

ROSARY

Continued from page 1

come embedded in the minds and memories of countless listeners.

Judy Geimer recalls attending early broadcasts with other youths from her native parish, Rochester's Ss. Peter and Paul. "You had to make an appointment (to be on the show)," said Geimer, who now attends St. Jude's in Gates. "That was a big thing for us. We would practice the prayers so we could recite them all (on the air) in unison."

Dolores Brien, the Family Rosary for Peace's business manager since 1974, said the small broadcast room at 401 Orange St. could only hold 20 people. On tapes being used for current broadcasts, she said, "I can hear my mother's voice."

During the summers, the show would move outdoors where Father Cirrincione broadcast from a special rosary garden next to St. Francis of Assisi Church. Among the garden's statues were a replica of the Virgin Mary that Father Cirrincione had obtained on a pilgrimage trip to Fatima. "My father worked at St. Francis for 35 years. He planted all the rosebushes," Brien said.

Father Tomasso said he attended several broadcasts with his father. In addition, his grandmother gave the show top priority: Whenever Family Rosary for Peace began, she was accorded complete silence — even at large family holiday celebrations. Father Tomasso added that many other families as well were devoted to the show. "It was very influential on diocesan family life — very, very influential," he said, noting that immigrant families could easily follow along even if they didn't understand English. Meanwhile, Bishop Clark pointed out that numerous travelers would

casually stumble upon the show, "just driving through our region."

The show became multifaceted, adding occasional Masses and special prayers as well as guest slots by diocesan bishops and priests. Father Cirrincione also developed a regular feature offering Catholic news of the day. He would occasionally solicit a guest priest, but led the lion's share of broadcasts for the remainder of his 40-year pastorate at St. Francis of Assisi.

"He sacrificed every evening, except on Sundays so he could have one night off," said Father Paul Wohlrab, a substitute host.

Msgr. Cirrincione continued his involvement long after his 1977 retirement. A heart attack in 1990 ended his role as host; taped broadcasts were played temporarily before live shows resumed at the Sisters of St. Joseph motherhouse for several years. The program has since reverted to taped shows.

The monsignor stayed on as director until 1998. His name remains synonymous with the show despite Father Tomasso's observation that he was a humble man at heart.

"He was only concerned about the Rosary for Peace. It was never about personalities," said Father Tomasso, who is pastor of Holy Apostles, St. Anthony of Padua and Holy Family parishes in Rochester.

Indeed, Msgr. Cirrincione credited a higher authority for the show's durability. "It has been possible because the Lord has wanted it and has blessed it. It has divine assistance," Msgr. Cirrincione said in a 1977 *Courier* article.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish closed in 2000, yet Msgr. Cirrincione lived in its former sisters' residence until his death. His memory is kept alive not only through the taped broadcasts, but also through the rosary garden that is still main-



File photo

Bishop James E. Kearney leads the rosary during the program's first year on the air.

tained by former parishioners.

SHOW WILL GO ON

Family Rosary for Peace has always held an early-evening time slot. In 1979, after many years at WSAY, the show switched its flagship station to WWWG 1460 AM. The tapes are now broadcast at 6:30 p.m. on WWWG, as well as at 9:30 p.m. on WLGZ 990 AM and 5 a.m. on WDCZ 102.7 FM. All shows are carried seven days per week.

At various times throughout its history, Family Rosary for Peace has aired on stations in such cities as Auburn, Corning, Buffalo, Syracuse, Elmira, Hornell and Binghamton. However, Brien said budgetary concerns have caused the show to drop some stations. She acknowledged that donations during this past year have totaled only about half the show's operating budget of \$55,000. Brien emphasized that radio air time is not cheap, saying, "I think some people are of the idea that this is free."



Dolores Brien and Father Paul Tomasso pose in the rosary garden of the former St. Francis of Assisi Church. The garden served as the program's summer broadcast site.

The show has always been an independent, nonprofit entity that relies strictly on donations. Those wishing to offer financial support may send checks to Family Rosary for Peace, PO Box 11007, Rochester, NY, 14611.

Despite the ongoing need for funding, Father Tomasso is optimistic that Family Rosary for Peace will continue its legacy, bringing spiritual nourishment not only to families, but also to hospital patients and shut-ins. "Our survey shows that all three stations have a good listening body," he said.

Geimer said she continues to listen to the radio show daily. "To me, it's like a community rather than doing it alone. Even though I live alone, I feel I'm with all of the people listening to it."

Father Tomasso said the show has always survived financial challenges thanks to the tireless efforts of Msgr. Cirrincione. "I think the 52 years are due to Father Joe's commitment to the power of the rosary and the power of prayer," he said. "People couldn't say no because his faith was so strong."

"We are better because of what he did in honor of Our Lady," Father Wohlrab added.

| GENERAL | SERVICES | |
|--|---|---|
| Announcements | Ceiling Repair | Painting & Wallcovering |
| ADOPTIONS The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 585-529-9530. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier. | TEXTURED/SWIRLED CEILINGS: 9' x 12' ceiling only \$59! Water damaged, stained, poorly textured/swirled ceilings repaired, re-textured, repainted, or made flat again. Any size drywall/plaster wall repairs. No job too small. 585/392-5076. | AL MEYVIS, JR.: Painting: Basement walls repaired/painted/wet basement problems/cellar windows. All type home repairs. NYS certified. Save up to 20% now, call 392-4435 or 323-2876. |
| MERCHANDISE | Moving & Hauling | Travel |
| Crafts & Collectibles | K-D Moving & Storage, Inc. Experience in office, household moving and deliveries. <i>Big or Small, We do them All!</i> 473-6610/473-4357 23 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607 NYDOT#9657 | JOIN OUR GROUP NOVASCOTIA SEPTEMBER 3-13, 2003: call for brochure 585-637-2119. ALL SEASONS TRAVEL. |
| Rosary & Rosary Bracelets: Hand made. Jewelry, collectibles, crafts and gifts. ROCK SHOP 214 E. Main St. Palmyra. 315-597-9226 email: rockshopjewelry@att.net. | www.catholiccourier.com | Classifieds will find you dedicated and well-educated employees 585-529-9530 |

Touch the Heart of Someone You Love With Music

DAWN MARIE CHMIEL Newly released compact disc

(Piano and Vocals) FOR HIS GLORY

Hymns of Faith and Inspiration

Classical and contemporary hymns. Celestial, heartfelt vocals with piano accompaniment. Includes favorites such as Schubert's *Ave Maria*, Webber's *Pie Jesu*, and *Amazing Grace*, along with 9 other hymns.

Available at the following stores: Alpha & Omega (both locations), Ave Maria Shop, The Catholic Shop, Logos Bookstore, St. Ann's Home Gift Shop, St. John's Religious Shop, Kate's Tea & Gift Shop at The Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse or online at www.dawnchmiel.com