

SENIOR LIFESTYLES

Volunteers help keep Holy Cross looking great

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER —Maintenance Supervisor Don Bogan feels there's no problem at Holy Cross Church he can't handle — thanks to a small army of loyal volunteers.

Throughout the year, eight men from the parish spend their Wednesday mornings assisting Bogan with numerous maintenance projects. These workers have donated their sweat, toil and expertise for more than a decade.

"I tell you, they are tremendous," Bogan said. "These guys are just amazing. They'll do anything I ask them."

Tom Roach, 74, began organizing a volunteer group about 12 years ago because Holy Cross didn't have a paid maintenance supervisor at the time. The current Wednesday-morning crew includes Roach, Bob Dodge, Ed Finewood, Dick Flanigan, Bob Glasow, Bernie Jardas, Dick Rebban and Al Trumble.

The volunteers range in age from their mid-60s to the 83-year-old Finewood.

"But he can outwork us all," Dodge said. "He's like a bull."

On Tuesday afternoons, Bogan prepares a list of tasks for the group, indicating work needing to be done on parish grounds, and on the interior and exterior of Holy Cross' church and school.

Duties include plumbing, painting, cleaning radiators, repairing locks and doors, patching holes in the parking lot, changing light bulbs, weeding and hedge trimming.

"It saves the parish a lot of money," noted Dodge, 70, as he raked a pile of pulled weeds on June 30.

"We contract out very little," Bogan added.

Once in a while, Roach observed, he answers to people other than Bogan for project ideas. He cited his June 30 assignment, in which he and Dodge removed weeds surrounding a tree in front of the church and carted the weeds off in a wheelbarrow.

"My wife dropped me off the morning and said, 'Tom, those weeds have never been dumped and they look horrible.' So I have no choice. She dropped me off — so if this isn't picked up, she doesn't pick me up!" Roach said with a laugh.

Roach said the volunteers generally work every Wednesday, the only exception being a week off at Christmas. He added that the turnover of volunteers has been relatively low over the years.

"They're sort of the pillars of the church," Bogan commented.

"We know each other pretty well," Roach said.

Well enough, in fact, to pool their spare change and buy New York state lottery tickets. They recently enjoyed some good luck, drawing a winning ticket worth \$1,836 — that's \$204 per man. The money will be split among Bogan and the eight Wednesday-morning volunteers when they actually



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Holy Cross Church parishioner Bob Glasow June 23 prepares a support for a sign promoting an August festival at the Lake Avenue, Rochester, parish.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Holy Cross parishioner Louise Christopher cleans, plants and waters shrubbery around the parish's shrine to the Blessed Virgin June 23.

receive their prize.

Wednesday duty at Holy Cross is not limited to the male parishioners. During the warmer months, Louise Christopher maintains the shrine areas for the Blessed Virgin and St. Anthony statues.

"I go to church every Saturday night and I park here (near the Blessed Virgin statue). She's the first one I pray to," said Christopher, 78, while taking a break from pulling weeds on June 30.

The St. Anthony's shrine area is looking in top shape as well, thanks to Christopher. She also organizes the parish's annual St. Anthony Day Mass, which was just celebrated June 10.

Christopher noted that the volunteer men frequently help her with the gardening responsibilities. She, in turn, brings in snacks she has baked for them to enjoy when their Wednesday-morning chores are done.

Christopher said that volunteers are essential at any parish — perhaps, even more so today.

"Who else is going to do it? Not the priests or the nuns, because we don't have that many of them anymore," she said.

"I feel better when I do this. It looks good."



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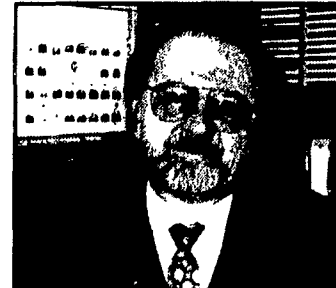
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