

June 2005

ly. report - J. Funeiga

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Usually, in every parish, there is an end-of-the-year evaluation as to how well things have been going or not going, for that matter. It will be one full year since I arrived in Jamesville on June 29, 2004. June 29, 2005 falls on Wednesday of this week. The general rule of thumb is that a new pastor not make significant changes in his first year of tenure. For awhile it seemed that St. Mary's people thought I was making changes quickly but, looking back, it would be difficult to pinpoint what those changes were. Every priest has his own style and it is not right to so tie him to what has been happening that he cannot implement his own ideas. The one thing in life that we can be certain of is change. By and large, change is a good thing and the spice of life. It is time, now that a full year has intervened, to look at what is happening and to make some changes that need to be made. There is a window of three months, July, August, September, for a hard look at things so that things will be in the best of order when Father Andrew Baranski moves in. He will not be in a position to make any changes for a year and there simply is not a year to coast and drift. When the new church building, now under construction at Holy Cross in Dewitt, is completed, St. Mary's will become a mission of Holy Cross with Father Yeazel as its Administrator. We will be working closely with Father Yeazel over the next three months so that things will first be in good order when Father Baranski comes and in good order when a year is over and the status of St. Mary's will change. That is a change we can be certain of. It will be a good change and the best part of it is that St. Mary's will not be closed and that Masses will continue to be offered and programs will continue to take place. St. Mary's will not lose its own identity and that is something which is now assured whereas it was not assured before. Father John is not one to let grass grow under his feet and it seems pretty clear that a good plan has been worked out in the best interests of the people of St. Mary's Parish and of Holy Cross Parish as well. There will be some changes in anticipation of what will be unfolding and taking place. One of the changes is that our Mass schedule will be reduced to one Sunday Mass and one Saturday Mass. Our October count of Mass attendance has made very clear that we have almost 500 people attending weekend Masses. St. Mary's church building seats 240 people. That means at full capacity two Masses will provide for the number of worshippers, something we are very sure of as to numbers. With Father Baranski serving every day as the Bishop's Secretary at the Chancery Office, there will be need for office coverage to be reviewed and changed. Religious education programs today need to be kid-friendly, parent-friendly and teacher-friendly. It's pretty clear that some new directions will need to be taken at all levels, grammar school, middle school and high school, if this goal is to be reached. Parish Pantry operation needs to be looked at realistically so that parishioners become more and more the persons who supply what is given out to those in need who turn to us for help. Maintenance of both church and rectory as well as parish grounds needs to be addressed and changes will need to be made. This has been addressed at last Wednesday's Parish Pastoral Council meeting and there will be much collaborative thinking before any action is taken. The bottom line is this is that we can't leave things as they are. It would be unfair to Father Baranski to inherit problems that are sorely in need of resolution.