

Retirement

Other towns

Continued from page 9

round residents.

"They're always building big, big (housing) complexes here," Edith said.

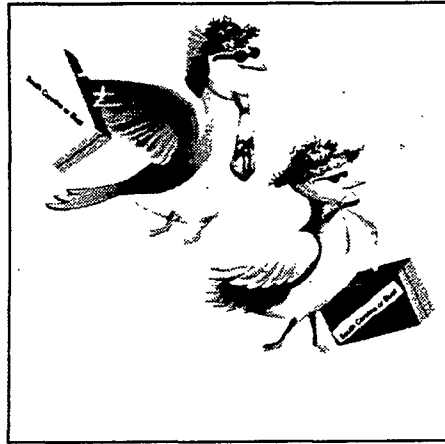
Catholic parishes are increasing, too. Whereas the last parish to be founded in the Rochester Diocese was St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Hamlin, in 1982, new parishes are going up quite regularly in Florida.

In fact, according to the *Official Catholic Directory*, the city of Fort Myers has six Catholic parishes — five of which were founded after 1964, and three from the mid-1980s on.

One such parish was St. Vincent de Paul Church in 1986. Edith Reidy said that she is impressed by St. Vincent's pastor, Father David Arle.

"He's quite a wonderful fellow. He'd have to be, to start a parish from nothing," Edith commented.

Even though Edith is fond of St. Vin-



cent's, she and Harry now attend a "lovely old church downtown" by the name of St. Francis Xavier, she said. The parish was founded in 1910.

Part of the reason for the switch, Harry explained, was the fact that St. Francis Xavier offers a 6:45 a.m. weekday Mass, which he attends daily. He even helps out as an altar server every now and then.

"He likes to get up at 5 (a.m.) I don't know why," Edith laughed.

Snowbirds' involvement is apparently more extensive at their home parishes than at the warm-weather parishes, however. For instance, Diane Meyer is involved in RCIA and a bereavement group at St. Mary's in Geneseo. But she explained that her retirement village in Florida offers a multitude of social events, so she and Bob don't have much time left over for church activities.

"We have so much here. It's like a small Geneseo," Diane said.

Edith Reidy said she once attended a parish mission, but otherwise her involvement at her Fort Myers church is limited to attending Mass. Harry, also, said he doesn't get terribly immersed in parish events because they only spend three or four months per year there.

"You don't have the same opportunity to build up friendships," Harry said.

On the other hand, the Cartellas — who have been going to Trout Lake since 1987

— enjoy attending such events as picnics and benefit spaghetti dinners at St. Mary of the Lakes Parish in Eustis. Joe noted that he and his wife were recently acknowledged during a Mass for their 50th wedding anniversary.

Joe said he lends financial support both in Florida and back home, giving to the Bishop's Appeal in the Orlando Diocese as well as the Thanks Giving Appeal in the Rochester Diocese.

Diane Meyer said that she and her husband support their church in Florida as well as St. Mary's Parish in Geneseo.

"We give the same amount each week as when we're at the church up north," she said.

Edith Reidy reported that she finds no drastic difference between the Catholic parishes in Florida and New York. The biggest change, likely, is that the Reidys, Meyers and Cartellas no longer step in snowdrifts in the church parking lots.

"Oh, we love it down here," Diane Meyer exclaimed.

Home parishes

Continued from page 9

tributions missed during winter.

Noting his parish isn't far from Conesus Lake, Father Gordinier commented, "Some lake people are very generous to us, but they are taking care of their parish at home primarily, which is fine."

And in Wolcott-Red Creek-Fair Haven (where St. Jude Chapel is open in the summer), Father Forni observed, "In summer we have very generous seasonal parishioners."

While he too noted that visitors seem to primarily support their home parishes, he added that some Florida residents who spend the summer in New York actively serve as eucharistic ministers or helping on committees.

While some snowbirds quietly slip

away, to keep track of its snowbirds, St. Jude the Apostle Church in Gates prints a "snowbirds" form in the bulletin. On this form parishioners who will be away can note the dates they will be gone. Parishioners also may advise the church whether to stop sending envelopes or to forward them to their winter home for a specified period.

"It works out beautifully," said Peggy Brown, religious education secretary, who estimated St. Jude's has 17 snowbird parishioners this year. "Most parishioners are very good about telling us when they are going away."

"What was happening was we were getting a lot of envelopes back from the post office when people were not contacting us telling us they were leaving. You aren't thinking of calling the church and telling the church, 'Don't send our envelopes.'" So staff members Judy Russell and Jackie

Feecey came up with the bulletin forms.

Albert and Ann Quatrini of the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community do think ahead before leaving for Myrtle Beach for six weeks.

"When we leave, I pay about half my commitment for the weeks I'm away and pay the other half when I get back," said Albert, also an usher who needs to find a substitute. "I made a promise to do it." The couple also contribute to two Myrtle Beach churches they attend.

Father Michael Conboy, pastor of the Corning-Painted Post cluster, estimated 20 parishioners go south during winter, and a similar number of parishioners left St. Joseph's Church in Penfield, where he was pastor.

Besides noting appreciation for those who make up contributions, he said, "One fascinating thing is they very often send a note and bulletin from the church they are

attending. We appreciate it here, that dimension of thoughtfulness," he said. "We look forward to seeing them back."

Similarly, said Father James Jaeger, pastor of St. Ann Church, Hornell, "I love it when they go, they always remember me, they send Christmas cards, Easter cards, bulletins. I use those bulletins for new ideas here."

He plans to reprint an article on tithing from one southern bulletin, for example.

Although the parish misses its snowbirds, he said, "The world is there to be seen, lived and enjoyed. The world is bigger than Hornell. They learn to be friends with others ... They realize people there are just as good and friendly as people in Hornell."

"Snowbirds, to fly south is their nature. But they always return to roost at the nest, return to the parish. For that, I am very thankful."

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