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Staff Photo by Durrell Hall Jr.

A time for sharing

The Most Rev. Thomas C. Kelly, Roman Catholic archbishop of Louisville, talked yesterday with people waiting to receive a free

lunch at the dedication of the St. Vincent dePaul Center, a facility for the needy, on South Jackson Street.

Archbishop dedicates center for needy

By JOHN C. LONG
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

When the Most Rev. Thomas C. Kelly, Roman Catholic archbishop of Louisville, arrived to dedicate the St. Vincent dePaul Center on South Jackson Street shortly before 11 a.m. yesterday, more than 100 hungry people were already waiting in line for their free lunches.

With brief prayers and the sprinkling of holy water, Kelly blessed each of the two parts of the facility for the poor for which the St. Vincent dePaul Society has remodeled the old St. Paul School and the basement of St. Paul Roman Catholic Church, between Kentucky and St. Catherine streets.

He first blessed the Ozanam Inn — the former school, renamed for Frederic Ozanam, who founded the charitable society in Paris 151 years ago — as a shelter for people who have nowhere else to sleep. Then he blessed The Open Hand,

the refurbished kitchen and dining room in the church basement, for people who have nowhere else to eat.

Kelly greeted and shook hands with each of the 210 people in the lunch line, beginning with those inside, then outside and up the steps and all the way out to the sidewalk along Jackson Street.

"What's the holdup?" a woman in line outside asked the archbishop, who confessed to being the culprit and went cheerfully on shaking hands.

"Nice to see you! We're proud to have you!" he said.

Yesterday's brief delay was the only one the dedication caused. Serving the poor at the St. Vincent dePaul Center would not wait on ceremony.

The center began serving meals last October, during construction, which had begun in May of last year. Last month The Open Hand

dining room served more than 12,000 free meals.

The Ozanam Inn opened in March, when the society moved in 25 people that it had housed at a shelter on First Street. Now 60 men and women are staying nightly at the new shelter. As soon as someone donates additional beds and mattresses, the shelter will be filled each night to its capacity of 74.

The center also needs a copying machine, office chairs, two food freezers, a regular-size and a miniaturized refrigerator, a van or station wagon, wall clocks, pictures, used TV sets, throw rugs, floor-style coat racks, asphalt tile, small tables, table lamps, exterior signs, an indoor sign board with changeable letters, a 16mm movie projector, a small safe, a filing cabinet that locks, a deep-fryer — and cash, said Joe Sloane, the center's community relations director.

Paul Willenbrink, the center's executive director, showed the shelter's top floor, private rooms; the main three dormitories, two one women's; and the group of 18 private cubicles are tiny (about 6 ft. by 6 ft.). Willenbrink acknowledged the shelter's "thrill!"

"I'm thrilled!" Kelly told V. and Gerald J. Roberts, president of the St. Vincent dePaul Society, which has 250 member parishes. "It was a great day. I really am very proud."

Kelly also said he was pleased that the center is open to need — not just Catholics but non-Catholics as well.

The center, in fact, receives funds from the Roman Catholic archdiocese toward its estimated \$460,000 cost.

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DePaul Society's women's center to open soon in Shelby Park

By DARLA CARTER
The Courier-Journal

The Society of St. Vincent dePaul is nearing completion of a sprawling, Shelby Park center for women recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.

The building, covering more than 8,000 square feet at Jackson and East St. Catherine streets, should be ready for a grand opening in October, which is slightly behind schedule, said Mary Schuyler, a society spokeswoman.

When construction began in December, the society thought work would be completed this summer, but unforeseen delays slowed down Waldrip Construction Co., Schuyler said.

"It's been a very wet spring and even a very wet summer, and that's delayed the construction company a great deal," she said. "There also were some building permit delays and the legal ramifications wrapped up in dealing with 14 parcels of land."

Several dilapidated homes were torn down to make way for the center. It will replace the St. Jude House at 703 E. St. Catherine St., where the society operates a recovery program for about 15 women.

The new center will offer several advantages, Schuyler said, including the space to serve 30 women. That's twice the capacity of St. Jude House, which typically has a waiting list of four to 15 women.

Stephan F. Williams, the society's director of programs, said the new center probably will reach capacity within the first few months. The Healing Place is constructing a shelter at 18th Street and Broadway to operate a similar program,

which should help meet the demand.

Williams said rampant cocaine use is driving the need for such recovery programs. A 1997 survey by the Coalition for the Homeless found that crack cocaine was the No. 1 drug in use among female respondents.

Similarly at St. Jude, Williams said almost every woman has had experience with crack, whereas alcohol abuse used to be more common. "It's a very addictive substance," Williams said of crack. "It debilitates faster than some other drugs."

Staff members say the center will be a drastic improvement over the aging St. Jude House, fashioned from two adjoining shotgun homes.

"There's tarp on the roof, and in some of the rooms, the ceiling is threatening to fall in," Schuyler said. "There's leaks when it rains. We'll be glad to leave it behind."

Program manager Sarah Tucker said the maintenance problems have been an unwanted distraction. She spoke as buckets filled with rainwater in her office.

"I'm looking forward to being able to spend more time counseling and serving the clients rather than keeping the building together," she said. "We're looking to have more staff too, and that will certainly be more helpful to the residents."

The new center will be a two-story building with an enclosed courtyard, 24-hour staffing and closed-circuit television monitoring.

Anyone interested in contributing may call the society at 584-2480.

Soup kitchen provides a Christmas feast

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serve," said Michael Lott, director of development for the local St. Vincent dePaul Society.

Yesterday the hall overflowed with Christmas decorations. Rows of stuffed animals to be given out to children lined the single and the workbench over the old doors. Plastic by children flanked a Christmas tree with gifts beneath it.

Some meant to establish a Christmas tradition of ringing the old church bell to symbolically — and literally — call people to dinner. Last year a little girl asked him if she could ring the bell. "She was almost 10," he said.

The annual effort "has the tendency to bring out the best in people," said Karen Steyer, who has worked for the Society of St. Vincent dePaul for a few years.

"They have a place where they can take their time. We afford them dignity, which they deserve."

Michael Lott, director of development for the local St. Vincent dePaul Society



Volunteers help prepare food for the Christmas feast at the St. Vincent dePaul Society's soup kitchen.



Former U.S. Rep. Romano, Mazzone and his wife, Helen, helped serve food yesterday. More than a dozen volunteers helped with the dinner.

St. Vincent Society Adds 53 Members

Catholic Group Spends \$7,375 For Relief Work

Quarterly reports were read to about 450 members of Vincent dePaul Society at a meeting Sunday in St. Peter's Church, at which fifty-three members were received.

William P. Kelly, correspondence secretary, reported that since October 1, a total of 966 Vincent dePaul Society members have been received. The cost to the society's relief work was \$7,375.37 for the quarter.

3,338 Visits to Families.

He announced that 448 visits were made to hospitals and nursing homes, exclusive of those made by the Vincent dePaul Society's special works committee.

3,338 visits were made to work among families in the homes of families. Thirty-one conference members were received.

Committees made a total of 134 visits to institutions about 1,864 persons whom were Catholics. Meetings were assisted by fifteen institutions by the Vincent dePaul Society.

On these visits were made public papers and magazines, eighty-two papers and catechisms, eight books and other religious books, twenty-eight creature comforts and nine pieces of clothing.

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It was sobering view from bottom of bottle

Cityscape

By Elinor J. Brecher

Cityscape is a new column by various members of The Courier-Journal staff. It will appear on this page every Sunday.

Bette Rentschler wrestles her monstrous seaweed-green Pontiac to the curb, its back end sagging under its burden of plastic garbage bags stuffed with linens, clothes and rugs, a trash can filled with tubes of toothpaste and bars of soap, small pieces of furniture, bedraggled plants.

Bette's a tiny woman, barely 5-foot-1. At the wheel of the Pontiac, she looks like a child.

The donor of the gun house near

Catherine and Clay streets stipulated it be named St. Jude House, after the patron saint of hopeless causes. It will have room for eight women besides Bette, the resident manager. Two years ago, Bette left Eastern State Hospital in Lexington with two changes of clothes and a \$5 bill. When she hit Louisville, "there wasn't anyone more hopeless than me," she says.

But she enrolled in the program at Jefferson Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center (JADAC), and now she has been sober for 18 months. Through still-clearing eyes, she's seeing a world filled with unsuspected wonders.

"I was raised to believe that mon-ey could get you anything," she says. "I've never been so broke in all my life, but I've never been happier."

Bette is 46. She says she started drinking after her divorce 15 years ago and wound up in institutions in Lexington and Cincinnati about

A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT Bush honors a local volunteer



President Bush and Paul Carmony shared a laugh after Bush presented a Volunteer Service Award to Carmony on the tarmac at Louisville International Airport yesterday. Carmony helps out at St. Vincent de Paul's Clothes Closet.



Brenda Stillwell rolled a rack of clothing into the showroom at the new St. Vincent dePaul Society thrift store last week.

DePaul Society opening store for the 'newly needy'

Preston site replaces one on Oak Street

By CYNTHIA WILSON
Staff Writer

Like workers for other organizations that help the needy, St. Vincent dePaul Society staff members see them every day: people who are suddenly out of work, ill or new in town with little more than a roof over their heads.

Many of these people aren't destitute but are looking for bargains on used furniture, clothing or household items.

"These are the newly needy," said Mary Jo Hruska, manager of one of the society's thrift stores.

Hruska and other society staff members hope people will be able to find those bargains at the store's new, 10,000-square-foot location, which opens tomorrow at 1029 S. Preston St. in the Shelby Park neighborhood. Tomorrow the store will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hruska said. Its regular hours will be 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.

The society owns the new location, which replaces a 3-year-old store in leased space at 1034 E. Oak St. Its other thrift store is at 248 E. Market St.



all donations are tax-deductible. "There are a lot more people who can walk to us now," Hruska said. "Like the old store, the new one

nated items sooner because volunteers from other St. Vincent programs will be called on to help the society's programs for the

store because they wanted it to

Messrs. W. & D. S. Piatt of this city have presented to the St. Vincent de Paul Society a box of shoes to be distributed to the poor the approaching winter.