

**Immaculate Heart
of Mary
25th Anniversary**

1953-1978

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH

"TO BECOME THE SERVANT CHURCH"

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May 1, 1978

Dear Family of Immaculate Heart of Mary:

Congratulations to all of you - to all of us together - on this twenty-fifth anniversary of our family! This is a time for celebration, for joy, for coming together in even closer bonds of unity and fellowship in Christ Jesus.

A couple of us are relatively new to the parish family and we experience, above all, a very strong and active community of people in many phases of the parish life. We are proud of a strong parish school. We long to deepen our experience of God in our worship and we want to see the family grow in the Spirit of the Lord.

We see many things happening - good things, and we are greatly encouraged and glad to be part of you. If there is anything that touches us deeply it is the fact that we ourselves have been drawn into the parish family and can call this "home."

And so, we join you in saying we have come a long way from the small beginnings from which the parish started, and at the same time continue in the tradition of the pastors who have gone before us in encouraging you to continue to work, to share, to live the Christ life individually, in your families and in our whole parish community.

Let us join our prayers closely together and our spirits as in one family to rejoice and to celebrate this life that is ours in Christ Jesus, especially as we mark this twenty-fifth year. As we call you to even closer unity, we rededicate ourselves to you as your pastors and in celibate love want to live for you and to serve you with our lives.

We love all of you.

Your Pastor, In Christ's love

Ed Sullivan
Rita Keenan
Helene Kuffner
Lucienne Savoie
Jaime A. Soliz

IMMACULATE HEART - A LOOK AT GROWTH

Perhaps all history is but a study in contrasts between what once was and what is now; and over the universal record men have hung the masks of Comedy and Tragedy – so near allied that, as seen only from the surface, they show but a single difference: the lips of Comedy upward – tilting toward fulfillment - those of Tragedy sloping downward toward doom.

Of course there are contrasts to be found in the history of Immaculate Heart of Mary parish; but after brief acknowledgment of those souls who lament all change as tragic and who sorrow over any remembrance of things past, it is necessary in the cause of truth to affirm that in this record hope prevails; and fulfillment of many works and prayers stands solidly proclaimed in the beauty of the new church.

Surely, however, we admit the contrast between past days and the present moment. We remember the isolation of the little chapel-of-convenience that Father David J. Kirgan built between 1947 and 1948 on what was then the dusty and unfrequented corner of Idaho and Espina, where flash floods still rushed periously close when the infrequent rains came. Few of the town's Catholics had ever actually seen the chapel; and to those who had, it was a glimpse from a distance as they ventured down Solano, that stretch of bad, unsettled road from Lohman to the College. In those days, few of the chapel's 250 seats were ever filled all at one time.

Then came the change that transformed in New Mexico from a realm not readily identifiable as a bona fide state of the Union in the minds of many Americans on the "outside," into one of the fastest-growing regions in our country, when people flooded into the Enchanted land from north to south to begin the work of the new post-war age. Many of them from White Sands came to the quiet corner where the chapel stood; and it was changed.

It was made in a separate parish under the name of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1953, with Father William H. Ryan as pastor. His rectory and office were in a small house across the street from the spot where the school now stands, and so rapid was the growth of the new parish that these temporary quarters seemed inadequate almost within weeks. Masses were now attended by increasing crowds, and the 250 seats offered increasingly insufficient accommodations for them. With the people came their children, and in 1957 - only four years after is becoming pastor - Father Ryan saw the completion of the beautiful new school with the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, who came that same year, were to offer the little ones the Catholic education which is their birthright.

So many children came, and then so many more, but the Sisters needed help. Then the lay-apostolate began, with two girls from Philadelphia who came to fill this urgent need. Their sacrifices and that of those other young women who came after has enabled the school to continue under the pressure of the ever-increasing enrollment, with no increase in the number of teaching sisters.

In 1960, when Father Ryan was transferred to Saint Genevieve's parish, Father Everett Finley came to replace him. Under the new pastor, the number of Catholic families continued to increase, and the need for a new and larger church became urgent. Plans were initiated, and a campaign to raise funds was started in January, 1965.

The new church was begun in September, 1965 to be finished in May, 1966. Its design is contemporary Southwestern. Before the building began, Father Finley returned to the army as a chaplain, and Father Thomas O'Mahoney was put in charge.

Certainly Father Tom, who took over for the duration of Father Finley's absence, is a continuing inspiration to the members of the parish with his own dedication to service and sacrificed. He extols the help constantly given him by the Altar and Rosary Society, and by the Holy Name

Society whose members have unstintingly performed their designated functions, and much besides.

At Father's suggestion, a Parish Committee was formed in September, 1965, to help in the administration of the parish. This was a permanent committee representing various professions and occupations when a diversity of knowledge and experience that proves invaluable in many matters including that of setting up an operating budget.

This was new to the Immaculate Heart of Mary parish, and to the Church; one example of the greater participation of the laity resulting from the Vatican Council.

Likewise in keeping with the Council's concern that parochial schools maintain standards as high, or higher, than those of the public schools, a parish School Board was formed. The purpose of this board was to promote a better understanding of Catholic education, implement the policies of the Diocesan office, be responsible for achieving a high standard of academic achievement, and set up an operating budget.

Serving on the Board were three professors from New Mexico State University, five of the officials and faculty from the Las Cruces Public School system, and three local business men.

Then there was the Home and School Association whose members have worked zealously toward the school's success, showing themselves willing to make any effort to safeguard their children's privilege to attend Catholic Schools.

However, with growth in both size and excellence (a notable achievement, since quantity and quality do not always go together), there were growing difficulties to be immediately met and solved. The Home and School Society came forward to offer a voluntary increase in tuition. The sisters had been given a new residence, in a building which had been the home of the Lay-Apostles.

There were heavy demands on members from whom have come all the lay teachers of C.C.D. with the many crowded classes which they gladly teach. There were 18 Saturday morning classes for grades one through six; two Wednesday evening classes for grades seven and eight, and seven Sunday evening classes for the high school students, among whose teachers were several professors from New Mexico State University.

But the greatest challenge lied ahead. To father O'Mahony it confronted the most privileged segment of our society - the educated Catholic youth - in whom the greatest hope for the future rested. It was evident that the school could not continue without the help of the lay apostles; there were still only four sisters, and 800 families in the parish would not decrease in number.

In this retrospective glimpse of the short, happy life of the parish, one thing strikingly emerges: the unity among its members, the devotion of its pastors, and the benevolence of the Bishop. Contrast is everywhere; but unity prevails amid the diversity. In every step we trace, we can see the determined direction which has led through difficulty to the day of the dedication of the new Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.

Adapted from an article by Dr. Marion Hardman, former professor of English, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

By Cathy Black

When asked to write an article on the growth of Immaculate Heart of Mary parish, I was reminded of this parable of Jesus from Luke's gospel:

“What does the reign of God resemble? To what shall I liken it? It is like a mustard seed which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a large shrub and the birds of the air nested in its branches.”

As a native Las Cruces, I was a member of old St. Genevieve's on Main Street when Father David Kirgan, the pastor there, built a chapel at the corner of Idaho and Espina to accommodate God's people living in the southeast part of Las Cruces. The chapel is now Finley Hall. After our marriage, we lived on Walden Drive in that same southeast section of the city for 14 years, and I should have rightfully changed by registration; but, as with so many oldtimers, my heart remained at St. Genevieve's and I continued to make that my parish – after all, my baptism, first communion, confirmation, and wedding had taken place in that beautiful old church. To me, IHM was still just a chapel to handle newcomers and nothing absolutely required me to change my affiliation. In those days, Father Kirgan wore several hats – he was pastor of St. Genevieve's and of this chapel, as well as being chaplain to the Catholic students at the university, and Father William Ryan may well have had to do the same thing for a time.

It was only when we moved into our present home in Mesilla Park after returning to Las Cruces in late 1968 from a two-year educational sojourn in Northern California, that I really felt myself to be a bona fide, registered parishioner of IHM. During my absence, St. Genevieve's had been torn down, breaking other hearts besides mine, but we won't go into that.

Also a big beautiful, new church for IHM had blossomed while I wasn't looking, and Msgr. Everett Finley was pastor. A year or so after I became a member, a brash young priest named John Anderson came as Assistant Pastor. To me, these two priests complemented each other well, in that one might be said to be of “the old school”, while the other was definitely of “the new.” All Catholics were suffering from the labor pains of change in those days (still are, you say?), and if three Catholics were gathered together it might not be for prayer but more likely to talk about “all the changes going on in the church.” And of those three, one would say there had been too much change too fast, another that there hadn't been enough and none too soon either, and the third would be simply and totally bewildered. God, who knows our needs even if we don't, knew that we at IHM needed a Father Finley and a Father Anderson. There was a need for diversity in our ministers – and diversity we had! My active participation in the parish came about through my appreciation of Father John's work here and, although I enjoyed a good and friendly relationship with Msgr. Finley, I swung like a magnet to Father John's liturgy, sermons, teaching and friendship.

Someone once said, “change is constant”, and that has certainly been true at IHM. There have been many, many periods of change in her relatively short history, but I would say that the mid-1970's saw the beginning of a period that would affect the greatest change – at least it seems that significant to me. If we can say that IHM has made progress in her attempt to grow from an “institutional church” to a “community”, I would point to this time as the beginning, the time of planting that seed.

As Msgr. Finley's health failed and Father John prepared to transfer his ministry to the Newman Center, the Parish Council came of age. For with the big beautiful building came a big ugly mortgage and attendant spiraling expenses. The Parish Council had been spending its time and energy going from crisis to crisis, worrying about discouraging, red-inked financial reports and the results of deficit spending, but never getting a firm grip on the jello-like problem. It was at this time that the Council unflinchingly (well, maybe with a flinch here and there) took the reins, appointed a parish manager, and then made a decision to launch a parishwide stewardship

program. Our by-word was "Becoming the Servant Church" and we went to work, aided by many volunteers and under the direction of the Council Chairman Ed Gaughan and Parish Manager Denny Joe Lyle, but surely and firmly guided by the Holy Spirit. We sought out our parishioners on a face-to-face basis, speaking to them about their parish, her needs, problems, assets and liabilities, answering questions, noting complaints, and asking for a commitment of time, talent and treasure from each parishioner.

During the formation days of this stewardship program, God sent us a priest very much attuned to the ideals of that program, and Father Bob Getz came bouncing into our parish bringing with him those twin gifts of love and joy and a resounding – and now so familiar – acclamation, "PRAISE THE LORD!" Father Bob reminded us of the need for prayer for guidance in this endeavor and the faith this built in us the courage for our task.

Change not only continued to be the mode at IHM after the loss of Msgr. Finley and Father Bob's acceptance of the pastorate, it was rampant. It is impossible to enumerate all the changes the new pastor instituted, since they range from mundane housekeeping chores like grocery shopping for the rectory to any and all ways of making IHM a truly servant church and each member an exemplary witness for Jesus Christ.

God blessed Father Bob with a stamina that puts most of us to shame, and this was certainly proved in the Fall of 1975 as he visited and blessed the homes of our parishioners. When he first broached this idea, a Parish Council took the bit eagerly and confidently, remembering the fun, blessings and success of the stewardship program earlier. As you will remember from reports of the campaign, some parishioners had resided in the same homes for ten-twelve-fourteen years, and Father Bob was the first priest to visit. What a giant step this was toward cementing and (and sometimes mending) relationships, and building that most sought-after spirit of community in our parish.

At a time when it is easy to get discouraged by that we see in the world today, we can praise God for the work He is doing in and through, and the use He is making of, His servants. With the high cost of living, most of us have had to trim some areas of spending, and one might be tempted to trim the amount donated to the church; but, as published financial reports indicate, our offertory collection has increased rather than decreased and our financial statements are finally ending in the black. Surely, part of this is due to the example of frugality exercised by our pastor in rectory spending, and to the fact that so many of our parishioners have a real feeling of belonging to a parish family with an obligation to support and help meet the expenses of that parish family which naturally increase in inflationary times just as individual family expenses do. We seem to be heeding our pastor's oft-quoted biblical advice to seek God first and rely on Him to provide the rest.

It is gratifying to see the church full for a Sunday Mass, and even more so to witness the selfless work of so many parishioners, and the strong bond of fellowship, love and well-being that is evidenced by such small things as so many worshipers remaining after the 12:30 mass to sing God's praises as long as the musicians will play; or the fact that members of organizations will remain after meetings just to talk, relate and share with one another; or in remarks of visitors who see and feel the love, fellowship, friendship – whatever they happen to call it – in our parishioners.

Of course, IHM has always had selfless volunteers, as any parish does, and she has had her programs, plans and dreams from her first days as a parish, and I do not mean to denigrate any of those or the good people who labored in the vineyard then, but there seems to be a refreshing, open, prayerful - yes, Christian - atmosphere in our parish now. Organization and committee meetings begin and end with prayer; retreats, workshops and other faith-building programs are accepted and encouraged; commitments are made for a long-term sustained programs for spiritual growth; many different ministries among parishioners are sponsored to enhance the spirit of community - these include our religious education classes, this very newspaper, organizing to visit the elderly and sick, involvement with our parish school, the work of the whole pastoral team in Bible classes, convert classes, and prayer sessions, to name just a few. Making lists is risky, and

this partial list is submitted for you to take it from there and add many more that are just as important and stimulating to the spiritual advancement of our parish family.

So, that mustard seed, sown so long ago as a chapel-of-convenience, has indeed grown into a large shrub - but the growth I see at IHM is not so much one of size and number, but one of involvement, a spiritual growth in our people that can only be attributed to a yielding to God and His will and to the power of the Holy Spirit.

And for this, we echo our pastor, "PRAISE GOD!"

THE PARISH

A parish is more than geographical boundaries. It is something really quite intangible. Sure, there is the organized structure side of a parish...its operations. But isn't it something else? Yes.

A parish is a community of people. These people, although they live in particular area of a city, town or county have something special in common. That something in common is unity...hence community. But the community is bound together by Christ through professing the doctrine and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Many years ago the rigid boundaries of parishes did not exist. Priests were sent as missionaries to territories and rather than people coming to a central church location, they went to the people. The missionary reached out, as Christ to minister and serve. Mass might not have been as available as it is now, but when it was celebrated...it was celebrated.

As time went and people clustered in quantity in certain areas that need arose for priests to establish churches, places of worship for the easier access of the people.

Thus we now have a parish. But what does a parish do? We all have our notions, and ideas and concepts. We all see what is done by our priest, at least on Sundays. But a parish operates seven days, 24 hours each day.

A parish has several functions. To mention a few: proclaiming the Good News of salvation to those who have not heard it, to establish baptized in the faith, to offer the liturgy of praise and gratitude, to be a sign of God's kingdom on earth, to offer the service of the Gospel, to do works of the lord such as feed the hungry, visit the sick, forgive sinners, to foster and support a diversity of ministries, to offer appropriate Christian response to times of today, and most importantly to discern the desire of the Spirit in Church.

These functions of a parish perhaps are not complete, surely there are more. But a parish basically should minister, serve and see that the people with common unity of goal and purpose of the Word of God and the sacraments available.

FISH IN STAINED GLASS

The new church building completed in 1967 was designed with Southwestern style and tradition in mind. Incorporated into the church design were several appointments to the interior decor of the building.

The most noticeable are 16 stained glass windows on the sides of the church. The following article, "Splendor in Stained Glass" by Marilyn Watson appeared in a copy of New Mexico in August 1969.

Fish in the desert, organs in the sky. An incongruous pairing? Visit the new Immaculate Heart of Mary Church near Las Cruces.

The impressive window motif of a fish rises in stained glass splendor from the desert floor, with the jagged spires of the Organ Mountains in the far distance.

According to Andrea Bacigalupa, the Santa Fe artist responsible for the window design, the plan from the outset was to free the church of superfluous statues, pictures and the like. "The sacred appointments and essential furnishings were to provide all form and color within the interior," Bacigalupa says. "With this idea of a pure - not stark - interior, I decided that one place to put lots of exciting color was in the windows. The architect agreed.

Why a fish motif?

The fish symbol is one of the earliest known to Christianity, Bacigalupa explains. It comes from the initial letters - IXOYC - of the Greek words for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour." Early Christians used the fish symbol as a secret sign while seeking to avoid persecution.

"I liked the idea of this one simple symbol, rather than myriads of symbols or saints, for a contemporary church in the economical age. I thought too, of the miracle of the fish in the desert and of the church's location in arid country at the foot of the Organs."

Incidentally, some people never see the fish in the nave windows. "I like this," Bacigalupa remarks, "for I never wanted the fish to be overpowering, but rather only an element or form and color in the walls."

Sixteen windows, about 18 inches by 23 feet each, are divided eight to a side. The fish shapes are not always seen -- at least not at once -- because their designs stretch along the entire length of each wall.

Counteracting broken areas of unadorned plaster was achieved by strong use of linges. At the same time, Bacigalupa had the opportunity he desired "to create individual windows which, when viewed close up, presented mere abstract color rather than subject matter."

From conception to installation the windows took about two and one-half years. Louie Ewing of Santa Fe Church Art Studios, one of the Southwest's most experienced in his field, handled the faceted glass work. Bacigalupa assisted closely to see that the thousands of individual pieces and various sections conformed to the original design.

"We stumbled once, substituting an entire gold area - part of the fish - with green," Bacigalupa recalls. "it was not noticed until the windows were installed... and one of the fish appeared to have a bilious belly."

The section was removed and redone. The discarded window section is now on the Bacigalupa living room wall. "It stands very well on its own -- a blaze of abstract form and color."

As for the design of the edifice itself, architect Loren Mastin tells of some wavering over where to situate the sacristies, the rooms where sacred vestments and utensils are kept. It is conventional to put them adjacent to the sanctuary--that is, in the vicinity of the altar. But it was decided to put them off the narthex--the vestibule leading to the nave.

"This would allow a processional entry to the sanctuary down the center aisle with minimum awkwardness," Mastin explains. "Since parish members do not leave their seats until the recessional, it would allow the priest to be stationed in the narthex to greet parishioners as they leave Sunday morning Mass -- again with less awkwardness."

As for the over-all design, some have found it analogous to that of a Sunrise temple. Mastin calls it a contemporary adaptation of territorial style for which this area of New Mexico had historical precedence. Little thought was given to the exterior, he says, until the interior plan had been developed and improved.

"We wanted a simple plan that would function well for today's changing liturgy."

Mastin elaborates: "The building is designed from within to without. One does not dream up an exterior design and then try to fit an interior to it. Their interior fit an interior to it. Their interior dictates the exterior. Perhaps this is what Wright and Sullivan (world-famous architects) meant when they said form follows function."

Mastin further expounds his philosophy: "Also, I do not believe in copying any style. We can logically give recognition to a historical style which is regional, but I believe that it must be adapted to today's materials and methods of building."

Interestingly, this church began as an isolated little chapel-of-ease as recently as 1947. With population influx, it became a separate parish in 1953. Four years later, a new school was completed. A fund-raising drive in 1965 led to completion of the new church the following year.

Father Thomas O'Mahony envisions a kind of Catholic Peace Corps for his parish. He looks forward to a commitment by young Catholic men and women with college educations to devote one teaching year of their lives to the school--at low stipend--to provide a continuing Catholic education. Of inspirations to all in the parish -- and to visitors as well - are the fish in the desert, the organs in the sky.

Las Cruces -- Steeped in Catholic Tradition

The following copy is adapted from an article by Paul Taylor which appeared in the July 1976 issue of La Palabra.

The first missionary expedition through the Mesilla Valley was the Franciscans - Fray Augustin Rodriguez, Fray Juan de Santa Maria, and Fray Francisco Lopez. They were the first to follow the Rio Grande northward to the Indian pueblos. The expedition party perhaps did no more than to make an overnight camp in the valley. The friars mingled with the Manso Indians, the native population of the area.

Although seeming uneventful these padres blazed the trail that would ultimately become known as El Camino Real, the link between Mexico City and Santa Fe.

The Rodriguez expedition was the first of many by the zealous Franciscans. Fray Bernardino Beltran came southward down the Rio Grande Valley after an expedition commanded by Don Antonio de Espejo failed to bring aid to the missionaries. Fathers Rodriguez, Santa Maria and Lopez met with death in their efforts to Christianize.

In 1598 Don Juan de Oñate traveled northward through the Mesilla Valley to establish New Mexico's first permanent Spanish colony---first at San Juan de los Caballeros, then at San Gabriel, and finally at Santa Fe in 1610. With Oñate came eleven Franciscans including Fray Alonzo Martinez, Father President of New Mexico Franciscans.

Mass was perhaps celebrated on foothills overlooking the river or perhaps along the riverbank in a clearing among native vegetation.

Under Fray Alonzo the mission system was established, the bulwark of Christianity in an isolate colony of Spain. These missions were supplied with necessities brought from Mexico City on a slow caravan begun in 1609 by government contract. Father Francisco de Ayeta was Father Quartermaster on this mission train.

The Mesilla Valley, though a stopping place on the trail northward, was not permanently settled until the 1800's. In 1805 Don Juan Garcia Noriega settled in the Brazito area. He obtained the grant from Spain in 1823, then dying in 1825, the land was vacated a few years later.

The second settlement was Dona Ana in 1840, Las Cruces in 1849 and Mesilla in 1850. Coming of the railroad in 1881 the villages of Picacho, Tortugas, Santo Tomas, San Miguel, La Mesa, Chamberino, La Union, Anthony, Mesquite and Mesilla Park were developed.

Each of these villages settled by people of Spanish / Mexican heritage had the Church as a pivotal part in their life.

Deep traditions provided creative outlets in arts, music, and drama for the posadas, pastores, and alabados. Many of the spiritually motivated products of the people are highly treasured folk arts people preserve today.

In the early days of settlement priests traveled from El Paso del Norte, now Juarez, on their periodic visits to the colonies. Records from El Paso del Norte show Father Bernardino Hinojos performed a baptism in Dona Ana approximately February 2, 1851.

Records of St. Genevieve's begin in 1859 but it is known that a church existed in Las Cruces at least as early as June 1852.

Until 1858 churches of the Mesilla Valley were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Durango. In 1868 it became part of the Diocese of Tucson until the Diocese of El Paso was created in 1915.

A Ministry of Advice -- Parish Council

Key to the meaning of Parish Council is servant. By its very nature it is to be a servant, a servant to the people, to the pastor and associate, and to itself.

The structure of Immaculate Heart of Mary's Parish Council is primarily leadership and committees. The president chairs meetings while the nuts and bolts work is done in committees. Our Parish Council has committees of Administration, Finance, Family Life, Education, Social Concerns, Liturgy, Facilities, and Maintenance.

Parish Council meets monthly and opens its meetings to any parish member. It is at the meetings that parish members can give their thoughts and ideas on what should happen in the parish. Parish Council, after all, is an extension of the whole community. Some of its members are appointed, some elected and still others serve by virtue of the organization they represent.

The essential ministry of the council now is to give the pastor and associate suggestions on actions to be taken in operating the parish. Through its members the council body brings feelings of the people in the parish.

An Important Part of Growth -- Our Parish School

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish School is "Different Where It Counts"... firmly established in the teachings of Christ.

Students are encouraged to become the best person they were meant to be. They are provided with an environment to help them grow scholastically, emotionally, and socially as well as morally and spiritually. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish School was constructed in 1957 and open on September 3, of that year in its early days part of the building was used as the convent. Later the present convent was built.

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood staff the school in its beginning and do now. Growth has added personnel to the staff where now the school has three sisters and seven lay teachers. They also have two part-time physical education coaches, cafeteria workers, library workers and teacher aides.

The school offers grades pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. It is fully accredited by the state of New Mexico and El Paso Diocese. All required subjects are taught as well as a program of religious instruction emphasizing doctrine, liturgy and services.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR I.H.M.

Now that 25 years of ministry and service has passed... where does Immaculate Heart of Mary go from the present?

In just a few years our parish has grown to over 1300 families. Each of these families will have important roles in the future of the parish.

With the growth in families expected to get larger what with the area of the parish above Telshor and the new apartments built just a few blocks away our parish has to gear for such growth. Why, houses are being built with a rate faster than they can be sold. And business in the parish area is growing too. Soon another shopping center will be built just down Idaho.

Looking toward the future the following questions might be raised: What will happen if a new parish was formed around the Telshor area? How might this affect our revenue? How might such a revenue change directly or indirectly affect our programs?

With an increase in membership several areas of growth will be affected. They are the Physical plant, the Staff, Liturgies, Spiritual life, the Parish school and Religious education.

One topic often discussed is the parish hall. Should a new hall be built? Or should the present one be enlarged with extensive remodeling? If a new hall was built it might be located on the back corner of the church grounds or maybe even where the present hall is now.

Some members would like to see an automatic sprinkler system installed on the grounds and quality grass planted for better appearance. And some have even thought a ball diamond might be good for the school.

With more families coming to Mass on Sundays the parking lot could see expansion. On the drawing board now is a possibility of resurfacing the present lot with a seal-coat.

Physical plant condition / maintenance, of course, is always in the future concerns with growth in mind. Such projects as repainting the outside of the church and the school are perhaps in order. The carpeting in the church might need to be replaced.

With a growing community of faith new services from the office will also be developed. Under study now is the possibility of an in-house printing reproduction function. This might be a small offset press or a good quality dry copier. Another possibility could bring about the computerization of our parish census. This will give the pastoral team up-to-date family information, sacramental history, mailing list availability and analyzation of finances.

With growth in the parish community, CCD and our parish school will obviously be affected too. The school might need more audio-visual equipment, more staff and other new equipment. CCD might have to add additional paid staff persons, more supplies, volunteers and books.

Spiritually, the parish is just beginning; It is foreseeable that small Christian communities might be formed. Using neighborhoods as a geographical basis, small groups of families will be encouraged to gather together for Mass, social activities, prayer or Bible study.

Youth ministry needs will be expanded through CCD, prayer community and the school undoubtedly.

Liturgies are presently growing into being more responsive to those who attend particular Masses regularly. Father Sullivan hopes to see members of the parish community from those Mass communities become more involved in planning their worship.

Looking back to a June 1977 issue of La Palabra we see other items that might be required with added growth. Some from a list compiled by former pastor, Rev. Robert Getz, are: hiring a liturgy coordinator, providing training programs for parish leaders, a new car for the parish, greater evangelization (adult education especially), and perhaps mailing the bulletin.

But what happens in the next 25 years is up to you the present parish members and those yet to come. By being involved and committed to the parish community, an extension of your own family, the directions that Immaculate Heart of Mary take will be charted for the deeper love of Jesus.