

Narrator: Reverend Eugene Faucher
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Interviewer: Yvonne Ryden
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INTRODUCTION

Reverend Eugene Faucher was the Pastor of St. Martha Parish for twelve years. In this interview, Father discusses the remodeling of the church and chapel as a result of Vatican II. He spoke of the annual Vineyard fund-raisers and the pledges that replaced them. He mentions the influx of Filipinos into the parish, declining enrollment and his concern for the involvement of lay people in the ministry of the church.

EF: Reverend Eugene Faucher

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Yvonne Ryden

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: Good morning. This is Yvonne Ryden. I'm in the rectory of St. Martha's Parish Church, and I'm preparing to interview Father Eugene Faucher. Father Faucher, would you like to begin with a little bit about your family heritage?

EF: All right. My grandparents both came from the Chicagoland area, with the exception of my dad's father, who was born in Quebec. My dad's name was Edward; my mother, Florence Gorman -- they both were born in Chicago also. I was born on the West Side of Chicago in St. Anne's Hospital in 1925 -- and I was raised in St. Angela Parish on Chicago's West Side in the Austin area. I attended Quigley Seminary from 1939 to 1944, and then went on to St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein and was ordained on May 3, 1951.

Of my family, I had one brother, Ed. Ed died quite suddenly on February 7th of 1986. I had two sisters, Sister Rita, a year younger than I, was a Sister of Providence for many years. Rita was killed in an auto accident in 1981. My remaining sister, Jane, younger than I, is Mrs. William Ryan. She now lives with her husband in Willowbrook, their family of five having been raised.

I gained post-graduate degrees in classical languages and in religious education at Loyola University during the ten years when I was teaching at Quigley Seminary. My parish assignments were St. Mark parish on the Northwest Side of Chicago. I was there from 1951 to 1955. And then I was asked to teach at Quigley Seminary at our minor or high school seminary. I taught there from 1955

to 1967. And then I went on to be an assistant pastor or associate pastor at St. Colette's in Rolling Meadows, and I was there from '67 to '73. Then I was assigned at St. Bernardine parish in Forest Park, and I was there from '73 to '75. And then in January of 1976, I was appointed pastor of St. Martha's, and I've been there these past twelve years.

The next question concerned life at St. Martha's. I could begin by saying that Father Dever here initiated the involvement of people in parish life. Father Bill was my predecessor here. He has established a school board, a parents' association, a finance committee, and a liturgy committee. And there was more involvement of people in the planning and the executing of the twelve Vineyards, and I was delighted to see that such involvement was underway and I have readily encouraged that throughout the twelve years I've been here as well as other efforts to have the people more involved in parish life.

Q: Would you go back and explain a little bit what the Vineyards are?

EF: All right. The Vineyards were the perhaps most successful fund raisers the parishioners have had. They would involve the use of our big auditorium, our smaller hall called the Pine Room, and then the classrooms of the school building as well. There would be show rooms set up in which the people put on plays or acts or whatever. They might be in those show rooms. There would also be a restaurant and a casino as a part of each Vineyard, and we would employ professional talent in the big auditorium in the main room. And the Vineyards over the years made anywhere from thirty to forty-six thousand dollars for continuing the parish and keeping us in the black.

As of about thirty years ago. The people who were the key leaders of the Vineyard shows just became kind of tired of doing it year after year, so we had a town meeting -- a meeting of as many people as wanted to come -- to ask what we should do in replacing the Vineyard. And it was determined that we would have a parish pledge, asking for a hundred dollars over six months. And that turned out to meet the needs of the parish. We've had the pledge for three years now, and it's been successful in raising about forty thousand each of those three years, which was about what we expected from the Vineyards. What we missed in not having the Vineyards was the development of community by bringing people together to both put the Vineyards on and bring that much entertainment to all of the people who came, not only from the parish, but....

Q: I know the people came from quite a distance to St. Martha's.

EF: They did, yes. I think people would talk about it at work or they would bring their families and relatives and friends from hither and yon. We had the Vineyard for a number of years in January, which meant that often we were contesting with pretty bad weather as well. I remember when we changed it to November, the anticipation was that now that we were in milder weather, more people would come, but the numbers did not increase. And that, in fact, was another factor considered in dropping the Vineyard -- not only the less enthusiasm on the part of the people who did the yeoman work of the Vineyard, but we felt as well that the kind of entertainment was diminishing in its attractiveness to people. They were going elsewhere for entertainment or they had seen this often enough...

Q: That it wasn't novel and so they were....

EF: They were less inclined to come, at least in the same numbers that had come before, so that was still another consideration in ...

Q: So the pledge system has worked as well at generating income?

EF: These three years. The thought was that it might taper off, but, on the contrary, it's held even. And this, in fact, is the fourth year we're in now, and it seems that this year it's also going to meet the...

Q: That the pledges will meet the need.

EF: That they still are holding. That's the good news.

I think the chief physical changes that I've made here have been in the renovations of the two churches. We have at St. Martha's a small church and then the auditorium chapel, our multipurpose building that was originally constructed in 1960. In the small church -- I think it was the second year that I was here, so that would be ten, eleven years ago -- we did some renovating there. It was initiated by a practical need. The plaster over the sanctuary in the ceiling was coming loose. In fact, right over where the priest sat (laughter), so it seemed that it was a good idea to patch that up.

And while we had to fix that, I thought that would be good time to simplify more the altar setting. There were paintings and a number of statues, a communion rail, two side altars that really were no longer functional in the light of the new liturgy, where the focus was to be much more on the altar where we celebrated

the Mass. And with all of this other paraphernalia in the sanctuary, it seemed to me the focus was dispersed all over the place rather than being...

Q: It was more a distraction than centering on the altar.

EF: That's what I felt was the case.

Q: Now this was the original St. Martha's Church -- a small church that had been built?

EF: This was built in 1923, and this was the original. So part of the renovation then involved much work by the people themselves. Rather than just bringing in outside professionals, we had some professional tradesmen in the parish who did much of the work of the renovation of the small church. We put paneling along the side walls, recarpeted the side aisles and the sanctuary, and then as I mentioned before, took out the side altars, some of the extra statures and paintings and the communion rail, which no longer served a purpose in light of the new liturgy.

And I think the result was a simplification that makes it even more a very beautiful church. I think many people who come to St. Martha's for funerals and weddings or for baptisms -- that is, people who aren't generally coming here -- always find the small church a very attractive and prayer-centered kind of church. It really is, as it was when it was built, of course, a small-town church, because Morton Grove was a small town at the time. But I think it's got a special kind of beauty. Perhaps what's most unique about it are the beams in

the ceiling, but the rest of it now, I think, is a very warm and prayer-conducive kind of building that we have right now.

The renovation in the auditorium chapel was also done in the light of the teaching on liturgy from the Second Vatican Council. And that took place three years ago -- three or four. We met with a committee of people for about a year before we began the work itself.

Q: And these people actually gave input, or these people talked about how the work would be done? What was their role in meeting?

EF: Their input was to, first of all, read the booklet from the bishops on church environment, on what church environment in the light of Vatican II ought to be. So that was their education toward giving us input. And then from then on, it was a determination of how that could be implemented in the setting that we had in the auditorium chapel. The original setting had the altar up on a stage and all of the people through the large rectangular building facing the altar. And that's, when it was built in 1960, that's the direction in which buildings -- most of our church buildings -- were constructed. But Vatican II presents a different picture of what liturgy ought to be and thus what the setting ought to be. And it's not as if we're an assemble of people looking forward to a raised, elevated place where liturgy...

Q: Like a stage, really.

EF: Almost like a stage. And that was pretty much the setting. The new understanding is rather a family of people gathered around a table celebrating

that they are a family. And with that in mind, we moved the altar from the stage, put it along the north wall -- one of the longer walls of the rectangular building -- and grouped the chairs around this table. So now the people, even the people in the back rows, are far closer to where the action is, where the Eucharist is being celebrated.

And that, as I say, encountered a number of difficulties because when a building is built, the architect has in mind the flow or direction or purpose of the building. And so when we did what we did, we really were changing in this structure -- parts of which had to be left be, like the walls and the ceiling (laughter) -- that we had to change the functional direction of the building, and that...

Q: That sounds like a difficult task.

EF: Well, it was difficult and it was costly, too. But I feel it was worth it because the purpose that it achieved was a setting for prayer, which is for us as a community of faith people, the most important thing we do all week as a parish. So it seemed to me it was a most worthwhile investment to make that more possible -- that we would pray as we ought to pray. Now I think the setting speaks of what our liturgy is -- a group of people gathered around this table to do what in our belief is the most important thing we do all week as a people, as a parish.

Then apart from physical changes -- I think those two would be the two most significant physical changes I've been a part of -- the last two years the parish staff and a group of people forming a steering committee have been meeting to form -- or that we might ultimately form--a council of parish ministries. Now we're still in this process, but a good deal of the process has been achieved.

Part if it was this committee working with the staff, formulating a parish questionnaire. And that was accomplished this last summer and mailed out to all the people on the parish mailing list. And then this same committee has looked at the returns from this parish questionnaire and drawn up a summary of them. And the summary has involved both observations of how the people see the parish and suggestions -- not suggestions, I should say, but what term did they use? (pauses) Well, ideas that were given to the staff of what should be done -- recommendations that were given to the staff, given that this is the input from the parishioners, these are the recommendations gathered from this survey of what should be done to make St. Martha's a better place, a better parish.

Q: Did you have a good return on this questionnaire?

EF: The return in the questionnaire was approximately, it was about 465 returns, and we had sent out about three thousand. Now again, we had sent it out to the...

Q: Now were these three thousand family names or three thousand individuals?

EF: Three thousand individuals. There are approximately fourteen hundred names on the parish mailing list. So we figured that, and we sent several to each home.

Q: So that if there was a disagreement or some diversity of thought, then each one could answer.

EF: Each, both husband and wife, would have one, or an older person in the family. They could all respond. And then we indicated, too, if you required more than

two, you could get one from the rectory, so they could be available for those who wanted more. But I think while 460 out of three thousand is a small percentage, there's several ways of looking at it. One is that of that fourteen hundred, maybe about five hundred families are regular church attenders. So it's not necessarily true that those who aren't regular attenders would answer the questionnaire, but it does seem more likely that those who are regular Mass goers would be the ones who would have an opinion about the renovation, or would have an opinion about something else that is going on or is not going on at the parish. Or it's possible, if not probable, that those who aren't regular goers really wouldn't have much interest in going through a multi-page questionnaire.

Q: Now you mentioned that some of these are parish ministries that have been started or are in the process of being originated. What are some of the ideas, so I could understand what you mean by parish ministries?

EF: All right. One of the things that the people asked more about -- well, first of all, there were some things that they thought were going well. So they thought that the liturgy, the way the liturgy celebrated the music at our Masses, the quality of the homilies -- all of those got good marks. There was good acceptance there. There seemed to be among the people a good spirit about the parish. They were glad to be part of St. Martha's. There seemed to be a good percentage of people that felt good about that, about the spirit of the parish, about the possibilities of communication, about the presence of the pastor and the priests and the staff people -- again that seemed to get good marks. The parish school seemed to be very well received by those who had or have had children in the school. So the school got good ratings.

The needs that the people cited -- very many of them concerned teens and young people. They felt that we had nothing in our ministries toward serving young people and involving them in parish life, or providing either recreational or educational services of one kind or another for them.

Q: Now I found that interesting, because when I was reading about St. Martha's, I thought there had been a group that you had begun -- perhaps not you -- that had been for youth, teenagers who were not in a parochial school.

EF: We have had that. In my time here, there has been an effort at religious program for high school kids. That ran for a couple of years, and then, despite the efforts of the people running the program, we couldn't get the kids to attend.

Q: So in other words, people feel this should, something like this, should be reinitiated.

EF: That's correct. They should make some new efforts to try to find them wherever they are both social, recreational, and in terms of their religious education as well.

Q: I see. All right. Would you like to continue then? I interrupted you with this.

EF: No. That's fine. Where was I?

Q: You were talking about the results of the questionnaire and some of the things that, that...

EF: I was going to say that the questionnaire in a way seemed to go in two directions on the question of communication. We really weren't sure how to interpret that. But one of the recommendations was that we should continue to research ways to communicate to the people more consistently and more efficaciously. We felt as a staff that through the parish bulletin, through parish mailings, through what comes from the school and our religious ed program -- the program for children in public school, grade school children that come on Monday evenings for class -- we felt that through those programs, there's an effort to communicate to the people as much as we can.

But there seemed to be an expression in the questionnaire that there should be more effective communication. We felt, again, that that could be interpreted in several ways. Some people seemed to indicate that decisions were made without their being consulted, and that's what they meant, we felt, by not having good communication -- that suddenly there was a pronouncement that this was going to be done or that was going to be done, this program was going to be started or so on -- and that they hadn't had a chance for input, either to endorse that or to say, "We don't really need that." So that was one element of communication that some people indicated they thought could be enhanced, could be improved upon.

And others, we felt, whether it was in the bulletin, the Sunday bulletin, or had come from the school, that it still wasn't reaching them. For example, if they weren't at Mass that Sunday because they were out of town or for whatever reason, there had to be more consistently efficacious ways to get the word out.

Q: Is there a parish newsletter that would reach those who aren't regular attendants?

EF: The only thing we would have in parish mailings would be occasional mailings, but it wouldn't be a regular monthly newsletter, which again might be something that would be developed on the heels of this asking for more communication.

Otherwise, our parish mailings would be a mailing usually before Easter to give the schedule for Holy Week and the Easter Masses, a mailing for the week before Christmas, again with the same purpose of the schedules for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and for the Christmas Masses. But otherwise, the mailings would have to do with a specific fund raiser or some larger parish activity that would call for getting the word out to all the people in the parish and just those who come regularly.

For those who come regularly, we have the Newsette, or the parish bulletin, which, of course, would fill them in on what's being done this coming week, this coming month, in parish life. And then, of course, the announcements at the Masses sometimes might just repeat what's in the Newsette or highlight it, draw the people's attention to it all the more.

Q: Sometimes reaching them both ways...

EF: Is most effective, yes, to get through the eyes and the ears. (laughter)

(pauses) And the hope, the final hope, of this steering committee that I have spoken of that put together the questionnaire and then kind of drew together all the information from the questionnaire and then got it out to the people -- the on-going work of that committee would be to formulate, and that still has to be determined, this council of parish ministries, which would be like a parish council as it's sometimes called in other parishes. And they would be the people who would be the on-going avenue of communication, both drawing from the

people what they see the needs are and then finding out in some ways how those needs can be met, how programs can be put together that will continue to make St. Martha's a good and a viable parish. And that still remains to be done, but I think what it has already begun could be maybe one of the most important works in our parish life for the church of the future.

Another development, and I think Father Quinn who came here last March has been most effective in accomplishing this, another development both in St. Martha's and in parishes throughout the nation has been the possibility of Martha's being a one-priest rather than a two-priest parish. Now right now, and throughout my time here, we've had at least two priests active in parish work. At the present time, we have three but one is a resident who teaches at Quigley, so his full-time work is at the seminary. And now Father Quinn and myself are the two priests active in the parish life itself. But when I am transferred from here, which might take place in January because my twelve years here are concluding at the end of next month, it is not necessarily so that we will be given an associate to work with the new pastor, and ...

Q: Would Father Quinn leave at that time -- no, he might stay on. I don't understand.

EF: All right. Well, at the present time we're kind of in betwixt and between. My twelve years are up, and according to diocesan policy now, I'm to move on to be a pastor at another parish. And that means that there will be a new pastor coming here.

Q: Who would be considered the chief or head pastor and Father Quinn may or may not be his assistant?

EF: Well, Father Quinn might be my successor here. He's ordained close to 25 years now, so he would be old enough, experienced enough, and I think certainly qualified enough. But in the process now of becoming a pastor, when a parish is put on open listing for a pastor, then those priests who wish apply to the personnel board of the diocese. And they consider the names of those who apply, choose three of them, and send those names to the cardinal, and then the cardinal picks the one whom he wishes to be the pastor of the parish.

So Father Quinn, as I say, would be a very well qualified successor to me, but he must go through this process just as I am in the midst of that toward becoming pastor at another parish. But let's say it would be Father Quinn who was chosen to be pastor here, that's what I meant -- it's not that certain that there would be an assistant because there are simply fewer priests engaged in parish work in the diocese.

Q: And one priest could handle St. Martha's at the size it is now?

EF: Well, I was saying that could be one on the new developments of the parish and Father Quinn has already been working in some of that. The newer development means gaining some of the people of the parish to do the work that heretofore had been done by the priest.

Father Quinn, for example, has developed two programs. One is a pre-baptism instruction program and he's lined up eight or ten couples who are doing this work and have been for the last four months now, I think it is. Now prior to the

establishment of these couples and the training of these couples as this program, the priest who did the baptizing would do the pre-baptism instruction. And the way we would do it is take the four or five couples whose babies are being baptized later this month or early next month, and then I or the priest who was doing the baptizing would arrange and visit with them at their homes. And then we, at their homes, would give them a booklet about baptism and talk with them about the responsibilities of having a child baptized, deal with whatever questions they might have about baptism and so on. Now instead of the priest doing that now, these couples give this instruction in one of their homes to couples or together as the teachers or the presenters of the new program. And then the four or five couples whose children are being baptized the following month, they are called and invited to come to the home of one of these teacher couples for the pre-baptism instruction.

Q: So this is something a priest does not have to do?

EF: No. In other parishes such programs have been established.

Q: It would be another way of involving the lay people in the service of the church.

EF: It would involve the people and it would free the priest, whose time already might be cut short because he's short handed. He's the only one rather than what we had in former days -- two or three priests doing that work. And also the idea is really very much in keeping with the teaching of Vatican II, or I should say the emphasis of the Second Vatican Council, that the parish is the people.

And so it's fitting that they share in this teaching ministry as they do now in this new baptism program.

And then Father Quinn also organized some couples in a pre-marriage program. Now again before, we as parish priests didn't do this. There is in the parish the Pre-Cana Program and also the Discovery Weekend, which are two diocesan programs that heretofore we would send couples to -- give them the brochures with the schedules and so on, and then they would go to one or other of the diocesan programs and that would suffice for their marriage preparation.

Now, if a couple comes to arrange for a marriage, we encourage one of three programs. The first one we encourage them to go to is our parish program, and some couples in the parish have been trained by people from the downtown Office of Marriage and Family. They've been trained, and they invite the engaged couples to their homes for four meetings on a weekday evening, four successive Tuesdays of a given month. And then that would be the pre-marriage instruction for those couples. We encourage that primarily. Otherwise, we encourage them to go to the Discovery Weekend, which is a full weekend of marriage preparation that stresses particularly communication.

Q: Is that like a retreat in some area?

EF: It's something like a retreat in that they go away from home and stay overnight at a place like Villa Redeemer or some place that is a retreat center. But it's really different from a retreat in that it stresses more a style of communication between the fiancée...

Q: With each other?

EF: With each other, yes. So the dynamic is mostly the encouragement of communication rather than all of the couples just listening to lectures. There are presentations given by the couples who give the Discovery Weekend, but that having been done, then they're given questions -- questions that usually deal with their feelings. How do you feel about your being almost forced to come to this weekend or something like that. And then the couple, each of the couple, is to write out his and her answers to these questions, and then they share with each other and then they talk about what each of them has expressed on paper. So it's really a different technique of expression or communication, and as they're at it through the weekend, their skills at this technique develop and, of course, the intensity of the weekend helps that to occur as well. So it's really a marvelous experience for a couple.

And then the third program is the Pre-Cana conference, which could be a Saturday evening and a full Sunday afternoon, again at some center where a priest in the Pre-Cana program and a couple or two couples make presentations. But there, too, they try to involve the young people, the engaged people, in some kind of exercises themselves.

Q: Thank you very much. Would you like to continue?

EF: All right. Let me just mention one other element of ministering the parish that again with Father Quinn and with our Deacon, Art Metallo, has been developed more, and that's our Ministers of Care program. These are people trained by our deacon, by Art Metallo, to work with and visit people who are shut-in, people who are homebound. They bring them Communion and then visit with them for a while. Might take care of other needs that these people have if they're equipped to do

that. And then some of these same Ministers of Care once a week on Saturday morning go over to Skokie Meadows Nursing Home and visit the people there, the Catholic people there and bring them the Eucharist as well.

So these programs have been developed, well even before Father Quinn came, but Jack together with Art, with Art Metallo, has developed them more fully and more consistently. And they, of course, will be on-going and continuing to minister to the parish.

Part of that same ministry has been another group of people who provide as much as they can information about substance abuse through leaflets and pamphlets that they put in our book rack in the vestibule of the auditorium and through programs, through speakers that they've brought, that are open to anybody in the parish concerned with abuse of one kind or another and how that can be dealt with, how we can find help. Not from these people, but they're the ones with some background now that can guide people in need to places or to people who can help...

Q: Who direct them to social service agencies?

EF: That's correct. Agencies or individuals who can provide help for them. And then some of our people themselves are able to at least provide some initial listening and help, but then they're not professionals. They would have to steer them to the ones who are more qualified to resolve their problems as much as possible.

Another development in the time I've been here at the parish is an increase in --not only the Morton Grove area; it's throughout this whole vicinity, but we witness it here in the parish -- an increase of the Filipino population in the parish. We see that in the school for at least, let's say at the present time I

think there are 40 or 45 out of 215 children are Filipino. So that's a sizeable percentage. And then we've had other Filipino children, of course, already go through the school and graduate. Our hope is that the Filipino population as well as any other ethnic population would be more and more incorporated into parish life. And I think we see that already with the Filipinos. Last year they ran a dinner-dance completely put together by themselves and it was most successful.

Q: That was for the whole parish?

EF: It was for the whole parish, and I was happy to see that many others responded to this open invitation to the parish -- many others who were not Filipinos.

And all enjoyed it. It was something that -- it was very successful not only as a fundraiser but as a social event. It was a delightful evening, and we would hope that they would continue to be involved more and more in parish life. Now we have had through the years of the Filipino presence in the parish, and do have now, Filipinos who are on the school board, who are on the parents' association, who are ministers of communion. So they are gradually becoming more and more identified and involved with parish life, but it seems that's something the leadership in the parish has to continually be after -- that they might become more and more what other people have already become, active members of the parish and more and more present in parish activities.

I had mentioned already that the parish questionnaire gave high marks to the liturgy, but I continue to see that -- the way we pray together, and I mentioned this when we talked about the renovation. As a faith community, our liturgy is our number one activity, so I'm delighted that right now that is going so well.

But I think again that's something we have to continually try to improve -- that the people might share in the liturgy with more and more understanding and more and more spirit and become more and more a part of it. Because if we're not about that, then we have no purpose in being a group of people who claim to have allegiance to God and to serve Him as we've been enlightened to serve Him.

Q: Is this an appropriate time to ask if St. Martha's has altar girls? Would that be all right?

EF: Yes that would be all right to ask, sure.

Q: At this point?

EF: Okay. (laughter) That's, in a way, I think, one of those issues that has...

Q: Had publicity.

EF: Had publicity (laughs) so in a way it's We do have altar girls and have had, I believe, it's been about two or three years now. The reason that we went ahead and had them was that the, Rome's reason for not allowing then has this as its reasoning. The servers at Mass technically are called acolytes. And in the steps that are taken toward priesthood, there are four minor orders, one of which is acolyte, or the one who serves at Mass, brings the cruets up to the altar. Now as I say before minor orders are seen as the steps one takes toward

priesthood. Now, since at the present time, Rome does not allow women to be ordained, they forbid women to take these steps toward the priesthood. And so that's very logical -- the prohibition from women serving at Mass.

But in the practical order in the American church, servers or becoming a server even for a boy does not mean that he has in mind that some day he's going to be a priest, and this is a necessary step toward it. And that never has been the case. And, of course, in practical history (laughs), thousands and thousands of young boys have served Mass for several years in grammar school -- maybe some have gone on to serve Mass in high school -- and the vast majority of them have never thought of becoming priests and never have become priests.

And so in the practical order, to be a Mass server is not to take a step toward priesthood. And so I guess we feel that we are not violating the spirit of the church law in having girls as servers. And the illogic of forbidding them to be servers is all the more clear from other church practice. That is, women are allowed by Rome to be readers at Mass, to read the word of God. They're allowed to be Ministers of Communion, which are far more significant roles than the role that the server has. So it doesn't seem to make sense that they can be allowed to have these more purposeful roles and are not allowed to have a minor role which is a Mass server. So we've done it. I thought at first when we began that there would be some ruffles and some complaints from the people. On the contrary, if there were any, I didn't hear them.

Q: And so the idea was accepted by the parish and by the . . . ?

EF: I thought it was accepted quite readily. A couple people asked about it because they had seen in the paper that it was forbidden by Rome and that Cardinal

Bernardin agreed with the prohibition from Rome. And to these people I tried to explain as I just did that it seems the law doesn't fit our situation.

Q: So you had the right, then, to allow girls to act as servers even though it is frowned upon or was it absolutely forbidden?

EF: Well, I would say this. If the cardinal wrote to me and said, "I forbid you to have girls as servers," in obedience I would have to respond to that. But I think that if a law is given to us that doesn't seem to be within reason or our situation doesn't seem to be the situation the law is dealing with, then I feel we can do otherwise than the law states.

Q: All right. Thank you. Father Faucher, on the outline I gave you, I mentioned the V.I.P., the man of the year award. Would you talk about that for me?

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

EF: . . . (conversation joined in progress) . . . be concerned for the community and give ourselves to the good of the community as generously as we can, so it just seemed that from that point of view, they should have found someone who has other work or other direction in his life and yet at the same time finds time to

volunteer, to serve the community in many ways, as the other V.I.P.s have. But at the same time, it was a very (pauses) flattering choice that they made. And then to be made at the same time a member of the Morton Grove Historical Society, which was an honor given together with that, was again very flattering. And I'm not sure of my worthiness in either event, but (laughs) for whatever . . .

Q: There must have been several other awards. I know the other night at the V.I.P. dinner the man being honored was presented with plaques and I imagine the same thing happened the year that you were named V.I.P.

EF: There were at ours as well, yes. Maybe at this time I could speak a little about Conway Ramseyer.¹ I felt then in a way he had served the community far more than any of the rest of us, not only in time but in the way he was a minister here in Morton Grove.

I've really admired Conway since I've met him in coming here. We first became involved together as he called me to help plan with other ministers and with the rabbi the Thanksgiving Day Interfaith Service. And Conway, until he fell ill, was usually the man who would do the organizing of this in his customary humorous and very expressive way. And I felt that, in a way, of the five of us who were so honored in '83, he was the one who merited it most of all. And the rest of us, perhaps, by way of rebound were granted the award with him.

I really feel it's a sadness for the whole community that Conway had been silenced by his stroke, because not only was he an eloquent preacher, but just such a genial and humorous and will-rounded person. Just a delightful,

¹ Conway Ramseyer was pastor of Morton Grove Community Church from May, 1965 to February, 1958.

delightful man. I think maybe the one thing I have done in the community is shared with the others that Thanksgiving Day or now Thanksgiving Eve Interfaith Service. And I would hope that would be continued.

Right now we're at the point where there is new leadership throughout all the churches -- St. Luke's and Conway's church still working with interim pastors, but I hope will have permanent ones shortly, and then Ed Feldheim at the Northwest Suburban Jewish Congregation just one year into the post. Now Rabbi Feldheim is very enthusiastic about the service, and I trust both my successor and the other new ministers will be. Because I think it's our one opportunity to pray together as a community, and on Thanksgiving Day if we're not motivated to pray then, we never will (chuckles) So, it has been a service, too, that has drawn a goodly number of people, at least in these twelve years I've witnessed it, and I would hope that that would certainly continue.

One of the questions you had asked about was my opinion of the famous Morton Grove handgun ban. And I couldn't applaud it more. I realize that it's a very multi-faceted law...(pauses)... and a very sensitive as well that can raise hackles as few other issues can. But it seems to me the spirit of the law that seeks solutions by more reasonable methods rather than violence is so right.

I think as well -- at least from what I have read -- that our statistics, not just in Morton Grove, of course, but nationwide, our statistics on intentional and accidental handgun deaths is so alarming. And compared with countries that have more restrictions on the ownership of handguns, our statistics are so alarmingly tragic that it seems we've got to find another way to resolve our differences. In a way, I think many Americans' approach to handguns is like our national government's approach to armament. And again, that's another issue, but one in

which I think we just are moving toward annihilation if we don't find another way not only to keep peace in communities such as Morton Grove, but to keep peace among the family of nations. So I, I couldn't endorse it more, more strongly.

Q: Speaking of changes in the school, ad you mentioned -- going back a little bit -- you mentioned the increased Filipino enrollment, how has the number of boys and girls in your school changed? Or have, maybe it hadn't changed?

EF: When I came twelve years ago, the enrollment of the school was about 252. And at that time, we had just grade one through eight. Now we have also a preschool, which is a half-day school called the Little School, and a kindergarten, which is another half-day -- so the same teacher teaches both sets of children -- together with grades one through eight. Even with the addition of the preschool and the Little School, our total enrollment now is about 215.

So we've gone from 252 with eight grades to 215 with equivalently ten grades. So there has been a diminishing. Of course, the tuition has increased through the years. But it seems to me at the present time, both the parents with children in the school and the other rest of the parish at large are very much for the continuing of St. Martha's School. I think we have been blessed both in Jerry Robinson, who was here when I came, and in Sister Madeleva (Sr. Mary Madeleva, RSM), who's been here the last then years -- excellent leadership. Both of them just wonderful administrators and I think that together with a good faulty throughout all of this time I've been here has made for an excellent school and I trust that will continue.

One other change that is going to take place is that recently Sister Madeleva announced that this would be her last year here. So one of the efforts of the

school board now together with the pastor, and that would be my successor, would be to search for a replacement for Sister Madeleva, which of course, will be a very important decision to be made by the search committee together with the pastor.

Q: So she is not assigned by the archdiocese? She's hired?

EF: It comes to that, that's right. And she would be hired by the pastor of the parish though in the process he is to work with members of the school board and a representative from the faculty who form the search committee.

Q: So a lay person could also be hired?

EF: That's correct.

Q: What's the percentage of religious nuns to lay teachers right now in your school?

EF: In the school now, Sister Madeleva, who's a Sister of Mercy, is the only religious, and all of the teachers are lay teachers. And in our religious ed program, Sister Mary Ann, who heads it up as a Sister of the Living Word, but all of her volunteer teachers, of course, are parishioners or others who are lay people.

Q: So she is not an assigned teacher at the school? She comes just to do the . . . ?

EF: Sister Mary Ann is in charge of the religious program both in the C.C.D. and in the school, and so she does some work with our teachers in the parish school as well as instructing the teachers in her religious ed program. But she will occasionally give days or instruction to our teachers. And then she, together with Sister Madeleva, will determine what textbooks are to be used -- the ones she thinks are the most...(pauses)...the best qualified to bring the message to the children.

Q: So she will continue even with a decreasing enrollment?

EF: Well, I would hope so.

Q: Is there a cut-off point when it wouldn't be economical?

EF: The number that they usually give is two hundred. If you get under two hundred, and again that's a ball park, but they figure if you get under two hundred, it's not likely that you can keep your school going. That's it's going to be economically out of reach, both in tuition and for the amount of money in subsidy that must come from the parish. So when you get to that number, then you have to consider consolidation or just closing the school. But my hope would be that it would continue to function.

We do see a number of young couples moving in -- not in swarms, but we see some moving into the neighborhood, and some of them attending Mass on Sunday or registering at the parish. So whether their toddlers are one day going to be in our school remains to be seen, but it seems that there's possibility there.

Q: It would then be hopeful that even if you reached the two hundred number, you keep the school going in perhaps the chance that there will be an increase.

EF: Yes.

Q: Going back and talking about your, your childhood and your boyhood, I don't know if I heard your mother's maiden name clearly. Would you say it and spell it for me?

EF: Yes, my mom's name was Gorman, G-O-R-M-A-N.

Q: Which sound Irish.

EF: Yes.

Q: Is Faucher?

EF: Faucher is a French-Canadian name. My dad married a McNulty, and my mother was Irish on both sides, so I'm three-fourths Irish. (laughter)

Q: And you talked about the fact that you were a server. You probably came up -- when you mentioned the steps that a young man follows. About how old were you when you realized you wanted to be a priest?

EF: I think it might have been as late as seventh or eighth grade. I began to serve in fifth grade, and I enjoyed serving. And the priests we had at the parish were

very easy guys to talk with. But I think I began to think about priesthood in the last two grades of grammar school. And what prompted to me to do that was a priest at the parish school named John Hayes. Father Hayes taught at the seminary. And at that time, Quigley had Thursday off and had school on Saturday.

On Thursday, Father Hayes would teach us religion, and, in fact, at that time -- this would be back in '38 and '39 -- it was well before the Second Vatican Council and Liturgical Reform. And yet Father Hayes, together with a handful of other priests in the diocese, had been reading some of the works of the European scholars and so he was very progressive in his understanding of what the liturgy ought to be. That it ought to be the prayer of the people and not just the prayer of the priest and so on. And he taught us many of these notions.

Now, again, we were eighth graders, so we had about two brain cells going at most, but at least it was an introductory idea and perhaps what really stuck in my mind was that this priest is really concerned about the Mass and it must be something really important. And that was probably the only concept I caught, but it had something of meaning for me. And I think his interest in us had most to do -- together with my parents' faith life -- with my considering the priesthood. And then once I began to go, it was with other boys who were considering priesthood. That seemed to be what I continually wanted to do.

Q: So you never had a doubt that was . . . ?

EF: Not one that was so serious that I was ready to pack and leave.

Q: Were there other young men, other boys in your class, let's say, in this eighth-grade class that met with Father Hayes -- is that what you said?

EF: Yes. Oh, he taught all the classes.

Q: Well, were there others of you who became priests?

EF: I was the only one in my class who did. One other boy started at Quigley, but after a week he dropped out. (laughs) So he didn't stay very long.

Q: You mentioned going back to teach at Quigley. Were there still men on the staff, on the faculty, that had been there when you had gone through school?

EF: Yes.

Q: That's an experience.

EF: It is.

Q: Did they welcome you back?

EF: They did, yes. It was, it was an interesting experience to see them from this other perspective, too, because we had know them as profs, and some of them I felt, I must say, were rather eccentric. But as I got to know them more as persons, some of them remained eccentric (laughs), but some I got new understandings of as we got acquainted now more on and equal level as fellow priests and fellow faculty members. Some of them who were a little more dignified I had trouble calling by their first name for a while, but that broke down, too, and we gradually became more of a unit.

Q: When you teach at Quigley, do you live as you say you have a teacher here? Do you live in a parish?

EF: Yes, and I didn't remember to write that down. In my first ten, first nine years at Quigley, I lived at Our Lady of Me. Carmen parish on Belmont near the lake. Then I gradually got involved in some parish work there. Parish ministry has always been my primary interest in priesthood. Nowadays if there are openings on the seminary faculty, priests can apply for them. In my time, in 1955, I was just appointed there. I wasn't asked if that was my preference.

But, as I said, at Mt. Carmel I did get involved in some of the parish work there as well. And then I was assigned to St. Bonaventure parish on Diversey near Ashland for one year. I was there from '66 to '67. And at that time, I had already begun to feel that I wanted to go back full time into parish ministry. And Cardinal Cody was then the Bishop of Chicago, and I made an appointment with him, asked him if I could do that, and he said he had no problem with that. So, the next fall I was assigned out at St. Colette's in Rolling Meadows.

Q: I see. When you were a teacher at Quigley, what did you teach?

EF: I taught Latin and Greek and religion. And I had mentioned, I think, that I had to go to Loyola for a master's degree in classics and I got one in religious education. And the latter, of course, was far more worthwhile for what was going to be the rest of my priesthood. Much of the Latin and Greek, I think, is already in the Land of Forget.

Q: Are Latin and Greek still taught at Quigley?

EF: They're not taught at Quigley now. I believe they're taught at Niles as an elective. But, of course, when they were first put into Quigley, part of it was the liberal arts classical education that was felt a priest should have. Then Latin, of course, had a practical purpose when the Liturgy and the Divine Office, the prayer we say, would be in Latin. Now that practical purpose is gone, and they've just taken on a new approach to what the liberal education the priest should have is to be.

Q: You don't see -- I would love to have you say yes -- but you don't see any trend for more young men entering the priesthood? There's been no uprise in the number of...?

EF: No, it's stayed, it seems to be staying pretty much the same or diminishing -- at least at the present time. What the future holds there -- the immediate future seems to be, well, this year there was a very small number. I think it was just seven or eight were ordained last May. But it looks as if this coming year is going to have I think it's between seventeen and twenty, somewhere in there. And at least from the present numbers in the major seminary that would be the last four years of seminary training, it's in the vicinity, I think, of twenty that will be ordained. But that still is going to be an overall diminishing of number of priests in parish ministry.

Q: Has a young man from St. Martha's become a priest in your tenure here?

EF: Not in my time here. No, we've not done well there at all. The one priest who has gone through the parish is—well, there are two that I'm aware of. One is

Father Bill Wentink, who is a priest in the Rockford diocese. His parents live right kitty corner from the new Jerusalem Church (Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church). And then Father John Manz, M-A-N-Z, is a priest in the diocese. And much of his work since ordination has been among Spanish-speaking people. Part of John's training was down in our mission, the mission that the diocese had for several, more than several years, in Panama. Part of his training, too, was at St. Colette's. He was a deacon there when I was out there. In fact, that was the time I found my way to St. Martha's -- when John had his first Mass here. That was the first time I found there was a Georgiana Avenue to come here for his first mass. But those are the two boys that have gone through here.

One of the problems currently -- together with other factors that have deterred young men from considering priesthood -- one of the practical problems with boys leaving our eighth grade and then going to Quigley is what seems to me as sort of a suburban view of the city. This might be an exaggeration, but I think many of our parents feel that sending their boy to Quigley which is at Chestnut and Rush -- though it's near Chicago and State, is something like . . .

Q: It's near Holy Name in other words, isn't it?

EF: Near Holy Name Cathedral. But I think in the view of many parents, that's like sending them to Vietnam or it just is . . .

Q: Sending them to the battleground. (laughs)

EF: Well, I think so, and I think it's an unfair view, for one thing, of what the city is like. At least during the daytime it's not that hazardous. I don't believe. But there's been such a change in parental attitude over a lot of years, and I'm sure with many reasons explaining it. In our time at Quigley -- now again that would be back in the early '40s --but in our time at Quigley, boys came from Waukegan, , from Libertyville, from Chicago Heights...

Q: You mean they'd commute? They commuted?

EF: They commuted. They would either come in on the train or the other public transportation ways or their dad or neighbor would be working in the Loop and would drop them off and pick them up on the way home. But there was no hesitation in their traveling that far to come to the seminary. Now, most of the parishes that feed the seminary are within the city parish. Hardly any suburban parishes send boys to Quigley at all, and I think that's part of it.

Q: So basically what you're saying is the location prevents suburban boys from thinking about the priesthood?

EF: That seems to be the case.

Q: That's very limiting.

EF: Yes.

Q: Which means that only inner-city boys, young men, will become priests.

EF: Well, at least begin their training at Quigley. The other possibility is that boys might go, let's say to Notre Dame or Loyola or Niles, and then at the end of four years choose to be...But at the present time, the problem with that is that at the present time, the majority of boys, small as that majority is at the seminary college and at Mundelein, are boys that have gone through Quigley North or Quigley South.

Q: So I imagine it would be very unusual for a boy who's attended Niles West or another suburban school public high school to think about the priesthood.

EF: It would be unusual, yes. It's a possibility, but the odds would seem to be against it.

Q: I would like to ask, you mentioned that you've been here twelve years and that there will be a future assignment. And I imagine you think it will be another parish church. At this point in your life, are you thinking of retirement? If you were assigned to a parish church, would it be for another twelve-year tenure?

EF: No, in our diocese now, 70, is the mandatory retirement age, so I would have only eight years to go. When the cardinal visited in May, I had a chance to talk with him then about this change coming up. I did ask him if I could stay here at Martha's because I feel so very much at home here now. But he said no. He wanted me to be part of this process and to go on to another parish.

And then I asked him, given that I just had the eight years left, I said I'd really like to devote that time just to parish ministry rather than to have some

time divided off into administration, concerned about fund raising and patching roofs and so on.

Q: Well, would that mean then that you would be an assistant pastor?

EF: Yes, that's what I had asked -- if I could just serve as an assistant and not be involved in the particular work of the pastor. And his response was no to that also. He said he wanted experienced pastors and so he felt that's how I ought to continue.

Q: Well. Especially if you were assigned to a parish where you would be the only priest. Then it's a foregone conclusion.

EF: That's right. Yes, that's right. What I was considering, if it were possible, would be a place with one or two associates, and that would be my role. But he said no to both requests.

Q: (laughs) I, I, before we close, I'd like you just to give me a little idea of how you see this parish. You've talked about the changes. I'd like you to talk a little more about the people and how you see this parish as a group.

EF: I think I found St. Martha's the more I became acquainted with it, a very familial community kind of parish. At least the people I've become more acquainted with, been in their homes, shared celebrations, family celebrations or First Communions, weddings, et cetera, with them, are very easily friendly. I've

had no difficulty in becoming part of the life of the parish, and I've relished that. And that, of course, is what I'm going to most miss.

I always wish there would be more people who would become more involved because I think people who do take that jump into the pool find that the water's great once they get into it. But I think our difficulty with that is true of so many parishes -- that there are a number of people who find fulfillment in coming on Sunday and that's it. But it seems if we could get more involvement of the people, that would both add to parish life and it would add, I think, to the faith life of the individuals themselves.

But I have found Martha's to be a very warm and friendly parish. I think most of the time when I've asked people to do something by way of parish service, they've been very ready to do it. I think that by nature the majority of people in the parish tend to be somewhat conservative, and so the changes that have been made while there's been a percentage of welcome, they've been kind of slow in being accepted.

The change perhaps that was most dramatic in the lives of the people in terms on Sunday church going, of course, would be the renovation. And I think that now at the present time I think that many people accept that and like it. I think there still is a percentage that would have wished we had kept it the way it was.

Q: That would have wanted to stay with the traditional?

EF: I think so, because that's what they had been used to all their lives. But again, they feel what we were doing was completely in keeping with the nowadays

understanding of what liturgy is. It was completely in keeping with the church's doctrine, document, and church environment.

And, in fact, when, after we had done the renovation, shortly after that, the cardinal had written a pastoral letter on the liturgy which was done 20 years after the Vatican II document on the liturgy had been promulgated, and in his letter the cardinal described what a church setting ought to be. And it was almost as if he had taken a look at the auditorium and then wrote about it. So I remember putting in the Newsette that I was very glad to see that the cardinal was thinking along our lines in writing about the liturgy.

Q: (laughs) Well, I want to thank you for this interview. You have been very, very helpful, I'm sure, to future historians. I'm sure some of the things you've said will help them as they study the history of the parish. Thank you very much.

EF: You're most welcome, Yvonne.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B ENDS