Christ the King/Iglesia de Cristo Rey: A community full of joy and hope

BY BARBARA MULVEY LITTLE

Christ the King Parish/Iglesia de Cristo Rey is a worshipping community built firmly on a foundation of history that graciously accepts change and innovation.

Pastoral Life Director, Patricia (Patty) C. Repikoff explains that a deep historical memory rooted in multiple generations of original families still worshipping at Christ the King creates stability that allows the community to embrace change, new people and new ideas.

For example they elected one of the Archdiocese’s first parish councils in 1971 and parishener Rolland Ellis was ordained in the first group of men consecrated to the priesthood in 1978. In 1986, the North Seattle Hispanic Catholic Community led by Father Horacio Chavarria was invited by pastor Father Andrew Bullwinkle to share liturgical space.

Many parts, one body

In 1998 Repikoff was appointed to serve the pastoral needs of the community as pastoral life director supported by parochial vicars for Christ the King (Jesuit Father Joseph Stocking and Father Ward Oakshott) and Cristo Rey (Reverend Alberto Cerezo and Arturo Araujo SJ).

Over the last decade, Repikoff said, the intentional integration of Christ the King and Cristo Rey has benefited everyone. “People find something here that is life giving,” she said.

Father Araujo agrees. With over 800 English speaking families and about 1,000 Spanish speaking families from 17 different countries, the parish is a living example of unity through one Catholic faith.

Giving expression to all the different rituals is challenging work said Father Arturo. “The fusion of music,” Father Arturo said of Holy Week, “was like an Irish mambo fiesta.”

“As people come together with the same faith,” he said, “they sell will be donated to Christ the King program. Five dollars from each subscription to the Progress P3 subscription program. Five dollars from each subscription they sell will be donated to Christ the King Parish. For more information on this program contact Marketing Associate Keri Hake at 206-382-2075 or keri@seattlearch.org

Parish Snapshot

Founded: 1930
Registered Households: 1,000
Address: 405 N 117th St, Seattle, WA 98133
Phone: (206) 362-1545

Parish Leaders:
Fr. Gerald Fitzgerald, pastor 1930 - 1957
Fr. Paul Byrne, acting pastor 1957-1959
Fr. A. L. Leahy, pastor 1959 - 1970
Fr. Thomas Philan, pastor 1970 - 1973
Fr. John P. Doherty, pastor 1973 - 1985
Fr. Andrew Bullwinkle, pastor 1985 - 1997
Fr. Ward Oakshott, Parochial Vicar 1999 - present
Patricia Repikoff, Pastoral Life Director 1998 - present

Cristo Rey Hispanic Community
Fr. Horacio Chavarria
started Cristo Rey in 1986
Fr. Alberto Cerezo, parochial vicar 1997 - 2002
Fr. Arturo Araujo, parochial vicar 2002 - present

An Irish Mambo Fiesta

Social and liturgical celebrations take on added dimensions with integration of the two communities. Salsa dancing, Bar-b-que and Tex-Mex foods mingle at the parish Fall Fest. Holy Week is bilingual.

Father Gerald Fitzgerald, the first pastor, purchased a small house that served as both rectory and church. Fewer than a dozen people celebrated the first Mass.

Fr. Paul Byrne, acting pastor 1957-1959
Fr. Thomas Philan, pastor 1970 - 1973
Fr. John P. Doherty, pastor 1973 - 1985
Fr. Andrew Bullwinkle, pastor 1985 - 1997
Fr. Ward Oakshott, Parochial Vicar 1999 - present
Patricia Repikoff, Pastoral Life Director 1998 - present

A history of change

Founded in April 1930 by Bishop Edward D. O’Dea, Christ the King was originally called St. Anthony Parish and was established in what was then a rural area northwest of Seattle.

Father Gerald Fitzgerald, the first pastor, purchased a small house that served as both rectory and church.

The death of Father Fitzgerald in 1957 opened the way for a succession of gifted priests and leaders that guided the parish meeting challenges brought by social upheaval, a declining number of priests and women religious and the changing demographics of the neighborhood.

More recently, the parish added Caritas Center in 2004, a full-day child care, preschool/pre-kindergarten program for children two and a half to five years old plus a morning preschool/pre-kindergarten program for children four and five years old. In 2005 the parish partnered with St. Peter Claver in the lower ninth ward of New Orleans to rebuild homes.

In 2006 training began for a parish program to address issues of health care, bereavement, health advocacy and pastoral care outreach. This year the parish erected new signs for the church and school reflecting the integration of Cristo Rey and Christ the King communities.

“THINGS HAPPEN NATURALLY WHEN PEOPLE COME TOGETHER WITH THE SAME FAITH.”

JESUIT FATHER ARTURO ARAUJO

parish school opened in 1939 with four Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin and 94 students who learned French and Spanish in addition to standard subjects. In 1949, the still growing community built a larger church building and changed its name to Christ the King to distinguish it from St. Anthony’s in Renton.

Although the new building won several awards and was pictured in national magazines, the new design was controversial. No one in the congregation is more than fifty feet from the altar creating a feeling of intimacy both with God and each other.

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