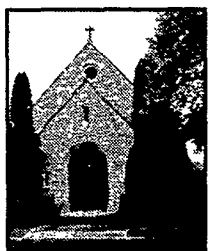


PARISH PROFILE

Hornell parish's laity respond in time of change

Parish Profile

St. Ignatius
Loyola,
Hornell



By Mike Latona
Staff writer

HORNELL — For better or worse, a new era unfolded at St. Ignatius Loyola Church last October when Father Jeremiah P. Moynihan abruptly left his 16-year pastorate.

Father Moynihan moved to Elmira to become pastor at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. However, nobody took his place at St. Ignatius — so, for the first time in its 68-year history, the parish is moving forward without a resident priest.

Margaret Johnson had been aware of a priest shortage in the diocese — in fact, Father Moynihan went to Elmira to replace Father Paul McCabe, who had died suddenly — yet she was caught off guard when the trend touched St. Ignatius.

"You kind of thought, this is not going to happen to you. It's going to happen to the people next-door," said Johnson, the parish religious education coordinator.

This development, Marie Labanoski said, initially sparked rumors within the St. Ignatius community about its future.

"I think that had been a fear, that we're not going to have a parish anymore," she remarked. Labanoski is parish council chairperson.

Perhaps the fear was exaggerated, but this is nonetheless an era of change for St. Ignatius. The 570-family parish, at the



Greg Benenati/Photo Intern

Chris Libordi leads the procession to begin Mass at St. Ignatius Loyola Church, followed by his sister Kara, left, and Brie Hogan, right. Behind them are students from Margaret Johnson's Sunday School class, who helped celebrate Mother's Day May 9 by placing flowers around the statue of Mary.

end of June, will cluster with three other parishes in western Steuben County.

During the past few months, according to parish secretary Gina Moores, the tight-knit St. Ignatius community has adapted admirably.

"People have pulled together even more so," said Moores, who has served as secretary for 23 years.

Peggy Brewer added that several parishioners — aware of the need for their help in this time of transition — have increased their volunteerism as well.

"A lot of times it was just asking people. They didn't know what needed to be done," said Brewer, who chairs the social ministry committee.

Her husband, Charles, said that unified

spirit shone when the church parking lot was blacktopped a few years ago.

"Volunteer workers just came and got it done," he said.

"If you want your parish, you need to work for it," Labanoski remarked.

When the Roman Catholic Faith Communities of the Canisteo Valley goes into effect, St. Ignatius will expand its focus. The cluster will include St. Ignatius along with St. Ann in Hornell, St. Joachim in Canisteo and St. Mary in Rexville.

Pastor of the new cluster will be Father James Jaeger, currently the pastor of St. Ann in Hornell and temporary administrator at St. Ignatius. His parochial vicar will be Father Kip Corriveau, who is ending his stint as priest intern at St. Louis

SNAPSHOT

St. Ignatius Loyola Church
343 Canisteo St.

Hornell, N.Y. 14843

Founded: 1931

Phone: 607/324-5811

(Will become a part of the Roman Catholic Faith Communities of the Canisteo Valley cluster July 1)

Ministerial staff:

Temporary administrator:

Father James P. Jaeger

Deacon: Robert W. McCormick

Religious education coordinator:

Margaret Johnson

Secretary: Gina Moores

Parish council chairperson:

Marie Labanoski

Organist: Nancy Hann

Choir director: Anita Jacobs

Church in Pittsford.

St. Ignatius is already accustomed to collaboration with other parishes, Peggy Brewer said. For example, St. Ignatius and St. Ann staged a fundraiser this spring to aid refugees in Kosovo. In addition, Johnson said, St. Ignatius has teamed with cluster parishes in recent years for such programs as confirmation, RCIA, marriage preparation, and rosary society.

Within St. Ignatius, the parish features many fine programs of its own, Moores noted. Among them are hospitality ministry, Advent outreach, rosary and novena group, and prayer group.

Youth participation includes 65 children in religious education (grades kindergarten-eight). In addition, the parish emphasizes youth-oriented liturgies and music.

"We've got a beautiful children's choir," Labanoski said.

And St. Ignatius' adult choir is a fixture not only at church, but also at community ecumenical services and holiday concerts at nursing homes and hospitals.

St. Ignatius is also renowned for two annual events to which the whole community looks forward. The first is the St. Patrick's Day Mass, which honors the parish's largely Irish roots.

"We end up with people at it who aren't even Catholic," Moores said.

Coming up shortly is St. Ignatius' parish festival. It will take place June 4 and 5, beginning at 5:30 p.m. each night, with chicken dinners available Saturday.

The festival will be held at the church, which has stood at the corner of Grand and West Pine streets since 1935.

St. Ignatius was formed in 1931, with a humble beginning that seemed fitting of the Depression era: Masses were held in a vacant area of a local grocery store.

"They took a counter and made it into an altar," noted Anna Curry, a founding parishioner. Her late husband, Ray, was parish historian and its first sexton, overseeing maintenance of church property.

Curry added that parish volunteers worked hard to raise funds for a permanent church, reaching its goal of collecting enough pennies to make them stretch a mile — that's 68,480 pennies.

Fittingly, the parish's first pastor was Father Ignatius X. Cameron, a Hornell native. He presided over the parish for its first 19 years.

St. Ignatius was formed to serve a population surge due to Hornell's thriving railroad industry. Though that era has passed and the population has dwindled, Moores said that the parish has remained financially solvent and has recently seen an influx of young families.

Through all the changes, Curry feels that a spirit of unity is part of St. Ignatius' past, present and future.

"Everybody gets along well," she commented. "St. Ignatius has a great parish."



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