

Pastors opt for new home

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

In an effort to separate work and living spaces, and to live in community, two Webster pastors are moving to a Rochester rectory where they are joining two resident priests.

Father Charles Latus, pastor of St. Rita's Parish, and Father Stan Kacprzak, pastor of St. Paul's Parish, were to relocate in early September from their parish rectories to St. John the Evangelist Church on the city's northeast side. There, they will live with Father Robert Schrader, first-year pastor of the Winton-Culver Parishes (St. John the Evangelist, St. James and St. Ambrose) and Father Robert Werth, first-year parochial vicar for Winton-Culver.

Father Latus said he and Father Kacprzak had discussed such a move for two years, originally pursuing a residence together in Webster. However, after Father Schrader was assigned the Winton-Culver pastorate, Father Latus inquired about the availability of St. Ambrose's rectory.

"I told him that there were only two suites at St. Ambrose, but that St. John's Rectory on Humboldt Street has four suites and four guest rooms and that they would be most welcome," Father Schrader said.

Whereas several rectories in the Diocese of Rochester have more than one priest in residence, it's rare for two pastors of sizeable parishes to concurrently move for this purpose — but of the town in which they minister, no less. Yet despite the seven-mile drive to work, Father Latus said, "It doesn't change my commitment or presence in this parish at all." He added that St. Rita's parishioners are accepting of his move — "I think, basically, people have been very supportive."

Priests living in community is an option that has been studied closely on the national, state and local levels, according to Father Schrader. He cited the 2003 book *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood* (Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN, 2003) by Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline Wenger, professors at Catholic University of America. Among the book's recommendations from priests were to "separate work space from living space" in order to avoid overwork and burnout, and to "combat loneliness by fostering priestly fraternity, especially in living situations."

Father Schrader had raised these concerns in his proposal "Strategies for Sustaining a Healthy Presbyterate," which addressed many elements of priests' spiritual, mental,



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Father Charles Latus, pastor of St. Rita's Church in Webster, packs up some of his belongings Aug. 25 at the church's rectory. As of Sep. 1, Father Latus will live in community with three other priests at the rectory of Rochester's St. John the Evangelist Church.

physical and emotional health. In 2003 Father Schrader submitted the document to the Priests' Council of New York, and it has since been approved by the bishops of the eight dioceses in New York state. It was locally adapted by Rochester Bishop Matthew H. Clark last fall.

The subject of living in community has also been examined by the diocesan Priests' Council, for which Father Latus recently concluded his term as president and Father Schrader as secretary. Both priests are also former diocesan directors of priest personnel. Now they will put into practice what they have been advocating.

"I really am very excited about it," Father Latus said.

Meanwhile, Father Schrader is eager to welcome his new house mates. "It will be good to share their wisdom in reflecting on pastoral matters of the day. It will be good just to have their company to watch the evening news at the end of a busy day," he said.

"I certainly endorse the concept," said Father Michael Conboy, the current diocesan director of priest personnel. "I think it's a great idea, living in a situation where they can share a common life of prayer and recreation and mutual exchange of ministry ideas." Father Conboy added that it's important for the priests to support each other not only in their ministry, but also in their personal lives.

Such moves must be approved by Bishop Clark. Father Latus said the bishop is generally supportive of

any living situation that leads to a healthy priesthood. He also noted that when Bishop Clark arrived in Rochester in 1979, the bishop expressed a desire to live in the city as well as in community. In fact, the bishop resided briefly at St. John the Evangelist — "in the very room I'm living in now," Father Schrader remarked. Today, Bishop Clark lives with three priests at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Although living in a community of more than two priests is currently the exception rather than the norm, Father Latus said his move has sparked interest and questions from his fellow priests. With a declining number of priests, more may seek out such an option rather than to live alone and, in some cases, several miles apart from another priest, Fathers Latus and Schrader noted.

On the other hand, many active priests in the Rochester Diocese willingly reside alone, both in rectories and in residences off parish grounds. "There are some guys who will always choose to live independently, and that's fine," Father Latus said.

"There is no one model for all priests. We are as different one from another as anyone else." Father Schrader added. "But I do encourage each priest to assure that his own living situation is the best for himself and his own personal health. If we all do that, we'll have the best chance of having a cadre of healthy and energized priests to serve the needs of our diocesan faith communities."

HEALTH-CARE MINISTRY HAS NEW COORDINATOR

Deacon John Nelson, health-care ministry coordinator for the diocesan office of Parish Support Ministries since 2002, resigned his position as of Sept. 1.

Deacon Nelson's departure is due to family responsibilities and for personal and health-related reasons, according to an announcement from Bernard Grizard, director of Parish Support Ministries.

He will be succeeded by Deacon John Brasley, who currently serves Parish Support Ministries as coordinator of the offices of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and Urban Ministry Services and as diocesan jail-ministry coordinator. Deacon Brasley will continue serving in these roles as he takes on the health-care ministry position.

SEMINARIANS TOUT MANDATORY CELIBACY

WASHINGTON (CNS) — At least 556 U.S. seminarians have signed a letter to the head of the U.S. bishops' conference affirming their support for mandatory celibacy in the Catholic priesthood of the Latin rite.

Gary J. Kasel of the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis and Franz S. Klein of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wis., initiated the signature project last fall. They said they did so because they were concerned about the negative impact of a petition last year by a group of Milwaukee priests urging the U.S. bishops to begin admitting married men as candidates for the diocesan priesthood in the Latin rite.

FARGO DIOCESE TO CLOSE 33 PARISHES

FARGO, N.D. (CNS) — The Diocese of Fargo announced Aug. 21 that it would close 33 parishes by the year 2010.

Bishop Samuel J. Aquila of Fargo said the parishes are in the rural parts of the diocese, which covers the eastern half of the state.

The closed parishes, he added, will be consolidated with larger parishes nearby, mostly to transfer parish sacramental records. He said population shifts and declines account for the closings.

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