

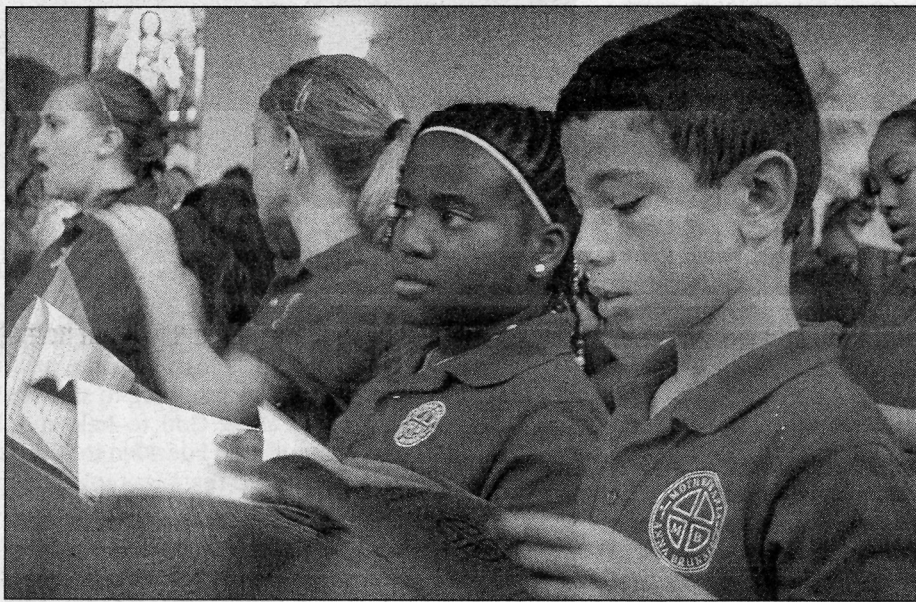
## News

**Members** of the Mother Brunner Catholic School community pose in front of their school with Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr.

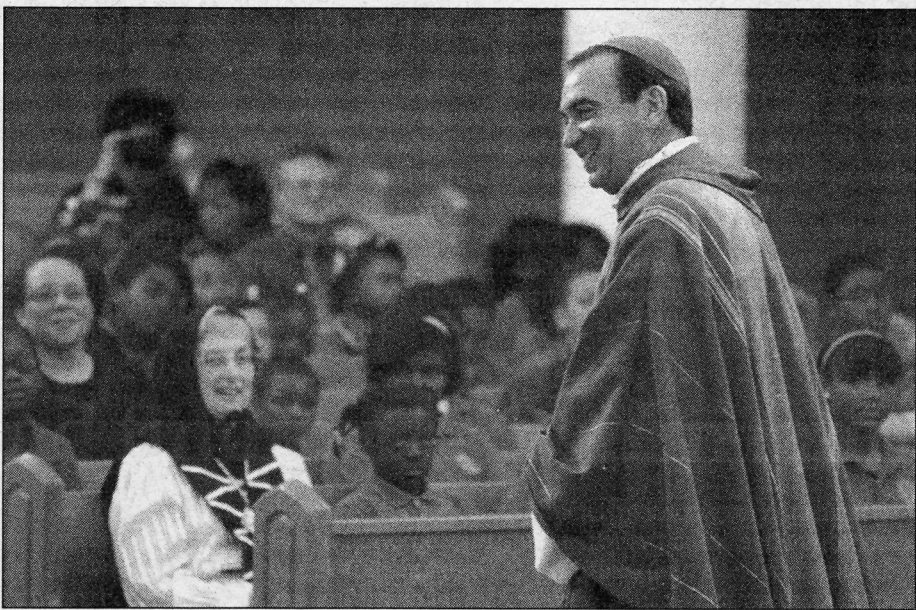
CT photos by  
Jeff Unroe



## Mother Brunner Catholic School celebrates unity



**Students prepare to sing** during the opening Mass.



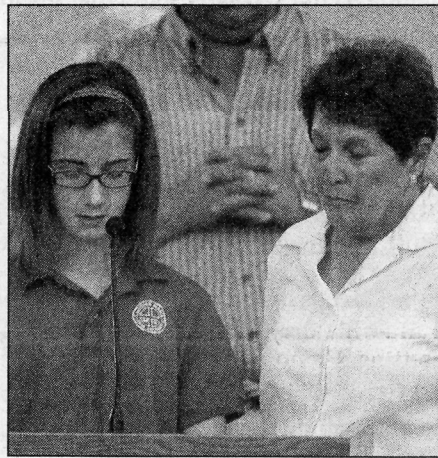
**Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr** presides at the opening Mass at Mother Brunner Catholic School. Also pictured is Sister of the Precious Blood Nadine Kashalk, portraying Mother Maria Anna Brunner, foundress of the religious congregation for whom the school is named.

**DAYTON DEANERY** — Students, faculty, staff, parents, representatives of the archdiocesan Catholic Schools Office and members of the local community came together at Mother Brunner Catholic School in Dayton Sept. 22 for the opening Mass of the academic year. Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr presided.

The school was established this year through the consolidation of Precious Blood and St. Rita schools, each of which has a rich history of Catholic education. Changing neighborhood demographics, financial struggles and declining enrollment had affected both schools in recent years, explained Veronica Murphy, principal. Discussions about a possible consolidation began last fall, she said, and involved parents, members of both parishes and area residents. The consolidation was announced in March.

"Both groups realized that, in spite of our individual struggles, we had a positive future together," Murphy said. "Our goal is to maintain a strong and vibrant Catholic presence in northwest Dayton."

The school, which serves 455 students, was named for Mother Maria Anna Brunner, foundress of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. "We realized one thing that ties us together was that the



**Cassidy Aughe**, an eighth grader at Mother Brunner Catholic School, reads the petitions at Mass along with assistant principal Annette Dodsworth.

Sisters of the Precious Blood taught at both schools for many years," Murphy said. "It was only fitting to name the school for Mother Brunner. She's very important in our area, and we can use her as example as we guide our mission. She treated everyone like family, and that's what we want to do — care for each other like a family."

Another goal was to build unity among students and teachers, so a variety of activities were held in the spring and summer to accomplish this. Seventh and eighth graders attended a retreat together at the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. The younger students had lunchtime play dates and exchanged letters with pen pals from the other school. The teachers attended a summer retreat at the Spiritual Center of Maria Stein. To further promote a sense of community, the theme for the 2010-11 school year is "One Lord, One Body."

The opening Mass was an opportunity to celebrate their unity, said Murphy, noting that the students were thrilled to have Archbishop Schnurr there to join them. "He shared the message of how important Catholic schools are and his support made us feel wonderful," she said. "It was very exciting to have our first Mass all together. All the hard work that everyone did has really paid off." ■



**Memorabilia** from both Precious Blood and St. Rita schools, which consolidated to form Mother Brunner Catholic School, is on display.