

DIVERSITY

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learn about this gift the more we are enriched. It will really build this church and give us a better idea of who God really is."

GIFTS OF PARISHES

Parish leaders agree that volunteerism is an important gift of urban, suburban and rural parishes alike.

Father Bob Ring, pastor of Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Community in the Finger Lakes, said his parishioners derive a tremendous sense of pride from volunteering to take care of themselves and the needs of their rural church.

Father Alex Bradshaw, pastor of Our Mother of Sorrows Parish in Greece, agreed, saying a strong volunteer base is also a gift of the suburban church.

"There's a core of people who are the solid base of a faith community, an invariable point of contact for volunteers and have consistently shown an involvement in the parish," Father Bradshaw said.

Father Mugavero said volunteers and a strong music program are among the strengths of his urban parish. But one of its biggest assets, he noted, is its "incredible diversity." Two-thirds of the parishioners are African American and only one-third are "cradle Catholics," he said.

"We have a real different dynamic at work, and that creates some wonderful things," he said. "In a lot of ways they have lived faith, and that faith has been tested in life."

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Father Mugavero said the urban setting of his parish presents unique challenges.

"Our challenge is to be able to create relationships that will grow in such ways that eventually we start to change the culture of the street, the economics of the street. We're out there on the front lines and we're in daily conversation with prostitutes, drug dealers; it's a different kind of challenge," he said.

Rob Layer, youth minister at Our Mother of Sorrows, said that reaching out to Catholics of all ages and cultures is important.

"Our youth today don't look at the church the same way that we do. I



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Nancy DeRycke, pastoral associate at Church of the Resurrection in Fairport, helps lead a panel discussion on suburban parishes Aug. 20 during the diocesan Leadership Days, held at the New York Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls.

think our youth look at the church as being catholic, meaning universal. I think the greatest need is to continue to reach out and for us as staff not to get stuck within the four walls of the church," Layer said.

Father Norm Tanck, pastor of Christ the King Church in Irondequoit, said some so-called suburban parishes, like his own, cannot really be considered suburban. Parishes like these lay between urban and suburban areas and have a mix of both influences, giving them something unique to offer.

Many representatives from urban

parishes said it is important to stop concentrating on numbers and start really looking at parishioners to find out who they are and how to better minister to them.

"How can we as a church start listening to the people? I believe that's something we really haven't done yet. I think we need to start from a position of humility. Start by listening, not by jumping to conclusions," said Father Ray Fleming, pastor of Rochester's Emmanuel Church of the Deaf Parish.

"It is very important to know the culture. We need to build relationships and be able to be a bridge between one another," said Sandra Rojas, pastoral administrator of Rochester's Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

Veola Hawkes, a parishioner of the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward in Rochester, said this change needs to start with parish leaders, who should try to be inclusive and reach out to those who feel

unwelcome. Hawkes stressed that she is comfortable in her parish community but thinks the diocese as a whole needs to shift its paradigm, using personal contact to let people know they are welcome.

"The church needs to do something about the invisibility of the black culture in the Diocese of Rochester. If we are part of the body of Christ, continue to celebrate us as such," Hawkes said. "I believe that the Catholic Church can be a leader in this community."

Doug Mandelaro, diocesan spokesman, agreed that it is crucial that all feel welcome in the church.

"We are working hard to achieve, through programs and other ways of reaching out, a goal that no one feels invisible," he said.

REACHING OUT

Project Unity is one way parishes in the diocese are attempting to bridge cultural and geographic gaps. The project, which is coordinated by diocesan Catholic Charities, is specifically designed to provide bridge-building opportunities.

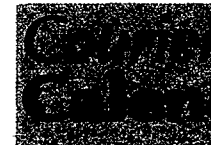
Project Unity provides guidance and support to parishes that want to form a partnership with other parishes, and also offers three opportunities for involvement. Parishes, planning groups or individuals can choose to partner with the migrant community, an inner-city Catholic school or first-time home owners, building personal relationships through socializing, tutoring and mentoring. Emphasis is placed on partners learning from and helping each other, as well as making sure that there is an equal give and take, since all parties have their own gifts to share.

"We need to understand our inter-relatedness and our need for one another. We're not isolated in ourselves, and we don't possess everything that we could as a community. We need each other," said Sister Janet Korn, RSM, social-justice awareness coordinator for Catholic Charities.

At St. Andrew's School in Rochester, about 25 people volunteer to be tutors through Project Unity. They offer a range of services, from assisting children who need extra help to providing enrichment for academically advanced students. Principal Tracy Nadler said the children often form close relationships with their tutors, sometimes even becoming pen pals at the end of the school year.

"It's just beautiful to see the children respond to the adult men and women, who are reciprocating. We do believe that it's academically useful," she said, adding "You can just see the flash of excitement and joy as the child understands the concept."

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■ **SUN, SEP. 7**
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baskets; McCabe (C
Lady of Lourdes C
Demarest Pky., E
a.m.-12:30 p.m.;
\$15 family; take-
able; 607/732-6261

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EDUCATION

■ **MON, SEP. 8**
tration deadline:
Center with the A
nar "Caring for
Loved One"; Lega
Crescent, 1000 P
Cir., Greece; Sept.
Oct. 6, 13, 20; 7-9
585/244-5190; mc
rochester.org.

■ **TUE, SEP. 9**
shop: preview of
"Caring for an Ag
One"; Mercy Cent
Aging, 327 Warri
Brighton; 5:30-6
free; advance re
requested; 585
mca@mercyrache

■ **SAT, SEP. 13**
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Serving the Lord"
ed in Spanish; Pec
cava, leader; hall,
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tario St., Roche
a.m.-3 p.m.; free; re
required; Yvoni
585/328-3228, ext.

FUNDRAISERS

■ **SAT, SEP. 6** —
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Joseph's Church, 6
Lima Rd., Route 1
3:30-7 p.m.; \$7 adu
niors, \$3.50 child
outs available; Mas
to 8 p.m.; 585/533-1

■ **SUN, SEP. 7**
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ion, sponsor; Salm
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1992, Ann Hynes
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