

Diocese takes new view of parish leadership

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Based on results of a three-month study by Pastoral Center and parish officials, some fresh approaches appear imminent regarding the ministry of pastoral administrators, extern priests, deacons and retired priests in the Rochester Diocese.

A 12-member advisory committee — which worked in conjunction with the Priest Personnel Board — submitted its report March 2 to Bishop Matthew H. Clark. He approved plans relating to pastoral appointments, in what is considered a working document. The diocesan Priests' Council reviewed the report March 13.

According to committee members, some aspects of their document will be evident in new parish leadership appointments this summer.

'The question was, are we going to just put people in slots, or look at the needs of the parish?'

— Father Michael Conboy

The committee had been meeting since Nov. 29, with the goal of releasing its study in time for the next round of parish administrative openings. Those openings were announced Feb. 27.

Diocesan officials on the committee are Father Michael Conboy, priest personnel director; Bill Olsen, human resources director; Deacon David Palma, deacon personnel director; Patricia Finnerty, voca-

tions awareness director; Sandy Grocki, clergy services coordinator; Barbara Pedeville, recruitment and staff services director; Bill Pickett, pastoral planning director; and Jean Wood, priest personnel administrative assistant.

Completing the committee are Charlotte Bruney, pastoral administrator of Churchville's St. Vincent DePaul Parish; Father Ed Palumbos, pastor of Greece's St.

Charles Borromeo Parish; Deacon Dan Kinsky, who serves at Perinton's St. John of Rochester Parish; and Mary Ann Fackelman, a parishioner of St. Charles Borromeo in Greece. Fackelman also served as the committee's moderator.

A notable recommendation from the committee is that, for the first time, people in the diocesan pastoral administrator pool are eligible to apply for all parish leadership openings. Previously, pastoral administrators have been considered mostly for smaller parishes.

Olsen emphasized that Bishop Clark will still appoint a priest pastor whenever possible. However, he added, there are fewer diocesan priests available for leadership than there are parishes. Grocki estimated that there are 150 to 160 full-time active priests in the diocese — almost iden-

Continued on page 3



Catholic Courier

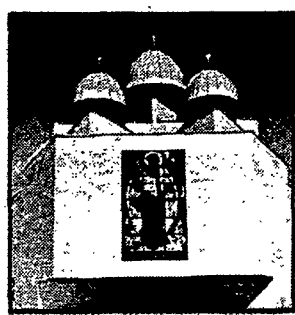
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Inside This Week

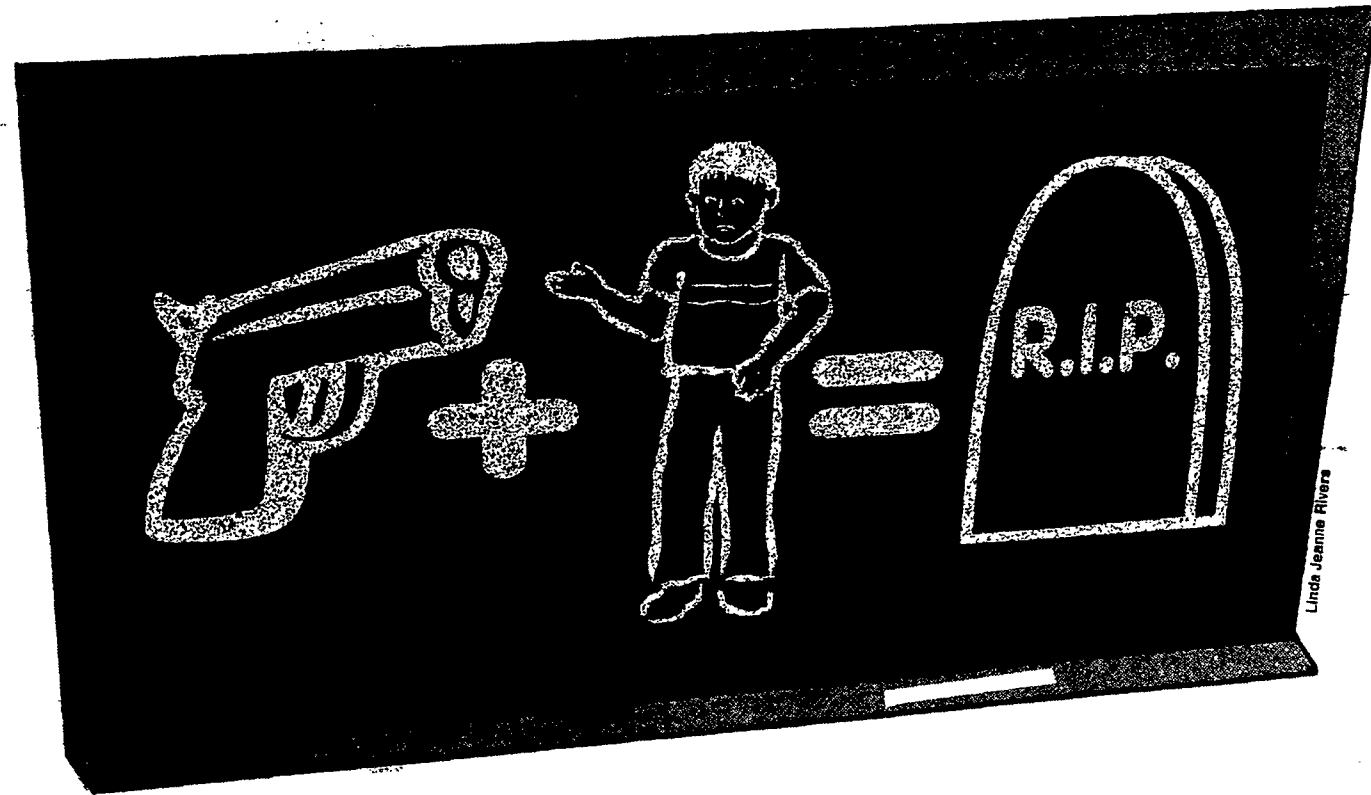
Dating violence a topic of concern
Teens learn warning signals of abuse
— Page 6



A '40 Under 40' honoree, career City official credits much to McQuaid
— Page 7



Eastern church keeps heritage
St. Josaphat's proud of Ukrainian history
— Page 12



Schools struggle with violence

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

Until March 7, Catholic schools had steered clear of the recent wave of highly publicized school shootings.

But that changed when a 14-year-old girl at Bishop Neumann High School in Williamsport, Pa., opened fire with a .22 caliber pistol during the school's first lunch hour and wounded one student in the shoulder.

The incident, at a small school for seventh- through 12th-graders, occurred just two days after the shooting at a public high school in Santee, Calif., where two students were killed and 13 wounded.

"It was inevitable," for a school shooting to occur at a Catholic school, said Sister Mary Angela Shaughnessy, a Sister of Charity and an education professor at Spalding University in Louisville.

"But we can all be relieved that it wasn't worse than it was," she told Catholic News Service.

Sister Shaughnessy, who has a law degree and has written several books and recent articles on Catholic school safety, is a legal consultant to many Catholic schools and dioceses. For the past several years she has been on the lecture circuit urging Catholic school administrators to be prepared for worst-case scenarios.

She said at first Catholic schools were slower than public schools to come up with plans to deal with a tragedy such as a school shooting, but not anymore.

"Most Catholic school principals aren't that naive," she said, to assume an outbreak of violence "can't happen" on their own school grounds.

Just last year, Sister Shaughnessy spoke in the Diocese of Scranton, Pa., where Bishop Neumann High School is located. She said that particular high school did everything short of having metal detectors — which she doesn't agree with — to provide a safe environment.

All Catholic schools in the Scranton Diocese have a zero-tolerance policy on weapons. Bishop Neumann High has security cameras and secured entrances. Its students are required to put their backpacks in their lockers in the morning and keep books in clear plastic while in school.

Right after the shooting, police cordoned off the school and questioned students. School officials immediately had crisis counselors available.

Compared to public schools, Sister Shaughnessy said, "Catholic schools are safer, in my opinion, but they still have troubled kids."

Leonard DeFiore, president of the National Catholic Educational Association, agreed.

"Catholic schools aren't immune from the in-

Continued on page 10