St. Anne on Queen Anne prepares for second century

Vibrant community propelled by longtime families and newcomers
BY TERRY MCGUIRE

Not one to rest on its laurels after 100 years of serving the spiritual and physical needs of its Queen Anne community, St. Anne Parish is getting down to business as it prepares for its second century. Over the spring and summer, “Candid Conversations” sessions brought parishioners together to address issues of parish leadership and finances, “so we’ll be better prepared to look at our future,” said Pastoral Coordinator Ron Ryan.

The parish’s transition from a full-time pastor to the current full-time lay pastoral coordinator position was among the topics. “It’s not a model of parish leadership that most parishes are used to,” Ryan noted.

Building on those sessions, parish leaders last month began a series of “conversation cafes,” asking parishioners to share their thoughts and dreams for the future. Among other questions, they’re being asked to describe what they value most about the parish, and what they would take for them to become more involved. Fifty parish leaders are conducting the “cafes,” each inviting ten parishioners to meet in their homes or at a local eatery. “We hope to have the first drafts of our mission statement by the end of the year,” Ryan said.

‘Strong sense of community’
Ryan, in his third year as pastoral coordinator of the parish of approximately 590 households, says St. Anne’s long history is a strong part of its community. “We have some families that go back for generations and provide a very strong sense of community and identity,” he said. “And at the same time, because of the changing demographics on Queen Anne Hill, we have a lot of new families moving in who bring their life and their vitality, too.”

Ryan said the community’s sense of service and outreach has been integral to its history. For example, Martha’s Work, founded in 1986, makes sandwiches, collects groceries and sponsors a monthly spaghetti dinner for users of the Family and Adult Service Center downtown.

The parish boasts an active St. Vincent de Paul Society conference, and St. Anne Moms serves mothers and children in need in the greater community. The parish also hosts a dinner for homeless people twice a year.

Parish members Dr. Steve Albright, a Seattle dentist, and his wife, Paula Cioppa, recently took four fellow parishioners with them to Guatemala to provide dental and medical services to people in need, part of a humanitarian effort the couple has been involved in for years.

Chasing home, longtime parishioner Judy Killingsworth of Seattle, whose family was originally from Queen Anne community, came together when a parish boy took a fatal fall from a rope swing some years back.

“While he was still in a coma we had a prayer vigil that was entirely instituted and instigated and run by parishioners,” she said. “That’s when I realized that it was really the community that was most important. Pastors come and go, but your neighbors are usually here with you in times of joy and sorrow.”

Betty Ferguson, who with her late husband, Murray, sent all seven of their children through St. Anne School, has been an active member of the parish for 48 years. She marvels at how well the young and old parishioners combine their talents in serving the parish community. “The young people are welcoming and inclusive as far as welcoming the older people (and vice versa),” she said, “and I think that’s a great strength.”

St. Anne’s also is known for inspiring vocations to religious life. Close to a dozen parish sons have gone on to the priesthood, while a number of parish daughters have become women religious.

Msgr. Quain was colorful leader
According to a parish history, the parish named in honor of the mother of Mary was established by Bishop Edward O’Dea on Dec. 20, 1908, two years after 40 families petitioned him for a parish.

Founding parishioner Mrs. A. Butterfield, writing of the parish’s early times in a 1941 reflection, recalled: “There were so few men in church in those days that it was known as the ‘Women’s Church.’” Those first parishioners were predominately of German ancestry, she said.

Still, a succession of Irish pastors was to guide the parish for much of the next century, starting with Redemptorist Father Patrick Byrne, an Ireland-born attorney who at age 45 discerned his calling to the priesthood. He is believed to be the parish’s first priest, though it is not clear if he was assigned as pastor, according to the Archdiocese of Seattle Archives.

Ireland-born Father Thomas Quain — later Msgr. Quain — was the parish’s longest-serving pastor. He became the staff of legend during his 37-year pastorate, which ran from 1922 to his death on Dec. 22, 1959. Stories of him are retold to this day.

One longtime parishioner members being in the first grade on that Sunday during the Depression when Father Quain took up the collection basket himself during Mass. He went out among the congregation to implore parishioners to help their money-starved parish. “He was almost angry as he walked up and down the aisles,” the parishioner recalled last week.

Father Quain was equally forthright when Father Quain was a year into his pastorate. “Boys, be good to your mothers,” he said.

In 2001 the parish began a building renovation and construction project that included a seismic retrofit and additions to the school, a new parish hall and a reconfiguration of the church into the round.

Centennial Celebrations: Monday, Oct. 9. Paul and present parishioners, priests, staff and friends are invited to a parish reunion, with Mass at 6 p.m. followed by a reception and an all-class reunion celebrating St. Anne School’s 85th anniversary.
Sunday, Dec. 14. Archbishop Alex J. Brunett will rededicate the recently renovated church at the 10 a.m. Mass.

PASTORS:
(unless otherwise noted)
Father Patrick Byrne, C.Ss.R., 1908
Father Joseph Chapoton, C.Ss.R., 1909
Father Matthew Woods, 1910 (first resident pastor)
Father James Dunne, 1913
Father Thomas Quain, 1922
Father Bernard Cremer, 1960
Father Richard Stohr, 1973
Father John Horan, 1976
Father Ed Norris, 1983
Father Jim Mallahan, 1992 (priest administrator)
Father Richard Basso, 1992 (priest administrator)
Father Kevin Moran, 1994
Father Bob Camuso, 1996
Father Paul Pluth, 2005 (parochial vicar)
Father John Bowman, 2008 (parochial vicar)