An arched walkway runs along the rear of the old building

**THIS TIME AS DAY CARE CENTER**

**St. Mary's To Again House Children**

The old St. Mary's Home at the corner of West St. Mary and St. Landry streets will soon be filled with the sound of children again.

Our Lady of Lourdes has leased the building from the Diocese of Lafayette to relocate and expand its employee child care services.

A hospital spokesman said the day care center for employee's children now accommodates 43 youngsters from 6 a.m. to midnight and there is a long waiting list for others.

By moving to the old St. Mary's Home, the spokesman said, the day care center's capacity can be doubled. The child care program may be expanded to offer 24-hour service if needed in the future.

Our Lady of Lourdes has offered employee child care service since February 1981.

Portions of the property will be utilized for other purposes.

Dudley Romero, executive vice president of the hospital, said the St. Mary's Home gymnasium "will be used to accommodate our Cardiac Rehabilitation Phase III program. This is an out-patient exercise program so only minor changes will need to be made. We will also be building a 'wellness' track next to the building as part of our Center of Excellence in Cardiology.'

Also, Romero continued, the hospital will use some of the property along the coulee for parking.

The lease for 6.45 acres of the diocese's property is for 66 months. The hospital has an option to renew that agreement for an additional five years.

Romero stressed that Our Lady of Lourdes has no plans to demolish any buildings on the site. He added that office space in other St. Mary buildings may be used in the future.

The Diocese bought the St. Mary property from the Albert and Lillian Landry estate in 1923. It was used as the St. Mary's Children's Home (popularly referred to as "St. Mary's Orphanage") until it closed in 1976.

Portions of the building were then used for the seminary and some diocesan offices.

Also, St. Mary's Special Education Center was located in some of the buildings. But the property was vacated and put up for sale in 1982 by the diocese.

"We are happy to enter into this agreement with Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital," Bishop Gerald Frey said. "It is in keeping with our intentions to use the property to provide continued health care for the citizens of Lafayette and surrounding Acadiana."

Frey noted that the diocese sold part of the original St. Mary property in 1946 to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. That 8.45 acres west of the coulee became the site of the present hospital.

In 1947, the diocese sold land on St. Julian Street to the state of Louisiana for a tuberculosis hospital. It is now the Acadiana Mental Health Center.