

# St. Helen's Celebrates 30th Year by Burning Mortgage

The Church of St. Helen celebrated not only its 30th year as a Westfield parish on June 6 with a special liturgy commemorating the event but also the "burning of the mortgage."

In a procession before the liturgy, members of the parish presented various symbols representative of the church which were put on display during the liturgy. Hank Daaleman carried the parish seal which is used on baptismal certificates and any letters or documents requiring church certification.

Ruth Lojo, parish secretary, presented the baptismal registry which is a record of over the 4,000 baptisms performed in the parish. A picture of the founding Pastor, Monsignor Thomas B. Meaney, was carried by Ann Waters and Mary Briggs, two long-time parishioners.

Adele and Gene Gatens displayed a scrapbook depicting the construction of the church and Parish Center while Robert Cagnassola, a member of the finance committee, exhibited the mortgage facsimile which was later burned.

Church Trustees, Helen Guididas and Fred Nelson with their spouses, Ed Guididas and Bernadette Nelson, presented the gifts of water, wine and the hosts at the offertory.

Frank Wolgom, a representative from the Pastoral Council, read a congratulatory letter from Most Reverend Theodore E. McCarrick, Archbishop of Newark.

The Anniversary Liturgy was concelebrated by Monsignor James

A. Burke, Pastor, with Reverend Donald K. Hummel and Reverend Peter K. O'Brien, Parochial Vicars at St. Helen's and Reverend Philip Waters.

Monsignor Burke praised the people of the community of St. Helen in his homily for their "generous and consistent support" and noted that no special fund-raisers, collections or pledges were needed to pay the mortgage.

"Since we have met our financial obligations in paying off our debts, St. Helen's is now able to direct help to others by donating 10 percent of the weekly collection to the needy and poor," a church spokeswoman noted.

Monsignor Burke reminisced by quoting parishioners' observations about the early growth of the parish and their feelings about the church today. Many remember the Sunday masses celebrated at the Thomas A. Edison Junior High School (now Edison Intermediate School) and affectionately called "St. Edison."

The starting base for the new parish was 600 families which has continually grown over the years to the current count of over 3,100. Daily masses were held in a small prefabricated green chapel which stood on the empty field upon which the Church and Parish Center were built.

After liturgy, parishioners congregated on the church grounds and cheered the burning of the mortgage.

A reception was held in the parish center followed the liturgy.



**DEBT FREE AT ST. HELEN'S...**In honor of celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Helen in Westfield, parishioners and staff watch the burning of the church's mortgage. Pictured, left to right, are: Barbara and Nick Ugenti, Pat Diemer and Helen Guididas, parishioners; Kathy Dulan, a Pastoral Director of Catechetics for the elementary grades of St. Helen's School; Reverend Monsignor James A. Burke, Pastor of St. Helen's, Reverend Peter K O'Brien and Reverend Donald K. Hummel Parochial Vicars. A reception followed in the Parish Center.