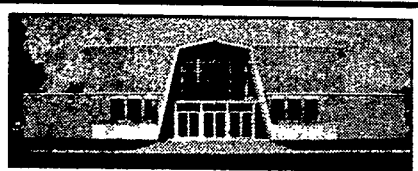


PARISH PROFILE

Church kindles flame of faith in its members



Parish Profile
Christ the King, Irondequoit

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Connecticut native Timothy Fitzgerald, 31, who is serving Christ the King Parish, will be ordained a Basilian priest next year.

The Basilian congregation sends its seminarians to various parishes it serves in the country, in order to prepare them for pastoral work, Fitzgerald noted. He made sure his superiors knew he wanted to come to Christ the King.

"Out of all our parishes, it has the highest reputation in the community," Fitzgerald said of the parish, which will celebrate its 40th year on Nov. 24, the feast of Christ the King, with a special Mass.

Fitzgerald would get no argument from Father Robert B. Hale, CSB, parochial vicar at the parish. He complimented the friendly atmosphere created by Christ the King's 1,400 families.

"I think this is the best parish in the world," Father Hale said. "The people are very supportive, challenging and generous."

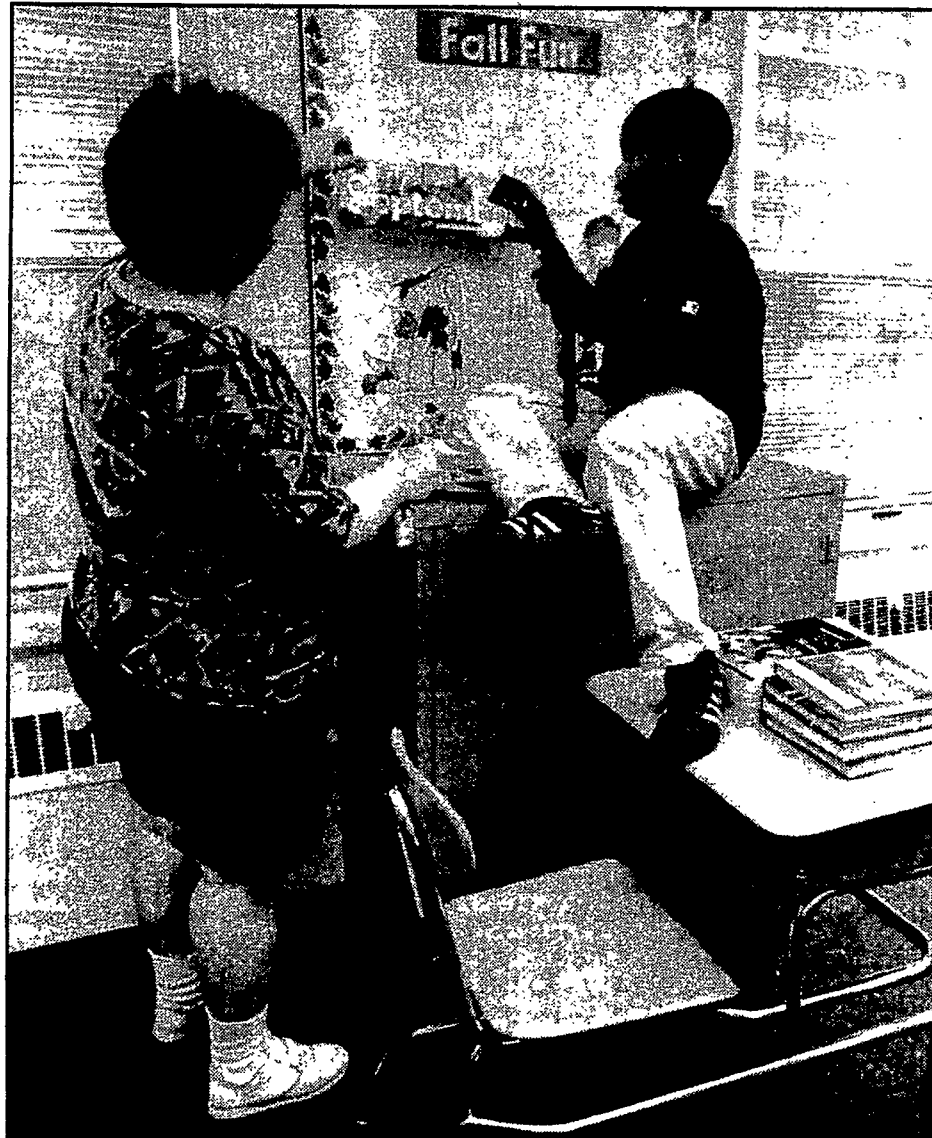
Lest the reader think Father Hale, CSB, is simply trying to keep his job, let it be noted that his sentiments were echoed by Bob Norton, volunteer co-director of the parish's sacrificial giving program.

Norton noted that the majority of Christ the King parishioners pledge at least two to three percent of their income to the parish each year. This arrangement has enabled the parish to produce revenue surpluses for the last two years, he said.

"There is a very positive and warm feeling of community," Norton commented. "This has resulted in people reaching in to their pockets and supporting the parish and its ministerial programs."

One such program is religious education, which provides catechesis for almost 400 students in grades pre-kindergarten through nine, according to Mary Ann Obar, director.

Obar, who has completed one year as director, said Christ the King's program is distinguished by its emphasis on the saints. Every October, in anticipation of All Saints Day on Nov. 1, the students make representations of various saints on



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer
Karen Ives, a fifth-grade teacher, gets a helping hand from student John Bourd'a while preparing her classroom for the school year at Christ the King School.

pumpkins, which are then displayed in the church, she said.

"In a sense, we're rekindling for the next generation new heroes," she said.

Young people are important to the parish, according to Paul Anastasi, the parish youth minister who works with between 30 and 100 teenagers.

"We often hear the comment that the youth of today is tomorrow's church," Anastasi said. "But the youth of today is today's church ... They should look to the church as their own."

One way the parish gives teenagers a sense of ownership is by holding regular youth Masses during which young people perform such duties as ushering, lector-

ing and altar service, he said. Such participation by young people is welcome at the parish, said Father Joseph Trovato, CSB, parochial vicar. Christ the King parishioners prize participation by all age groups in the church, he added.

"I think the people have a sense of ownership," he said. "They don't wait for the pastor to say something to do something." Marie DiRaimo echoed that sentiment. "There's so much parish involvement

SNAPSHOT

Christ the King Parish
445 Kings Highway S.
Irondequoit
Established 1956

Ministerial Staff:
Pastor: **Father Robert B. Hale, CSB**
Parochial vicar:
Father Richard C. Kinsky, CSB
Parochial vicar:
Father Joseph A. Trovato, CSB
In residence: **Timothy Fitzgerald**
Youth Minister: **Paul Anastasi**
Director of Religious Education:
Mary Ann Obar
Secretary: **Marion Fullone**
Bookkeeper: **Mary Merkel**
School Principal: **Colleen D'Hondt**
Church & school maintenance:
Richard Bready
Choir/folk group:
Jean Woehrlen Grizard
Parish Council President:
David Zimmerman

in all the groups we have," she said.

DiRaimo knows such involvement firsthand. She coordinates a 30-member prayer group that meets in the church every Monday evening for Scripture study and other activities.

"We really support each other in good times and bad times," she said. "People come ... who have a lot of troubles and we return them to God. All of sudden they flourish. We tell them the Good News when there's so much bad news around."

Apparently, the Good News as announced by Christ the King has been getting around. At least 80 new families join the parish each year, according to Kyra Niklewicz, chairwoman of the parish evangelization committee. The committee emphasizes welcoming new parishioners through a variety of events including "New Parishioner Sunday" twice a year, she said.

"We like to see ourselves having the whole parish taking on the ministry of evangelization," she said.

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