

Beyond the Bulletin

The Greek word for “letter” is Epistole, the name chosen by the Church of the Holy Apostles, Gambrells, for their quarterly newsletter, which in essence, said pastor Father Jeffrey Dausen, is a letter to all members of the parish.

“While the bulletin can give limited information,” he said, “the newsletter gives us the format for more in-depth coverage of ministries, activities, and people in the parish.”

More parishes are turning to newsletter production as a beyond-the-weekly-bulletin approach to keep parishioners linked and informed.

“When people have information, they feel more connected and more familiar,” said Father Dausen. “Knowledge is power, as the saying goes, and the more knowledge we can share with the parish at large, the more people feel ... a sense of ownership and responsibility for the many ministries and activities at the parish.”

Holy Apostles’ newsletter distribution recently has switched methods from bulk mailing to electronic. Families are sent a link to the newsletter via e-mail which they can download, resulting in virtually no cost to the parish, the pastor reported.

In its second year of publication, “The Saint Patrick Patron” sports a happy photo of pastor Monsignor Thomas R. Bevan on the front page with his message. This quarterly 16-page newsletter started March 2006 for The Church of St. Patrick, Cumberland; 1,500 copies are mailed to 28 states and Europe.

“Our newsletter has been quite a success for our own parishioners and also for keeping our far flung ‘graduates’ in touch with things in Cumberland,” writes Monsignor Bevan.

The summer edition reprinted a letter from Andy McDonald, retired bishop of Little Rock, Ark., praising The Saint Patrick Patron: “As I read the newsletter, I felt as though I was walking down the streets of Cumberland and climbing the steps to the rectory of St. Patrick. Then I walked into the church and experienced its ancient beauty.”

The newsletter continues as one of the parish’s “best projects” reports Monsignor Bevan as the mailing list continues to grow. He said he is grateful for volunteer editor William Derlan, employed as an editor of a Cumberland daily paper. “Everyone who looks at the newsletter realizes that it has the ‘touch’ of someone who knows well how to write a newspaper.”