

SENIOR LIFESTYLES

Liturgy is all in the family at St. Rita's in Webster

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

WEBSTER — Dorothy Mykins doesn't mind when the colorful banners she designs draw attention. But she definitely prefers anonymity with regard to the rest of her work on the St. Rita's Parish liturgy committee.

"I'm a worker. I'm the silent one in the back," Mykins said.

Well, sort of. Mykins, 80, admitted that she occasionally speaks her mind with the liturgy-committee chairperson — who happens to be her daughter, Kathy Reinhardt.

"She gives me her opinions beforehand and says, 'Here, you take care of it,'" Reinhardt said with a laugh.

Mykins' family is represented by yet another generation on the 20-member committee: Reinhardt's daughters Erin Reinhardt, 25, and Becky Childs, 28, who are two of Mykins' 13 grandchildren. Both acknowledged that Mykins' spirit of dedication has factored into their own journey toward greater church involvement.

"I learned by example from grandma: If you care about something, then you get involved. And you can't say anything negative, or change something, if you don't get involved," Erin Reinhardt said.

"I learned from watching mom and grandma (that) I could be a non-active participant, or I could be involved in the Mass," Childs added. "Grandma has taught us to make our church an extended family."

"Mom (Mykins) gave so much of herself," Kathy Reinhardt said. "Even though she had five children, she found some things to do with church. She's a real good example of giving back to the church." Reinhardt said her parents' in-



James Stein/Photo Intern

Rebecca Childs (from left), Kathy Guentner, Kathy Reinhardt, Dorothy Mykins and Erin Reinhardt share a laugh during breakfast May 5 at Bay Front Restaurant in Webster. Mykins, her daughter (Kathy Reinhardt), and granddaughters (Childs and Erin Reinhardt) have breakfast together every Sunday after Mass at St. Rita's in Webster, where they all serve on the parish liturgy committee.

fluence made Mass, for her, something "I grew to enjoy and look forward to."

Mykins, meanwhile, credits her parents. One of nine children, she grew up near Buffalo, living seven miles from the nearest Catholic church — but the family never missed a Sunday Mass. "They taught me the same thing: You can't walk without the Lord," Mykins said.

Mykins and her husband Bill, 81, join their daughter, granddaughters and other family members each Sunday for 7:30 a.m. Mass at St. Rita's. This ritual usually is followed by breakfast at the Bay Front Restaurant on Empire Boulevard, where



Dorothy Mykins offers the chalice to a communicant at St. Rita's May 5.

they and fellow parishioners fill up a large back-room table. Not surprisingly, the conversation often turns to liturgy. Childs noted that discussions in recent weeks centered on singing the Passion for the first time this past Good Friday, and singing a new Kyrie during Lent.

"It's good for us to get together for breakfast. If we're trying something new, we can discuss how did it go over," Childs said.

Indeed, as breakfast was ending on a recent Sunday, a discussion arose over the scheduling of lectors. "You see, this is what happens," Mykins remarked.

Mykins has belonged to the liturgy committee since 1980, five years after she and Bill became parishioners at St. Rita's. Kathy Reinhardt joined the committee in 1982, and her daughters have come aboard within the past seven years.

Mykins, a former nurse, remains quite active with her work on the committee. She designed altar linens for Lent this year, and plans to make ribbons for Pentecost Sunday, May 19.

"Every week something comes up. It's like a house — there's always something to be done," she remarked.

Mykins is also a lector and eucharistic minister at St. Rita's, and regularly brings the Eucharist to residents of St. Ann's Community. Mykins added with a smile that Santa and Mrs. Claus — who appear each year for the St. Rita's schoolchildren — bear a strong resemblance to her and her husband.

In addition, Mykins avidly attends daily Mass with a large group of people who travel between St. Rita's and St. Cecilia's Parish in Irondequoit.

"It's the only way to start the day," she stated.

She and her husband, also enjoy their large family gatherings that include not only her children and grandchildren, but also great-grandchildren. Childs was due to deliver the Mykins' fifth great-grandchild on May 1. But as of May 5 that hadn't yet occurred, so Childs showed up for the Sunday-morning Mass and breakfast.

"There's 3,999 generations here," Childs joked as she sat near her mother, sister and grandmother. (She still hadn't delivered as of press time May 7.)

Breakfast at the Bay Front will give way to the Mykins residence on May 12, where the family will celebrate Mother's Day in its typically boisterous style. Mykins, for one, can't wait.

"Oh my gosh, this family is out of this world," Mykins exclaimed. "The family brings the food to the house and cleans up too."

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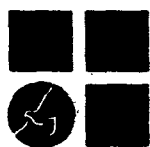
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