# **Technology**

Continued from page 1

Most parishioners are already well aware of pastoral planning at the parish level, which is known as "Action Plan A." They may not realize, however, that the Pastoral Center been going through its own planning process as well. Five key areas - currently in various stages of implementation – are covered under "Action Plan B" of PPNM.

Father Joseph Hart, moderator of the Pastoral Center, said that communication by computer is vital because of the diocese's geographic imperfections: the Pastoral Center, located in Rochester, is tucked in the diocese's northwest corner. The Finger Lakes impede quick access as

"You can't drive through (the lakes) and you can't get around them very easily," Father Hart said. "So it makes perfect sense that to tie us closer together, we need to use technology."

Joan Zaia observed that Rochester, compared to other dioceses, is on the cutting edge of this form of computer technology.

"I haven't heard of any diocese that has an intranet to connect all the entities," said Zaia, diocesan director of Information Technology.

"Many other dioceses don't even use email yet," added William Pickett, diocesan director of the Office of Planning.

Zaia's office has increased staff and begun to install new computers and software programs. She said that approximately 35 faith communities - as well as all diocesan Catholic Charities offices and Catholic schools - are now equipped with intranet capacity.

Zaia noted that the intranet project includes 250 installations at a cost of \$1,500 per site for both the program and a compatible computer. Most sites require a new computer to accommodate the new software, she said. The diocese is subsidizing faith communities that cannot afford the full cost.

Zaia said this development should be especially welcome among people from farreaching parts of the diocese who complain about lack of contact with the Pastoral Center.

"Hopefully our credibility will go up in that we're trying to establish better communication between all of us," Zaia said.

That credibility has already risen with Billie Dietrich, office manager at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Hamlin.

"I'd always felt we're disconnected from the diocese," she said. "I was looking forward to this."

#### Benefits are many

Mark Darling, an Information-Technology specialist who is installing many of the computers, noted that breaking news can be transmitted, within minutes after it occurs, throughout the diocese via intranet.

For example, when Bishop Matthew H. Clark was rushed to a hospital for an ir-

regular heartbeat the morning of Oct. 16, 1998, word did reach many parishes in the diocese until many hours later, he said.

Zaia said that during orientation, users are urged to check their e-mail and intranet regularly. For the most part, she said, this adjustment

quickly becomes a part of the user's daily routine.

"As time goes on, one hopes that's what happens," Zaia said.

Zaia noted that electronic transmission of Pastoral Center news via the intranet will eliminate the need for diocesan centralized mail - a system by which bulk mailings have been issued from the Pastoral Center each Wednesday for several years.

Tioga County, located in the southeast corner of the diocese, was among the first to have new computer hardware and software installed. The addition is welcomed by Marilyn Legault, secretary at St. Margaret Mary Church in Apalachin. She said that centralized mail often didn't arrive at her church until Friday.

Legault said she likes the way that the new software categorizes news from the Pastoral Center by region, allowing her to quickly find information pertinent to Tioga County.

"I can pick and choose," she said.

Legault said that she also uses the intranet's e-mail system and has experienced better communication not only with the diocese, but also with other Tioga County parishes.

Father Ryan observed that the intranet even allows better communication among the staff at his parish. For example, he said that he can send e-mail messages to staff members from his office or home computer at any time of the day or night; rather than endure a parade of busy signals, handwritten messages and voice mail.

Father Ryan said he handles about 50 email messages per day. He e-mails with others not only on the intranet, but also with parishioners who have their own computers. These options allow him time to dash off individualized notes, from praising a parishioner to criticizing a diocesan policy.

"The nice thing is, you can pat somebody on the back quickly. I guess you can kick them in the pants, too," Father Ryan

Father Hart enjoys the intranet's e-mail system as well. He, also, said he averages 50 messages per day.

Father Hart said.

Father Hart pointed out that benefits of this technology extend to parishioners, though not always directly. For instance, he said, the quicker a pastor can communicate with Pastoral the the Center, faster he can set his schedule and be available for parishioners.

Father Hart said that the diocese is also considering technology that would

allow cameras to be installed at remote locations for teleconferences. This would permit face-to-face contact without the inconvenience of long car rides.

"We can have better geographical representation," Father Hart said.

Another computer-related aspect of Plan B, Pickett noted, was the launching last year of a diocesan Web page (http://www.dor.org). Among its offerings, Pickett said, are a calendar of events and extensively detailed updates on the pastoral planning process for each of the planning groups.

#### **Growing pains**

With such a new system, Zaia said, there are still kinks to work out. Noting for example, that many parishes' computer modeins run through phone lines rather than cables, they sometimes operate slowly. This has no effect on e-mail, but parishes do struggle with slow transmission of documents that are heavy with graphics.

"We'll figure out a way around it," Zaia

Meanwhile, Darling observed that not all potential users have enough experience to adapt quickly to the new technology.

"I have seen 15 to 20 percent of people who were concerned about their ability to learn it," said Darling, who provides orientation when he installs computers and

Suzanne Enes, secretary at St. Philip Neri Church in Rochester, said she had scant knowledge of computers when her parish received one in March. In fact, she was the only person who didn't know how to operate a mouse at a training class offered at the Pastoral Center. The learning process is going slowly, she said, because she's trying to maintain her regular workload as well.

"If you have a job to do, there's not much time left to learn this," she said. Even so, Enes said that she's glad for the

arrival of the diocesan intranet.

"I'm so afraid to let go of the old way, but I've really been anxious to learn for 'ears. I think it's probably time we've done this," she said. "I really do enjoy it."

Darling said everyone is capable of learning the new technology regardless of any initial fears.

'To date, nobody's lost their job because they couldn't use the new stuff," he said.

#### **Necessary changes**

The addition of computer technology and support staff is one of Plan B's five chief components. The plan also seeks to:

• Increase dialogue and interaction between Bishop Clark and faith communi-

• Form comprehensive leadership and training programs for all diocesan and parish employees.

 Develop a strategic communications plan between the diocesan Office of Communications, the Catholic Courier and such Pastoral Center offices as Vocations, Catholic Schools and Catholic Charities.

 Restructure Pastoral Center staff and resources to support the planning process.

"This is a five-year plan. I hope to have it all done sooner rather than later," said Father Hart, who is beginning his second year as Pastoral Center moderator.

As part of the efforts to increase contact with faith communities, Bishop Clark plans to visit each region of the diocese in the year 2000. The Plan B objectives on employee programs and communications are still in the planning or early development stages.

Father Hart said that funding to launch the computer project came largely from an anonymous bequest. He added that the diocese still seeks funds to support other parts of Plan B, for which there is no specific budget.

Meanwhile, monies for Pastoral Center staff reorganization were freed up, in part, by the elimination of 15 Pastoral Center staff positions, which Father Hart announced in April.

Pickett said that many parts of Plan B wouldn't have been possible without the cuts. He added that the financial burden would have been too heavy to draw from the Thanks Giving Appeal.

"If there was going to be change, it had to be reallocation (of staff)," Pickett said. "You can go to the TGA people and ask them to raise more money, but the reality is, that's probably not going to happen in the short run."

One outgrowth of that revamping is Karen Rinefierd's newly created position as planning-group liaison, which she began July 1. Her former role as coordinator of young adult, adult and family faith formation was part of the April job cuts.

Rinefierd will work with regional planning groups as they carry out the five-year plans they drew up during their planning processes. She added that the diocese plans to hire an additional part-time liaison by January.

A large part of her job, she said, is to put planning-group members in touch with the proper diocesan officials when problems or questions arise that she cannot address.

"I'm not expected to know everything, but I am expected to know the people who do know," Rinefierd said.

# COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

#### GENERAL

Announcements

ADOPTIONS The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 716-328-4340. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

#### Miscellaneous

MUSIC LESSONS Piano, Organ, Accordion, Keyboard. All ages welcome Call Martin 266-6337

#### **EMPLOYMENT**

**Help Wanted** 

Area Representative \$1200 + per week working from home with a NYSE company. No experience necessary. Call 1-800-227-4920

#### SERVICES

Ceiling Repair

TEXTURED/SWIRLED CEIL INGS: 9' x 12' ceiling only \$59! Water damage, drywall, plaster repairs. Any size patches or repairs. Quality work; reasonable prices. 716-392-5076.

#### SERVICES

**Home Improvement** 

CARPENTRY: Handyman service. Will do odd jobs. No job too small. Call Ken 716-247-8785.

All home and building maintenance/repairs. Painting, carpentry, masonry, driveway sealing, basement windows, power-washing.
All types repairs, NYS certified.
Serving all areas. At Meyvis Jr.
392-4435 or 323-2876



## SERVICES

Landscaping & Lawncare

All types of lawn repair. Landscape design & planning. Concrete sidewalks & patios. In ground pools filled. Cerretto's Landscape

# 247-6790

MASONRY Repair : steps, sidewalks, basements walls. Repaired, painted, etc. Reasonable. 35 years exp. 716-323-1007. Al Meyvis, Sr.

Masonry

# SERVICES

Moving & Hauling K-D Moving & AZ 15 200

Storage, Inc. Experience in office. usehold moving and Big or Small, We do them All! 473-6610/473-4357

23 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607 NYDOT#9657

#### Painting & Wallcovering

AL MEYVIS, JR: Exterior/int. painting. Basement walls repaired/painted. All types of NYS 392-4435.

### SERVICES

Travel

Lion King · Toronto-Year 2000 Christmas in Branson 11/30-12/5/99 Christmas in New York • 12/3-5/99 w/Radio City Christmas Show

All Seasons Travel 637-2119

Weight Loss

Lose weight like crazy and love your body again! Safe, effective, all natural, metabolism breakthrough. Proven results. Call 1-800-610-5475