

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Parish unveils redesign plans

Joe Sarnicola  
Contributing writer

AUBURN — A simple estimate for new carpeting has led to visions of a redesigned interior for St. Mary's Church.

The parish plans to launch a \$1 million project that not only will include replacing the carpet, but also moving the altar and renovating the sanctuary; installing a handicapped accessible restroom; remodeling the basement and kitchen; repairing walls and floors; and recreating a mural depicting the Assumption of Mary.

Father Robert Schrader, the parish's pastor, said he hopes construction is completed by April 29, 1997, the 120th anniversary of the dedication of the building.

The decision to undertake the renovations followed the discovery that replacing the carpet required a new sub-floor. Project planners also determined that some walls needed major replastering before being repainted.

In light of the growing number of repairs needed, Father Schrader sought full estimates for repairs and renovations.

Working with the parish council and the parish's Art and Environment Committee, designers developed several options. Planners then held two open forums, in the spring and fall of 1995, for input from parishioners.

The current plan calls for the altar to be raised and brought forward, with pews laid out "in the round." New carpeting or tiles would be installed, the walls would be repaired and repainted, and some deteriorating doors replaced. The vestibule would be enlarged to accommodate a handicapped accessible restroom and a ready room.

As part of the project, Lyceum Hall, the basement area, would receive a new floor, an upgraded ventilation system, and an additional entrance. The kitchen would also be remodeled.

Mark Seeborg of the Diocesan Office of Development met planners in November to suggest ways to raise funds for the project.

"Sometimes during projects of this magnitude," Father Schrader said, "parishioners attend other churches. This does not help the financial security of the church. We hope this won't be a problem."

**EDITORS' NOTE:** Contributions for the project may be sent to the St. Mary's Church Renovation Fund, 15 Clark St., Auburn, N.Y. 13021.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

## 'Kids' Chronicle' winners visit Courier

Associate Editor Lee Strong (seated at right) explains how the Catholic Courier is put together to "Kids' Chronicle" contest winners who visited the Courier offices Jan. 24. The kids, who won essay and trivia contests during 1995, were treated to a tour of the Courier facilities, an awards ceremony, and refreshments. Written by Joe Sarnicola of Auburn (standing, left center), the "Kids' Chronicle" is an award-winning feature page that appears twice monthly in the Courier.

## St. Mary's, Park Ridge weigh 'affiliation'

By Lee Strong  
Associate editor

Officials at St. Mary's Hospital and Park Ridge Health System Feb. 1 announced plans to explore an "affiliation" between the health care institutions.

Trustees, administrators and physicians from the two hospitals will begin talks at the end of February about what form that affiliation might take — or if any relationship will be developed at all.

"The initial focus of the discussions will be, 'Do the boards of both organizations believe we can do a better job of serving our community together rather than separately,'" noted Stewart Putnam, St. Mary's president.

Among the details to be discussed are a possible joint governance structure, potential consolidation of some services, and the role of the Daughters of Charity in the operation of St. Mary's.

In preparation for the upcoming discussions, Putnam and Timothy McCormick, president of Park Ridge, met Feb. 5 at the Pastoral Office with Bishop Matthew H. Clark and diocesan officials.

"From both our points of view there's a clear commitment to maintaining a Catholic health care presence in Monroe County," Putnam emphasized.

In addition to a continuing Catholic role in the any new organization that emerges, McCormick said other key topics to be addressed are governance and management structures, and the hospitals' respective indebtedness.

He cautioned, however, that despite publicized speculation, an outright merger of the two hospitals is unlikely.

"We've got to have a common management team and a common governance process, but there's 15 ways to accomplish that," McCormick noted.

Putnam said he and McCormick began talking informally about an affiliation in early January. They recognized, he said, that some sort of affiliation would allow each hospital to take advantage of services the other hospital offers, such as St. Mary's brain injury rehabilitation center and obstetrics department, and Park Ridge's chemical dependency and long-term care operations.

In addition, Putnam observed, the initial talks made clear that the hospitals share a vision that the future direction of health care lies in clinics and outpatient care, and not in acute care.

Indeed, in addition to the main hospital on Main Street in Rochester, St. Mary's provides health care services through some 27 clinics and offices

around Monroe County. Park Ridge offers services at its main campus in Greece and at sites in three counties.

"Both truly are community hospitals that work hard to meet the needs of the communities they serve," Putnam said.

"Every time I turned around we were bumping into each other because of the some creative activity," McCormick said.

Both McCormick and Putnam said they expected that any decision to proceed with developing a closer relationship will be made within six months.

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