

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## McQuaid grad to lead society

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Father Alfred E. Caruana, SJ, a 1958 graduate of McQuaid Jesuit High School in Rochester, has been named executive director of the Xavier Society for the Blind in New York City.

The society's board of directors voted at its Oct. 3 meeting to select Father Caruana, who replaces fellow Jesuit and Rochester-native Father Thomas R. Fitzpatrick, a 1948 graduate of Aquinas Institute. Father Fitzpatrick, who had served as Xavier's executive director since 1990, will work for Jesuit Refugee Services in Africa.

The Xavier Society provides Braille, audio-cassette and large-type Catholic publications free of charge to more than 10,600 blind and visually impaired people throughout the United States and the world.

Prior to taking his position at Xavier, Father Caruana had spent 10 years as vice president of the Jesuit community at Fordham University in the Bronx.

In a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Father Caruana noted that he wants to use his position at the Xavier Society to heighten awareness of the society's services.

"Although our materials are religious in nature — and specifically Catholic — we do have a number of (non-Catholic) Christians using our services," he said.

In addition to offering the English translation of "Catechism of the Catholic Church" in Braille, audiocassette and large-type books this year, the society also offers anthologies of prayers and devotions, Bible reading programs, Sunday Mass propers, and religious and inspirational writings.

Father Caruana added that the Xavier Society publishes a digest of Catholic articles from various periodicals every two months in all three of its formats.

According to society literature, the organization was begun in 1900, and is funded by private donors and staffed primarily by volunteers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: To learn more about services offered by Xavier Society for the Blind, call 212/473-7800, or call 1-800-637-9193 between 10 a.m.-noon, or 1-4 p.m.

The Xavier Society for the Blind can also be reached by mail at 154 E. 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10010.

## Giving peace a chance

The Greater Rochester Community of Churches sponsored 'An Affirmation of Non-Violence' at Franklin High School Oct. 26 as a response to violence threatening Rochester's children. Speakers included Debbie Fickess, whose son was murdered in 1993 in downtown Rochester, and leaders of the Rochester's faith communities. From left, Franklin High School students Loyse Goff, Dimitri Horton and Mark Simmons sing "Let There Be Peace on Earth" at the conclusion of the event.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

## WIN program schools' enrollments rise

By Lee Strong  
Associate editor

Diocesan officials estimate that the Wegman Inner City (WIN) Voucher Program may have increased enrollment at six Catholic schools by as many as 200 students for the 1995/96 school year.

Officials also report that overall enrollment in diocesan Catholic schools for grades kindergarten through eight has increased from 11,251 for the 1994/95 school year to 11,268 for the 1995/96 school year.

According to Fred W. Seiler, assistant superintendent for business and finance for the Diocese of Rochester's Department of Catholic Schools, enrollment at the six inner-city schools targeted by the WIN program has risen from 875 last year to 899 as of Oct. 27.

The affected schools are Corpus Christi at Blessed Sacrament, Holy Family, Holy Rosary, St. Andrew's, St. Boniface and St. Monica's.

The increase follows a sharp decrease from 1,062 students during the 1993/94 school year to last year's 875 — a trend diocesan officials had expected to con-

tinue, Seiler acknowledged.

The trend apparently changed after August 22, when Robert and Peggy Wegman announced that they were donating \$25 million over 10 years to help students from low- and moderate-income families pay their tuition bills at the six targeted schools.

"We feel that if (the Wegman gift) hadn't come through, (enrollment) would have dropped to 700," Seiler said. Thus, he explained, the turnaround attributed to the WIN program is being pegged at about 200 students.

"Tuition really had become too much for some families," Seiler stated.

Seiler said the gift came too close to the school year to have an even greater immediate impact on enrollment. But he noted that some families that had considered withdrawing their children this year because they could not afford the tuition bills changed their minds when the gift was announced. He also said that because of the gift, families that had not enrolled their children in the Catholic schools had decided to do so.

In fact, he said, families are still enrolling their children in the six schools

even though the school year has already begun.

Seiler predicted that by the end of the current school year the enrollment at the six schools will reach 925, and that close to 1,000 students will be enrolled for the beginning of the 1996/97 school year.

Capacity at the six schools is 1,100, Seiler reported. He predicted that the schools would reach full capacity within three years.

Moreover, the Wegmans' gift is expected to begin affecting other diocesan schools by the 1996/97 school year, Seiler said.

Beginning next year, he said, "some of the dollars that went to the inner city can flow out into the other schools. There's going to be some ripple effect. Nothing like \$25 million, but it's going to impact the other schools."

One way the gift will affect other schools is that the WIN program will gradually increase the number of students enrolled in Catholic junior high programs, Seiler said.

"The dollars will follow the students into grades seven and eight in the regional junior highs," Seiler concluded.

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