

DIOCESAN NEWS

Corpus pastor closes Rogers House Restaurant

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Rogers House Restaurant, a ministry of Rochester's Corpus Christi Church, closed Oct. 26, due to insufficient funding.

Rogers House had been noted for its ministry to ex-prisoners by employing them at the restaurant, 271 Central Park, Rochester. Sister Sue Hoffman, SSJ, pastoral associate, said Father Daniel McMullin, pastor, decided to close the restaurant after consulting with parishioners at a Sept. 26 meeting.

Sister Hoffman said the meeting was precipitated by a letter sent to Father McMullin by Jennifer Deas-Vasquez, restaurant director, requesting that Corpus Christi give her the property so she could operate it independently.

Sister Hoffman said that the parish cannot even consider this proposal because the state Supreme Court — whose approval is needed when a not-for-profit organization divests property — would not allow the signing over of any property due debts owed by the parish.

At the same time, Sister Hoffman added that Corpus Christi could no

longer afford to keep Rogers House Restaurant open. She said the parish lost \$150,000 during the 1998-99 fiscal year, which ended June 30. Corpus Christi had spent \$57,000 in subsidies on Rogers House Restaurant over that period, she noted. In addition, the parish projects a \$100,000 loss for 1999-2000.

Weekly subsidies for Rogers House Restaurant were cut from \$1,100 to \$500 beginning Jan. 1, 1999. With the cuts, Sister Hoffman said, Rogers House Restaurant could no longer provide adequate professional staff to work with the ex-prisoners. She added that restaurant hours had been reduced in recent weeks.

"(The ex-prisoners) were employed, but not in a real helpful program," she said. "You would need people who could offer them support."

Rogers House Restaurant had existed since 1987. Sister Hoffman said Corpus Christi has no plans to re-open the restaurant. She added that the parish is exploring the possibility of leasing or selling the property to a neighborhood organization. Any sale of parish-owned property is subject to approval by parish and diocesan officials.

"We don't want a vacant building in the

neighborhood," she said. "We want something that benefits the residents. As Christians, we're people of hope. God never closes the door without opening a window."

Sister Hoffman said there are no immediate plans to close Corpus Christi's other outreach ministries, but she did say that they "all have their financial vulnerabilities."

Sister Hoffman said donations from Corpus parishioners and from other parishes have enabled Corpus Christi's remaining ministries to survive.

"There's been great generosity from many parishes," Sister Hoffman said.

Though Rogers House Restaurant has closed, the Rogers House residential pro-

gram will remain open as a ministry of the parish's Prison Outreach Program. Corpus' other outreach ministries are Corpus Christi Center, Dimitri House, Isaiah House and Matthew's Closet.

The parish has lost sizable numbers of parishioners and donations since the summer of 1998, when Bishop Matthew H. Clark removed Father James B. Callan, parish administrator since 1976, for his violations of church teaching on ministry to homosexuals, intercommunion and women in the church.

Father Callan's departure touched off a chain of events that led to formation of a new church, Spiritus Christi, which mostly involves former Corpus Christi members.

New women's ministry in diocese sets numerous outreach initiatives

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Some years ago, Mary Ann Erickson returned to the Catholic Church with the support of friends. Now, she and other women in the Rochester Diocese seek to convey the same spirit of evangelization.

"I was touched by the women asking me to come back. I want to be a vehicle to other women," said Erickson, a parishioner at St. John of Rochester in Perinton.

Erickson is team coordinator of the new Rochester chapter of Magnificat International. The group will hold its inaugural event on Saturday, Nov. 13, with a breakfast at Mario's Via Abruzzi Restaurant, 2740 Monroe Ave., Rochester. Registration is at 9:30 a.m., and the program runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Guest speaker will be Beryl Kinney, northeastern region representative of Magnificat International and founding coordinator of Magnificat's chapter in the Buffalo Diocese. Additionally, the Nov. 13 event will include music and prayer.

Magnificat's Rochester chapter, known as Spouse of the Holy Spirit, began about three years ago as a prayer group. Erickson explained that Magnificat is an excellent vehicle for women who may be grappling with issues either in the Catholic Church or their personal lives.

"It's the same model of Mary going to Elizabeth, and the way the two of them kind of came alive," Erickson said. "Many women have left the Catholic Church, and we want to invite them back home. We also want to give them a non-threatening, comfortable place."

According to Father Kevin McKenna, diocesan chancellor, Bishop Matthew H. Clark has given conditional approval to Magnificat's Rochester chapter. Its ser-

vice team was installed Oct. 10 at Rochester Institute of Technology, with Father Joseph Catanise, RIT Catholic chaplain, officiating. Father Catanise is spiritual adviser to the group.

Other service-team members are Jean Wierszewski, assistant coordinator/treasurer; Carol Miner, secretary; Pat Roman, hospitality; and Gert Amesbury, historian. Amesbury is a parishioner at St. Pius X Church in Chili, and Wierszewski, Miner and Roman all belong to Church of the Transfiguration in Pittsford.

Erickson said that approximately 30 women are already actively involved in the new chapter, and she expects the Nov. 13 breakfast to help boost that number. Although most current members are over 40 years old, Erickson stressed that young-adult women are welcome as well.

Magnificat's prayer meetings are held every Friday at 9 a.m. at St. John of Rochester Church. The group will hold at least four breakfasts per year. The next breakfast is planned for June 10, 2000.

Erickson added that Magnificat members are encouraged to take part in other diocesan programs, such as Life in the Spirit seminars with Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

In addition, she envisions Magnificat taking a growing role in working with the poor and elderly, as well as in pro-life efforts.

Magnificat International began in 1981 and is based in New Orleans. Its 45 chapters are located mostly in the United States.

EDITORS' NOTE: Tickets (at \$10 each) are still available for the Nov. 13 breakfast and must be pre-ordered by Nov. 6. Call Jean Wierszewski at 716/334-2286 or Pat Roman at 716/381-9740.

U of R Newman Community names fund for Fr. Hedges

The University of Rochester Newman Community has announced the establishment of the Rev. L. John Hedges Capital Fund.

Father Hedges, who has retired and lives at McAuley Residence, served as the Newman Community's pastor from 1953-68. He became its first full-time pastor in 1963.

More than 30 alumni and current members of the Newman Community gathered to celebrate with Father Hedges Oct. 13. Mass was said at the UR Interfaith Chapel

and a reception followed at the Spring House, Pittsford.

Alumni from 1953-68 raised more than \$7,000 for the fund, which is intended to develop the community's retreat and social-outreach programs. Father Hedges was instrumental in establishing those programs.

Contributions may be made to the fund by contacting Father Brian C. Cool, director of the UR Newman Community, at 716/275-8523.

Up, up and away



Above, Bishop Matthew H. Clark and Eric Patchke, director of diocesan buildings and properties, enjoy a laugh during the Nov. 1 ceremony dedicating the newly completed elevator in the diocesan Pastoral Office, 1150 Buffalo Road, Gates. At right, Bishop Clark goes off to join five employees on the first ride. The elevator, added to make the Pastoral Office more accessible for the handicapped, is not only a convenience, "but a symbol of openness, accessibility and inclusion for which we like to be known," the bishop said.



Mike Mergen/Photo intern

New Year's Eve



Package Price \$49.95 per person

Early Bird Package Price \$39.95 per person

Early Bird seatings 4:00 and 4:30 only (prices do not include tax and gratuity)
A deposit of \$15.00 per person is required

Menu

CHAMPAGNE TOAST
(you may substitute a house wine for champagne)

APPETIZER
Choice of
Artichoke French
Marinated Mushrooms
Crabmeat Bisque

GARDEN FRESH TOSSED SALAD

MAIN ENTREES Choice of
Angus Filet Mignon
Portofino
Rack of Lamb
Shrimp Alexander
Risotto with Truffles
Cruised Duckling
Crispy Sea Bass
Prime Rib
Australian Lobster Tail
(up charge on this item is \$12)

BEVERAGE
Fresh Brewed Columbian Coffee
Gourmet Tea Selection

LAMPLIGHTER

Creekside Plaza
831 Fetzner Rd.
Corner Maiden Lane
225-2500