



With more than 500 families in attendance for the services in Churchville Park, St. Vincent de Paul parish celebrated its centennial on Sunday, July 21. Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Churchville Mass Revels In 100 Years of Family

Coming home to St. Vincent's Church in Churchville has always meant coming together as a family to work as well as to celebrate. On Sunday, July 21, it was a celebration for which parishioners gathered — the 100th anniversary of the church building at 11 N. Main St. More than 600 people rejoiced in the theme for the day — homecoming.

"The church is people," Father Dominic Mockevicius, the pastor, pointed out during an outdoor Mass at Churchville Park. "Today we are celebrating the people who 100 years ago decided to continue this community."

One of the guests welcomed home was Father Louis Hohman, the homilist for the Mass, who served as pastor at St. Vincent's from 1972-83. He is now pastor at St. Louis Church in Pittsford.

"The glory of St. Vincent's is I believe friendship. People really and truly joined together because God is our friend," he said during the homily. "You must be friend. Without that, there is no Church."

Sister Jean Rodman also enjoyed a homecoming. After spending seven years as "miscellaneous parish person" at St. Vincent's, she is now studying to become an

interpreter at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

"My car still knows the way here and so does my heart," she said, speaking to the crowd briefly. Later she added that what she admired most about the people of St. Vincent's was that they are a community of self-starters. "It was an utter joy to work here," she said. "Small-town communities have a reputation for close-mindedness, but it's not true here. The genius of the parish has been something for everyone ... a lot of different ways to plug in."

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey celebrated the Homecoming Mass for Bishop Matthew H. Clark, who was unable to attend. Among local officials and clergymen who attended was Joseph Carr from the Town of Churchville, who spoke briefly. One of the parish's oldest members, James Ehrmentraut, who is a Riga town official, presented the church with a plaque in recognition of its "community service and spiritual dedication."

Music has played a large role in the family spirit of St. Vincent's. On Sunday, the Mass was enriched by a huge gospel choir and instrumental ensemble, directed by Leon Roberts from Washington, D.C. and Lou

Bynum, from outside New York City. Roberts, who wrote the music for the Mass of St. Augustine performed on Sunday, was visiting the Rochester area to conduct a gospel music workshop on Saturday, July 20, at St. Bridget's Church. The music was organized by St. Vincent's music director, Helen Halligan, and her husband, Bill.

The choir's usual strength was augmented by former members who enjoyed a homecoming of their own as well as a few guests, including the Rev. Charles Buchanan, minister of music from St. Bridget's.

One choir member, 32-year-old Kathy Fink, described how music brought her into the St. Vincent's family when she moved to Churchville in 1974 from Syracuse.

"The choir welcomed me in and has been a support and my friends since then. Of all the groups, it's one of the most open and generous," she pointed out.

Of the gospel-style music for the Homecoming Mass, Fink said "A few years ago people wouldn't have done any clapping. We (the choir) wouldn't even have been clapping. Helen (Halligan) does for us what we do for the rest of the group," which is to

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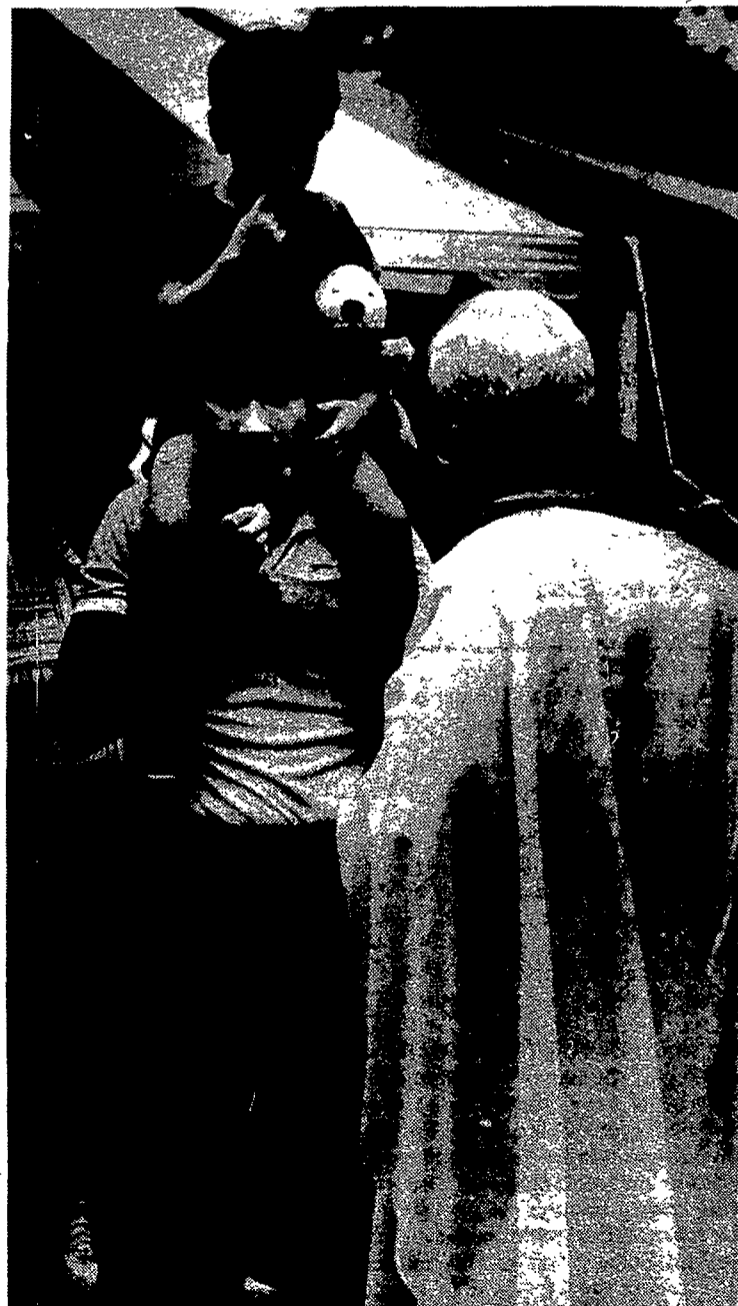
Kathy Fink of St. Vincent's sings her part in the gospel choir with a little help from her twin sons, Andrew and Kyle.



Deacon Ramon Detz assists Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey with the gospel readings.



All eyes are upon Mellossa Muchler, 7 months, as the Muchler, Rabideau and the Strohmeier families gather for the service.



Tom O'Marra receives the Eucharist from Bishop Hickey, as O'Marra's son David, age 4, looks on from his high vantage point.