

Schools plan consolidation

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

After 120 years of Catholic education in Wayland, St. Joseph's School is due to close in June 2004 as part of a consolidation process.

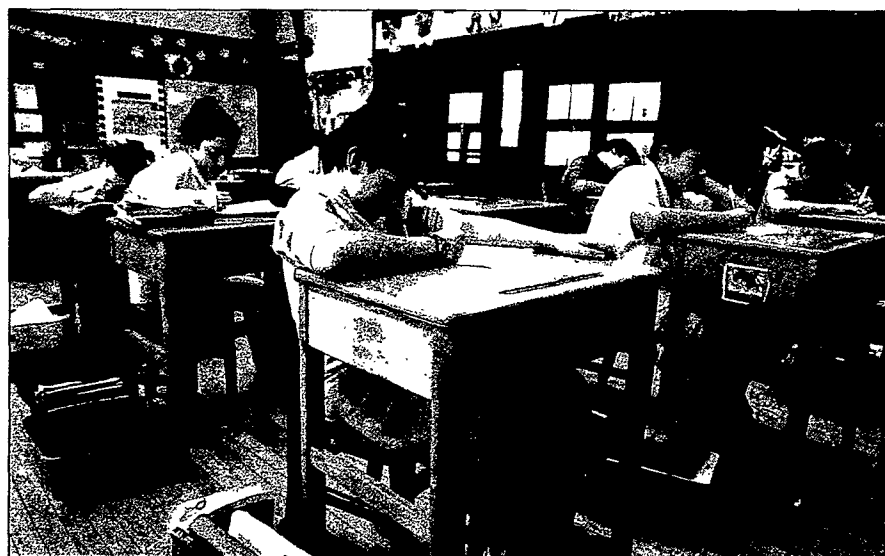
St. Joseph's is one of two parish-based schools in the Holy Family Catholic Community cluster; the other school is St. Mary's, Dansville. In a unanimous vote on Dec. 9, the 12-member Holy Family Parish pastoral council opted to merge St. Joseph's and St. Mary's into one facility — at the current St. Mary's building — for grades pre-kindergarten through 6. The combined school will open in the fall of 2004 as Holy Family Catholic School.

The decision follows several years of discussion on how to restructure the two schools, which have experienced declining enrollment and are among the smallest in the Rochester Diocese. According to statistics provided by the diocesan Department of Catholic Schools, St. Joseph's has 89 students this year in grades pre-K through 6, whereas St. Mary's has 109 students in pre-K through 5. St. Mary's currently does not have a sixth grade.

Holy Family Catholic Community encompasses the parishes of St. Joseph's, St. Mary's, St. Pius V in Cohocton and Sacred Heart in Perkinsville. Father Stephen Kraus, cluster pastor, said that the new school's location in southern Livingston County will offer the best opportunity for future growth — not only in attracting Holy Family-area students but also those from such Livingston County communities as Mount Morris, Nunda, Livonia and Geneseo.

"We're very much looking forward to this new venture, and are happy to continue Catholic education strongly in our cluster," Father Kraus stated.

Father Kraus acknowledged that there will "inevitably" be sadness over the closing of St. Joseph's School, but said the parish is considering "some creative ideas" for future use of the building. One possi-



Andrea Dixon/Catholic Courier

Students at St. Joseph's School in Wayland complete their classwork in this February 2002 photo. The school is slated to close in June 2004 as part of a consolidation process.

bility, he said, is to convert it into a faith-formation center.

St. Joseph's School, located in northern Steuben County, was founded in 1884; the current school building opened in 1932. Its closing will leave the county with two Catholic schools, St. Ann's in Hornell

and All Saints Academy in Corning. All Saints is a recent example of consolidation as well, having eliminated one of two buildings beginning this school year.

St. Mary's is currently one of two Catholic schools in Livingston County, the other being St. Agnes in Avon.

SADDAM'S CAPTURE WON'T END VIOLENCE

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican reacted quietly to news of Saddam Hussein's capture, and church officials in Rome predicted that Iraq still has a rough road ahead.

In Iraq, bishops and other church leaders said Saddam's detention would help the country "turn the page" in building social peace and order. But they, too, cautioned that violence would probably continue for some time in the country.

WOMEN'S ORDERS DECRY DEATH PENALTY

The Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of Mercy have jointly petitioned Monroe County District Attorney Howard Relin not to seek the death penalty in three murder cases.

"As Christians, we value each life and believe that public legitimized killing is never a solution," the sisters told Relin in a jointly signed Dec. 9 letter. "We, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester and the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester, beg you not to recommend this irrevocable and inhuman form of punishment."

Both congregations support life imprisonment with no parole for murderers.

Relin said his office is considering seeking the death penalty against defendants in three pending cases. Relin said he will take the sisters' objections to the death penalty into consideration. However, he added that he still believes the death penalty is a necessary punishment for certain crimes.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Sun., Dec. 21: Micah 5:1-4A; Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45.

Mon., Dec. 22: 1 Samuel 1:24-28; (Ps) 1 Samuel 2:1-8; Luke 1:46-56.

Tue., Dec. 23: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Psalms 25:4-5, 8-10, 14; Luke 1:57-66.

Wed., Dec. 24: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16; Psalms 89:2-5, 27, 29; Luke 1:67-79.

Thu., Dec. 25: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalms 98:1-6; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14.

Fri., Dec. 26: Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Psalms 31:3CD-4, 6, 8AB, 16BC-17; Matthew 10:17-22.

Sat., Dec. 27: 1 John 1:1-4; Psalms 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; John 20:1A, 2-8.

The Courier will not be published on Dec. 25, 2003, or Jan. 1, 2004. We will resume publishing on Jan. 8, 2004.

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