

FEATURE

Parishioners become friends at St. Dominic

Parish Profile
St. Dominic,
Shortsville



By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

SHORTSVILLE — Even residents of small towns can be brought closer together.

That's what parishioners of St. Dominic Church, many of whom live in Shortsville and Manchester, Ontario County, say the church is doing for them.

Parishioners attribute much of that growing closeness to Renew, the parish renewal program the church adopted last fall.

"I've seen people I've nodded to, said hello to and never really knew," said Mary Lou Angeline, a lifelong St. Dominic's parishioner. "But this has really gotten us together."

She and her sister Pauline Angeline host three men and 12 women at their Manchester home each week to study and share Scripture.

All together, about 150 parishioners of the 600-family church get together weekly in 15 such sharing groups.

Renew has encouraged a sort of "renaissance" at St. Dominic's, according to Father William J. Cosgrove, pastor, and Maura Sweeney, Renew coordinator. They said it also has helped the church work toward Synod goals, including that of fostering small Christian communities.

Homilies are coordinated with Renew themes; lecturers take home Renew workbooks to help them prepare; and parishioners take home materials to read that further explore the liturgy.

Also part of the "renaissance" has been a change in music, with parishioners singing more parts of the Mass.

"We are into a variety of music," added Roger De Bell, one of 15 choir members. He said that with Janet Stoddard's direction, the church's music is "better than average."

Another Renew-encouraged innovation that has had an unexpected impact is having greeters at the church doors on Sunday.

The greeters — about 50 volunteers take turns — are often quite jovial and parishioners respond to them, said Father Cosgrove.



Kurt Brownell

Dolores Attenboro teaches liturgy to children gathered recently at St. Dominic Church, Shortsville.

"The whole thing gets off on the right foot," the pastor said.

It would be a rare soul who feels uninvited to any church function, parishioners indicated.

Sweeney and her husband John of Canandaigua came to visit St. Dominic's Church 4½ years ago at John's suggestion. He figured if the niece and nephew they were babysitting misbehaved, well, they'd never have to show their faces again. They found people were so accepting, Maura recalled, she registered the couple at the church the next day.

St. Dominic's extends its welcome beyond the parish. This Lenten season, the church plans a 24-hour prayer vigil with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament March 15-16. Youth will act out the Stations of the Cross at its conclusion and then everyone — no matter what age or denomination — is invited to the parish center for a stone soup supper Sunday night.

The parish center, built about 10 years ago behind the church and dedicated to Father Cosgrove, is forever hosting community Scouting events, Red Jacket Central High School's yearly sports banquet, church fundraisers, church funeral luncheons, diocesan workshops and Priests' Council monthly meetings.

Edith Carr keeps the center's ovens warm and the coffee going, especially for the funeral luncheons she organizes. These are inevitably sad occasions, she acknowledged.

"But then again, that's life, and it's good to have friends around you," she said.

She and other Women of St. Dominic's

serve whatever food the families gather or order for their funeral reception.

Every woman at St. Dominic's, in fact, is recognized as part of the Women of St. Dominic's. Sweeney said it makes no difference if the woman is a committee chair, supports fellow parishioners through prayer at home, or supports the community by devoting herself to raising her children.

Even men are part of the Women of St. Dominic's. They make up one of the group's many bands, or committees and help with any heavy moving required.

"We call it the Women of St. Dominic's Auxiliary," Father Cosgrove laughed.

The increasing church activity — whether prompted by the synod, Renew, strategic planning or other factors — has meant for a busier church office as well.

"I started working 20 hours a week (Jan. 2, 1989) and I'm up to 35 and could use 15 more," said Sandy Cooke, secretary/bookkeeper, though thankful for volunteers.

Church activities for youth are also growing, particularly for the 200 enrolled in religious education. Each grade performs a service project during the year. The fifth graders made rosaries to send to missions, for example, classes have visited nursing home residents, and junior-high youth have collected baby clothes to donate to

SNAPSHOT

St. Dominic Church
6 Canandaigua St.
Shortsville, N.Y. 14548
Phone: 716/289-4164

Pastoral Staff;
Pastor: Father William J. Cosgrove
Deacon: Edward A. Smith
Secretary: Sandra Cooke
Religious-education coordinator/
youth minister: Andrea Record
Liturgical musician: Janet Stoddard
Young adult minister/Renew
coordinator: Maura Sweeney
Maintenance: John Sroka

Birthright and Faith Haven.

"We want to send the message that service is part of faith," said Andrea Record, youth minister and religious education coordinator. "It isn't done as part of confirmation. It's just done as regular religious education."

Another form of education parishioners are undertaking — as are all churches in the diocese — is studying the strategic planning recommendations recently given to them by the Pastoral Office. They plan to meet with other area churches soon over the plan as drafted.

They realize, as well, that Father Cosgrove plans to retire in three years. Father Cosgrove said he expects St. Dominic's to do more sharing with St. Felix in Clifton Springs and St. Francis in Phelps.

"We'll probably be moving back in that direction," he mused, noting that in the 1860s Shortsville began as a mission church under the St. Felix Church pastor.

While parishioners will be dealing inevitably with change, some noted they understand, and that the church is becoming well-prepared.

Mary Lou Angeline said that the church "works beautifully together."

But, she added, "Father Cosgrove may be at the heart of the whole thing. From the first day he came he memorized everybody's names. He brought us all closer together."

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Meeting Christ: Our Helper & Healer

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Parish Mission March 9-12, 1997

All Are Welcome!

Mission Schedule All homilies by Fr. Joe Champlin

Saturday, March 8th	Letting Go: The Dark Past
5:00 pm	Mass
Sunday, March 9th	Letting Go: The Dark Past
8:00, 9:30, 11:30 am	Mass
Monday, March 10th	Faith and Prayer
9:00 am	Mass
11:00 am—12:30 pm	Private Appointments
3:30—5:30 pm	Private Appointments
7:30—8:30 pm	Talk and Evening Prayer
Tuesday, March 11th	Forgiveness & Freedom: Grace & Growth
9:00 am	Mass
11:00 am—12:30 pm	Private Appointments
3:30—5:30 pm	Private Appointments
7:30—8:30 pm	Talk and Communal Penance Service
Wednesday, March 12th	Caring About Ourselves
9:00 am	Mass
11:00 am—12:30 pm	Private Appointments
3:30—5:30 pm	Private Appointments
7:30—8:30 pm	Talk and Evening Prayer followed by a social gathering with refreshments and book signing

Program available for children ages 5-12 during each evening discussion. Call Joan Tannous at 637-8490.

The Church
of the
Nativity
of the
Blessed
Virgin Mary

152 Main Street
(Rt. 19) • Brockport
For additional
information,
call 716-637-4500

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