

INTRODUCING THE MONTHLY COURIER!

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

For longtime *Catholic Courier* readers, this new monthly edition departs from the newspaper's weekly frequency. For many more of you, this is your first exposure to the *Courier* — or your first in several years.

This monthly news-magazine is now being sent to all diocesan Catholic households for which the Rochester Diocese has a valid address — approximately 125,000 households in all, marking a three-fold jump in the paper's distribution.

"It's very important that people have as full an opportunity (to read the *Courier*) as we can provide," explained Bishop Matthew H. Clark, leader of the Rochester Diocese and publisher of the *Catholic Courier*. "Good information, consistently offered, is very important to the ongoing faith development of every one of us. I hope we can produce a product of such quality that we can get people interested, get their wheels spinning on issues that really matter."

Although recipients are welcome to contribute toward their parishes' expense in providing the paper, they are not obligated to do so, according to Karen M. Franz, the *Courier's* general manager/editor. The *Courier* will abide by the wishes of those who do not wish to continue receiving the paper, but Franz asked new recipients to review a few issues before making such a decision.

Franz noted that the process of combining the *Courier's* previous subscriber records with the diocesan database undoubtedly has produced some duplicate deliveries. She asked anyone with questions or concerns about delivery to call the *Courier* at 585/328-3228, ext. 2687 (or 1-800-388-7177, ext. 2687), a special line established for this purpose.

In other *Courier* changes, Massgoers on April 3-4 found inside their parish bulletins the first installment of a new four-page weekly edition being published in three versions — one for each of the diocese's three regions. In addition, a Spanish-language version is planned for later this year. The *Courier's* Web site — www.catholiccourier.com — also is being expanded to offer more news and features.

Diocese issues fiscal report

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

The Diocese of Rochester's 2002-03 financial statements tell two stories — one about the success of the Partners in Faith capital campaign and the other about mounting fiscal pressures faced by the diocese, according to James M. Rinefierd, chief financial officer. A condensed version of the audited statements appears as a supplement to this newspaper following page B12.

Pastoral Center operations posted a surplus of \$159,874. The diocese posted an overall deficit of \$489,650, a sharp contrast to the previous fiscal year's deficit of \$9.3 million.

Partners in Faith's success contributed to the fiscal improvement, Rinefierd said. The campaign — which had raised \$11 million by the end of the diocese's fiscal year in June 2003 — exceeded its \$50 million goal by 10 percent, he noted. The campaign will fund endowments for Catholic schools, Catholic Charities and faith formation. Proceeds also will go toward parish projects, enhance the priests' pension fund, and finance the renovation of Sacred Heart Cathedral and the construction of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry's new facility.

Yet Rinefierd cautioned that the diocese continues to face mounting financial pressures, including declining proceeds from the Thanks Giving Appeal. Each fall since its inception in 1981, the TGA has solicited donations from Catholics throughout the diocese. It is the diocese's primary fundraiser, providing approximately half of the annual budget. In 2003 the TGA was rolled into the Partners in Faith campaign, but the appeal will be reinstated in the fall of 2004.

Pledges to the 2002 TGA fell 8 percent short of the appeal's \$4.931 million goal, Rinefierd noted. That shortfall, coupled with investment losses and rising health-insurance costs, forced the diocese to lay off

nine employees in April 2003.

Rinefierd noted these other highlights of the financial statements:

- Investment losses declined significantly in 2002-03 compared to results from 2001-02, when the diocese posted a net investment income loss of more than \$4 million. Investment losses for 2002-03 were \$530,432, a figure that reflected rebounding in the stock market during the fiscal year, Rinefierd said

- The diocese's self-insurance fund presents a particular challenge. The costs of insurance policies have climbed 20 percent per year in each of the last three years, he said, and the diocese has been forced to increase its deductibles for property claims and worker's compensation to soften the blow. During the mid-'90s, Rinefierd added, investment returns on the insurance fund generated an average of \$1.2 million per year, but in the last three years, the insurance fund suffered investment losses totaling \$1.2 million. Additionally, claim expenses increased an average of 22 percent per year in the last two years.

Rinefierd said the diocese has increased premiums charged to parishes by 30 percent over the last

two years and encourages claims control through more vigilant maintenance of facilities.

He emphasized that rising insurance costs were not produced by the sexual-abuse scandal, noting that the diocese has paid out a total of \$600,000 since 1992 on claims related to sexual abuse, as opposed to \$14.2 million on all other claims during the same period.

- The cost of priests' pensions also is rising, Rinefierd said, noting that the number of retired priests has grown 40 percent over the past 10 years, from 74 in 1993-94 to 103 in 2002-03. Over the same period, the cost of funding priests' pensions has risen 97 percent, from \$571,000 in 1993-94 to \$1,127,000 in the past fiscal year, he said.

Rinefierd said he foresees further improvement for 2003-04, and encouraged diocesan Catholics to support the TGA's return this fall. "The appeal is critically important in allowing the diocese to conduct its work, and provide ministry and support to parishes, schools and agencies," he said.

Rinefierd said the complete financial statements are available on the diocesan Web site, www.dor.org.

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May 1 GARDENING AS PRAYER
9:30 am - 4:00 Offering: \$25

May 5 "GENUINE HAPPINESS"
Given by Dr. Terry O'Brien PhD.
6:00pm (dinner) - 9:00 pm
Offering: \$20 per person; \$35 per couple

**May 6 MOTHER / DAUGHTER
TWILIGHT RETREAT** Given by
Mrs. Gerrie Kaluzny (a mom) and
Sister Rose Raymond Wagner (a
daughter.) 6:00 (dinner) - 9:00 pm
Offering: \$35 per mother/daughter

June 4-6 PHOTOGRAPHY AS MEDITATION
Friday evening
6:00 (dinner) to Sunday morning.
Offering: \$100

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