

DIOCESAN NEWS

St. Bridget's to move into St. Theresa's building

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Poignant thoughts and memories are surfacing as St. Theresa's Parish prepares to dissolve and St. Bridget's Parish plans to move onto its property next month.

Despite its decaying building, St. Bridget's has served as a place of hope and refuge for the economically and spiritually impoverished, according to its pastor.

"The brokenness reflected the people in the neighborhood. There is a way in which people can relate to the struggles in their lives to a building that has broken down, but remains," Father Anthony Mugavero remarked.

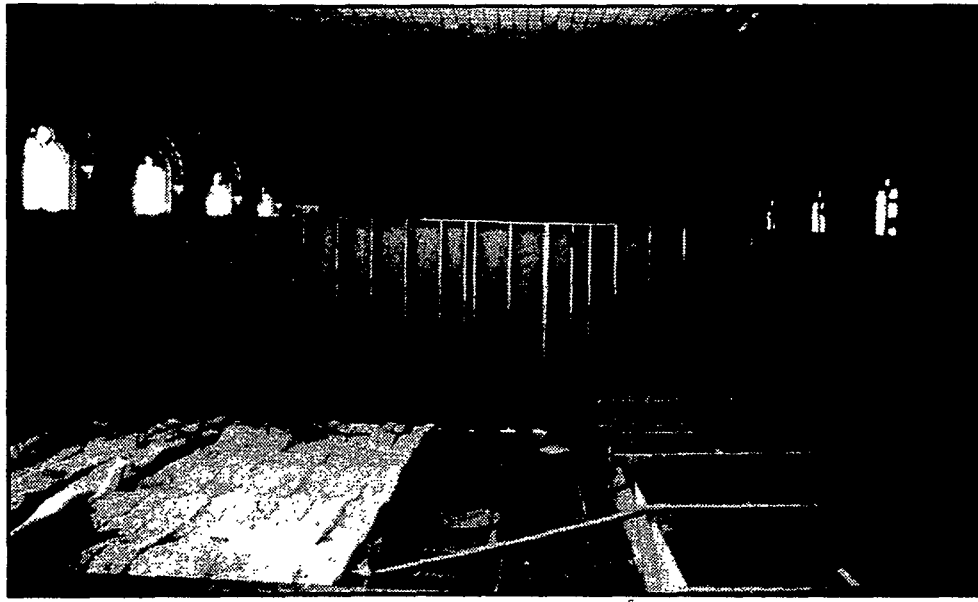
Meanwhile, St. Theresa's Church holds a special spot in the heart of Gabriela Jaskot. In January 1929, she and her husband Stanley became the first couple married at St. Theresa's, two months after the church opened.

Nearly 70 years later, St. Theresa's will hold its final Mass at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, June 8. The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark. St. Bridget's has set a tentative date of June 22 for a special Mass that will begin in the St. Bridget's building — the final service to be held there — and end at St. Theresa's.

Due to declining membership and financial resources, St. Theresa's voted in late February to discontinue its parish. According to Father Mitch Zygodlo, St. Theresa's pastor, the Polish-American parish has approximately 120 members.

St. Theresa's decision created an opportunity for St. Bridget's, a 250-member parish that had struggled to raise sufficient funds for repairing its 122-year-old building. The parish voted April 27 to purchase St. Theresa's building. According to Father Mugavero, 74 percent of the 225 voters favored the move.

St. Bridget's has staged a building repair



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Portions of the interior of St. Bridget's Church were unused due to the need for extensive repairs. Below, a broken cross tops the church.

drive over the past five years, but has only collected about 10 percent of the projected \$1.25 million needed to renovate the church and demolish an adjacent building that formerly served as the parish convent.

"St. Bridget's could have made this work, but St. Theresa's is a better choice," Father Mugavero stated. He noted that the St. Theresa's building seats more than 400 people, about double the capacity of St. Bridget's.

"I'm excited about it. I really feel like the building is a blessing and a gift from God," said Telena Stokes, who serves as evangelism director at St. Bridget's. In addition, St. Theresa's offers a rectory, office space and meeting rooms.

Details of the purchase price were still



being worked out among Father Zygodlo, Father Mugavero and diocesan officials.

Father Kevin McKenna, diocesan chancellor, said that St. Bridget's will be responsible for selling its property. However, he noted, the buyer is subject to diocesan approval.

Father Mugavero said that the sale of St. Bridget's property will not affect the future of Bethany House, a shelter for homeless women and children located behind the church in the former parish rectory.

St. Bridget's is located at 175 St. Bridget's Drive, off Clinton Avenue North. St. Theresa's is located approximately one mile northeast of St. Bridget's at 14 Mark St., off Hudson Avenue.

According to Father Mugavero, his parish plans to retain its current title and rename the St. Theresa's church building as St. Bridget's.

Father Zygodlo said that the St. Theresa community will be absorbed by St. Stanislaus Church, 1124 Hudson Ave. Father Zygodlo is also pastor of St. Stanislaus, which numbers approximately 1,200 people. He estimates that 80 percent of the St. Theresa's and St. Stanislaus communities are of Polish descent.

St. Theresa's was founded in 1928 by Franciscan priests to serve a growing number of Polish immigrants on Rochester's east side.

St. Bridget's, formed in 1854, originally served a large Irish population. Today it has one of the largest African-American memberships among Rochester's Catholic city parishes.

Father Mugavero said that although the move to St. Theresa's makes good sense for the St. Bridget's community, these will still be difficult emotional times.

"We'll be dealing with our grief and memories and dreams and hopes," he said.

However, Father Mugavero appreciates the fact that — unlike St. Theresa's — his parish community will remain intact.

"St. Theresa's is probably feeling even worse," Father Mugavero said.

"We love our church; it's a very beautiful church," said Jaskot, 86, who serves as vice-chair of the St. Theresa's parish council. "It's hard to leave everything behind that we've worked for. It's very painful to accept the facts, but facts are facts."

Father Zygodlo said that the St. Stanislaus community is "planning a warm welcome" for St. Theresa's worshippers.

"Of course there's sadness, but there's the understanding that they were no longer able to operate," Father Zygodlo said. "They also know that I'm not leaving them as pastor, and I will give them consolation."

'Catholic Courier' debuts new online edition on the Internet

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

The *Catholic Courier* is now available on the Internet.

As of May 5, the *Courier* was on line with a Web site offering a featured story, Bishop Matthew H. Clark's column, On The Move (the teen page), parish profiles, the stories from the Kids' Chronicle and a more complete calendar than in the print version.

The site, which will be updated weekly, also includes advertising and subscription information, allows readers to submit letters to the editor and offers a guest book that asks a series of questions to help discern readers' interests and reactions to the site and *Courier* stories.

"The Internet, and particularly the World Wide Web, offer an opportunity

to reach a broader audience — an international audience — and an audience that statistically is different from the audience we typically reach," noted Karen Franz, the *Courier's* general manager and editor.

That audience, she explained, tends to include younger readers and more males than the typical *Courier* audience — though she added that seniors are becoming more active on the Internet as well.

The site will gradually be expanded to include previous parish profiles and On The Move sections, and possibly an archive of significant stories for use by *Courier* staff, parish staffs and researchers, Franz said.

Further, through the site, computer users will now be able to access other Catholic Web sites, including those of-

fered by local parishes, the Vatican, other Catholic periodicals, colleges and services such as Catholic Connect! and Catholic Online.

Franz pointed out that creating the Web site is part of looking to the future — a future in which some people say print publications will die out.

"I don't believe that," Franz said of the prediction. But the Web site, she added, "is a means of preparing ourselves in case that day does come."

Eventually, she added, the site could evolve into a publication of its own.

Although it will include material from each weekly issue, the *Courier* Web site, like those of other publications, will not include all stories, reviews and columns

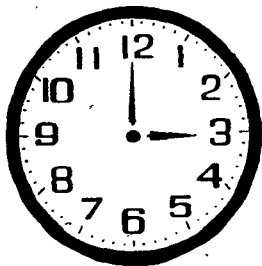
published in each print edition.

"If we put too much content or too big a presentation of each issue's content we've given away the store in a sense," Franz explained. "Why should people subscribe when you can get something on the Internet for free?"

But the Internet site will offer a more inclusive calendar, with items left out of the print edition due to lack of space, information about staff members and their duties, the *Courier's* mission statement and policies.

"It isn't just a tease," Franz said. "What we have out there we hope will be helpful and useful to people."

The *Courier's* Internet address is <http://www.catholiccourier.com>.



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