

Wayland school considering whether to adopt K-6 format

Decision on junior high expected by month's end

By Teresa A. Parsons

Parishioners and parents want St. Joseph's School in Wayland to continue seventh and eighth grades, despite the fact that only three students have registered for the eighth grade next year.

Nearly 100 people attended a parish meeting last Thursday, April 9, to discuss the future configuration of the school. The consensus among them was clear, according to Father Paul Schnacky, pastor.

"There was a strong feeling that it's not that easy just to drop two grades, and that we should hang on despite the indications," he said. "The feeling was that if we hang on, maybe the numbers will increase."

St. Joseph's junior-high enrollment has hovered at the borderline for the past several years, according to Bob Cownie, school board president.

"It's a seeming trend in Wayland and

elsewhere to see questionable numbers in the junior high setting," he said. "You have to ask yourself where is that minimum number?"

Last year, low enrollment and the loss of a long-time junior high teacher to another school raised the issue of whether to continue seventh and eighth grades.

"There was some concern about getting a replacement (teacher) who would be up to meeting the expanded requirements of the Regents' (Action) Plan," Cownie said.

Parish leaders took their concerns about junior high enrollment to parents and parishioners as well as to the diocesan Division of Education, in January, 1986.

At a series of meetings last spring, parents urged the school board and parish leaders to explore every possibility for keeping seventh and eighth grades at St. Joseph's.

Diocesan representatives, meanwhile, outlined a process for the parish to follow in attempting to reach a decision, and suggested several options that other schools have tried.

Included among the options were retaining

the full kindergarten through grade 8 program, dropping only the eighth grade, or dropping both grades and possibly supporting the junior high grades at St. Mary's in Dansville, eight miles away.

Cownie termed those suggestions helpful, but said they had not offered any fundamental solutions.

When three of the six students currently attending seventh grade at St. Joseph's failed to re-register this year, the question of whether to continue the junior high grades resurfaced.

With a total of only 11 students registered in both the seventh and eighth grades next year, Cownie believes the cost as well as the quality of education is likely to be affected at St. Joseph's.

"I'd say we would have to charge about \$300 more per family if we go with a K-8 format next year," Cownie said. "I would question whether, because of our limited resources, we could really offer a quality program."

Cownie and Father Schnacky agree that

finances are not the main consideration facing the school. But both officials noted that a class of three students does not offer adequate opportunities for social development.

"While you can educate a kid in a class of three, socially it's not healthy," Father Schnacky said. "They're missing out."

In contrast to the declining numbers in the upper grades, St. Joseph's preschool and kindergarten programs are fast outgrowing the space that's now available in the school library. Last year, preschool enrollment rose to 78, from a previous average of 40 students.

"I would see this as an opportunity to strengthen the lower grades, not just to eliminate the upper grades," Father Schnacky said.

St. Joseph's school board and parish council will both meet later this month to discuss the issue further. By early May, Cownie expects both groups to have reached a decision, which will then be presented to diocesan officials for their evaluation.

RCIA

Continued from previous page

dependently to become Catholic have supported them in every case so far, Sister Ryan said. In fact, parents and other family members often end up participating in the RCIA as well. "A lot of it is a family kind of atmosphere," she said.

Typically, Sister Ryan asks young people to attend one year of regular religious-education classes before beginning the RCIA.

During the process, which begins in November, adults and young adults are taught separately, but come together for prayer and discussion.

"The adults like having the kids there. I don't think the kids are made to feel like outsiders," Sister Ryan said. "These are the most motivated kids in the world. Everything you talk to them about is new — Jesus, the saints, the Mass ... They have never heard of most of these things before."

Attracting young people to the RCIA at St. Bridget's Parish in Rochester is one of Father Robert Werth's goals for next year's

process.

This year, St. Bridget's was one of several parishes that offered RCIA for the first time.

Enoch Kettles and his wife, Kathy Davis, are one of two couples among the two catechumens and five candidates whom St. Bridget's will welcome into full communion on Holy Saturday.

Kettles has long awaited that day. The son of a Baptist minister, he first visited St. Bridget's in 1967 out of curiosity. He kept coming back because he was more comfortable with the church's black-oriented music, preaching and participatory style — a combination of Catholic and Baptist worship-traditions sometimes called "Batholic" — than he had ever been at any other church.

"Everybody goes to church looking for something," Kettles said. "I go to get a good feeling and take it home with me. If I don't get that, I feel I'm missing something."

"I had been to a lot of other churches," he added, "but at St. Bridget's, you have the freedom to be yourself ... to clap and call out, to express that good feeling."

Kettles has harbored a quiet desire to become a Catholic for most of the 17 years he's attended St. Bridget's. A rather shy

"Everything's changing so fast. I don't know where it will go from here. All I know is I've made one right step in my life."

Pattie Johnston

man, he once went so far as to ask a former pastor how he could go about joining the church, but received no definite response.

When Kettles and Davis became engaged two years ago, they worshipped in different denominations. Since they wanted to worship together as a family, they agreed to visit one another's churches.

Davis was "hooked" on St. Bridget's after the very first service she attended. She recalled that Father Werth's homily explaining the church's liturgical cycle was clear and understandable. She also liked the music and the comfortable feeling of community.

"It was so different than I expected, and so different from any Catholic service I had ever attended," she said.

For Davis and Kettles, the teenagers at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Pattie Johnston, the Easter Vigil will mark the end of a search for what Davis calls "a church home."

They and other newly initiated Catholics or neophytes will continue to meet between Easter and Pentecost. This period, known as the mystagogia, is a time for neophytes to reflect on the meaning of initiation and the directions in which their faith will take them.

"Everything's changing so fast. I don't know where it will go from here," Johnston said. "All I know is I've made one right step in my life."

"My biggest fear has always been of having to face situations alone," she added. "Now, I know that I'm not alone, and that's a pretty good feeling."

Reunion planned for May 1 by Nazareth Academy Alumnae

Nazareth Academy's Alumnae Association will host Monroe County's largest annual alumnae reunion on Friday, May 1. The gala, scheduled for the Mapledale Party House in Rochester, will honor alumnae who graduated in years ending in 2 or 7. Only Nazareth graduates are invited.

Nazareth's living alumnae number more than 15,000. Each year, the school brings

more than 800 alumnae together for a banquet.

This year's events include a homecoming Mass and breakfast for graduates, their spouses and families on Sunday, May 3, at the school, 1001 Lake Ave., Rochester.

Graduates are asked to call the Alumnae Office at (716)254-3219.

Society for Chamber Music schedules winter season finale

The Society for Chamber Music will present the final concert of its winter series on Sunday, April 26 and Monday, April 27, in the Marble Room of the George Eastman House, Rochester. Both performances begin at 8:15 p.m. and will include a free pre-concert talk beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Marble Room.

French hornist David Angus will be featured in Mozart's Horn Quintet in E-Flat Major, K. 407, and the featured guest, violinist Paul Arnold, will perform Schubert's Octet in F Major, Op. 166.

Tickets for this performance are priced at \$9 for adults and \$5 for students. They may be obtained by calling (716)385-4416.

Automatic SPEED CONTROL

Your "silent chauffeur" for easy driving.

These custom control modules duplicate the factory controls incorporating set speed, resume, accel, decel., or coast. Windshield wiper, horn and headlamp functions where applicable. Full year warranty — no mileage limitation.

AIR CONDITIONING
SOUND SYSTEMS
DEFROGGER/
DEFROSTERS
RADAR DETECTORS

TEMSTAD INC.
HOME OF PROFESSIONAL SALES & SERVICE
777 Monroe Ave.
behind Monroe Hess Gas Station
461-0050

Senior Citizen

FREE

Learn to Bowl Clinic

CLINIC DATES:

Monday, Apr. 13th, 20th, 27th
1:00 p.m.

CLASS INCLUDES:

- Free use of rental shoes
- A fun filled afternoon
- Free Coffee & Donuts
- A chance to meet new friends

BRIGHTON BOWL

1717 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14610
473-2241

EASTER BUNNIES LIKE IRISH GIFTS TOO!

Hop right in for . . .

Waterford
Belleek
Whiskey Cake
Whiskey Marmalade
Royal Tara
Celtic Jewelry
Soaps & Sachets

IRISH IMPORTS

Hours:
Mon.-Sat.
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

21B. So.
Main St.
Pittsford
248-8346