

Century of care, unity celebrated

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

In 1952, Loretta Parshall joined Catholic Daughters of the Americas' Court 1173 St. Michael-Penn Yan. Although she has seen the organization change in many ways during her 51 years as a member, she said one thing has remained constant.

"Our mission stays the same," Parshall said. "We work for charity and unity. We do a lot of good and we give a lot to charity."

This year, Catholic Daughters across the nation are celebrating 100 years of charity and unity, as 2003 marks the organization's centennial anniversary. Members of the organization participate in the religious, charitable and educational apostolates of the church, and their mission is to positively influence the welfare of all people and to work for the promotion of justice, equality, human rights and dignity for all.

To celebrate the organization's anniversary, a commemoration Mass was held at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City in June, and another Mass will be held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 18. Locally, a celebration was held Oct. 4 at St. Michael's Church in Penn Yan, in conjunction with the annual Past Regents Memorial Mass and Luncheon, which is hosted each year by one of the 12 CDA courts in the Dio-

cese of Rochester.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark celebrated the Mass and commented that it was held on the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi. He likened the Catholic Daughters to St. Francis, noting that both are known for their concern for the harmony and well-being of the human family.

"How inspired we all were by whose feast day this is," said Marie Wilkins, a member of Court 1173. "That's what we need now, is the spirit of Assisi."

During the luncheon, New York State Regent Helene Shepard presented Bishop Clark with a \$2,000 check for the Seminary Fund in Rochester. Bishop Clark also received a copy of *Catholic Daughters of the Americas — A Century in Review*, a book that was recently published for the organization's centennial.

"It's been my privilege as bishop here to experience firsthand your generosity. You care for others, and I pray, along with everyone here today, that God will continue to bless the Catholic Daughters, both in our diocese and in the state," Bishop Clark said.

Shepard, who traveled across the state to be at the Mass, said it was important for her to come.

"We had the celebration in St. Patrick's, and we will have our celebration in Washington, D.C., but it's on the local level, in each of the eight dioceses, that it's really happening. We're a grassroots organi-



Leila Navid/Catholic Courier

Jo Kuczek (left) and Jeanette Botindari, color guards for Catholic Daughters of the Americas, join with Patricia Curtain (background) to celebrate the organization's 100th anniversary Oct. 4 at St. Michael's Church in Penn Yan.

zation," she said.

Marian Love, CDA's state diocesan chairman of public relations, joined Court 1173 in 1976. She said the Catholic Daughters are losing members rapidly because of age, and fewer women are joining today than several decades ago because more women have careers. Even so, she said, women continue to be attracted to the organization, especially through word of mouth.

"Every single day we're losing by age, but at the same time, we're slowly bringing in new members," Love said.

"We will continue to find our strength in the various courts in the big and so-called small places in the state and in our nation. It started in Utica, it's continued for 100 years, and we pray for that service to nation, to church and to community may continue," said Msgr. James

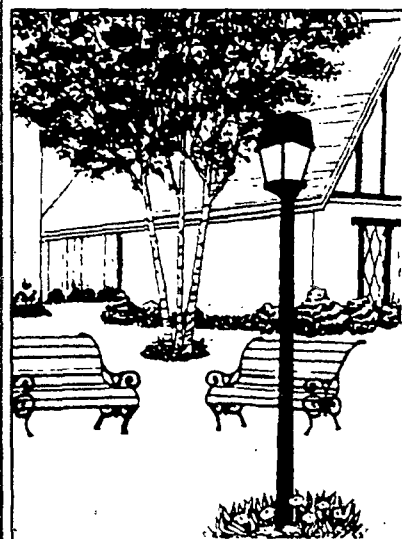
Cox, New York state CDA chaplain.

Parshall, who twice has served as grand regent of Court 1137, had seven children when she joined CDA. The organization provided a way for her to get out of the house, but it was more than just that, she said.

"I just sensed that this was a beautiful group that I felt like I wanted to be a part of. It was something that I needed and I was grateful for it. It fulfilled me more," Parshall said.

Parshall's experience with CDA has been so satisfying that she would encourage all Catholic women to join the organization.

"It would add a lot of dimension to their lives. My dream is that every Catholic woman in the parishes join the Catholic Daughters of the Americas," Parshall said.



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