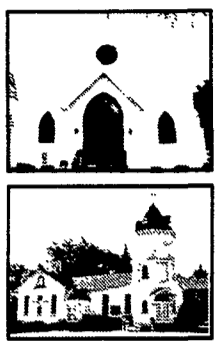


FEATURE

Summertime, and Wayne County parish is jumpin'

Parish Profile

Church of the Epiphany, Sodus/St. Rose of Lima, Sodus Point



By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

SODUS — At a time many parishes slow down, others gear up.

Such is the case along the shore of Lake Ontario for Church of the Epiphany in Sodus and its mission, St. Rose of Lima in Sodus Point.

With vacationers boating, fishing and swimming in the lake, as well as migrant workers swarming area fields, the parish sees weekend Mass attendance increase more than 30 percent, to 600. On the Fourth of July weekend it can reach 800. The 2 p.m. Sunday Spanish Mass at Epiphany builds from 30 during the winter to 220 — standing room only — as the busiest harvest begins, in August.

Father David Faraone, pastor, happily accepted his appointment three years ago, he said, because of the parish's reputation for "friendliness, spirit within the community and closeness to the water."

The parish makes the most of the summertime influx. Its second "blessing of the boats" took place June 29, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, at the Sodus Bay Yacht Club. From Memorial Day through September, St. Rose adds a 7:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. The parish sponsors a hot dog roast outside St. Rose as a summer fundraiser; it holds a parish picnic with an outdoor Mass at B. Forman Park on the lake in nearby Pultneyville.

Parishioners describe Epiphany/St. Rose as a committed, active, close community with increasing involvement each year.

Margaret Cinelli, a parishioner for 34 years, remembers when she'd see the same lectors and eucharistic ministers at Mass after Mass.

"I'd see the same people and say I'd never get involved in it," she said. "Now there's somebody different up there all the time and it's great."

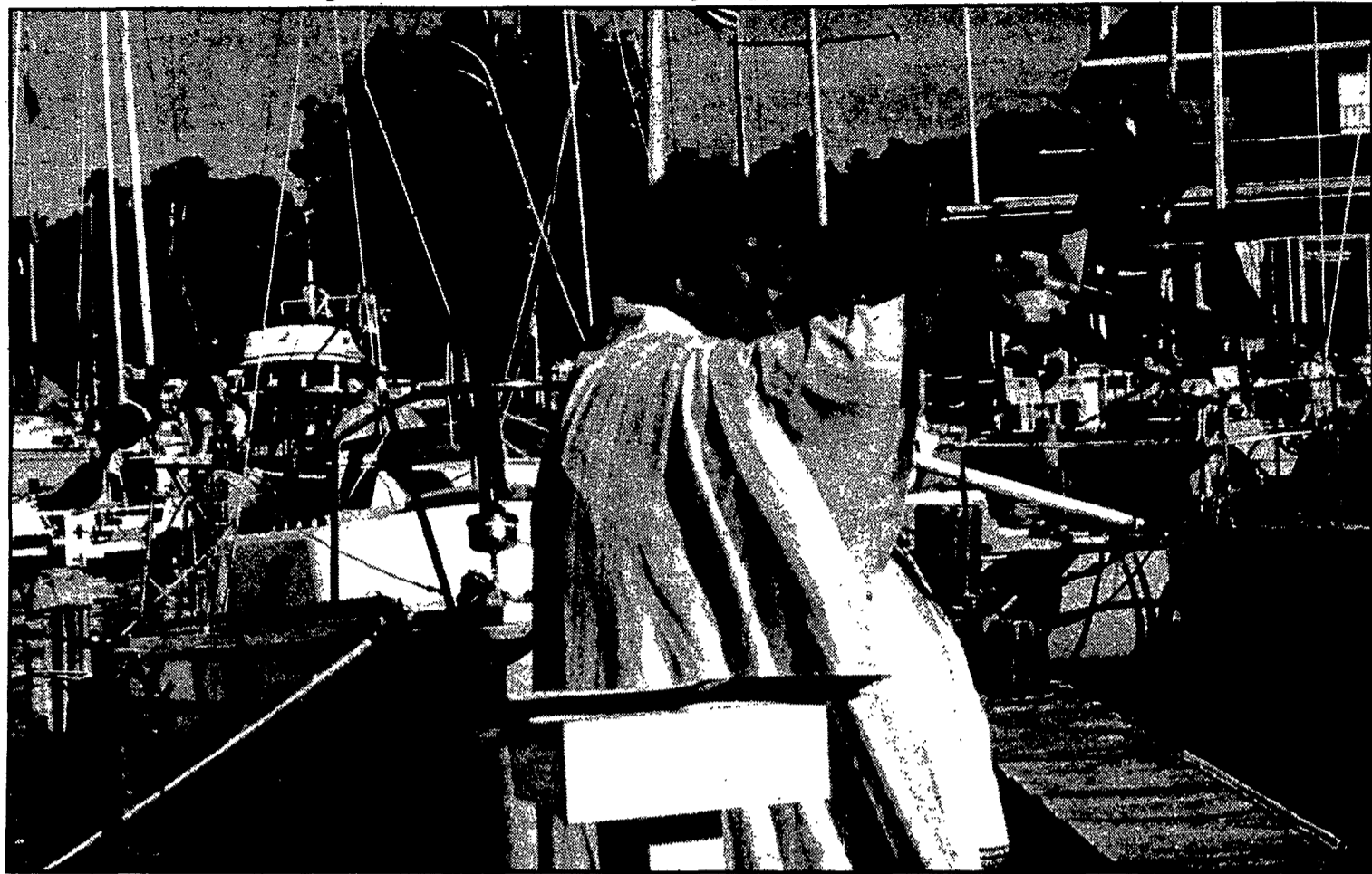
And she is now among their numbers.

A long-standing lector and eucharistic minister, Charles Costello, at the church since 1955, welcomes the participation. And he recalled his first attempts at serving.

"The first time, I gave the wrong reading. Father (John F.) Cavanaugh glared at me," he laughed. But he made it through the right reading after that.

When he first offered Communion, he said, "You talk about shaking! Being able to touch the chalice and hold the host, I thought I'd die. I don't know how I ever got through."

Partly explaining the increased involve-



Kerry Huller

Father David Faraone blesses boats at Sodus Bay Yacht Club June 29, after a prayer service for the community. "Come by land or sea" is the way he bills the annual event.

ment, Helen Hillis, secretary/bookkeeper, said that Father Faraone is good at making presentations for church causes.

"People have a very hard time saying no to him," she said. His organizational abilities are a plus, she added.

"People are very affirming of me but I think my organizational skills compliment what is already here," Father Faraone said, "a willingness to serve. All I've done is pull it together."

Indicating that willingness, and something that still amazes him, is the parish's homebound ministry. He'd hoped for enough volunteers to take the Eucharist to homebound members once a month; about 15 visit their fellow parishioners every week.

Father Faraone has reason to remember that the ministry began June 25, 1995.

"I was hit with sciatica that week and was the very first person to receive the Eucharist from a minister," the pastor said.

Parishioners joked that because of the visits, homebound or nursing home residents may know more about the church than people who can regularly attend.

"They receive the Eucharist but also receive a visit, and it means so much to them," Cinelli said.

The parish reaches out to younger people as well, she noted.

Anne Wilkin, faith formation coordinator/youth minister, encourages parish youth to gather with youth of other parishes, through diocesan events such as "Movie Madness" night and regional events such as Shortsville's St. Dominic youths' ski day. In Sodus, a yearly lock-in, she noted, draws 40-50 teenagers from local and area churches.

"The music is unbelievable from 3 to 6 in the morning," she laughed. A disc jockey reigns over the lock-ins during those hours.

A few times a year she converts the regular religious education hour into a family hour with a video, crafts, or a skit, and food.

Noting Wilkin's rapport especially with

junior high kids, Father Faraone said, "She's like a magnet for them. She speaks their language, which drives us crazy."

"I don't talk like an old lady," Wilkin responded, adding she was about to turn 59. "I'm kind of a chatterbox and a little silly."

The day before this year's lock-in, she had a heart attack and was ordered to rest for three months.

"You should have seen the outpouring from the families and kids," she said. "Father gave me the sacrament of anointing and also asked what I'd planned for the lock-in."

"There's a lot going for a small parish, isn't there," commented Elaine Costello, married to Charles Costello. She praised the church's cantors and organist, "regardless of the fact" she was a longtime organist for the parish, and now only fills in.

"I think the singing here is exceptional," she said. Hillis affirmed that, adding that even substitute pastors remark about it.

Last summer, Father Faraone invited local Protestants to an Epiphany Mass. Local congregations visit each other's churches for "union services" in the summer. Churches also cooperate in a ministers' lectionary study, Lenten breakfasts, and efforts including Epiphany's clothes closet, the United Methodists' community luncheon and the Presbyterians' food cupboard.

"So many people have said to me, 'Look how far we've come,'" Father Faraone noted. Longtime parishioners remember when crosses were burned on local lawns, including that of the church built in 1924.

The church history by Mary G. Piekunka states that when Father Charles F. Shay arrived in 1922, "Father Shay found much evidence of anti-Catholic feeling in the town, and at first no one greeted him on the street. Children later told him that if a Catholic church were to be built, the local people were determined that it would not be on Main Street but a distance away on the lakefront."

SNAPSHOT

Church of the Epiphany, Sodus Mission of Saint Rose of Lima, Sodus Point

Office: 105 W. Main St.
Sodus, NY 14551-1119
Phone: 315/483-6111

Parish Staff:

Pastor: Father David J. Faraone

Deacon: Edward R. Sergeant

Faith formation coordinator:

Annette J. Wilkin

Weekend associate:

Father Nathaniel Kuguta

Property manager: Corinne Ginett

Secretary: Helen Hillis

Seminarian: Patrick VanDurme

Organist: Lawrence DaPolito

Music director:

Sheila Sullivan Buck

Parish council chairperson:

Joan Hurley

Today the ecumenical spirit is remarkable, Father Faraone noted.

When summer is over, the parish hardly winds down. The long list of activities and ministries includes some 18 begun since Father Faraone moved to town.

"I think the parish is very happy with him and he is very happy with the parish," Wilkin said.

In fact at one point during the group interview in Sodus, Charlie Costello suddenly realized that if the parishioners continued to wax on about their pastor, other parishes might want him. It was suggested they might want to switch their story to, "Nobody would want this priest."

Father Faraone quickly added: "And nobody would want this parish. Say that."

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