

Letter from the Pastor, Fr. Paul Auer

In the Church, as in the State, children representing the up-coming generation and future hope are a most important consideration. For this reason, the proposal was made to the parishioners of St. Mary's Parish some ten years ago (1958) to provide the best possible facility for the Catholic education of their children – A NEW SCHOOL. His Excellency, Archbishop Connolly had already authorized the purchase of 8 acres at the Hillcrest location two years previous (1956) and at a letter date of an additional three acres (1965). Total land costs were \$21,500.

With the more immediate prospect of school construction plus the inauguration of a tithing program in the parish (250 contributors) an average of \$30,000 including interest was added to the School Fund in each of the past 10 years. Thus the complete base bid for construction, \$300,000 was on hand in advance when the ground breaking took place in April 1967. "A small parish can afford any facility the people are willing to save for" was a frequently heard phrase during these years. It is apparent our conservative parishioners felt the same and were satisfied to save in advance for this capital improvement.

A tribute to the faith and generosity of our tithing parishioners is, of course, the present structure to be dedicated today by our own Bishop Gill. But a greater tribute, by far, were the ten years of confident hope that this day would come, shared alike by present parishioners as well as by many others whose business interests took them away from Anacortes before they could see the fruition of their efforts.

On each and all of these we invoke our heavenly Father's grace and blessing. All of these generous souls have elected to place God's works in their own planning and family budget. Children, as yet unborn, will use our new school. Their prayers of innocence will intercede for our benefactors down the years.

The present generation of St. Mary's parishioners are now asked to maintain and support the new school facility and its program for the education of our children. We are all grateful for the appointment of Sister Mary Roverte, B.V.M. as the first religious assigned to the parish to coordinate its catechetical program. Additional Sisters are in prospect in the next years to further the program of religious instruction and training.

Anacortes will grow and expand in the years to come. Our own confidence in this axiom is seen in the provision made for the addition of 8 more classrooms to the present structure. This can be seen graphically in the masterplan for the future which likewise provides for a convent, a new enlarged church and a rectory. Many of us will

not be among the people of God on earth when this plan is finally completed. But our concern seen in initiating its first phase will surely contribute to our eternal glory. So while we pause momentarily to admire what has been accomplished, we do not rest on our oars to drift with the tide, but we push on to new achievements in the years ahead.

Fr. Paul Auer