

PARISH FEATURE

Unity, activity walk hand-in-hand in Wayland

Parish Profile
St. Joseph,
Wayland



By Mike Latona
Staff writer

WAYLAND — Did you know that the priest residing at St. Joseph's Church is married?

One definition of marriage in Webster's New World Dictionary is "any close or intimate union." And that would be an entirely accurate way to characterize the relationship between Father Paul R. Schnacky and his parishioners in northern Steuben County.

"In all honesty, these have been the best years of my life," said the 66-year-old priest who has served as St. Joseph's pastor since 1979. "I've never had a day here that I didn't really relish and enjoy this parish."

"My impression is that there's a tremendous sense of unity; everybody working together. There aren't any division, any cliques, any factions," he added.

"As soon as you set foot in the place, it's 'You're part of the family.' It's not, 'He's a retired priest,' remarked Father Gennaro J. Ventura, who has been assisting at St. Joseph's since retiring to nearby Springwater in 1989.

The respect works both ways: parishioners credit Father Schnacky with spearheading the large number of activities and programs operating at St. Joseph's.

"Father leads us into things. When he gets you into these things, you feel like you've accomplished something," said Larry Mitchell. "I think he puts a spark back in people; they feel like they're needed."

Henrietta Westermann is a prime example. Widowed since September of 1994, she noted that "Father is getting me to start something" — a ministry that would minister to bereaved men and women.

At the same time, Father Schnacky feels he's only helping perpetuate what already existed in the 425-family parish community.

"I just walked into a parish that was very active," said Father Schnacky.

Mitchell and his wife, Sharon, reflect this parish's immense energy. Not only do they serve as bingo coordinators, but the couple also is involved in the St. Vincent de Paul Society and nocturnal-adoration group.

St. Vincent de Paul, begun four years ago, provides short-term emergency help to needy area residents. According to Sharon Mitchell, the outreach can take many forms.

"It's wide open. You never know what it's going to be. It could be a case of delivering diapers to a mother," she said.

Or, her husband added, "(Residents) may be living on \$50 a week, starving to death with the heat turned off. We connect them with the right people."

This ministry brings diverse back-



Father Gennaro Ventura (from left), Jack Lill, Sharon and Larry Mitchell, Henrietta Westermann and Father Paul Schnacky, pastor, pose for a photo in front of St. Joseph's Church in Wayland.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer



SNAPSHOT

St. Joseph's Church 206
Fremont St., Wayland
Parish Incorporated: 1881
School Incorporated: 1884
Ministerial Staff:
Pastor: Father Paul R. Schnacky
Weekend Assistant:
Father Gennaro J. Ventura
Deacon: Daniel P. Slattery
School Principal: JoAnn M. Struck
Religious-Education
Coordinator: Nancy Goodrich
Secretary: Carole Ann
Schwingel
Youth Ministers:
Jay and Sara VanIngen

grounds together, noted St. Vincent de Paul president Jack Lill.

"There is no distinction — no high level or low level," said Lill. He explained that the society includes a doctor, lawyer and a dentist, as well as business people, secretaries and retirees.

Another focal point of St. Joseph's is



On Good Friday, St. Joseph's Parish will join the annual ecumenical Way of the Cross, walking to the top of Calvary Hill where this cross stands.

its school, which came into existence three years after the parish was founded in 1881. St. Joseph's offers an unusual no-tuition policy at the grade pre-K through 6 institution; parents contribute on a free-will basis.

"It's a ministry of the whole parish," said Father Schnacky.

Principal JoAnn Struck said support has been strong enough to keep the school on solid financial ground.

"It really is wonderful, the way the system is set up," she remarked.

In addition to the school, St. Joseph's religious-education program numbers nearly 200 children in grades 1-12.

Cohesiveness and activity are traits St. Joseph's exemplifies in the village of Wayland as well. For example, Father Schnacky meets for lunch at Jim's Diner each Wednesday with several local ministers. In addition, St. Joseph's is part of the Wayland Area Council of Churches, which currently is conducting weekly Lenten ecumenical services and will join forces on Good Friday for the annual Way of the Cross walk up Calvary Hill.

Regardless of one's age or talents, fitting in at St. Joseph's should never be a problem, Sharon Mitchell concluded.

"We have everything from a men's choir to a youth group," she remarked. "If you want to help and you want to belong, there's a place here. I don't know if every church has that."

"Best Wishes"
Wayland Food Mart
Groceries
Gas
Video
East Naples St.
Wayland, N.Y. 14572

"CONGRATULATIONS"
Country Wood Products Inc.
510 2nd Avenue
Wayland, New York
716-728-5745

"Congratulations"
McKelvey Ford Mercury, Inc.
Route 15 South, Wayland
716-728-2225
John J. McKelvey, President

LEADER
Quinlan's PHARMACY
TOM QUINLAN PHARMACIST
107 North Main Street
Wayland, NY 14572
716-728-2250
"Personal Friendly Prescription Service"

BATH NATIONAL BANK
YOUR INDEPENDENT HOMETOWN BANK
Main Office-44 Liberty St., PO Box 630, Bath, NY 14810-0630
Branch Office-323 West Washington St., Bath, NY 14810
Dundee Office-32 Main St., Dundee, NY 14837
Hammondsport Office-24 Sheather St., Hammondsport, NY 14840
Wayland Office-1 West Naples St., Wayland, NY 14572
Hornell Office-7434 Airport Road, Hornell, NY 14843
Atlanta Office-19 Main St., Atlanta, NY 14848
Naples Office-South Main St., Naples, NY 14512
Bath National Bank/Member FDIC
Equal Housing Lender
An EBA Lender

The CHESTNUT INN
The Chestnut Inn
Chef and Proprietor
David G. Beaupré
520 West Naples Street
Wayland, NY 14572
716-728-3750