

# How would you improve communications?

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

What do you think of this idea?

What if we equip every church in our diocese with television monitors and develop the capacity to communicate by television with all of our parish communities on any given Sunday?

That idea was proposed to me by a gentleman at Nativity Parish, Brockport, after one of the parish's Eucharistic Liturgies on Sunday morning.

His reasoning went like this: We cover a considerable amount of territory. Our communities are diverse in many ways, and we deal with a multiplicity of issues. It would enhance our capacity efficiently and fruitfully to work together for the common good if all of us were able to receive the same information at the same time about a particular issue.

My conversation with the gentleman was a brief one, but despite its brevity it has stayed in the back of my mind ever since. I think that's the case because I realize that a) effective communication is important to the life and health of any community or organization and b) effective communication is a very difficult thing to achieve.

You may recall that the findings of the survey we commissioned by the Winters Group challenged us strongly to be better communicators. Among the recommendations raised up by that effort were the following: a) to communicate simply and clearly our major priorities; b) to recognize that there are



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**LONG THE WAY**

many constituencies within our faith communities and to communicate appropriately with them; and c) to develop our capacity to receive and respond promptly to the reasonable pastoral demands of those we serve.

We have made strong efforts to respond to those recommendations. We developed and published a statement of diocesan mission and goals, which will serve as our guide through the completion of our Synod process in October, 1993.

We have done much to reorganize our Pastoral Center ministries in order better to meet those goals. In addition we have begun publication of *Companions* and *Partners*, two newsletters that are meant to help us to communicate more effectively with a variety of constituencies.

Besides encouraging the efforts just mentioned, I have also been trying to respond personally to the call contained in the survey's findings that I should be more visible in the community.

I must confess to you that I read that item with some apprehension. I read it as saying: Do all you do now, plus much more. And I just didn't think I had much more time or much more energy for that.

But with the help of good friends like our Priests' Council and Stewardship Council, I came to realize that the call was not so much a quantitative one as a qualitative one. In other words, the invitation of the community was to rethink my own priorities and rearrange them so that I could use my limited time and energy in the most effective fashion.

One of the decisions I have made as a result of that consultation is to give high priority to spending as many weekends as possible in our parish communities. To do so was a strong recommendation of our priests. And I have found it to be a most rewarding experience.

I started all of this by sharing the idea of our friend in Brockport. What do you think of it? What advantages and/or disadvantages would you foresee if the idea became reality? What suggestion would you make to improve our communication efforts if you were allowed one and only one suggestion but were guaranteed that it would be carried out?

Peace to all.

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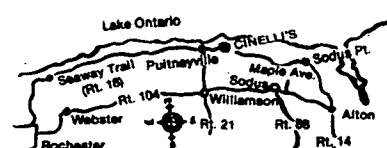
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