

DIOCESAN NEWS

Renovations begin at Pastoral Center in Gates

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant editor

GATES — The diocesan Pastoral Center is undergoing a \$1.8 million renovation that will incorporate a new conference center as well as improved office areas, new windows, insulation and updated workstations.

The renovations will be paid for from the estate of the late Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey and funds from an anonymous donor. They will be overseen by general contractor J.C. Pilato, and are expected to be completed by April 2003.

"As various departments are moved ... into temporary space while their areas are renovated, please be patient with us," Father Joseph A. Hart, vicar general and Pastoral Center moderator, wrote in a message to pastoral leaders last month. "It may take a bit longer to find a file or track down requested information. In the end, though, we hope not only to have a happier workforce but one that is more efficient and better able to serve you."

Even before the renovations had begun, Providence Housing Development Corp. moved in March 2001 from the Pastoral Center into the first floor of St. William House, the wood-frame building at the front of the Pastoral Center campus on Buffalo Road.

"Providence had begun to grow and expand, and needed more space than we could give them within this building," Father Hart said. Providence, an affiliated agency of diocesan Catholic Charities, was established in 1994 as a not-for-profit housing corporation that develops, finances and manages housing projects throughout the diocese's 12 counties.

The agency also has applied for a state grant to build a 12-apartment complex for developmentally disabled people on the Pastoral Center campus. Construction may begin this spring, on the west side of the drive and between the first two parking lots.

In mid-December, the *Catholic Courier* likewise moved from the Pastoral Center, where its offices had been since 1986, to the second floor of St. William House.

"The *Courier* seemed to be the perfect



Joe Aquino (left) and Sam Bird, employees of general contractor J.C. Pilato, lay cement Jan. 15 outside the new entrance to what will become a conference facility at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Gates.

fit (for St. William House), as far as size," Father Hart said, adding that like Providence, the newspaper is a more discrete entity with a separate board of directors.

St. William House was built in 1936 as a residence hall for out-of-town students at the former St. Andrew Junior Seminary. The house later became living quarters for seminary faculty. More recently the St. William House was rented by Monroe County Social Services, which left in spring of 1999.

The Pastoral Center main building was constructed in 1950 as St. Andrew's Seminary. It included both classroom and dormitory space. Diocesan offices moved into the brick and cinder block building in the fall of 1972. Since then, only piecemeal changes have been made, according to Father Hart.

Most of the furniture has been donated through the years, he said, and much of it was designed for the typewriter rather than the computer era.

The renovation plans include replacing

leaky windows and insulating cold block and cement walls. Office spaces are being reconfigured.

"Anyone who was seated next to the walls had a real problem," Father Hart said, noting the coldness of those locations. The walls of his office, which once enclosed classes in French and music, display cracks he assumes occurred due to blasting at the active quarry across Buffalo Road. Similar cracks are seen elsewhere through the building.

"They were blasting close to the surface," Father Hart said. "It's a bomb going off on the same rock ledge we're on." The quarry has since moved to deeper levels, he noted.

The gymnasium, lately used for storage, will become the Bishop Dennis Hickey Conference Center, and may house such activities as pre-Cana sessions, Thanks Giving Appeal kickoffs and house meetings.

"We really have held off doing anything until we could afford it," Father Hart said.

Mendon parish begins centennial observance

St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Mendon will begin a year-long centennial celebration with an anniversary Mass Tuesday, Jan. 23, at 7 p.m. The church is located at 26 Mendon-Ionia Road (Route 64), just south of Route 251.

The liturgy will fall on the exact date of the first Mass that was celebrated at St. Catherine's 100 years ago, before the original church was even completed. As part of the centennial Mass, descendants of the founding families will be part of a procession, and carry candles. The Mass will be followed by a reception in the parish center.

"It sounds as if it's going to be a beautiful evening," said Anne Schottmiller, a member of the centennial coordinating committee that is being chaired by Sister of St. Joseph Ruth Maier, pastoral associate at St. Catherine's.

Among the other big centennial events planned during the upcoming year are a church dedication on May 23, 100 years to the day from the first dedication celebrated by Bishop Bernard McQuaid; and a Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark on June 9.

Schottmiller — who co-chairs the parish social-ministry committee along with her husband, John —noted that a picnic, ice-



James Stein/Photo intern
Jessica Hunt, 16, and her mother, Linda, work on a project during confirmation class at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Mendon Jan. 13.

cream social, international dinner and possible pilgrimage to Siena, Italy, are also being planned.

St. Catherine's was founded as a small rural parish but has grown steadily in recent years due to suburban sprawl. Today,

the parish, located in the southeast corner of Monroe County, has an interesting cross-section of young families in newly built homes, as well as longtime parishioners from the farming community. The parish now has approximately 1,000 families.

To accommodate St. Catherine's growth, a new church was added in 1992 and built onto the preexisting parish center. In an innovative architectural move, St. Catherine's original church was moved across the campus and attached to the new church. The old church is now used as the daily Mass chapel.

Father James Lawlor has served as pastor of the Mendon parish since 1998. Other recent pastors were Father Charles Latius, now the pastor of St. Rita's in Webster, from 1986-98; and Msgr. Albert Schnacky, who served at St. Catherine's from 1956 until his death in 1985, becoming pastor in 1970. The parish center is named after Msgr. Schnacky.

— Mike Latona

An elevator was installed at the center a few years ago, and the front entrance redone after that to provide handicap accessibility.

"This is the third phase" of renovations, Father Hart said. "Each time we did it because someone gave us the money to do it."

Phased renovations also will take place at Sacred Heart Cathedral, he said. The diocese is beginning to draw up a long-term, campuswide plan, but will do only what it can afford at each step, he said. The first decisions were whether or not to move the cathedral and the Pastoral Center, he noted. Having made the decision to keep them where they are, the next step was planning the repairs.

The cathedral roof needs immediate attention, for example. "It's either that or you abandon the building," Father Hart said.

A December diocesan-approved cathedral project update stated that the renovation committee would work over the next few months to determine how much money can be raised, what improvements are affordable and over what period of time.

"The committee hopes to have recommendations for a phased renovation plan that will ultimately upgrade the entire Cathedral campus ready for Bishop Matthew Clark's review by June of 2002," the document stated.

The committee has determined that essential work, estimated at \$2.5 million, should include replacing the slate roof and flashings; preserving and restoring exterior masonry and stained glass windows; repairing the 75-year-old boiler and heating system and plumbing; upgrading and replacing electrical and lighting systems; and adding new fire alarms and security systems.

While major decisions about the interior renovation are yet to be made, the update stated, there is consensus on preserving unique features. For example, more than 100 angels will be given more prominence, and the Stations of the Cross will be lowered and lighted to give them greater visibility.

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Kids' Chronicle answers from page 12:

1. Job, b; 2. Easter, ea; 3. truth, t; 4. spirit, it; 5. Jesus, u; 6. deacon, de; 7. saint, s.

Answer: Beatitudes