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Hospitality ministry is key to growing parish

In the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus mentions that hospitality toward strangers is one of the conditions a believer must fulfill to enter the God's kingdom.

"For I was ... a stranger, and you welcomed me," Christ tells the faithful kind enough to have extended a warm welcome to those they did not know.

Many diocesan parishes have taken Jesus' command and put it into practice through what is sometimes called "hospitality ministry." And, as the following anecdote illustrates, such ministry pays off in attracting new members to a parish.

About 18 months ago, Carol J. Reed and her husband, Guy Kevin, began looking for a new parish. The Reeds had been attending the campus parish at the Rochester Institute of Technology for most of the last decade because Carol works at RIT

NEWCOMERS' GUIDE

Look for our newcomers' supplement after page 8.

as associate director of residence life. However, after the couple had three children — who now range in age from four months to five years — they discovered that RIT's Catholic services (generally attended by students) no longer satisfied the Reed's growing need for a family-oriented worship environment.

So the Reeds began "shopping around," as Carol put it, carefully examining diocesan parishes for the services they offered active Catholic families. They found what they wanted at St. John the Evangelist Parish, 150 Floverton St., Rochester.

The Reeds were impressed from the start with the efforts St. John's made to make their family feel welcome in its new Catholic home.

"I'm from Connecticut, and I've lived in several other

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Story by Rob Cullivan, Staff writer