

New addition **blessed**

*Classrooms, all-purpose
conference room
accommodate more students,
parish activities*

By Harry Thomas-
Correspondent

The blessing that took place Sept. 19 will go down in the history of St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish and School as another mile-stone for excellent education and vibrant community life.

Bishop Paul G. Bootkoski and Msgr. Michael J. Corona, executive director, diocesan Department of Education, joined pastor Father Robert G. Lynam; Religious Teacher Filippini Sister Mary Louise Shulas, principal; representatives of the diocesan schools office; Knights of Columbus; Columbiettes; teachers, the student body, and parish members at the blessing of the new Father McGivney Hall, the showpiece of the updated Canterbury Corner for young children.

The new addition houses two class- rooms and a

conference room to accommodate the exploding population of pre-K students - 98 this year - and provide a meeting place for the Knights and other parish and community organizations.

On hand were local, state and national officers of the Knights of Columbus to recognize the contribution of the St. Augustine of Canterbury Knights Council #6345 and its long history of support of education in the parish.

The Knights of Columbus donated \$175,000 for the McGivney Hall project to turn a former four-bay storage garage into the sparkling facility. According to Father Lynam, the parish matched the donations with savings, and then received another \$100,000 from the Knights at just 4 percent interest through five-year payouts. The remainder was received from the Diocese of Metuchen at a five-year payout, he said.

Bishop Bootkoski, who served as state chaplain for the Knights in the past, praised the organization for its support of many worthwhile projects. "It's

wonderful," Bishop Bootkoski said during the Mass. "We need the Knights of Columbus. They are important to us."

Following the Mass in the church, school children and an honor guard of Knights led a procession to McGivney Hall.

A copper statue of Father Michael J. McGivney, who founded the Knights in 1882, as well as a plaque with a timeline of his life and a copy of the first Knights of Columbus charter, are found in the building's conference room.

As part of the blessing, first graders held crosses to be placed in each of the rooms.

Father Lynam praised the Knights for their generosity. "Father Reilly reached out to the Knights to provide our original addition, Canterbury Corner. In the spirit of Father Reilly, I reached out to the Knights again to share their treasure with the parish, to help this building come about."

Father Lynam also commended past Grand

Knight Bob Volner, who moved the project through on every level.

He credited Sister Mary Louise with the impetus to begin the project. "I just helped develop the ideas with the architects . . . We knocked out the walls, and we brought in large windows to bring in the sunshine," Father Lynam said.

Sister Mary Louise was moved by the large attendance at the Mass and blessing. "It was a beautiful testimony in support of Catholic education," she said.

Each classroom holds 15 students and two pre-K sessions are held each day. The addition has allowed the school to offer a pre-K Enrichment Program, a full-day program for working parents. Children began using the new building several weeks ago.

The pre-K program, including the full-day Enrichment Program, will also be open all summer, Sister Mary Louise announced.