SENIOR LIFESTYLES

Retiree makes rosaries that circle planet

By Rob Cullivan Staff writer

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DANSVILLE – If you talk to Jim Kramer long enough, he'll convince you that praying the rosary can solve every problem in the world, including drunk driving.

The 76-year-old Kramer even makes a 10-bead rosary "ring" to fit around a driver's finger for motoring down the road.

"Instead of driving and drinking, you can say the rosary," said Kramer, a parishioner at St. Mary's Church.

Motorists aren't the only ones who might benefit from some time with the rosary, according to Kramer. A combat infantry veteran of World War II – who was awarded two Bronze Stars for his service in Europe – he ardently advocates that everyone pray the rosary whenever they can for world peace.

"Having served, I know what that means," he commented.

Kramer doesn't just pray rosaries for world peace. He makes it possible for others to do so by crafting rosaries of all types. By his own count, he's made 7,625.

"That's 100 a year for each year of my life," he said, "but I didn't make too many when I was a boy."

A retired salesman and whole-**7**, saler, Kramer is spending his golden years making free rosaries for anyone in the world who wants them.

"I usually have a rosary or two in my pocket," he observed.

Kramer gets requests for rosaries from various sources, including Our Lady's Rosary Makers International Center in Kentucky. He has sent rosaries to dioceses and individual Catholics in more



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer Dansville native Jim Kramer holds a few of the 7,625 rosaries he has made.

> than 20 countries and states in Africa, Europe, North and South America, the Pacific Islands, and Asia.

> Kramer credited his late sister, Mabel Holland, with inspiring him to take up the mantle of rosary-maker about eight years ago. She told him how she made rosaries in her spare time.

His wife of 53 years, Dorothy Norton

Kramer, also encouraged him to make rosaries, he said. And she never complains about the money he spends on his materials.

"It's a good thing I have my wife," Kramer commented. "I'm sure a lot of women wouldn't go for this – they'd want a new fur coat!"

Kramer purchases the materials, makes the rosaries, and ships them fourth class. He added that he counts among his pen pals <u>Bishop</u> James Sangu of Tanzania, and Bishop John Choi of South Korea – relationships that caused his friend, the late Father Andrew Teuschel, former pastor of St. Mary's, to tease him.

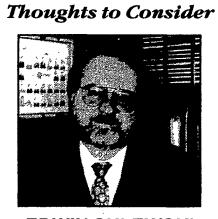
"I see you skip the middle man and go right to top," Kramer recalled the pastor saying.

In addition to encouraging his work, his home parish provided⁴ him with materials for some large rosaries. With the help of fellow St. Mary's parishioner, Steve Maimone, Kramer obtained wood from an old church confessional for crafting the rosary crosses.

As for his own crosses in life, which include a number of disabilities, Kramer seems to bear them quite cheerfully, though he would be the first to credit the Blessed Virgin Mary for helping him along in life.

"I'm sure the Blessed Mother hears me in my stumbling prayers," he concluded. "I usually say 'Polish my prayers."

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you are interested in making rosaries, write for information from Our Lady's Rosary Makers International Center, 4611 Poplar Level Road, P.O. Box 37080, Louisville, KY 40233.



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