

PROFILES IN GIVING

A pair of postcard-pretty churches in New York's Adirondack region have remained faithful partners with America's missions even after their original "partner" got back on its feet.

Father Richard Sturtz, the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in Schroon Lake and St. Joseph's in Olmstedville, about 25 miles from the Vermont border, says the congregation of 280 families immediately wanted to assist a Gulf coast parish after Hurricane Katrina.

Parish youths started raising money to replace religious education materials lost at St. Ann

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Church in Lakeside, Miss. So when the churches signed up with Catholic Extension's Parish Partnership Program, they were paired with St. Ann's. Over a year, the generous parishes contributed more than \$12,500 for St. Ann's restoration.

About the time that St. Ann's was finishing its recovery efforts, Father Sturtz read a story in EXTENSION Magazine about the Parish Partnership Program's expansion to needy missions in other parts of the country. Asked if they were willing to continue sharing their blessings with the less fortunate, his parishioners gave a resounding yes!

"We've been blessed here, and we really feel as if we should share," Father explains.

Half a country away

Before his current assignment, Father Sturtz had been a teacher and librarian at Wadhams Hall, the former college seminary for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. On weekends, he helped out at St. Regis Mission on the Mohawk Reservation, which straddles the U.S. and Canadian border.

Having seen first-hand the problems faced by many Indian missions, Father asked if his parish might partner up with one supported by Catholic Extension.

They were paired with Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mission on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. It is one of several missions that pastor Father Tony Grossenburg oversees – all of which also need partners.

"We couldn't function without this program," says Father Grossenburg. "The things that the [Parish Partnership Program] provides aren't flashy – they're things like money for insurance and heating bills, the nuts-and-bolts stuff. But without them, things like religious education and evangelization can't happen.

Father Grossenburg says he's grateful that many parishes have stepped forward even though they may never see the fruits of their generosity. "The help that we receive from our Parish Partner shows a concern and love that we have as a Church united as the Body of Christ."



St. Joseph's (above) and Our Lady of Lourdes in Upstate new York have combined their support for a couple of mission parishes.

For more information on how your parish can join the Partnership Program, contact Bridget Monahan at:

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