Ministries abound as parish enters second century

With outreach programs in their own backyard and overseas, Holy Rosary parishioners have plenty to keep them busy.

**HOLY ROSARY PARISH, SEATTLE**

- **Founded**: 1909
- **Households**: 1,500
- **Address**: 4210 S.W. Genesse St., Seattle, WA 98116-4298
- **Phone**: 206-935-8353
- **Web site**: www.holyrosaryseattle.org

**PASTORS**

- Fr. Daniel Hanly, 1909
- Fr. Michael J. O’Callaghan, 1910
- Fr. James Lanigan, 1924
- Fr. William Power, 1962
- Fr. James van Gong, 1973
- Fr. James Mallahan, 1981
- Fr. David Brant, 1988
- Fr. Jeffrey Sarkies, 1992
- Fr. John Madigan, 2006

**CENTENIAL MASS**

Archbishop Alex J. Brunnett will celebrate the centennial of Holy Rosary Parish on Sunday, Oct. 11 at two Masses, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

**1909**

- The parish’s 20th annual Westfest fall festivity — extending as far away as Africa.

**1913**

- Fr. John Madigan, Holy Rosary’s pastor since 2006, sees those family ties played out in the parish school, whose teachers — from the Tacoma Dominicans of the past to the current lay educators — have educative operations of families.

**1926**

- Father Madigan notes, too, that the parish has been blessed with strong leadership over the past century, including Father James Lanigan, pastor for 38 years, and Tacoma Dominican Sister Carmelita, the school’s principal and superior for 33 years. Both of these Irish immigrants served the parish up to their deaths.

**1938**

- “So many families remain connected to our school … and to the sacraments in our parish,” he said.

**1951**

- “There was strong, consistent leadership, and that really set a very important foundation for what Holy Rosary is today,” Father Madigan said.

**1995**

- “We had tremendous pride in being Holy Rosary students, and it was instilled in us that we had to watch our behavior all the time — in the community, on the bus and in the West Seattle junction — because we were Holy Rosary kids,” said Agnes Jacobson, a parishioner for more than 50 years prior to moving from West Seattle, considered the parish an “extension of the family.”

**2009**

- “So many parishioners have plenty to keep them busy.”

**2013**

- Kris Brown, whose 23-year tenure as Holy Rosary’s principal included the Blue Ribbon years, said it’s a school community that values Catholic education, is proud of its tradition, and strongly supports the school spiritually and financially.

**2019**

- Now principal of St. Catherine School in Seattle, Brown said she was especially impressed by the community’s “ethic of care” that she said happening daily at Holy Rosary, and by its “compassion for one another and for the outside community — extending as far away as Africa.”

Reaching out overseas

The outreach to Africa and to the Philippines is one of the parish’s newer ministries. Since 2000, the Holy Rosary International Mission Board has sent 10 missions of parishioners to Kenya, Uganda and the Philippines. Coordinator Tim Law said in an e-mail that school, parish and outside donors have contributed more than $500,000 to projects in those countries.

“We have helped build schools, clinics, medical centers, water wells and supplied water tanks, medical equipment, computers, school supplies, school fees and more,” Law said.

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HOLY ROSARY: Outreach aids projects in Africa, Philippines

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Holy Rosary’s school children sponsor four of the approximately 20 African students who each receive $600 annually for school fees and boarding. The parish’s monthly second collection at Mass goes to the Ugandan Sisters of the Daughters of Mary and the Carmelite Sisters of the Philippines.

Parish center nears completion

Looking ahead, Father Madigan said the $3-million remodeling of the former convent building into a parish center is expected to be finished by early November. It will provide space for meeting rooms and receptions and will be highlighted by a chapel seating approximately 71 people, enabling the parish to hold small weddings, funerals and other liturgies in the chapel instead of in the large church.

The pastor said the parish also is following the lead of the archdiocese in looking at initiatives and programs promoting Catholic identity.

Road to centennial has had its bumps

Holy Rosary Parish has had its share of tragedy and crime over the past 100 years. Its second pastor, Father Michael O’Callaghan, known as an untiring leader, drowned on a wet and foggy night in November 1924 after his car skidded into a water-filled ditch and overturned near Kent as he was returning from Forty Hours’ devotion at an Auburn parish. A Progress story on his funeral reported how his casket was carried from the church “between the long lines of parochial school children, who wept unrestrainedly.”

Three years later, his successor, Father James Lanigan, made newspaper headlines when thieves who had apparently planned to rob him on his way to the bank instead broke into his office while he was away at lunch and made off with a Sunday collection of more than $500.

In 1992 the parish again made the police blotter when a burglar stole the church’s bronze tabernacle and left behind satanic markings in the sanctuary. Ironically, one of the parish’s Eucharistic ministers, Donald Bernitt, was the one who discovered the discarded sacred object three months later. He was on his morning jog when he found it bent and scratched and jammed onto a guardrail post. The burglar had been sentenced in the case only days earlier.

In August 1997 Holy Rosary Church might have burned to the ground had it not been for Dan Jackson, a member of Hope Lutheran Church across the street. Struck by the smell of what he at first thought was a “terrible barbecue” as he was leaving for the evening, Jackson stopped his car, got out to investigate, and noticed puffs of smoke coming from beneath the church tower’s eaves. He alerted a neighbor, who called the fire department. The blaze, caused by a loose ceiling light fixture, caused more than $200,000 in damages and forced liturgies to be held in the Lanigan gym for the next eight months.

(Information from Edward A. Day’s centennial history was included in this story and the story below.)