

PARISH PROFILE

Eastside parish reflects suburban growth

Youthful faith community concentrates its resources on youth ministry, social outreach

SAMMAMISH
BY GREG MAGNONI

Mary, Queen of Peace Parish is young by archdiocesan standards, youthful in its makeup and dynamic in its growth.

Established in 1987 by retired Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, the parish serves a largely white-collar population attracted to the area by corporate giants like Microsoft and Boeing. As a suburban parish, its membership consists largely of young families.

According to its 2008–2009 annual report, the parish has 2,119 registered households and a total of 7,397 parish members with an average age of 32. Not surprisingly, the parish ranks among the highest in the Archdiocese of Seattle in the number of children of school age, with nearly 2,500.

The number of households in the parish has more than doubled since its establishment in the rapidly growing East King County community, and the ethnic make-up of the parish reflects the efforts by the region's largest employers to attract top professionals from around the globe.

Youth ministry, human concerns

With so many young families, youth ministry is a focal point for Mary, Queen of Peace. The parish Sunday preschool had 104 students and the kindergarten through sixth-grade religious education programs enrolled 350 students in the past year. Life Teen and Edge ministries for middle school and high school students had 210 participants.

Although the parish does not have its own school, it subsidizes both St. Joseph School, Issaquah and St. Louise, Bellevue. Both schools partner with the parish to ensure that parents of school-age children at Mary, Queen of Peace who want a Catholic education for their children can get one.

Father Kevin Duggan, pastor since 2005, said that the parish membership, which is "mostly white-collar and socio-economically middle to upper-middle class with a high degree of education and professional advancement," support numerous social outreach initiatives with their time and treasure.

Delegations from Mary, Queen of Peace have traveled to establish a sister parish relationship with a faith community in Ghana, Africa and to assist with well drilling and other projects. The Human Concerns Commission oversees distribution of 5 percent of the parish's ordinary income to local, national and international charities. Mary, Queen of Peace provides substantial support for special collections, contributing \$183,000 in 2008–2009.

Parish History

Father Duggan is quick to credit the parish's founding clergy and members for the vitality of Mary, Queen of Peace. Father Stephen Szeman was appointed



Mary, Queen of Peace Pastor Father Kevin Duggan presides at feast-day Mass honoring Mary.

Mary, Queen of Peace, Sammamish

Founded: **1987**

Households: **2,119**

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Feast day celebrates Mary, growing parish diversity

SAMMAMISH

Mary, Queen of Peace Parish celebrated its first annual parish feast day at weekend Masses Nov. 14 and 15.

"Every parish that I've ever been a part of in any capacity, there's always been a feast day," said Father Kevin Duggan, pastor of Mary, Queen of Peace since 2005.

"[We wanted] to do something that would celebrate the patronage of Mary but also the cultural and ethnic make-up of the parish," Father Duggan said of the faith community that includes many members who have immigrated to the East King County parish from nations throughout the world.

Patronage of Mary

Parishioners were asked to bring icons of Mary from the various traditions and cultures now represented in the growing suburban parish. In addition, intercessions at the Saturday evening Mass were prayed in eight different languages: Vietnamese, Lebanese, Spanish, Malay, African, Japanese, Tagalog and Polish.

Father Duggan, who penned the lyrics for an original Marian hymn, "Holy Mary, Queen of Peace," to mark

the occasion, explained that when the parish began consideration of a parish feast day, the choice of a date proved difficult. Although a number of obvious dates were considered (Aug. 22, the Queenship of Mary; Aug. 15, the Assumption; and Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception), the timing of those Marian feast days were not favorable for a parish celebration.

The planning committee finally settled on a lesser-known feast day, the feast of the Patronage of Mary Nov. 11, which fell after the summer season but prior to Advent.

In his homily on the occasion, Father Duggan said, "Our honor of Mary reflects God's own desire that she be honored."

The parish feast day activities included a movie night featuring "The Song of Bernadette," special liturgies at all weekend Masses, a Saturday evening banquet, displays featuring statues, portraits, tapestries and other icons and a living rosary recited on Sunday afternoon, Nov. 15.

Celebrating multicultural presence

Father Duggan, who credited a team effort including the feast day

steering committee, liturgy, the social life committee, the parish art and environment committee, the rosary-making ministry and staff with the success of the event, said "especially for those who are members of a parish that bears her name, it is appropriate each year to honor her. And one of the most wonderful things was the number of people who were involved in it."

It was the first year the parish has tried to highlight and celebrate the multicultural character of the parish as a means to "reach out into the various ethnic groups and celebrate their presence," Father Duggan said.

Planning for the celebration began in January under the direction of Father Duggan. Debbie Moore, who has been a member of the parish with her husband, Brian, for the past 18 years, co-chaired the feast-day steering committee with parishioner Mike Perry.

Moore said the planning and organization ultimately "was about taking what the church already has.

"This really should rise from what we already have. That's what the feast day is," said Moore. "The living rosary was fabulous. I think we had about 10 different languages as we prayed the rosary."

Moore said she hopes participation in the feast day celebration, which involved several hundred people in the parish, will continue to grow steadily, like the parish itself, in coming years.

the parish's first pastor by retired Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, and Father Mike Raschko, who served continuously from 1988 to 2008, was the parish weekend assistant.

Approximately 300 families gathered to celebrate the parish's first Masses on the weekend of Oct. 3 and 4, 1987 in the chapel of the Lutheran Bible Institute.

Ground was broken less than two years later on May 28, 1989 for the uniquely designed new church — the parish history acknowledges that the unusual shape has been "irreverently referred to as the holy spaceship or the launching pad to heaven.

The first Masses were celebrated in the new building in August of 1990 and on Sept. 23, Archbishop Thomas Murphy dedicated the church of Mary, Queen of Peace.

Pastoral Assistant for Administration Brenda Nulliner, who took over the position from Deacon Bill Taube, who retired in January 1999, said construction plans originally called for three phases to complete the church, social hall and office wing. She said it was later decided to build out the two additional wings and a large basement meeting room that was not part of the original design in the second phase of construction.

Shortly after Father Szeman announced his resignation as pastor for health reasons, Father Paul Dalton was named pastor in 1991 and he served the parish for 14 years. One of the largest liturgies ever held in the church that he helped build was the funeral for Father Dalton after his untimely death in 2008.

Like Father Duggan, Nulliner acknowledged the debt owed to the origi-

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FATHER KEVIN DUGGAN

PASTORS:

Father Steve Szeman, 1987

Father Paul Dalton, 1991

Father Kevin Duggan, 2005



Fr. Steve Szeman

Fr. Paul Dalton

Fr. Kevin Duggan

nal parish members who brought the vision for their dynamic parish to life.

"It's only the sacrifices of founding members that make what we have today realistic," Nulliner said. "It's the people [of Mary, Queen of Peace] that have really made this parish happen."