

Education

St. Mary's fund encourages lay leaders' religious studies

By Scott VanDerveer
Editorial intern

St. Mary's Church downtown has developed a new way to involve parishioners in religious studies.

The Kettell Fund for Expanding Lay Leadership in the Church has been designated to enable St. Mary's parishioners to attend religious programs and workshops or participate in short-term ministerial experiences outside of the Rochester area.

The fund, named after Father George Kettell, STD, pastor of St. Mary's from 1935-49, will cover as much as one-half the tuition of summer institutes, weekend conferences and theology courses at local colleges. It will also help defray travel and housing expenses.

Two donors contributed the fund's initial balance of \$7,000. Organizers said additional donations are welcomed.

"The fund is not for Catholic education; it's for those specifically interested in theological studies," said Sister Joan Sobala, SSJ, one of St. Mary's pastoral associates. "We want to help young adults who want to attend a program or take a theology course."

The parish does request that the educational experience is in keeping with the spirit of Vatican II and St. Mary's Long Range Plan, which was developed through a series of parish

"town meetings" and the diocesan Synod process.

"Our hope is to educate our parishioners about the meaning of 'church.' That's why we want the education to be in the spirit of Vatican II. It's a spirit that says, 'we are the church,'" Sister Sobala said.

Bernadette Tutty, also known as "Bunny," used the fund for a course offered by St. Bernard's Institute.

"It would never have occurred to me to take a course," said Tutty, a teacher in the workforce preparation program of the Rochester City School District. "The course was thrilling. It was one of the highlights of my summer."

Ray Grosswirth, who joined the parish in 1988 through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, is using the fund to help defray the expense of two SBI courses.

"I owe a great deal of gratitude toward the community of St. Mary's," said Grosswirth, who already is certified as a music coordinator. "I am beginning my (master of arts) studies this fall at St. Bernard's with a major focus in worship and liturgy, and hope to serve the local diocese on a full-time basis after graduation."

Father James Lawlor, pastor of St. Mary's, said the parish offers the fund as one way of assisting and encouraging future leaders like Grosswirth and Tutty.

Parish combines fun, support

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

PALMYRA — Many schools host dances as traditional social events.

On Sat., Aug. 26, St. Michael's Church in Lyons will sponsor a dance with a different intention.

The parish is holding a dinner-dance at the Lyons Veterans of Foreign Wars building on Route 14 to help pay for its obligation for its regional school, St. Michael's in Newark.

Organizers are hoping that the dinner, combined with a raffle, will help raise approximately \$2,000.

The gala is the brainchild of a committee of parishioners headed by John DiSanto.

"The reason why it started is Father (William M.) Barrett (the Lyons pastor), came out with a newsletter talking about the regional school and the need for us as a parish to raise money," DiSanto said.

In the newsletter, the pastor explained that parish payments for the school — which serves pupils in Wayne and Ontario counties — and diocesan tuition fund bills were currently coming from the parish's general fund, and that any money raised through other efforts would allow that money to remain in that fund.

In an interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Father Barrett used as an example a spring roast beef dinner that helped raise approximately \$700 to help pay for its school-related bills for the 1995/96 school year.

Payments the Lyons church make include a flat fee that Wayne County parishes agreed to pay to help support the Newark school; a fee of approximately \$500 for each student from the parish attending the school (in the Lyons parish's case, three in 1994-95 and four in 1995-96); and a contribution to the diocesan pool that helps to subsidize tuition for low-income students.

DiSanto's committee looked at a number of options to help raise the money before settling on the dinner-dance to be held in conjunction with the raffle, he said.

Tickets for the dinner cost \$18 — of which \$5 will go toward the parish's obligation for St. Michael's in Newark. Remaining proceeds will pay for the buffet dinner, which is being catered by Club 86 in Geneva, and for the music provided by an area disc jockey.

Because the Newark Catholic school is considered a "regional school" — drawing students from several different towns and parishes in Ontario and Wayne counties — Lyons organizers are hoping to get support from people

around the region. In addition to tickets on sale in Newark, Lyons and Geneva, promotional material is being distributed among a number of communities and parishes in the area.

"What we wanted really was not only to get our parish together, but to get other parishes together for a nice sociable evening," DiSanto observed.

Moreover, he said, "The event is looked upon as an investment in Catholic education."

Should the dinner-dance prove successful, the Lyons parish may do it again, DiSanto said. The event could also rotate between parishes in the region so that other churches might help defray some costs in supporting the Newark school.

This fits in with the what the pastors and school officials who developed the county-wide support plan for the school hoped to see, Father Barrett observed.

"We encourage every parish to have some kind of social event to support the school and to raise consciousness about the school," Father Barrett concluded.

For ticket information, contact DiSanto at 315/597-0241; Mary Gilardo, 315/331-3353; or Netta Colacino, 331-0749 (Newark); or Jim Blandino, 315/946-4743 or Bob Bloomer, 946-6007, (Lyons).

School parents look to fundraisers, vouchers to help lessen tuition costs

By Jennifer A. Webb
Catholic News Service

CLEVELAND — Melodie Ashton spent untold hours preparing for St. Columbkille School's biggest annual fundraiser, "A Night at the Races."

As chairwoman of the committee that organized the event, she prayed enough people would bet on recorded horse races to raise up to \$3,000 for the Parma parish school.

"We do a lot of things for the school, and this is where we get our money," Ashton recently told the *Catholic Universe Bul-*

letin, Cleveland's diocesan newspaper.

For parents of Catholic school students, fund raising has always been a fact of life, but it has become an even greater necessity as the costs of educating pupils have soared well past the amounts of tuition parents pay. And school officials are reluctant to hike tuition much higher because they know parents are already sacrificing.

According to the latest figures available from the National Catholic Educational Association, the average tuition for Catholic elementary schools for the 1992-93 school year was

\$1,152 and for high school, \$2,700. For the same period, the per-pupil cost was \$2,044 and \$3,700, respectively.

Those figures reflect a big increase over the costs from even five years earlier. In 1987-88, the average elementary school tuition was \$924 and for high school was \$1,875. Costs per pupil were \$1,476 and \$2,690, respectively.

About 67,148 students attend 170 Catholic schools in the Cleveland diocese's eight counties. Enrollment has been up the last two years. Since 1984, 16 elementary schools have closed, most of them in inner-

city Cleveland. Some merging of schools has also taken place.

Teacher salaries and health care costs have a significant impact on school finances and often parish finances.

At St. Charles School, for example, salaries and benefits account for about 77 percent of the overall budget, said business manager Tom Holzheimer.

At St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Parma, the school is subsidized through the weekly collection. The parish contributes about 52 percent of the school budget. About 33 percent comes from tuition; the remainder comes from endowment

and gift-certificate programs.

Times have changed since schools were run almost exclusively by religious orders whose members were paid little by parishes but were provided with housing and transportation. Today, as one official put it, women religious "can't live on a hug and a holy card."

Still, Catholic school teachers do make substantially less than their public school counterparts. According to salary figures provided by the NCEA, public school teachers earned an average salary of \$35,104 for the 1992-93 school year. The average salary of Catholic elementary school teachers with bachelor degrees and higher degrees was \$19,132.

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