

SSNDs celebrate 150 years

LISTING OF LOCAL SISTERS

Fifteen School Sisters of Notre Dame reside and minister in the Rochester Diocese. They are:

- **Sister Marie Therese Alaimo:** parish service, St. Cecilia Parish, Irondequoit
- **Sister Evelyn Breslin:** executive assistant, School of the Holy Childhood, Henrietta
- **Sister Mary Louise Brien:** teacher/learning assistant, St. Joseph's School, Penfield (will move to Notre Dame Learning Center, Rochester, in June 2004)
- **Sister Lorraine Burns:** coordinator, Notre Dame Learning Center, Rochester
- **Sister Rita Habecker:** special service foster care, Andrew's Center, Irondequoit
- **Sister Blanche Leising:** academic intervention services coordinator, Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Rochester
- **Sister Dorothy Mary Leising:** pastoral minister, Holy Apostles Parish, Rochester
- **Sister Mariella McMillan:** parish service, St. Cecilia Parish, Irondequoit
- **Sister Janice Nadeau:** in transition; was most recently pastoral minister, Holy Family Parish, Rochester
- **Sister Yvonne Nadeau:** pastoral minister, St. Paul of the Cross Parish, Honeoye Falls
- **Sister Miriam Therese Roncinske:** parish minister, St. Margaret Mary Parish, Irondequoit
- **Sister Mary Smith:** principal, St. Boniface School, Rochester
- **Sister Alma Caroline Statt:** teacher assistant, Siena Catholic Academy, Brighton
- **Sister Bernice Staub:** outreach to the elderly, St. Bernard's Park, Rochester
- **Sister Stephania Walczak:** teacher, Bishop Kearney High School, Irondequoit

— Mike Latona

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

"How ya doin' there, pumpkin?" Sister Rita Habecker said as she took a 9-month-old boy into her arms.

Though the child has numerous physical problems following a premature birth, Sister Habecker exclaimed, "He's *such* a beautiful baby — oh, my God." She continued to cradle the boy lovingly as she met with a visitor.

Sister Habecker has served as co-director for the past 20 years at Andrew's Center, a foster-care outreach in the convent of Irondequoit's St. James Church, where she also resides. She is one of many School Sisters of Notre Dame in the Rochester Diocese who have branched out from their backgrounds in education. Several of those SSNDs are involved in parish ministry, and two — Sister Lorraine Burns and Sister Mary Louise Brien — have committed to an SSND-operated learning center for low-income women and their children that just opened in Rochester this year.

The order celebrated 150 years of service in this diocese on Sunday, April 25. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark at St. Michael's Church in Rochester, and a banquet followed at the Diplomat Party House. All 15 School Sisters of Notre Dame who currently reside and minister in the diocese, as well as 50 additional SSNDs, were to have taken part.

According to a history provided by the order, the Rochester connection began on Oct. 15, 1854, when two SSNDs and a candidate came to Rochester to teach 178 girls at the former St. Joseph's School — the first parochial school in Rochester. Most of the families at that time were of German extraction.



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

School Sisters of Notre Dame Sister Blanche Leising (left) and Sister Dorothy Mary Leising carry candles to be placed on the altar of Rochester's St. Michael's Church during an April 25 Mass celebrating the order's 150th anniversary in the Diocese of Rochester.

The teaching ministry spread rapidly to other German parish schools: Ss. Peter and Paul in 1855; St. Boniface in 1856; Holy Family and Holy Redeemer in 1867; St. Michael's in 1874; St. Joseph's Commercial School in 1904; and Holy Ghost, Gates, in 1918. Three new missions were added in 1962: Rochester's St. Philip Neri School and Irondequoit's St. Margaret Mary School, as well as Irondequoit's Bishop Kearney High School.

Sister Evelyn Breslin, a Boston native, said she was attracted as a young child to an SSND vocation due to the sisters' "openness, their friendliness, their eagerness to work on educating children." Sister Breslin, who entered the SSNDs in 1965, taught at St. Joseph's Business School and was then a teacher and administrator at Bishop Kearney for 22 years before taking on her current role — as executive assistant at School of the Holy Childhood in Hen-

rietta — in 1994.

Sister Habecker, who entered the SSNDs in 1962, said that she "always found the sisters to be extremely friendly and caring" at her childhood parish, Ss. Peter and Paul in Rochester. She is a former principal at Holy Family and Holy Ghost schools.

The SSNDs' provincial headquarters are in Wilton, Conn. While education is still a focal point for several of the Rochester sisters, Sister Habecker and Sister Breslin noted that some of the other ministries are closely linked with the founding sisters' focus in 1830s Bavaria — care of the poor. This is true in both the United States and the many other countries where SSNDs serve, Sister Breslin said.

"Well, you know, you teach in different ways," Sister Breslin remarked. "We're constantly becoming more involved in the communities."



We Invite You To Discover The Unique Advantages Of

OUR MOTHER OF SORROWS SCHOOL






Accepting
Student
Registration for
Grades K-8

- Faith, moral and spiritual values to sustain children throughout life
- An academic curriculum that meets or exceeds the standards set by New York State and the Diocese of Rochester
- The use of technology to enhance the curriculum with a state of the art computer lab along with computers in the classroom
- A nurturing family atmosphere
- Opportunities to discover talents, develop leadership abilities, and grow in self-confidence
- A highly dedicated faculty and support staff

1777 Latta Rd
663-1100

*Striving to be
Authentically Catholic and
Academically Excellent*

Now hiring direct support professionals

COME GROW WITH US



Heritage Christian Services is a growing human service agency that provides services for people who are developmentally disabled. We are currently accepting applications for FT and PT positions. Weekend, evening, and overnight hours available. Enjoy excellent benefits and great team work. Drivers license required.

Call today (585) 340-2079
Fax (585) 340-2006

349 West Commercial St., Suite 2795
East Rochester, NY 14445-2402
www.heritagechristianservices.org

HERITAGE
CHRISTIAN SERVICES

Empowering people. Enriching lives.