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SAULT AREA RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SERVICE PROGRAM



Person to Person  
Sharing Our Faith

Serving the Catholics of Sault Ste. Marie, Bay Mills, and Sugar Island

My dear friends and co-workers,

Spring has made its long awaited appearance and the school year is quickly winding to a close. The next two months, as you will see, hold promise of being important and busy for the Sault Area Catholic Community.

Next year, I shall be teaching in the Chicago area. This is a change I had planned to make last year but postponed because of the Task Force Study of the Religious Education program. While my heart is deeply rooted here among you, physically I am spent. In addition, I have served in Michigan for the last fifteen years (four in Detroit, eleven here) and for family reasons it is time to live nearer to home. I will be teaching fifth graders in one of our schools.

As many of you heard in church Sunday the Religious Education Task Force has finished their work and made their recommendations. Because it is important that fact, not rumor, permeate our decisions I am taking the liberty of reprinting that recommendation for you in total.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOO AREA RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TASK FORCE

April 5, 1984

The Religious Education Task Force recommends the following:

That each parish be totally responsible for its own Religious Education program and that each parish design its own program according to the needs and desires of its parishioners (this will allow parishes that so choose to implement family-centered programs).

- a. Each parish decides if it needs to hire full or part time religious education staff persons. Job description are written up by the parishes according to the type of program they each desire and are submitted to the current religious education staff and others who may seek these positions.
- b. Each parish would have its own Religious Education Board or Committee (there would be no need for an Area Board).
- c. Arrangements for the distribution of commonly owned property, equipment and materials would be worked out by all of the parishes presently involved in the area program.

Although the original request for permission to withdraw from the Sault Area Religious Education program came from only one parish (Nativity), the meetings of this task force revealed that a consensus exists among the pastoral leadership of Nativity, St. Isaac Jogues, St. Josephs and St. Marys parishes that this recommendation is in the best interests of all their parishes.

The pastoral leadership of Sacred Heart and Blessed Kateri felt that in light of the consensus among the above parishes they would support this decision even though they judge it not to be in the best interests of their parishes.

Several things will be happening before May 4 to insure that the final decision will be reflective of the total Catholic community. The Religious Education Board will study and discuss the recommendation after which they will vote to accept or reject the recommendation. Each parish council will be involved in a similar process. In most, if not all parishes, the parish community will be asked for their input at a meeting. Lastly, I, as the director will also respond. All responses will be sent to the Diocesan Board where after study and a meeting with representatives of the Task Force the board members will make their recommendations to Bishop Mark. Bishop Mark has the responsibility for the final decision regarding the future of the Sault Area Religious Education Program. This is a complicated process because the Diocese views the present program as an institution, similar to a consolidated school, and desires to safeguard the interest of all member parishes.

I am including some information to make it easier for you to make an informed decision. If you have questions or are not sure of possible implications I would urge you to ask questions before as well as during your parish meeting.

The total budget for this year is \$81,860. It includes salaries for a director and 4 coordinators, a full time secretary and janitor as well the expenses of teaching supplies, textbooks and busing.

Assessments paid by the parishes total \$70,000 and are divided as follows:

|                   |           |                      |          |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------|
| St. Marys -----   | \$25,130. | St. Josephs ---      | \$24,220 |
| Nativity -----    | 9,100.    | St. Isaac Jogues --- | 5,460    |
| Blessed Kateri -- | 2,240     | Sacred Heart -----   | 3,850    |

This rate is figured by a formula which takes into consideration parish assessable income and the number of envelope users in a parish. It allows little parishes to have the same chance at quality religious education as their larger counterparts.

#### FEATURES OF PRESENT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SERVICE PROGRAM

##### Educational Services

Adults: Bible study  
Peace Pastoral  
Teacher education  
Marquette Diocesan Pastoral Conference  
Adult handicapped sessions

Family: Family enrichment sessions  
Sacramental programs  
"Saints Hall of Fame"

High School: Regular classes  
Lenten program  
Deanery retreats  
Youth rally  
Fastathon  
Reverence for Life and Family program (every other year)  
Sacramental program (Confirmation)  
Opportunities for service and peer ministry  
Community building experiences

Junior High: Regular classes  
Social and liturgical experiences  
Youth rally  
Opportunities for service and peer ministry  
Progress reports

Elementary: Release and non-release time classes  
Special education classes  
Home study  
Sacramental program  
Mini-retreats  
Progress reports  
Haunted House  
Opportunities for peer ministry and service  
Consultative services to supplementary programs as needed.

##### Pastoral Services:

Secretarial service  
Baptismal and marriage preparation  
Conduct Wake service  
Ministry to prisoners  
Participation in Domestic Violence Center  
Involvement in hospice program  
Leadership role in prayer group  
Eucharistic Ministers to the homebound  
Lectors  
Outreach to Brinks, Provincial House and Long Term Care  
Parish team membership

##### Other:

Qualified coordinators  
Prepared and dedicated catechists  
Monthly staff meetings  
Regular pastoral team meetings to plan shared responsibilities  
Monthly Area Board of Religious Education meetings  
Participation in Diocesan and Deanery planning groups  
Regular evaluation of Director, Coordinators, Catechists and program  
Well equipped curriculum and general library  
Up-to-date audio-visual library and equipment  
Classrooms conducive for learning  
Use of Place Apart for retreats and classes  
Parish facilities available for use  
Convent available for winter parish Masses, retreats, classes and Board meetings.

Reflect, pray, and attend your parish meeting. Your pastoral people, board members, the staff and myself would be happy to try to answer any questions you might have.

Please, join our "family" in praying these words each day.

Lord Jesus,

The people we strive to serve are your people.

You know their needs, their pain, their aspirations.

Help us to see with your eyes, to hear with your ears, to love with your heart.

We place this Program in your hands,

Make of it what you would have it become.

Amen.

*My love and my prayers,  
Sister Marietta  
J.B.M.*