

# New parochial school dedicated

by **BILL GLEISS**  
Democrat Editor

A planning and construction journey lasting more than two years culminated in the dedication of a new school for St. Patrick's Catholic Parish last week.

La Crosse Diocese Bishop Jerome ListECKI blended disarming humor with an inspirational message to over 100 parishioners at the ceremony at the school gymnasium in Sparta.

"As a former basketball player, I think there's something sacrilegious about dribbling a ball when you walk into a gymnasium," he quipped as the half-hour event got underway.

"God bless you for your accomplishment," added the prelate on a more serious note. His compliment concerned the \$1.6 million structure built in two phases over two years. Total cost of the project tops out at \$2

million with furnishings.

Planning and fundraising for the project were started at the beginning of the decade by a series of parish committees.

The one-story concrete block building stretching the entire 100 block of North L Street is simple in taste but colorful, said Father Jim Leary, parish pastor.

Four houses were acquired, and, along with the parish center, razed to create space for the education and activity center. In addition to the gym, the structure contains 10 classrooms, computer and science labs, library, kitchen, lavatories, quarters for the Religious Education Program for youth who don't attend the school, and a series of offices, said Leary.

"It's a great commitment to the young people of the parish by the adults of the parish," he added. Building donations came from a variety of sources beyond 650 of Leary's parishioners.

Gifts from far away school alumni and others in the form of memorials also found their way into the project's coffers.

The most generous benefactors, James and Barbara Runde, gave \$75,000 for the library in memory of his parents, Orlin and Kathleen, whose 10 children attended the school. A few other formidable contributions were in the \$30,000-\$35,000 range.

With completion of the first phase last year, the school became an actual campus with classes taught in two buildings.

The lower grades occupied the older one, and older children were sent across the street to the new educational venue. But that will change this week with consolidation of the 150-member student body in the modern 50,000 square-foot facility.

The old school, also built in

(See BISHOP Page 10)



St. Patrick's Education and Activity Center



## Dedication

Bishop Jerome Listecky (right) of La Crosse officiated at last week's dedication of St. Patrick's Parish's new school and activity center on North L Street. At left is Listecky in full ecclesiastical garb.

# Bishop officiates at school christening

(Continued from Page 1)

two phases, eventually will be torn down, but Leary doesn't foresee that happening before

spring.

In offering perspective to the colossal cost of the new school, the parish's largest capital improvement to date, Leary said the first story of the old school was built in 1932 for \$20,000. The second level, with a red brick exterior matching perfectly with the original construction, went up about 1950 at a cost of \$51,000.

The monetary accomplishment wasn't lost on Listecky, who joked that for the dedication Leary wore his Capuchin robe -- a symbol of austerity -- because he would be experiencing poverty now.

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
 612 N. Water St.  
 269-5081, [www.tlcsparta.org](http://www.tlcsparta.org)

**Pastor: Jeffrey Wm. Miller**  
**Pastor: Matthew E. Toso**

Friday, Oct. 2 - 6 p.m. Wedding of  
 Stephanie Schulz and John  
 Greenwell.

Sunday, Oct. 4 - 8:15 a.m. Holy  
 Communion Service; 9:15 a.m.  
 Youth Group; 9:30 a.m. Adult

**Mission Fest dinner**