

DIOCESAN NEWS



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Children from Vacation Bible School at Christ the King Church, Irondequoit, sing in closing ceremonies July 14.

Kids cross Bible school finish line

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Bill Maher, a parishioner at Christ the King Parish, has a checkered past, but was allowed a significant role in the July 10-14 Vacation Bible School.

The 45-year-old is a semi-retired race car driver and the man who's held the checkered flag for several professional races. He used his contacts in the racing world to secure the loan of a Formula Ford car that served as a prop for the Bible school, whose theme was "In the Race with Jesus Road Rally 2000." The car was a popular pit stop for the 112 kids in grades pre-kindergarten-six who attended the morning Bible school.

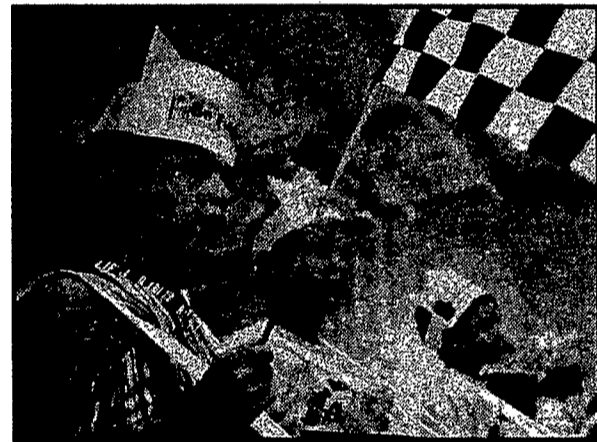
"It's a nice little icebreaker," Maher said of the car owned by race car driver Mark McAllister of Webster. The car was used in formula racing, which pits cars built to specific designations of size, weight, engine displacement and other features, against one another.

Maher noted that the children loved sitting in the car that served as the centerpiece on stage at the school's closing ceremonies in the parish gymnasium July 14. Maher's two sons, Joey, 7, and Billy, 9, attended the Bible school and his wife, Mary Ann Maher, served as a catechist.

Throughout the week, the school's catechists used racing themes as a way to elaborate on biblical stories, according to Mary Ann Obarck, Christ the King's director of religious education. The theme was based on the 12th chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews in which he writes: "(L)et us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us."

The classes focused each day on different biblical "road" stories such as the road through the Red Sea taken by the Israelites in Exodus. The students also named their classes with such titles as "Hopeful Hitchhikers" and "Speedy Saints."

Obarck pointed out that many children today are particularly interested in drivers and racers associated with NASCAR, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, the association behind such famed



Lena Ross, 6, waves a flag during a song on the last day of Vacation Bible School at Christ the King on July 14.

races as the Daytona 500.

"We liked the idea that the theme has action implied in it," she said of the Bible school. "It's a way to take their faith and apply it to something they're excited about."

Apparently, the idea worked because the children seemed to enjoy waving checkered flags, singing songs about racing with Jesus to heaven, and wearing race driver helmets at the closing ceremony.

"Race cars are really neat, so I think it was a good way to get kids into it," said Lauren Caccamise, age 11, who participated in the fifth/sixth-grade group at the Bible school. Her friend Gina Iannone, 12, in the same group, had a more measured judgment of the racing theme.

"I like cars, but I'm not really into NASCAR," she said. However, she pointed that she does own a go-cart that she likes to drive around in her backyard at home.

Jonathan Kane, 7-year-old son of Kathy

Kane, a third-grade catechist, was in the first-grade group and said he appreciated the effect the racing theme had on his mental image of Jesus.

"He was, like, in front of me," Jonathan said. "I was, like, behind him. There was this ramp up to heaven. We kept going up it and up it till we got to heaven."

Jonathan's brother, Ryan, 4, was in the pre-kindergarten group, and his father, Kevin, has been a music volunteer at the parish. Kevin Kane said his sons particularly enjoyed singing the songs they learned about Jesus and auto-racing.

"I think it's great that they can tailor the stories and the elements of Jesus to something the kids can relate to outside religion," the boys' father said.

A key component of the Bible school was teenagers, Obarck said, noting they made up the bulk of the 48 volunteers. One such volunteer was Mike Murray, 13, who said he enjoyed working with the kids even when they were challenging.

"They're good, but sometimes some of them can be a little rowdy," he said, stressing that the volunteers did not yell at the children but put them in "time-out" when they got out of hand.

Many of the children got the privilege of sitting in the formula Ford car. John Nowak, 10, held his checkered flag in his hand as he sat inside the narrow confines of the car. When asked how he liked the Bible school's racing theme, he summed it up succinctly.

"I could say it's pretty exciting."

Hornell native becomes priest

Father James Doran, a baptized William Patrick Doran, was ordained a Benedictine priest on July 8 at St. Cecilia's Church in Leominster, Mass.

Father Doran grew up in St. Ann's Parish, Hornell, and will return to St. Ann's to preside at a Mass of thanksgiving at noon, Sunday, July 30.

Father James P. Jaeger, pastor at St. Ann's, and Sister Dolores Ann Stein, R.M.S., principal of St. Ann's School, attended the ordination. Bishop Dan Reilly of the Diocese of Worcester, Mass., presided.

"I'm honored to be a priest and looking forward to serving as a Benedictine," Father Doran commented in a brief telephone interview.

The son of Kevin and Mary Margaret Doran, Father Doran attended St. Ann's School and served as an altar boy in the parish from grades four through 12. He graduated from Hornell Public High School in 1986 and began studying at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Mass., to become a Benedictine monk. He graduated from St. John's in May.

He is now serving at St. Benedict Abbey in Still River, Mass., within the Worcester Diocese, where he will assist in the guest program for retreats.

—Lisa R. Mugnolo

Ordination set for monk

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will ordain Brother Gerard D'Souza, O.C.S.O., to the diaconate Friday, Aug. 4, at the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard, a Cistercian monastery.

The ceremony is open to the public and begins at 9:30 a.m.

Brother D'Souza, 42, is a native of Mumbai, Bombay, India. He is one of 45 brothers at the contemplative monastery in Livingston County.

He received his master of arts degree in religious studies from the former Archdiocesan Catechetical Institute (since renamed the Institute of Religious Studies) at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, in Yonkers, in 1991. He was a member of St. Monica Church, Manhattan, where he was an RCIA instructor.

After spending time in a retreat at the abbey, he entered the monastery in 1992. He will continue studies for the priestly formation at the Dominican House of Studies at Catholic University, Washington, D.C., and plans to be ordained in May 2001.

—Kathleen Schwarz

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