

New churches, renovations reflect Vatican II reforms

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Apostle Parish, 4100 Lyell Ave., marked the opening of their newly constructed church and parish center building — a building undoubtedly more to the liking of liturgical consultants such as Vosko (also see related article on page 14).

St. Jude's new church sets a striking contrast to the ornamentation that marks Ss. Peter and Paul. Coming from a pre-Vatican II church, an observer is immediately struck by how St. Jude's altar table is the main focal point in the simple, yet tasteful, interior. Rather than merely occupying center stage among the numerous visual sideshows with which Ss. Peter and Paul's must vie, the St. Jude's altar table has little visual competition.

And that's just as it should be, according to Thomas Castelein, architect with Bergman Associates. Castelein,

who designed the new St. Jude Church, explained that the interior's quiet features are an attempt to adhere to the post-Vatican II concepts embodied at the diocesan building guidelines issued in December, 1992.

"Part of the outlook of the church is to lessen the emphasis on multiple numbers of images in the worship space," he said. "Biblical images carry more weight because there are less of them."

The church's walls feature the Stations of the Cross and a single crucifix hangs alone over the altar, in contrast to the painting of the Last Supper and the ornate tabernacle located behind the altar at Ss. Peter and Paul. A handful of statues occupy certain areas of the worship space at St. Jude and were placed there for the benefit of older parishioners who enjoy the devotional quality they lend to the church's

atmosphere, Castelein added.

Unlike the straight rows of pews in Ss. Peter and Paul, which seem almost to stretch beyond the narthex to the street, the rows of pews in St. Jude arc around around the altar, enabling worshippers to see one another's faces as opposed to each other's backs.

Such a "gathering" style marks the vast majority of new churches built in the diocese, according to Sister Estelle Martin, RSM, a member of the Diocesan Building Commission. More than 26 new churches have been built in the diocese since Vatican II, she noted, adding that nearly all the pre-Vatican II parishes have renovated their worship space to fit the church's liturgical guidelines.

Michael J. Doran has helped renovate a number of those churches, including most recently Owego's St. Patrick. A Rochester-based architect, Doran noted that adapting churches built for pre-Vatican II worship for use in the post-conciliar era requires a mix of architectural skills and personal charm.

"I think you have to get a sense of what the congregation is like," he said. "You have to know their social mores,

their traditions."

Doran attends services, coffee hours and group meetings at the churches he renovates to get a feel for where a church wants to go with its renovation. He has great faith in people's willingness to accept changes in a church's design once they understand the reasons behind it.

"A lot of these conservative people initially resist," he said. "It takes three months and they come right around."

Robert A. Healy, an architect with LaBella Associates, Inc., Rochester, designed St. Catherine of Siena Church, Mendon. He also may work with Ss. Peter and Paul on plans to locate parish offices in the church's front half.

Like Doran, Healy enjoys the challenge of designing worship space and he, too, emphasized the need for architects to involve as many people as possible in the planning stages of a renovation or new design.

"I think in all cases, you assemble a good building committee," he said. "Youthful, elderly, people with children, men, women ... it gives you an opportunity to learn about everyone's faith."



S. John Willkin/Staff photographer
Carmin Ramos (left) and her daughter, Desiree, take a close look at one of the statues in Ss. Peter and Paul Church's narthex June 27.

Gala marks new edifice in Gates

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Father John J. Steger's eyes beamed as he entered Logan's Party House, 1420 Scottsville Road, to join a dinner celebrating the dedication and consecration of St. Jude's new church and parish center at 4100 Lyell Road, Gates.

"Exhilarated!" he responded when asked how he felt now that the \$2.1 million structure was completed. "It just totally fulfilled all the 25 years of pastoring at St. Jude's," he said.

Several of the more than 820 people who attended the party at Logan's on Sunday night, June 27, shared those sentiments of the pastor who has guided St. Jude Parish since its founding in 1968.

The dinner followed a special dedication and consecration Mass at which

Bishop Matthew H. Clark presided.

The Gates church's members and other friends agreed that the new church and parish center's completion highlighted Father Steger's dedication to the parish and the parishioners' dedication to each other.

"It's been a parish of family unity," noted Donald E. Kuhlman, the parish auditor who served as master of ceremonies at the dinner. "People are always working together for a common cause."

Sylvia Nagy, a parish "Martha" who will help clean the new church, pointed out that erecting the building brought out dozens of volunteers from the congregation. Listing the groups and individual participants who offered their services throughout the building and dedication process would take all day, she noted.

"It's so hard to put down just one name," she said. "There's so many talented people, it's unreal."

One such volunteer was Brad MacConnell, who, along with his friend, Michael Ferranti, designed and constructed several pieces inside the new church — including the cross over the altar and several candleholders.

"You never get over seeing your own work," MacConnell said. "I'm kind of proud of it."

Prior to giving a historical speech on the parish, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, a longtime friend of Father Steger, seemed just as proud of the parish as MacConnell was of his work. He noted that the new church and parish center — which combined will accommodate more than 1,200 people — symbolize the Catholic Church's wider embrace.

"We have room for everybody," he said. "Saints and sinners."

Francis W. Schwalm, superintendent with D'Agostino General Contractors Contractors, Inc., noted that his tradition — he was raised Episcopalian — emphasized that a church was "not a building, it's the community within it." If that is the case, then St. Jude's — the first Catholic church he ever built — will house that type of community, he noted, explaining that the parishioners impressed him with their warmth.

"They're just nice," he said. "I almost love them."

City parish celebrates 150th year

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — On Sunday morning, June 27, parishioners and friends of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, 720 W. Main St., emphasized that the church plans to thrive in the poor neighborhood that surrounds it.

Scores of people — black, white and Hispanic, reflecting the parish's multicultural makeup — gathered on the church's front lawn following a Mass at which seven teenagers were confirmed as the parish celebrated its 150th anniversary.

"We're letting people know that we have a very lively community here," remarked Father David P. Reid, SS.CC., pastor.

Barbara Classen, pastoral associate, noted the parish is currently looking at plans to locate its administrative offices in the church building itself. Combining the worship space with the parish services space may make it more inviting to people, she explained.

"We want to let people know these doors are open!" Classen said.

Rochester Police Sergeant Brian F. Conlon of Maple Section certainly knows the parish doors are open. He patrols the church's neighborhood and said he occasionally relies on its outreach services, especially St. Peter's Kitchen which serves free meals to hundreds of people every week.

"A lot of times we'll run across destitute people ... and we'll send them down to the soup kitchen," he related.

That's just the kind of reputation John F. Curran wants Ss. Peter and Paul to have. Curran sees Ss. Peter and

Paul Parish as a "lighthouse" and a "place of hope" on West Main Street, an area marked by boarded-up buildings and street crime.

"When a neighborhood dies, the last two things to go are the churches and the liquor stores," mused Curran, director of the parish's PriceLess Clothing. The program distributes donated clothing every Saturday morning.

Curran pointed out that more than a decade ago, the parish decided that it must meet the needs of its neighbors — Catholic and non-Catholic — or face the phenomenon of declining membership that has closed so many urban churches in recent years.

Hence, in addition to the soup kitchen and clothing service, the parish subsequently opened a medical center, community organization, day-care center, and food cupboard. And an affordable housing program is located in the parish' former school building.

For 81-year-old Lucille M. Isaac, Ss. Peter and Paul Parish contains the best of the old and the best of the new. A daughter of German immigrants who originally made up the majority of parishioners, Isaac now volunteers as an administrative assistant at the parish.

She hopes that the parish can preserve its old ornate church but make it the center of continuing social outreach. Isaac noted that the congregation's small size — Ss. Peter and Paul has less than 200 members — actually makes it more appealing to some Catholics, especially those from the suburbs, who will travel a distance to volunteer and to worship.

"Here we're smaller, and we'll reach out," she said.



Kellie McCann
Mary (left) and Betty Alazaus attended the opening celebration at St. Jude Church on June 27. Betty has been a parishioner for 25 years.