

Completing the picture

It didn't take long for the Archdiocese to send a replacement for St. Raymond's beloved Father O'Brien. Father Leo P. Coggins became the parish's second pastor in June, 1963, coming from St. Bonaventure parish in Chicago.

Father Coggins quickly picked up where Father O'Brien had left off. Wanting to make his mark, he approached the Archdiocese for permission to build a new rectory on the southwest corner of the block. But the Archdiocese would not allow it. They had a moratorium on the building of rectories in effect and would not make an exception.

Well, Father Coggins proved that

adversity is truly the mother of invention because when they turned down his original plan, he quickly came up with another. He decided to consolidate the two existing Tudor homes on the block and make them into offices, meeting rooms and living quarters for the priests. He would not live there, however. He planned to maintain a separate pastor's residence right next door at 313 S. I-Oka Avenue.

Even officials at the Archdiocese considered his plan "ingenious," according to *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, edited in 1980 by Monsignor Harry Koenig. There were two problems with it, however – the two families living in those houses.

One was easily solved. The parish already owned the house at 311 S. I-Oka Avenue. Its maintenance man was living there. So in November, 1963, Father Coggins purchased another nearby home, located at 218 S. Elmhurst Road, to serve as a janitor's home.

The one remaining privately-owned home at 309 S. I-Oka Avenue, however, was another matter.

"My husband, Jack, was out of town," recalls Nell Steinmiller, "and I approached the painter who was next door painting the convent for an estimate. He shook his head and said that he wouldn't do any painting, if he were me, because the church wanted our house."

Right after that Father Coggins approached them with a formal proposal and although the Steinmillers took several days to mull it over, Nell says they felt that they really had little choice but to acquiesce to Father Coggins' wishes. They were given until the end of 1963 to move and they used every day of it.

On December 31, 1963 the Steinmillers sold their three-bedroom home at 309 S. I-Oka Avenue to St. Raymond and the parish

Father Leo P. Coggins became the second pastor of St. Raymond de Penafort in June, 1963.



Father Coggins Farewell Homily



I remember as if it were yesterday. Seven years and five months ago I stood in this very pulpit and announced to all of you that my name was Father Coggins and that I had been selected by Cardinal Meyer to be your new Pastor. It was indeed a very joyous day for me.

Today I have another announcement and it is not a joyous one or a happy one for me to make. Because of persistent ill health I have been forced to resign as Pastor of St. Raymond and Cardinal Cody has reluctantly, yet very graciously, accepted that resignation and has appointed me Pastor Emeritus with permission to live in a climate more advantageous to me.

As some of you know, my health has been steadily declining over the past several years and joined with rapid loss of eyesight, I have been unable to continue in an active capacity. Faced with these facts, I have come to the agonizing conclusion that I have little choice but to step down and leave. Actually, I suppose, I could have stayed on and been Pastor in name only, but no one realizes more than I do

how unfair this would have been to the priests and people alike of this great parish. This parish is so large, so active, so vital that it needs a young energetic Pastor who can be a part of all of its varied activities. To remain as an inactive Pastor would have placed a tremendous burden on my Associate Pastors. As it is, they are attempting to carry a schedule now that should be shared by two additional priests.

These years that I have spent among you were the happiest of my entire priesthood. I am most grateful for your kindness, your sympathy and your understanding over these past years. Truly St. Raymond is the finest parish in the Archdiocese and you, its people, as well as the priests who have served here have made it so. Oh, it would have been so much easier to say goodbye to you today if you had been otherwise. Believe me I shall cherish every memory that I have of your graciousness and your warm, friendly nature. If I have failed any of you during my tenure here I wish now to offer my humble public apology. Every day

of my life, I shall thank Almighty God for His goodness in permitting me to spend these years among you.

As for the future – I intend to live in a climate that will be more propitious for me – preferably the southern part of California. There I hope to achieve a life-long ambition – to work among our Indian brothers. I have been asked to take over two of the many Indian reservations close to San Diego. I expect to depart for my new assignment within two weeks.

Before I leave, however, I do have several requests to make of you. I do not know who the new Pastor is to be, but I ask that you give him the same cooperation and love that you have given to me. To be a Pastor today in our ever changing world is not an easy task and he will need every bit of understanding, loyalty and generosity of which you are capable.

I have always said that St. Raymond has the most wonderful priests in the world and that is certainly true at this time. It has been a privilege and a high honor to be associated with truly dedi-

cated priests such as Fathers Kalas, Carroll and Kiepura. They are truly noble men of God. (Deacon Mike Kelly has been among us only a short time, but all of you must be aware of his tireless energy and unfailing good humor.) The Church of tomorrow will be in good hands with such men. I wish to thank the Sisters of Mercy for their unselfish work here among us for these many years. We are all deeply indebted to them for the task of educating our youth.

What can I say to you dearly beloved people of St. Raymond? Only that I take away the fondest memories of a truly wonderful people. I ask for the kindness of your prayers that God will give me a few more years of fruitful service in a new part of His vineyard. I promise to remember each and every one of you in my daily Mass and Holy Communion, that Almighty God will continue to bless you, to guide you and to direct you. May you live in the protected shadow of His love forever! God bless you and keep you always close to His Sacred Heart. Goodbye. *

sold the five-bedroom rectory at 218 S. I-Oka Avenue to the Steinmillers.

The parish retained ownership of the empty lot at 216 S. I-Oka Avenue, directly north of the house.

As soon as the Steinmillers moved out, Father Coggins set parishioner and local contractor, Ben Trapani, to work on connecting the two homes. He was assisted by Ted Erbach, the church's architect.

"It was not particularly difficult," Trapani recalls. "The houses were only separated by about five feet so we dug a foundation to connect the two basements."

"They also took the fireplace out of our

simple enclosed ramp, Trapani explains. It remains the pastor's private residence but now has access to the rectory kitchen and dining room, as well as the offices.

With his plans for a new rectory in full swing, Father Coggins turned his creative processes to how best to use the southwestern corner of the block, since he wasn't going to be allowed to build a rectory on it. He also wanted to create a fitting memorial to his predecessor and the parish founder, Father O'Brien. The result was a combination of both.

He put together a committee of interested parishioners and together they drew up

plans for a memorial park on that corner of the block and dubbed it "O'Brien Park". Within the park is a marble statue of the Virgin Mary which is dedicated to the memory of Father Coggins' parents, Patrick and Frances Coggins. The committee also chose to carry out Father O'Brien's long-time, but unfulfilled, dream. They commissioned a ten-foot marble statue of St. Raymond de Pennafort to be placed just to the left

The combined efforts of two parishioners, builder Ben Trapani and architect Ted Erbach, brought Father Coggins' plans for a new rectory to fruition.



former home, rearranged rooms making them into separate 'apartments' for the priests and took out a pretty, open staircase," Steinmiller says. "Our living room became a bedroom for one of the apartments."

When Trapani and Erbach were done with the \$42,627 renovation, there was an arched niche on the front of the building where the front door of the middle house had once been. The two decided to donate a lovely statue of Jesus Christ for that space. It is still there.

The southernmost house was connected to the other two some time later, using a

of the church's front doors. For the base of the statue they ordered a memorial plaque made of German silver with O'Brien's likeness and some words of tribute on it.

Thanks to the renovations and the new memorial park, another door-to-door fundraising campaign, similar to the one conducted in 1959, was held during the fall of 1964 and it's a good thing that money was solicited because upheaval came to St. Raymond, as well as virtually every other parish in the country, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (known as Vatican II) in 1965. The new directives from Rome

resulted in a new, more people-centered liturgy and certain physical changes to the church were necessary. The main altar was made smaller and turned to face the people while the tabernacle was enlarged and elevated to fit the rear wall of the sanctuary, all at a cost of \$9500. The Catholic Woman's Club of Chicago donated \$4,000 of it.

Father Coggins once again turned to Ben Trapani and it was during this time that the two became close friends. Trapani also became one of Father Coggins' two lay apostles, acting as a go-between for both the pastor and the parishioners. Norb Peeters was his counterpart.

"Father Coggins was an innovator,"



Father O'Brien's untimely death cut short his plans for a large marble statue of the parish's patron saint at the entrance to the new church. His successor followed through on the statue and dedicated it to the memory of Father O'Brien.



Trapani observes. "He wanted to make changes."

The work was finished in time for the Christmas Masses of 1965.

According to the 1966 Parish Welcome Book, "critics from far and wide have proclaimed the new Sanctuary as ideal and the most fitting representation of the new liturgy as proclaimed by the Vatican Council." They then went on to explain the changes.

"With the advent of the new liturgy of the church, the main altar was reduced in size to the new dimensions and relocated in the middle of the sanctuary to face the people, and the present tabernacle was enlarged and elevated to fit into the rear wall of the sanctuary," it explained. "A crown of bronze with colored jewels concealing the new flood lights for the altar was erected over the mensa symbolizing the kingship of Christ. Immediately above the tabernacle in bold relief is a figure of a pelican feeding her young, symbolic of Christ feeding us with

O'Brien Park on the southwestern corner of the church block is a lovely place for quiet reflection and prayer.



The new church was remodeled in 1965 to become more people-centered. The main altar was made smaller and turned to face the people and the tabernacle was moved to the rear wall of the sanctuary. In addition, a crown of bronze with colored jewels concealing new flood lights was erected over the mensa to symbolize the kingship of Christ.

His own flesh in the Eucharist. Seven rays emanate from the tabernacle, the three long rays symbolizing the seven Sacraments that leave an indelible character on the soul and the four shorter rays, the other Sacraments. The large cross was edged in gold leaf and raised five feet to be visible throughout the church. The altar in the convent and in the auditorium were also renovated to conform to the new liturgical standards."

By this time organist Hazel Voorhees had passed away and been replaced by several people. Charlotte Weigle, a lay teacher in the school and also a parishioner, accompanied the choir. Marcella Odmark played the 12:30 Mass each Sunday and also played for many funerals. Others played for the other Masses.

"I remember Charlotte and two other

women, Jeanne Mathews and Lina Doyle, providing the music for funerals," recalls Myron Weigle. "The three of them would work together and earn \$5 per funeral. I used to laugh because it cost the three of them more than that, just for the babysitters!"

The choir was still an important musical presence in the parish. Joe Molumby, its founding director, had been replaced by William Jean who, in turn, was replaced by Herman Baldassarre in the spring of 1965.

Meanwhile, the school was growing by leaps and bounds. Sr. Mary Athanasius was the principal when the school's enrollment peaked at 1358 students in 1964. Her faculty consisted of 12 nuns and 13 lay teachers. By 1966 they had added special teachers for singing, art, physical education and remedial work, bringing the faculty total to 13 nuns



and 17 lay teachers. There were three classrooms of each grade level in grades 1 through 8. Kindergarten and pre-school were not yet taught at the school.

By April, 1965 enrollment had been scaled back somewhat to 1200, presumably because 1358 students were just too much to handle. They still reported having 1,000 names on their waiting list, however, and they had a very well-publicized system for ordering that list. One's seniority for admission to the school was based on the date upon which their parents registered in the parish. Those who registered earlier, had a better chance of getting in. Younger siblings of current and former students were automatically admitted.

More opportunities were being offered. John Reed had started a school marching band, complete with uniform hats and capes. It boasted 70 boys and girls in its ranks by 1966 and was called upon often to play at both village and parish functions. A cadet band for younger beginners was added later. And one of the

nuns taught private piano lessons in the basement room of the convent (now known as Coggins Hall). Students were called out of their classrooms for the lessons, according to Donna Dhein Rowe, a graduate of the St. Raymond Class of 1969.

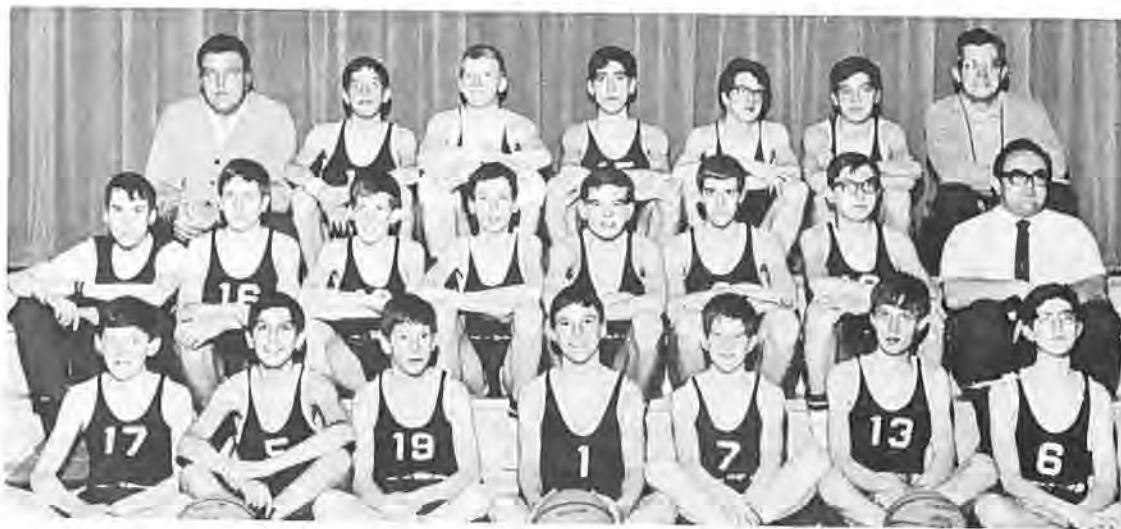
In addition, Father Coggins had noticed that the former church, which they were now calling the parish auditorium, was getting little use, especially during the school day. So he had it transformed into a gymnasium and an athletic program was added to the school's curriculum. Father Coggins firmly believed that children needed organized recreation. In fact, teams were even organized. There was basketball for boys only and volleyball for girls only. There was also cheerleading and softball intermurals for girls, Donna Dhein Rowe recalls. And all of the teams played under the name the "St. Raymond Pirates."

Make no mistake, however. St. Raymond School was still a strict, strait-laced place. And no one expected anything else.

"We thought that it was normal," recalls Donna Dhein Rowe. "But now that I look back, we had 50 desks in a room and we had to sit there with our hands folded. The girls wore Wedgewood blue and gray plaid skirts, white blouses with Peter Pan collars and blue and gray plaid boleros. And when we went to Mass we had to wear lace mantillas. The boys had to wear cross ties and blue beanies. Nevertheless, we had lots of fun. Everyone knew everyone."

John Reed started a school band in the mid-1960s, complete with uniform hats and capes.

Father Coggins believed in organized recreation for children so the former church was transformed into a gym and school teams were organized.





Fifty desks in a classroom was not at all uncommon in St. Raymond School during the 1950s and 1960s during the height of the Baby Boom.

Parents of the day had, themselves, experienced similar educations in Catholic schools in the city while they were growing up. Yet, to succeeding generations, their published philosophy of education from the 1966 Welcome Book is evidence of how much Catholic schools have really changed over the intervening years.

"We, the faculty and staff of St. Raymond School, do hold and maintain that the pupil is a creature of God. And that he is of inestimable worth since he has been redeemed by the Blood of the Saviour and elevated to a supernatural state by the waters of Baptism; that he has been endowed by his Creator with his natural faculties of reason and will and the supernatural gift of divine life; that he was created for the purpose of giving honor and glory to his Creator by the proper development of the gifts which he has received and by his self-dedication to a life of

service in conformity with the Divine Will.

"We, therefore, dedicate ourselves to the task of directing the pupil in the development of these talents so that he might achieve the purpose of his existence. To this end, we believe that it is necessary to place equal emphasis upon the development of his will through discipline and upon the development of his intellectual powers so that the pupil will acquire the moral as well as the intellectual virtues.

"We recognize the primary right and duty which parents have in the education of the child and realize that the parents have chosen us to assist them in this most vital function.

"Fully realizing this challenge which faces the American youth, whose mission it will be to preserve a Christian and democratic way of life in a world that is threatened by paganism and slavery, we accept the responsibility of preparing for this mission. This we believe, necessitates the fullest possible development of his personality;

spiritual as well as physical; moral as well as intellectual, according to the teaching and examples of the Divine Master.

"Only in this way, we believe, can an institution of learning be successful in developing citizens of two worlds who are spiritually vigorous, intelligent, cultured, patriotic, vocationally-prepared and physically fit.

"May God assist us in this noble task, that we might accomplish the goals which we have herewith set forth."

Those parents who chose to educate their children in the public schools sent their children to the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes at night and on weekends. Operated by lay volunteers under the direction of another lay volunteer, Dee Corr, CCD took care of the religious education of over 1200 public school children. It was not until July, 1969 that a parish staff member, Sister Mary Mrozynski, took over direction of this program. She would hold the position until the summer of 1972 when Sisters Mary Loftus and Jean Schulte replaced her.

Meanwhile, Father Coggins was seeking even more uses for the parish auditorium, so he had the former altar area transformed into a stage and an addition was made to the south side of the building. A large parish



Membership in the St. Aloysius Guild meant that a woman's son was an altar boy. The Guild handled the pressing and mending of the cassocks and the laundering of collars and gloves.

Bridge parties like this one were very popular during the 1950s and 1960s when few women worked outside the home. Such parties were often held as group fundraisers to support community or church projects. Courtesy, The Daily Herald.

kitchen, lots of storage and janitor facilities made up the first floor of the addition while the second floor was made into a science laboratory for the school. Marie Jeuck's husband, Philip, owner of Illinois Range Company, outfitted the entire kitchen as a huge donation to his wife's church. At the same time he was also outfitting a similar kitchen for St. Mark Lutheran Church, the church many of his family members attended.

And it's a good thing that those adjustments were made because when the huge snow fell in January, 1967, the auditorium/gymnasium became the temporary home of over 100 stranded motorists. Food (prepared in the kitchen) and sleeping bags were provided by nearby parishioners.

The 1960s were the heyday of adult



Camp Fire Girls were one of the many youth groups active at St. Raymond in the 1960s. Here, Mount Prospect Camp Fire founder Bertha Elhard (center) is welcomed by a bluebird and her leader. Courtesy, Mount Prospect Historical Society.

service and social clubs and St. Raymond was no exception. The St. Raymond Woman's Club was still very active, both socializing and fundraising. They raised funds for automobiles for the nuns, a new altar for the Church, cassocks and surplices for the altar boys, vestments for the priests and a new crown for the Church sanctuary. They also had several standing committees.

The St. Aloysius Guild Committee was made up of the mothers of the altar boys. They were responsible for the pressing and

mending of the cassocks and the laundering of collars and gloves. Each altar boy mother was responsible for the laundering of her own son's surplice.

The Good Literature Committee was still monitoring area stores for objectionable literature. The Pamphlets Committee stocked the rack in the Church vestibule with pamphlets on religious and social problems and with copies of both *Our Sunday Visitor* and *Catholic Digest*.

Men could join either the Holy Name Society or the St. Vincent De Paul Society, or both. The Holy Name Society boasted over 300 men in 1966. Begun as the Catholic Men's Club in 1949, by this time it offered bowling and golf leagues, dances, smokers and social events. It also sponsored Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Explorer Scouts within the parish.

On the other hand, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which Ben Trapani was instrumental in getting started at St. Raymond, was a club totally involved in service. They worked with the pastor to care for the needy of the parish and members also acted as substitute fathers to the orphan boys at nearby Maryville.

Couples had the Christian Family Movement which, by 1966, had become more of a couples support group than a social service organization, as it was in the early 1950s. Its stated purpose was to "find Christian solutions to everyday problems and promote happier family life."

Single Catholics over 21 from St. Raymond and surrounding parishes in Des Plaines, Prospect Heights, Arlington Heights and Elk Grove enjoyed the Tarragon Club which provided both religious and social functions for its members.

For young people there was the Teen Club which promoted "wholesome" recreation for high school boys and girls in both public and private high schools and there were Scout groups – lots of Scout groups. Bill White and Kenneth Cherwin founded Boy Scout Troop 155 which claimed a membership of 57 boys in 1966. Two Cub Scout Packs, 55 and 133, claimed 63 and 61 boys, respectively. For the girls, there was Campfire which had over 200 members affiliated

with St. Raymond and there was Girl Scouts which claimed 300 parish girls involved in programming.

Father Coggins founded the Parish Youth Council in the fall of 1964 to coordinate all of the parish's youth activities and its members were parents, appointed by the pastor. The Council oversaw the band, athletics for both elementary and high school students and education in the school. It also monitored use of the gymnasium.

Father Coggins was variously described by his former parishioners as everything from "brusque" to "private" to "charming and funny."

"Father Coggins was very concerned about people," recalls Marcella Odmark. "He was a real advocate for women and the woman's club. He even donated all of his books to the school and started the school library."

In fact, Father Coggins was even an author in his own right. He wrote a book about his dog, Boots, and also wrote a small biography of Our Lady of Guadalupe called "The Woman Clothed with the Sun."

His pastoral duties were shared by not only his assistants, Father Daniel Coughlin (1960-1965), Father Donald Fenske (1963-1968), Father John Rochford (1963-1966), Fr. Augustin Pallikunnen (student priest from India - 1963), Father Ronald Kalas (1966-1980), Father Robert Carroll (1967-1972) and Father Kenneth Kiepora (1969 - 1976), but also by a parade of deacons who served in a parish for one year in a sort of internship and then went back to the seminary to be ordained as priests. The three who served under Father Coggins were Steven Tebes (1967-68), Edward Braxton (1969-70) and Michael Kelly (1970-71). The permanent diaconate program was organized in November, 1970.

Failing health finally forced Father Coggins to resign his post as pastor, effective November 1, 1970. Almost blind in his right eye and plagued by nagging back pain which had already forced the removal of two discs, Father Coggins told a local newspaper during the summer of 1970:

"I can't do my share of the duties with the church anymore. I can't get around as I



used to and when there is something I can't do, another father in the church has to do it. That's no good."

So he accepted the title Pastor Emeritus of St. Raymond and retired to California to work with the Indians there.

"When I came here seven years ago the first thing I noticed was how friendly everybody was. How everybody said, 'hi' to you on the streets. Not only Catholics and members of St. Raymond's, but everybody," he told the reporter. "That's what I'll miss the most. I'll miss the friendliness."



The St. Raymond Woman's Club played an integral part in the parish's early growth and Father Coggins, shown here with members in 1966, was one of the club's biggest proponents.



Americans, including those at St. Raymond de Penafort, became much more casual about their clothing – in church, in school and in general – after the issuance of the Vatican II document and the social upheaval of the late 1960s.



Empowering the laity

The next priest to accept the pastorate at St. Raymond was Father William J. Buhrfeind who came from a similar post at St. James Church in Maywood. He arrived in January, 1971 to take over the bustling parish.

Father Buhrfeind's challenges in Mount Prospect were different from those of his predecessors. They had dealt with virtually all of the physical needs of the parish. He,

on the other hand, had to deal with profound social change and an era of widespread unrest. This was only seven months after the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations at Kent State University in Ohio had led to the deaths of four students and the wounding of many others, and the country was wound up tight.

"I believed we could change the world," *Life* magazine reporter Robert Friedman

wrote of that time in *Life's* 1996 special issue on the 50th anniversary of the Baby Boom. "The collective power we felt – here we were, Dr. Spock's children, setting off on a moral crusade, marching and chanting and inhaling together – was exhilarating. And our sense of self-importance was magnified by television, the very medium that had sought to commodify us. We had become the show."

Churches were not immune to the public's feeling of empowerment. The guidelines for more involvement in the Church by the laity had been outlined years before in the Vatican II document, but not yet implemented. So, understanding the demand for change in all areas of life, the



Father William Buhrfeind came from St. James Church in Maywood to take over as the third pastor of St. Raymond Church.

American bishops began to introduce Vatican II's directives.

Father Buhrfeind was the perfect leader for such an era. Quiet and gracious, according to Marie Jeuck, he was willing to let parishioners try their hand at many different tasks within the church. In fact, in 1972 he suggested the formation of a parish council in line with the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council. Its job was to be the coordinator of the activities of parish committees which oversaw such issues and entities as finance, religious education for both adults and children and the education board. In addition to the elected representatives of the people, the council was also to include the pastor, another priest and a

The idea of a Parish Council made up of lay people was a revolutionary one for the people of St. Raymond. So almost 40 people made the effort to run for 16 seats from eight geographic districts.



representative of the Sisters of Mercy.

Almost 40 candidates vied for 16 seats from eight different geographic districts within the parish. It was a spirited campaign which was even covered by the local newspapers. Everyone in the parish was given an opportunity to vote. In fact, ballots were

mailed to parishioners' homes and 2,000 people cast their votes – a participation rate of 40 to 50 percent.

The victors were Edwin Linkman, Patrick Doheny, Thomas Pawlowski, Mike Mokate, James Wade, Barbara Bychowski, William Demmert, Paul Sims, Malcolm King, John Nowicki, Robert Magnus, Pat Hayes, Joseph Arndt, James Barrett, Bernice McCarthy and Donald Burke. King was elected the first Council president. But he was transferred to another city and was unable to finish his term. So Nowicki then took over and finished out the two-year term.

"I remember that I ran for the Parish Council because my son was in first grade there and I wanted to become involved in helping the parish," recalls Don Burke.

"When the Council was formed, some people thought that they were going to run everything in the parish," Burke says, "but that wasn't practical. We weren't full-time people. The staff was better equipped. But I do remember Father Buhrfeind giving the Council a pretty free hand."

The Council addressed issues concerning finances, fund-raising and the physical plant of the parish, according to Burke, and it acted as a sounding board for parishioners on issues like Eucharistic ministers.

It was Father Buhrfeind himself, however, who handled two other important issues. He decided to sell an empty lot that the parish owned at 216 S. I-Oka Street, just to the north of the former rectory and the current home of the Steinmiller family and he personally solicited help in obtaining funds to replace the church's wheezing organ.

Father Buhrfeind chose to sell the empty lot to a neighbor, Richard Springston, who was also a builder. Springston built a home on the lot for which he paid St. Raymond \$12,500. Of course, the sale also had to be approved by the Archdiocese and John Patrick Cardinal Cody gave his approval in a letter dated July 14, 1971. The sale was completed in late August of that year. As far as the ailing electric organ went, Father Buhrfeind appealed to the congregation for donors and 16 stepped forward offering \$1,000 apiece to pay for a new instrument. The dedication and blessing of



The Fiesta Grande held at Providence of God in May, 1975 drew many St. Raymond families for a day of cultural sharing.

the new organ took place on November 26, 1972.

Meanwhile, the social concerns of the day were leading St. Raymond parishioners to once again reach out to the Hispanic community – only this time instead of reaching out to migrant farm workers as they had in the 1950s, they began working with urban Hispanics at Providence of God parish at 717 West 18th Street in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood.

Parishioners Shelia and Bob Ryan and the Community Life Committee spearheaded the effort to help Providence of God. It was all part of Cardinal Cody's larger "Twinning Program" in which he tried to unite more affluent suburban parishes with poorer inner-city parishes.

The partnership worked well for St. Raymond and Providence of God. St. Raymond parishioners traveled to Providence of God for a Mass and fiesta to celebrate the relationship in May, 1975. After that, a fiesta to raise money for college scholarships for Providence of God's most promising young people was held out here

for several years, first at Maryville Academy and later in the St. Raymond parish courtyard. The people of St. Raymond continue to donate food to Providence of God parishioners each month and at Christmas they donate wrapped gifts, as well.

The people of St. Raymond loved a good party, so they attended the fiestas – and

Children and adults alike enjoyed dancing and finding common ground during the festivities.



Our sister parish: Providence of God

St. Raymond's sister parish, Providence of God, was officially established in 1900 as the second Lithuanian parish in Chicago. Located at 18th and Union Avenue at the east end of the Pilsen neighborhood, today it is a predominantly Spanish-speaking parish serving Mexican families.

Pilsen has been considered a port-of-entry neighborhood for immigrants for more than 100

years. The Germans and Irish came first. Then came the Poles, Bohemians, Czechs and Lithuanians. Now it is home to the Latinos.

Each of these ethnic groups formed their own parish in the last part of the last century and the early part of this one. In each case, they used their own native languages in them. The Irish founded Sacred Heart Church in 1872. Providence of God was founded by

the Lithuanians in 1900. And the Czechs began St. Joseph Slovak Church in 1905.

Providence of God served its Lithuanian founders exclusively for over 50 years. The original parish complex consisted of a combination church and school. That was quickly outgrown and in 1914 a new church was begun. Because of financial difficulties, however, only the lower portion of the structure was completed. It was enough to ease the overcrowding, though, so the former church portion of the combination building was remodeled into classrooms and a convent was constructed nearby. By 1916, 518 children were students at Providence of God School.

Work on the church finally resumed in June, 1926. George Cardinal Mundelein dedicated the Romanesque church with its twin steeples in June, 1927.

The character of Providence of God parishioners began to change in the late 1950s when its neighbor, Sacred Heart Church, was destroyed by fire and the Irish began attending Providence of God. The construction of the Dan Ryan Expressway around the same time then started an exodus of long-time Lithuanian residents away from the neighborhood. The closing of St. Joseph Slovak Church in 1968 added Czechs to the mix at Providence of God and the building of



Founded in 1900, Providence of God Church is located at 18th and Union Avenue in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. Courtesy, The New World.



the University of Illinois Circle Campus around that same time drove even more old residents to leave the neighborhood.

All of this combined to open the way for a new migration of people into the area. These new immigrants were Latinos from Mexico and Texas. Today, in fact, Latinos comprise more than 90 percent of the population of Pilsen and Providence of God serves as both a religious and cultural center for them, promoting educational opportunities, employee training programs and redevelopment and rehabilitation projects in the

community. Pope John Paul II even delivered a short address on the merits of the Campaign for Human Development at Providence of God during his visit to Chicago in 1979.

Unfortunately, the parish's school is no longer open due to steadily declining enrollment and increasing costs.

St. Raymond's relationship with Providence of God began in 1971 and continues today. A strong bond has been established and parishioners and staff members alike are always looking for additional avenues of interaction. *

Members of St. Raymond Church shared Mass and a fiesta with the predominantly Mexican members of Providence of God Church in 1975. The relationship between the two churches began in 1971 when Cardinal Cody instituted his "Twinning program" in which he paired affluent suburban parishes with poor inner-city parishes for purpose of fellowship, cultural sharing and financial support. Courtesy, The New World.

they loved a good show, too. Plays and variety shows were a staple of parish life.

According to long-time parishioners, the first original musical revue put on by St. Raymond parishioners was produced in 1960 and was called "Campaign Capers." Organized by Georgine Reynolds, the revue featured a series of political history musicals including one which featured Virginia Henneberry and Bernie Minton playing Queen Isabella and Christopher Columbus, respectively. Adelaide Thulin wrote some of the revue's songs, including one entitled "The Ladies' Light Artillery Temperance Band."

That was it until Deacon Michael Kelly's highly successful production of "The King and I" in April, 1971. A year later in March, 1972 it was back to original musical revues with the show "Here We Go Again," written by a group of parishioners. Both were performed at St. Viator High School in Arlington Heights.

The parish's performers took a break in 1973, waiting until St. Raymond's 25th anniversary in 1974 to put on a huge "Jubi-

lee" show. Planned and organized by Father Jack Dewes and chaired by Tom and Jane Gelinas, the Jubilee was a two-weekend extravaganza which took up much of the gym and school. There was a casino with blackjack, craps and a wheel of fortune; a Showboat restaurant; and mini-shows performed in each classroom. Nearly 750 volunteers were involved in the late February "doings" which kicked off the 25th anniversary celebration. Everyone had so much fun at the Jubilee weekends, though, that they even decided to repeat it the next year, with a few changes to keep it fresh. The second year it was called "Jubilee '75".

"My involvement with the Jubilee Players began in 1974," recalls John Semerau. "I played clarinet in one of the mini-shows. Throughout the seventies the annual productions turned into dinner/theater events reaching bigger and bigger audiences."

Father Jack Dewes, along with parishioner Cy Race and good friend Jack Nolan, produced many memorable shows during the decade of the seventies, according to Semerau. Their cooperative efforts culmi-

ST. RAYMONDS



The Jubilee Players were put together in 1974 to celebrate the parish's 25th anniversary. For two consecutive weekends the gym and school were turned into a casino/restaurant/theatre. For years afterward, the Jubilee Players provided the parish with an annual musical, play or revue.

nated in two original productions in 1978 and 1979. But then Father Dewes was assigned to a parish in Highland Park.

After Father Dewes' departure, the Jubilee Players, thanks primarily to the efforts of Carol and Guy Marsh, continued to provide the parish with annual entertainment including musicals, plays and revues. The last production by that organization was Jubilee '90.

The Jubilee year, which spawned these shows, had also ended on a high note with the Jubilee liturgy on November 24, 1974 concelebrated by Father Buhrfeind, Father Coggins (who returned from California for the occasion) and Associate Pastors Ronald N. Kalas, Kenneth G. Kiepura and Jack Dewes.

Parishioner and former cantor Kent Kirkwood recalls Father Buhrfeind's tenure at St. Raymond as the "high point in parishioner involvement in the Church."

"Father Buhrfeind was very laid back," he recalls. "He would let us try any idea anyone had."

"Father Buhrfeind knew his people and he let them go and do," says parishioner Jane Stavoe. "It was a very special, exciting time. Everyone was welcomed and called by name. Father Buhrfeind had a gift of wonderful staff members who had wonderful ideas and he let them run with them. For some people,



I suppose, Father Buhrfeind was too liberal. But for me, he was perfect."

"Joan Fletcher was his director of pastoral ministry and she started such organizations as Moms Plus, the Phoenix group for divorced and separated Catholics and the Seniors group," Stavoe continues.

And Youth Minister John Fontana, seeking ways to excite the high school students about religion and the church, developed the "Branches" program.

Father Coggins (third from right) returned from California to concelebrate a Jubilee liturgy with Father Buhrfeind in November, 1974. Associate pastors also took part.



Father Buhrfeind was a man of the times, never setting himself apart from his people, but making himself a part of them. Here his ushers felt comfortable enough with him to ask him to personally "dig deep" for the parish.

The name "Branches" has a special history. On a winter retreat one year, students gathered branches for a special bouquet to place on their altar, according to parishioner and member of that original Branches group, Laurie Piscopo Roubitsek.

After their retreat, the group decided that the program needed a name. One student, Billy Gordon, son of Bill and Joan Gordon, remembered the symbol at the altar and suggested that the group be called 'Branches.' The name was accepted, but never really caught on. Later that winter, however, Gordon died in a tragic accident and the name Branches came to life again in his honor.

The purpose of the Branches program, according to an article which appeared in

The Chicago Catholic in 1981, was to create "a supportive and caring community in which to challenge young people and be challenged by them as they journey toward maturity" and to help youth to "reflect together and act on this experience in terms of the Gospel."

The program was organized into small groups of 10 to 25 students of the same high school year, led by an adult couple which stayed with them throughout their high school years. The adults' four-year commitment strengthened the program and built up a trust with the students which enabled them "to talk about issues they may not feel free to discuss with their parents." The program also met social needs through activities like ski trips, dances, open gyms and ball games.

The program was so successful that it was destined to continue, virtually unchanged, for over 20 years.

"This was the time when we had guitar Masses in the gym in an attempt to lure kids to Church. A teenage girl and her friends initiated it," Kirkwood says. "And it gave people a choice."

Eventually, he explains, the 11 a.m. Mass in the church became the guitar Mass. The traditional choir still sang at 9:30 Mass.

"I particularly remember Barb Schrage and her husband, who was a guitarist, leading the 'love' round in church," Kirkwood continues. "They would divide the church into four

Guitar Masses were the new thing and innovations like using instruments other than the organ and incorporating multi-media presentations into services drew young people back to Church.





parts and do a round of: *Love, love, love, love; People now, hear his call; Love your neighbor as yourself; For God loves us all.*"

Eventually, the choir split into a traditional choir and a contemporary choir – which accompanied the guitars. John King was the director at the time, followed by Sister Bernadette Luecker.

Changes were also occurring in the school.

In April, 1971 St. Raymond School was chosen to be one of 30 Archdiocesan schools (out of a pool of 413 schools) to experiment with a new type of education called "Individually Guided Education" or IGE. The only other schools in the area chosen were St. Stephen in Des Plaines and St. Thomas of Villanova in Palatine.

Designed by the Charles F. Kettering Foundation's Institute for the Development of Educational Activities, IGE involved individual assessment of each student's

needs, followed by a prescriptive educational program to meet them. From that point on, each child was given a specific objective to work on, either on their own or in a group, and then tested to assure mastery of the concept before moving on.

It was a huge change for the school, faculty and parents.

"People who are just getting used to seeing nuns in schools without the old black habits," wrote a Chicago Today newspaper reporter in November, 1971, "now have to get used to seeing children sprawled on the floor or chattering in small groups as they work on their 'objectives'."

And no grades were issued in the subjects where IGE was used – specifically, math. Parent-teacher conferences were held and detailed summary sheets were given out explaining where improvement was needed and where progress was satisfactory.

It was hypothesized in The New World

The traditional choir donned their robes to sing for the Jubilee liturgy in 1974.



Under the IGE (Individually Guided Education) program during the early 1970s children worked at their own speed, alone, in pairs or in small groups. Educators hoped that it would produce more independent learners.



in November, 1971 that using IGE would "produce students who enjoy school; progress at their own rate; are more independent learners; draw upon a variety of learning experiences; know how to find facts and use them; understand concepts, not just how to memorize; and who are helped by teachers filled with greater enthusiasm for their work."

Sisters Joan Bransfield and Judy Herrmann were the principals during this experiment, which went on through much of the 1970s.

Only the best parts of the system were kept by Fran Harwas when she became principal in 1976. Music and art teacher Marguerite King spearheaded efforts at integrated learning. Each year a different subject was chosen and many areas of that subject investigated by all of the classes. One year had a Native American theme and it culminated in a huge Pow Wow in the courtyard. In 1976 the school celebrated the nation's Bicentennial with a parade down the neighboring streets in authentic costumes. Other themes included the circus, the Renais



Kindergarten was added to the school in 1975. Dressing up for a Thanksgiving presentation has long been part of the kindergarten experience at St. Raymond.



Teacher Wayne Kendall led the school's patriotic parade around the neighborhood, culminating their studies in honor of the country's Bicentennial in 1976.



Dressing in a smock and painting at an easel has been one of the highlights of pre-school since it was initiated at St. Raymond in 1979.

The Sisters of Mercy, who had served the parish so faithfully, dwindled in numbers to the point that it made sense to close the convent. Times had changed. Service formerly done by members of religious communities was being turned over to the laity. So the convent was turned into a pastoral ministry center to facilitate this new involvement by parishioners.



sance and the Olympics.

"We encouraged the children to put themselves into a different time and/or place and learn everything they could about it – right down to the foods and the money," King explains.

Meanwhile, enrollment had slipped as population numbers dipped. So kindergarten was added in 1975. Its first teacher was Robin Hafey. And another parishioner, Evann Balmes, developed a pre-school program which the school instituted in 1979. She taught three-year-olds two mornings a week and four-year-olds the other three mornings each week.

The upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s had also caused a dip in religious vocations and it became more and more difficult to find nuns to teach at the school. The last Sister of Mercy departed St. Raymond's convent in September, 1976, ending the order's 22-year involvement in the parish.

"The Sisters of Mercy just dwindled in numbers here," recalls Jeanette White. "They never formally left."

But the handwriting was on the wall. The future of the school was in the hands of the lay teachers because nuns were too scarce. So the convent was closed and it quickly became a center for other ministry

functions like religious education, marriage and baptismal preparation offices and Branches.

Unfortunately, too, when the kinks inevitable in any new enterprise appeared at St. Raymond, Father Buhrfeind convinced himself that his grand experiment with letting the laity handle more of the decision-making, was probably a mistake.

"My associates and I had decided at the beginning to try giving the decision-making power to the Parish Council, the Education Board and the other parishioner-run bodies and after several years, we realized that it just wasn't working," Father Buhrfeind states. "The people there were so good to me and it was a tremendous experience, but I had delegated too much power. All I had asked of them at the beginning was for them not to do anything that would get me in trouble with the Bishop."

"But it turned into a power struggle between the various boards to whom we had given decision-making ability," he explains. "We knew that we needed to take the power back from the various committees to which we had delegated it."

It was at that point that the 66-year-old pastor decided that he had "contributed as much as he could to St. Raymond" and asked permission to retire. Once permission was granted, he and members of his staff traveled downtown to lay out their dilemma and confer with the Archdiocese personnel board about his replacement.

"I remember the head of the personnel board saying to me at that meeting, 'Well, Bill, I think you have pretty much made yourself unnecessary,'" Father Buhrfeind admits.

Ironically, Father Buhrfeind was simply 20 years ahead of his time. Shortages of priests were soon to make increased involvement by the laity a necessity, not a boon. And a pastor who could set up a lay leadership which could render himself virtually unnecessary would be congratulated.

Father Buhrfeind was named "Pastor Emeritus" on June 27, 1979 and subsequently set off for retirement in Arkansas. But he only remained in that southern state for four years. In 1983 he returned to the Chicago



area and has been living at St. Gerald Parish in Oak Lawn ever since.

Yet his legacy at St. Raymond persists to this day. Many of the parish's strong lay leaders, who make St. Raymond a parish envied by others, cut their teeth, so to speak, during Father Buhrfeind's tenure. He gave them the chance to become involved and help lead their church and since then, they have never been content to simply sit passively in the pew each Sunday.



Father Buhrfeind had a gift for making everyone feel welcome and included in the St. Raymond de Penafort family.



When Pope John Paul visited Chicago in 1979, the people of St. Raymond held a special outdoor Mass in the parking lot in his honor.

Implementing Vatican II

St. Raymond's fourth pastor, Father Robert J. Loftus, had his work cut out for him. He had to come into a parish in which the parishioners had had a taste of lay leadership and he had to reshape it in a way which would serve well the entire parish.

Formerly associate pastor at St. Joseph Church in Homewood, Father Loftus was a brilliant man with a Ph.D in psychology from the University of Notre Dame who was certainly equal to the task. He was a member

of a group of progressive priests known as "Network" which was examining ways to take the faith and renew it, update it and make it real for people and he was committed to doing just that at St. Raymond.

"For the first year he just went to all of the various meetings and listened to the people. Then he started doing things," recalls parishioner Don Burke.

One of the first things he did during his second year was to take back from the Parish

Council the authority to make decisions about the parish because some Council members, as Father Buhrfeind had already noted, felt that the Council, not the parish's professional staff, should run the parish and Father Loftus did not agree. According to Sister Kathleen O'Connell, the Council continued to meet for about a year after that, but when it came time for new elections, no one wanted to run and the Council fizzled.

"Our previous pastors had all been very mild-mannered and Father Buhrfeind, in particular, let the people direct the parish," says Pat Schoenberger, Father Loftus' dear friend and long-time housekeeper. "Fa-



Father Robert J. Loftus was a young, progressive priest when he assumed the role of pastor at St. Raymond in 1979. He also brought with him his training as a psychologist, holding a Ph.D in psychology from the University of Notre Dame.

ther Loftus, on the other hand, was the boss and everyone knew it. His was a strong presence and you couldn't help but feel it."

"Father Buhrfeind was a kindly man who could put his arms around people and make them feel better and get them to do things," parishioner Tom McGough explains. "Father Loftus' personal style was different. He had to face up to all of the changes that had taken place in the Church and were still taking place in the Church and he had to act as a bridge between the old and new Churches for people. He had to be careful not to tear out the roots of the older people in favor of the wishes of the younger people. He had to keep a foot on both sides of the gap. He was the right man for that job."

"Father Loftus was very concerned with developing a strong faith community at St. Raymond. So he did much to add to the spiritual growth of St. Raymond by promoting many ministries and parish programs. But he was also very concerned with the buildings themselves and their maintenance.

He wanted good strong buildings you could be proud of," explains Burke.

"The buildings were in terrible condition when he got here. The paint was peeling, the carpets were shredding," Schoenberger agrees.

"For years the parish had tried to save money by patching things instead of really fixing them," explains Bob Bush, St. Raymond's first parish administrator (in office from 1985-89). "For instance, there were so many layers of roofing on the flat roof over the area of the church that is now the Eucharistic Chapel that the rafters were bowed in."

So he took the buildings of the parish one-by-one and renovated and redecorated them.

"One of his major achievements was taking that 'white elephant' of a convent and bringing it back to life as a true parish ministry center," states Bob Bush. "It was in serious disrepair when he got here, sitting relatively empty for over three years. When

The blessing of the throats has long been a tradition at St. Raymond.



many other parishes in the Archdiocese were letting their convents remain dormant, he made it into offices and used it for CRHP (Christ Renews His Parish) weekends, meetings, funeral luncheons and limited social functions."

Father Loftus recruited an old friend from St. Joseph Church in Homewood, Sister Kathleen O'Connell, to oversee the job and named her Director of the Pastoral Ministry Center.

"I came to St. Raymond in September of 1980 and spent almost the entire first year studying the old convent, deciding what to do with it and getting quotes," the Adrian Dominican sister recalls.

"When I came here the front part of the building was used by the religious education people; the living room was used for occasional meetings; the school was using the basement recreation room as a music room; and the Branches youth group also had an office in the basement. The rest was empty."

They began updating the building by painting and recarpeting it in May, 1981 and many parish functions were moved into the building in 1982, Sister Kathleen says.

Religious education was moved to the south end of the first floor; the parish book-keeper and secretaries moved over from the rectory and set up operations in the front area; a big computer was put in a basement room off of the laundry room; and the upstairs bedrooms were spruced up so they



could be used for retreat work.

The priests, however, kept their offices in the rectory. They simply maintained one small 'priests' office in the PMC which they could all use to meet with people.

Father Loftus also renovated the former janitor's house at 218 S. Elmhurst Avenue, which had fallen into disrepair after some years of renting and vacancy. In addition, he renovated the rectory, knocking down walls and replacing carpet. He gave the school all new windows and doors, replaced the carpet, built a new office area and renovated the preschool and kindergarten units.

The biggest and most controversial renovation, however, took place in the church.

Revitalization of convent building was one of Father Loftus' goals. Even though it was being used as a pastoral ministry center, it was not being fully utilized, so Sister Kathleen O'Connell was hired to transform it into a meeting and office center.



Statues like this which had adorned the corners of the Church were moved to hallways and chapels during the 1988 renovation of St. Raymond de Penafort Church.

Father Loftus put together a committee, headed by Father Robert Banzin, associate pastor, to study the "Environment and Art in Catholic Worship" document developed by the American bishops in 1978, in which they

urged the simplification of American Catholic churches. The document called for "more austere interiors with fewer objects on the walls and in the corners . . . a space in which people are involved as participants and not as spectators." The statement said that it was an historical problem wherein the churches themselves had somehow attained "a dominance over the people assembled in them."

The committee was comprised of several parishioners and a few staff members. They were a very serious committee, according to Bob Bush, which took the time to review the then present church environment and some of its recognized problems and finer points and related them to the bishops' proposals. Early in the process, open meetings were held with parishioners, many of whom wanted to leave the church as it was. There were mixed emotions among the committee members, too.

"I had had three daughters married in the church and I was very proud of its appearance," Bush says. "But when you really stepped back and looked at it, there were conflicting vertical and horizontal lines in the wood treatments, as well as different kinds of wood, multi-colored bricks and glass blocks, and highly decorative marble. I could see that it wouldn't hurt to simplify it."

After several weeks of study and debate, the committee's thoughts and proposals were discussed with the architects engaged by Father Loftus. Several renderings were offered for consideration and a general consensus was reached in favor of the renovation, explains Bush.

A huge controversy ensued, with articles even appearing in the local newspapers and The Chicago Tribune. In the Tribune article one Chicago priest even complained that "in their zeal to change, they <are making> the churches look more like Protestant churches or Quaker meeting houses."

And parishioner Nancy Kaye admitted in the Chicago Tribune article that, "I was used to praying to a statue. It has been hard getting used to praying to a blank wall." Others called the church with its new look "a barn" and said that their only consolation was that Christ was born in a barn.

The story of our windows

Assembled from a series written for the Radius newsletter by the late Justine Kawalek

When the church was renovated and rededicated in 1988, St. Raymond parish commissioned Robert Harmon to design and execute new windows and stained glass. What you see and admire on every visit to the church is the result of long hours and contemplation and dedication to the task of making the windows a vivid part of the House of God and a fitting

component of all the worship services which take place there.

The Eucharistic Chapel

The entry to the Eucharistic Chapel, consists of three approximately symmetrical panels of glass. Viewed as a whole, the mellow colors of yellow, pale beige, white and gold predominate. The large, not quite complete circle in the center is the most noticeable shape. This circle "suggests that those entering the chapel are entering

into the life of wholeness," Mr. Harmon said.

Within this circle and in the upper panel of the door, a viewer will notice a vivid flame, a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Both the colors and the shapes of the flames are classically abstract but recognizable. The shapes, particularly the curves of the flames, are then echoed in the loosely defined bird-shape depicting the Holy Spirit in the edge panel to the upper right. Both the flame and the Spirit "symbolize the blessing of those who enter the chapel," according to Harmon.

Inside the chapel itself, the worshiper may notice the three panel windows high in the south wall. Here again, there are three approximately equal and symmetrical panels, each with a series of circular shapes within it. The middle panel depicts the host itself as "the radiant source of life." Its energy, seen in the rays radiating from the host, reaches out and encompasses all life as symbolized in the two side panels. The sun on the right pulsates with color and is the symbol of the daytime of life. The cooler, darker colors of the moon symbolize the nighttime of life.

These symbols of circles, flames and rays are truly deeply embedded in our activities, our lives and our faith.

South Windows

It's easy to see that the south windows of the church tell the



chronological story of Jesus, from the Annunciation on the east to the Resurrection on the west. Both "ends" of the story carry the concentric circling lines, which connect every panel within the story. These white lines undulate through each window, connecting the stories and the images. The circles on the "ends" are symbols that the story of Jesus' life and message never ends, but carries on into the work and life of the parish of St. Raymond.

The Advent and Christmas seasons are the subject of the eastern section of windows in our sanctuary. The eastern swirl is within the end square set of windows. Here the colors of red, orange, gold and yellow predominate. The shapes and colors are a flowing depiction of flames, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The content of the story here is of the Holy Spirit announcing to Mary that is to be the mother of Christ.

The inspiring passage for this picture is Luke 1. The angel said to her:

Do not fear, Mary. You have found favor with God. You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus"..... Mary said to the angel: "How can this be since I do not know man?" The angel answered her: "THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME UPON YOU AND THE POWER OF THE MOST HIGH WILL OVERSHADOW YOU; HENCE, THE HOLY OFFSPRING TO BE BORN WILL BE CALLED SON OF GOD."

In a pointed statement interpreting this passage, the artist



did not picture Mary herself as she so often was in the more traditional medieval church windows and holy cards we're familiar with. Rather, the emphasis is placed on the nascent Christ Child, depicted in the central lozenge shape. He looks like a little child wrapped in blue and gold checkered swaddling. Below him, there is a lotus flower in shades of sea blue and white. The shades of blue in Jesus' wrap echo the shades of the flower. These contrast vividly with the yellow, gold and red flames of the Holy Spirit. Together, the shapes of the flames and the shades of blue begin to pull the viewer's eyes out of the circle and onto the next panel in the story.

The story of the Nativity of Jesus is told in the first rectangular section of the windows. This section is toward the east, rear end

of the church and contains 12 small squares arranged in a three-high, four-wide rectangle. This section is very colorful and contains many symbols of this popular story.

The familiar passage which inspired this section of art comes from Luke 2. "There were shepherds in that locality living in the fields and keeping watch by turns over their flocks. The angel of the Lord appeared to them as the glory of the Lord shone around them saying: "GLORY TO GOD IN HIGH HEAVEN, PEACE ON EARTH TO THOSE ON WHOM HIS FAVOR RESTS."

If you look at this section of windows, you will be able to see every part of this Biblical passage depicted in visual form. The artist has done a masterful job giving life to some very ethereal concepts such as "angel of the Lord" and "heav-

enly host." For instance, the angel of the Lord can be recognized just above center and to the left section of the window. This angel is shown flying through a section of the firmament which is in swirls, circles, rectangles and lozenges. Above the white radiating lines form a dome enclosing rectangles of blue, gray and purple, like shade of the sky. Below the angel, the colors include more orange, brown, rust and blue, like the shade of the more solid earth and sea.

The visual center of these panels is the Star of Bethlehem. Our eyes have been brought here through the strong rays of the star itself as well as through the overall composition of this section. The star is loosely encircled with red and purple sparks and rays which give it a truly three-dimensional geometric appearance.

Directly below the star are the familiar shapes of three shepherds with their staffs. The shepherds appear to be bending over in unison to admire the symbolic birth. The gently curving shapes of the shepherds echo the shape of the angel of the Lord above them. The light shades of the shepherds' cloaks contrast nicely with the surrounding colors of the earth, brown, green and blue variations.

The final section of this large story window is most mysterious and exotic to our eyes. The passage from Matthew 2 inspires it. "After Jesus' birth in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, astrologers from the east arrived inquiring, 'Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We have come to

pay him homage'."

The bottom window in the section is chocked full of symbolic images. The triangular pyramids are easy to recognize. These ageless monuments are a reminder of the timelessness of the nativity story. The sphinx is a more mysterious image, symbolizing the wisdom of the ages, of the astrologers, the wise men. The wise men were confused by the signs in the sky, just as we are sometimes confused by the signs which God gives us.

We move on to a central

section depicting the public life and works of Jesus. This section begins with Jesus' baptism and shows one of his most familiar miracles. Overall, themes and color begun earlier in the story are continued here where Jesus' life begins to come to fruition. The most noticeable shades are the gold and yellows contrasting with the blues and whites.

Mark I begins this part of the story. "During that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and WAS BAPTIZED IN THE JORDAN BY JOHN. Immediately, on coming



up out of the water, he saw the sky rent in two and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. Then a voice came from the heavens: "You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests."

The left section of this window is quite simple and geometric. All three panels, top to bottom, are regular shapes with very little visual content. At the very top, one could say that the rays of a sun or star seem to fall in the series of dark lines on the white background. These "rays" are very similar to those of the Star of

Bethlehem in an earlier panel, but here they depict the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus. These rays can also be symbolic of the "rays" of St. Raymond parish, the people and programs that radiate into the community from the core of our church.

The right section of this window is the one with more visual content and which is more closely linked to the Biblical quotation. Here we can readily see the yellow, gold and white rays of the Holy Spirit as they fall upon the figures of John and Jesus. John and

Jesus are entirely encapsulated in the waters of the Jordan. In the blue curves of this section, we can see the waves of the river. John in a brown shawl pours the clear water of the river over the head of Jesus, whose halo is a brilliant yellow.

The complementary section of this window consists of six panels telling the story of Jesus' miracle of the loaves and fishes. Here, a passage from Luke 9 inspires the artist. "The disciples said, 'We have nothing but five loaves and two fishes.'" (There were about five thousand people.) Jesus said to his disciples, 'Have them sit down in groups of 50 or so.' THEN, TAKING THE FIVE LOAVES AND THE TWO FISH, JESUS RAISED HIS EYES TO HEAVEN. PRO- NOUNCED A BLESSING OVER THEM. BROKE THEM. AND GAVE THEM TO HIS DISCIPLES FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE CROWD. They all ate until they had enough. WHAT THEY HAD LEFT FILLED TWELVE BASKETS."

The colors and contents of these windows are simple and pristine. The sky over the scene is predominantly blue, white and yellow. The shapes are mostly rectangles, some are horizontal while others are vertical, giving movement and variety to the scene.

The lower portion of the panels tells the heart of the story. Jesus holds a basket and stretches out his arms to the crowd. Here, the crowd of people is symbolically shown in the shapes of the loaves which are arranged in a hill around and over Jesus. The loaves them-





selves appear realistically as bread, but then they also mirror the shape of Jesus himself, as well as the shapes and color of the shepherds whom we saw in the earlier nativity story.

The loaves actually become the bread of life, for those privileged to have been there at Jesus' miracle, as well as for we who are privileged to partake of the Eucharist celebration today. The bottom of these two panels shows the 12 baskets of bread which were left over after the feast. Is it too much to say that they also symbolize the

12 apostles of Jesus who then spread the Word, which we hear today?

The next section of windows brings in a new visual topic. Death. These two panels, each of three vertical squares, tell two parts of the story. We see Jesus as healer and one who raises the dead, and we have the story of his crucifixion.

The left three panels together show us Jesus contemplating death with the simplest shapes at the bottom and the more complex on the top. The bottom square is composed of only rectangles and

triangles in earth-tone colors. The center square shows three figures, white ovals of death. They are stylized figures, unrealistic and ghostly in death, although their repetitive shapes remind us of the shepherds and apostles of earlier panels.

The story here could be any of the several tales of Jesus as healer. Jesus healed a paralytic man, a woman suffering from hemorrhages, a leper, two blind men and a mute. He also raised a girl and Lazarus from the dead (Matthew 9). What we see in this panel is not any one of these stories in particular, but rather a symbol of them all, a visual rendition of Jesus as healer.

Jesus himself is the central figure of the upper panel. He is flanked by two apostles with their hands folded in prayer. On second look, the hands of the three figures seemed linked together in prayer. Jesus' halo is clear white, and all three men are framed in a reddish arch and encircled by a light yellow sun.

Above these figures in a corner we see one of the repeating shapes in our windows. There is a set of three irregular concentric circles. The center is a solid red here where it has been green or turquoise before. Surrounding the center is a medium beige-colored ring with parallel straight lines which give the impression of movement and reflected light. On the outside is a third ring of white which also has parallel rays shown by thin black lines. These circles seem to epitomize the symbol of

eternity, shining stars or suns, the core essence of the Holy Spirit or the radius of our community.

The last vertical section of three panels is the most somber of all. We see the hill at Golgotha simplistically portrayed as in the passage from Mathew 27. "From noon on, darkness came over the whole land...Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'"...One of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick and gave it to him to drink...Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split."

This earth is rendered in the bottom of the three squares. It is simply the gray, dark blue and brown shapes of the hill itself. A semi-circle of ruby red covers these shapes like the blood of Jesus flowing from the cross which is delineated in the middle panel.

The cross itself is bright red and irregular with pointed ends. The red is the color of Christ's blood, the color of our Eucharist wine, symbolic of His sacrifice. As before, the artist did not attempt any figure on this cross or any realistic shape for Christ's body. Instead, in his more contemporary rendition, we have the symbol alone so each view may personalize the message.

On either side of the cross are other symbols of Christ's crucifixion. There are two smaller, black crosses, those of the two thieves

crucified with Jesus. These two crosses should remind us of the forgiveness Jesus has in his heart for each of us. To the left of the main cross, we see the spear which pierced Jesus' side, while on the right we see an oversized "fork" with a food shape on the prongs. This is the sponge soaked in vinegar which Jesus was given while he suffered.

This bitter drink and the darkness of the entire panel is lightened in the middle by a single flower. This bell-shaped bloom is blue and white, supported on a blue stem with green leaves. The flower symbolizes the rebirth, resurrection and renewal which come after death.

The major side window section at the front of the church tells us the resurrection story in three uneven units: the angel at the tomb, Christ resurrected and Christ's ascension into Heaven. Matthew 27 gives us some of the story. "Suddenly there was a great earthquake: for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow."

The left section first shows us the angel visiting Jesus' tomb on Easter Sunday morning. The tomb is in the bottom square shown in the concentric circles we've seen before. This time, that entire symbol is further surrounded by a black circle and a final, larger irregular circle in dark shades of gray, brown, purple and blue. This large dark circle further symbolizes

Jesus' descent into hell and into the grave for three days.

The center two panels of the six show Christ's rising gloriously from death. This section is indeed glorious in color and feel. Christ is slightly off-center, rising from the Eucharist symbols. We see a stylized cup of red, gold and white which seems to grow from the earth and the tomb in the neighboring panel. Above the chalice is a round yellow host in front of the figure of the risen Christ with his arms out in blessing over the world.

Surrounding Christ is an intricate series of golden rays and wheat shapes. Christ has first a conventional yellow halo, then a larger, paler yellow aura. Bordering these, there is a series of golden triangles alternating with crystal white ones. The final ring of the halo has a pale two-tone beige background punctuated with stylized fronds of wheat. These also look like the palm fronds of praise and adulation waved around Jesus on his entry into Jerusalem.

The right-hand third of this large panel shows Jesus ascending into heaven. The bottom two squares are very simple, consisting of swirls of air and earth in shades of deep red-orange, brown and pale gray-blue.

The top third is the most detailed and carries the content of this portion of the story from Mark 9. "He was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as none on earth could bleach them...they were terrified. Then a cloud

overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

In our window, we see the figure of Jesus surrounded by a white line and circle. The figure of Jesus wears a white robe and his hands reach down and out to us. He seems to be cradled by the flames of the Holy Spirit below him while he's drawn to heaven by the hands of God the Father above him. A couple of small concentric circles almost seem to be comets in the disturbed sky. The tails of these "comets" reflect the flames of

the Holy Spirit.

The western-most square section of six windows, which brings the stories and symbols in our south wall to a final pinnacle, is the least representational, most abstract and most meaningful. A passage from Matthew 26 gives the familiar words of consecration. "While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat: this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying,

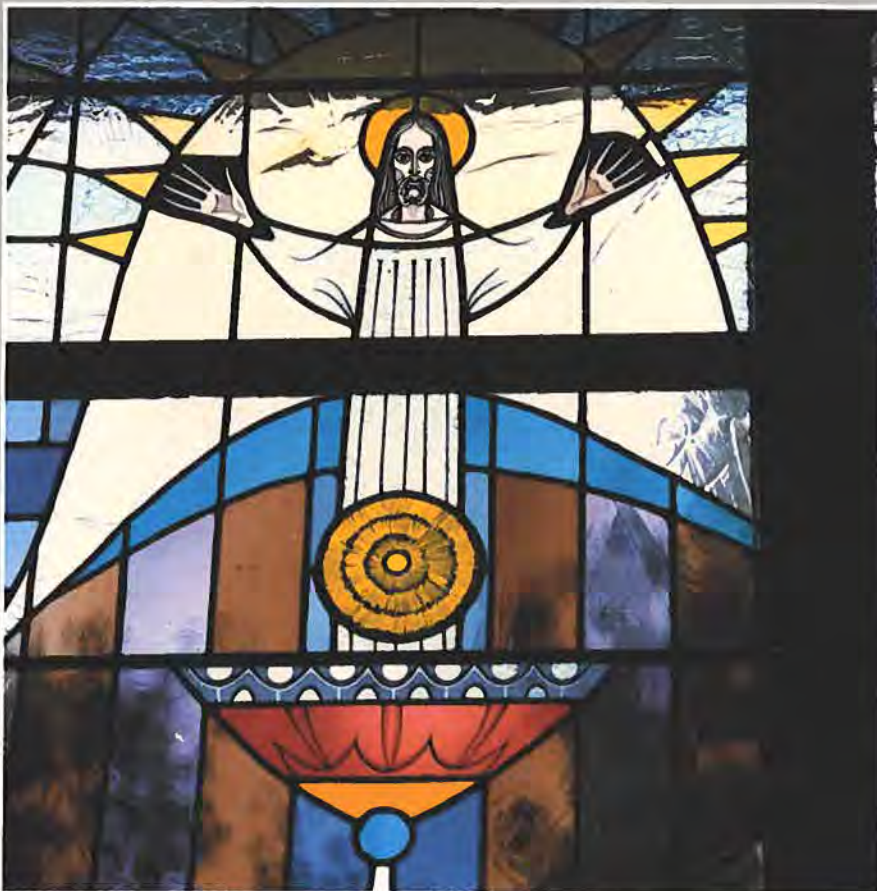
"Drink from it, all of you: for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'."

In this square window, we see the signs of the Eucharist, bread and wine. The center left panel shows the round, light brown Eucharist host. This host has a jagged line through it symbolizing the breaking of bread and the sharing of it in our Mass. This host is surrounded by tan, yellow and brown sections, bordered with white outlines.

The middle right panel contains the symbols of the cup and wine. We see an inverted triangle of purple containing lighter rounds within it. This is a cluster of grapes, the source of the wine, the symbol of Christ's blood. Below these "grapes" are a series of repeating interrelating triangles. These are the golden cups we share at each Eucharist service. They are outlined with white edges just like the host to the left.

Both of these symbols are encircled by white lines which originate with the host. These lines then widen out from the host to encircle the cup and grapes. Finally, the lines rise over these two symbols into an area of flames. If we follow these flames, we see they are the tail of one of the "comets" in the neighboring panel.

Should we let our eyes follow the direction of these white lines, we will scan up and down, through every panel of windows, backwards to the annunciation panel. What we don't notice in individual panels, are the repeating themes



which we will see if we step back to look at the entirety of this wall.

There are two square end panels. One is the nascent Christ of the annunciation. The other contains the symbols of that Christ: bread and wine. Between these ends, there are four rectangular panels. One tells the Nativity story. A second tells of Jesus' baptism and the miracle of loaves and fishes. Jesus provided sustenance for his flock even then. The third section tells of Jesus calming the raging waters, healing and raising the dead, and finally being crucified. The fourth section shows the glorious resurrection and Jesus' ascension into heaven.

The East Window

Many of you have been to the Sistine Chapel to see Michaelangelo's ceiling frescoes. Most of us have seen reproductions in books of this chapel. "The Last Judgement" is a huge painting on the rear wall where Michaelangelo realistically and symbolically rendered a time after death. It is a painting rife with images of fear and agony, as well as redemption and salvation.

The windows at the rear of St. Raymond Church is a much simpler, and in its way, more beautiful, interpretation of the same subject. The window itself is an irregular shape which reflects the shape of our church with its peaked roof.

The visual center, though off-center, of the window is a large

circle of white symbolizing the redemption of Christ and the host of the Eucharist. Swirling outward from this center are white concentric rings which unwind to become the background to the right. Within these rings are repeated symbols from other windows within the church. There are doves and angels, flames and circles, flowers and even the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Outside this ring, there are two border areas. The one on the left shows angels gathering in a background of flames and flowers. Below and to the right is a very organic section of stylized white and beige flowers on prolific green stems. The flowers are round and delicate black lines etch the details of each flower. The round shape is like the stars, suns and concentric circles we've seen in our other windows.

Overall, this window is a fitting symbol of our parish and its promise. In life, we are like flowers, individually unique, contributing to the life of our families, church, community and planet. After life, we will be among the host of angels praising God in another dimension, in ways we cannot fathom or imagine now. In between, we have God's commandments and the symbols of his life – Bread and Wine.

If we follow these symbols, through the narrative of Jesus' life, we will be led to everlasting life. What that's like, of course, no one can say. But the artist who designed and executed our windows gave it a masterful interpretation in

this largest rear window.

You don't have to go to the medieval cathedral of Chartres to see its celebrated window or to the Vatican to contemplate the Sistine Chapel's beauty. Come to St. Raymond and study our colorful and beautiful windows. You'll find your reflection well rewarded. *

But Father Loftus braved the controversy and followed through with the \$750,000 renovation.

"Few people realized how much he agonized over the decision," recalls Bush.

"When we began and the controversy was the hottest, I was ready to give it up," Father Loftus told the Tribune reporter. But he said that he went ahead because he supported the more participatory atmosphere the architectural changes would create.

"The plainness and elegance drive you into yourself," he explained.

The changes which caused such an uproar were extensive. The marble back altar and tabernacle were removed and replaced with brick and wood. The four-foot-high main marble altar was replaced by a smaller wooden table. Some of the statues which had once adorned the body of the church were

enshrined in hallways, chapels and entrances. The statue of the Blessed Mother, however, was placed next to the statue of St. Joseph to the right of the altar in order to make a Holy Family shrine. The sanctuary was brought forward, bringing the altar closer to the people. The choir was moved from the loft in the back to a ground-level position next to the assembly. The old original stained glass windows were replaced by newer ones with a definite story to tell. One of the two rear "cry" rooms was transformed into a priests' vesting room. The other "cry" room was redecorated so that it could double as a "wake chapel" on the mornings of funerals. The priests' vesting room became the altar servers' vesting room and their former vesting room was transformed into a Eucharistic chapel, following the American bishops' wishes for a sacred place of perpetual adoration in each parish.

Simple elegance without distractions was the goal during the 1988 renovation.





Joseph Cardinal Bernardin dedicated the renovated Church in January, 1988. During his homily that day he praised the changes saying that the new look was designed to bind "us all into one assembly gathered around the pulpit and the altar." Courtesy, The New World



"The emphasis in the Catholic liturgy has changed," Father Loftus explained to a Daily Herald reporter at the time. "We were a church of observers. We watched the priest do things. With Vatican II, however, we became a church of participants. The people have become much more actively involved in the service, so there is a lot more talking before and after church and so forth."

"So we felt that it was no longer an atmosphere appropriate for the tabernacle. As a result, we took the old server's sacristy and made it a private Eucharistic Chapel which houses the tabernacle and is also a private place to pray."

The loss of the tabernacle as the central focus of the church, he said, "is a major change for everyone that will take some getting used to. It is very different for me, too. I grew up and served many years in the old way. But I am finding the new design to be extremely functional."

The work, which was designed by Paul Straka, a church architect who had won national architecture awards for church renovations elsewhere in the Archdiocese, took seven months to complete. Many of the renovations, however, came not from Straka, but from the ever-fertile imagination of Father Loftus, according to Bob Bush. He came up with the idea of the wake chapel. To his knowledge, no one had ever done such a thing before. But since it has been so successful at St. Raymond, others are now following suit.

The renovated church was dedicated by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin on January 24, 1988.

"Have you noticed that, if you stand in the back of the church, you may easily see that the new design of the interior tries to create unity, binding us all – priests, ministers and congregation – into one assembly gathered around the pulpit and the altar?" Bernardin asked during his homily that day. "This symbolizes what our worship, as a community, should signify and what the liturgy has the power to create – a united family gathered to hear God's Word and to be nourished by his body and blood."

One portion of the renovation was not yet complete at the time of Bernardin's visit.

The new bank of stained glass windows along the south wall of the church, designed and made by artist Robert Harmon, were not done until the fall of 1989. So Bishop John Gorman came out on October 15, 1989 to dedicate them.

"When they ultimately put in the new stained glass windows, we all felt they were the finishing touch," Bush recalls. "Many have come to like the church since they were put in."

"Father Loftus had a knack for making the right relationships and getting contributions for his projects," explains Don Burke.

For instance, he combined fund-raising and a social event by raffling off a donated

Father Loftus encouraged an increase in Sunday collections, as well as increased voluntarism, through his "Time, Talent and Treasure" campaign.





Seventh graders enrolled in Bob Froehlich's religious education class made posters and banners as part of their learning experience.

car each year at Oktoberfest. And he managed to increase Sunday collections by five percent with his Stewardship campaign and its slogan of 'Time, Talents and Treasure'.

"He was fantastic at raising money," agrees Pat Schoenberger. "He had some wealthy people he loved and who loved him. But

he was never phony in whom he cared about. He truly cared about them."

"It was his ability to reach out and touch people that brought the endowment and scholarship fund that now bears his name to where it is today," says Bob Bush, its treasurer. "This is probably his greatest long-term legacy to Catholic education in our

parish. Father Loftus was a very strong supporter of Catholic education. He felt that the future of the faith was in the hands and hearts of our young and he wanted to ensure that such education would be available to those who wanted it."

Tom McGough agrees. "Father Loftus had an overriding zealotry for Catholic education. His pride was the school."

"Consequently, the unfortunate closing of schools by the Archdiocese because of funding problems was of great concern to him," Bob Bush continues. "To our knowledge, ours was the first scholarship and endowment fund for elementary education in the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese subsequently established guidelines for endowment funds and several are now in place."

The principal purpose of the Reverend Robert J. Loftus Endowment and Scholarship Fund is to provide scholarships to families so that no family wanting to send its children to St. Raymond School is prevented from doing so by financial constraints.

"Father Loftus was always an advocate

for the children – both in the school and in religious education,” recalls Marguerite King, who left her position as music and art teacher in the school in 1980 to become Director of Religious Education, a position she held until



1997. “He was very supportive of me. If I had a problem, I could go to him and he had a deep interest in religious education. But he let me run my program.”

“Father Loftus was very supportive of the idea of combining the religious education and school children for the sacraments and having the two faculties meet occasionally because we are, after all, one parish. And we would also have one theme each year for the school and religious education to plug into like ‘Share your talents; Let your light shine’ and ‘Reaching new heights for Christ’. He supported all of that.”

“Father Loftus was also very good at looking at what our parish needs, seeing what is acceptable and doing it – like allowing girls to be altar servers,” she continues. “We did that earlier than most of the neighboring parishes.”

“He was constantly thinking of the parish and its people,” recalls Pat Schoenberger. “His mind was going constantly. There just were not enough hours in the day for him. In his healthy days he never sat down until 11 p.m. at night. He was a workaholic who was blessed with lots of energy.”

“I worked side-by-side with him and witnessed how his mind was always working



Social events like the annual Easter egg hunt and the Oktoberfest celebration were the brainchildren of Father Loftus. He thoroughly enjoyed social events himself and felt that they were necessary to tie a parish together and truly make it a community, even if it cost the parish a little money.



Father Loftus loved the children and he particularly enjoyed giving them their First Eucharist. Here, in 1985, as in most other years, he gathered the First Communicants around him up on the altar for an intimate talk on their big day.

on how he could improve things for the parish and the people – thoughtful things," she continues.

One of those was the resurrection of a dramatic group at St. Raymond, a group which could provide both entertainment and camaraderie.

"In late 1991 Deacon Tom Corcoran, then president of the Parish Council, came to me on behalf of Father Loftus and asked if I would bring back the plays like those the Jubilee Players produced," recalls John Semerau. "It took about a year and a half to reestablish a cadre of people to get the show up and running."

That cadre included director Dean

Showalter, musical director Bernie Petosa, Skip Braband, Ann and Rich Sobanski, John and Betty Weidenbach and others, Semerau says. Then, in 1993 the new St. Raymond Players produced "I Remember Mama" and produced one show each year thereafter up until and including 1997. Another is planned for the 50th anniversary year of 1999.

"Throughout its history, the annual productions have been a big part of life and community at St. Raymond," he explains, "with involvement not only from parishioners, but the surrounding community. There have been many parishioners who first became involved at St. Raymond through these shows. You now see them as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, choir members and in other areas of the church and school."

"The greatest value of the shows and other social events is that they cut across the entire parish, bringing together various groups," Semerau states. "It helps explain part of the St. Raymond spirit."

But providing for his parishioners' entertainment and enjoyment was not Father Loftus' only concern. He tried to be there to provide services for both the good times and the bad.

"People were his life. He was the one who started sending plants to the bereaved families who had lost someone in the previous year," Schoenberger says. "Depending on when the loved one died, they would get a plant from the parish for Easter, Thanksgiving or Christmas. He took great joy in leading the school children's Halloween parade each year, dressed in a costume my husband, Chuck, made for him. He would invite people who were alone for Thanksgiving to eat at the rectory. He occasionally had bereaved families eat at the rectory while they were planning the funeral to make it easier for them. He invited the eighth grade students in groups of ten or 12 to lunch at the rectory before they graduated. He agreed to counsel people whenever they needed him – sometimes not finishing until 11 p.m. Even when he was dying, it was important to him that he help his parishioners learn what it was like to die."

"He had a tough presence about him. But he had a heart of gold," she says.

Bob Bush agrees. "He was demanding, but supportive. Father Loftus was truly a visionary. He would come up with one idea after another and staff members had to try to decide which ones he was serious about and then implement them."

"Father Loftus was the right man for the times here at St. Raymond," says parishioner Tom McGough, a close friend of Father Loftus. "He was a superb innovator who came up with great ideas and he was able to usually find some people in the parish who were capable of giving those ideas substance."

"But he was also a man who was impatient with the status quo," McGough continues. "He had tough personal standards and he was highly educated and well ahead of the mainstream of intellectual thought. Those things combined to make him intolerant when it came to incompetence. He wanted things pursued and finished. So he had considerable difficulty dealing with individuals who needed constant direction. That made for some uncomfortable times."

Father Loftus didn't confine his candor to his parish, either. He was a member of Cardinal Bernardin's Advisory Board and, according to Sister Kathleen O'Connell, several other priests on the board told her that he would always speak his mind at those meetings and tell it like he saw it. He was well respected by the Cardinal, bishops and his peers as evidenced by their remarks and attendance at his funeral liturgy.

Among the programs he brought to the parish or established new here were CRHP (Christ Renews His Parish), RENEW, the substance abuse team, psychological counseling services, funeral luncheons and bereavement counseling. He even tried to establish a parent organization for religious education, but that never worked out.

"Within a few weeks of arriving here, it became clear to me that Father Loftus' first priority was the spiritual life of the people of this parish," recalls Sister Kathleen, who retired her full-time position in 1990 because of ill health, but continued to edit the weekly bulletin until 1996. "He directed me to begin both the RENEW small group program and the CRHP retreat program, which I did. In

fact, I feel that being the spiritual director for those groups was the most significant thing I did at St. Raymond, besides beginning the funeral lunches and some of the other ministries of care."

In 1987 Margaret Moser was hired to take over the ministries of care from Mary Kay Frazier, the part-time parish nurse who was administering the ministries of care under the direction of a seriously over-worked Sister Kathleen. A parishioner at neighboring St. James Church in Arlington Heights, Moser had been coordinating a similar program for them on a volunteer basis and when Father Loftus offered her a paid position, she made the switch.

"Father Loftus was always open to me starting whatever program I felt we needed because he trusted me," Moser says. "He let me run with the ball because he knew that if we minister to people in their time of need and do it well, we are touching them at their deepest core and that is true evangelization."



Margaret Moser, director of the Ministries of Care, thoroughly enjoyed the annual St. Patrick's Day parties which Father Loftus held to raise funds for the school endowment fund. Her Irish brogue was a great addition to the atmosphere, as well!

They will usually want to become more involved in the church after that."

Father Loftus also saw the value of forging ties with area ministers of other faiths, particularly the ministers of neighboring St. Mark Lutheran Church. The two churches eventually collaborated on summer Bible Schools for children and established a Palm Sunday tradition of processing together and then sharing a meal at alternating churches.

Drawing inactive Catholics back to the fold was another of Father Loftus' fondest wishes so he collaborated with the pastors of St. Cecilia, St. Emily, St. Thomas Becket and St. Alphonsus to hire a coordinator of evangelization, Sister John Vianney, to plan and carry out programs and activities to draw in inactive Catholics, as well as those who

might be interested in becoming Catholics.

And after approximately ten years of doing without a Parish Council, at the urging of Bishop John Gorman, he re-established an advisory Parish Council with a number of commissions under it. According to McGough, it never really got off the ground, however, because the commissions were not fully developed or implemented and there was not a thorough integration of the parish staff and the Council on many parish matters.

An unexpected bonus to Father Loftus was the arrival, in the mid-1980s, of the former bishop of the Fort Wayne/South Bend, Indiana diocese, Bishop William McManus. He retired and rented a home a few blocks from the rectory. And he promptly became a prized asset to the life of



The joint Palm Sunday procession and reception with neighboring St. Mark Lutheran Church, which began during Father Loftus' tenure, showed his dedication to the idea of forging ties with area ministers and congregations of other faiths. He is shown here marching with his associate pastor, Father Charles Skach. Courtesy, The New World.



the parish.

Pat Schoenberger scoffs when asked if having Bishop McManus in the parish cramped Father Loftus' style. "No one cramped Father Loftus' style. He was his own person. He would stand up to anyone. No, he and the Bishop had a good relationship. They would even go out together occasionally."

"Bishop McManus was another idea

man," recalls Bob Bush. "He considered himself to be just another parishioner, but he was a terrific sounding board for Father Loftus."

In fact, it was Bishop McManus who developed the idea for St. Raymond's very successful alms-giving program, which began in the fall of 1994.

"Our recent failure in the Catholic Church to make a distinction between giving



Bishop William E. McManus, former bishop of the Fort Wayne-South Bend (IN) diocese and former superintendent of the Chicago Archdiocese's school system, did the St. Raymond community a huge favor when he decided to retire within it. Bishop McManus made great contributions to the parish on a daily basis, but his lasting legacy is the parish's cutting-edge alms program, which he began. He died less than a year after Father Loftus—on March 3, 1997.

money to support the Church and giving alms has been a detriment to both," he told the parish newsletter, *Radius*, in November, 1995. "When people are giving money to the Church, they are really just paying their fair share of the expenses of a parish which is serving them well. But when they are giving alms, they are selflessly contributing money for a charitable cause."

Bishop McManus freely admitted that it took some talking to convince Father Loftus to try the alms-giving. He was worried that asking parishioners to give alms would make them cut back on their support of the church. But he let Bishop McManus experiment and the program ended up being a big success. So, with Father Loftus' blessing, the Bishop formed an alms committee to choose the charities to be supported each week, but instructed the members to try to limit themselves to the corporal works of mercy:

feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless and caring for those with no one to care for them.

In his later years, Father Loftus' health became increasingly problematic. He was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis, according to Pat Schoenberger, but told that he could live on with that disease for many years, as long as it was treated.

In January, 1996 during his annual trip to Florida, only seven months after celebrating the 40th anniversary of his ordination, he became ill enough to be hospitalized upon his return. But the doctors still assured him that there was no trace of cancer, that he simply had the pulmonary fibrosis, Schoenberger says.

"It wasn't until two weeks before he died that he found out that he had lung cancer," she says. "His lungs had filled with fluid and when they drained the fluid, they found cancer cells in the fluid. They said that the fibrosis had been so thick that it had masked the cancer."

"He didn't stop until the very end. He wrote those letters to the parishioners in the weekly bulletin and the *Radius* newsletter and really taught us all how to die," she continues. "I feel so blessed to have known him."

Father Loftus passed away in his bed in the rectory on a Saturday morning, April 27, 1996 – coincidentally, on the 33rd anniversary of the death of St. Raymond's founding pastor, Father Thomas O'Brien.





In May, 1995 Father Loftus celebrated the 40th anniversary of his ordination into the priesthood with an elaborate show put on by the children of the school, a Mass and a lovely reception in the parish auditorium. He thoroughly enjoyed it, clapping with gusto as the children entertained him and greeting old friends with great pleasure at the reception.





The rectory of St. Raymond de Penafort parish remains one of the most attractive and unusual in the Archdiocese.



St. Raymond's core staff is comprised of (top, left to right) Ed Dowling, Fr. Steve Dombrowski, Fr. Bernie Pietrzak, Fr. Jerry Jacob, Dominic Trumfio (bottom, left to right) Margaret Buckstaff, Rosemary Hinkemeyer, Sr. Elaine Campbell and Barbara Koop. Not pictured, Margaret Moser, Mary Jennifer Meister and Jerry Kellman.

All are welcome in this place

Associate Pastor Steven Dombrowski blesses parishioners' beloved pets at the annual Pet Blessing ceremony.

Replacing Father Loftus after his 17-year pastorate was no easy task for the Archdiocese. He had come to be greatly loved by most of his parishioners and his lengthy illness, yet surprisingly sudden death, had been shared by the entire community. In addition, things had changed in the Archdiocese. They no longer assigned pastors to parishes without consultation with that

parish. The process had become more in keeping with current secular personnel procedures. The vacancy was announced to all Archdiocesan priests and those interested in St. Raymond were invited to apply. The Placement Board also made a concerted effort to send representatives to meet with staff members and parishioners to hear their wishes on the matter.

"I remember the meeting when the representatives from the Archdiocese came out to speak with us about what qualities we would like to see in our new pastor," recalls Chuck Hemler, president of the Parish Council from 1995 to 1998. "Someone stood up and really said it well: 'We want someone who will laugh with us and cry with us. We want someone who will celebrate with us and share our sorrow. We want someone who really wants to be a part of our parish'."

Fortunately, there was no real urgency for the Archdiocese. Associate pastor Steven Dombrowski had been appointed 'administrator' in the interim and, together with an experienced parish staff, was running the day-to-day operations of St. Raymond with great competence and insight. The parish was in good hands, so the Archdiocese had the luxury of taking its time and choosing carefully.

In early September, 1996, the Cardinal's choice was announced. The new pastor would be Father Bernard Pietrzak, the administrator of The Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg. St. Raymond would be his first pastorate.

"I pursued St. Raymond parish," Father Pietrzak told the parish newsletter, *Radius*, soon after the announcement. "I wanted to become the pastor here. I wanted to choose the kind of parish that I felt I could pastor well. Once I felt I was ready to become a pastor, I wanted to apply for a parish carefully and with thoughtfulness. Two things were important. I hoped the parish



would have been renewed with a Vatican II spirit. Secondly, I had hoped to find a parish with a large grade school. I have a strong belief in Catholic education. I believe that a parish day school helps to bring a parish community to life."

"I have a lot of energy and some good years of pastoral experience to bring to the table, but I know that I am going to continue to learn and be shaped and molded by this community," he continued. "A priest friend of mine in the diocese is fond of saying that people don't 'get married' they 'become married.' In that same sense, I feel that in these next years I am in the process of 'becoming' the pastor of St. Raymond."

Father Bernard Pietrzak became the fifth pastor of St. Raymond in the fall of 1996, coming to Mount Prospect from the Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg.



Father "Bernie," as he asked everyone to call him, was a breath of fresh air to a parish community which had been in mourning all summer. He was young, self-confident and enthusiastic, yet he didn't seem to be in any hurry to change things. He wisely sat back and studied his new parish and immersed himself in its many activities and dimensions before passing judgments and making plans.

"People were cautious around him at first," says Hemler, "because he exudes a great deal of confidence and no one knew what to expect. But he quickly showed himself to be a caring individual."

"Father Bernie was a different person and a different age from Father Loftus, but we quickly realized that he was rather progressive in his thinking and theology. He is very inclusive in all areas and aspects of the church leadership," says Margaret Moser, director of the Ministries of Care. "He certainly has his own ideas, but he respects what people are already doing and, like Father Loftus, isn't constantly looking over your shoulder. He places his trust in his staff."

After taking the time to analyze the parish and its needs, Father Bernie began to formulate and then implement parts of his vision for parish life.

"A good pastor should have a plan or view for his parish," explains Father Steve Dombrowski, "and if he doesn't, the place flounders. From the first it was obvious to me that Father Bernie wanted to make our liturgy more inclusive and more open to children."

"Liturgy is the most important action of a faith community," Father Bernie explains. "It needs to be prepared well. The music should inspire, and the preaching should connect people to real life. The assembly needs to be involved and engaged in our shared prayer."

"Father Bernie wanted to draw people in more and have the staff work more collaboratively," Father Steve continues. "He was very dedicated to adult formation, marriage preparation and parenting skills development, as well as our fiscal responsibility."

Father Bernie began by working to draw his staff together as a unit, opening the lines of communication between the various departments of parish life. Weekly lunches for the staff are now held in the parish house. In addition, the administrative staff (Father Bernie, Margaret Buckstaff, Father Steve and Ed Dowling) meets weekly; the core staff (which also includes Sister Elaine, Barbara Koop, Margaret Moser, Jerry Kellman, Father Jerry Jacob, Mary Beth Sammons, Dominic Trumfio, and Mary Jennifer Meister) meets every other week and the extended staff (including all of the deacons) meets on a quarterly basis, as well. On the alternate weeks, he meets with the staff members in departmental meetings.

"He has convinced us that the highest level we can aspire to is to become interdependent and that it is important for the good of the church that we do so," explains Ed Dowling, operations manager.

"This is a new era. That is the key element," adds Sister Elaine Campbell, school principal. "All staff members are now aware of the direction of the entire parish. They have a voice in what is happening in the parish, even if they are not directly involved. We are all working together for the good of the parish."

"There is such an open line of communication now that the staff has become very close," Buckstaff says. "At the beginning of each of our meetings we take time to discuss the weekly Scripture and reflect upon our lives in light of the Sunday readings. This, combined with weekly check-ins, at which time we discuss what is going on in our lives professionally and/or personally, gives us a balance and a wholeness. We are not islands unto ourselves. We see ourselves as a part of a larger picture now."

Another major change is that the pastor is no longer making decisions alone. Dowling, Buckstaff, Father Steve and the chairman of the Parish Council collaborate with Father Bernie to administer the daily operation of the parish. Together, they make up the "Office of the Pastor" and make decisions as a team.

Yet, those decisions, whether undertaken by Father Bernie or in conjunction with

others, are open to well-argued change and dialogue, the staff says.

"Father Bernie wants to be approachable," Dowling says. "He doesn't want anyone to place him on a pedestal."

"Father Bernie has to be 'directive' because he has a vision for St. Raymond," explains Barbara Koop, director of religious education. "But he doesn't always impose his vision and opinions on others. He always tries to listen and be open to others' opinions and ideas."

Sister Elaine agrees. "He is focused on his vision, but he will listen to other points of view and process them. And he is willing to take risks and try new things."

Virtually the only physical change made recently at St. Raymond has been to take a large donation and bring parish management up to speed with computers and networking. Prior to 1997, all parish bookkeeping was still done by hand. Now, however, it is computerized. Better reports are now being generated to give the parish finance committee a better handle on day-to-day finances. The school has also been networked and e-mail is being used.

"Believe it or not, we are one of the first parishes in the Archdiocese to get on the bandwagon with networking," Buckstaff states.

Well-thought-out job descriptions for the staff, complete with checks and balances and immediate accountability are also in



Staff communication has been emphasized and streamlined for the good of the entire parish.



As director of worship, Fr. Jerry Jacob oversees liturgy planning, as well as "art and environment" for the parish.

Setting priorities and identifying needs

During the summer of 1997, Father Bernie set in motion a program which he hoped would address needs he saw in the parish on several fronts: adult formation, drawing more adults into leadership roles within the parish and determining the direction the parish would take on the issue of its young people. It was to be a massive program involving hundreds of people, meeting once a week during Lent to discuss parenting issues in small groups. To handle coordination of the program and training of parishioner discussion leaders, Father Bernie hired Jerry Kellman, a layman with a Master's of Divinity from Loyola University.

The theological basis for such a program, Kellman said, was that "we believe that if you allow people to talk about the things that matter, they will become a more

authentic church, closer to Christ's vision of the kingdom. Such conversations allow us to get on the same page as one community. We believe that the Holy Spirit will guide us when we strive to do something that touches the entire community."

In addition, he said that while the Church, like any institution, must focus serious attention on those activities on which it depends for survival, including money, building, ongoing formation programs and its liturgical life, the Church still exists to serve the world.

"If we don't try to touch people's lives in their daily struggles, if the turn towards God isn't reflected in our homes and workplace and communities, then our love of God is limited," he explained.

"I genuinely believe that the

priests by themselves and even the priests with their staffs cannot help the Church through the challenges it is facing now and will be facing in the future," Kellman told the parish newsletter, *Radius*, when the program was announced. "I believe that the solution lies in empowerment of the lay people and connecting them together."

"We need lay people to step forward and provide leadership on issues relating our faith to other areas of our lives like our jobs, child-raising, etc.," he continued. "And in order to do that we have to get large numbers of people in the parish talking to each other about issues they might not otherwise discuss."

"Our goal is to work toward setting a grassroots agenda or vision for where St. Raymond is going on any number of issues," he said, "and we need to involve people who normally don't get involved in the Church to any significant degree."

"It is a real challenge to move beyond the core of people who always carry the ball at any parish. But that is what we are trying to do. That is why we chose 'parenting' as our initial topic for this reflection program because while some of these people may not really be involved in the daily life of a parish, they do care about their children and it creates an opening for parish staff and volunteers to step in and say, 'if you are really here at Church for your kids, let's talk about what we're all doing and



why'."

"Parenting is a community event. It is an illusion to think that we parent alone because what I do affects you and what you do affects me," he stated.

"We want to help our children make wise choices in the stressful world they face and in many cases, we are counting on the parish to sustain our kids. But if we don't get together and discuss our strategy, we can't work together," Kellman explained. "We need to truly create a community."

The Reflection Program gained wide acceptance throughout the parish, engaging over 600 parishioners in active discussion for the first time and thus making them feel much more a part of the St. Raymond community.

"Once I got there I found that it was nice to just sit and talk to people and know that you're not



worrying alone," said parishioner Sue Loebbaka, a Reflection group participant, in a subsequent article. "I hope that participation in these groups makes people more comfortable with one another and helps break down some of the many barriers which may exist between parishioners and the parish staff."

"If our children's future is important to us, then anything we can learn from each other will help both them and us to grow. We need a support group to help us counter all of those outside forces which we wish weren't there but we know are," she continued.

"Our children need so much more than they are getting out there, so I felt that it would be beneficial if we could get some values established and if every one of us was working off a similar game plan."

"We don't expect a blueprint for the parish," Kellman emphasized, "but we do expect issues and priorities to emerge for the entire parish. The pastor, parish staff and program leadership are committed to concrete changes and growth that benefits the life of our community." *





Serving the children of the parish is the mission of both St. Raymond School and the religious education program. In addition to academic subjects, students in the school study music, art, computer, library skills and physical education.

place now. But despite the highly-organized, 'fast-track' management style, Father Bernie manages to make people feel comfortable and included – everyone from his fellow priests to his parishioners.

"A rectory is traditionally known as a pastor's house," explains Father Steve, "but Bernie works very hard to make sure that this is *our* house. He is very concerned about making sure that we are happy. We have lots of privacy, yet we eat meals together and take the time to connect in prayer, humor and concern. The fact that I have been able to stay here for so long after being parish administrator in the interim says a lot about Bernie's style."

Deacon John Lorbach sees Father Bernie's inclusive style as "evangelization at its very finest."

"Under Father Bernie, our motto at St.

Raymond has changed to 'All Are Welcome In This Place.' I am extremely excited because I have witnessed that this new motto is not merely words, but rather a way of life in our faith community," he says.

"It is a win/win situation for all. By being welcomed into the community, one feels the warmth of being part of the 'family' and one knows that what happens in their life (in good times and in times of trouble) really matters to the community. The parish, itself, is then gifted because of the presence of this new member and, therefore, the entire community grows stronger."

"I want people to feel more 'ownership' in their parish," Father Bernie explains. "I don't want people to simply be members of St. Raymond parish. I want them to be active members and leaders in this parish community."

The new fund-raising and development committee is trying to involve more people by finding new and more creative ways for people to share their financial resources with the parish and to help it to fall in line with Archdiocesan financial guidelines.

The many existing Ministries of Care (and even some potential new ones) also add to the welcoming feel of the St. Raymond community. Contact with the church through those many ministries (including, but not limited to: Ministry of Praise, Carpe Diem, Respite Care, Outreach to the Homeless, three widow/widower support groups, CRHP Women's groups, Substance Abuse team, Hospital and Nursing Home ministries and bereavement ministry) serve to strengthen people's connection to the church and encourages them to become more involved in it. New programs being considered are: Share the Care, a program in which people work with the family to provide basic care at home for ill people; Elizabeth Ministry, a support ministry for people dealing with problems or grief involving adoption, miscarriage, pregnancy and fertility difficulties; and the Parish Emergency Assistance Resourcing (PEAR) program, a database which tracks homeless transients and lets parishes know if another parish is already assisting the person who has come to the door for help. It helps churches be good stewards of their limited funds, Moser says.

Many within the parish are also working to make the children and teens of the parish want to become involved and feel ownership.

"So many people and things are trying to evangelize our youth," explains Father Steve, "that we have to be out there making a climate for them where they can feel comfortable. It is becoming more and more challenging as our world is changing."

This challenge begins with the younger children in the school and religious education and extends to the high school students in Branches, all under the auspices of the Youth Formation Commission.

"We have to be conscious of the fact that we are here for all of the children of the parish," explains Sister Elaine. "We just have different roles."

"We have also instituted more of a family focus," says Koop. "We are emphasizing the concept that it is the parents who are bringing their children to receive the sacraments. That is why we have held reconciliation sessions for the entire family – not just for the children during school or religious education time. It is another form of evangelization and we, as educators, have to learn to let go and trust the parents to be, as we have always *said* they are, the children's primary educators."

As for Branches, the high school program, Father Steve spent the spring and summer of 1997 revitalizing it, bringing in a part-time youth minister and engaging the assistance of youth ministry consultants.

"Over the years, Branches had kind of deteriorated," explains Father Steve, "and we can't afford to let it fall by the wayside. Teens need to understand that they don't graduate from their faith once they have been confirmed."

Branches, in its new, revitalized form, is expected to combine small discussion groups, service projects, social events and occasional retreats. Regular teen Masses have also been instituted.

And just as teens do not 'graduate' from their faith at confirmation, neither do adults. Consequently, much emphasis is being placed on adult religious formation.

"People have to learn to look at their faith through adult eyes," Father Bernie

Long an integral part of the parish, the Branches program for teens is entering a new phase for the new millennium.





Planning to meet the needs of the future, in terms of buildings and grounds, programming and finances, is now the shared responsibility of the pastor and the people of God, as represented by the members of the Parish Council.

explains. "So we are committed to offering more opportunities for adult formation including sacramental preparation meetings for parents, the annual Lenten mission and periodic religious lecture series."

"From the moment he arrived here, Father Bernie saw the potential for a local education and formation experience similar to the lay ministry training program put on

by the Archdiocese," recalls Hemler, a member of the Adult Formation Commission, as well as the Parish Council. "He wanted to hold a series of regular meetings during which a religious topic would be discussed. The 'Fall Experience' program held during the autumn of 1998 was a piece of that. He sees adult formation as a way to support people in the parish who want to minister and who need to grow into a more adult understanding of this faith."

Some parishioners have even been willing to take the ultimate ownership role and become part of an active, policy-making Parish Council which will help the pastor guide the parish.

"We are on the cusp of some very exciting new beginnings as we approach the milestone of our 50th anniversary," says Parish Council member Judy Mitchell. "Father Bernie wants the Council to take an active role in leading this parish because I believe he shares our concept of 'Church' being the people of God. By virtue of our baptism, we are all called to be 'Church' to each other and the Parish Council will represent the people of St. Raymond."

"As any institution, or even our own homes, age and get to be 50 years old, you begin to think about 'sprucing things up', possibly updating to keep current with the times," says Mitchell. "As St. Raymond celebrates its 50th anniversary the Parish Council will be looking ahead to determine the direction the parish will take and how it will meet the needs of the future."

Hemler agrees. "Father Bernie would like the Parish Council to become a body which is totally in tune with what is going on and which collaborates with the pastor and the staff to run the parish. Of course, there are certain areas of the parish in which the Parish Council will not be involved. Spiritual and moral directives are his alone to issue and the directing of the staff and other personnel are also his area of sole responsibility."

But the Parish Council is involved in most other areas, either directly or through its five commissions (worship, adult formation, youth formation, parish life and human concerns). In fact, Father Bernie is counting on the Parish Council to help him develop, coordinate and put in action a long-range plan for the parish, after they have jointly determined the direction St. Raymond should take during the 21st century.

"The Parish Council is designed in concentric circles revolving around the Office of the Pastor," Hemler explains. "The focus is on lay involvement in the parish and the new structure of the Parish Council will make that more obvious."

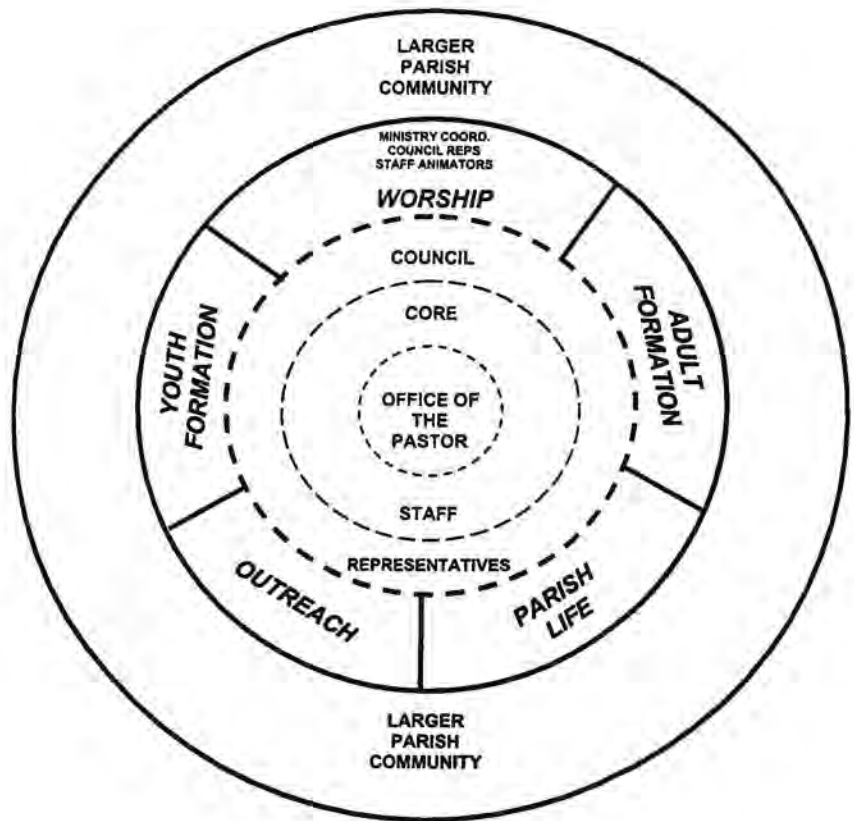
"In the case of the previous Parish Council, the commissions were added many months after the Council was established," he continues. "But this time we got the commissions functioning first because that is where the real work takes place and it is also where many decisions can be made, as long as they aren't contrary to parish policy or something else that is being done."

Members of the Parish Council also spent a full year in formation activities like getting to know each other, doing spiritual formation, learning about church history and interviewing successful Parish Councils in other parishes to see what has worked for them. They have also made sure that mem-

bers of the parish's core staff are active as 'animators' on each of the five commissions.

"The intention is not for the staff to take over the Parish Council," Buckstaff explains, "but rather to assist the commissions in completing our mission."

"Everyone thinks that we are off on something new with the Parish Council, but that's not really true," Hemler says. "The intention is the same. Only the way it is being acted upon is different. We intend to help St. Raymond and the individuals within the St. Raymond community grow in every way we can."



People who have served

Priests who have served at St. Raymond:

Fr. Thomas J. O'Brien - 1949 - 1963
 Fr. J. Michael Hartnett - 1953 - 1958
 Fr. Joseph Doyle - 1958 - 1963
 Fr. Daniel Coughlin - 1960 - 1963
 Fr. Leo P. Coggins - 1963 - 1970
 Fr. Donald Fenske - 1963 - 1968
 Fr. John Rochford - 1963 - 1966
 Fr. Augustin Pallikunnen - 1963
 Fr. Ronald N. Kalas - 1966 - 1980
 Fr. Robert Carroll - 1967 - 1972
 Fr. Kenneth G. Kiepora - 1969 - 1976
 Fr. William Buhrfeind - 1971 - 1979
 Fr. John Dewes - 1972 - 1979
 Fr. William Veith - 1976 - 1981
 Fr. Robert Loftus - 1979 - 1996
 Fr. James P. Murphy - 1979 - 1984
 Fr. Alec Wolff - 1981 - 1984
 Fr. Richard Brousil - 1984 - 1988
 Fr. Robert Banzin - 1985 - 1986
 Fr. Louis Palazzola - 1985 - 1996
 Fr. Thomas Srenn - 1987 - 1989
 Fr. Ted Duda - 1987 - 1988
 Fr. Charles Schutt - 1988 - 1990
 Fr. David Kloak - 1989 - 1990
 Fr. Michael Meany - 1990 - 1994
 Fr. Charles Skach - 1990 -
 Fr. Steven Dombrowski - 1994 -
 Fr. Bernard Pietrzak - 1996 -
 Fr. Jerome Jacob - 1997 -

Student priests who served as deacons 1 year:

Steven Tebes - 1967-68
 Edward R. Braxton - 1969-70
 Michael Kelly - 1970-71
 Jay Finno - 1971-72
 Russell Romano - 1972-73
 Gerald Zachar - 1973-74
 Thomas W. Falkenthal - 1975-76

Permanent deacons and deacon couples:

Thomas J. Grady - 1974 - 1985
 Chester and Sylvia Checki - 1980 - 1997
 Thomas and Rita Lambert - 1983 -
 William and Joan Reinert - 1994 -
 Thomas and Irene Corcoran - 1994 -
 John and Ingrid Lorbach - 1996 -

Principals of St. Raymond School:

Sr. Mary Innocentia - 1954 - 1955
 Sr. Mary Delores - 1955 - 1960
 Sr. Mary Athanasius (became Sr. Patricia Diver)
 - 1960 - 1967 *
 Sr. Joan Bransfield (formerly Sr. Michaelena)
 - 1967 - 1973 *
 Sr. Judith Herrmann - 1973 - 1976
 Frances Harwas - 1976 - 1983
 Veronica Patt - 1983 - 1985
 Frances Forsys - 1985 - 1986
 Joan Dowling - 1986 - 1991
 Sr. Elaine Campbell, BVM - 1991 -

*Sisters of Mercy were required to choose a religious name and leave their baptismal name behind when they took their vows. But after Vatican II, the sisters were given permission to revert to their baptismal names, if they so wished. Most chose to revert to their former name, hence there were two separate names for the same person.

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