

Parish bids farewell
to Father Callan
— Page 3



Aquinas football's
past celebrated
— Page 6



Diocesan students
set to hit books
— Page 12



Catholic Courier

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 109 NO. 51 ■ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1998 ■ 75¢ ■ 12 PAGES

Talks promote ecumenical ties

When Brian and Lynne McNulty were preparing for the arrival of their first child in the early 1970s — long before he became a Roman Catholic deacon and she an Episcopal deacon — they had a decision to make.

Should the child be baptized Catholic or Episcopal?

"We knew if we had him baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, it would be accepted by the Episcopal Church," Deacon Brian McNulty recalled. "We weren't sure if it would happen the other way."

Such uncertainty was understandable at the time, acknowledged the deacon, now coordinator of the Diocese of Rochester's Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Just two decades earlier, he noted, the marriage ceremony of Catholic-Protestant couples would have probably have taken place in such a location as the rectory, not in the church proper. And they would have been required to agree that their children would be baptized Catholic.

By the early 1970s, though, Christians were beginning to feel the effects of ecumenical openness engendered by the Second Vatican Council (1961-65). As Pope John Paul II noted in his 1995 encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* ("That all may be one"), "At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church committed herself irrevocably to following the path of the ecumenical venture, thus heeding the Spirit of the Lord, who teaches people to interpret carefully the 'signs of the times.'"

The conciliar documents promoted greater openness to other faiths, as well as calling for dialogue and for efforts to advance greater unity and acceptance of beliefs and practices where possible — such as with baptism.

"The sense in the Roman Catholic Church in the last 30 years is, 'We'll talk to anybody,'" Deacon McNulty observed.

Indeed, Christian Brother Jeffrey Gros, associate director of the U.S. Catholic bishops' Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, told the *Catholic Courier* that in the United States alone eight separate discussions are currently underway between the Catholic Church and such groups as the Southern Baptists, United Methodists, Lutherans, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox. Internationally, the church is also in dialogue with such groups as Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Mennonites.

Those dialogues have focused — and in some cases, produced agreements and understandings — on such issues as baptism, the Eucharist, the saints, Mary, the Scriptures and authority in the church.

"The results are coming due," Brother Gros said. "They are coming to the churches for action."

Latest fruits

Two of the most recent results of such dialogue were announced this summer.

In June, the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation Council approved a "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification," in which Catholics and

Continued on page 5

Story by Lee Strong

Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers



0
74470173013
2
36

nt
es of
a large
t. The
all the
ry, law,
ers and
ooks of
of God.
church
ected
ss. On
from
and a
test or
of the
chosen
of the
er over
due
born in
e was a
se and
in. He
id went
ined a
nal. He
bishop
known
station
id even
were in
people.
Robert
ked to
ions on
roversy
he day
e man
of the
lared a
aint of
pt. 17.
0 or
hone
ster,
ified
essay
Pius
lare
pray
t, my
best
e last