

# SEASONED OBSERVER



(CNS photo/Father Bill Pomerleau, Catholic Observer)

A crane towers over the site for an innovative 'small-house' nursing home being built by the Sisters of Providence congregation in Holyoke, Mass. Construction has been under way since last year.

## Sisters of Providence Developing 'Small-house' Nursing Home

The health care facility being developed in a Holyoke, Mass., meadow is so revolutionary the state hasn't yet figured out how to regulate it.

In essence, that is why there was no formal groundbreaking for the building project now rapidly progressing on the property of the Sisters of Providence.

"The state gave us the approval to do site work earlier in the year. Then they came back and told us we could lay a foundation," explained Sister Mary Caritas Geary, a member of the Sisters of Providence planning team for a new kind of nursing home that will open this year.

The project is called Mary's Meadow, and at least initially, most of the residents of the facility will be older Sisters of Providence, who were all given the first name Mary when they entered their religious community.

If the sisters open the new facility as planned by July or August, they will be the first in Massachusetts to operate a long-term care facility in the "small-house" or "Green House" model in Massachusetts.

The trademarked term "Green House" refers to 50 nursing homes across the United States being developed by Dr. William H. Thomas and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Learn more about the Green House Project at [www.thegreenhouseproject.org](http://www.thegreenhouseproject.org).

While not directly a "Green House" facility, Mary's Meadow will follow many of the project's ideas. For example, it will feature small homes that cluster private rooms for 10 residents around a central service and socializing area.

"We're building 40 private rooms, with 10 rooms to each pod. Each pod will be separate and distinct with its own staff," Sister Geary explained.

Each pod will have its own entrance to encourage small-group living and will be physically connected to a chapel in the center of the complex.

But the real secret to the small-house model is in its new way of staffing, Sister Geary said.

Like any nursing home, Mary's Meadow will employ nurses and other medical professionals. But, "in addition to the professional staff, we'll have universal workers as opposed to certified nursing assistants, homemakers and cooks.

"The universal staff will be trained to do the cooking, the caregiving and the cleaning. So there will be a small community caring for the people in that one community of 10 patients," Sister Geary said.

— Father Bill Pomerleau, Catholic News Service

# Fish Dinner Goes On

## Trolling for Volunteers Nets Rewards

BY TONY CARTON  
For The Observer

Fifteen years ago the folks at St. Mary parish in Oregon began hosting a fish fry on Fridays during Lent. The events grew bigger each year and when the project became too much for the original organizers to handle, more parishioners stepped up to keep the project afloat.

Fran and Paul Kaminski are two of those volunteers. They joined St. Mary about five years ago and started working with the fish fry in the parish center kitchen when the call came for help.

### Hoisting the anchor

"We started out four years ago making coffee," she recalls. Paul went to washing pots and pans. I started working on the salad bar and then we did the au gratin potatoes. Now he works with the fish and I coordinate the volunteers making sure there is someone always available in the different spots."

This year, she will coordinate the activities of more than 50 volunteers who manage everything from the dozens of phone calls made to remind the workforce of their assignments, to setting tables, to baking au gratin potatoes or preparing the five to six hundred pounds of fish needed to feed the hundreds of folks that come back time and again to participate in what has become an Oregon Lenten Friday night tradition.

"I think because of the way we advertise in the parish, telling people what is needed, we are not really seeing a shortage of help," Kaminski said. "We do have our youngest people helping us not only with their bake sale, but also with bussing the tables.

The kids look forward to coming and putting on that apron and knowing that they are helping in the parish. Of course, at the end of the season, when we announce the kind of money that is put into the parish treasury, the kids just beam because they know they've helped with that."



Paul and Fran Kaminski along with St. Mary fish fry pioneer Gary Bolthouse are cooking up something special in the kitchen at the parish center in Oregon.

*'Any parish needs whatever volunteer help you can give them. Nothing is too small in the way of time given.'*

— Fran Kaminski, volunteer coordinator at St. Mary Parish in Oregon

She said they are firm believers in getting the youngsters involved, so they will stay involved as they grow older.

### Building on a legacy of dedication

Kaminski said the project originally began with the Knights of Columbus.

"When it all started years ago, it was the Knights of Columbus that were working to raise money for the parish," she said. "Those gentlemen built the equipment that they fry the fish and potatoes in and most of the time it is still the Knights of Columbus that work what we call the back room. They do all the frying of the fish and the potatoes. They worked out a system that makes it so that when you do come to the

parishioners and the community is unbelievable.

"When we first came here most of the people we knew were people from the parish, but the longer we've been here and worked with the fish fry the more of the community we've met," she said. "People look forward to it. We are always asked if we are still going to have them, and we have people coming in from as far away as Sycamore, DeKalb, Dixon and Sterling."

### No amount of energy is too small

The volunteers of St. Mary Parish also do cooking and serving for the annual Farm Bureau and Village of Progress dinners in Oregon. The Village of Progress is a sheltered workshop.

"Any parish needs whatever volunteer help you can give them," Kaminski said. "Nothing is too small in the way of time given. All you need is the energy and a good spirit. What, at least, brought my husband and I close together with this parish and this community was the idea of volunteering and really getting to know the heart and soul of this town. I think it's been terrific."

"Having a strong team of volunteers in a parish is absolutely indispensable," noted St. Mary pastor, Father Richard Kramer. "I could not operate without them. The parish could not operate without them. In the case of those volunteers that work the fish fry, they have to be certified food handlers and undergo those courses taught by the health people here in Ogle County. There are county and state health inspections. There are hundreds of things to do. The Kaminskis handle all those details."

He added that the future looks bright at St. Mary because folks are willing to step up and do things.

"We could have the same sort of problem that other parishes have where there are just a handful of people that do things," he explained. "But so far, so good; Fran has been real good about recruiting other helpers and getting them involved. We have an extremely active group that is extremely supported by the parishioners."

fish fry the food you get is hot out of the fryer and everything is as fresh as we can make it."

The St. Mary fish fry is buffet-style serving both fried and baked cod. There are potatoes au gratin and French fried potatoes as well as a vegetable, coleslaw, fresh rolls and coffee and lemonade. They also offer wine or beer and the children from the youth ministry stage a bake sale where folks can buy pies, a cake or cookies. The meal also comes with ice cream.

"We get people from a lot of the neighboring communities," Kaminski said. "Many of them have been coming for years."

She said the camaraderie between the

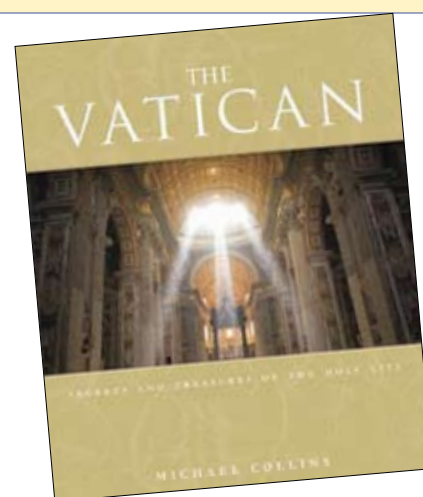
a map of this small country and a very succinct history of the church and the popes.

This book is richly illustrated with art and photographs seen only in this book. The mission of the church through the travels of the Holy Father is well-documented and the breathtaking Renaissance architecture, art and treasures are illustrated with great detail.

Father Collins, an Irish priest who studied

and taught in Rome universities for many years, shows you a day in the life of the Vatican. He features not only the liturgical aspects but all of the work that goes on behind the scenes by so many of the laypeople who contribute to the working Vatican — the art restorers, the papal photographer, the choir boys, the Swiss Guards. It's an insider's look but with a fresh perspective.

— Catholic News Service



## Curl up with a Winter Book

"The Vatican: Secrets and Treasures of the Holy City" by Father Michael Collins. Doring Kindersley (New York, 2008). 317 pp., \$35.

Part photo essay, part tour book, this fine offering by DK, the publishing company that makes travel so easy with its Eyewitness guides, gives the reader unprecedented access to parts of the Vatican that most will never see. It begins with

## DESTINATION



(Photo provided)

## St. Paul Church

**Destination:** St. Paul Church in Sandwich is the only Rockford Diocesan church named solely for St. Paul, whose Jubilee Year is half over this month.

Masses at the parish are held Saturday at 5 p.m.; Sunday at 8 and 10:30 a.m.; Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.; and Wednesday through Friday at 8:30 a.m. There is a Spanish Mass at 12:15 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month.

Vigil/holy day Masses are at 5:30 and 7 p.m./8:30 a.m., 7 p.m. Sacrament of reconciliation is at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday.

**Why to go:** A focused trip to learn more about your faith or a person of faith is called a pilgrimage. The traveler or student on a pilgrimage — a disciple — tries to achieve greater intimacy with a person or event which has had great impact on the church and the world.

For thousands of years, faithful of all religions have made pilgrimages to shrines. During this Year of St. Paul, Pope Benedict XVI has offered special indulgences for travelers to Rome and other sites designated by local bishops. Bishop Thomas Doran has included St. Paul Church as an official pilgrimage site in the Diocese of Rockford. Visitors who attend Mass, go to confession and receive Communion are eligible for the indulgence.

**Special events:** St. Paul Church can't promise record-breaking numbers of pilgrims, but does plan special events throughout the year. There are plans for a showing of the "Eucharistic Miracles" display early this year. Call for details.

**Access:** There are a few steps, but there is also a ramp for wheelchair access.

**(Grand) Kid friendly:** Absolutely. In the photo, Father Jack Heraty and children from St. Paul Parish welcome pilgrims during the holy year.

**Info:** Address: 110 N. Eddy St., Sandwich, IL. 60548  
Phone: 815/786-9266.

— Compiled by Elsie Campbell Morrissy

Share a favorite destination with others. If you have a photo, send it to "S.O. Destinations" at The Observer, 555 Colman Center Dr., P.O. Box, 7044, Rockford, IL 61125, or to [observer@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:observer@rockforddiocese.org). If you want a photo back, include a stamped, addressed envelope. If you send e-mail, include "Seasoned Observer" in the subject line. Please give us a phone number or Web site for more information.