

PARISH PROFILE

# Marysville's St. Mary's known for rising to the occasion

Food bank and clothing bank were started by parishioners in a community that strives to make newcomers feel welcome

BY TERRY MCGUIRE

Two corners of the St. Mary Parish campus reflect the "can-do" spirit of this 121-year-old Catholic community.

In one corner lies the century-old parish cemetery, containing the earthly remains of James and Maria Comeford, who were among the nine pioneer families that settled the area, founding the parish in 1901. Marysville is named after Maria.

Kitty corner from that is the newly-built Marysville Community Food Bank. Dedicated last January, the 5,600-square-foot facility serves approximately 1,100 families each month and has 18 sponsoring churches, said director Joyce Zeigen. But its roots go back to 1974 when two parishioners, JoAnn Mulligan and Yvonne Delisle, began delivering groceries by car to a handful of families in need. Many of those early volunteers from St. Mary's continue volunteering today, Zeigen said.

Parishioners say St. Mary's is the kind of community that will spring into action when a challenge arises, such as the need for a food bank.

When given "the information of what needs to be done, they really take it and go with it," Mulligan said. As the food bank's retired director, who continues to volunteer there, she has seen the need for the food bank grow over the decades. It originally operated out of the St. Mary's rectory then was moved to a building next to the Marysville YMCA. Now it's back on parish grounds, leased by the parish for just \$1 per year.

Mulligan said Father Horacio Yanez, St. Mary's pastor since 1998, has been especially supportive of the effort.

"He was instrumental in our being able to build the new building on the parish grounds."



Horacio Yanez



The old church served the parish for seven decades.



St. Mary's first Communion Class of 1911 joins Father Patrick O'Donnell, who twice served as pastor between 1908 and 1931.

in Puyallup helped keep her off of welfare when she was a divorcee raising her six children on her own. So she sought to do something similar after moving to Marysville. She prayed to God through St. Joseph for help in raising her kids and keeping them out of trouble, thus the name of the house.

## ST. MARY PARISH, MARYSVILLE

Founded: mission, **1888**; parish, **1901**  
 Households: **1,800**  
 Mission: St. Anne, Tulalip  
 Address: 4200 88th St. N.E., Marysville, WA 98270  
 Phone: **360-653-9400**  
 E-mail: [clarene.schadee@stmary-stanne.org](mailto:clarene.schadee@stmary-stanne.org)  
 Web site: [www.stmary-stanne.org](http://www.stmary-stanne.org)



Father Peter Dubbel, shown in this 1895 photo, rode horseback from his residence in Tulalip to serve the Marysville Catholic community, which started as a mission in 1888.



Pastor Father Edmond Long stands with a vacation school class in June 1940.



Founding pastor Father Paul Gard (in front of man in doorway) poses with parishioners outside their original church in the early 1900s.



A new altar imported from France arrived at the church in 1917.



The parish cemetery holds the remains of Marysville pioneers James and Maria Comeford.

## A growing community

Lenora Bruce is another example of a St. Mary parishioner taking action after seeing a need. With the encouragement and support of Father Yanez, and with the help of volunteers from the parish, she opened Saint Joseph's House three years ago to provide free clothing and household items to low-income families. The ecumenical effort serves an average of 40 people on each of the three days a week it is open.

Bruce remembers how Francis House

## PASTORS

- Father Paul Gard, **1901**
- Father William Quigley, **1906**
- Father M. Gallagher, **1907**
- Father Patrick O'Donnell, **1908**
- Father Daniel Grace, **1915**
- Father James Wagner, **1916**
- Father Patrick O'Donnell, **1918**
- Father Terence Carraher, **1931**
- Father Edmond Long, **1933**
- Father Garrett Galvin, **1942**
- Father Maurice Foley, **1944**
- Father Anthony McGirl, **1950**
- Father John O'Connell, **1957**
- Father John Horan, **1960**
- Father Kevin Coyle, **1964**
- Father Kenneth Ogradowski, **1969**
- Father David Brant, **1977**
- Father John Bulger, **1988**
- Father Horacio Yanez, **1998**



The bell from the original church sits atop a glass-enclosed case containing a statue of Mary near the church entrance. Donated by Marysville pioneer James Comeford, the bell was part of a steeple addition in 1907.

St. Mary Parish today is a growing community, having gone from 800 households a decade ago when Father Yanez arrived to approximately 1,800 households today. Much of the increase is due to an influx of Hispanic families drawn to the parish by the bilingual Father Yanez.

"The first Mass I celebrated here there were 47 (people) at the Mass in Spanish," the pastor recalled. "Now we number about 1,200."

Hispanics make up about a third of the parish, he said. Caucasians are the largest group, followed by parishioners of Filipino, Hispanic and Vietnamese descent, he said. It makes the parish's annual cultural fest in August a showplace of diversity.

"They're a very flexible people," Father Yanez said of his community. "They're very open to ideas about spirituality and prayer."

The Marysville School District is one of the main employers of parishioners. Recent additions such as Naval Station Everett, the Tulalip Casino and a factory outlet shopping center have brought more growth to the city of 36,000.

## Hospitality is a priority

Father Yanez said St. Mary's is probably best known for its hospitality. Making people feel welcomed has given the Hispanic community and others a "greater sense of ownership" in the parish, he said. People arriving for Mass are

greeted at the door. Then, just before the liturgy starts, everyone is asked to greet those around them.

The parish's obliging secretary Clarene Schadee, a parishioner since 1970, said she strives to let newcomers know "we're happy they're here" and to give them all the information about what's going on in the parish. "Bending over backwards should be our most important mission," she said.

St. Mary's also is known for its good liturgies and strong Scripture study gatherings.

Longtime parishioners Sandy and Ted Keaton said the community has been blessed over the years with good priests. They said Father Yanez is an inspiration.

"He's very personable," said Sandy Keaton. "His sermons are always down to earth — easy to understand and apply."

The Keatons were married in 1960 in the old St. Mary Church, which seated around 100 people. They remember the many fundraisers for the new church, which opened in 1968 and seats approximately 700. After its construction, a dedicated crew led by John Krell staged Saturday night bingo games to pay off the debt. In the mid-1980s they had succeeded in their goal, said Schadee, the parish secretary. She notes it was good timing, because the advent of casinos meant the end for bingo.