"This is not a one-time thing," Balinsky said. "This is yet another effort."

That the delegation was in Washington as the vote was actually taking place was a bit serendipitous, Balinsky acknowledged. Preparations for the September visit began in mid-August when Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole of Kansas put the vote on welfare legislation on hold until mid-September.

Meanwhile, the diocese has been raising concerns for months about the direction the welfare debate was taking in Congress. Information packets were sent to parishes in June urging Catholics to write to their representatives.

"We decided it would be very timely for us to go (to Washington) in early September to complement advocacy that had been going on in the parishes,"

Balinsky said.

Accompanying Bishop Clark and Balinsky were Carolyn Portanova, executive director of Catholic Family Center; Kathleen Dubel, director of justice and peace for Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier; and Sister Anne Curtis, RSM, a staff member of Rochester's Melita House who is currently serving an internship in Washington.

They were joined by Albany's Bishop Howard J. Hubbard; Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Costello of Syracuse; and Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan of Brooklyn.

The group also met with Congressional Representatives Bill Paxton and John LaFalce and a representative of the office of Congresswoman Louise Slaughter.

The welfare reform package was expected to be passed by the Senate and combined with separate legislation passed in the spring in the House of Representatives. The package will be sent to a joint conference committee where a combined bill will be worked out and sent to President Clinton in the upcoming weeks, Balinsky explained.

Bishop Clark noted that concern over welfare legislation is in line with Catholic social teaching.

"We felt that welfare reform — which we recognize as a necessary enterprise — should be made with great care for the most vulnerable in society," the bishop said. "We are involved in such activity because we have a deep conviction that unless we speak to the needs of the most vulnerable in our society and lend a voice to those who have no voice, they are too easily ignored and neglected."

Scipio Center parish set to honor Grace B. Clark

SCIPIO CENTER — St. Bernard's parishioners have scheduled a Mass in memory of Grace Bills Clark, the late mother of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, for 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 1, at the church, Center Road.

Mrs. Clark died July 26, 1995.

On that day the parish will also honor Sister Paul Marie Dougherty, SSJ, a Scipio Center native marking her 50th anniversary as a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The daughter of the late Paul and Marie Dougherty and the sister of Scipio Center resident Margaret Ann Dougherty, Sister Dougherty currently lives at the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.

In addition, the parish will recognize Betty Lacey, who recently donated a stained-glass window of a dove to St. Bernard's in honor of her late husband, Howard.

A coffee hour will take place on the church's front lawn after Mass. The Mass and coffee hour are open to the public.

Dady Bros. will perform for Mercy Prayer Center

ROCHESTER — The Dady Brothers will perform at the annual fundraiser for the Mercy Prayer Center on Friday, Sept. 29, at the Gateway Banquet Center, 4853 W. Henrietta Road.

Titled "Hospitality Night," the evening will begin with a 6 p.m. cash bar followed by a buffet dinner at 7 p.m.

The Dady Brothers play a variety of traditional and improvisational songs on such instruments as the guitar and fiddle.

Operated by the Sisters of Mercy, the Mercy Prayer Center provides opportunities for inner growth and awareness through its programs.

Tickets for the fundraiser are \$25. Reservations are required. Call 716/473-6893, or send a check payable to Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14620.

Penfield parish to mark 135th year of founding

PENFIELD — St. Joseph's Parish, 43 Gebhardt Road, will celebrate its 135th anniversary the weekend of Sept. 30-Oct. 1.

Titled Founders' Weekend, the celebration will feature descendants from five of the parish's 12 founding families participating in the 9 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Oct. 1.

In addition, St. Joseph's will hold an organizational fair after all weekend Masses. Each of the parish's organizations will have representatives at tables in the Parish Resource Center.

Correction

Due to misinformation, the list of Catholic campus ministers on page 14 of last week's issue contained an error. The contact at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester is Dr. Joseph G. Kelly, who can be reached at 716/586-2525, ext. 481.

The caption for a photo on page 11 in last week's issue was incorrect. Julie Antignano was the Our Lady of Mercy girls' soccer player in the photo.

The caption underneath a photo on page 4 of the Aug. 31 issue included erroneous information on one of the speakers at the "Reality Cup" rally in Rochester Aug. 26. Sister Grace Miller is a Sister of Mercy of Rochester.

We regret the errors.