

Greece parish home to thousands of believers

Parish Profile

Our Mother of Sorrows, Greece



By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GREECE — The current mix of politicians with presidential aspirations might want to consider visiting Our Mother of Sorrows before next year's election.

At least one politician who did so went on to be elected president of the United States for four consecutive terms.

That's right. Former New York Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt — and yes, he was accompanied by his wife Eleanor — traveled to Mother of Sorrows back in 1930 to help the Greece parish celebrate its centennial.

Today's ministerial staff members pointed out that neither current Gov. George Pataki nor any of the announced presidential candidates have made similar plans. It might behoove the New York governor or any presidential candidate to do so, however, considering the number of potential votes a politician could garner from one of this diocese's largest worshipping communities.

Father Thomas R. Statt, pastor since 1981, said the Greece church can accommodate up to 1,000 worshippers at any of the parish's four weekend liturgies.

According to Sister Mary Doran, SSJ, pastoral associate, while some parishes struggle with declining numbers, the 2,900-family parish actually draws 12 to 15 new registrants a month.

The Greece church sponsors a gathering for new parishioners once a month during which they are introduced to the parish's impressive array of programs and activities, she said.

And those activities involve significant numbers of parishioners, staff members emphasized. About 300 parishioners, for example, volunteer each year for the parish festival held during the second week of June, Father Statt said.

"It's always been the first festival of the season in Greece," the pastor said, adding that the church raised \$82,000 during this year's fest.

The priest and woman religious concurred with Jim Hart, chairman of the liturgy committee and former parish council president, when he asserted that volunteers are the lifeblood of Mother of Sorrows.

"Oh, there's hundreds of people that are actively involved," Father Statt said. "I



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Cantor Anna Damelio leads the congregation during the 11 a.m. Mass at Our Mother of Sorrows Church July 23.

SNAPSHOTS

Our Mother of Sorrows Church
at Paddy Hill

5000 Mt. Read Blvd., Greece
Phone: 716/663-5432

Ministerial staff:

Pastor: Father Thomas R. Statt

Parochial Vicar:

Father Mitchell Zygadlo

In Residence:

Father Raymond G. Heisel

Parish Deacon:

Deacon Thomas H. Beck

Pastoral Associate:

Sister Mary Doran, SSJ

Youth Coordinator: Joan Grass

School Principal:

Rebecca E. Maloney

Religious Education Coordinator:

Claudia Adams

do think that the commitment of the people in terms of their volunteerism is second to none."

Staff members noted, for example, that 150 people serve as eucharistic ministers, while another 40 parishioners regularly serve as lectors.

"They're so faithful and committed,"

Father Statt added.

According to parish records, Our Mother of Sorrows Church received its name in 1860, but its history extends all the way back to 1829 when a small Irish community began constructing the church at Paddy Hill. Dedicated to St. Ambrose on Feb. 5, 1832, Mother of Sorrows was the first rural Catholic church in New York state. The growing congregation eventually outgrew the corner church, however, leading to the current church's construction and dedication in 1968. The old church is now leased as a library building to the Town of Greece.

Located in Rochester's largest suburban town, Mother of Sorrows could be described as a middle-of-the-road parish, Sister Doran commented.

"We're not far out on either end," she commented.

Father Statt noted that Mother of Sorrows, which offers 16 Catholic Youth Organization sports teams for boys and girls in soccer, basketball, softball and cheerleading, is an ideal parish in which young families may raise their children.

"If they have children, I underline the school," Father Statt said of Mother of Sorrows' kindergarten-to-eighth-grade program. "It's an excellent school."

Nearly 450 children attend the Catholic school, he added, pointing out

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