

DIOCESAN NEWS

Superintendent will serve nation's educators

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GATES — Timothy W. Dwyer, superintendent of diocesan schools, is exchanging his position here for one of national prominence. He has been named assistant executive director of the National Catholic Educational Association's Chief Administrators of Catholic Education.

Dwyer will help provide seminars and consultation for administrators and educators on such issues as leadership development, finance and strategic planning.

The NCEA is a Washington, D.C.-based professional organization that serves Catholic educators from preschool through university, including seminaries and religious education programs.

Last November, Dwyer announced he was leaving the superintendent's position, which he has held since 1992. Sister Elizabeth Meegan, a Dominican nun and educator currently working in Oregon, will become the new diocesan schools superintendent July 1.

Dwyer will be working from his new home in Grand Rapids, Mich., about 90 miles from his hometown of Jackson.

"I'll be the first telecommuter in NCEA

history," he said. He noted that the fact he could work via computer, phone and fax machine with the Washington office was a major reason he took the job.

Dwyer's wife, Carol, recently became vice president for clinical operations at St. Mary's Mercy Hospital in Grand Rapids. The couple came to Rochester in 1992, he said, with the intention of staying until their daughter completed high school. With their daughter now in college, and both spouses' Michigan-based parents aging, the couple decided to move back to Michigan to be closer to their family, he said. He added that the hospital position was a good career move for his wife.

"She followed me for four career moves, so when the opportunity came along for her, it was about time," said Dwyer, who resigned after his wife accepted her new position.

Prior to coming to Rochester, Dwyer had been a Catholic schools superintendent in Gaylord, Mich., and knew a little about the Diocese of Rochester's numerous school closings in the late 1980s and early '90s. Yet, he said he did not appreciate the depth of passion and feeling surrounding the closings. When he showed up for his first press conference as super-



intendent the media turnout was sizeable.

"I was shocked that there was such good attendance at a press conference announcing my arrival," he said.

Dwyer said he quickly learned that turmoil had left media observers, and, more importantly, parents, wondering about the future.

But schools reorganization was mostly at an end, and during his tenure as superintendent, Dwyer oversaw the stabilization of school enrollment throughout the diocese. Holy Ghost in Gates was closed during his tenure, but its demise was announced prior to his arrival. Only one other school, Most Precious Blood in Rochester, closed on his watch.

He also oversaw the dismantling of the quadrant-based system of governance for Monroe County schools and the creation of a centralized board for the whole county. Dwyer noted that centralization helped the schools streamline their finances. For example, he said, under the quadrant system, between 80 and 90 percent of tuition due to schools was successfully collected yearly. Under the centralized system, that figure increased to more than 98 percent.

To a great extent, Dwyer credited the stabilization of the school system to \$28 million from Robert and Peggy Wegman, of Wegmans Food Markets, in the mid-90s. The gifts funded both preschool and elementary education at schools with many low-income students in Rochester.

"It kind of lifted the burden of all the schools working together to support our six poorest schools," he said of the Wegmans' gifts. He added that the gifts "sent a powerful message to parents and the community ... that there's a future here, and we're making the right steps."

Diocesan schools received another such boost in January when a group of nine anonymous donors gave a total of \$15 million to DeSales High School in Geneva and six Finger Lakes area Catholic elementary schools. Dwyer noted that Catholic schools must continue to aggressively seek such gifts and sell their schools to the public. Gone are the days, he said, when Catholic schools could assume that they would always be supported and used by parents, and financed solely by parishioners.

"We've got a wonderful product, but we can't rest on our laurels ... to stay strong," he said.

Dwyer has also publicly advocated government-funded tuition vouchers for non-public school parents, a cause that was dealt a blow last year when California vot-

ers rejected a pro-voucher measure at the polls. The anti-voucher movement maintained that vouchers would violate the constitutional separation of church and state. However, Dwyer said he is optimistic that if President George W. Bush appoints voucher-friendly Supreme Court judges, that argument may begin to lose sway with the public.

"I think we need a Supreme Court decision in our favor, and then the snowball will start rolling down the mountain," he said.

As superintendent, Dwyer earned accolades from such Catholic school administrators as Eileen Preston, principal of St. John the Evangelist School, Greece. She said Dwyer successfully advocated for better teachers' salaries and retirement packages, and also steered the schools through an uncertain era.

"He's very capable and calm and level-headed, which you certainly need when you have change," she said.

Dwyer had to deal with his own uncertainty in 1993 when he was diagnosed with colon cancer. Surgery and chemotherapy combined to beat the cancer, he said, which has shown no signs of coming back.

He underwent treatment in the summer, after school was out, a plus for him as superintendent.

"The best time to have cancer is in July," he said with chuckle.



Karin von Volgtlander/Photo intern

Healing the healers

Thomas Warfield leads 80 people in singing "Kum Ba Yah" at an interfaith healing service at St. Mary's Church in downtown Rochester June 14. The service was held in St. Mary's Church and providers affected by the recent closing of the city's Genesee Hospital. (Left) Bonnie Abrams also sang.

Finger Lakes priest resigns pastorate for a break

Father Philip J. Billotte has resigned from the pastorate of Our Lady of the Lakes Parish — St. Januarius Parish/Our Lady of the Grapes Shrine, Naples; St. Patrick Parish, Prattsburg; St. Michael's, Penn Yan; St. Andrew's, Dundee; St. Theresa, Stanley; and St. Mary, Rushville.

Father Michael Conboy, diocesan director of priest personnel, made the announcement at the June 16-17 Masses at St. Januarius and St. Patrick's. A statement by Father Conboy was read at the other churches.

The priest is taking time off "to pray, renew himself and spend time helping at a retreat center. He is definitely not leaving the priesthood," Father Conboy wrote

to priests June 15. Father Billotte is expected to return for a new assignment, he continued, and "will be welcomed back with open arms."

"We knew he had been under a lot of stress and he had gone on vacation for about 10 days," said Chris Stanley, St. Januarius business manager, "and we thought maybe that would help. When he got back he had made the decision he needed more time."

The community is one of two six-parish clusters in the diocese; Father Brian Jeffers on April 18 was granted a leave of absence from the other, Good Shepherd Catholic Community, in Cayuga County.

Father Billotte had served St. Januarius

and St. Patrick's nearly six years and was pastor of the six-parish community for two years. He turned 62 on June 17.

In his letter to parishioners, he noted he had been involved in creating the pastoral plan to include the six parishes and Keuka College. "I have tried to share with you the gifts that God has given to me and to help move our plan ahead so that it would benefit all. However, I feel now that it is time for someone else to come in with a fresh outlook to help you continue with the pastoral plan," he stated, in part. He wrote that he was taking time for "the next few months to renew myself physically and spiritually."

Father Timothy L. Niven will become a parochial vicar for the community June 26. Two Kenyan priest externs have been helping with sacraments: Father John Gathanya, who plans to continue one more year, and Father Stephen Karani, who is being reassigned. Also, Father Daniel Condon, who becomes diocesan chancellor June 26, will continue helping for a few weekends, Stanley said. A new pastoral leadership appointment is expected.

—Kathleen Schwarz

Recognizing

The Diocese of Rochester ranked 18th per capita among dioceses giving to the general fund of the national Society for the Propagation of the Faith last year, and 25th in total giving.

Father Robert Bradler, director of the diocesan Society of the Propagation of the Faith, noted that the diocese ranks 64th in population among the 176 dioceses contributing.

"I just want to thank the people for their generosity," he said. The contributions were made through wills, donations of sustaining members and others. All told, they amounted to \$686,443. The Vatican distributes the fund among numerous countries.

JUNE SPECIALS LUNCH

RUM CHICKEN

Chicken sautéed with lime, butter and meyers rum \$7.95

CRAB CAKE CAESAR

Maryland crab cakes on a bed of romaine with a special remoulade dressing \$8.95

CATCH OF THE DAY

Each day the Lamplighter features a new seafood selection \$8.95

SOUP AND SANDWICH

Our chef creates a new and interesting combination each and every day \$6.95

All lunches served with a choice of soup or salad

DINNER

PORTOFINO

Lobster, shrimp, scallops and crabmeat sautéed in olive oil and white wine served with artichokes and black olives over a bed of pasta \$19.95

GRILLED VEAL CHOP (14 oz.)

This fusion creation is marinated in Chinese herbs, served on the bone with a madeira wine sauce \$23.95

FILETTO BAROLO

Choice tenderloin sautéed in a wine sauce with sliced portabella mushrooms \$18.95

CARIBBEAN STYLE SALMON

Marinated in lemon, lime and ginger, rubbed with adobo, and served on a bed of sautéed spinach \$18.95

Serving Lunch Tuesday-Friday

Serving Dinner Monday-Saturday

LAMPLIGHTER

Located at Creekside Plaza

831 Fetzner Rd.

At the corner of Maiden Lane down the road from Greece Marriot

225-2500



Anniversaries

Notices of two wedding anniversaries did not arrive at our offices for inclusion in the May 24 Milestones edition. They are:

Goodwin and Lillian Welch, who will mark their 60th anniversary on September 6. They were married at Rochester's Holy Cross Church on that date in 1941.

Daniel and Alice Bower, who will mark their 25th anniversary on August 14. They were married at Christ the King Church, Irondequoit.