

Change awaits Hispanic school

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

For more than 10 years, the Hispanic Pastoral Institute has provided theology courses taught in Spanish.

In January, the institute's curriculum will change in order to focus more on pastoral training, according to Deacon George Dardess, director.

The institute, which is a part of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry, was designed to inform and empower members of the Hispanic community, Deacon Dardess said.

"For different reasons, it never developed that pastoral dimension," he said. "It was a series of continuing-education classes. A lot of people benefited from that, but that's not the same as pastoral training."

Students at the institute have learned about the theory and theology behind ministry, but have not had the opportunity to put that knowledge into practice, Deacon Dardess said, so he has developed a new curriculum to address this problem.

The new curriculum will incorporate theology, spiritual development and the opportunity to gain hands-on experience through field work. The program includes 128 hours of class time, not including field work, spread over two years.

During the first year of the program, Deacon Dardess said, students will focus on learning about their faith and how to incorporate it into ministry, along with observing how liturgy works in several parishes. In the second year, students will complete a parish-based field-work experience, such as helping with a Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program, as well as a community-based experience, such as jail ministry. Graduates of the program will be able to minister in a variety of ways, from such parish-centered ministries as working with youths to such community-centered ministries as working with immigrants or families in crisis.

"This shows the ongoing commitment of the diocese to the Spanish-



Reuters/CNS

Marking Advent's start

Palestinian Christians light candles at Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity Nov. 30. The day was the first Sunday of Advent, the season of preparation that precedes the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas.

speaking community, and that commitment is now being strengthened to make the program more stable than it has been in the past," said Sister Patricia Schoelles, SSJ, president of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry.

Sandra Rojas, who has been active in the Rochester's Hispanic commu-

nity, said she hopes the renewed institute will serve as a model for other ethnic groups to use, eventually leading to a more multicultural church.

"I see the Hispanic Institute planting the seeds to see our church in Rochester worship in a multicultural perspective," she said.

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