

Many marriages marked at Mass

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Because one man put his foot down, Sharon Crandall has a husband today.

She was at a dance in Great Neck, Long Island, when a man stomped her foot, tearing her toenail in the process. The pained woman sat down at a table with a U. S. Merchant Marine Academy cadet named Ron Crandall who consoled her in her agony.

Ironically, Crandall's fellow cadets had bet him that night that he wouldn't meet a girl. He countered that he would meet the prettiest girl at the dance. Not only did Crandall win the bet, he eventually married the pretty woman with the wounded foot, and the couple celebrated their 38th anniversary on Sept. 11.

The pair was among almost 350 couples who attended the annual Wedding Jubilee Celebration at Fairport's St. John of Rochester Church Sept. 28. Sponsored by the Diocese of Rochester, the event marked the anniversaries of couples married 25, 30, 40, 50 or more years. It consisted of a Mass and reception, and each couple received a certificate from the diocese honoring their marriage.

"It's one of the easiest things we do, and it's the happiest thing we do," said Sister of St. Joseph Karen Dietz, diocesan coordinator of sacramental catechesis. "People are just glad to be here and to have their

commitment blessed by the church."

Bishop Matthew H. Clark presided at the Mass, which included a renewal of marriage vows ceremony in which all the couples partook. During his homily, the bishop spoke about the many qualities couples must bring to a marriage, including patience and respect. He added that he hoped the celebration served to bolster the marriages of all present.

"This is the perfect event, the perfect reality into which we insert hope," he said. "I hope that you find this gathering good for your spirit, strengthening of your heart and enriching of your marriage."

Of the couples who attended, Sister Dietz said 33 had been married 60 years and 150 had been married between 50 and 60 years. Three couples had been married 67 years and one couple, Leon and Dorothy Taylor of St. Michael's Parish, Newark, had been married 68 years.

Bishop Clark asked the Taylors at the end of the Mass to come up to the altar and receive a bouquet of flowers. The Taylors said they wanted the flowers sent to their old friend, Father Joseph M. McDonnell, who lives at McAuley Residence in Brighton. After the Mass, the Taylors, who raised their four children on a dairy farm, credited their rural life with keeping them together.

"We got up at 4:30 every morning to milk the cows, feed the calves, and get four children breakfast and off



Leila Navidi/Catholic Courier

Bishop Matthew H. Clark presents a bouquet of flowers to Leon and Dorothy Taylor of St. Michael's Parish in Newark, who have been married 68 years. The couple attended the Sept. 28 Wedding Jubilee celebration at Fairport's St. John of Rochester Church.

to school," Dorothy said. "We were always working together."

The Taylors met in high school where Dorothy said her future husband proved difficult to interest at first.

"He was very attractive, and he was hard to get, and I thought I had to work harder to get him," she said with a laugh.

"She was attractive — and still is," Leon added.

If faith in God was something that all the couples at the celebration shared, a sense of humor such as that displayed by the Taylors seemed high on the list of qualities that bonded them as well. For example, Evelyn Stroud laughed as she said that she and her husband of 30 years, Vincent, were both highly opinionated and often argued.

"But that doesn't mean you don't

love each other," she said. "You kind of get comfortable with each other to do that. You get to the point where she's not going to leave him, and he's not going to leave me, so what's the point?"

Her husband added that the couple, who attend Christ the King Church in Irondequoit, learned through the years to depend on each other because both of them had to live in Rochester away from their families — hers is in Texas and his in Illinois. Evelyn said that they enjoyed the celebration at St. John's, and especially liked being around so many couples who had been married longer than they have been.

"I think it's a reinforcement for us 'newbies' to be around the seasoned veterans that know what they're doing, and it's encouraging," she said.

GENERAL

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