



PHOTOS BY PHILIP KAMRASS/TIMES UNION

**BISHOP HOWARD HUBBARD** anoints the altar during Sunday's dedication at Corpus Christi Church in Round Lake.

# Ancient rites, modern architecture

**Round Lake** 1,000 attend as bishop consecrates new house of worship for growing community

By **LEIGH HORNBECK**  
Staff writer

The smell of new carpet mingled with the ancient scent of incense Sunday as Bishop Howard Hubbard consecrated the new sanctuary of Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church in Round Lake.

More than 1,000 people celebrated the culmination of four years of fund raising, planning and construction to expand Corpus Christi, a \$3.6 million project.

In his closing remarks, Hubbard drew laughter when he said he overheard a woman say during the lengthy ceremony, "It's taking longer to consecrate this church than it did to build it."

Witnessing the dedication of a new church is a unique event, Hubbard said. The elements of the ceremony — anointing the altar with oil, blessing the walls, the ambo and the baptismal font — are rare rituals.

The sanctuary, large enough to seat 1,000 when extra chairs are set up, is an unusual design. Congregants are seated in a circular



**THE REV. MARTY FISHER**, pastor of Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church, greets parishioners Sunday at the dedication of the \$3.6 million church.

arrangement so they face the altar, the ambo — the lectern where Gospel passages are read — and one another. It is rare among American churches, Hubbard said, but symbolic of the mission at Corpus Christi,

which is to take the focus off clergy and spread religious responsibility among lay people.

The Sunday school teacher and the  
Please see **CHURCH B7** ▶

# CHURCH: New project consecrated

▼ CONTINUED FROM B1

people who help couples preparing to be married need to understand "They are not just helping out because of a shortage of clergy, but because it is their responsibility, their right," said Hubbard.

"We believe Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist, the Gospel and the community, so we were trying to separate the three," said Bill Malloy, co-chairman of the building committee. "And when people can see each other, it is a more communal celebration."

The new sanctuary is the result of local effort and national contracts. The altar, made of exotic wood and inlaid granite, was

made by an artist in California and arrived in Clifton Park only Saturday. The 11-by-16-foot banner hanging behind it was sewn by eight members of the congregation and led by artist Diane Marco of Ballston Lake. The image of Christ on the cross with a dove in his left hand was repeated on the stole Marco embroidered for the pastor, the Rev. Marty Fisher, to wear Sunday.

A crown of thorns hanging from the interior of the 60-foot steeple was created by a Schenectady artist and was a gift from Our Lady of Victory in Troy. Some of the elements of the church, including 22 stained-glass windows, were taken from the old church. A wood carving

in the vestibule of the holy family also used to hang in the original 1954 church.

Controversy touched the Corpus Christi parish during the years leading up to Sunday's dedication. In July 2002, a former pastor, the Rev. Edward C. Pratt, was removed from public ministry because of substantiated allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor.

Pratt's replacement, a priest everyone calls "Father Marty," said he was overwhelmed by the "support, the courage of this community."

"This once-in-a-lifetime event is captured by the liturgy, but also the joy and excitement of the congregation," Fisher said.