

St. Boniface to send junior high grades to Blessed Sacrament

By Teresa A. Parsons

Higher quality education was the conclusive factor in a decision by parish leaders from St. Boniface to send their seventh and eighth grades to Blessed Sacrament Regional Junior High next fall.

In a meeting February 27, diocesan education officials swayed parish decision makers by describing the specific advantages of a larger junior high program. The school board then voted to approve the proposal.

"We agreed to support the diocese in their urban reorganization plan," said Father Richard Brickler, the pastor. "We think we had a good program, but Sister Virginia (Sister Virginia Steinwachs, assistant superintendent for urban education) showed what could be had in a larger school that would be very difficult and very expensive to offer in a small junior high."

School board president Ed Sloan said that some of the major improvements described could have been made at St. Boniface next year. But the "niceties," such as a student council, full-time guidance counselor and religious education teacher, were beyond their reach financially.

"Educationally, the children will fare better, and that's the basic and main reason for our direction," said Sister Blanche Leising, the principal. "Now we can concentrate and work harder on pre-

kindergarten to grade six."

"Now since we've made the decision, we want to do the best we can to make it work," Father Brickler added.

He wrote last week to Bishop Matthew H. Clark and parents, announcing the parish's decision and expressing his "wholehearted support" for the move.

A parents' committee, meanwhile, is contacting other parents to explain the decision and answer any remaining questions.

"We haven't had much reaction yet," Father Brickler said, attributing that to a growing perception that the move was inevitable.

"We had some doubt from the emotionalism that was attached to the issue whether anyone would go (to Blessed Sacrament)," Sloan said. "But it appears that they're accepting it more readily than I expected."

In 1974, the St. Boniface parish council voted unanimously to reject a similar plan to consolidate with Blessed Sacrament and St. John the Evangelist, Humboldt Street. Among the concerns parishioners described then were that the move would not save money, that the plan was not specific enough in naming its advantages and that children would have to cross several major intersections in walking to Blessed Sacrament.

Although the plan was rejected, the parish has continued to struggle with low enrollment and rising costs at the school.

At an open hearing January 14, a number of parents and parish leaders from St. Boniface spoke against an earlier draft of the diocesan elementary school plan. Paul Riordan, a parent and parishioner, protested then that the plan did not offer enough specific information. But this week he said that most of the questions he raised have been resolved to his satisfaction.

"I was specifically concerned about curriculum," Riordan said. "I had not had much of an idea of what was going to be offered." After learning that Blessed Sacrament students will have the option of studying a foreign language and will have access to a science lab and guidance counselor, Riordan said he was favorably impressed. He also appreciates the higher degree of specialization the junior high teachers at Blessed Sacrament can offer.

Tuition was another concern for parents. "Schools in this cluster are meant to be on their own tuition-wise," Sloan explained. According to the formula developed by Blessed Sacrament/St. John's, parents from St. Boniface whose children attend Blessed Sacrament will continue to pay tuition through their own parish, he said.

Some parents still question a lack of specific transportation arrangements and cling to the concept of their neighborhood school. Because most students from St. Boniface live less than one-and-a-half miles from Blessed Sacrament, they are not eligible to be bused by the city school district. "But if the parents were to send their youngsters to public school, they'd be walking too," Sloan said. Any final transportation arrangements will depend on how many children go (to Blessed Sacrament) and where they live, Father Brickler added.

Thirty-two students are currently enrolled in the sixth and seventh grades at St. Boniface. Last Monday, they spent the day at Blessed Sacrament to get acquainted with the building and the other students. On Friday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m., Blessed Sacrament's principal, Sister Elizabeth Snyder, will meet with parents from St. Boniface to answer their questions and concerns.

"We're pleased and grateful that our school was not closed, that we still have a Catholic school," Father Brickler said. "We place a high priority on Catholic education."

Parents looking for more information on Blessed Sacrament Regional Junior High School may call (716)473-3937.

Father Curran

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presented Father Curran with 16 pages of observations, "detailing the principal errors and ambiguities which have been found in the writings examined."

A memorandum, written by Father Curran and provided to the press as background material, outlines the focus of the Vatican investigation of his writings. In the memo, Father Curran states that the differences between his writings and official Church teaching "are much narrower" than was claimed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation, in a letter written to Father Curran on September 17, 1985. Moreover, Father Curran asserts in the memo that his dissent is confined to "matters

of ordinary, noninfallible teaching, not matters of divine and Catholic faith."

Cardinal Ratzinger's Sept. 17 letter, a copy of which was also provided to the press, lists four specific areas of dissent for which Father Curran is being investigated: 1) artificial contraception and sterilization; 2) abortion and euthanasia; 3) masturbation, premarital sex and homosexuality; and 4) the indissolubility of marriage.

The background memorandum outlines Father Curran's dissent, as expressed in numerous publications, as follows:

1) "I have maintained that (contraception and sterilization) are not intrinsically evil but can be good or evil insofar as they are governed by the principals of responsible

parenthood and stewardship. However, I have pointed out the danger of abuse in connection with both contraception and sterilization."

2) "My position (on abortion) can be succinctly stated: truly individual human life begins at the time of individuation which occurs between the 14th and 21st day after conception. One can be justified in taking truly individual human life only for the sake of the life of the mother or for a value commensurate with life itself.

3) "Masturbatory acts are ordinarily not very important or significant and usually do not involve grave matter. Such actions are generally symptomatic of other realities and should be treated as such. However, masturbation falls short of the full meaning of human sexuality and should not generally be seen as entirely good or praiseworthy ...

"On the basis of a theology of compromise I propose that for an irreversible, constitutional, or genuine homosexual, homosexual acts in the context of a loving relationship striving for permanency can in a certain sense be objectively morally acceptable. However, in accord with this theology of compromise, such acts are good for these persons because of their objective condition. In general, sexuality should be seen in terms of the female-male relationship so that homosexual relationships fall short of the full meaning of human sexuality. This position obviously does not accept or condone homosexual acts without personal commitment ...

"I have not devoted separate studies to premarital sexuality but have considered it within the broader context of sexuality in

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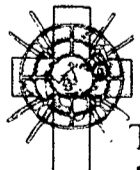
"I didn't pick Korea specifically. I was interested in working overseas and with the Church. I think what I wanted was some way to make a commitment. When I came to St. Vincent's I just fell in love with the children. I let them know they're wanted! . . ."

— Debra Bartelli

Debra Bartelli, a lay missionary, chose to give three years of her life serving at St. Vincent's Home for American Korean children who are not accepted in Korean society. Through your prayers and sacrifices for the Propagation of the Faith you share in the work of lay missionaries like Debra Bartelli.



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