

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

ST. ANTHONY PARISH WELCOMES HISPANICS INTO THE FOLD

Despite the language and cultural differences of its growing Hispanic congregation, the goal of St. Anthony Parish on the west side of Indianapolis is to be a single community that happens to be bilingual. This is the mission of Father John McCaslin, administrator.

“Our goal is to be a community—a parish with a real sense and spirit of oneness,” he said, adding that the parish hopes to achieve this goal with the help of proceeds from its *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign set to begin this spring. Father McCaslin added that many of his Hispanic parishioners want to become integrated, bringing their customs and traditions into the parish community to be shared by all.

Father McCaslin’s thoughts were echoed by Robert McCurdy, president of the St. Anthony Parish Council. “While in some cases there is a language barrier,” he said, “it is not insurmountable. We’re all sharing the same service, the same God, the same pastor and the same message. Non-verbal communication in the form of a nod or a smile or a handshake are helping this process.”

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Last month, Father McCaslin celebrated his first anniversary at St. Anthony, only his second assignment since being ordained in 2002. He also serves as administrator of Holy Trinity Parish in Indianapolis.

The growth in the Hispanic congregation at St. Anthony prompted the scheduling of a second Spanish Mass this past October. It is the only Spanish Mass in the city conducted on a Saturday evening, and it is a youth ministry service, mirroring the demographics of this growing segment of the parish. The 6 p.m. Mass will be a service where young people of the parish will serve in the various liturgical ministries such as lectors, cantors, ushers or eucharistic ministers.



The second Mass helps relieve the pressure on a church built in 1891 that has a seating capacity of only 750. More than half of St. Anthony’s 851 households are Hispanic with the number continuing to grow, Father McCaslin explained.

This growth is reflected at St. Anthony Catholic School, where the Hispanic enrollment has nearly doubled in the past year. This was due in large part to the school moving back to the parish grounds from a nearby neighborhood. “Being back inside the church community made a big difference,” said Principal Cynthia Greer. To help facilitate instruction where some language barriers exist, Greer explained that the school utilizes a Hispanic support person who works with teachers and students. Of the 86 students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, she said, 68 percent are Catholic.

Father Scott Nobbe, the archdiocesan liaison for Hispanic ministry, observed that St. Anthony is typical of other parishes with large concentrations of Hispanics. At

St. Anthony, he observed, Father McCaslin is making an effort to integrate the various communities and encourage them to work together.

Father Nobbe is seeing tremendous growth in the overall Hispanic population throughout the archdiocese. “About 50 to 60 percent are from Mexico,” he said, “with others from South America, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and other countries.”

While the archdiocese as a whole is experiencing growth in Hispanic populations, Father Nobbe explained, the largest concentrations are on the west side of Indianapolis as well as pockets in New Albany, Shelbyville and elsewhere. There are about 15 countries from around the world represented and nearly 20 percent of parish households are Hispanic.

“Most of the Hispanics across the archdiocese are very young, and there’s a lot of energy and growth,” Father Nobbe added.

How is the archdiocese responding to the needs of this growing population? Father Nobbe mentioned that it is promoting religious vocations and leadership of Hispanic ministries among members of this community to help them further assimilate into their new parishes. These programs are being implemented with the help of proceeds from the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign.

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and is designed to address the local and changing needs of parishes such as Hispanic outreach. By contributing to the Legacy for Our Mission campaign, you are helping your parish address its most urgent capital, operating and ministry needs as well as those of our larger archdiocesan church community.

Please visit the new online home of the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign. Our campaign Web site is www.archindy.org/legacy. It can also be accessed at www.LegacyforOurMission.org.