

PARISH PROFILE

Community to move school, expand church seating

Parish Profile

Assumption of Our Lady, Fairport



By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

FAIRPORT — When you meet Father Edward Golden, pastor of Church of the Assumption of Our Lady, you may get the feeling that you know him from somewhere. That's because his face rings a bell — or, to be more accurate, a bell once rang his face.

Not long after taking up his position as pastor more than nine years ago, Father Golden was standing outside the church talking to worshipers after Sunday Mass. Suddenly, the clapper (tongue) on one of the church's bells fell off, bounced off the church roof, scraped his face, and put a considerable dent in the sidewalk.

"My homily wasn't that bad," said Father Golden musing on what providential designs lay behind the bell's apparent wrath against him.

The then-new pastor survived the incident to continue ministering to his flock. Joseph DiMino, the parish business manager, noted that Father Golden has practiced a hands-off style of management in line with the post-Second Vatican Council Catholic emphasis on empowering the laity.

"You don't always have to go to him and say, 'Can I do this? Can I do that?'" DiMino said.

However, the business manager did note that Father Golden does dictate at least

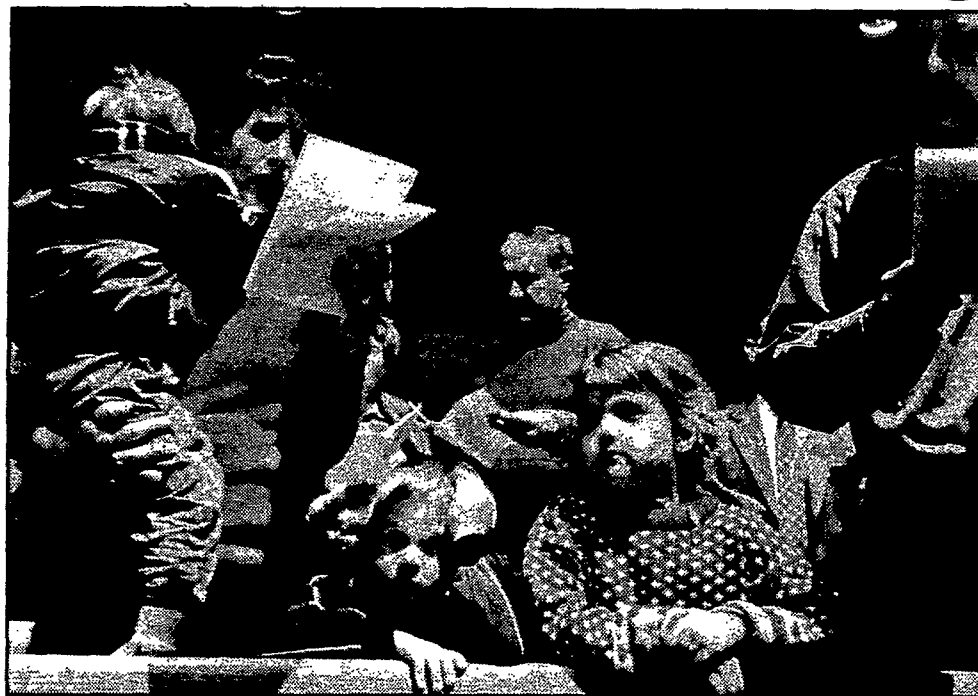
one priority budget item for Assumption — bell maintenance. But the priest will no longer have to worry about cavalier clappers come Jan. 1 when Assumption's parochial vicar, Father Gary L. Tyman, becomes parish administrator. Father Golden said he plans to go on sabbatical, but had made no specific plans as of yet.

The parish is planning a parish reception for Father Golden in the church hall on Sunday, Dec. 31, after 12:15 p.m. Mass.

Father Tyman will oversee the suburban Monroe County parish made up of 2,400 registered families, 95 percent of whom call Fairport or neighboring Perinton their home. The parish has been running a fundraising campaign to raise more than \$1.85 million for renovation efforts, including expansion of the church's seating capacity and centralization of all parish offices into one building. The expansion was fueled by the fact that the parish's membership increased by 600 families from the mid-1980s to the present and by the fact that the decreasing number of available priests means fewer Masses, which will be attended by larger congregations.

Founded in 1866 by immigrants who had settled in Fairport, which straddles the Erie Canal, Assumption is one of the oldest parishes in the diocese and has been a diocesan pioneer in such ministry areas as teenagers and religious education.

For example, the parish has boasted a school of religion for public school students since 1956, built in an era when most parishes concentrated on maintaining Catholic schools. Named for Father Leonard A. Kelly, Assumption's pastor from 1954 to 1975, the school, located one mile away from the church, is slated to be relocated on church grounds, DiMino said. Schooling children in the faith is an integral part of church ministry, according to Cathy Tocci, Assumption's director of re-



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Assumption parishioners Sue Brekovsky (left) and her husband, Jim (far right) join in song at the Perinton Lay Clergy Council's Inter-Faith Thanksgiving Service at Church of the Assumption Nov. 21. Their children (from left) are Andrew, 3, Ryan, 5, and Rachel, 6.

ligious education.

"I especially love the seventh- and eighth-graders," she said. "I like the challenge because they're trying to be so 'cool' but underneath, they're still little kids, and I'm trying to get into that little kid part and tell them about Jesus."

Marie Claus, the parish's director of youth ministry, also pointed out that Assumption provides weekly Scripture reflection and discussion sessions for more than 100 junior high and senior high students. She added that a number of college-age parishioners come back from time to time to help out with the two youth groups.

She also said that adults benefit from the parish's youth ministry programs that encourage the kids to organize special liturgies and other events.

"Young people have a different outlook on life," she said. "They're very excited about their faith. People say, 'It was nice to see young people participate in that. It gives us so much hope.'"

Giving hope to people outside the parish motivates such initiatives as Assumption's sharing, or tithing, program. This uses parish funds for donations to prison ministry programs and community



Sandy Burke (right) talks with Rosemarie Hoffman following the interfaith service.

service efforts in Rochester, according to Sandy Burke, a parish volunteer, and Deacon Ronald J. Tocci, Cathy Tocci's husband. The deacon added that scores of parishioners have also volunteered to serve food to the city's hungry at a Rochester parish soup kitchen and build a home for low-income residents.

Sheryl Zabel, Assumption's pastoral associate, also pointed out that the parish recently co-hosted with St. John of Rochester in Fairport a "listening" night for Catholics who are interested in coming back to the church after leaving it for one reason or another. The listening night was held at Assumption's religion school, she said.

"They felt it was a safe place to tell their stories," she said.

Assumption works to give hope to people inside the parish as well, Burke noted. She pointed out that the parish has trained several Stephen Ministers to help individuals and families experiencing temporary or ongoing challenges ranging from being victimized by a crime to taking care of an ill loved one. It's this kind of faith-inspired volunteerism that comes naturally to Wally Kennelly, vice chairman of Assumption's parish council, who said he's simply paying back a debt by helping out at the parish.

"I have a lot of respect for all of these people who started this parish years ago," Kennelly said. "They made a lot of sacrifices, and I feel you should contribute when you can."

Deacon Tocci expressed similar sentiments about contributing to the life of the church. A member of the parish since 1970, he noted that parishioners inspired him to consider becoming a permanent deacon. He was ordained in 1994.

"I do feel as if I was called from this parish," Deacon Tocci said. "And it's wonderful to be here with the people I've known for 30 years. I know the kinds of struggles they've had in their lives, and they know the ones I've had."

YOUR SPOUSE NEEDS YOU.
THE KIDS NEED YOU.
A PARENT NEEDS YOU.



Looks like you need us.

Finding time to meet the needs of an older adult or person with disabilities can be difficult. To help, St. Ann's Community offers two levels of adult day services at three convenient locations. Home & Heart provides nutritious meals, recreational activities and a variety of support services. For those in need of skilled medical care there's Home Connection with everything from physical therapy to dietary counseling. Even transportation. To learn more and register for a complimentary day, call 342-1700 ext. 440

or visit www.stannscommunity.com.



ST. ANN'S
ADULT DAY SERVICES
Full of Life

SNAPSHOT

Church of the
Assumption of Our Lady
20 East Ave.
Fairport, N.Y. 14450
Phone: 716/388-0040
Web site:
www.assumptionofourlady.org

Pastoral Team:

Pastor:
Father Edward Golden

Parochial vicar:
Father Gary Tyman

Deacon:

Ronald J. Tocci

Youth ministry director:

Marie Claus

Pastoral minister:

Sheila Cody

Business manager:

Joseph DiMino

Religious education coordinator:

Christine Heisman

Religious education director:

Cathy Tocci

Music director:

Thomas McGary

Parish Council chairwoman:

Cath Elliot

Pastoral associate:

Sheryl Zabel

In residence:

Msgr. George Cocuzzi