

Bishop Clark Encourages Diocesan Participation in Needs Assessment

The Diocese of Rochester is joining parishes and other faith communities to plan for the Church of the 1990s by sponsoring a needs assessment during the coming year.

Titled "Dare To Dream: Free To Serve," needs assessment is a diocesan effort to prompt individual parishes and faith communities — on campus, in hospitals and jails or wherever people gather in Christ's name — to identify their missions at the grassroots community level. As common needs for support and service emerge from the process, community and diocesan representatives will join to discover ways to accomplish their missions.

Deacon Claude Lester, diocesan director of parish services, describes it as a hopeful process.

"We want to recognize what parishes are doing well already," he said, adding that one goal of the survey is to bring communities together to share expertise with one another and to provide input to the diocese on areas where more services are needed.

As an example, he pointed out that not every parish needs or can afford to pay a

full-time youth minister. But every parish does need to serve the young people within the community, and the same is true of elderly or singles or mothers with children.

"One thing we hope to provide is networking between parishes, to prompt clustering to meet needs," he said. Citing the example of youth ministry, several parishes, each discovering a need for a part-time youth minister, could decide to share the efforts of a full-time worker by combining their resources.

Lester also believes that needs assessment can create more awareness of diocesan services and expertise already available to parishes in areas of ministry.

Right now, Lester is concentrating on spreading the word among parishes and communities so they in turn can decide by the end of June whether they wish to take part in needs assessment. To date, all pastors and parish council chairmen have received a full information packet on "Dare To Dream: Free To Serve." Promotional flyers have been sent to school principals; religious education personnel and all convents and

mission houses in the diocese.

In the early fall, Bishop Matthew H. Clark plans to issue a focus/vision paper, seeking to create dialogue and raise questions relating to needs assessment.

For communities that decide to participate, the actual kick-off will be a Leadership Conference on Saturday, Sept. 21, at DeSales High School, Geneva. The first of three in-service sessions, the conference will feature Father Eugene Hemrick, director of research for the United States Catholic Conference-National Catholic Conference of Bishops in Washington, D.C., who will speak on "Shared Responsibility." This keynote address will be followed by a series of workshops to provide information and support for local efforts to write a mission statement.

Following the conference, a series of 15 leadership training workshops will be scheduled in October and November at various locations throughout the diocese. The workshops will specifically address two areas: supporting parish council members with training and determining community needs and priorities using available demographics.

Although dates and locations have not yet been determined, the third step in needs assessment will focus on forming long- and short-range goals.

Input received will be reviewed by division directors and an appointed operational steering committee comprising: Sister Mary Ann Binsack, representing diocesan personnel; Monsignor George Cocuzzi,

Priests' Council; Sister Mary Smith, Sisters' Council; John Cottrell; Marge Glasser; Edward Gutman; Dan Hoffman; Robert Laird; Clement Lynch; and Kathleen McLaen.

Although he is pleased by the response so far, Lester admitted that, without a specific end product to describe, selling needs assessment to some parishes and groups could be difficult. Parish council, committee and staff members do not need "busy work," as the packet he has circulated acknowledges. And realistically, the diocese can't promise funds or programs for every need the survey identifies.

But he pointed out that the results will provide Bishop Clark with a clearer perspective on services and programs needed at the diocesan level and will help him match the priorities raised to allocation of resources.

Meanwhile, each community will have gained a mission statement and formed specific goals toward accomplishing its chosen mission, along with a network of support both from other parishes and at the diocese.

"We need you to influence how we function on the diocesan level," Bishop Clark said in his letter on needs assessment, adding that he "looks forward with great hope to the fruits we can bear as we 'dare to dream' and are enabled to be 'free to serve.'"

Anyone wishing more information on the process should contact Deacon Lester at the Pastoral Center.

Noisy Reconstruction's On Schedule At Diocesan Pastoral Center Offices

By Teresa A. Parsons

Her voice has lent its personality to the diocesan Pastoral Center for the past year and a half, but recently receptionist Joanne Thompson has been competing with the sounds of demolition in the background. An obvious optimist, she noted that despite walls being knocked down nearby, the company of the workmen has been a welcome distraction from her usually solitary routine.

When the dust settles, renovations to the former St. Andrew's Seminary on Buffalo Road will make the space more compatible with the needs of staff who are and will be housed there. Impetus for the renovations was initially created when the School of the Holy Childhood moved from the basement and ground floors of the Pastoral Center to its new home in Henrietta. The newly available space plus the fact that some diocesan offices were renting space in other locations combined to suggest some re-arranging.

The project is being tackled in two phases, according to Jim Magee, the diocesan property manager.

Phase one began June 1 and is scheduled to be complete by July 1. Much of the first floor and the third floor's west end will be demolished and renovated according to an architectural plan devised by La Bella Associates, a Rochester engineering and

management firm. The plan requires removing some walls while adding others along with new doorways and windows. Typical of the kinds of changes taking place, the former gym is becoming a storage and work area for the print shop. Once a shower area for students, the far west end of the third floor will become several small offices surrounding a central open area shared by secretarial staff.

Phase two will involve a similar renovation of the third floor's east end, and on a smaller scale, will rearrange the current partitions on the second floor. August 1 is the proposed deadline for the second phase. Meanwhile, displaced office staff and temporary conference rooms have been located in the basement and in other available spaces.

"At this point we are right on schedule, but it's extremely tight," said Magee, who's been coordinating the project since May. His job is to ensure that, on one hand, the architect's plan is implemented by the contractor and on the other, that the architects respond with revisions when the contractor identifies parts of the plan that won't work.

Meanwhile, Thompson continues to handle the 90 extensions in the Pastoral Center with remarkable aplomb, despite being located in the thick of the first floor activity. "It could have been worse," she said.

Father Melvin Walczak Accepted Into Service in Rochester Diocese

The Rev. Melvin H. Walczak will become the first married priest to serve in the Diocese of Rochester.

By extraordinary privilege, the Holy See has allowed Father Walczak, formerly the pastor of St. Casmir Polish National Church in Rochester and a recent convert to Roman Catholicism, to continue active priestly ministry.

During a six-month period of transition and study, he will join the staff of St. Joseph's parish in Penfield. After that time, he will be assigned to a ministry in the diocese.

A native of Scranton, Pa., Father Walczak holds a master of divinity degree from St. Bernard's Seminary. He has been involved in parish ministry in the Polish National Catholic Church for the past 15 years. He lives with his wife, Joanne, and his sons, Darryl and Gregor, in Irondequoit.

Father Walczak is not the first married Roman Catholic priest in the United States. In 1981, the U.S. bishops began accepting married former Episcopalian priests into active Roman Catholic ministry after reordination. It is believed, however, that Father Walczak is the first non-Episcopalian to be accepted in the United States, and the

first accepted without reordination.

Married priests are not well-known in Roman Catholic circles. However, the Roman rite is the only rite of the Catholic Church that does not have married priests. In the West, celibacy developed from a fourth century regional custom to a requirement demanded of all priests by the 12th century. It continues to remain a disciplinary measure which Rome does not intend to relax by this extraordinary pastoral exception.

Copy Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles for the Courier-Journal is noon on the Thursday-seven days prior to the desired date of publication. When a holiday falls in a certain publication week, the deadline may be moved to Wednesday at noon. Items must be typed and double-spaced. The Courier-Journal office is located at 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.



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