

## St. Pius

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When asked Monday, Dec. 10, for a response to the task force members' concern over a possible enrollment decline at the school in the wake of reorganization, Bishop Clark replied that parents have a choice as to whether they want to send their children to Catholic schools.

"If they want the quality education in Catholic education, it's open to them," Bishop Clark said. He added that the possibility of parents pulling their children out of St. Pius the Tenth because of reorganization raises a question: "Is it quality education (in) Catholic schools or is it something else" that concerns the parents?

During the Dec. 7 meeting, parents expressed their concerns by calling for responses ranging from a boycott of the Thanks Giving Appeal to a complete resistance to quadrant reorganization by the parish's task force. "Tell (the diocese) we're not part of this plan," said Cathie Dambra, a school parent. "I think they need something like that to prod them to do something because I don't think they're going to listen unless we play tough."

Ognibene responded positively to a woman who asked if members of other parishes feel the same way as St. Pius parishioners do regarding the reorganization process.

"I believe there will be a ripple effect from (our) parish to others out there," Ognibene said of whatever opposition measures the St. Pius task force will take.

Regardless of opposition by St. Pius parishioners, Bishop Clark has shown no sign of backing down on the reorganization plan. He reiterated Dec. 10 that all parishes in the quadrant are required to participate in the reorganization process, and said he believed only St. Pius was still strongly opposed to the schools' plan.

Bishop Clark also noted that he was willing to meet with Father Connor and members of the parish leadership, but would not attend a meeting like that conducted Dec. 7.

"It simply serves no useful purpose anymore to meet with large groups of people who oppose the reorganization," he said.

William Pickett, former chairman of the Bishop's Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools, said he felt St. Pius' Quadrant Task Force never wanted to take part in the reorganization process from the start.

"It appeared to me that the possibility they were going to take is, 'We're not going to participate,'" Pickett said, claiming that such a position left the commission no

room in which to negotiate with the parish.

Such observations contradict the St. Pius Quadrant Task Force's stance that it is the diocese — not parish representatives — that has been the unreasonable party in the dispute. Connellan alluded to such an argument when describing the letter the task force sent to Bishop Clark outlining its opposition to reorganization.

"We didn't call it an opposition paper," he said. "We didn't call it, 'If you don't, we will' — We called it a position paper."

Connellan also criticized Father Connor for not publicly opposing the schools reorganization plan and called upon him to do so on behalf of the parishioners. "Father has an obligation ... to let the bishop know exactly where we stand," Connellan commented.

Yet Father Connor ended the Dec. 7 meeting by remarking that he would not be "bullied" into choosing what to say in a meeting with Bishop Clark. The pastor also noted the delicacy of his position as pastor of the parish with Bishop Clark as his superior and president of the parish corporation.

"I hope you realize I'm between a rock and a hard place," Father Connor said.

The pastor also remarked: "I'm firmly convinced that you're not going to change (the diocese) on a single point." But, he added, "I won't try to stop you."

Nonetheless, Connellan suggested at the beginning of the meeting that task force members believe they could succeed. "We're not Don Quixotes," he said. "We don't have time to waste on futile causes."

## Bishop Edward J. Harper, confirmed many here

ST. THOMAS, Virgin Islands — Retired Bishop Edward J. Harper, CSSR, the first bishop of St. Thomas, died Sunday, Dec. 2, 1990, in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., after a long illness. He was 80.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Bishop Harper was made prelate of the Virgin Islands in 1960, and became ordinary when St. Thomas was elevated from a prelature to a diocese in 1977.

At the invitation of Bishop James E. Kearney, Bishop Harper confirmed hundreds of individuals in the Rochester diocese during the mid-1960s.

Bishop Harper, who retired in 1985, was to be buried Dec. 10 at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas Virgin Islands.

Following a public-school education, Bishop Harper joined the Redemptorists in 1928, made his profession of vows in 1934, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1939.

He began ministering in the Caribbean

islands in 1941 at the Redemptorist Foundation in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where he worked with youths and traveled on horseback to visit chapels.

In 1946 Bishop Harper founded a Redemptorist mission in Las Matas de Farfan, Dominican Republic, to care for Dominicans living near the Haitian border.

He returned to Mayaguez in 1950 for a parish pastorate, and in 1956 was named superior of a Redemptorist vice-province covering Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Dominican Republic.

Bishop Harper's episcopal appointment by Pope John XXIII came July 23, 1960, his 50th birthday.

His accomplishments as bishop included the creation of four parishes and a high school, the expansion of a grade school, the introduction of the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters of the

Americas to the diocese, and the establishment of service and education programs for low-income residents of the diocese.

Bishop Harper also ordained the first native priest of the diocese and established a diaconate program. Following his retirement he served as vicar general of the diocese until August 1989, when he sought medical treatment in the United States.

Severe damage to his home caused by Hurricane Hugo and a worsening medical condition kept the bishop from returning to the Virgin Islands.

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