

St. Joseph Church

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There are times when we are pleased to belong to a group such as when the accomplishments of a few members are ascribed to all. I rejoiced at the announcement that three of our young people were elected to the Youth Advisory Council for the diocese or, when we strengthen our sense of unity by cooperating on a project, i.e. putting out new missalettes and music books. We realize more goals can be reached when we work as a team.

And then there are times when we suffer embarrassments because of the groups to which we belong. When accusations or suspicions are aimed at all members when one commits a crime it causes pain. I was feeling resentment against the pedophile priests in the midst of that scandal. The group suffers when feuds and fights occur because individuals put self interests before the community or when members seek glory for themselves and forsake the goals or principals of the group.

We belong to several communities at once. I will use the word community to mean a group of people identified by some common purpose and agreed-upon values, some examples are family, church, town, country. A community without a purpose or with divided purposes deteriorates. The community must teach its goals or lose them. Reminders that we are community are all around us and help to identify us as a group.

I am beginning a series of essays on the various communities to which we belong. Some have a common vocabulary (family and church); some do not. The church uses many family terms but has a unique name - the Mystical Body of Christ. In this series I will hopefully strengthen our identity as Catholics of twenty-first century Americans.

Msgr. James E. Mancini
Pastor