

Grant program

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Five years ago, Privett and several other people began searching for a way to serve individuals with innovative ideas for ministries who were then forced to shop around the diocese looking for support. "They were dealing separately with each individual and group, not knowing how others were responding," he recalled.

After several months of discussions, representatives of the funding groups decided to pool their money and distribute it cooperatively among projects proposed by members of the Sisters of Mercy or Sisters of St. Joseph, Monroe County parishes, or agencies of Catholic Charities or Catholic Family Center.

"While there are benefits to collaborating, each group had to give something up," Privett said. "But bringing together people from urban ministry, the religious congregations, social ministry and suburban parishes, and bringing together their resources and concerns has turned out to be a good thing."

Until last year, Ventures has had almost \$20,000 to distribute annually. Because the Thanks Giving Appeal fell short, diocesan budget cuts reduced the contributions of the Division of Urban Ministry and the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry by half, to just \$9,000.

As a result, only five applicants were funded this year. Catholic Family Center's STAR program for disabled persons was not among them.

Although their grant was not renewed, program director Irene Coveny said that STAR's

new clients didn't go away. In fact, new applications still come in.

"It's been good and bad. I was really grateful that they gave me the chance to test out my idea," Coveny said. "But we were the new kids on the block. We felt like we just got into it and there was no time to find other funding. A year is way too short for that."

"Now we have a caseload of clients we're really struggling to serve," she added. "We agreed to continue servicing them, but basi-

Mass schedules

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fortable ratio of priests to Masses each weekend. Those are generally in areas with hospitals, schools or other institutions, or where a substantial number of retired priests live.

In the Yates/Ontario/Wayne region, however, things are "right on the edge," according to Father Thomas Nellis, coordinator of the region and pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Clyde.

"There used to be a couple extra priests around, but those little cushions are gradually deteriorating. Most of the priests are getting older and let's face it — what you can do at 30 is not what you can manage at 50," he said. "If I get sick, it would be pretty hard to cover here. Four or five years down the road, especially in rural areas, the problem is going to be more acute."

Having fewer priests has already prompted some parishes to re-evaluate their Mass schedules. As they struggle with that decision, parish leaders begin to realize how fragmented communities have become in the decades since Vatican II.

cally that means the program is operating at a deficit."

Fortunately, Coveny said, the Ventures money helped establish the need for such a program. "We are trying to beef up clients' contributions to the program and looking for funding from foundations," she explained.

Meanwhile, 10 of STAR's developmentally disabled clients qualify for help from Stresswatch, a new program funded by the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

People who are of a contemplative bent, for instance, attend the early morning "quiet" Mass. For lovers of traditional Church music, there's the choir Mass. Those who like to sing and commune with their neighbors enjoy the folk Mass. Then there are children's Masses and Spanish-language Masses and charismatic Masses, among others.

Whereas specialization has made liturgies more meaningful to people, pastors like Father Edward Zimmer of St. Mary's, Auburn, caution that a delicate balance must be maintained.

"There is a certain fracturing of community by the multiplicity of Masses," he said. "People have a right, if possible to choose their style of liturgy, to worship with song or with quiet, but not at the expense of community."

"Size, large or small, doesn't necessarily make a community," he added. "Sometimes the more people that are gathered, the harder it is to have good community. What it comes down to is good liturgy."

Regardless of how imperative the need, changing Mass schedules is hardly ever accomplished without shedding blood or tears. "Whenever you change something like a Mass schedule, you're changing people's lives, and they tend to react as if something about the

To date, Ventures in Human Services has been limited to funding projects in Monroe County. With additional funds, Privett believes that a similar approach would work in the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier areas.

But expansion depends on when and if more funds are available.

According to Catherine Wobus, the programs and the people are out there waiting. "I would think if we had twice as much money, we could really do something," she said.

Church has been shaken," Father Mull said.

On the other hand, for pastors whose parishes teeter on the brink of survival, even a relatively minor change in the Mass schedule may threaten a disastrous exodus of parishioners. On a practical level, they must also contend with small church buildings or inadequate parking.

Education is one way to smooth the process, according to Father Zimmer. "People are intelligent. If you will let them know what you're doing and why, they'll generally accept it," he said.

Because Mass-schedule changes are so painful, some priests said they would like to see "Celebrating Sunday" be more authoritative, possibly coming from Bishop Clark himself rather than the liturgy office.

Others, including Father James Boyle, coordinator of the Chemung-Schuylers region and pastor at St. Mary's in Elmira, believe that this is only the first learning step in what will be a long process of adapting to changing patterns of ministry.

"I think this is a strong recommendation from the liturgy office," he said. "It doesn't strike me that this is trying to legislate anything at this stage. I think it's a step in the right direction."

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