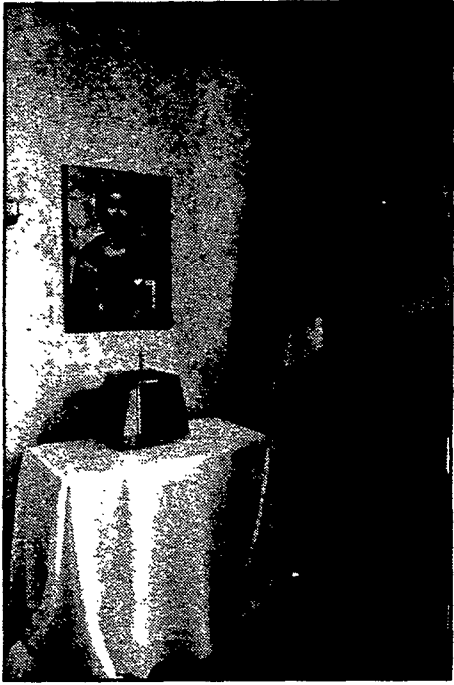


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Since there is no Catholic Church at the Chautauqua Institution, the Blessed Sacrament is kept in the Catholic House.

Chatauqua

Continued from page 1

In 1986 Catholics gathered and later formed a Catholic Community at Chautauqua, which has assured that Catholic Masses and other services are arranged.

Rev. Mackenzie said the Catholics make up the "strongest single Christian communion" at Chautauqua, although there are more Protestants. Numbers are not kept, however. Catholics also serve on many boards and have a strong influence on programming, he added.

In 1991 the Episcopal Chapel of the Good Shepherd offered to share its space with Catholics for daily Mass, and plans are to continue that affiliation. Catholics celebrate Sunday Mass in the Hall of Christ and the open-air Hall of Philosophy on the grounds on weekends.

In 1998, a house was donated to the Catholic Community. Built in 1884 as a residence, it is among the many Victorian-style houses that give the place its charm, as do other distinctive buildings, brick walkways, gardens, beaches, and the absence of cars, which are generally banned.

On July 29 this year, the Catholic Community celebrated its 15th anniversary with a reunion of past and present board members and committee heads at its "new" house. It had another reason to celebrate - Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington, D.C., became the first cardinal to preach at Chautauqua. He preached at the July 8 Sunday ecumenical service to 6,000 people packing the auditorium. The grounds buzzed with word that a Catholic who "might help elect the next pope" was



The Catholic House at the Chautauqua Institution.

going to speak.

Although Ellie Lesser began going to Chautauqua in the 1930s, and her husband in 1928 (as a 1-year-old), they acknowledged a failure shared by Catholics and Protestants to begin working together decades ago.

Both have served terms as presidents of the Catholic Community.

Chautauqua's founders "had a vision that probably was not completely understood in the late 1800s," states an information sheet of the Chautauqua Catholic Community. "That Catholics have not, in the past, taken advantage of the opportunity to build here and join in the ecumenical spirit, was due primarily to the times."

But today Catholic events at Chautauqua include weekly socials, a Sunday youth Mass, two daily Masses, a Saturday vigil Mass and two Sunday Masses. Catholic chaplains meet regularly with chaplains of other denominations.

Two Catholic chaplains are assigned to



Father Winkler blesses a baby during Communion in the Hall of Philosophy at the Chautauqua Institution July 29.

the Catholic House each of nine weeks of Chautauqua's summer program. They offer Mass, Bible studies and lectures.

"It really was a wonderful thing," said Father William Donnelly, pastor of St. Mary's Parish, Rochester. "I was surprised; the extent of the ecumenical activity was a pleasant surprise, also the number of people there and from all over. It was a wonderful experience."

Father Donnelly was a chaplain in June 2000, when he was asked to fill in for another priest. Other Rochester diocesan

priests who have served as chaplain include Fathers Joe Brennan, Robert Kennedy, James Lawlor, Thomas Nellis and Robert Ring, according to the Lessers. Msgr. William H. Shannon has been a guest speaker.

"So you see - we are blessed," Ellie Lesser said.

Cultural center emerges

It became necessary, Rev. Mackenzie said, for Chautauqua to develop into a cultural center with music, art and secular education. Its mission states that it is to be "a community in which religious faith is perceived, interpreted and experienced as central to the understanding and expression of our social and cultural values, a community which is open to all and is distinctly founded upon and expressive of the convictions of the Christian tradition."

Each week has a theme, be it related to environment, religion, global affairs, education or ethics, for example. Several presidents, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and author Jane Goodall have spoken. Entertainment includes opera, theater and ballet productions.

Jim and Rita Hickey of St. Mary's, Rochester, have spent a week at Chautauqua every year for 13 years. Rita said they find the services spiritually uplifting, no matter who is preaching.

"We go to Mass first, and then hurry to get to morning spiritual services in the am-

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