

DIOCESAN NEWS

Bishop calls on community to aid city schools

By Mike Latoña
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The success of inner-city Catholic schools hinges on greater community support.

This point was emphasized by Bishop Matthew H. Clark during a speech to the Rochester Rotary Dec. 12. It is also the subject to be revisited by Rotarians when they join Bishop Clark on a tour of a Rochester school later this month.

During his Dec. 12 address, Bishop Clark called on businesses and other community members to support Catholic schools on both a monetary and voluntary basis.

Among the initiatives he announced was a task force to explore a partnership between businesses and Catholic schools. It is being coordinated by Timothy Dwyer, superintendent of schools, and

Mark Seeberg, diocesan director of development, with diocesan Stewardship Council member Frank Stotz serving as chair.

The task force will also include Peggy Wegman, who with her husband Robert, chairman of Wegmans Food Markets, Inc., pledged \$25 million last August to aid six inner-city Catholic schools over the next decade; the principals of those six schools; and additional Stewardship Council members.

Dwyer said that since Bishop Clark's invitation in December, no additional businesses have yet stepped forward to offer a partnership with Catholic schools.

However, Mary Consler, director of major gifts for the diocesan development office, explained that the Bishop Clark's goals were not meant to be short-term.

"This process will take some time," Consler said.

In his speech, Bishop Clark targeted the six schools to be helped by the \$25 million Wegman Inner City Voucher (WIN) Program: Corpus Christi at Blessed Sacrament; St. Andrew's; St. Boniface; St. Monica's; Holy Family; and Holy Rosary.

The bishop acknowledged that those schools will reap tremendous financial benefits from the Wegmans' pledge. Yet he also stressed that further community involvement will be needed to ensure success beyond the 10-year span of the program.

The bishop encouraged Rotarians to volunteer services at the schools, such as reading to students or helping with building repairs.

"We need a vehicle to enable people to volunteer in all kinds of ways," Bishop Clark said.

Also during his Rotary address, Bishop

Clark voiced hope of establishing a foundation "to attract investments from individuals and businesses that would not give to a strictly religious organization."

Dwyer explained that an appeal to these potential donors is feasible due to the high percentage of non-Catholics attending the WIN schools.

"We're serving a public good that goes well beyond the Catholic Church," Dwyer said.

"This benefits all religions, and benefits a lot of minority kids and single-parent families," Consler added.

As the first planned follow-up event to his December speech, Bishop Clark will lead a tour of Rotarians at St. Monica's School on Feb. 28. According to Dwyer, the tour was planned so Rotarians "can see all the things Bishop Clark spoke about, and see that all those good things are in place."

Obituaries

Sister Mary Clare Russer, OP; founding member of Elmira monastery

By Mike Latoña
Staff writer

Sister Mary Clare Russer, OP, a founding member of the Dominican Monastery of Mary the Queen in Elmira, died Dec. 19, 1995, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira. She was 84.

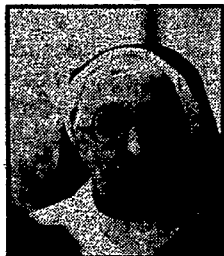
Sister Clare, a Rochester native, was born Eleanor Barbara Russer. She was a member of Holy Family Parish and later St. Augustine's Parish, where she was in the first graduating class at St. August-

tine's School. She was also a graduate of Nazareth Academy.

In 1930, Sister Clare entered the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary in Buffalo.

Her sister, Agnes, entered the same monastery in 1933 and took the name of Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart.

Sister Clare made her final profession



in 1935. In 1944, she and her sister were among the eight original Order of Preachers women religious who founded the Monastery of Mary the Queen. (Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart died in 1967.)

During her 51-year tenure in Elmira, Sister Clare served as sub-prioress and mistress of novices. She also displayed her artistic talents by sewing and painting vestments, painting prayer cards and designing wedding announcements. In addition, she was instrumental in starting the Dominican Laity Chapel at the monastery, serving as advisor and spiritual director for several years.

"She was a very generous person, always willing to help wherever it was need-

ed," said Sister David Marie Beikirch, the monastery's prioress. "She is deeply missed by her community, but we are sure she is still a part of us and will intercede for us before her Lord and God."

Sister Clare is survived by her sisters Esther Eagan, Ruth Carroll and Barbara Andrieu; sister and brother-in-law, Theresa and Eugene Schickler; sister-in-law, Margareta Russer; brother-in-law, Clarence Young; several nieces and nephews; and her sisters who reside at the Monastery of Mary the Queen.

A funeral Mass for Sister Clare was celebrated Dec. 22 at the monastery chapel. Donations in Sister Clare's memory may be sent to the Dominican Monastery, 1310 W. Church St., Elmira, N.Y. 14905.

Sister 'George' Burns, RSM; 69

Sister Mary George Burns, RSM, pastoral associate at St. Joseph's Parish, Oswego, until last year, died of cancer Jan. 3, 1996, at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse Lourdes Hall infirmary. She was 69.

Sister George was a native of Auburn, where she was a parishioner of St. Mary's Church. She celebrated her 50th jubilee in 1995. She was a teacher for 30 years before going into parish ministry in 1977. From 1971 to 1982 she lived and worked with the Omaha, Neb., Mercy regional community.

She spent her early teaching years, 1947-54, in Rochester diocesan elementary schools: St. Charles Borromeo, Rochester; St. Mary's, Corning; and St. Cecilia's, Elmira.

Later she taught science and math at Our Lady of Mercy High School and the

now-closed Cardinal Mooney High School, Rochester; Notre Dame High School, Elmira; and Catholic high schools in Missouri and Nebraska. She also taught science at St. James Hospital School of Nursing, Hornell.

Sister George earned a master's degree in teaching biology from St. Thomas University, St. Paul, Minn.; and a master of ministry degree in ministry/theology from Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.

Msgr. Francis J. Furfaro, former pastor of St. Joseph's, said, "Her ministry took her to the lonely, homebound and those who just wanted to talk."

She is survived by her sister, Catherine Culkin of Liverpool, N.Y.; a cousin; an aunt; and the Sisters of Mercy.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Jan. 6 in the Mercy Motherhouse chapel. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

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