AVERY ISLAND

The church of St. Marcellus has an Avery Island post office address, but it is actually located in a small community known as Rynella, on the road to Avery Island. The actual location is about ten miles south of downtown New Iberia. There are some 650 families in the church parish which was originally served from St. Peter, the mother parish of New Iberia. Later priests of Our Lady of Perpetual Help served the mission and the independent parish was established in 1960. St. Marcellus was selected as the patron in recognition of the donation of the land for the church by Marcel DeRouen.

Father Richard Fabre, the present pastor, estimates he has some 650 families, according to the latest census. Some of the parishioners work at Avery Island in the salt mine or Tabasco farm and factory. Others raise sugar cane and there are those related industries off-shore or at the Port of Iberia.

The parish council is headed by Mrs. Patsy Rader and operates through two main commissions, administrative and spiritual. They also assist in preparing the children for first penance and first Communion. They also will sponsor an annual fund-raising activity for the muscular dystrophy telethon in August. Recently they participated in a "planned giving" campaign for the church.

Father Fabre said there were some 95 children in the parish but these have become involved in the share groups. He hopes to renew the bible study program after the renewal weekend.

Mrs. Loney Leeson is religion coordinator for the CCD program in the church parish with some 155 children enrolled in grades one through eight, and 85 students are enrolled in the high school program for grades nine through 12. There are also children from the church parish who attend Catholic schools in New Iberia. Bishop Frey administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 46 tenth graders in May.

The adult choir sings at the Saturday evening Mass under the direction of Roy Boudreaux, organist. The youth choir, directed by Mrs. Brenda Crochet, sings at the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass.

Young people of the parish provide a baby-sitting service in the parish hall for the Saturday anticipated Mass. Youngsters also sang at the 10 a.m. church service in May.

Eight new stained glass windows have been installed in the church by Father Fabre.

He hopes to initiate a program in the fall to reach out to fallen-away Catholics. With the help of the spiritual commission of the parish council, an appeal will be made through the bulletin and pulpit for names of people to be invited to a get-acquainted session. It is hoped that through personal contact and an exchange of views, Father Fabre said, those who have been alienated can be encouraged to again become part of the church.

St. Marcellus Church, Avery Island