

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## House of Hope doors open in Webster

By Kathleen Schwar  
Assistant editor

WEBSTER — The H.O.P.E. Ministry of Holy Trinity Parish has itself run on hope the past few years, looking for a good place to settle down. This month, the ministry — "Holy Trinity's Outreach Program for Everyone" — opened in a newly dedicated building near the church.

"It's wonderful we've come this far," said Joan Weir, who helps run the Trinity House of HOPE. "It really was on faith."

The ministry provides assistance with shelter (elsewhere), food, medicines, gasoline, clothing, rent payments, money for counseling, education expenses and other needs.

The three-story building has seen years of service to the Sisters of St. Joseph, who moved from the convent in 1986, and was home to Father William M. Hart, Holy Trinity's pastor, after he retired in 1992. The parish council turned the building over to the ministry after Father Hart died Jan. 29.

At this point, 24 ministers have been commissioned for the ministry, and other parishioners pitch in. It takes a variety of skills, they say, to keep the doors open to some 30 families a month seeking help.

There's Judith Kiehl, pastoral associate, who came forth with the idea for the ministry to people in emergencies and special needs.

There's Weir, whose background is in social work and work at Corpus Christi Parish ministries.

There's Marlene Green, former Klem Road School secretary, known for "organizing and doing."

There's Dave McKechney, experienced at keeping up rental properties, who has added many needed touches to the house.

The list goes on. Agatha Schultz, whose husband died in January, signed on more recently and keeps the several clothing rooms in order on the second and third floors of the house.

"Everybody picks up each other's slack. We couldn't do without each other," one of the ministers explained during a tour through the house's 18 rooms. A few of the rooms have also been used for Bible classes and other programs.

Kiehl well remembers the reason the ministry began — a woman who was working full-time and became ill, who had to take a leave of absence from her job a few years ago. Her benefits were "almost minimal," she said, and she could not meet the rent.

"That's basically why the program started," she said, explaining the ministry was able to help the woman financially. "Those who have are invited to share with people who do not have."

House of HOPE receives a monthly donation from the parish financial council; a percentage of a monthly collection tak-



Bill Hawken

Chef Mohamad Bensalama prepares food for a spaghetti dinner benefit for Holy Trinity Parish's House of HOPE, Oct. 23. Ruth Anderson is at work in the background.



The house collects food and clothing for those in need.

en by the parish's Community Action Committee; envelopes placed in the church; and various donations of money, food and clothing solicited through the bulletin.

For seven weeks, ministers have trained weekly, learning, for instance, about the church's social justice teachings. They are expected to continue to learn about social-justice issues. They're also expected to maintain prayer lives.

Each is assigned a client, and follows through with the person. Sometimes the first stop is the house's chapel, where a statue of Lazarus has a prominent position.

"I remember speaking with someone who was still emotional, and guided them to the chapel for some quiet time," Weir said. "Most people we've worked with are so inclined. It's easy to talk about God, too, because they bring it up. ... You'll find tremendous faith, people who have brought me up when talking because they continue to have strong faith."

"You think you know about compassion," said fellow minister Pat Bell. "Then you learn it."

Among the ministry's clients so far have been:

- Grandparents who have to raise their grandchildren.
- Newly divorced people.
- People who have left abusive situations.
- People who have lost jobs.

The majority are working people, and many working full-time; according to Kiehl.

"It's an amazing thing, you are here giving people help and you find they are from here," Schultz said, meaning the people are from Webster and some even attend the parish. "You wish you could get more people to see that."

Parishioners have been more than generous with donations, Schultz said. "You put the word out and being, you've got it. ... But right now we need blankets, and men's (size 42) and ladies' (size 20) large coats — Webster is a town of size 12 women."

Kiehl stressed that, "A real part of the program is to build relationships, not to be understood as hand-outs, but to welcome, and help everyone feel a part of the community and not so isolated."

A 34-year-old mother recently stopping by for food commented, "I guess we're all going through one point or another where we need people."

House of HOPE is at 1450 Ridge Road, Webster, NY, 14580. The phone number is 716/265-6694.

## Tier parish notes 150th

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will preside at the 150th anniversary Mass of St. Ann's Church in Hornell, at 10 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 31.

St. Ann's is one of the oldest parishes in the Southern Tier.

According to Bev Gilbert, jubilee organizer, the Mass will be concelebrated by eight deacons and priests — past and present — who have served at St. Ann's. Included in this group are former pastors Father Robert C. MacNamara and Father Elmer J. Schmidt, as well as the current pastor, Father James P. Jaeger.

Gilbert said the Mass will feature children dressed in ethnic clothing to acknowledge the many Irish, Italian and Polish families who have attended the parish over the years.

"It's going to be a beautiful service," remarked Gilbert, who serves as parish pastoral council vice-president.

Tours of the church buildings and grounds will be available following the Mass. A reservation-only brunch is planned as well. In addition, the parish pastoral council will present a commemorative chalice and charger to the church.

During the past year, St. Ann's has noted its 150th anniversary by constructing a jubilee float for the local St. Patrick's Day parade, and beginning a memorial garden next to the church. The garden's dedication is set for early 2000.

The parish's first church building was located on Cass Street. It moved to its present site, at Erie Avenue and Elm Street, in 1869. The parish was originally part of the Buffalo Diocese, and became a member of the Rochester Diocese in 1897.

The large church has a seating capacity of 1,100. Michael Colomaio, a parish pastoral council member who conducts tours of the church, said that St. Ann's is noted for its artwork, including a Jesse tree, on its ceiling.

"It's very unique to have a painting on a church ceiling in our diocese," Colomaio said.

He added that two former pastors — Father Michael Creedon (1863-1870) and Father James Early (1879-1890) — are buried under the church. Father Early is noted for overseeing construction of the parish convent, enlargement of the church and ground-breaking of the parish school. St. Ann's School, dedicated in 1890, is one of the longest continually operating schools in the Rochester Diocese.

The parish has produced 20 priests, 22 women religious and two religious brothers.

— Mike Latona



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