

## EASTER on 40th and Wilson

### Richard Hoogterp retires as Music Director

Our parish will soon launch a search for a new music director. Richard Hoogterp submitted his resignation April 14 for health reasons.

The news caught many by surprise. Dick has been a consummate professional, quietly battling liver disease for several years. Dick said he felt a need to retire immediately, rather than leave the parish without anyone to accompany Masses in a medical emergency. Being freed from parish responsibilities also simplifies matters if Dick becomes eligible for a liver transplant, which is a real possibility.

For Dick, music has been as much a vocation as a career. He has helped Catholics in the Diocese of Grand Rapids celebrate Mass since he was in high school.

While attending Catholic Central, Dick served as a substitute organist at Holy Name, St. Adalbert and the Cathedral parishes. In the decades since, Dick has been organist or Director of Music at seven parishes in our diocese, including Immaculate Heart of Mary, Holy Trinity and St. Mary Magdalen churches. He even served at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Wyoming in the mid 1970s.

Dick came to St. Pius in August of 2006, after serving at St. Stephen Parish in East Grand Rapids. Among his achievements here are the Resurrection Choir, which sings at funerals, and the Family Choir.

Many of us would have enjoyed honoring Dick at some kind of event. It would have been enlightening to have hosted a hymn sing reflecting the varied genres of music during Dick's career — which spanned the major reform of the liturgy under Vatican II. From the Latin "Panis Angelicus," to "Gift of Finest Wheat" to the repertoire of Marty Haugen and David Hass, to the jazzier arrangements by Bob Hurd, who seems to be a current favorite among parishioners, Dick

has played it all.

But Dick — who always quietly served others rather than draw attention to himself — requested that no special attention be given his leaving the parish. A staff luncheon with his wife, Eileen, was held last Thursday.

In my years of working with Richard, he never said "no" to anything that was asked of him. Although classically-trained as an organist and a recipient of the "Service Planning Certificate" awarded by the

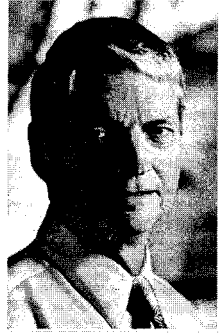
American Guild of Organists, Dick often played the piano more frequently than the organ because he knew that was what people preferred. Worshippers who paid attention on Sundays were always treated to an excellent organ prelude before Mass. We who worked with Dick will miss his professional, cooperative spirit, his historical insights, the ease with which he made us sing, and the sounds of organ and piano music wafting from the church as he practiced throughout the week.

Dick's emails and choir notes often ended with the encouragement: "carry on." That is what we will do, Richard, and as we "carry on" we will be praying for you, for your healing, and a for a long, melodic retirement.

Within the next few weeks, a search will begin for a Music Director. My hope is to have a person hired by July 1. In the meantime, qualified parishioners and other liturgical musicians will be sought to accompany our Lord's Day Masses, weddings and funerals. You can help your parish by praying, and by singing. And as St. Augustine said, when you sing you pray twice.

Easter peace!

*Fr. Chris*



Cards and notes can be sent to:  
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