

**Stewardship Program**

**The St. Salome Story**

In 1974, St. Salome's parish in Rochester, like many throughout the diocese, was facing growing problems -- expenses climbing while income was failing to keep pace.

Studies by the Parish Council disclosed that 29 per cent of the parishioners were providing 67 per cent of operating income at an average contribution of \$5.40 a week and that 71 per cent of the parishioners were averaging \$1.22 a week.

Council members wondered what to do. How to motivate the 71 per cent to give more? Should the parish undertake an increased offertory campaign? The council voted against such a drive.

Continuing analysis during 1975 revealed a static condition among many parishioners and too few doing all the work. How could the non-activists be activated unless they themselves were more

involved in parish life? Was there a program which would increase parishioner interest?

Among means researched was the annual Parish Stewardship Program. An inquiry to the National Catholic Stewardship Council revealed some surprising information. Many parishes across the country, faced with similar problems, were conducting a newly-developed Stewardship Program and



FATHER SUNDHOLM

**FR. SUNDHOLM . . .**  
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meeting with great success. After further investigation, the council approved this approach to take place over a six-week period in the Fall of 1976.

Later, the pastor, Father Conrad Sundholm, declared: "This experience with the stewardship concept was one of the most heartwarming of my priestly career. Our parish family grew in faith, hope and charity -- and Christ grew in us. It brought about a closer family relationship in the parish and resulted in many more persons getting to know each other."

Just how did St. Salome's go about its stewardship program? First literature and a slide presentation were prepared. Volunteers to make visits to parishioners' homes were organized and trained. Parishioners were asked for three commitments -- their time, talent and treasure -- in that order. The key response being sought from fellow parishioners was, "Yes, I'm willing to become more involved with my parish."

Two hundred and ten volunteers conducted the home visits. Results were amazing. Parishioners made a total of 1,238 personal commitments of time and

talent. Above all, a communications gap was bridged. They were given the opportunity not only to know more about the parish -- its problems, organizations and activities -- but also to register their reactions, criticisms and recommendations. Instances of time and talent commitments included:

302 agreed to work on the festival; 131 on the Bingo committee; 32 offered carpentry services; 28 agreed to assist in church cleaning; 127 offered to serve on the prayer and suffering ministry committee.

Other evidences of involvement: 563 persons

voted for Parish Council candidates -- more than double the number voting in the previous year; 195 voted for the Youth Council -- a large number for a new program.

As for treasure there was a greater sense of awareness and involvement became financially rewarding as well. Parishioners committed themselves to a \$600 increase in weekly contributions -- a \$30,000 yearly increase.

So the stewardship paid handsome dividends for St. Salome's, not only monetarily, but more important, as Father Sundholm pointed out in "faith, hope and charity."



FR. JAMES MARVIN

**St. Ambrose**

Continued from Page 1

one goal, assisting the elderly."

At this stage, Father Marvin noted, much study of the question must be done

For some time, he noted, the convent has not been occupied to its fullest. The building on Waldo Avenue was constructed in the mid-1930s to house 28 nuns. Today, Father Marvin said, the staff of Sisters of St. Joseph numbers only four.

He said he discussed the possibility with the sisters, and with their superior Sister Jamesine, all of whom were supportive of the notion of turning the convent space into a more useable facility.

Last March, he said, the issue came before the finance committee of his parish council, and that body too was positive on the idea. Father Marvin then consulted Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and found the bishop to be supportive as well.

Then, in May, Father Marvin applied, with technical assistance coming from a friend, for monies through the Title 202 program.

Last week, he received word from the offices of Sen. Patrick Moynihan, and Reps. Frank Horton and Barber Conable that HUD had approved his project.

Father Marvin sees his role in the entire matter to be one of exploring avenues of good management and stewardship over property, which after all is only a tool in parish mission."

He feels strongly that the Church should be exploring avenues for receiving such funds, he said. "There's a great deal of government

money available if people will only use their imaginations and take a risk," he said.

**North Region DCG Starts**

The first meeting of divorced and separated Catholics in the Rochester diocese's North Region will be in St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Hall, 41 Colebrook Dr., Sunday, Sept. 25 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Sister Kathleen Kircher, diocesan coordinator of ministry to the divorced and separated, will be the speaker; refreshments and a discussion period will follow. All uncoupled Catholics are welcome to attend.

**CORRECTION**

Transposition of characters caused confusion in the Courier-Journal's report on the Priests Council last week. The paragraph quoted a committee report on priests' salary adjustment. The correct statement is: "In this time we have had a 3 per cent raise in salary which means that it takes \$137 today to buy what it cost one dollar in 1973, and our salary has been adjusted to only \$1.03."

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