

SUN MESSENGER

2010

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CLEVELAND

Merged SE parish now Sacred Heart of Jesus

By Jeff Piorkowski

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SOUTH EUCLID — The merged parish created by combining St. Margaret Mary and St. Gregory the Great churches will be known as Sacred Heart of Jesus Church.

Announcements of the new name were made at each of the churches at weekend Masses. The two churches will come together in June at the site of St. Gregory the Great, 1545 S. Green Road.

St. Margaret Mary, 4217 Bluestone Road, no longer has an operating grade school, as does St. Gregory.

"There was a period of time when we took suggestions, asking parishioners of both parishes about possible names," said Mark Geyman.

Geyman is a member of the cluster committee that, for the past three years, worked on condensing from three to two the number of churches in the local cluster.

The third church in the cluster, Holy Rosary Church, 12021 Mayfield Road, Cleveland, will remain unchanged.

Geyman said each name submitted during the process had to have a rationale for its nomination.

"We came up with nine names from those suggestions," he said. From those, the number was whittled down by a vote of parishioners of both parishes to three names, and those three were submitted to Bishop Richard Lennon for a final decision.

Besides Sacred Heart of Jesus, other choices were Divine Mercy and St. Benedict.

The Rev. Richard Hudak, pastor of St. Margaret Mary the past 11 years, said in a written statement, "St. Margaret Mary Alacoque had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In addition, St. Gregory the Great Church has a beautiful altar dedicated to the sacred Heart of Jesus."

In that same release it is noted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus goes back to at least the 11th century and is often tied to the Five Wounds of Christ.

The worship site will remain at St. Gregory the Great.

"Once a church site is consecrated, that name may

never change," said six-year St. Gregory Pastor Rev. Dave Ireland. "The new parish name will be Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Lennon, in a letter, noted St. Gregory the Great School will be known as Sacred Heart of Jesus School.

Geyman said he voted for Sacred Heart of Jesus, stating, "That seemed to be the best choice."

The final Mass at St. Margaret Mary will be held June 12, and the final Mass at St. Gregory, the following day. Lennon is expected at both Masses.

Ireland said the first Mass of the merged church will be June 20. Guest celebrants are expected, but have not yet been identified.

Ireland said he and Hudak do not yet know their future assignments.

Dennis Fiorelli has been a parishioner the past 19 years at St. Gregory and before that, since 1963, a parishioner at St. Margaret Mary.

"I am very comfortable with the name," Fiorelli, a St. Gregory Parish Council member, said.

When asked about his thoughts on the merger, Fiorelli responded, via e-mail, "As we unite to form and welcome a new vibrant Sacred Heart of Jesus parish, let us remember and acknowledge with the most sincere gratitude those very special St. Margaret Mary and St. Gregory parishioners."

St. Gregory was founded in 1922, and St. Margaret Mary in 1944.