



STAFF PHOTO BY NANCY LANE

**NEW HOUSING:** Pauline Moriarty, left, and Alfred Gaudet greet Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley, who was in Lynn yesterday to kick off redevelopment of the St. Jean Baptiste church.

# Lynn church will be reborn

By **FRANCI RICHARDSON**

The old St. Jean Baptiste church — once a welcoming refuge for many French immigrants in Lynn's west end — will be razed to make way for new apartments and townhouses for the poor.

"I'm glad it's being used for something special and not just forgotten," said Pearl Hebert, 74, wiping the tears from her eyes during a groundbreaking yesterday at the church. "My children got baptized here. They were married here. It was home."

After being closed for more than five years, St. Jean Baptiste will be

converted into 38 units of affordable housing to include 24 subsidized apartments and 14 townhouses available to first-time homebuyers. The project also will have a community area that will provide after-school programs for children, job training for adults and homebuyer counseling. The development project is the work of the Archdiocese of Boston along with city and state officials.

"Part of the message at Christmas-time is we who are believers need to find room at the inn for those who need decent and affordable housing," said Boston Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley. This project is a "living testimony to the church's commit-

ment to social justice and betterment of people's lives."

At the same ceremony, Gov. Mitt Romney underscored the importance of affordable housing throughout the state. "We need to create more housing of all kinds in the commonwealth for all people," Romney said. "I'm very much in favor of seeing more housing in areas that have already been developed, like this with transportation and schools and water and sewer."

Demolition of the four buildings that belong to the church is scheduled to begin in three weeks while construction should be complete by the end of 2004.