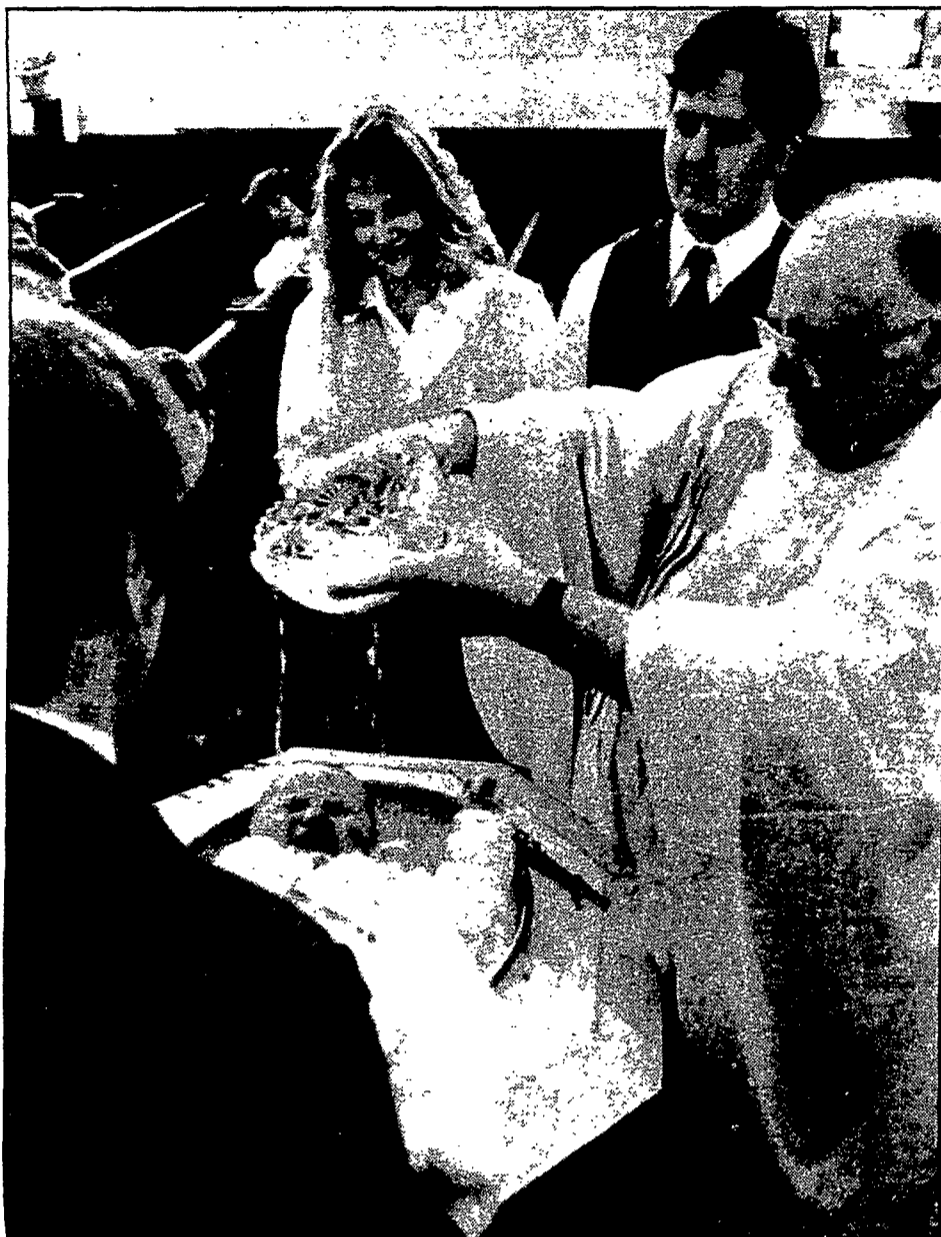


# PARISH PROFILE

## Rural life keeps country church's members together



Godparents Jamie and Beth Post watch as Father John Philipps baptizes Nathan James Eldredge in father Chet's arms.



Teacher Mike Moreland watches as his Sunday School class gets ready to do a coloring activity about Easter at St. Bridget/St. Joseph Church April 25.

### Parish Profile

St. Bridget's,  
St. Joseph's,  
East  
Bloomfield



By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

EAST BLOOMFIELD — When he retires, Father John J. Philipps will finally be able to tell his parishioners at St. Bridget's and St. Joseph's Church what he really thinks of them.

To the sorrow of the scandal-hungry, however, the priest seems to hold a high opinion of his flock.

"I think you would find it a welcoming parish," he said of his church. "I've enjoyed it because it's small and, after a few years, you can stand up there any Sunday and know their first names."

Father Philipps will celebrate his retirement at the 11 a.m. Mass Sunday, June 27, followed by an outdoor reception on parish grounds. Sam Orlando, a retired school-teacher who attends St. Bridget's and St. Joseph's with his wife, Dianna, said Father Philipps will be missed at the parish.

"He talks straight to the people," he said. "He loves kids, and I think ... he's just an honest, nice guy."

Father Philipps will be leaving one of the oldest parishes in the diocese, St. Bridget's, which was founded by Irish immigrants in 1850. Its neighboring parish, St. Joseph's, was founded as a mission of St. Bridget's in 1856. But declining membership forced St. Joseph's to close its doors in 1990 and its congregation merged with that of St. Bridget's.

Located in a rural area outside of Rochester, St. Bridget's and St. Joseph's draws parishioners from both East and West Bloomfield as well as Victor, Bristol and Canandaigua, Father Philipps said. He added that about 300 families are registered at the parish.

Low-stress country living seems to keep many parishioners in the area, parish staff members said. In fact, Judie Worhacz, parish secretary, noted, "a lot of people still leave their doors unlocked at night." She added that the only time her own house was broken into was when she had locked it up.

Bob A. DeSanctis, chairman of the parish council, echoed Worhacz's sentiments about easy living in a country parish.

"A lot of people know each other, and you always get a smile and a 'hello' and that's all we need," he said.

This intimacy flows into the life of the church, according to Jim Weisbeck, chairman of the parish's finance committee.

### SNAPSHOT

St. Bridget's and  
St. Joseph's Church  
15 Church St.  
East Bloomfield, N.Y. 14443  
Phone: 716/657-7626

#### Ministerial Staff:

Pastor:  
**Father John J. Philipps**  
Parish Deacon:  
**Deacon Claude Lester**  
Parish secretary:  
**Judie Worhacz**  
Parish Council chairman:  
**Bob DeSanctis**

"There's a lack of cliques," he said. "I like the fact that people do get along."

The parish is also bound together by its approach to catechesis, according to Deacon Claude Lester, who's a staff member. Deacon Lester said St. Bridget's and St. Joseph's emphasizes making an entire family — and not just individual members — learn about the Catholic faith together through its religious education program.

"Faith is caught, not taught," Deacon Lester commented of the parish's approach to catechesis. "Parents are the key element. We're really giving them support to have (family) conversations around the common element of faith."

Deacon Lester added that the parish often puts its own unique twist on religious education. For example, during Lent, parishioners used tables, chairs, masking tape and other materials to create a replica of ancient Jerusalem in the parish center. This set was used to give people a physical sense of the events of Holy Week, he said.

The parish emphasizes not only creating its own life, but participation in the life of others, according to Margaret L. Iardi, chairwoman of the 12-member social ministry committee. The church sponsors a child in El Salvador, as well as donating materials and monies to area organizations working with the homeless, the imprisoned, the hungry and women in crisis pregnancies, she said.

Another parish group that does social outreach work is Court Isabella 836, the church's chapter of Catholic Daughters of America, according to its regent, Dolores T. Rayburn. She noted that her 30-member group raises funds for seminarians and women in crisis pregnancies, and has also procured materials for an area hospice.

She added that she is never lacking for help from her fellow parishioners when it comes to needing volunteers for an outreach effort. She attributed the parish's commitment to others to its faith-filled families and friendly atmosphere.

"This parish has always made everyone feel welcome," she concluded. "Nobody's ever shut out."

### The Monthly Prayer Request For Priests

#### A PRAYER TO SAINT JOHN MARY VIANNEY, CURE OF ARS

Saint John Mary Vianney, Cure of Ars, I honor you for having so followed the Divine High Priest as to become the model and heavenly patron of all Parish Priests.

With confidence in your intercession before the Blessed Trinity, I seek your assistance in helping every priest to become the kind of priest God wills him to be from all eternity.

Pray for all priests, that they, too, may have a profound reverence in offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; zeal in preaching the word of God; and tireless loyalty and patient sympathy in hearing the confessions of sinners.

From God the Father, please obtain strength of mind and body for them to carry out the duties of the priesthood; from God the Son, special grace for them to be, like Him, both priest and— if need be, for the salvation of souls— victim;

and from God the Holy Spirit, His guiding light and good counsel to direct those entrusted to their care and those who come across their path.

## May, 1999

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Look for the June MPRP Calendar in the May 27th Courier.						Revs. Bishop Matthew H. Clark
2 Pope John Paul II	3 Sabbatical Priests	4 Gerald G. Kelly	5 Dr. Austin Budnik, OFM	6 Scott M. Kubinski	7 James F. Lawlor	8 Joseph Demajo, O CARM
9 Frank E. Lioi	10 James J. Marvin	11 Anthony P. Mugavero	12 Thomas P. Mull	13 Kevin P. Murphy	14 Vincent P. Panepinto	15 Joseph M. Sasso
16 William Spong	17 John Robbins, CSB	18 Matthew Temple, O CARM	19 Mitchell Zygodlo	20 Edward A. Zimmer	21 George Wiant	22 Gary L. Tymon
23 Thomas J. Valenti	24 Louis A. Sirianni	25 Msgr. William H. Shannon	26 Timothy L. Niven	27 William Onuh	28 Michael J. Volino	29 Raymond J. Wahl
30 Vocations	31 Seminarians	Mass for Shut-Ins: Channel 10, WHEC TV, 7:30 am Sunday Mornings				

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