

Pastoral administrators are positive additions

I visited St. Michael's Church in Lyons Saturday afternoon to install Deborah Housel as pastoral administrator of that Wayne County parish.

This was only the second occasion on which I have done that, the first being the installation of Sister Anne Michelle McGill, SSJ, in the same ministry to the people of St. Gabriel's Parish in Hammondsport. Sister Ann Michelle pioneered the pastoral administrator position in our diocese, beginning this ministry in 1994.

For the people of St. Michael's, it is a totally new experience. For many years they have enjoyed the ministry of full-time residential pastors. For this reason, some of the parish leadership, Debbie included, thought that a visit from me to install her would encourage her and the parish family in this time of significant transition.

I leave it to Debbie and the community to judge whether my visit helped or not. I know that my experience with them helped me. I found a community that is ready and willing to accept Debbie's ministry, and to work with her to meet the challenges and to respond to the questions that inevitably attach to a time of significant change. And I found in Debbie a person whose faith is strong; and who is well prepared by her studies at our St. Bernard's School

along the way

By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



of Theology and Ministry and by her rich ministerial experience in our parishes.

Father Ed Steinkirchner was at the celebration. I am so glad that he could make it. It was he who first called Debbie to pastoral ministry when he was her pastor at St. Michael's in Newark. For me, his presence also symbolized the encouragement and support the priests of our diocese consistently offer to these new co-workers in the vineyard. Their willingness to make the changes we need to make is one of the reasons I admire them so much. You can well understand how important it is that the pastoral administrator who has day-to-day responsibility for the life of the parish and the priest who comes to preside at the Eucharist and administer the sacraments enjoy a harmonious relationship. With much credit to all parties involved, I think

this has gone very well in our diocese.

Between Sister Anne Michelle McGill and Deborah Housel we have enjoyed the ministry of about 20 pastoral administrators. (Forgive the lack of precision. I write while traveling to Washington for a U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting, and do not have the data with me). They have been women religious, permanent deacons, lay women and men. All met our demanding criteria for acceptance into our pool of candidates. Most of them did their academic work at St. Bernard's. I think that the number of current pastoral administrators is 10 or 11.

The position of pastoral administrator is just one of several ministries in which lay persons, women religious and permanent deacons serve with great distinction. To me their emergence is one of the great fruits of the work that was either begun or renewed at the Second Vatican Council. Such a blessing would be welcome at any time, and is especially so now when the number of our diocesan priests has fallen so dramatically. But I pray very often that even when we attract more candidates for priesthood, we will never back away from our commitment to the development of lay ministry in our diocese.

Peace to all.

MISSION NEWS



"In our own age, there are many often unknown heroes who give their lives to bear witness to the faith."

Pope John Paul II

As we remember those who lost their lives and those who live on, we pray that the Gospel be proclaimed in every corner of the earth so that all people may come to know the peace, the love and the abiding presence of Jesus Christ.

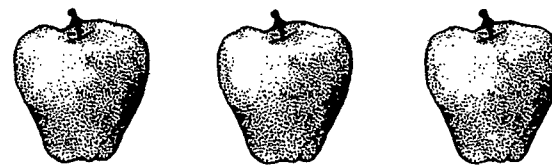


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9/02

St. Ann's Community and Rochester General Hospital present the 16th Annual Community Care Health Fair



Thursday, September 19, 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

St. Ann's Home

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Free Admission, Refreshments and Door Prizes

With over 30 booths offering information and health screenings. The fair is designed to create awareness of community resources for senior citizens and those who care for the elderly.

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