

With dinner, Mass, reception, Sellwood's St. Agatha's celebrates a century

By DAVID F. ASHTON
for *THE BEE*

Sellwood's St. Agatha Catholic Church officially celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of its school and church on October 8 and 9. The commemorative events, held on the parish's campus, brought together past students, parishioners, family, and friends – for a dinner, a church service, and a reception.

St. Agatha's pastor, Fr. Nathan Zodrow, OSB, put the weekend in context for *THE BEE*. "We're celebrating 100 years of grace and blessing, that the parish and the school started at the same time in a building just one block away."

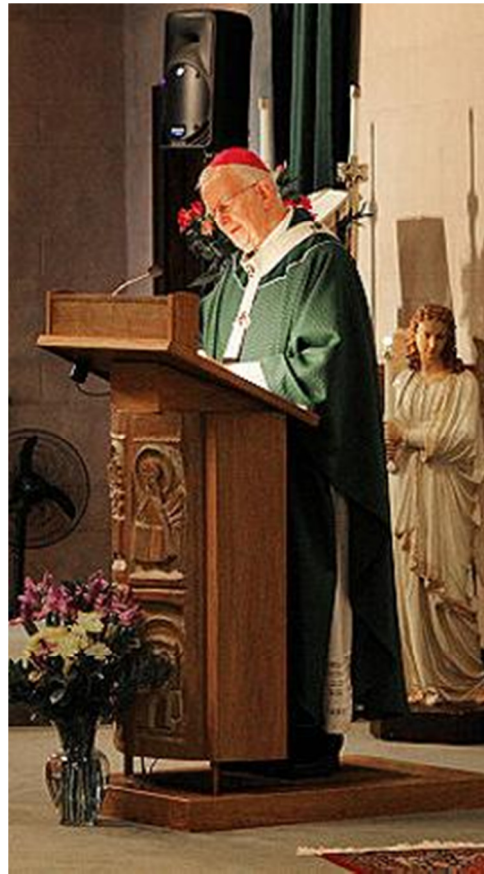
Zodrow pointed out the structure on the eastern edge of the property, and continued, "The church was on the top floor, and the school was on the first floor.

"We've survived 100 years, and we are prospering. While we celebrate this, we are also praying for the Lord's blessings for the next 100 years. We see it in continuity, always – that we are part of the life of the Church in this community of Sellwood, and as part of the legacy of the whole Church. We are celebrating that the Holy Spirit is with us; there is life and new life."

In America 100 years seems like a very long time, the pastor reflected. "But in Church history throughout the world, there are churches and faith communities that are centuries of years. We are part of that history, and are looking to build that legacy and those connections for our children, and their children."

Tables seating 240 guests were elegantly set in the school's gym, ready for the Friday evening banquet.

"Our guests here tonight are parishioners, school alumni, and school parents, relatives, and friends," observed the event's coordinator, Sarah Lutz. "And, we have about 25



Most Reverend John G. Vlazny, Archbishop of Portland, presents the Homily. (Photo by David F. Ashton)

volunteers helping to serve our dinner – prepared by our caterers, professional chefs Lisa and Brianna Quinn, whose children attend school here.”

While attendees waited in line to be served, a pleasant buzz of conversation filled the air. Looking over the assembly, Lutz observed. “The best thing about this is seeing our community coming together, and having a good time. It’s a great sense of community that St. Agatha has.”

As dinner got underway, more than a dozen St. Agatha students were on hand to wait on tables and serve beverages, while a band called “Fat Wednesday”, headed by Eastmoreland’s Peter Bach, provided a musical soundtrack for the evening.

A highlight for many who attended the Sunday service was the Mass celebrated by Fr. Nathan Zodrow, Rt. Rev. Gregory Duerr, OSB, Abbot of Mount Angel Abbey; and Most Reverend John G. Vlazny, Archbishop of Portland.

“Centennial Memories” were presented at the close of the service by Patrick Hainley, a member of the Administrative Council.

Finally, Most Reverend John G. Vlazny, Archbishop of Portland, blessed a “time capsule” to be installed in the base of the bell in front of the St. Agatha Catholic School.

The capsule contains: Letters from the Archbishop, Abbot, St. Agatha Church pastor, and St. Agatha school principal; a family photo of the late past pastor Fr. Slider Steuernol, and his wife Jacque, with his story; a photograph of Fr. Nathan with his story; photographs of students; the names of all the students attending St. Agatha this centennial year; a St. Agatha letter opener; and *THE BEE*’s recent newspaper article about the lighting of the centennial bell tower.

After the service, walking from the church to the reception luncheon in the school’s gym, Fr Zodrow commented, “When the time capsule is opened in 100 years, hopefully they will look at it and they will be encouraged to then pray for, and sustain, another 100 years for the parish and school.”