

Bishop's Message on St. John the Baptist Church

I come to you today as the shepherd of the diocese to be among you to show my concern and express my sympathy at this time of parish sorrow. I extend to Father Tobin, to Monsignor Schwab and to all the good people of St. John the Baptist parish my personal sympathy at the loss of your beautiful church which has served the Elmira area for so many years.

I have come to you today to show by my presence that I am ready to consider whatever decision is made by Father Tobin in conjunction with his parishioners concerning the future of St. John the Baptist Church. However, before a decision is reached, I am asking that Father Tobin and his parishioners seek answers to questions based on proper planning data, which will signify

the total future mission of the church in this area. May I ask that you address yourselves to the following:

A) POPULATION

1. How many people will be living in the geographical area served by your parish in the next five to ten years? (U.S. census of population 1970 may be of assistance.)

2. What will be the forecast of the number of parishioners in the next ten years?

3. Will there be any major or minor population shifts caused by urban renewal, New York State Department of Transportation plans, or loss of population caused by Hurricane Agnes of June 1972?

4. In light of population surveys by age groupings (ex. 45-49 yrs., 50-54 yrs., 55-59 yrs., 60-64 yrs., 65-69 yrs., 70-74 yrs., etc.) please provide me with an age profile which shows the projected financial viability of the parish ten years hence.

B) MINISTERIAL NEEDS AND PERSONNEL

1. How are the ministerial needs and pastoral problems facing the church of Elmira to be dealt with for the next ten years? I suggest a resource meeting of Father William Tobin, as pastor of St. John the Baptist Church, Father Henry Adamski and Father Joseph Gaynor, as regional coordinator, and assistant coordinator, respectively, for the Chemung-Schuyler Region, and Father Edward Foy as pastor of

the neighboring parishes to discuss these problems of the future.

2. In view of the overall lack of personnel in the diocese for the foreseeable future and the availability of other churches in the area, could not the needs of St. John be met by the neighboring parishes?

C) BUILDING

1. In view of the physical condition of the building, is it best to repair the present structure of St. John the Baptist Church, amalgamate with other parishes or build a functional building?

2. What type of church facility and space will best serve the needs of the area in the next 20-30 years?

3. What are the possibilities of sharing facilities with other churches and/or denominations?

The important decision concerning the future of St. John the Baptist Church should be based on research data and any important information that might be gathered. Once the information has been completed and a decision is about to be made, I request that a written report to the above questions be submitted to me at the Pastoral Office.

May I add one final note. In the future, all parishes faced with major problems demanding major decisions will be expected to work through a planning process established by the diocese to expedite matters and to aid pastors and parishioners.

Sentiment Flares For Burned Church

By DICK BAUMBACH

Elmira — Sentiment is running high at St. John the Baptist Church here to have the church rebuilt following an arson fire which destroyed a major portion of it.

The general alarm fire broke out in the early morning of Dec. 27. Police and fire officials have said an arsonist set the blaze.

During a meeting recently of 75 St. John's parishioners, conducted by Father William D. Tobin, pastor, shouts of "no, no, no" were heard when the pastor mentioned the possibility of the church not being rebuilt, but amalgamated with other parishes or having a functional building replace the church.

Father Tobin offered a series of questions prepared by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, which are to be used as aids in helping the parishioners and the Bishop decide if the church should be rebuilt.

During a news conference, Bishop Hogan said the questions were only to be used to help make a determination on having the church rebuilt.

The Bishop offered no definitive position on whether the church should be rebuilt, but said the questions would help solve the problem.

During the parish meeting, several committees were formed to delve more deeply into readying answers for the Bishop.

One parish leader estimated it would take two to three weeks for a final report to be prepared answering all the questions and ready for submission.

In response to the first question posed by the Bishop, which deals with the number of people living in the geographical area served by the parish, Father Tobin said St. John's was originally aimed mainly at German residents of Elmira and that its boundaries are not the same as other parishes.

He said persons from throughout Chemung County are members of St. John's while other parishes have specific areas where their members are supposed to live.

Catholics living in one parish can always join another parish, but in the case of St. John's boundary lines are not actually drawn to encompass the majority of the church members, Father Tobin said.

"Being a national church means that any German could come to us. Because when St. John's was founded it was intended to serve all the German people of Chemung County," the pastor said.

Addressing himself to a question on how many parishioners might be members of St. John's in 10 years, Father Tobin said, "The number of parishioners at St. John's is a little less than when I first came here six or seven years ago, but we all know there has been a drop in parishioners all over the world."

Father Tobin said in 1965 about 900 persons attended Sunday Mass at St. John's.

After the meeting, Father Tobin said the actual membership of St. John's is about 500. "That's the number of parishioners we have on our books, but we get 300 to 400 more at our Sunday Masses."

The parishioners decided to start a petition drive to show their strong interest in having the church rebuilt.

In closing the meeting, Father Tobin said, "We need action. We want action and we don't need delays. We have to get started working on this project now so the Bishop will see how we feel about keeping our parish."

PETER NERO

Multi-award winning pianist Peter Nero will appear in the Eastman Theater with his trio Saturday, Jan. 18, at 8:15 p.m. Tickets are on sale at Original Performances Inc., Midtown Plaza Terrace.

Elmira

IRISH NIGHT

Elmira — "Irish Night" will be held at Notre Dame High School, 9 p.m.-2 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 19. The affair will be sponsored by the Msgr. John J. Lee Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Entertainment will be provided by the Noel Kingston Trio, an Irish folk group. Cost of the event is \$5 at the door. Refreshments will be served, and special awards will be given.

BOARD MEMBERS

West Elmira — James J. Comerford and Edward L. Kunzinger Jr. have been selected by members of Our Lady of Lourdes School Board to be representatives for 1974 to the Chemung County General Education Board of the Diocese of Rochester.

The board has the overall authority for the Chemung County Consolidated Catholic School System. The system has four elementary and one junior high school, with an enrollment of 1175 students.

KNIGHTS SUPPER

Horseheads — The Knights of Columbus of Horseheads Council 6158 held their annual corporate Communion and spaghetti supper at St. Mary Our Mother Church here on Saturday.

During the latter part of 1973 the Horseheads Council carried out programs of assisting the needy and the poor. The projects included sending socks to a skid row program in Los Angeles and providing food baskets to needy local families. The group also gave knitted slippers to residents of the Chemung County infirmary.

Homell

COORDINATOR SOUGHT

Dansville — A coordinator is being sought for the religious education program and the adult education program of St. Mary's Church. Those interested in the position should contact the rector.

HOME STUDY

Homell — A home study program with discussions ranging from The Role of Mary in the Church to How to Interpret the Old Testament, is being offered through St. Ann's Church. For

more information contact Carol Shilkett at 276-6417.

BASKETBALL

Dansville — Anthony Savukinas, basketball coach at St. Mary's, recently announced the following boys are participating in the sport: Tim Sauerbier, Mike Mathieu, Joe Rounsaville, Leo Bricks, Kevin Mastin, Tim Shepard, Brian Teachout, Bob Burnside, Chris McConnell, Jim Welch, Rick Infantino, Arnold Johantgen, Mike Heiman, Tim Mastin, Dave Sundlof, John Welch, Marty Stavish, Dave Leven, Henry Heiman, Dan VanDurme, Dan Fuhrman, Alan King and Wayne McKenzie and Jeff Martin. The cheerleading staff is composed of Joanne Hammon, Alise Johantgen, Kathy Johnson, Beverly Miller, Kathy Niezgoda, Karen Redding, Lisa Redding, Felicia Serusa and Rachel VanDurme.

ROSARY OFFICERS

Wayland — The monthly meeting of St. Joseph's Rosary Society will be held this evening, Jan. 16, at which time new officers will be installed. They are: Caroline Trautlein, president; Sheila Case, vice-president; Becky Russell, secretary and Judy Perkowski, treasurer.

LEGION OF MARY

Homell — Members of the Elmira Curia of the Legion of Mary spoke at all the Masses Jan. 6 at St. Ignatius, and active and auxiliary memberships were accepted.

Auburn

CEDAR WINTER

Auburn — CEDAR recently announced its winter program will include two sessions for first penance catechists.

The first session, Thursday, Jan. 17, will feature background material on the sacrament, including historical development, moral development, concepts of sin, reconciliation, conscience formation, and confession.

The second session, Thursday, Jan. 24, will cover methods and materials for preparing children for first penance including lesson plans, audio visual aids, activities, penance services and parent material.

Both sessions will be at CEDAR, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

CEDAR has also announced the schedule for its second semester lesson planning sessions for catechists using Come To The Father texts.

Grade 1 will meet Monday, Jan. 14; Grade 4 on Monday, Jan. 28; Grade 5 on Tuesday, Jan. 29; and Grade 6 on Monday, Feb. 4.

Meetings will be at CEDAR from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The program will highlight second semester lessons with suggestions for lesson plan, audio-visual aids, activities and parent involvement.

CWU MEET

Auburn — The Church Women United of Cayuga County annual meeting will be held Jan. 23 at the First Baptist Church. The sandwich luncheon is scheduled for 1 p.m.

HD COURSE

Auburn — The Human Development Committee of St. Mary's parish is sponsoring a family life education program which will attempt to help with problems of family life, especially problems in communication and understanding.

An introductory registration session will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 99 South St.

The purpose of the family life program is to provide an enrichment experience for families, together, or as individuals. Participants will work in small discussion groups under the direction of trained professional leaders from local agencies. Additional information may be secured by contacting Father Anthony Valente at St. Mary's Rectory or Mrs. Thomas Corinors, Lawton Avenue.

CORRECTION

In the issue of Jan. 2, the Courier-Journal incorrectly stated that a \$500 donation for the rebuilding of St. John the Baptist Church, Elmira, came from the James D. Barrett Funeral Home. That sum was given by the Charles Hughes and Sons Funeral Home. However, James D. Barrett said that his funeral home also intends to make a donation.

This page is intended to capsule news from throughout the diocese. It will not, however, contain all the news from our area correspondents and other stories will be found throughout the paper. Our correspondents now have deadlines of Wednesday. Anyone wishing news in the Courier-Journal should keep the deadline in mind.

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