

PARISH PROFILE

parish grounds. A parish volunteer, Moss said it was St. Monica's people that made her want to join the church.

"There's no pretense about the people, and that's what I like," she said.

Katie Shelly Butler speaks much the same way about her fellow parishioners at St. Augustine's Church. Sunday Mass is always a pleasure, she said, because the parishioners like to socialize afterwards.

"You're never home before an hour and a half because everyone sticks around and talks," she said.

Butler, who attends the church with her husband, John, said the parish rallied around her when her son, Sean, now 5, was born prematurely, weighing in at a little more than two pounds.

Butler said her baby was in the hospital for 55 days after he was born, a situation made more complicated by the fact that her husband underwent back surgery during her son's stay. Parishioners flooded her with cards, phone calls and gifts to support her and her family during her son's early days of life, she said.

Butler added that her son is healthy now, and is, in fact "one of the tallest kids in his class."

Friendly airport parish

Founded to accommodate the overflow from St. Monica's and St. Augustine's in the 1920s, Our Lady of Good Counsel now actually has the most registered families in the cluster: 375. Like its cluster sisters, Good Counsel also seems to be home to a number of active Catholics committed to living out their faith by involvement in their church.

For example, Nicholas Reeder, who attends Good Counsel, is a 15-year-old member of the cluster's youth group, composed of teenagers from all the parishes. Reeder said the youth group has been a great way to meet friends, go on field trips and other outings, and increase his faith.

"Because of this, I've become an active member in the church," he said of the youth group. "It gets me to go to Mass a little more often."

The youth group inspired him to become a lector and a eucharistic minister, he said.

On the other end of the age spectrum, Jo LaVilla, a senior, also attends Good Counsel and heads up the Airport Seniors Group, which meets in Scutari Hall in her church's basement every second Friday of the month. Sixty seniors from the 19th Ward, as well as a number of other neighboring parishes, participate in trips and social activities she said.

"We get them out and keep them active," she said of the seniors. "That's the main thing."

LaVilla also directs Sewing For Charity, a Good Counsel group that has created

SNAPSHOTS

Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward, Rochester, N.Y.



St. Monica's Church
831 Genesee St.
Phone: 716/235-3322



St. Augustine's Church
410 Chili Ave.
Phone: 328-2442



Our Lady of Good Counsel Church
640 Brooks Ave.
Phone: 235-1130

Emmanuel Church of the Deaf
640 Brooks Ave.
Phone: 235-3849 TTY
235-1812 Voice

quilts for local hospitals, health organizations and overseas charity efforts. In addition, she volunteers for a number of other activities at Good Counsel.

"It's a very good outreach church," she said. "They get involved with the neighbors, and that, to me, is important."

Scutari Hall is also where Emmanuel's pastor, Father Raymond H. Fleming, rubs shoulders with his fellow parishioners after the parish's 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sundays. One hundred families are registered in Emmanuel Church of the Deaf, and about another 100 individuals show up for services, he said.

After one such Sunday Mass Sept. 20, parishioners John Patrick Sullivan, Arun and Debra Bellare, and James Murphy all stressed that the parish provides a vital service to Catholics who are deaf or hearing-impaired.

Murphy said the fact that the Mass is completely in sign language allows parish members to fully appreciate each moment of the liturgy. Murphy spoke to the *Catholic Courier* in sign, with John Mark Smeenk interpreting.

"(The priest) signs slowly and carefully, and we all understand what he means," Murphy said.

He added that the parish provides needed spiritual fellowship for him and his fellow Catholics who are unable to hear.

"I'd like to see more hearing people who come to the 19th Ward come here to get an idea of what a deaf church is like," he said.

Cluster and community

Father Fleming noted that he performs sacramental duties both for his parish as well as the cluster parishes, and he also regularly attends meetings with the cluster's



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Bill Durfey jokes with wife Fran after she won a 50/50 pot during monthly meeting of the Airport Seniors Group at Scutari Hall, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, on Sept. 11. The Durfeys are parishioners of Good Counsel. The group offers trips and social activities.

administrators.

Emmanuel Church also collaborates with St. Monica's, St. Augustine's and Good Counsel in special liturgies at such times as Easter and Christmas, according to Emmanuel's Deacon Patrick Graybill.

Father Fleming added that Emmanuel is more than happy to be considered a member of the cluster.

Many parishioners at the cluster parishes said that, initially, at least, there was some resistance to the formation of the cluster. They added that fears of losing individual identity have subsided, however, and the parishes have grown used to collaborating on a number of activities.

For example, recent parish bulletins list such joint activities as a women's retreat, a

men's retreat and a cluster anointing Mass.

Tami Divers exemplifies how clustering has widened the faith experiences of 19th Ward Catholics. She belongs to Good Counsel, but also likes to attend services at St. Monica's. Married with three children, she added that she sings in St. Monica's gospel choir, and volunteers to do cleaning at Good Counsel.

Divers said she is active in church because she wants her children, David, Tiera and Isaiah, to grow up with an example of faith. Speaking of her own family, her words could be seen as the goal of a good many Catholics in the 19th Ward.

"I feel if you plant the seed in the children, more than likely it will flourish," she said.

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