

Kearney moves
toward local board
— Page 3



Supplement hails
parents, families
— Page 8



Christmas Appeal
begins this week
— Page 16

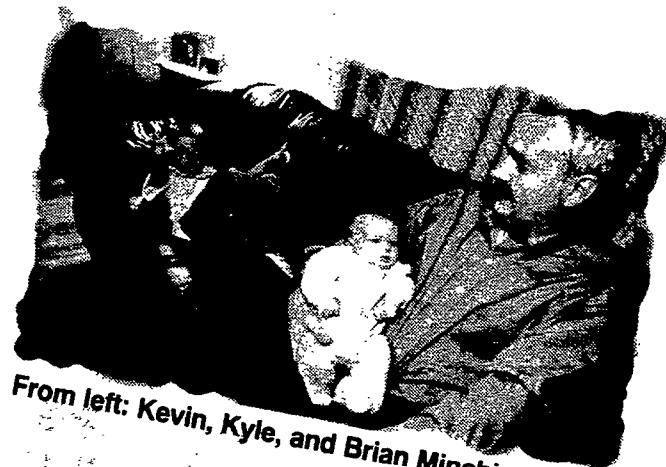


Catholic Courier

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 109 NO. 8 ■ THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1997 ■ 75¢ ■ 20 PAGES



From left: Stephanie, 8, Kevin, 6, and Patti Minchin.



From left: Kevin, Kyle, and Brian Minchin.



Brian Minchin holds Kyle, 7 weeks, while Stacey, 11, does homework in the family's kitchen.

Big broods buck small families trend

At the time of his wedding, the prospect of a big family wasn't at the forefront of Brian Minchin's mind.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted children," Brian admitted.

Eighteen years later, Brian is obviously no longer leery about having one child — or several more, for that matter. He and his wife, Pat, became the proud parents of their fifth child when Kyle Minchin was born on Oct. 5. Kyle joins four brothers and sisters ranging in age from 6 to 13.

"I had seen what I was missing," Brian said. "Each child we've had has just seemed so perfect."

On the other hand, there was no doubt on Jack and Judy Dunlavey's end that they wanted a sizable brood. They are parents of six children ages 4 to 17.

"I'm one of 12 children, and Jack is one of eight. He liked kids as much as I did," Judy said. Both the Minchin and Dunlavey families belong to Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Elmira.

Joe LaMagna noted that his parents, Ron and Michaelle, never debated about family size, either.

"They both agreed that they wanted to have 10 to 12 kids," said Joe, 16. "My mom followed her Catholic faith and the upbringing she learned from her mother

— 'Go forward and populate the earth.' She took that quite literally."

Joe is the only boy in a family of 10 children; his nine sisters are ages 12 to 28. The LaMagnas are parishioners at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Brighton.

"People say, 'How can your parents possibly handle it?' Then they find out I'm the only boy, and they say, 'How do you handle it?' They feel sorry for me," Joe laughed.

A generation or two ago, families the size of the Minchins, Dunlaveys and LaMagnas would not have stood out as glaringly in Catholic circles. Such is not the case in the 1990s, according to an official with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Richard McCord, associate director for the NCCB's Committee on Marriage and Family, said a 1995 survey — done in conjunction with Catholic University of America's sociology department — revealed that Catholic Caucasian women, ages 25-44, were parents to an average of 1.62 children per household. This figure was lower than other religious and ethnic categories: 1.68 for non-Catholic Caucasians; 2.09 for Catholic and non-Catholic Hispanics; and 2.24 for Catholic and non-Catholic blacks.

Continued on page 13

STORY BY MIKE LATONA • PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREG FRANCIS