

## CONTINUED...

## Growing

Continued from page 1

Statistics from the diocesan Office of Information Technology reveal that nine parishes in the diocese (not including clusters) currently have 2,200 registered families or more. Of those nine, four are in the town of Greece (St. Lawrence, St. John the Evangelist, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Charles Borromeo) and three are in the five-parish Penfield/Perinton planning group (St. Joseph's in Penfield, St. John of Rochester in Perinton and Church of the Assumption in Fairport).

To accommodate quick growth, Pickett said, planning groups are considering such options as expanding present facilities; increasing lay staff; erecting multi-parish worship and recreation buildings; and even creating new parishes.

On the other hand, Pickett noted, the same needs don't exist for parishes located in the city of Rochester and near its borders. There, the Catholic population has generally leveled off or decreased in older, developed neighborhoods.

Father Robert McNamara, diocesan historian, said the location of sprawling parishes began shifting from the city to the suburbs after World War II, when immigration from European countries slowed and the standard of living increased.

"While new parishes were established in suburbia to take care of the city outflow, the old parishes and their plants in the city center tended to become wasteland, sustained with great difficulty," Father McNamara remarked. "This development is still with us today, obviously."

"Catholics have become Americans. They're affluent, upwardly mobile, want things for their children, want new stuff," Pickett said. "They want to live in certain kinds of homes with more land, cathedral ceilings and extra bedrooms. It's ironic because family sizes are smaller than they used to be, and yet the houses are bigger."

## Pros and cons

Prorok said that growing suburban parishes tend to yield enviable resources, such as a large pool of potential volunteers and strong financial support. However, he said, their growth is often so rapid that it's hard for them to keep up the pace.

"It puts a strain on facilities and current staff. How do you efficiently use those dollars?" Prorok said.

St. Mark's just built a new church in 1993 and is looking to erect additional buildings over the next few years, Prorok said. Yet parishioners have mixed feelings about the loss of intimacy associated with this level of growth, he said.

"How do you ever get to know all the people?" Prorok said.

Father George Wiant cites similar con-

cerns: As pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Victor, he has seen his parish grow from 1,000 to 1,400 families over the past decade and he's concerned that worshippers may get lost in the shuffle.

"How can we become a welcoming community, get people to participate?" Father Wiant asked. "People need to feel that this is a caring community."

Two weekend Masses are regularly filled to capacity at the 400-seat church, with another Mass at 80 percent and the fourth at 70 percent. A new parish center went up in 1996, allowing St. Patrick's to double its religious-education classes. Father Wiant added that the possibility of a church expansion has been discussed as well — but this isn't viewed as a positive step by all.

"There's a certain tension. The older parishioners don't recognize the people at Mass," Father Wiant said. They feel St. Patrick's "is too big already," he said.

To maintain a sense of community, Father Wiant said he promotes greater personal contact among the laity via coffee hours, informational bulletins, "name tag Sundays" and a new parish directory.

Maintaining intimacy is also a challenge for smaller — but growing — parishes, said Sister Alice Cooney, SSJ. Since she became pastoral administrator at St. Joseph's Church in Rush in 1995, the parish has increased from 375 to nearly 500 families. This has put a strain on St. Joseph's 250-person seating capacity — an ironic twist, Sister Cooney said, because many who come there from neighboring communities say they enjoy a small-church setting.

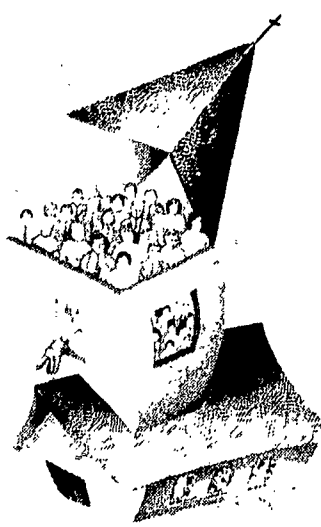
Although Sister Cooney said she "will certainly welcome everyone who comes," she also wonders how long St. Joseph's current buildings and staff can accommodate the growth.

"That's a very real question," Sister Cooney said.

## St. Caldor?

One option for handling growth is to form a new parish. Prorok said the northwest Monroe County group is considering creation of a parish by the year 2005. It would be built west of St. Lawrence, south of St. Leo's in Hilton, and north of St. John the Evangelist in Spencerport. Should this plan come to fruition, it would mark the first new parish in the Rochester Diocese since St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Hamlin — also a part of the Northwest planning group — was founded in 1982.

Pickett said the possibility of a new parish in the Penfield/Perinton area has



been discussed as well, primarily to take the load off St. Joseph's in Penfield — which, at approximately 3,100 families, is the largest parish in the Rochester Diocese. (St. Lawrence is No. 2.)

Another alternative raised by the Penfield/Perinton planning group is a multi-purpose liturgy center that would be used by all five of the planning group's parishes (St. Joseph's in Penfield, St. John of Rochester and Church of the Resurrection in Perinton, Assump-

tion in Fairport and St. Jerome's in East Rochester). The center would incorporate classrooms and meeting rooms, as well as a worship area housing up to 2,000 people.

Penfield/Perinton co-chairs Mary Paul and Mark Vahey have dubbed the liturgy center "St. Caldor" because one of its potential sites is a former Caldor department store near Eastview Mall. Paul and Vahey said that such a facility would ease overflow at the Penfield/Perinton parishes, especially during holiday liturgies.

Pickett, for one, favors the idea of large worship centers. In light of the priest shortage, big buildings would allow for fewer Masses with larger congregations, he noted.

Paul and Vahey said the idea has played to mixed reviews from the planning group's parishes. Along with financial concerns, Paul said, the parishes are concerned about maintaining their individual flavor.

"We don't want to do anything to destroy the strength of the existing parishes," she remarked.

For the same reason, Prorok said, northwest Monroe County may encounter resistance if it goes ahead with a new parish.

"People are worried about losing their parish identity," Prorok said. "Are people going to move to a new one if they're in the choir at St. Lawrence, for instance, and they're happy?"

Parish identity is also an issue for Father John Glogowski, pastor at St. Leo in Hilton. He is concerned that a new parish to his south could cut in St. Leo's population and vitality.

Father Glogowski also questioned the proposal to locate the new parish in the town of Parma, when the Northwest group's main growth area is in Greece. Parma is expected to remain fairly rural for several years, he said.

"Usually there is a surplus of people when a parish opens. Here (in Parma), you have no people," Father Glogowski said.

Some people may wonder how a new parish can even be discussed in light of the

priest shortage, when there aren't enough priests to staff the existing parishes.

Pickett emphasized, however, that any new parish would be overseen by a pastoral administrator, not a priest. This arrangement would help dispel another myth — that priests are plucked from the city to serve richer suburban congregations.

Pickett further noted that the ratio of registered families per priest is 1,400 in the Penfield/Perinton planning group and 1,100 in the Northwest Monroe planning group, compared to 500 in many city parishes. And in largely rural Tioga County, there are 2,443 families for four full-time priests at six parishes — an average of just over 600 families per priest.

"The reality is, everybody's losing priests. It's not some areas being filled at the expense of others," Pickett said. He said the families-per-priest ratio is lower in rural parishes because there's more square mileage to cover, and in the city because those priests often take part in special ministries such as working with the poor.

Then there's St. Lawrence — where, with three priests for 3,000 families, Father Falletta feels more like a CEO than a pastor.

"Really, it's delegation. I can't do hands-on. If you do hands-on, you go nuts," Father Falletta said.

Father Falletta recalled that when he grew up in Rochester's Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, four priests served a 1,000-family parish. Now he foresees St. Lawrence going down to two priests after 69-year-old Father Donald Haycock, CSC, parochial vicar, retires.

"I really kind of dread the day when we have one less priest. But that day will come," Father Falletta said.

The Penfield/Perinton co-chairs said that their area, likewise, will increasingly feel the priest shortage, and therefore should weigh creative solutions such as a shared liturgy center. However, because each parish has at least one full-time priest, assisted by retired priests, parishioners aren't terribly concerned at this point.

"Joe in the pew is not going to see it the same way," Paul said.

"People aren't ready to deal with the problem until you hit them with the reality. We're not there yet," Vahey said.

Yet despite the challenges facing large parishes, Pickett feels that the advantages of size outweigh the disadvantages.

"The larger parish has more programs going on, more attendance, more options, more choices," Pickett said, adding that parishioners who seek intimacy can still gain it through small Christian communities offered at many parishes.

Paul reasoned that there could be worse things than struggling to accommodate growth — such as rows of empty pews.

"Somebody said to me 'What are you complaining about? It's a good problem to have,'" she remarked.

## Dili

Continued from page 1

firmed killings of clergy to four.

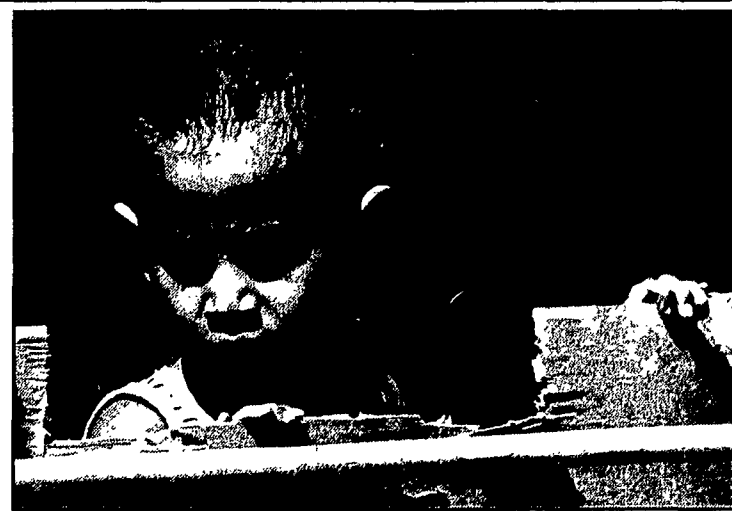
Sister Bautista said Mother Matilde, the 80-year-old mother superior of the Canossian Daughters of Charity, also is alive.

"She visited here yesterday, which made us all very happy because we heard that she was killed," Sister Bautista told Catholic News Service.

Mother Matilde, who worked for Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, told the Salesian nuns that she was residing alone in a portion of Bishop Belo's house that was not destroyed when militias attacked the residence in early September.

"She said she's 'standing guard,'" Sister Bautista said.

Bishop Belo, apostolic administrator of Dili, said in Portugal Sept. 19 he would return to Dili "when the U.N. force is in all towns and cities (of East Timor) and when Dili is calm." He celebrated Mass that day in Fatima, the site of church-recognized Marian apparitions to three children in 1917.



Reuters/CNS

**A child peers from makeshift housing near the Dili harbor in East Timor Sept. 19.**

Bishop Belo was evacuated to Australia in early September following a militia attack on his residence.

The bishop met Sept. 13 with Pope John Paul II at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo to discuss the situation in East Timor. Priests and dozens of pastoral workers were killed in

what Vatican officials described as deliberate attacks against the Catholic Church.

Of the 10 priests reported missing, six priests, including Father Barreto, were believed to be residing in the hills outside Dili. Father Francisco Tavares dos Reis was said to be alive, while a Father Francisco Soares was believed dead, said a church official.

Bishop Basilio do Nascimento, apostolic administrator of Baukau, East Timor, was also in hiding in the mountains surrounding Baukau, said Father Reinaldo Cardoso of Providence, R.I., a priest from the Azores who served in East Timor prior to the 1975 Indonesian invasion.

Many of the refugees at the Salesian convent wept during a Sept. 19 Mass, which was the first Mass held at the convent in more than two weeks, said Sister Bautista. The refugees had been trapped in the convent by the violence that broke out in the wake of the Aug. 30 referendum.

"When you think about it there is a lot to cry about. But the priest told us that as Christians there's also a lot to be joyful for. All the evil and bad in our society for the past 24 years has been burned clean, and now we can start rebuilding something pure, just and good," Sister Bautista said.

Meanwhile, a ship carrying 1,200 tons of rice provided by Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' international relief and development agency, arrived on Timor island, bound primarily for the more than 60,000 refugees in the Atambua Diocese.

Venera Pancho, CRS logistics manager, told UCA News, an Asian church news agency based in Thailand, that about 115 tons of the rice would be given to refugees sheltered in the Kupang Archdiocese.