## SENIOR LIFESTYLES

## Cluster celebrates the 'Evelyn Scherbyn era

By Kathleen Schwar Staff writer

CLIFTON SPRINGS - After 30 years as a church office mainstay, Evelyn Scherbyn is almost apologetic describing her current role for the St. Felix/St. Francis Church Cluster in Clifton Springs/Phelps.

"I pretty much come and go as I please," she said. "That doesn't sound very good. But that's the way

It hasn't been her style to "come and go" as she pleases. She's been a steady resource for the cluster since 1968, except for a few years when she worked at the Clifton Springs Hospital.

At the end of June, "the Evelyn Scherbyn era" as tagged by the parish's former pastor Msgr. John F. Duffy (1976-83) - will come to an end.

Scherbyn acknowledged she looks forward to simply enjoying Mass - "to go to church and love

She compared this transition in life to having raised three sons and the relief parents feel when their children become responsible for themselves.

Scherbyn first became parish secretary at St. Francis Church, Phelps. She also took on management of the cemetery for about 10 years and religious education as well, primarily as coordinator over the years. Her jobs became more complicated when the parishes began clustering several years ago, she noted.

"Basically, she's the all-purpose person," said Father Edward J. Dillon, cluster pastor. "We call her the education czar," he added, explaining she has worked to motivate parishioners at all levels to

Scherbyn has worked under five pastors (and three bishops and three popes, as well). She remembers how it all started: "I asked Father (William I.) Riefer if he needed help, and he hired me," she said.

Scherbyn converted from Methodism while attending Kider College in Trenton, N.J., about 50 years ago. She said that she appreciated that everything was "black and white" in the Catholic Church back then. However, she also said she has been com-



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Evelyn Scherbyn, retiring religious education administrator for the St. Felix Church (Clifton Springs) and St. Francis Church (Phelps) cluster looks forward to leaving duties behind, "to go to church

mitted to keeping up with changes since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and attended classes the Capuchin Franciscans ran in Geneva.

Msgr. Duffy, petired in Syracuse, sent a letter read at an April24 retirement party at the Phelps Hotel - a place where the honoree and her husband of 40 years, Bill, once cut the rug to jukebox jitterbugs.

The former paştor referred to the Energizer batteries bunny commercials, writing, "Now Evelyn Scherbyn, to me, really typifies that quality of persistence. She had to put up with all the characters that the Bishop of Rochester has sent to Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Phelps. (And I include myself in that illustrious group!)"

"They all had their individual personalities," Scherbyn commented. But perhaps her happiest 10 years, she added, were during Father Anthony Calimeri's leadership as St. Francis pastor (1983-93). "He just made you feel you were important and did good."

But throughout the years, she has enjoyed her fellow parishioners, she added.

"What has kept me going was the people," Scherbyn said. "The people have been absolutely won-

She's kept many a confidence, and that won't

change when she's fully retired, she noted. Some, she said, "would talk things over with me, would unburden, even though I said you have to

talk to Father. You learn confidentiality.' At times, she felt parishioners' frustrations; she recalled. When Mass times were changed, for example, "one parishioner came and threw her envelopes on the desk and said that was it, she was

through with church." Still, Scherbyn maintained, "I never felt them de-

Her secretarial successor, Lisa M. Burns, said Scherbyn's best advice to her has been, "Basically,

She then paid a compliment that put a big smile on Scherbyn's face: "She was very organized. I think I've kept everything the way she had it."

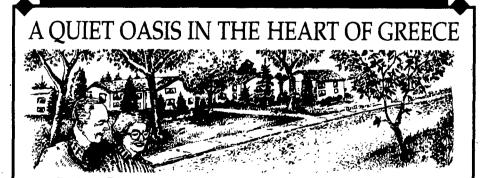


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