Longview parish plays integral role in outreach to others

At home and abroad, St. Rose de Viterbo community a symbol of charity and Catholicism

LONGVIEW
BY TERRY MCGUIRE

John Gotshall’s voice rises with enthusiasm as he describes the St. Vincent de Paul Society’s new 10,000-square-foot building.

Four times the size of its predecessor, and featuring walk-in freezers, storage rooms and spacious display areas for racks of clothing, the new facility enables the society to provide free food and clothing in a much more efficient and congenial setting to the 1,500 clients it serves each month.

“I just can’t tell you how convenient it is now compared to our old environment,” Gotshall said.

Opened in December and blessed by Auxiliary Bishop Eusebio Elizondo last April 8, the building at 1222 Baltimore St. is an example of the impact that St. Rose de Viterbo Parish has on this city of 35,000. Many of the 63 volunteers and much of the financial support come from the parish and its mission, St. Catherine in Cathlamet, said Gotshall, a parishioner and vice president of the St. Vincent de Paul board of directors.

“It’s a wonderful service for the community” and an “expression of the charity and Catholicism” that St. Rose stands for, he said. “We couldn’t really exist without the support of St. Rose Church.”

The new building is but one of the many ways St. Rose has been making its presence felt in Longview since the parish was established in 1927. St. Rose School, which is nearing its sixth decade as the area’s only Catholic school, has produced generations of Longview’s citizens. The St. Rose parish center accommodates gatherings for a variety of nonprofit organizations.

The parish’s outreach extends to a sister parish relationship in El Salvador. Several delegations from St. Rose have traveled to the Central American country to assist in projects while also praying for them at home.

St. Rose parishioners are welcoming and friendly, said Father Tim Ilgen, completing his fifth year as pastor. “It’s a very active community, a lot of people volunteer,” he said.

“There’s a lot of multigenerational families that support and have been part of St. Rose School and St. Rose Parish for a lot of years,” said former St. Rose principal Kay Purell, a product of the parish herself.

Parish events include a popular Cinco de Mayo food festival sponsored by its Hispanic community, the Knights of Columbus Crab Feed in January and the parish picnic in September. Another popular community-building event is the Friday night pizza gatherings during Lent, a successor to the Lenten soup suppers.

Parish nurtures vocations

St. Rose has nurtured religious vocations among a number of its sons and daughters over the years. Redemptorist Father Joe Maier is recognized around the world for his missionary work in Bangkok’s largest slum over almost four decades. Others with parish roots include Seattle archdiocesan priests Fathers Bill McKee, Brian Snyder and Derek Lappe.

Women religious include Providence Sister Leona Miller and Sister Stella Monroe.

“It was a community very supportive of vocations,” Father Lappe, now pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish in Bremerton, recalled last month. The daily Mass participants and the women religious from St. John Hospital were especially supportive during his discernment, he said.

According to both a parish history and information in the archdiocesan archives, Bishop Edward O’Dea established the parish in 1927, although other archival information pegs it at being established in 1928 at an unknown date. The parish’s namesake, St. Rose of Viterbo, Italy (1235–1252), was a poor and pious recluse known for her miraculous powers who was active in the Third Order of St. Francis. She was banished for a time from Viterbo by the Roman emperor for preaching penance in the community. She returned when the pope regained power.

St. Rose Parish was established just four years after the timber town of Longview was dedicated. But the roots of Catholicism in the Longview-Kelso area date back to 1850 when Mass was celebrated near the mouth of the Cowlitz River in the settlement of Monticello, Longview’s predecessor. A half century later, Kelso-area Catholics petitioned the Franciscan Fathers for a permanent presence, and in 1908 purchased a former Methodist church in Kelso and remodeled it. When the Franciscans founded St. Rose, the community consisted of approximately 185 Catholic families, most of them of German descent who worked the area’s mills and plants along the Columbia River.

St. Rose’s first church was constructed in 1926 for $17,500 under founding pastor Franciscan Father Leonard Bose. The 98-by-40-foot wood-framed building seated 350 worshippers and served the parish until the current church opened in 1959 at a cost of $397,000.

ST. ROSE
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St. Rose de Viterbo Parish, Longview
Founded: 1927
Households: 1,200
Mission: St. Catherine, Cathlamet
Street address: 2571 Nichols Blvd.
Longview, WA 98632-1800
Phone: 360-425-4660
E-mail: info@strose-longview.org
Web Site: www.strose-longview.catholicweb.com

PASTORS:
Father Leonard Bose, OFM, 1927
Father Luke Pawleson, OFM, 1930
Father Victor Bucher, OFM, 1934
Father Clarence Manns, OFM, 1937
Father Humillis Wiese, OFM, 1940
Father Patrick Mulligan, 1941
Father Joseph O’Shea, 1974
Father Richard Basso, 1980
Father Patrick Ryan, 1985
Father Hans Olson, 1989
Father Lawrence Minder, 1996
Father Scott Connolly, 1998
Father Tim Ilgen, 2004

Father Patrick Mulligan