

PARISH FEATURE

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S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Monette Mahoney, faith formation ministry director at St. Mary's Church, distributes an unconsecrated host to Tiffany Tomzak during the April 19 workshop. Children also got a taste of bread, grapes and wine in an effort to prepare them for their first Communion.

Past

Continued from page 10

1992. "We have all ages involved. It's very much an intergenerational parish."

And its also a growing parish, noted Father Walter L. Wainwright, St. Mary's pastor since 1990. Currently, the parish has about 3,000 families.

"When Father James Dougherty (pastor of the parish from 1901-21) constructed the new church (in 1905), he obviously had great foresight and vision, because he built the church as large as he did," Father Wainwright observed.

Ironically, the parish began with only 15 families who gathered in Patrick Doyle's log house in the spring of 1843 for the first Mass celebrated in Canandaigua proper. Under the parish's first pastor, Father Bernard O'Reilly (1843-48), that core of Catholics purchased land for the church on Oct. 16, 1844, when the Rochester diocese was still part of the Diocese of Buffalo.

The first church was built at this site, but in 1873, the parish's eighth pastor, Father Dennis English (1869-1901) purchased the Granger property, site of the current church. The homestead on that land was turned into a convent. Built in

Vital statistics

Name: St. Mary's Church
Address: 95 N. Main St.
Canandaigua
Number of families: 3,000
Significant dates:
Founded on Oct. 16, 1844
First church opened in 1845
Current site purchased in 1873
School started in 1880
Current church dedicated on Dec. 17, 1905

1834, the convent building is listed on the national and state registers of Historic Places.

It was in this convent that the Sisters of St. Joseph lived, having come to Rochester from Missouri in 1854. St. Mary's was the first parish in the diocese in which they served (see related story).

The parish remained for many years a small town parish. Indeed, Angela Rockmaker, a lifelong parishioner, remembers, "When you went into church, you knew everyone, you knew where everybody was going to sit."

And because of the parish's long history, parishioners were often following in the footsteps of their parents and even their grandparents, noted Rockmaker, a member of the parish council and the parish's liturgy committee.

"My mother was born in Canandaigua," Rockmaker said. "Her mother attended St. Mary's School. Two of my (grown-up) children go to the church. There's lots and lots of those kinds of people."

Back in the earlier days, this smallness helped to encourage closeness, noted Mary Bigham Farren, who was born in Canandaigua, moved away after her marriage, but returned to live there approximately 10 years ago with her late husband, Arthur Farren.

"I think it's vibrant," Farren said. "I think, unfortunately, it's gotten so large it's lost some of the intimacy and closeness that it had. I think the small Christian communities will help."

Those communities are another consequence of the diocesan Synod, noted Father Wainwright, and one of the areas on which the parish hopes to concentrate in the years ahead.

"I see that as a big step forward in terms of the way we can minister to people," Father Wainwright predicted.

Buildings

Continued from page 10

James Madison. Tradition says that John and Harriet Granger entertained in this resident such celebrities as author Washington Irving, General Winfield Scott, statesman Henry Clay, and presidents Martin Van Buren and Millard Fillmore.

When Father James T. Dougherty, the pastor from 1901-21, decided to build the current St. Mary's Church, he chose a plot on North Main Street adjacent to the "Granger" convent. The architects were Edwin S. Gordon (1867-1932) and William V. Madden (1868-1921).

What the firm designed for Canandaigua was a large, Medina-stone building of Romanesque inspiration with a dignified facade flanked by twin crenellated towers. The barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling inside is supported by monolithic columns of polished granite.

Fortunately, the fine marble tester over the high altar was preserved when Father James C. Burke remodeled the sanctuary in 1987. An Austrian firm (signing itself "A.M./Innsbruck") provided handsome German-style pictorial windows. Constructed for the price of \$100,000, the second St. Mary's enhances the visual beauty of the "Historic District" designated by the city in 1975.

By 1987, however, the Granger Convent was in sad disrepair. However, under Father Walter L. Wainwright, current pastor, the congregation has undertaken to restore the mansion scientifically — within and without.

Restoration has recently been completed. The parishioners are pleased with their accomplishment. So are Canandaiguans in general, justly proud as they are of this nationally registered historic landmark.

...
Father McNamara, diocesan archivist, lives at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Irondequoit.

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