

Schools

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community newspapers and put up posters throughout the neighborhood to promote the school.

Parish volunteers worked on a mailing to prospective school parents in the neighborhood, and a phone committee made follow-up calls that resulted in 30 prospective students by last spring, said Edward J. Sloan, chairman of the St. Boniface school board. An open house for the prospects flopped last spring, Sloan admitted, but the school tried a similar mailing with phone call follow-ups this summer. The results were remarkable, Sloan noted.

"This year we've got 52 new students," he said, noting that "the big share of our people really came by word of mouth," a form of promotion that Della Costa saw as a strong link in the marketing chain. As of last week, Sloan said that St. Boniface was "cautiously optimistic" that it would be slated to remain open in the next draft of the schools plan for the Southeast Quadrant, scheduled to be released Nov. 26.

Sloan also pointed out one of the advantages of the new students. "Some of the new people we got, fortunately, are full-pay (tuition)," he added with a laugh.

Sloan's remarks relate to a concern that many inner-city Catholic schools have — how to attract parents who are frightened

by the prospect of high tuition costs. One way St. Boniface Parish alleviated that anxiety was by creating an adopt-a-student fund, whereby a donor may subsidize a student for periods ranging from one day to a whole year. Contributors kicked in almost \$16,000 for the fund, Sloan said.

Della Costa pointed out that city schools this year are in line to benefit from a singularly fortuitous gift from an anonymous benefactor. The donor has offered to give \$1,000 to the 11 diocesan city schools for every new student recruited this year, said Della Costa, who is creating a computer data base containing information on new students.

The 11 city schools recruited more than 200 new students this year, he said, putting the diocese in line for a possible \$200,000 donation sometime this month. The donor has also indicated that he is willing to expand his contribution up to \$500,000 if the diocese continues to recruit more students.

To get students in those empty seats is going to take a lot of cooperation from school parents, Della Costa noted. So far in his meetings with school officials and parents, he's found reason to be encouraged that this is what will happen. He pointed to parent activity in the Northeast Quadrant as an example.

"What's happening in the Northeast Quadrant (is) now I see a really positive energy going into the (reorganization) effort," he said. "There's also a creative tension between schools maintaining indiv-

iduity in a centralized system."

That "creative tension" should lead schools to sell prospective school parents on all area Catholic schools, and not just themselves individually, Della Costa stressed.

"I think there's a need for each school to see themselves as part of the quadrant," he said. "When (school officials) talk to a parent about that school ... (school officials should) see that they're helping themselves by referring someone to another school in the quadrant."

Each quadrant will eventually produce flyers and brochures jointly promoting the quadrants' schools, Della Costa said.

Jesuits

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absence from the country, Father Sobrino said in a telephone interview with Catholic News Service that the Jesuit-run university, known by its Spanish acronym as UCA, has pulled itself together during the past year. He said the replacement of the six slain priests by American, Canadian, Mexican and Spanish colleagues has helped to offset the initial sense of loss.

"Not even those terrible assassinations will stop the UCA and the Jesuits from complying with our mission of analyzing and telling the truth about the country, of seeking the best path toward ending the war and injustice and, as far as we are able, of giving hope to the Salvadoran people,"

though he acknowledged that his \$20,000 promotions budget is just enough "to maybe make up one flyer for each of them."

Della Costa also hopes to get school committees actively involved in Catholic Schools Week next year, and suggested that individual Catholic schools might run their advertising campaigns in a "staggered" fashion, with some schools advertising one week followed by other schools advertising the next week. Such a technique would enable the schools to stay in the public eye for longer periods, he noted.

Father Sobrino said.

Still, he said the Jesuits are concerned about the motives behind a shooting attack two months ago in the department of Chalatenango against two Jesuit priests as they were driving down a road.

Spanish-born Father Jon Cortina and Salvadoran Father Nicolas Salvarenga were uninjured in the attack, but one bullet just missed Father Cortina's head.

Father Sobrino dismissed reports that Father Cortina had left the country as a safety precaution, saying that the priest had recently visited his ailing father in Spain but is now back in El Salvador, continuing his work in rural Chalatenango.

Father Sobrino also lamented the virtual "impasse" he said has developed in the investigation into the Jesuit murders. Even though formal charges have been filed against an Army Col. Alfredo Benavides and eight soldiers and officers of the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion, Father Sobrino said "there has been no progress in clearing up who is behind Col. Benavides."

The priest said the importance of the Jesuit case and the order's interest in it go far beyond the murders.

"The interest we Jesuits have in this case being cleared up is not so much because those killed were Jesuits, but because if we get to the bottom of the matter in this case, we'll comprehend much better what is one of the basic roots of the catastrophe in the country — the armed forces," he said.

While the murder investigation drags on, so do peace negotiations between the government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front guerrillas, he said. Although the U.S. government is always thousands of miles away from the scene of the on-again, off-again talks, Father Sobrino said its presence in the peace process is a very real one.

"Here, we have the feeling that perhaps if there were sufficient pressure from the North American government, a settlement could be achieved that would at least lead to a cease-fire, and that's very important," Father Sobrino said.

International public outcry over the slaying of the Jesuits, he admitted, has been a key element in focusing world attention on El Salvador's problems once again.

"For the first time in many, many years even the U.S. Congress has taken a serious look at El Salvador and has confirmed what is the true situation regarding the armed forces and as a result has cut military aid," he said.

That kind of pressure could force peace negotiations and, ultimately, Father Sobrino said, a settlement to the civil war.

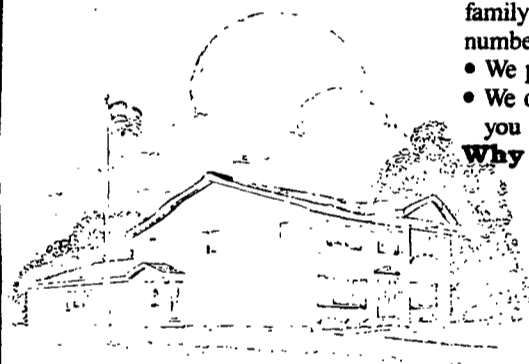
Should that happen, he said, there still remains the "most serious problem ... how to overcome the roots of structural injustice that have caused the war, the repression and the rest."

He said he sees that as "much more difficult ... but I hope all the people of the world will help us."

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