BELIEFS & Values

Vicariate addresses needs

The Vicariate of the Lakes is an example of strength in num-

Since 1969, the association has

Since 1869, the association has coordinated the programs, personnel and facilities of its 11 parishes to better serve Catholics in northwest Oakland County.
Today, the vicariate covers a geographic area from Prince of Peace in West Bloomfield to St. Anne in Ortonville. Population numbers of its parishes and religious schools are steadily on the rise.

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"It's not a super-parish," said Monsignor Robert Humitz, view of the Lakes Vicariate. "We look at our common problems and concerns and share resources, so that each parish doean't have to reinvent the wheel. . (Adam) Cardinal Maida has asked that vicariates begin to do their own pastoral planning, because the kind of the vicariates periodiens best."

The Lakes organization is one of five vicariates in Michigan, created following the second Vatican Council. The state was divided into regions by the Archicess of Detroit, each with its own vicariate.

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According to the Rev. Arnold Kosco at Prince of Peace, things were different then. Parishas were more independent. They belonged to the pastor, so to speak, he said. "Now we understand that the parish belongs to the people. The decisions made here are not one-man decisions."



Pastoral planner: Mon-

signor Robert Humitz explains his role as vicar in the Vicariate of the Lakes, an association of 11 parishes in northwest Oakland County.

Oakland County.

While banding together as an organization is seemingly full of advantages, one distinct disadvantages, one distinct disadvantage in the Lakes area is the distance between churches. "You can't get there from here." joked Patricia Allsteadt, director of religious education at Our Lady of the Lakes in Waterford. "If you live out in Warren, where the nearest church is two miles away, it's easy to do. We travel." Meetings are so difficult, agreed Humitz. "We try to bridge that through the use of communications. We have all sorts of means today that we didn't have before."

Those means include a vicariate neweletter, an electronic bulletin board, and e-mail. Although St. Daniel and Prince of Peace already have their own web sites, next year a viceriate web site will allow people to keep track of events at different churches and to register for religious education classes.

"People have needs right now," said Frieda Arpoika, in charge of communications at St. Daniel. "If they want to know about annulments, they don't want to know six months from now, they want to know now."

The vicariate is also preparing for a crisis of sorts: its tremendous population growth. Expanding congregations and long waiting lists for religious schools led Humitz to conduct a detailed demographic study of the area, projecting growth into the next century as part of his pastoral planning.

"We want to know, 'What will the impact of growth be on our facilities?" he said. "The parishes need to start dealing with this information."

More and more Catholics are moving into the Lakes area, said Kosco, but will meet with a decreasing number of priests. "In m 62, more or less the median age of a priest in the archdiocess of Detroit. We can retire at age 70, which means that in eight years, there could be half the priests there are today."

Humitz offered a similar forecast. "The priest-to-people ratio now is 1 to 5,000. By the year Those means include

Warking together: Patricia Allsteadt, director of religious education for Our Lady of the Lakes, and the Rev. Arnold Kosco of Prince of Peace coordinate the use of their churches' resources.

2010, it will be 1 to almost 10,000," he said. "Based on that, we need to respond to what our ministries must do."

There are many options open to the vicariate to deal with this problem. Humitz said they are considering building new churches and/or building andivines onto existing ones.

"There could be some decisions about training people for special kinds of ministries, maybe pro-

viding space in parishes for these people to operate or function," said Humitz. "Someone might be an executive secretary for vieuriates, things like that. Possibly a sharing of school support, financial support, facility support.

Although the vicariates have been around for some time, Humitz believes the system is finally coming into its own. Now it's got more teeth to it because

now we're making decisions about the future and how to copie with the growth," he said. "We're all working toward and aware of the same problems." The other churches of the Lakes vicarinte are St. Rita in Holly, Holy Spirit in Highland, St. Perpetua in Waterford, St. Mary in Milford, St. Patrick in White Lake, Our Lady of Refuge in Orchard Lake, and St. William in Walled Lake.

Let us strive to be people of good will – even after Christmas, too



come. We celebrate the comingof the eternal word made flesh,
who for us, and for our salvation, was born of the Virgin
Mary and not only came to us,
but became one of us. The
Word was made flesh, and
dwelt among us, the prelude
of the Gospel of John
announces. Orthodox and
Eastern Catholic Christians
enhance this celebration by

readers know what

winter-time enjoyment you have to offer!

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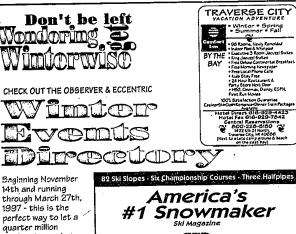
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world.

As we observe the feast of Christmas, we give witness to the incredible, saving love of the God of goodness and mercy, manifest over the centuries in His care for His human creatures. We celebrate the fidelity of this loving God to His ancient promises to send a savier to redeem humankind. We unite in wishing to all people the joy and hope that this celebration wankens anew within us — a hope which, when fulfilled, will help to make our world a better place to be.

I would like to focus today on the greeting of the angles to simple shepherds on that first Christmas. "Glory to God in highest heaven, and on earth peace to all on whom God's favor rests!" Other transla-

vance we too often overlook. For Christmas to be realized, what Christ came to bring
must be accepted in "good will"
— that is, with an appropriate
disposition and understanding.



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