

# St. Bridget's Looks to 'Rebirth'

It is now 25 years since the centennial celebration of the founding of St. Bridget's Church; and it may be fair to say that this month's celebration of the parish's birth ought to be counted as year one.

In 1954, attendance at Rochester's "Dublin section" church amounted to 1200 worshippers at five Sunday Masses.

Today 75 persons worship at a single Sunday liturgy — and not all those who attend are even Catholic.

It has been an extraordinary quarter century. In the words of a former pastor, "How can people be concerned about religion when they're worried about having enough to eat?"

Nevertheless, in the words of a present pastoral minister, "You can see a growth, a beginning of the power of the Spirit — a spirit of self liberation, of personal and spiritual liberation."

The parish celebration of its 125th jubilee will begin with a Mass of Thanksgiving at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 16. Bishop Matthew H. Clark will preside at the Eucharist, will preach, and will greet parishioners and well-wishers at a special reception following the Mass. St. Bridget's Gospel Choir will sing.

During the Mass an active participant in the parish programs will be received into the Church and confirmed.

To continue its celebration, St. Bridget's will hold its first revival, from Sunday, Sept. 23 to Sunday, Sept. 30.

The revival will be preached by two guest preachers, Rev. John Hill who will talk Sunday at 11 a.m., Monday and Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.; and Rev. Audrey

Bronson who will finish the week and preach the final meeting at 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 30. Choirs from black churches will sing each night.

Rev. Hill is a student at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School. Rev. Bronson is well known in the Rochester area from previous speaking engagements. She is a preacher from the Sanctuary Church of the Open Door in Philadelphia, Pa.

The anniversary festivities will conclude with a Black Heritage Mass on Sunday, Dec. 9. An invitation has been extended to all parishioners, former parishioners and friends of the church to attend all the events.

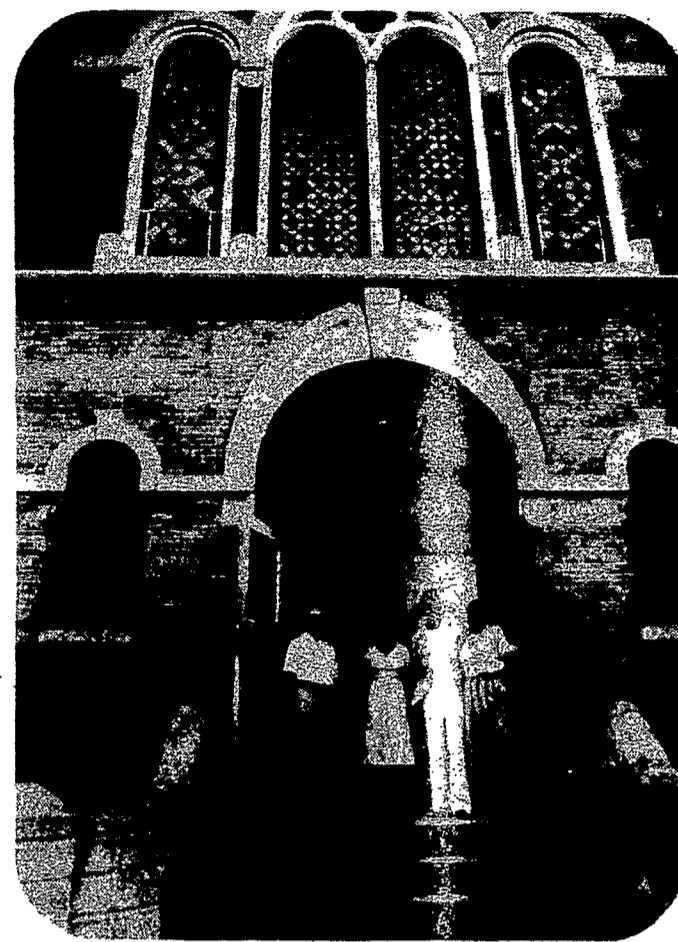
In attending to the parish's spiritual needs, the pastoral team of Sister Grace Miller and Father John Forni also are convinced their mission includes "empowerment" of the people in the area.

In the past year, Sister Grace said, the parish has had a hand in organizing negotiations with the personnel directors of the area's small industries to combat the 50 per cent unemployment in the area, and has also helped with tenant organization in the numerous housing developments which surround the church.

One young parishioner, Eli Danzy, commented, "If other churches did as St. Bridget's does, a lot of problems would be solved."



St. Bridget's door is open to many community groups.



Father Forni (left), a member of the pastoral ministry team, poses with church workers Adine Cannon, Eli Danzy and Jean Cooper.

Sister Grace sees her work as helping "things get started."

She observed that "Things can change but you have to fight to do so."

In its call to the neighborhood to celebrate the

parish anniversary, the church's invitation reads that the thrust of the parish is "outreach into the community." The statement says that "The parish concerns itself with problems and issues affecting people socially, politically, physically,

economically and spiritually."

The church building has been opened to many community groups, and the staff serves as advocate for persons and families faced with problems of welfare, social

security, evictions and imprisonment.

In addition to the daily and Sunday liturgies, the parish also has weekly Sunday School, a study group on Wednesdays, and a Bible Study on Fridays.

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