

FEATURE

Penfield parish stresses community outreach

Parish Profile
Holy Spirit,
Penfield



By Mike Latona
Staff writer

PENFIELD — When Holy Spirit Church opened a parish center in 1990, Father Frederick W. Bush stressed that the building's services should extend well beyond the parish community.

"The emphasis these days is to be more ecumenical, and so on," Father Bush recently remarked.

The Holy Spirit pastor — for whom the parish center is named — listed the diverse groups that utilize the facility. Among them are Boy Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, Kiwanis Club and even a rural postmasters' group.

"It's been going like a house on fire, with an event every minute," Father Bush said.

This emphasis on community outreach also exists in other parts of parish life at Holy Spirit. For example, the parish operates a social ministry committee that works year-round to provide Rochester-area relief agencies with food and clothing for the poor. The committee has labored extensively this past month on a parish food drive to support the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Eleanor Falkowsky — who with her husband, Carl, chairs the social ministry committee — stated that Holy Spirit parishioners are enthusiastic supporters.

"We are 12 members of a committee. The parish is the 13th," she said.

"The cooperation is just exceptional," Carl Falkowsky agreed.

The Falkowskys are original members of Holy Spirit, which was established in 1965 by Father Joseph Lynch. Father Lynch died in 1969, and was succeeded by Father Joseph Dailey as pastor. Father Bush moved into the position in 1971.

In the early days, Carl Falkowsky recalled, liturgies took place in a barn and in the Our Lady of Mercy High School auditorium. Mary Rose Cantatore — parish secretary since Holy Spirit's inception — added that she was forced to work out of her house.

"There was no rectory at the time. There was nothing," she explained. Cantatore recalled that much of her time was spent mailing pledge cards to new parishioners for the building fund drive.

The Holy Spirit church building opened in 1968. Major structural changes included a renovation that was completed in 1987, followed by the Father Bush Center's opening three years later.

Father Bush noted that the church sits right near a town border — so close, in fact, that Holy Spirit is located in Penfield but has a Webster mailing address.

"We're schizophrenic," the pastor joked.

Father Ronald A. Antinarelli, parochial vicar, joins Father Bush in serving the 1,200-family parish. Father Francis M. Feeney, a retired diocesan priest who resides at Holy Spirit, also remains active in parish activities.

"We're really blessed to have three priests on staff," remarked Michael Struble, director of religious education.

Struble added that the parish is also bountiful in its desire to grow in its faith. He noted that 275 children in grades one through eight participate in the religious-education program, and that many other parishioners are active participants in adult-education programs as well.

Gabriel Pellegrino, Holy Spirit's director of music, remarked that the parish fa-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Mitch Milton, a member of the Social Ministry Committee at Holy Spirit Church, packs the last bags of groceries Nov. 17 for delivery to disabled veterans. The parish collected approximately 70 bags of food.



Lee Claxton (left), chapter president of Veterans of Foreign Wars 9483, sorts through bags of groceries with Gary Passero and Rosetta Campanella, both members of the social ministry committee.

vors customary approaches to its liturgies.

"What we believe as Catholics, we're very traditional," Pellegrino said.

Richard Ford added that the parish adheres closely to Vatican directives.

"We follow the pope and his teachings. We're that type of church," said Ford, who has been involved in Holy Spirit's parish council along with its liturgy and hospi-

ality committees.

Father Bush backed up Ford's statement by pointing out that Holy Spirit — unlike several other diocesan parishes — delayed using female altar servers until the Vatican announced its approval of this policy in 1994.

"The moment the pope says it, we'll do it," Father Bush said.

The dedication and support of his parishioners, Father Bush said, has been the main reason he has chosen to remain rooted at Holy Spirit for the past 25 years.

"I'm very comfortable with the people," he remarked. "I go to Auriesville (a shrine near Albany) every year on retreat, and I hear the problems at other parishes. Then I come back home and say, 'Thank God I'm at Holy Spirit.'"

Richard Ford's wife, Bridget, echoed a similar love for the parish and its

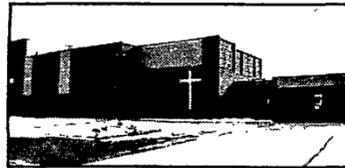
people.

"Holy Spirit is family to us," Bridget Ford stated. "We have met so many beautiful people here."

Charles Curdillo, a longtime parish volunteer, is even more firm in describing his attachment to Holy Spirit.

"It's meant everything to me, really," Curdillo concluded.

SNAPSHOTS



Holy Spirit Church
1355 Hatch Road
Webster, N.Y. 14580
716/671-5520

Ministerial staff:

Pastor:

Father Frederick W. Bush

Parochial vicar:

Father Ronald A. Antinarelli

In residence:

Father Francis M. Feeney

Religious education coordinator:

Michael Struble

Parish secretary/bookkeeper:

Mary Rose Cantatore

Social ministry committee

co-chairs:

Eleanor and Carl Falkowsky

Music director:

Gabriel Pellegrino

Parish council chairman:

Robert Tacito

*Best Wishes to
Holy Spirit Parish*



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