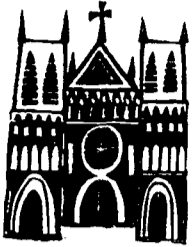


FEATURE

Church is 'tapestry' of its faithful

Parish Profile

St. Margaret Mary's,
IrondequoitBy Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Michele Bertot, pastoral associate at St. Margaret Mary Church, summed up why her parish recently trained seven people to become Stephen Ministers.

"It's just another way for us to live out our baptismal call," she said of the program through which parishioners counsel fellow parishioners experiencing such events as family deaths or sudden job losses. "Nobody can be a Christian alone."

It would be pretty hard to be totally alone at St. Margaret Mary's. Named for the saint most responsible for spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Margaret Mary's began with fewer than 200 parishioners at its first gathering in 1929, and has since become the spiritual home of about 5,000 Irondequoit residents. Today's members include young families and senior citizens.

"What always amazes me being in the front office is that there's so many people in this parish," said Nancy Fredericks, parish secretary.

Father John Quinn, the pastor, and other staff members added that the parish has almost 50 different groups and organizations, including a men's club; a club for people age 50 and over; a committee that welcomes new parishioners; and 40 volunteers who help out senior citizens with transportation, appointments, shopping and meals. It's a challenge coordinating the overall life of the parish, Father Quinn said.

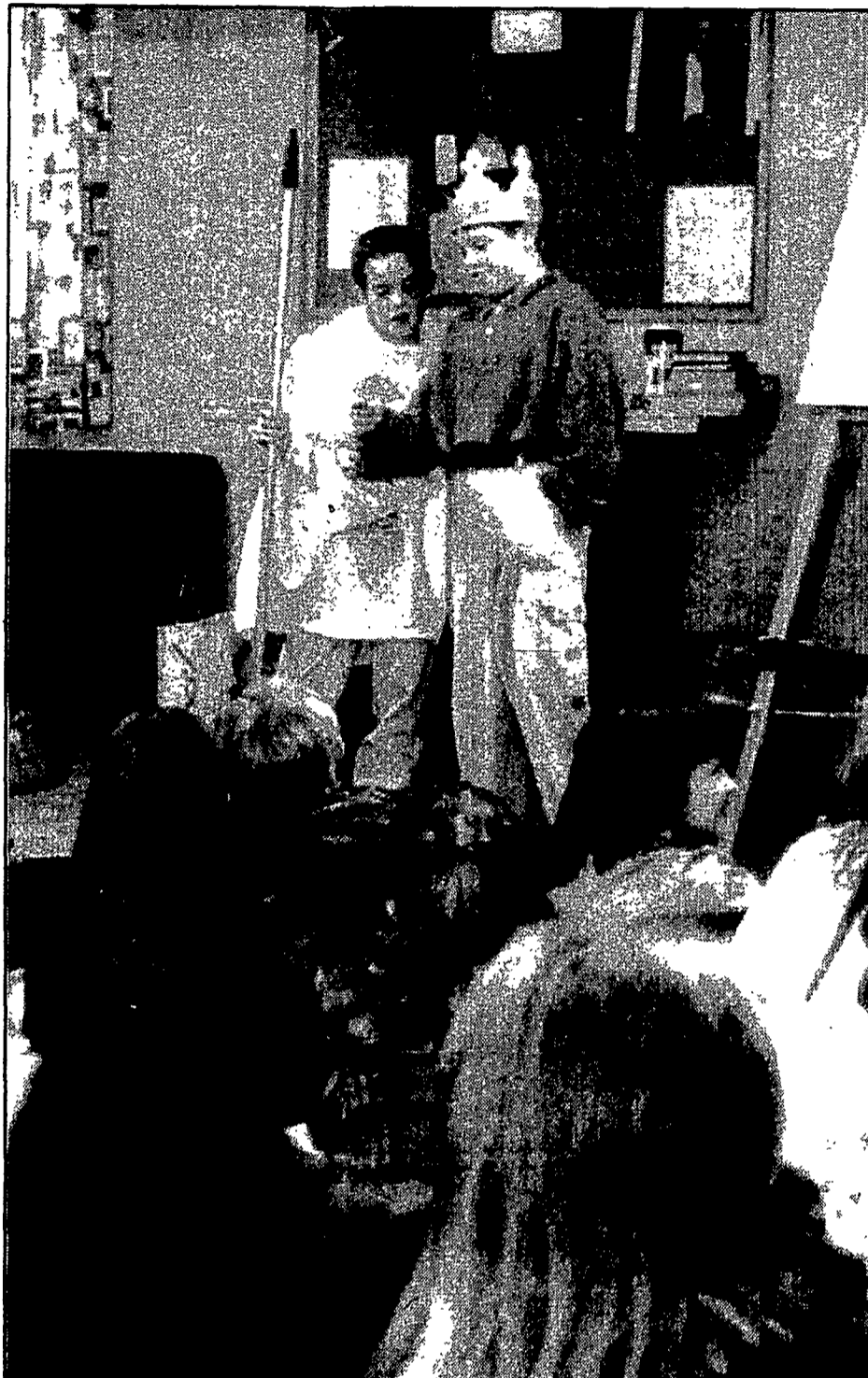
"The difficult thing is to be sure that they see their own group as part of the larger group that is the parish," Father Quinn said of the many organizations. He added that he often exhorts the faithful to reflect on their membership in the larger Body of Christ from the pulpit and through the parish bulletin.

James Miner, chairman of the parish council, also said he saw the parish's various groups as part of a larger whole.

"There's a thousand silk threads, and the parish is the tapestry," he said.

Miner added that the parish council is trying to see St. Margaret Mary's in the context of the larger Irondequoit Catholic community as well. As it explores ways to promote the diocese's synodal goals, the parish council will look at synodal programs put on by such neighboring parishes as St. Thomas the Apostle, and attempt to avoid duplicating them, he said. In particular, he speculated that St. Margaret Mary's would probably promote the synodal goal of recognizing the dignity of women in the church and society.

Promotion of small Christian communities, another synodal goal, is already underway informally at St. Margaret Mary's,



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Tim Cameron (left) and Kerrie Brown (right) play out a skit during the children's Liturgy of the Word at St. Margaret Mary Church on Oct. 12.

according to Charles Prindle, the parish's director of religious education.

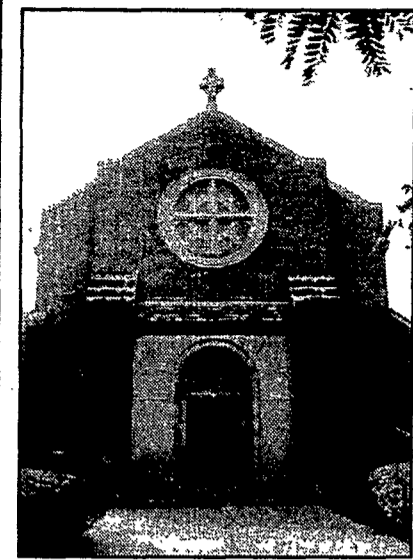
"I think there's a lot of networking that goes on that creates small Christian communities," he said.

He noted, for example, that parents and religious education teachers often form friendships through catechetical projects done by the parish's children. Prindle, and other staff members, ex-

plained that the bonding created by such activities helps Catholics — especially from two-income families — to cope with the pressures of modern living.

"I think people are looking for a supportive community," Prindle said. "I think people feel isolated ... They're looking to their parish community for ways to re-energize."

One way St. Margaret Mary's parish-



SNAPSHOT

St. Margaret Mary Church
401 Rogers Parkway, Irondequoit
Phone: 716/342-2100
No. of families: 2,100

Ministerial staff:

Pastor:

Father John Quinn

Pastoral associates:

Michele Bertot,
Sister Mary Ann Brunett, SSJ

Director of religious education:

Charles Prindle

Youth minister:

Corky Wightman

Secretary:

Nancy Fredericks

Business manager:

Edward Cala

Northeast Quadrant School

principal:

Kathleen Carroll

In Residence:

Father John T. Walsh

ioners draw strength from their community is through Scripture study on Wednesday mornings and evenings. Sister Mary Ann Brunett, SSJ, pastoral associate said 28 parishioners come together to study the Bible and to share their personal reflections on its message.

Another small group recently formed within the parish to serve the needs of its teenagers, according to Corky Wightman, youth minister. Seventeen teenagers signed up to plan community service and social activities, retreats and sessions to deal with such issues as peer pressure, she said.

"They were a very exciting group," Wightman said. "They're excited about taking responsibility for the group as their own."

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