

Programming

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schools, Sister Steinwachs said. The Pickett Commission's final multi-cultural proposal recognizes that "racially-balanced school(s) may not be the only ideal setting for Catholic education" for minority students. In other words, Sister Steinwachs pointed out, while racial balance in all the Catholic schools would be the ideal educational situation, the reality is that some schools are bound to have majorities of black and/or Hispanic students.

Rather than trying to create a racially balanced school system, she said, the diocese should concentrate its efforts on strengthening such schools as Corpus Christi and St. Andrew's that serve great numbers of minority students. Sister Daly, noted for example, that the diocese could direct funds now set aside for black cultural programs to a school like Corpus Christi.

Whether or not the diocese succeeds in implementing a multi-cultural approach to education may be the one of the greatest challenges to its oft-voiced concern for the poor, Sister Daly said. The inner city — plagued by drugs, crime and poverty — can destroy people, she noted, and the church must make its stand with those potential victims, many of whom are children in the Catholic schools.

"If we can't do it here," she asked, "where are we going?"

Conciliation

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forums for people to work out their problems, not to provide a resolution or to take the place of the council of conciliation.

Despite Deacon Lester's efforts, the role of the parish council remains a factor in the current dispute at St. Anne's. According to members of the council, when Monsignor Roche overruled the council's decision to

keep the school open one more year, he failed to follow procedures outlined in the parish constitution. Canon law, however, stipulates that a parish council functions as a consultative body, not a decision-making one. Therefore, Monsignor Roche was within church law in his decision.

In an interview prior to a Monday, March 27, meeting with parishioners of St. Anne's, Father Mulligan said he intended to define the proper role of the parish council and to give parishioners an opportunity to "put things on the table. Hopefully, out of that I'll understand them better, and they'll understand where (diocesan officials) come from better," he said.

Prior to the meeting, LaMagna was not optimistic that the get-together would produce any results, and called the meeting "a gesture to diffuse some of the heat about Monsignor Roche." Unless the diocese removes the pastor, LaMagna said, he and the other parishioners who oppose the pastor would appeal to the apostolic pronuncio to the United States, Cardinal Pio Laghi, and if necessary, to the Vatican.

LaMagna added that at this point, the goal of the group is not reconciliation with Monsignor Roche, but his removal as pastor.

In situations in which one or both parties are unwilling to negotiate, Father Mulligan acknowledged, a resolution is difficult to achieve. When those disputes continue over a length of time, "we try to remain in

touch with (those involved in the dispute) and try to help them develop a constructive process to resolve some of these conflicts," he said.

Father Mulligan added that when conflicts become public, the diocese finds itself more limited in what it can do than if the situation had remained out of the public spotlight. Among solutions used in the past have been moving the pastor or priest to a new assignment, or simply waiting until emotions have cooled enough for some sort of reconciliation to take place. An unofficial "solution" is for parishioners to move to another parish, as the group in dispute with Monsignor Roche claims St. Anne's parishioners are doing.

Diocesan officials "hope to bring things to a fairly prompt resolution," Father Mulligan said, so that the situation at St. Anne's "doesn't drag on and on." He did not elaborate about what that resolution might be.

In seeking resolution to disputes, the diocese tries "to avoid situations of winners and losers," Father Mulligan remarked. "I think what we hope for is a win-win situation." The vicar general added that such disagreements in parishes can also be viewed in a positive light for the lessons they teach about compromise.

"Crisis is an opportunity," Father Mulligan said. "At St. Anne's, we do have a crisis, but it is an opportunity for growth."

Vigil

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come to church," he explained.

Perhaps because of such long and careful preparation, those upon whom the Easter Vigil focused recognize that its power is fueled by conversion and not some kind of magic. "I don't think you change the instant you're confirmed," Tim Payne explained, as he prepared for last Saturday's service. "The whole process you go through before and after is what makes the difference. I know the process before has changed me, and I expect the process after will change me, too."

As Payne noted, the Easter Vigil begins a newly extended follow-up phase of the RCIA known as mystagogia. Previously, mystagogia concluded with Pentecost, but this year Blessed Sacrament will offer a year-long mystagogia in accordance with new RCIA guidelines.

Some, including Payne, expect that they will struggle to attend the monthly sessions. "It will be harder afterward to make myself go," he conceded.

John Billington, on the other hand, is relieved that the process will continue. "At first, I stayed away, feeling the process was too drawn out," he recalled. "Now I don't want it to end."

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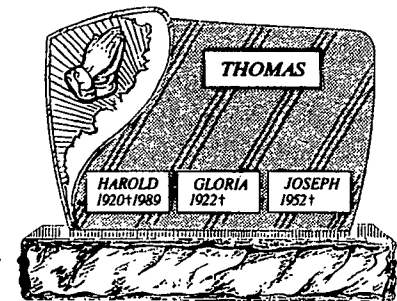
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