

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Easter walk unites three Rochester parishes

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Increasing efforts toward inter-parish harmony are a sign of the times, according to Tom Holland.

"The unity between the churches has got to happen," said Holland, a parishioner at Church of the Annunciation in Rochester.

Holland's parish brought to life this goal by joining with two nearby Catholic parishes for a special Easter morning walk. The walk drew about 50 participants ranging in age from 10 into their 80s.

Parishioners from Annunciation and St. Andrew's relayed candles and holy water containers from their churches to the corner of Randolph and Goodman streets, where the items were handed to parishioners from St. Philip Neri Church.

From there, people from all three churches proceeded to St. Philip Neri — located on Clifford Avenue, one block east of Goodman — for the beginning of the 10 a.m. Mass. Fire from the two candles was used to light an Easter candle inside the church, and water was dispersed in St. Philip Neri's baptismal font and main holy water receptacle. After Communion, ushers then distributed the water among the church's holy water fonts for approximately 300 worshipers who attended the Mass.

The relay distance was about a half-mile from both Church of the Annunciation and St. Andrew's to Randolph and Goodman, and another half-mile to St. Philip Neri.

Although heavy rains fell during the latter part of Easter Sunday, no weather glitches hampered the walk: Skies were calm and temperatures hovered near 40 degrees.

Diane Knittle, parish life coordinator at St. Philip Neri, served as coordinator of the walk. She explained that the event recalled a custom of "the early Christian church, where the Easter fire was passed out the door of the Holy Sepulcher to the Jerusalem churches."

"It was a good day. I hope we can do it again. A lot of people were coming out on their front porches, wanting to know what was going on," Gail Bauerschmidt remarked. Bauerschmidt organized the group that carried the two candles from St. Andrew's Church, located at the corner of Portland Avenue and Durnan Street.

Holland, who coordinated the Annunciation contingent, noted that his group included three generations of the Romeo family who helped carry two half-gallon containers of holy water from their church. Annunciation is located at the corner of Goodman and Norton streets.

Knittle said that the walk symbolized a growing spirit of cooperation among the three parishes. She pointed out that other recent examples of the churches' joint efforts included a penance preparation program and the Easter Vigil Mass.

"A beautiful spirit has developed between the three churches," Knittle said. "We're saying, 'Let's think as creatively as possible.'"

Some of this bonding was made necessary when Fa-



Kerry Huller

Mary D'Angelantonio watches as Carol Dineri receives the a candle during a relay procession to St. Philip Neri Church, Rochester, March 30.



Christine Castronova (left) and Diane DeLille (right) carry containers of holy water from Church of the Annunciation en route to St. Philip Neri Church.

ther Richard Shatzel left St. Philip Neri as pastor last June to become a parochial vicar at Our Mother of Sorrows Church, Greece, and was not replaced by a resident priest. Priestly sacramental ministry in the parish has since been divided between Father Robert O'Neill, pastor at Annunciation, and Father Timothy Horan, pastor at St. Andrew's.

During recent regional strategic planning meetings for parish restructuring, Holland said, the churches have expressed a strong desire to remain united. He noted that Annunciation, St. Philip Neri and St. Andrew's, all located in the city's northeast corner, also share the common bond of largely aging populations.

While change has come slowly for some members of these parishes, Holland observed that most parishioners are open to the possibility of stretching parish boundaries through clustering or other partnerships.

"We're all one church. We're universal, right?" Holland remarked.

"Our neighborhood is no longer confined to St. Andrew's," Bauerschmidt agreed.

"There's still a measure of fear, but we've all been very good at adjusting," Knittle commented.

## Ex-Fisher president to coordinate diocesan strategic planning

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

William Pickett, president emeritus of Rochester's St. John Fisher College, has been appointed as the Diocese of Rochester's first-ever director of planning.

Pickett, who began his full-time position April 1, will be responsible for coordinating the diocese's strategic plan for parish restructuring. He will also oversee Pastoral Center response to parishes' needs during the strategic planning process, which was announced in April 1996.

"I want to use some of the skills and abilities I've used in the past ... in the context of an organization I believe in," Pickett said of his new position with the diocese.

Pickett, 56, became involved in the strategic planning process when he served on the diocesan Strategic Planning Task Force last fall. As director of planning, he will facilitate approximately 12 planning groups composed of representatives from parishes and such other faith communities as college campus ministries. These groups will recommend a five-year plan for the networking of staff, resources, facilities and programs. The overall plan is due to take

effect in July.

Pickett will develop final recommendations with Bishop Matthew H. Clark and diocesan vicar general Father John M. Mulligan.

Pickett remarked that the strategic planning process signals a new era in which diocesan churches must plan as regions, rather than as individual parishes.

"It is now becoming a uniform expectation that the planning will be done in the larger church," he remarked.

Some of the goals of the strategic planning process are similar to those of the diocese's Commitment to Ministry. During that previous process, parishes developed reflection teams to examine alternative staffing patterns in light of the declining number of priests and the need for greater lay involvement in parish ministry. Pickett said he had heard of Commitment to Ministry, but does not know many details about it and plans to research the results to see how they might apply to the current planning process.

Pickett's previous diocesan roles are numerous. He is a past executive committee member of the diocesan Stewardship Council, and he also served on the Dioce-

san Personnel Commission and Synod Implementation Commission.

In addition, Pickett chaired the Bishop's Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this time, several diocesan elementary schools were closed as part of a restructuring process and attempt to group together parish-operated schools into quadrants and clusters.

Pickett acknowledged that some diocesan Catholics may perceive his new role as a signal that parishes, also, will be dissolving. However, he said that to assume this will happen — or to think a definite plan has already been developed — would be jumping to conclusions.

"It would be a mistake to say there's some kind of qualitative formula," Pickett said. "The need for collaborative planning has been brought on by a number of issues."

However, Pickett did not rule out the possibility that churches may indeed close.

"It's the same kind of issue (as the Catholic schools). Schools were closing as they were becoming weak and vulnerable," Pickett said.

If the restructuring of schools had not

taken place when it did, he added, "I contend that more schools would have closed. Being part of a system meant that resources were able to be used more efficiently."

Pickett was the first lay president in the history of St. John Fisher College. He served in that role for 10 years before resigning last June. In 1995 he received the Greater Rochester Quality Award, for his work in quality leadership, from the Rochester Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Rochester Quality Council.

Pickett resides in Rochester and is a parishioner and lector at St. Mary's Church.

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