

Roselle's holy angels turn 125

• Roselle

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apple-flavored Dum Dum sucker before it plunked me on the head. If I hadn't been on duty snapping pictures I likely would have hit my hometown of Dedham's "Last Chance Saloon" float for a beer.

My vote for most clever parade offering, however, has to go to Roselle's neighbors to the east — the town of Willey and St. Mary Parish. Those ambitious people pulled off a tricky parade feat, serving ice cream cones to anyone who wanted one while still keeping pace with the rest of the parade field. On each side of the Willey float was a hard-working fellow pushing a cart containing small cones and buckets of ice cream. Every few feet he'd stop the cart while helpers dolloped chocolate and vanilla goodness. More helpers — nearly all of them children in matching T-shirts and soda-jerk caps — swarmed the carts, grabbing cones and jogging them to the crowd. Other kids led the way with a banner that read "Here's the scoop" and the float itself carried a sign saying "Happy to serve you." Which town's going to top that for a parade entry?

The lineup had the usual chugging ageless-iron tractors and commercial entries, but what also impressed me was the number of families in the Roselle area that climbed onto flatbeds to show their community pride. Some wore costumes or featured their "holy angels

and little devils." Others were dressed in matching outfits, used themes like "Hats off to Roselle" or sang during the parade. All of them had a blast.

There were also many moments of laughter. Clowns yucked with kids of all ages, passing out balloons and threatening to sling fresh road apples at them. Rupiper shot wisecracks at every parade entry that rolled, sputtered, walked and galloped past. Employees from a lawn-care business did an impression of Shriners but with riding mowers. And a kiddie favorite was a long train of wheeled buckets pulled by an ATV, which gave rides following the parade.

All floats and funniness aside, a parade is great because of what else is going on. If you're at a parade, you can bet there are also food stands, games and other attractions. Roselle had plenty of these for the young and old.

The quasiquintennial provided plenty of parking — all of it close and much even shaded. The stands were laid out well, and I think the only glitch was that the company that was going to supply kiddie rides didn't show up. There was still plenty to eat, watch and do. Kids lined up to have their faces painted, cast a fishing line for prizes, buy slushes and play bingo. The food was exceptional as celebrations go. There were big hamburgers, brats with sauerkraut, kettle-fried potatoes and many flavors of pie. Never one to pass up a great meal, this reporter loaded up for under five bucks. And don't forget the real reason

for Saturday's festivities. Retired Bishop Lawrence Soens headed a delegation of five priests that celebrated the quasiquintennial Mass. Holy Angels Church was full but not stuffed. Several floor fans hummed while keeping the elegant Gothic-style building cool. A couple dozen people used folding chairs in the rear of the church or stood in the back aisles and out through the main doorway. Hundreds seated on benches and picnic tables outside followed the service via loudspeakers.

Soens proved to be the voice of the quasiquintennial.

He opened his homily by wondering what a Mass for Holy Angels' first parishioners would've been like, what differences there would be between the German Catholic families of 1874 and today.

"I'm sure you wouldn't find many similarities, other than the land they farm," he said.

Going to Sunday Mass back then would've taken up most of the day, Soens explained. The ride on a horse-drawn wagon down a poor road probably lasted as long as an hour. The parishioners would likely then have to wait for the priest, who was also traveling in. Since it was his only opportunity to preach for the whole week, father would speak for 45 minutes. After Mass the pastor would lead catechism class for the children while the adults visited. Then there would be the slow ride home.

"Life has changed," Soens sermonized. "... We must learn to distinguish between the essentials and the nonessentials."

The gift of faith that Holy Angels' earliest congregation members possessed is the same faith parishioners have today, and their purpose for going to Mass — to enjoy God

and the Eucharist, to celebrate with and strengthen one another and to praise God — has not changed, he said.

"The essence of our faith is still there," Soens related, "and the purpose of the parish and the purpose of the church is still there. There's only one purpose for this Catholic community, and that's to see to it that Christ remains strong in our presence ... that we praise God, forgive and be forgiven and celebrate with one another."

Anniversaries like the Holy Angels quasiquintennial remind parishioners of "the unbroken kinship of faith," but their challenge remains the same, Soens continued. He urged the congregation to "plan for the future with your minds and hearts open to the workings of the Holy Spirit."

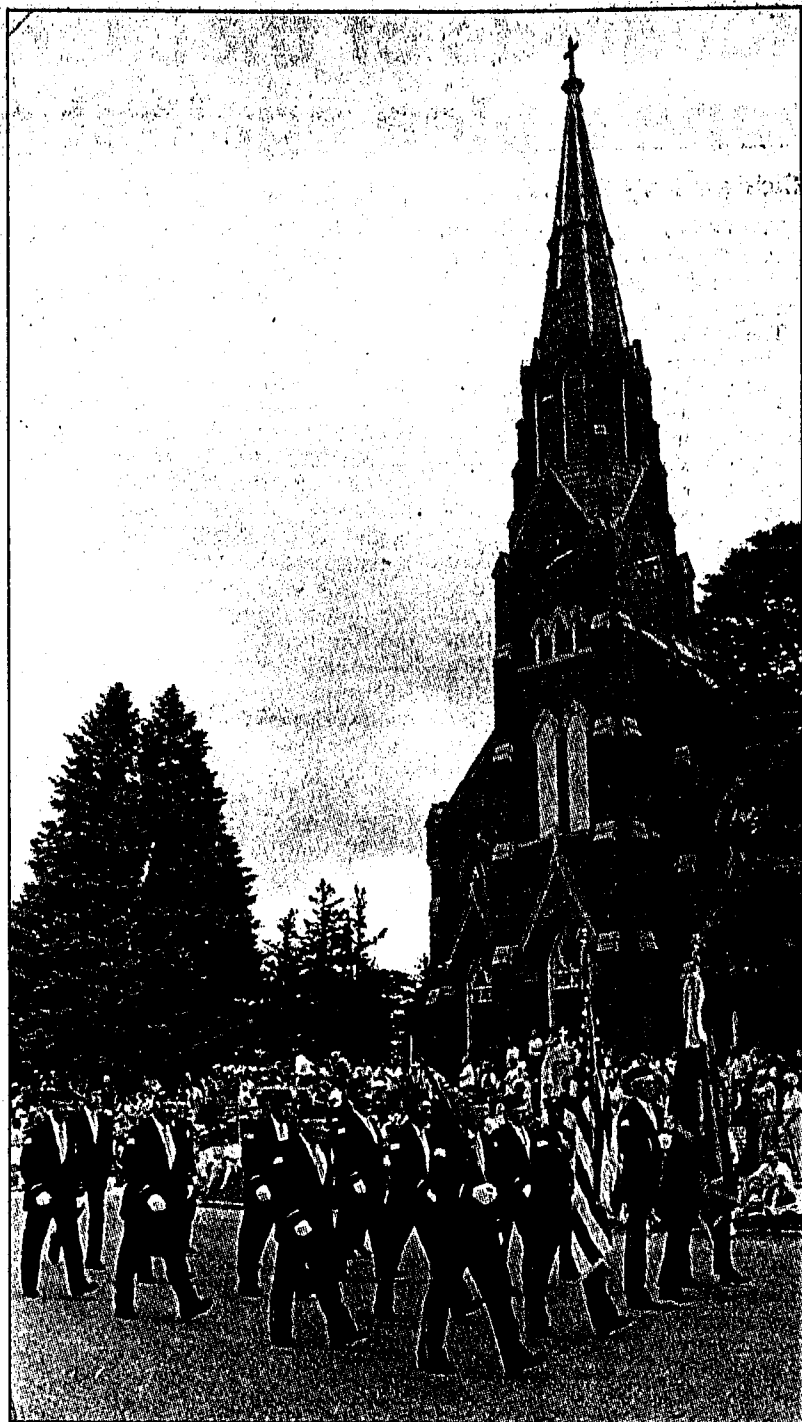
Saturday's gospel dealt with lost sheep returning to the flock.

"You are not the lost sheep," Soens added. "You are the sheep the Lord has loved and kept close to himself. Keep that in mind. ... You have already been healed and sealed with God's love. You have nothing to fear in the realm of changes. God's love will help you. ... You will continue to be the instruments of peace and the messengers of hope for the third millennium."

Among the activities after Mass were an auction and raffle that with other celebration proceeds will be used to make repairs and improvements to Holy Angels Church and Cemetery so they'll still be around for a sesquicentennial in another 25 years.

The celebration planners knew their quasiquintennial would be among the first in the Carroll area and other communities whose 125th anniversaries are coming up would look to them for ideas.

You want to talk about a challenge? Try topping this.



An honor guard from the Arcadia American Legion post leads the parade column past Holy Angels Church. The program took about 90 minutes.



Simon Langel, guiding his miniature horses, waves to the announcer's stand.

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Photos By Butch Heman

One-year-old Paige Jewell (left) traveled from Fort Dodge to watch the parade with her cousin, Katie Sporrer of Templeton.



The Wayne and Alice Rupiper family showed off its angels in the outfield by way of a parade entry, which showed an appropriate quasiquintennial score of 125 to nothing.



These prankster clowns are the mystery of the quasiquintennial — several organizers contacted for photo identifications had no

idea who the painted ladies were. Here they entertain youngsters in front of the church.



Lynn Hoffman (right) and Danny Sturm grill hamburgers in a food stand on the Holy Angels Church grounds. The stand fried more than 1,200 pounds of burgers Saturday, having only 20 to spare at the end of the day.



Jim Williams of Roselle appears to have an easy ride down the route.



Holy Angels pastor Gary Snyder (right) and Bishop Soens kiss the altar after processing into the church for the afternoon Mass.



Rita Rupiper was the cheerful queen of her family's entry.