

From the Rockford Register Star

Cardinal, laity join church dedication
By Carol Fouke, Religion Writer

“This is an edifice dedicated to the honor and glory of God,” said Ed Wood, a member of Holy Family Catholic Church, Sunday. “There’s nothing on earth that’s too good for it.”

Wood spoke of the long list of dignitaries, including John Cardinal Cody, Archbishop of the Chicago Catholic Diocese, who took part in festivities Sunday marking the official dedication of the new Holy Family Church.

Other bishops, Rockford clergy of non-Catholic faiths and the mayor and city clerk were other guests at the dedication Mass Sunday at the church, 1310 N. Alpine Road, and at a reception and dinner afterward at the Clock Tower Inn—Henrici’s.

From the founding of Holy Family parish in 1965 until the new church was completed in late August, 1975, parishioners met for services in the gymnasium of the Holy Family School, which was converted into a worship area.

The dedication services Sunday afternoon began as an honor guard of Knights of Columbus escorted the Most Rev. Arthur J. O’Neill, Bishop of the Rockford Catholic Diocese, and priests into the crowded church.

Music by the church choir and accompanists on the organ and on brass instruments filled the church, adding majesty to the opening procession. Cardinal Cody entered last, wearing a bright red robe and cardinal’s cap.

The service included special hymns, prayers, and scripture readings.

Cardinal Cody at the service relayed a special greeting and blessing from Pope Paul VI to members of the church and asked congregation members in return to pray for Pope Paul as he seeks to lead the church in “these critical times.”

He spoke of the Pope in affectionate terms as he described how it came about that the Pope sent a special blessing to the church for its dedication.

“A few months ago I was in Rome and had an audience with Pope Paul,” he said. “I told him I planned to be here today to rejoice with Bishop O’Neill, Msgr. Herman A. Mellinger, pastor, of the Holy Family church, the priests and the congregation on this occasion.

“I asked if I might bring his blessing. And with sort of a glow on his face, he said, ‘Gladly I give you my permission to bring a special greeting and to impart in my name the apostolic blessing.’”

“In return,” Cardinal Cody said, “I ask you to make a pledge that I can relate to the Holy Father this coming Wednesday when I hope to see him again.

“I ask that every one of you will pledge silently that you will remember him in your prayers. Today we are living in critical times. Pope Paul is responsible for 600 million spiritual children.

“War, violence and immorality seem to engulf the earth. I know this little favor I ask you would give him great strength and happiness,” Cardinal Cody said.

Then he spoke a blessing in Latin, and closed with “May God bless you all.”

In his sermon, Bishop O’Neill praised Msgr. Mellinger for his “priestly zeal” in the 49 years that he has been a priest and for his part in the realization of the new building.

“His zeal isn’t limited to his building of this church . . . People and priests are grateful to him far beyond this but this is concretized” because the church will remain for many decades, Bishop O’Neill said.

The congregation applauded spontaneously.

“Here we come for baptism, communion, marriage and our final goodbye,” the bishop said. “Our lives are centered in this edifice but it’s only a building unless we are alive in faith and love.”