



The Rev. Vincent Clyne, pastor of St. Ann's, enjoys the school Christmas play with some second-grade friends sharing his lap. The students include, from the left, James Gill, Mary Lynch and Richard Capobianco.

## St. Ann's dedicated to spiritual needs

By DIANE C. LORE  
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

It's a Monday evening, when most people are home around the dinner table or watching television. But in St. Ann's Church on Cromwell Avenue in Dongan Hills, the lights are on and the pews are filling up.

Parishioners (and some non-parishioners) are coming in for the 7:30 mass and novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

With 14 Sunday masses, three daily masses and a variety of special masses, devotions and services, including a weekly charismatic mass, St. Ann's prides itself on serving the varied spiritual needs of its parishioners. Indeed, the church offers more weekly masses than any other Island parish, and the church and auditorium chapel are usually filled for all the masses.

For the last two years, the parish has sponsored a Lenten mission and renewal program that has drawn Catholics from across the Island. A "holy hour" and "nocturnal adoration," where persons may come to the church throughout the night and early

morning to pray, also draws parishioners. And the rosary is recited every weekday after 9 a.m. mass.

"First and foremost, I'd say we're a parish dedicated to fulfilling the spiritual needs of our people," said the Rev. Sylvester McGinn, associate pastor.

Although small in geographic size, St. Ann's is the Island's second largest parish, with some 4,000 families on the register. Weekly mass attendance averages more than 3,000, although not all are parishioners, Father McGinn noted.

"Because we have such a varied schedule of masses, and because of our location (mid-way between Hyland Boulevard and Richmond Road), we get a lot of people who do not live in the parish but who attend mass here," he said.

"I'd have to say our parishioners are very concerned about their spiritual growth. If they weren't, we assume they would not be turning out so enthusiastically," said Father McGinn.

Long-time parishioner Francis Ciosek is a volunteer lay coordinator of liturgical ministries. In that capacity, he coordinates the various parish volunteers. St. Ann's has an active corps of lay volunteers, with 22 parishioners serving as Eucharistic ministers, 15 as lectors, and others singing in the choir or serving as ushers.

There are also parish chapters of the Legion of Mary and the Blue Army, volunteers dedicated to the rosary.

"What I like about this parish is the spirit of concern shown by the people. The people seem to hunger for spiritual growth," Ciosek commented.

St. Ann's parishioners also work in the Island community "in quiet ways," Ciosek pointed out. Several parishioners, for example, work with the homeless as volunteers with Project Hospitality. Others regularly contribute clothing and food for the needy. Members of the St. Ann's St. Vincent dePaul Society also work in the community, visiting the sick and the needy and doing good deeds, as do members of the Holy Name and Altar Rosary societies. St. Ann's also hosts weekly meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous.

"No one advertises, they just go out and do it," Ciosek said.

According to Father McGinn, the majority of St. Ann's parishioners are middle-class from Italian or Irish backgrounds, reflected in the neat one-family ranch-style homes that line the streets of Dongan Hills.

The parish also includes the Berry Houses complex, St. Francis Priory, and the Carmel Richmond Nursing Home. Adjacent parishes include St. Christopher's in Grant City; St. Margaret Mary's, Midland Beach; Holy Rosary, South Beach; St. Sylvester's, Concord; and St. Teresa's, Castleton Corners.

Although many parishioners have lived in the neighborhood for decades, young families have been moving into new homes built below Hyland Boulevard.

As evidence of the younger families in the parish, last year St. Ann's had 129 baptisms and 60 weddings. There are also 475 students enrolled in St. Ann's religious education (RC) program, and 282 students enrolled in the parish school, which is across the street from PS 11.

The parish supports an active youth sports program and a Scouting program. Parents of St. Ann's students also meet several times a month to socialize and play a friendly game of volleyball or basketball, Father McGinn said.

On the other end of the age spectrum, St. Ann's Golden Age Club meets once a week in the basement of the rectory. There seniors come to socialize and plan special events, such as day trips.

"We really do try our best to make everyone feel welcome, to make everyone feel there's a place for them," Father McGinn added.

The Rev. Vincent F. Clyne has been pastor of St. Ann's for 12 years. He and Father McGinn are working together again, after having both served at Immaculate Conception parish in Stapleton for a number of years. In addition to Father McGinn, Father Clyne is assisted by the Rev. Joseph Shiel, a member of the Holy Ghost religious order. Several priests also serve as weekend assistants.

When St. Ann's was established as a parish in 1914, it was the only church serving residents of Dongan Hills. Grant City, Concord, Midland Beach and South Beach. Surrounding parishes were not established until the 1920s. The present church site on Cromwell Avenue was acquired in 1920, and the church was completed two years later. Since then it has undergone interior and exterior renovations.

"This is one in a weekly series on each of the Catholic parishes on Staten Island."



### St. Ann's Parish

101 Cromwell Ave.  
Dongan Hills

#### Masses

Saturday: 4 p.m., 5 p.m., 7:30 p.m. (church); 4 p.m. (chapel)

Sunday: 7 a.m., 8 a.m., 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 1:15 p.m., 7:30 p.m. (church); 10 a.m. (charismatic mass, chapel); 7:30 p.m. (chapel)

Weekdays: 7 a.m., 8 a.m., 9 a.m.; Monday, 7:30 p.m.

Miraculous Medal Novena mass

Christmas Eve: 4, 5, 7:30 p.m. (church); 4 p.m. (chapel); midnight mass church and chapel

Christmas Day: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 1:15 p.m. (church); 10 a.m., 12:15 p.m. (chapel)

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays 11:30 a.m. to 13:30 p.m.; 8:15 p.m. in the church.

Served by:

Rev. Vincent F. Clyne, pastor; Rev. Sylvester McGinn, Rev. Joseph Shiel, associate pastors; Rev. Edmund Conforti, Rev. Luke McCann, in residence; Rev. Thomas Bergin, Rev. John Comiskey, Rev. Edmund Whelan, weekend associates; Michael Mazella, school principal, religious education coordinator.

Parish phones

Rectory/office ... 351-9270

School ... 351-4343



First-graders act out the nativity scene during the parish school Christmas play.



Parishioners dot the pews in St. Ann's while saying the rosary on Tuesday morning.