



Father Louis Vasile (left) talks with parish council members from both of his new parishes, St. Anne's, Palmyra, and St. Gregory, Marion.

Chemistry

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advantageous to do so.

St. Gregory's has neither a folk group nor a youth ministry program. Both could be initiated with help from existing programs at St. Anne's. There are also activities at St. Anne's, such as the children's latch key program, that would benefit from additional enrollment.

Neither community has a Catholic school, so both share the goal of a quality religious education — a program that will also be enhanced by pooling some resources.

The final decision on the Mass schedule was so mutually agreeable that it almost passed unnoticed. Parishioners agreed with Father Vasile to adopt a provisional 5 p.m. Saturday Mass at Marion, 8 and 9:30 a.m. Masses in Palmyra, and an 11:30 a.m. Mass in Marion. The schedule will be evaluated by means of weekly meetings which Father Vasile plans to initiate with small groups of 20-25 parishioners from each region of each parish. Modeled on the base communities of Central and Latin America, these groups will meet in parishioners' homes for prayer, liturgy and discussion.

"My goal is to see everybody in both parishes over one year, to find out who they are,

what their needs are and how we can best serve them," Father Vasile said.

The Mass schedule will change on the weekend of June 29. That's also the feast day of St. Peter and Paul, symbols of two very distinct styles of church and therefore significant patrons of two church communities seeking common goals.

"I think we'll have our problems, but with God's help, we'll get through them," Father Vasile said. "It's really a great beginning."

Now council members hope they'll be able to translate their optimism to their larger parish communities. "We're really going to have to change our whole way of thinking from 'my church, my needs' to 'our needs and our church,'" said Diane Godsey, a Marion parishioner. "It's going to take a long time to realize we're gaining something — brothers and sisters in the next town. We need to educate people to think that way, to realize that the opportunity to be Church is twice as great, rather than having one less Mass."

St. Boniface

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p.m. Father William Amann brought a piece of that church's altar along to the reunion,

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PIMC meets wall of resistance in Brighton

It could work anywhere, but the diocesan process for Institutional and Ministerial Cooperation (PIMC) doesn't work everywhere.

At the same time that parishes in Palmyra and Marion were anxiously discussing clustering with diocesan representatives, those same representatives were encountering a solid wall of resistance at two Brighton parishes.

Faced with the imminent retirement of Father James Slattery, pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Bishop Matthew H. Clark asked parish council members to meet with representatives from Our Lady of Lourdes and the diocese to consider the feasibility of a cluster.

But in a letter to both pastors last month, Bishop Clark announced that he will appoint a pastor to replace Father Slattery in June, adding that he would like the parishes to continue with the same status for some months in Brighton.

If four parishes in the area could cooperate in a cluster, it would be a great opportunity for the diocese to meet its needs, he said.

As for a Queen of Peace parish council president Donald Karal is concerned, the inclusion of only two parishes in Brighton was the first mistake. "It should have been an area-wide process," he said, listing St. Thomas More, St. Anne's and St. Louis as possible participants.

Karal also argued that clustering should not be viewed only as an administrative option. "There are other services that you could offer jointly for the aged and for youth," he said. "Why not open it up?"

From the beginning, consultations were hampered by a lack of time, which placed both parishioners and the diocesan representatives, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey and Father Kevin McKenna, under pressure.

To expedite the process, both parish councils were invited to an initial joint meeting. "That was a very serious tacti-

cal error," one Queen of Peace parishioner remarked. "They should have met separately first."

In fact, Karal claimed he was never informed of the purpose for the meeting beforehand. "It was quite a surprise," he said.

Both pastors had received letters from Bishop Clark in December, advising them of his wish that they begin the process. "There is a percentage of people in every parish that are knowledgeable about something like this, but the overwhelming majority doesn't know and really doesn't care until they are challenged," one Queen of Peace representative explained.

On the contrary, Bishop Hickey believes that rumors of Queen of Peace being "taken over" by Lourdes got the parish council members up in arms before the first meeting even took place.

Other objections to the process that surfaced were that it was too right and inflexible and that it was too bureaucratically oriented.

On the other hand, Lourdes parish council president Michael Szmach charged the diocese with trying to be too democratic. "I think they should have said 'There will be one less priest in Brighton and there will be clustering. Now you work it out,'" he said. "I think clustering makes sense. It's necessary given the number of priests in the diocese, and parishes that are two or three miles apart are logical selections."

But others argued that the central issue behind clustering is not really a shortage of priests, but the utilization of priests in the diocese.

That kind of fundamental disagreement, combined with a high level of emotion at both parishes, virtually mandated a cooling-off period and a re-evaluation of the possibilities in the Brighton area.

"But this doesn't resolve the overall problem," one Queen of Peace parishioner warned. "It's not going away."

which sparked many a fire story.

"I can remember it was late in the afternoon and the kids came running in from school and said 'The church is burning,'" said Bernice Reinhardt, 65, a lifelong parishioner. "So everybody ran down and took pictures of it burning down."

At 4:45 p.m., reports noted, the great church bells chimed for the last time amid the flames and the steeple clock stopped.

So badly damaged was the church that it had to be demolished. A simpler, more

modern-styled church was begun in April, 1959, and opened March 6, 1960.

"The new church is nice, but you still remember the old one," Sister Marie Clare said. "Things were never the same."

Nor will they be again. But despite the changes, Father Ehmann recognized the homecoming spirit of the reunion in the grace he offered before dinner.

"We give you thanks for bringing us together under the wing of our home parish to which we owe so much," he said.

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