

Rosary gets raves at adult day care

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

ROCHESTER — Though Elsa Grunst isn't Catholic, she remembers hearing rosary recitations over the years. These days, she hears the rosary on a more regular basis — and, in fact, is a willing participant as well.

"I think it's very invigorating. You look forward to it," Grunst said.

Credit the rosary's growing popularity at Park Place at St. Bernard's for attracting Grunst. The ritual is observed every weekday at the adult day-care facility on Lake Avenue.

Susan White, activities coordinator, began the Oct. 1 gathering by encouraging participants to offer intentions. Then she led the rosary, with most of the approximately 40 senior citizens in the room taking part. This seemed a fitting start to October, a month devoted to rosary recitation in honor of the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary Oct. 7.

At Park Place, however, the rosary goes on 12 months a year. It's a custom that, according to White, began more than two years ago when some seniors brought their own rosaries for recitation on Mondays and Fridays. From there it grew to a daily observance, and interest ran so strong that the recitation was moved from a small room into the main room.

Although the rosary is done in a general setting, White said there's no forced participation. While some seniors still bring their rosaries, Park Place staff also provides rosaries made by two local Catholics, Rhoda May and her daughter Pat Petrie.

According to White, 75 percent of the Park Place clients are Catholic. The setting could also be considered appropriate because Park Place, operated by Unity Health



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Group recitation of the rosary has become a popular activity among participants in the adult day-care program offered by Park Place at St. Bernard's.

System, is located in a converted boiler room at the former St. Bernard's Seminary.

Charles Lee and Antoinette Pullano, who are regular rosary participants at Park Place, say their devotion to the rosary stems back to their childhood days.

"It does me good toward being a better Catholic," said Lee, a parishioner of St. Lawrence in Greece.

Pullano said she tries to say the rosary every day at home — even on the days she's due to be at Park Place.

"It's on TV now too (on the Eter-

nal Word Television Network), so I put it on before I come here," said Pullano, from Holy Apostles Parish in Rochester.

White said the rosary fits in nicely with other daily activities, coming right between lunch and exercise. "It's a soothing way to begin our afternoon," said White, who attends St. Pius Tenth Parish in Chili.

Mary Walker, manager of Park Place at St. Bernard's, said the facility opened in 1997 to serve senior citizens with varying degrees of dementia or memory impairment. She

noted that rosary recitation can have a positive therapeutic effect on this segment of the population.

"There have been some studies that show the repetition of the prayer synchronizes the breathing and the heart-lung rhythm," Walker said.

Spiritual benefits are available as well, Grunst pointed out.

"You go back to that rosary and what you thought while you were doing it — 'The Lord told me don't do this, don't do that.' You learn a lot from it, believe me," she stated.

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