

Division of Support Ministries

"The Division of Support Ministries is responsible for the care and supervision of the administration of the temporal goods of the church which are directed towards Divine Worship, Charity and the Apostolate in our Diocese. Your continued generosity to the Thanks Giving Appeal allows programs Thanks Giving Appeal allows programs and services to be developed which enable parish leadership to provide Christ's care and compassion more deeply to the people they serve."



Father Peter T. Bayer
Chancellor and Director of Support Ministries

The primary goal of the DIVISION OF SUPPORT MINISTRIES, which include the Chancellor's Office, the Departments of Financial Services, Information Systems and Research, Annual Appeal and Development, is to oversee the administration of the temporal goals of the Diocese and to support all parishes, regions and departments of the Diocesan Church.

One way of accomplishing this goal is the development of the Parish Information Program (CENSUS) to acquaint parishes with the unique way in which a computer program designed especially for their needs can enhance their effectiveness in ministering to the people they serve.

Ms. Donna Cauvel, Parish Computer Coordinator, emphasized that a computer program linked with an up-to-date census of a parish "is an excellent way to determine the parish's needs."

The Parish Information Program provides information to the priests and parish staffs so that they can minister to their people in many different ways: by identifying and recruiting potential candidates for the parish elementary school and the religious education programs; by identifying individuals who have a disability or handicap and providing care for them; by pinpointing couples who may need their marriage blessed or other individuals who need assistance with the annulment process.

Information developed through the Parish Information Program also helps parish staffs to link widowed, separated and divorced parishioners with support group in their own parishes or in neighboring parishes; to identify individuals who have been alienated from the church so they can be welcomed back to participate in the parish faith community.

The census program is of vital use in finding people in today's highly mobile

society who may have missed one of the Sacraments of Initiation.

Information developed through this census program has been used effectively to chart the age span of the parish: to plan programs for pre-school and elementary aged children, youth, young adults, single parent families, enrichment programs for families and programs for our senior citizens.

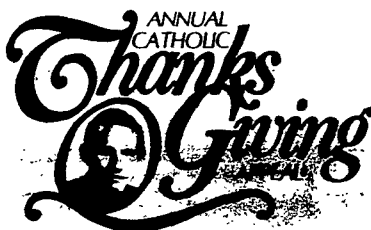
The Parish Information Program provides data to the Parish Council and its committees to review the present parish activities as it plans for the future.

Father Edward Palumbos, co-pastor at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Henrietta, is convinced of the value of having a parish computer. "Hardly a day goes by," says Father Palumbos, "in which we do not use our parish computer to help us serve our community better."

Father John Walsh, Pastor of St. Paul's Church in Webster, is using the services of the DIVISION OF SUPPORT MINISTRIES to improve the operation of his parish. "Through the use of our computer," Father Walsh says, "we have become generally more efficient. It has enhanced the accuracy of our record-keeping and has reduced the amount of time needed to complete such tasks as financial record-keeping, preparation of the Sunday bulletin, etc."

Joan Zaia, Director of Information Systems and Research, says that the Division is preparing profiles to distribute to parish leadership with an overview of age distribution, ethnic origin and socioeconomic information concerning all the people who live within the parish boundaries. This information will be a planning instrument to assist the parish.

"We continue to deepen the develop the Gospel Message," Father Peter Bayer, Chancellor of the Diocese and Director of the Support Ministries Division, says, "through support to parishes and individuals and by the use of volunteers with professional expertise as we share God's grace and goodness with others."



Turining Homeward

with Deacon Joseph Holleran

At our house, it usually begins with someone yelling "supper's ready!" That's the key phrase that begins to gather us from all parts of our home to the kitchen table.

It's not an announcement to be taken lightly, for someone has been working. The food is ready. It's hot. The table is set and all is prepared. Now is the time to eat and to share. However, to get the kids to talk is often like pulling teeth. It's hard to come up with questions that can't be answered by "yeah" or "no" or by that general response given to any question about what they did that day — "nothing." Despite problems in communication, the evening meal is still our traditional gathering and touching time.

This common daily pastime of sharing a meal can become very special, depending on the moment and the circumstances. Many celebrations, for example, center around meals. We gather to share food at our birthday parties and anniversaries, our testimonials and wedding receptions.

I remember very clearly the eating and reminiscing that took place during my grandfather's wake, as he himself was laid out in the front room some 30 years ago. When we join at table together, we are involved in something more than eating.

How natural for Jesus to use the sharing of bread and wine as the way for us to share in and with Him.

On another occasion, He told a story about a meal, a wedding feast, to help explain what God's kingdom was like. Remember the story? A king had prepared not just a meal, but a whole wedding banquet for his son. It was a glorious affair with the best chefs preparing the best foods. Each item was cooked so that everything would be ready for the guests at the right time. I prepare the meals when my wife works evenings, so I can imagine the work involved in planning for this celebration. But the guests never came.

Picture yourself as the parent of a bride or groom. You are waiting at the rented hall for the reception to begin, for friends, relatives and neighbors to show up. Finally you realize that no one is coming. The hall and the seats are empty.

The food is beginning to cool and the servants are getting anxious, so the king sends them to find out about the delay. They

are sent out, not once, but twice. Eventually some regrets are heard. "I'm too busy." "It's an inconvenience right now." "I'm not interested." "I've got work to do, so get lost."

Some of the servants never return and the king finds out that they might have been killed. But the banquet hall must be filled, even if those first invited will not come. The servants are sent out again, this time to the streets and alleyways, to collect all they meet. Both good and bad are invited to the banquet.

Jesus tells us that the reign of God is like this wedding feast. There must be something in the story that tells us about God and His kingdom. It is not hard to see God the Father as the king, and Jesus, His son, as the prince, the groom, in whose honor the feast is held. The banquet itself is His kingdom, where we will join in the festivities, a joyous celebration of divine proportion.

All of us could see ourselves as those invited in off the street, that mixture of good and bad gathered together. Yet God's kingdom has already begun. We are part of it. Through the Eucharistic feast, we are already sharing in a meal of divine proportion. So perhaps we have a greater role to play.

Perhaps we are called to be the servants. They are loyal to the king, working for him in preparing and setting the table. They ensure that there is enough food. Like them, we may be called to go out and gather others in. Not judging those we come in contact with, but inviting all to come in, for the banquet hall is not yet full.

We are asked to be sharers of God's goodness in whatever fashion we can. But carrying the message of the king is often not an easy task. To some servants, it meant rejection — to others a reassessment, for they had expected only the best of society to attend. To others it meant discouragement, and to some, death.

Yet the hall must be filled. The strength for such a task can only come from God. God will provide for all our needs. He will lift us up when we are down and show us the way to go. He will provide us with the strength for our many and varied tasks. There is much to do. The banquet is ready, but the hall is not yet full.

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