

Child care center closes due to lack of workers

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER— The morning of Friday, Aug. 28, Noah Beers, age 4, and Ethan Beers, age 3, came into one of the classrooms where Linda Hagarty was sitting at Corpus Christi Child Care Center, 880 E. Main St.

"This is Noah and Ethan who I just ...," said Hagarty, the program's director, as she paused to touch her heart. The boys then took turns climbing into her lap and hugging her.

That day marked the final day that Hagarty would be taking care of children like Noah and Ethan at Corpus Christi Child Care Center. The two children, their mother Peggy Beers and a number of other people came that day to bid farewell to the center, an outreach ministry of Corpus Christi Church housed in the parish's former school building and now closing after 18 years in operation. At the time of its closing, the center was serving 22 children, ages 18 months to 5 years.

In addition, a program for 19 preschool children with learning disabilities will be



Greg Francis/Staff photographer
Corpus Christi Child Care worker Katina Mercurio helps Kira Scotto, 3, press a cross walk button Aug. 28. leaving the building. The program has been operated collaboratively for two years by the child care center and the Monroe County Board of Cooperative Educational Services. The program will move to Brook-

side School in Brighton, according to Tom Munn, a special education teacher with the program.

Through phone calls and letters on Friday, Aug. 14, and Saturday, Aug. 15, Hagarty informed the parents who use Corpus Christi Child Care that the program would be closing.

Hagarty said all of the children have now found slots in other area daycare programs.

In an Aug. 20 letter to the parish, Hagarty announced that the parish's child care center would be suspending its operations for between six months and a year. The parish will have to explore whether the program should even be opened again, and what use will be made of the building, she said. Hagarty cited the program's inability to find qualified workers as the primary reason for its closing.

"Despite all our best efforts, we were unable to recruit and hire skilled and reliable caregivers," Hagarty wrote in the letter.

Hagarty also stressed that the closing was not related to the recent removal of Father James B. Callan, Corpus' administrator, from the parish by Bishop Matthew H.

Clark.

Peggy Beers expressed the sentiments of many of the child care program's supporters.

"I was really sad about it when I heard," Peggy Beers said of the end of the child care program. "The people that have been here, they really care about the kids a lot."

Opened in 1980 by Corpus Christi Church, the program served hundreds of children, many from low-income families who received subsidized care through the center. Director since 1989, Hagarty said she would have liked to have had eight full-time daycare teachers on staff and three or four aides. Instead, she said, the program has been making do with herself, two full-time teachers and two substitutes.

Starting salaries at the center ranged from \$15,000 yearly to \$16,000, said Hagarty, noting that the center also offered medical and other benefits and \$2,000 in training funds.

Although 70 volunteers helped out with the program, the lack of professional staff made it difficult to plan vacations or handle absences, she said.

"It was a lot of day-to-day crises," she said.

Father Callan's tenure at Corpus Christi set to end Sept. 6

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Father James B. Callan is scheduled to celebrate his final liturgy this weekend as administrator of Corpus Christi Church, Rochester.

Father Robert Ring, diocesan director of priest personnel, said he has informed Father Callan that his final day at Corpus Christi will be Sunday, Sept. 6.

"We feel it is best for both the parish and Father Callan that he move on at this time," Father Ring said in a statement.

Elizabeth Brown, diocesan director of communications, said Aug. 31 that Father Callan had not been yet reassigned. She added that Father Enrique Cadena,

parochial vicar at Corpus Christi, has been approached by Father Ring to continue serving the inner-city parish in an unspecified capacity.

A permanent replacement for Father Callan is being sought, Father Ring said in the statement.

"Several priests have expressed interest in serving Corpus Christi," Father Ring said. He added that the opening was formally announced in this week's diocesan Centralized Mail, which is sent out to all parishes. Brown said that a replacement will be put in place "as soon as possible."

Bishop Matthew H. Clark informed Father Callan last month that he was being removed from Corpus Christi after 22 years due to continued violation of

church laws, especially the priest's policies regarding women's liturgical roles, ministry to homosexuals and intercommunion with non-Catholics.

The announcement has touched off a series of public protests by the Corpus Christi community. In addition, those who attended Corpus Christi liturgies the weekend of Aug. 22-23 approved 3,322 to 7 a document protesting Father Callan's reassignment and vowing to continue his policies at the parish.

In a column appearing in the Sept. 6

parish bulletin, Father Callan wrote that he was being removed from Corpus Christi and "sent to St. Purgatory."

Father Callan defended his actions on behalf of those whom he feels face ostracism in the Catholic Church.

"The number of people who have been harmed by the Church for being exclusive is in the millions; the number of people who have been harmed by the Church for being INCLUSIVE is very small," Father Callan wrote in the column. "I accept my punishment with a clear conscience."

Obituary

Fr. Paul McCabe; Elmira pastor

Father Paul J. McCabe, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Elmira, died Aug. 25, 1998, of heart failure while on vacation in the Adirondack Mountains. He was 65.

"The way he died, which would seem to be so peaceful after an evening with friends, he would have liked that," said Father Edward Golden, a longtime friend who was the homilist at the Mass of Christ the High Priest celebrated for Father McCabe Aug. 27 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

"Everyone feels they have lost a personal friend because he touched so many lives in so many ways," noted Sister M. Raymond Joseph Griffen, RSM, pastoral associate at the Elmira parish.

Born March 20, 1933 in Auburn to the late Henry and Anna Hickey McCabe, Father McCabe graduated from St. Alphonsus School, Holy Family High School — both in Auburn — St. Bonaventure University in Olean and St. Bernard's Seminary. He was ordained a priest June 6, 1959, at Holy Family Church, Auburn.

Prior to his 1978 assignment at Our Lady of Lourdes, Father McCabe served as assistant pastor at three Rochester parishes: St. John the Evangelist on Humboldt Street, St. Monica's, and Corpus Christi. He also served as co-pastor of St. Augustine Church, Rochester. In addition, he was the chaplain at Notre Dame High School, Elmira, and a part-time chaplain at the Eastman School of Music.

Sister Griffen said that Father McCabe had left a legacy of caring from his 20 years at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.

"He made it just a part of his life to know the parishioners," she observed.

In fact, she reported, the church was rewired so that his funeral service could be broadcast to the church hall for the overflow crowd.

"He was a very generous person, outgoing with his parishioners," said longtime friend Father Gerald Connor, who was one of the priests vacationing with Father McCabe in the Adirondacks. "He was the kind of person who was thoughtful of people."

Father Golden recalled, for example, that when the late Father Robert Miller was ill and expressed a desire to see the musical, "The Phantom of the Opera," Father McCabe "called all over to try to find tickets," then took the ailing priest to see the show.

Bishop Dennis Hickey was the main celebrant of the Mass of Christ the High Priest Aug. 27. Bishop Matthew H. Clark was the main celebrant for the funeral Mass Aug. 28 at Our Lady of Lourdes. Father John Dillon was the homilist for the Friday service. Interment was at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Auburn.

Father McCabe is survived by many cousins.

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