

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Mass celebrates future church, parish

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

LIVONIA — If you build it, they will come.

Remember that quote from "Field of Dreams," referring to construction of a baseball stadium in an Iowa corn field? Although the setting on Sept. 22 instead involved a Livingston County Catholic church, the gathering had some profound connections to the 1989 movie.

Nearly 600 people congregated in their own field of dreams, just east of this Livingston County village, for the first Mass on the site of their future church. During the 10:30 a.m. liturgy, parishioners also discovered the name of their future parish: St. Matthew.

The parish and church building will replace St. Joseph in Livonia and St. William in Conesus. Father John Hayes, pastor of both St. Joseph and St. William, said he hopes groundbreaking for St. Matthew Church will take place in the spring of 2003, with work to be completed in about a year's time.

The land is located on Route 20A, the main road in Livonia. The 20-acre parcel was sold to the parish by William and Barbara Kurtz, St. Joseph parishioners, who operate a farm on that site.

Father Hayes said legal proceedings have begun for the merger of St. Joseph and St. William parishes. Both existing churches will remain open until the new church is completed, and then will be put up for sale. That development would mark the end of a long era for Catholics in the Conesus Lake area: St. William was built in 1875, and St. Joseph in 1911. St. William has existed as a mission church of St. Joseph since 1915.

Father Hayes added that Hagerty Hall



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer

Father John Hayes, pastor of St. Joseph in Livonia and St. William in Conesus, celebrates Mass Sept. 22 in a field just east of Livonia. The two parishes are in the process of merging and, beginning in 2004, will worship jointly in a new church, St. Matthew, to be built in the field.

in Livonia, which serves as St. Joseph's parish hall, religious-education center and office facility, will stay in operation until a similar structure can be built onto St. Matthew.

More than \$1.6 million has been raised toward the new church's projected \$2.2 million cost in just three months since a capital campaign began. Father Hayes noted that building a church had been discussed among parishioners long before he arrived as pastor in 1999. He explained that a new church has become necessary because the eastern part of Livingston County is expanding rapidly: there are more than 700 families between St. Joseph and St. William, and the number is climbing steadily.

"We knew we had to build. There was just no way we couldn't," Father Hayes said.

Another reality, he acknowledged, is the priest shortage. Currently, Father Hayes is the only full-time priest for the two churches, which have three regularly scheduled weekend Masses at St. Joseph and one at St. William. The churches are located eight miles apart.

Regarding the merged parish's title, Father Hayes said he proposed three new names "because it would be unfair to take one (St. Joseph or St. William) and not the other." He proposed St. Matthew, St.



Victoria Burt (left) of Holy Cross Parish, Rochester, and Shannon Coughlin, of St. William, Conesus, bow their heads in prayer during the dedication Mass.

Luke and St. Joan of Arc and put them to a parish vote, saying he selected those names, in part, because they had never been used for a parish in the Rochester Diocese. In addition, two of the saints were Gospel writers, and Joan of Arc would have fit in with many nearby parishes that are named after women.

When Father Hayes announced the choice of St. Matthew during Mass on Sept. 22, much of the congregation broke out in applause. Clapping filled the open air again when parish youths released balloons at the liturgy's conclusion. Parishioners then took turns digging dirt at the site of a red maple tree that was planted that morning to mark the home of the future St. Matthew Parish. To cap off the festive slate of events, a picnic was held at Livonia Community Park.

"It was just an incredibly blessed day," Father Hayes said. He added that he is "very, very proud of the people in this parish — the wonderful leadership, the people who have stepped forward. I'm very impressed with the spirit of the volunteers."

## Obituary

### Sr. Grace Conway; taught for 46 years

Sister of St. Joseph Grace Conway, formerly Sister Clara, died Sept. 2, 2002, at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary. She was 92.

A native of Bergen, N.Y., Sister Grace entered the congregation from Rochester's Blessed Sacrament Parish in 1929. She attended Nazareth Academy and earned her bachelor's degree from Nazareth College in 1946. She taught for 46 years in diocesan schools, including St. Francis Xavier and Immaculate Conception schools in Rochester, St. Francis de Sales in Geneva and St. Aloysius in Auburn.

Sister Grace performed various min-

## EWTN star to speak at conference

Redemptorist Father Pablo Straub, who appears on the Eternal Word Television Network and on Mexican TV, will be the star attraction at a conference organized by the St. Michael the Archangel Chapter of the lay group Call to Holiness from Friday, Sept. 27, through Sunday, Sept. 29.

Ordained in 1958, Father Straub has preached and evangelized in Puerto Rico, Mexico, the United States, the Philippines and Guatemala. He will speak during the conference's kickoff dinner at the Rochester Institute of Technology's Inn & Conference Center in Henrietta, on Sept. 27 at 6:30 p.m.

The conference will continue on Sept. 28 at St. Jude the Apostle Church, 4100 Lyell Road, Gates, beginning with a procession in honor of Our Lady of Fatima at 9 a.m., followed by a 9:30 a.m. Mass celebrated by Father Straub. Father Straub will also give the homily at the parish's 5:30 p.m. Mass, as well as preside at a 7:30 p.m. Mass.

Father Straub will give two speeches that day, at 10:30 a.m. and at 3:10 p.m. Other talks include a presentation on Call to Holiness by Father Frederick Bush, priest-in-residence at St. Mark's Parish in Greece, as well as a presentation on windows, statues and the St. Jude's chapel by St. Jude's pastor, Father John J. Steger. Both presentations will take place at 1 p.m. in the parish's faith formation center, which will also be the site of several booths set up by various church organizations.

Other events and activities during the day include recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, enrollment in the brown scapular, Benediction and hearing of confessions.

On Sept. 29, Father Straub will give the homily at the 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and noon Masses, as well as celebrate the parish's noon Mass. A reception will take place in the faith formation center at 1:30 p.m., and will feature another talk by Father Straub.

The conference will also feature Donna Cori Gibson, promoted as the "Celine Dion of Catholic contemporary music," who will sing at all the conference Masses. Gibson will give a 3 p.m. concert on Sept. 29. The highlight of her concert will be a musical rendition of the rosary.

The conference is free and open to the public. Participants are asked to bring a lunch on Saturday, and dinner will be served that day. For information, call 585/387-9662.

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