

DIOCESAN NEWS

Report shows diocese not exempt from market woes

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

The Diocese of Rochester has not been exempt from pain inflicted throughout the economy by an ailing stock market.

In a four-page pull-out section in this week's *Catholic Courier*, the diocese presents a condensed version of its annual financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001. The report was prepared by the independent auditing firm Bonadio and Co., LLP, of Pittsford. This is the second year the diocese has reported on its financial status through the *Courier*.

In 2000-01, the diocese had revenues of \$16.77 million and expenses of \$20.59 million, combining to create a deficit of expense over revenue of nearly \$4 million. This compares to a surplus of \$767,000 in 1999-2000, and a surplus of \$2.86 million the year before.

Moreover, the diocese's total revenues for 2000-01 were nearly \$7 million less than in 1999-2000, when total revenues were \$23.58 million. James Rinefiert, the diocese's chief financial officer, attributed this reduction in revenues to three factors: the conclusion of the year 2000 Jubilee Debt-Forgiveness Fund, to which parishes contributed \$1.08 million in 1999-2000 but only \$75,100 in 2000-2001; a timing-related reduction from \$5.7 million in 1999-2000 to \$4.78 million in 2000-2001 in gifts and bequests to the diocese; and poor investment performance.

Between 1999-2000 and 2000-01, net investment income — derived primarily from changes in the market value of as-

sets held by the diocese — declined by an amount roughly equal to the diocese's 2000-01 overall deficit. The diocese suffered a \$1.27 million loss in net investment income last year, compared to a gain of \$3.44 million during 1999-2000 — for a year-to-year variance of \$4.71 million.

"Clearly, if you look at our investment income, it was a huge swing," Rinefiert said. However, he added, stock-market woes affected "everybody else, from individual investors to institutional investors."

On the other hand, Rinefiert said, diocesan investment losses could have been much worse. Rinefiert emphasized that because its investment portfolio is highly diversified, the diocese only lost 3.3 percent of value. By comparison, he observed that Standard & Poor's 500 Index averaged a 14.8-percent decline during the same period.

Rinefiert said the diocese will not change its investment strategy in response to stock market volatility.

"We're not going to do some knee-jerk changes; we expect there's going to be some ups and downs. We accept the risk and know the risk is there," he said. "I think it's important to note that our investment program has a long-term outlook, and we have benefitted in previous years."

Rinefiert also spoke optimistically about the diocese's ability to convert funds into direct services. Of the \$9.6 million raised through the Thanks Giving Appeal and from other gifts, he said, only 5 percent was spent on fundraising expenses, whereas the national average for charities exceeds 20 percent.

Rinefiert remarked that the diocese has received positive feedback from last year's first-time effort to publish financial data in the *Courier*.

"People appreciated the information. It conveyed that the financial house of the diocese is in good order," Rinefiert said.

Despite the recently bleak economy, Rinefiert maintains that that house is still in good order.

"We try to operate our funds like an endowment, only using a portion of those funds for operations," Rinefiert said. This strategy is "designed to get us through those times when the market is going up and down."



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Matthew's Closet retail customer Lajuana Bost pays Paul Robinson \$1 for a bag of clothing during the ministry's dollar sale Feb. 1 and laughs as her son, Jeremiah, tries to get a rebate.

Clothing center reopened and looking for shoppers

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Paul Robinson is looking for a few clothes-minded people.

A volunteer member of the board of directors of Matthew's Closet, the clothing ministry of Corpus Christi Parish, Robinson wants the wider community to know that the ministry is alive and well and in need of volunteers after financial problems caused it to close temporarily last August.

Located in five rooms of Corpus Christi's former school building, Matthew's Closet offers free clothing to those in need and operates a retail outlet selling low-priced used items to the general public. The ministry also collects clothing for people in poor nations. It officially reopened the free-clothing operation Sept. 16 and the retail outlet Nov. 24.

Established in 1991, Matthew's Closet was so named because of a passage in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel that calls Christ's followers to clothe the naked. In August of last year, the ministry had to let go its three full-time employees and close shop, Robinson said.

"We just ran out of money, and we couldn't make payroll," he said, adding that Corpus Christi had partially subsidized the ministry until last August, when the parish no longer could afford to pay Matthew's Closet's three full-time employees. Since August 1998, when Bishop Matthew H. Clark removed then-administrator Father James B. Callan from the parish, several hundred of parishioners have left and the parish has experienced a decline in revenues. This has affected Matthew's Closet not only financially but in terms of the number of volunteers it is able to attract, Robinson said.

After Matthew's Closet closed last August, the parish said it could reopen as long as it was financially supported by other parishes in the diocese on a permanent basis. The ministry managed to garner donations from other parishes, enabling it to hire Robinson's wife, Beatrice, as a part-time referral manager, Robinson said. The ministry is still looking for a part-time retail manager, Robinson said, adding that interested persons can call contact him at 585-232-5160. It can always use more clothing donations and volunteers to sort clothes, he said.

By Robinson's account, Matthew's Closet is a busy operation, serving 1,300 families and individuals between January and August 2001 alone, and distributing 18,000 articles of clothing. Among its clients are poor people; newly arrived immigrants; people whose clothes were destroyed in house fires; and recently released prisoners, he said.

Various social service agencies, including Catholic Family Center and the Mon-



Jeremiah Bost, 5, fills a bag with stuffed animals at during the Matthew's Closet dollar sale. Customers paid \$1 for as many items as would fit into a bag.

roe County Department of Social Services, are the primary source of client referrals, he said. The ministry operates its referral service on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the general public is not allowed into Matthew's Closet on those days to protect the privacy and dignity of the clients, he said.

Robinson said that some of the clients are people who never expected to need free clothing. For example, he said that one grandmother aided by the ministry had suddenly found herself with five grandchildren to raise after her daughter abandoned them with no clothing other than what they were wearing at the time. Consequently, the grandmother was forced to adjust her lifestyle to take care of the kids. "This woman was washing their clothes every day," he said. "She was not on (welfare). She literally had nowhere to turn."

"The people that leave here are extremely grateful," Robinson added of the free-clothing clients. "Some leave with tears in their eyes, and there's always a 'God bless.'"

Proceeds from the retail operation — which operates on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays — go into the ministry's overall budget. Robinson urged all shoppers — even those who can afford higher-priced clothing sold elsewhere — to consider Matthew's Closet. Since all of the retail shop's merchandise is donated, consumers who shop there provide revenues the ministry can use to buy such items as men's underwear, which is generally not donated, for free-clothing clients.

"If (shoppers) spend \$10 here on clothing, financially that has the same effect it would have if they gave us a \$10 donation," he said.

MR. DOMINICS AT THE LAKE

Smoke-free, dining room

(off street parking available)

Delicious appetizers, soups, veal dishes, vegetarian, chicken, fish, and homemade pasta



10% SENIOR DISCOUNT WITH THIS AD!



Lunch:
Tues.-Fri. 11-2
Dinners Daily
from 4:30-9 p.m.

4699 Lake Ave
(585) 865-4630
www.mrdominics.com

Half of pregnancies are unexpected.
(But that's not the real surprise.)



It's that women can help reduce the risk of certain serious birth defects. Simply take a multivitamin with folic acid every day as part of a healthy diet, whether or not you plan on a visit from the stork. For more information, contact the March of Dimes at 1-888-MODIMES or www.modimes.org

March of Dimes
Saving babies, together

daffodil days
HOPE BLOOMS

Give a "Gift of Hope" to those touched by cancer.

Week of
April 1, 2002

With a "Gift of Hope," daffodils in a lovely vase will be anonymously delivered to a patient in a health-care facility designated by the American Cancer Society. We deliver the flowers, you deliver the hope.

Place your order today, or call to help sell daffodils at your company or school.

1-800.ACS.2345
www.cancer.org

AMERICAN
CANCER
SOCIETY

Hope. Progress. Answers.