

DIOCESAN NEWS

Cathedral renovation coming; protest vigil set

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Renovation of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester, will mark Bishop Matthew H. Clark's 25th anniversary of ordination as bishop in 2004, according to Father John Mulligan, the cathedral's pastor and diocesan vicar general.

Yet, even though plans have not been drawn up, renovation opponents will hold a "Candlelight Vigil honoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament" at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21, in front of the cathedral.

The vigil is being organized by "Catholics for the Real Presence" who see many current renovations of churches as both inordinately expensive and detrimental to the faith.

Catholics for the Real Presence is a grassroots group made up of 40 core members, with "hundreds" of supporters, according to Michael F. Brennan, a parishioner at Sa-

cred Heart. They believe the redesigns relegate them to "gathering spaces" where the focus is less on Christ and more on the people present, he said.

In particular, he noted, his group opposes the removal of tabernacles from the center of the altar which, in the group's opinion, diminishes the congregation's focus on Christ.

However, Father Mulligan said that any renovation of the cathedral would be legitimate in the eyes of the official church.

"Certainly all these norms, both the Vatican norms and particularly the national norms would have to be taken into consideration and followed," he said.

When asked about the tabernacle issue, Father Mulligan answered: "Will it be moved? I don't know. There's no legislation saying it has to be (in the center)."

For the record, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that the "tabernacle is to be situated in churches in a most wor-

thy place with the greatest honor."

Father Mulligan said that the language in the catechism is deliberately vague in order to allow local churches discretion in the placement of tabernacles.

In a letter to his parishioners published in the Sacred Heart bulletin Oct. 14-15, Father Mulligan also addressed the renovation opponents who had leafleted Sacred Heart parishioners on occasion.

"Please do not take seriously the premature and alarmist flyers distributed after some Masses," he wrote.

He said the cathedral convened committees in 1985 and 1993-94 to consider renovations, but scrapped both initiatives due to a lack of funds. Now, he said, the cathedral is considering launching a diocesan-wide fundraising effort to finance the renovation. However, he stressed, that the renovation planning process will not commence until committees made up of diocesan and parish representatives are established in January 2001 to examine the issue.

Father Mulligan said the cathedral is in need of renovation in the following areas:

- **Sound system:** Father Mulligan said that Sacred Heart Cathedral has six seconds of reverberation of speaker's voices, making it difficult for people to sometimes hear whoever is addressing the congregation.

- **Lighting and wiring:** "The church is just dark," Father Mulligan said, noting that many photographers at weddings have asked to have all the church lights turned on only to find out that all the church's lights are on. He added that some of the

church's wiring hasn't been replaced in decades and presents safety concerns.

- **Baptismal area:** The cathedral has no permanent baptismal area, he noted, and uses a portable bowl for baptisms.

- **Penance areas:** There is currently no place for people to experience confession face-to-face with a priest in the cathedral, he said.

- **Handicapped accessibility:** While the cathedral is accessible to people with handicaps, he said, the altar is not.

- **Gathering space and bathrooms:** The cathedral has no place for worshipers to gather before and after Mass, he said, adding that there are no bathrooms in the church. There is a church hall and bathrooms in a building adjacent to the church, but he said that the cathedral sometimes has crowds of 1,000 or more people and needs more room to accommodate them.

- **Bishop's chair:** The bishop's chair is located on the side of the altar with the bishop seated and looking across the altar rather than at the congregation. Under a renovation, the bishop's chair would be redesigned and relocated to accommodate current norms in church design, Father Mulligan said, including having it face the congregation.

- **Floor plan:** It's currently difficult for people seated in the cathedral's transepts (the two side seating areas at the front of the church) to see everything going on around the altar, Father Mulligan noted, and a renovation should address these concerns.

Nurses approve new contract

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Nurses at St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, voted in favor of a new contract Oct. 12, putting an end to fears of a strike.

The nurses had voted three weeks earlier to authorize a strike should contract negotiations fail to produce an agreement. The new agreement is good for three years, and retroactively effective as of June 1.

The hospital's 145 nurses have been working without a contract since May 31, and are represented by the New York State Nurses Association.

Mark Genovese, spokesman for the nurses' union, and Denis Sweeney, hospital spokesman, both highlighted points of the new contract in separate phone interviews from Albany and Elmira, respectively.

- A wage increase of 4 percent for each of the contract's three years. Genovese pointed out that this was 1 percent higher than most increases nurses are receiving in New York state.

- A committee comprising hospital and nurse representatives will meet with the Federal Mediation and Conciliatory Services to discuss changes in St. Joseph's non-contributory income retirement plan within 30 days from Oct. 12. The group will attempt to present recommendations within one year of the first meeting. Genovese noted that this committee will not scrap the hospital's current retirement plan, which the union considers inadequate, but rather will create a supplemental plan.

- Allowing the possibility for more than one staff member per nursing unit to take vacation on any given week. Prior to the agreement, Sweeney said, nurses in the same unit were unable to take vacations simultaneously, but now the hospital will allow two nurses working different shifts to take vacations the same week.

- Nurses who work 36 hours on three

weekends a month will be paid for 40 hours' work.

"We look at it as a great retention and recruitment tool," Sweeney said, noting that some employees prefer to work weekends.

- A new flexible staffing plan will allow nurses to voluntarily work 10- or 12-hour shifts. Many nurses prefer to work such shifts, Genovese said, because they then can have three days off.

- Within the next 60 days, representatives of St. Joseph's and the union will meet to review options for a retiree group health plan, which would be separate from the employee health/medical plan, and which would be paid for entirely by the retirees. Those who retired before January 1995 are covered under a health plan, but Sweeney noted that a plan for those retiring afterward was scrapped during contract negotiations in 1994.

In a statement jointly released by the hospital and the nurses' union, Sister Marie Castagnaro, SSJ, St. Joseph's president and chief executive officer, said she was pleased with the new contract.

"This agreement allows the healthcare team of St. Joseph's to focus on continuing our tradition of serving our patients with the highest quality of care and compassion," she said.

Sue Padgett, the union's chief negotiator with St. Joseph's, also praised the new deal.

"Now we need to continue working on improving communication and addressing the needs of nurses before they reach the crisis stage," she said.

Genovese said that the nurses want to see St. Joseph's keep up its end of the deal.

"All we did at this point is avoid the strike," he said. "We need now to do the work and change things."

Sweeney added that the hospital is ready to work with the union.

"I think this is an excellent first step to have the contract approved," he said.

School to be renamed 'Bishop Hogan'

Effective Aug. 1, 2001, Northeastern Catholic Junior High School in Irondequoit will be renamed Bishop Hogan Catholic Academy, and All Saints-Catholic Junior High in Gates will be renamed All Saints Catholic Academy.

Diocesan school officials announced the changes Oct. 16.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan died Aug. 27, and was the seventh bishop of Rochester, serving from 1969-1978. He served as principal of DeSales High School, Geneva, from 1953-1955, and taught at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries, and at St. John Fisher College and the Sisters of St. Joseph Novitiate as well.

"Bishop Hogan loved Catholic schools, and it is a fitting tribute to honor his memory in this way," said Timothy W. Dwyer,

diocesan schools superintendent.

Father Michael C. Hogan, priest-in-residence at St. John of Rochester Parish, Fairport, said his brother, the late bishop, would have been pleased by the announcement.

"I'm honored to think that his name will live on through this institution," he said.

The name change to "Academy" for both schools is designed to more accurately reflect the diocese's middle school philosophy. It emphasizes high academic standards, and spiritual and social development.

"Our (diocesan) middle schools are exceptional learning environments that are designed to assist each student in making the sometimes difficult transition from elementary school to high school," Dwyer said.



John Powell/Photo intern

To celebrate unity

Eric Heveron-Smith (right) and Michelle Raczka, members of St. Paul's Parish in Webster, bring holy water and a church banner forward during a Unity Celebration Mass at St. Paul's Oct. 14. Participants represented St. Paul's, St. Rita's, Holy Spirit and Holy Trinity parishes. The event was led by youth and symbolized unity among the Webster-Penfield Catholic communities.

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