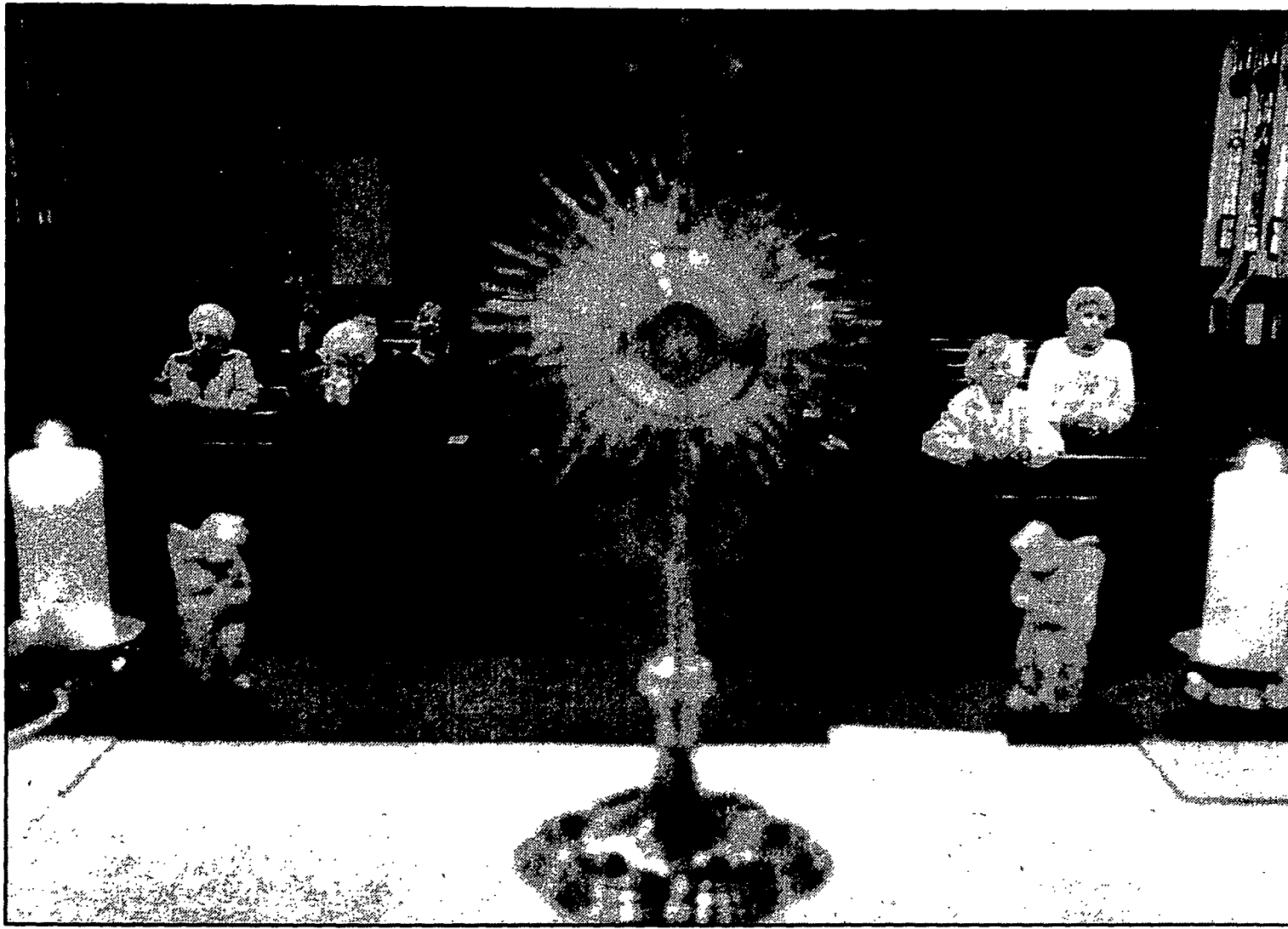


PARISH PROFILE



Parishioners of St. Pius V Church pray during devotion to the Blessed Sacrament following a first Friday Mass earlier this month at the Cohocton church. S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Lay input is lifeblood of Tier churches

Parish Profile
St. Pius V,
Cohocton &
Sacred Heart
of Jesus, Perkinsville

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Honor thy past, but live for thy present and future.

That's the general mind-set at both St. Pius V Church in Cohocton and Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Perkinsville. Both northern Steuben County churches own long and proud histories, but their parishioners' primary focus is to keep their programs up to speed to meet current needs.

For example, Dorothy Burke — commonly known as the "Grandmother of the Parish" at St. Pius V — is impressed by the number of lay ministries that have emerged at her church in recent years.

"Father (Father Charles T. Manning, pastor) says we have more programs than people," remarked Burke, a St. Pius V parishioner for 53 years. "It makes me feel good to see all these things going on."

Some of the activities in this 120-family parish include religious education, social ministry, rosary-altar society, youth ministry and food pantry.

"The parish is very much alive. A lot of



Father Charles T. Manning celebrates first Friday Mass with the Golden Agers Club in the Sacred Heart of Jesus parish center.

the parish council people are involved in other ministries," noted Sandy Azzi, who serves as parish council chairperson.

St. Pius V was founded in 1861 to serve the farming community around Cohocton. Despite the fact that several parishioners now commute to jobs in Rochester and Canandaigua, youth ministry coordinator Linda Mehlenbacher said the main fabric of the parish is still "agriculturally related."

An agricultural history is just as prevalent at Perkinsville's Sacred Heart of Jesus, nine miles north of St. Pius V. The parish's roots go all the way back to 1838, when a group of German potato farmers purchased an acre of land for Catholic worship in this quiet hamlet.

The 157-year span makes Sacred Heart of Jesus one of the oldest parishes in the Rochester diocese outside of Monroe

County — a distinction held up with great fondness by parishioners.

"The pride here is incomparable," parishioner Bill Recktenwald stated.

That sentiment is reflected in the volunteerism of the Sacred Heart community. According to Recktenwald, nearly all of the church maintenance is performed through volunteer efforts. Just recently, he noted, the church interior was painted by Steve Malter and his wife, Bettie. The Malters also donated the supplies.

"If there's a job to be done, it seems that somebody comes forth," parishioner Elizabeth Engel remarked.

Adaptability is also reflected in liturgical matters, Engel said. She acknowledged that Sacred Heart was one of the first Southern Tier parishes to offer the option of receiving Eucharist in the hand back in the 1960s.

SNAPSHOTS

St. Pius V and Sacred Heart of Jesus churches

Phone: 716/384-5500

Ministerial staff:

Pastor: Father Charles T. Manning

Secretary: Teresa Lawrence

St. Pius V Church

35 Maple Ave., Cohocton

Incorporated: 1861

Parish Council

Chair:

Sandy Azzi

Youth

Coordinator:

Linda

Mehlenbacher

Religious

Education

Coordinator:

Ann Carey



Sacred Heart of Jesus Church

Chapel St., Perkinsville

Incorporated: 1838

Parish Council

Chair:

Dan Wensel

Youth

Coordinator:

Sharon Bricks

Religious Edu-

cation

Coordinator:

Gerry

Recktenwald



This willingness to change has been essential to the survival of the 120-family church, said another Sacred Heart parishioner, Jack Malter.

"If you aren't progressive, you're going to die out," he commented.

Father Manning has factored into the innovative tendencies of both churches since he became pastor of St. Pius V and Sacred Heart in 1991. He plays taped music at weekday Masses, and even at weekend Masses when musicians are not available. Another popular and growing feature in both parishes is the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart, a series of home Masses performed by Father Manning.

The pastor said it's likely that St. Pius V and Sacred Heart will become clustered with St. Joseph's Church in Wayland following the anticipated retirement in 1998 of Father Paul R. Schnacky, pastor of St. Joseph's. Father Manning has already made a move toward clustering by encouraging the St. Pius V and Sacred Heart parish councils and finance committees to collaborate frequently.

With the lay involvement in Cohocton and Perkinsville already so extensive, Father Manning thinks his churches are well equipped to carry on in a one-priest, three-church setting.

"I sit here and say, 'Priest shortage,' and there's another part of me that says, 'Do you have to call it that?'" Father Manning commented.

Azzi said the clustering process is just one more example of the two churches' ability to foresee change and act accordingly.

"It seems like we've been preparing for a long time," she remarked.

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