

# Seniors meet needs through Catholic Golden Age

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

**HORNELL** — About once a month, Elizabeth McKinley and several friends travel from Hornell to Rochester to attend Catholic Golden Age functions.

But considering how far she used to travel to take part in the organization's activities, the St. Ann's parishioner noted that the drive does not seem that long at all.

Up until 1990, McKinley's only direct contact with the organization — which promotes interests of men and women over age 50 — was through trips each August to Washington, D.C., for the annual Catholic Golden Age national convention.

While in the nation's capital, she met former Rochester resident Irene Peters, who at the time was president of the Richmond, Va., chapter of the Catholic Golden Age.

"I told her it would be nice to have Catholic Golden Age in Rochester," McKinley recalled. "She said she was planning to move back to Rochester,



Members of the Prince of Peace chapter of the Catholic Golden Age Association gathered with the organization's president, Joseph Leary, during their September, 1991, meeting. They are (front row, left to right): Rose Godfrey, membership chair; Margaret Nolan, legislative advocacy; Rosemary Lamphron, publicity chair; and Lottie Gabrych, parliamentarian; (top row, left to right) Elizabeth McKinley, treasurer; Daniel Murphy, vice president; Leary; and Emily Gudell, secretary.

and that she might try to start a chapter. I said, 'When you do, let me know. I'll be glad to help.'"

Peters returned to Rochester and contacted McKinley. Consequently, the Hornell native became one of the founding members of Rochester's Prince of Peace Chapter of Catholic Golden Age in November, 1990.

"We decided it's a Catholic organization, and if you're going to do something, you've got to start somewhere," recalled McKinley, who currently serves as the group's treasurer.

The Rochester chapter has grown to

more than 100 members in just 18 months, according to McKinley. She attributed the growth — and her own willingness to travel approximately 100 miles Hornell to Rochester — to the fact that the group meets needs seniors rarely find met in parishes.

"There's nothing really (in many parishes) that's addressing the interest of senior citizens to bind them together," McKinley said. "We're senior citizens, but we were lacking something spiritual and we need information on legislation affecting seniors."

McKinley found Catholic Golden Age addressed those areas.

The Rochester chapter is part of an international organization that provides spiritual, service and social activities for seniors. In addition, the group helps members learn more about emotional, physical and legal issues affecting senior citizens.

The Rochester chapter has had speakers addressing such topics as the healing power of humor, safety and

protection for seniors and living wills. In addition to hosting parties and events to raise money for social projects, members have sponsored days of recollections and even an ancient Melkite service honoring the Blessed Mother.

McKinley noted that the organization helps to get people involved — even those who might be inclined to just stay home.

"You're building community," she said, "which I think a lot of people need, but they hesitate to extend themselves unless someone reaches out."

McKinley has a history of "reaching out." She is a member of such groups as the Rochester Cursillo and the Catholic Ladies of Columbus in Hornell, and is active at St. James Mercy Hospital as a volunteer and board member.

McKinley noted that she likes to keep busy. "I enjoy working on committees, and doing what I can to help people," she said.

Through Catholic Golden Age, the Hornell woman said she finds an outlet for her energy and desire to help people. And the group meets her own needs.

"I enjoy meeting people and I enjoy the activities that the club offers," McKinley explained.

In a sense, McKinley said, Catholic Golden Age serves as a support group for senior citizens.

"It's nice to meet with people your own age you can talk to and air your feelings," McKinley said.

**EDITORS' NOTE:** The next Catholic Golden Age meeting is scheduled for June 28, at St. Stanislaus Parish, 1124 Hudson Ave., Rochester. The meeting will include a dinner and birthday party for Bishop Matthew H. Clark, who will be guest speaker.

For information about the meeting or about Catholic Golden Age, write: Prince of Peace Chapter, P.O. Box 67544, Rochester, N.Y. 14617, or call 716/467-3398.

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