

Personnel coordinator matches jobs, applicants

Helps parishes to fill positions

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GATES — Looking for a job somewhere in the Rochester diocese? Look no further than Barbara Pedeville's office at the Pastoral Office, 1150 Buffalo Road.

The coordinator of diocesan Parish Personnel Services since Jan. 3, Pedeville previously worked for the diocesan tribunal as an advocate. While holding that position, she also took on the role last year of responding to people making allegations of sex abuse by diocesan or parish employees, a role she has continued in her current position.

But Pedeville primarily works with parishes who need to hire new staff people. Each April, her office lists job openings compiled from various parishes seeking everyone from pastoral associates to youth ministry coordinators.

Applicants seeking employment with a parish are screened and reviewed by the diocesan personnel office, Pedeville said, noting that her work relieves parishes the burden of finding employees in an enormous diocese.

"If you have a parish down in Elmira which needs a pastoral associate, they could advertise the position, but it would be difficult for them to get the most qualified candidate," she said. "We can recruit, screen and recommend candidates for placement."

Pedeville noted that she can inform those same applicants of any additional requirements they need to meet before applying for a certain position. An applicant, for example, might need certification or job training in a specific area before qualifying for a parish position, she said.

Pedeville also noted that by acquainting herself with such parish leaders as pastors and with their potential employees, she is better equipped to mediate disputes that might arise between parties.

"I would work together with a pastor and an employee to set down goals and objectives for themselves," she remarked. "They could review them on a short-term basis."

As of July 1, all parish personnel will also be able to use the Park Ridge Employee Assistance Program currently available to pastors, and to employees of the Pastoral Center, she said. The EAP is a free and confidential service that offers professional assistance for both work-related and personal problems.

The EAP is an added option for those seeking her office's services, Pedeville said, pointing out that she may not always be seen as a neutral observer in a pastor-employee dispute.

"They're (the EAP) an objective third



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Barb Pedeville, who previously worked in the diocesan Tribunal as a judge instructor-advocate, now serves as coordinator of diocesan Parish Personnel Services.

'Barb was extremely encouraging. She helped us all to feel a real sense of pride and accomplishment in what we were doing.'

Mary Lou O'Connor of St. Gabriel's, Hammondsport

party whereas I would be seen as part of the diocesan bureaucracy," she mused.

Parishes may be looking more and more to that bureaucracy for guidance in handling a new trend that is rooted in the nationwide priest shortage — the placement of a qualified lay person, deacon or religious as pastoral administrator, a position traditionally held by a priest.

St. Gabriel's in Hammondsport has used the services of Pedeville and Deacon Claude Lester, director of the diocesan Office of Pastoral Formation, to

prepare for the first-ever long-term placement of a non-priest administrator of a diocesan parish this year.

Father Robert W. Hammond, pastor of St. Mary's, Bath, will serve as St. Gabriel's regular sacramental minister, according to Mary Lou O'Connor, chairwoman of the parish forum.

Such a radical change in the way a parish sees itself as shepherded can create some anxiety among Catholics, Pedeville said.

"Father always did this, Father always did that — now we don't have Father," parishioners ask themselves, she said.

But Lester and Pedeville played a key role in assisting St. Gabriel to define what it wanted from their new administrator, according to O'Connor. The pair assisted a parish planning team in drawing up a parish vision statement and advised the team without unduly interfering, O'Connor said.

Pedeville, in particular, was helpful for the reassuring insight she brought to the process, O'Connor explained. She noted, for example, that one parishioner had questioned whether St. Gabriel's was asking for too much from potential administrators in its job application. The job description asked for numerous characteristics from applicants, including the ability to interact with different age groups, a talent for solving fiscal problems, and the desire to tackle the life-long religious education needs of parishioners.

Despite the tall order for a potential administrator, Pedeville assured St. Gabriel's that it was not asking for the impossible.

"Barb said 'There are people that are interested in this position,'" O'Connor recalled. "We were not hoping for more than someone was able to deliver."

"Barb was extremely encouraging," O'Connor added. "She helped us all to feel a real sense of pride and accomplishment in what we were doing."

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