

# Lenten feasts celebrate town's ecumenism

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

SODUS — Mike Garlock keeps things running smoothly in the Father Cavanaugh Parish Center kitchen.

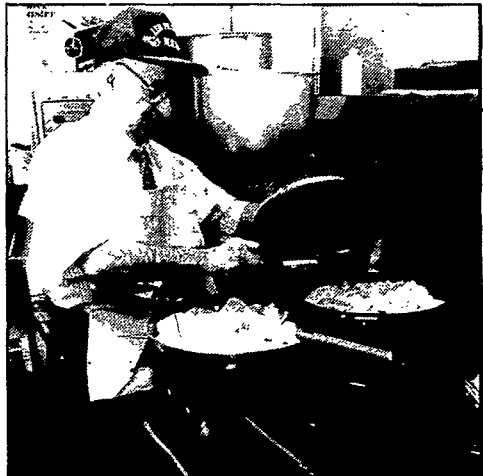
In the predawn hours of Wednesday, Feb. 15, Garlock moves from work table to stove to door, issuing quick, quiet commands, making sure enough food is made and served.

At the stove, aproned men hover over french toast and pork steaks, frying eggs and potatoes. Runners bustle in and out of the kitchen to fill platters with food to be eaten by approximately 40 men sitting at three long tables. The eating men barely notice the runners or that the food was always at hand — testimony to the efficiency of Garlock's crew.

Many of the workers arrived before 6 a.m. this snowy morning, cooking, setting tables, making coffee. Next Wednesday morning, most of them will be sitting at the long tables eating as another crew does the cooking.

For the last 10 years, these Wednesday morning breakfasts have been part of Lent in Sodus. Crews from various congregations belonging to the Sodus Council of Churches rotate cooking duties, with the clergy themselves manning the stoves for one morning gathering. The breakfasts move from church to church — this year's site being the parish center of the Church of the Epiphany.

Following the meal, guest speakers — who have ranged from a hospital adminis-



Len Pilaroscia, who has been in charge of the breakfasts for 10 years, cooks up a batch of fried potatoes.

trator to a retired post master — briefly address a theme chosen for each season. Bill Bolling, an investigator with the New York State Police, spoke Wednesday, Feb. 15, addressing the topic "Where does faith intersect with life issues?"

"It's become a real great institution in this community," explained Leonard Pilaroscia, who serves as one of the chairmen of the breakfasts. "There's just a lot of camaraderie, of fellowship."

"Fellowship" gets mentioned repeatedly by the men as they talk about the breakfasts. The Rev. Ralph Deen-Clingen of the Presbyterian Church described the get-togethers as "fellowship with a religious basis."

Pilaroscia has been in charge of the breakfasts for the last 10 years. Previous to his arrival, local clergy had attempted to hold such events, but they were poorly attended. Pilaroscia had his own idea about how to make them work.

"Men don't want to hear all that religious hocus-pocus," Pilaroscia said somewhat ingenuously. "They get enough of that on Sunday."

While downplaying the breakfasts' religious aspects, however, Pilaroscia did not eliminate them. Each year, he reads to the group from a brochure he prepared which details the history and meaning of Lent and Easter. The meal always begins with a prayer. On a recent Wednesday, the men also prayed for a newborn who was in Strong Memorial Hospital because of complications. Many of the local clergy attend the breakfast, or at least stop by.

"One of the things about these breakfasts is that there are a number of men who do not actively attend a church," explained the Rev. Voigt Archer of the United Methodist Church. The breakfasts give these men a chance to discuss spirituality and their own beliefs, he said. These discussions also help "to overcome barriers among the men of the churches," he added.

The Rev. John Eichenberger of the Reformed Church pointed out that some of the men "are experiencing something they wouldn't otherwise."

"It seems where you can really get a man to think about his faith is in terms of his job," he observed.

In Bolling's short talk, for example, he touched on areas where God is active in



Bill Bolling, an investigator with the New York State Police, was the speaker Wednesday, Feb. 15, during the Lenten season breakfast in Sodus. The group is made up of approximately 40 men from the various congregations in the area.

people's lives. He talked about his decision to join the state police 19 years before, and remarked that life was full of points where such decisions have to be made.

He also spoke about the infant for whom the group had prayed. "Where was God?" Bolling asked. "Why didn't God do something for the child?" Then he pointed out that God had done something by providing the doctors with the skills and training to help the infant survive.

For Al Dobbin, a retired post master who has been coming to the breakfast for nearly nine years, the ecumenical nature of the breakfasts is more important than their religious aspect. "I think it's great that people from different faiths get together," he said. He pointed out that the Council of Churches in the town has promoted ecumenism so strongly "that we're the envy of towns around here."

As part of that ecumenical spirit, many members of local congregations simply attend another church when their minister goes on vacation rather than hiring a re-

placement. Churches share facilities for events — with Epiphany's hall being a particular favorite. Congregations also hold regular Lenten luncheons and study groups for women, as well as weekend talks and suppers.

Garlock suggested that the town's ecumenical spirit is fostered by its small size. "Everybody knows everybody," he said. And once someone begins to come to the breakfasts, they generally become regulars.

As 8 a.m. approaches, the men usually begin to filter out to go to work. Among those who attended the Feb. 15 breakfast were several store owners, a vice president from Xerox Corporation, a barber and a judge. A volunteer clean-up crew clears the tables, and soon afterward, leaves for work.

Garlock, his work done for the morning, relaxed for a moment before going to his job. He assesses the breakfasts and their success simply.

"Good food, good programs," he observed. "I don't think you need any more."

## Scrutinies call everyone to amplify virtue

By Father Robert J. Kennedy  
Guest columnist

The restoration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults has brought with it a set of new and exotic words: catechumen, exorcism, scrutiny, mystagogical catechesis. Although these terms have been taken out of the storehouse of the church's tradition, they have a very timely and practical purpose. They describe and give shape to a process of faith formation of those seeking membership with Christ in the church.

On the next three Sundays of Lent, the

church will celebrate what are known as the scrutinies with and for the "elect" — those now "chosen" for the Easter sacraments. The scrutinies are not public examinations of these people, testing to see how much they have learned during the catechumenate. Rather, they are liturgical rites for self-searching and repentance. "The scrutinies are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright strong and good" (RCIA #141).

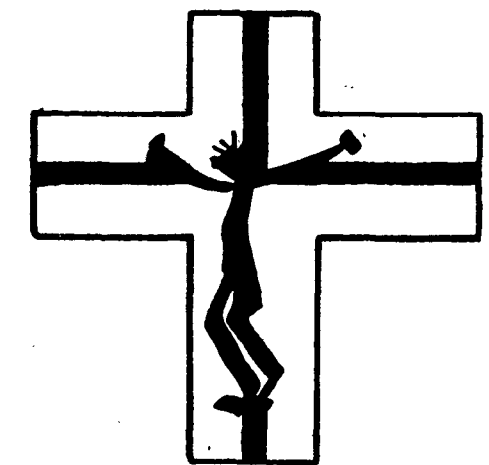
The scrutinies thus have the spiritual

purpose of allowing the elect to reflect on their attachment to Christ in the light of their being chosen for baptism, confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. These rites traditionally have been attached to the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, precisely because Lent is the time for weeding out the weak and sinful, and strengthening the good.

Although the scrutinies are focused on the elect, it is the whole community of faith that acts in these rituals. It is the role of the community to "surround the elect with prayer" and "accompany and lead them to encounter Christ" (RCIA #121). The whole community appropriately stands in solidarity with the elect because its members, too, are scrutinizing their hearts. The Lenten period is the time for all Christian faithful to eliminate the evil and to energize the upright and good.

Each of the scrutinies is based on powerful Gospel stories: the first scrutiny on the Samaritan woman and Jesus at the well (John 4:5-42), the second on the man born blind (John 9:1-41), and the third on the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-45). The combination of these stories with the prayer of the scrutinies asks all of us — elect and faithful alike — three questions. Who are we alone? Who is Jesus for us? Who are we with Jesus?

The first scrutiny asks us to identify with the Samaritan woman who, left to her own devices, cannot quite find what she is look-



GROSS OF GLORY  
LIFE in CHRIST

ing for; nothing seems to bring her the peace and fulfillment she is seeking. She is desperately thirsty for meaning in her life. Jesus is that living water for her and for us, and we become disciples, like the woman and the townsfolk she invites, to hear the word of Jesus, which quenches our thirst and offers us peace, direction and fulfillment.

The second scrutiny asks us to identify with the man born blind, who is caught in a web of evil not of his own making. Victimized by society because he was blind, then caught in a theological power play with religious leaders, the man seeks the light to understand his life and the freedom to live it well. Jesus is the light for indi-

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