

THE POST

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS AND LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

St. Therese's Church family struggling with emotions

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

SHAVERTOWN - Michelle Klaiss knows it won't be easy.

First, there are emotions to deal with. Deep-felt and enduring emotions. And at St. Therese's Church in Shavertown, those emotions have been running from deep sorrow to disappointment to unwavering support during the past week.

Following each Mass last Sunday, Monsignor Joseph C. Bamera of the Diocese of Scranton announced Monsignor J. Peter Crynes had resigned as the church's pastor amid allegations of "sexual misconduct."

The alleged misconduct, reported by two women, happened before Crynes came to St. Therese's 12 years ago, diocese officials said. Crynes has been a priest in the diocese for nearly 40 years.

The 64-year-old Crynes has moved out of the rectory behind the church at South Pioneer Avenue and Davis Street, according to a statement released by the diocese. And the Rev. Edward R. Scott, a retired priest, is serving the parish until a permanent pastor is named.

So now, members of the congregation must find a way to continue without their beloved pastor.

"If we adhere to the values Father Peter instilled in us, we will go forward as a (church) community," said Klaiss, who has been a member of the church for 16 years. "It's going to be very difficult.



MONSIGNOR J. PETER CRYNES HAD RESIGNED AS PASTOR OF ST. THERESE'S CHURCH IN SHAVERTOWN.

He's always been our leader. Nobody has earned more respect than this holy man. He has been gracious, moral, and selfless in time and person. It's really disappointing to see this man who has given so much to this community not be given the same amount of respect. It's very sad."

In a vague statement to parishioners, the diocese left key questions unanswered, including the ages of the women when the alleged misconduct occurred, the date, location and character of the alleged misconduct and the nature of the investigation, including whether it was being conducted by the diocese itself or law enforcement.

"The explanation that was given to us was so bland," said Joe Kerestes, a church member for 20 years. "We don't know what happened. If we knew more, it might make things a little easier."

The Dallas Township man also said life in the church without Crynes would be difficult.

"He makes everyone at the parish feel special," said Kerestes. "If he asked you to do something, you almost felt obligated because you knew he would do anything for you. You hope the strength he gave to the parish would keep going. You hope we can carry on the way he would like us to carry on."

Longtime church member Kathy Lenahan is encouraging those who support Crynes to send a letter to Bishop Joseph Martino.

"Monsignor Peter Crynes is a gifted priest," wrote the Dallas Township woman in an e-mail. "The alleged allegations against him should not diminish his beautiful relationship with all those who know him to be their partner on this journey. At this time we cannot discount his profound faith in Jesus Christ, his extraordinary leadership within the parish of St. Therese's, his constant chal-

lenge for community and reconciliation and his innumerable, extreme acts of kindness. I wrote to Bishop Martino at 300 Wyoming Avenue in Scranton and expressed to him the positive influence Monsignor Crynes has on those to whom he ministers. I would hope others would do the same."

When contacted by telephone, Lehahan said she was in church Sunday afternoon when the announcement was made. Although she didn't discuss the allegations, Lehahan questioned the timing of the accusations.

"If today I felt someone did something offensive to me, I could wait until 2018 and then report it," she said. "But then am I credible? What if it happened 20 or 30 years later, am I credible?"

Wayne Williams, who has been a member of the church for 30 years, was overcome by emotion when Bamera made his announcement.

"I think we were all in total shock," he said. "I had a meltdown. I had to have another choir member assist me. Father Peter helped me heal with a lot of things."

Williams attended a forum Wednesday night at the church. Officials from the diocese were on hand to answer questions and allow the church members to air their feelings.

"There were an awful lot of frustrated people at the meeting," said Williams. "We're going to try to work through all of our feelings. We pray that we'll get someone who can do the same dynamic job that Father Peter has done."

Having a ball with the Bard

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. - Dallas High School student Jillian Keller stood in the performance area at the school's Shakespeare Festival, soaking in the atmosphere.

After all, an event that was held for only a handful of students four years ago was now being attended by every student in the school.

"I was just thinking 'Wow, we actually did it,'" said Keller, a senior who was one of seven freshmen who comprised the school's Shakespeare Club four years ago. "I couldn't believe how many people were there - for a Shakespeare festival. It was a great feeling."

The Shakespeare Club - which has mushroomed to more than 70 students under the direction of teachers Sarah Saylor and Angela Pacini - held the festival on the high school grounds. The three-hour event featured booths and activities representing all areas of the school - from the math department's "Pi" sale to the wellness classes conducting an Elizabethan obstacle course.

"I guess we've come a very long way," said Saylor. "Originally, the Shakespeare Club met during flex period read a tragedy in the fall and a comedy in the spring. It grew bigger each year. This year, we wanted to make it a school-wide event."

And the response was overwhelming, said Saylor. "It was really great. We received so much encouragement from the faculty and administration," she said. "And the kids were phenomenal. They were talking about the festival for days. Kids were talking about Shakespeare. What more could you ask for?"

Seniors Katie Peters, Heather McDonald, Brittany Saylor, Caitly Green and Keller were original members of the Shakespeare Club. They've been surprised about the incredible growth of the club and the festival.

"I never thought it would become this big," said Peters, a self-described "English dork" who plans to major in the subject at Temple University in the fall. "But every year we kept thinking about ways to make it bigger and better. We decided to get away from a small group of English lovers and appeal to everyone in the school. I think that worked."

Keller agreed with her classmate. "We needed to get different parts of the school involved," said the State University of New York at Purchase-bound student. "We wanted everyone to get excited about the festival. I think it was a great success. People were having a great time."

In addition to the students having fun, the Shakespeare Club was successful at achieving another goal, says Saylor.

"We wanted to make Shakespeare available to the entire school," she said. "You see Shakespeare in everything from movies to commercials. The language is foreign to most students and it's considered challenging. Many students are apprehensive at first.

"But now, when you say the word 'Shakespeare' at Dallas, the students might groan a little but they can recite parts of his plays," she added. "A few years ago, I never could have thought that would be the case. It was just a couple of kids sitting in a room reading a play. Now, there are a lot of students at Dallas who are knowledgeable about the subject. It's amazing."



GARRETT CHRZANOWSKI, LEFT, AND KATIE PETERS PREPARE TO TAKE THE STAGE FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE.



DALLAS STUDENTS C.J. YVORSKI AND ROBERT VOJTKO STAND BEHIND A WOODEN CUTOUT DURING THE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL.



BRIE BOLTON GETS A PIE IN THE FACE TO THE DELIGHT OF HER FRIENDS AS PART OF DALLAS HIGH SCHOOL'S SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL.

"They were talking about the festival for days. Kids were talking about Shakespeare. What more could you ask for?"

Sarah Saylor
Dallas teacher



SUBMITTED PHOTO

CHARLES STRAUCH OF THE 320TH MP BATTALION PLAYS "TAPS" DURING THE SERVICE.

Harveys Lake vets take the time to remember comrades

American Legion Post 967 of Harveys Lake held its annual Memorial Day service at the Post Home. Harveys Lake resident Robert Costigan, a former Green Beret, gave the opening remarks.

"Let us never forget our fallen comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving bravely in our nation's armed services," said Costigan, a decorated war veteran.

The guest speaker was Karen Boback of Harveys Lake, a Tunkhannock High School teacher who recently won the Republican nominee for state Representative in the 117th District. Boback stressed the importance of remembering the true meaning of Memorial Day.

"It is up to us to insure that Memorial Day is preserved for generations to come," she said. "We must teach our children to respect the meaning of this most patriotic and meaningful day, offered in memoriam and tribute to those who gave their lives for our freedom."

In closing tribute to all fallen service members, bugler Charles Strauch of the 320th Military Police Battalion played a rendition of "Taps" as tears rolled from the eyes of many in attendance.

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