

Pipe organ reflects heritage

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Families raised \$80,000 for repairs

By Tricia Eber
Staff writer

NEW KENSINGTON: The majestic tones of St. Mary of Czestochowa Church's refurbished pipe organ reverberated in the sanctuary on Sunday afternoon.

About 300 parishioners gathered for the dedicatory recital of the new pipe organ. Church organist George A. Pecoraro Jr. and David Richards, owner of Allegheny Pipe Organ who fixed it, played selected pieces to show off the capabilities of the instrument.

Pecoraro said it may be 1993, but parishioners love the traditional flavor that a pipe organ gives to a Mass.

"With the improvements, it can play the most contemporary or the most ancient music," he said. "This pipe organ is a part of the church's heritage. It is the largest pipe organ in the Alle-Kiski Valley."

As part of the centennial celebration of the church, parishioners collected funds to repair and remodel the organ, which was originally installed in 1913 and had 1,188 pipes. There are about 1,200 families in the parish, and they raised \$80,000 to repair the pipe organ, Pecoraro said.

Dolores Brosky, 51, of Apollo, said the pipe organ reminds most of the parishioners of their heritage.

"The ancestors of the church worked hard to have the original organ built," she said. "This was built in their memory. This is a tribute to the immigrants who built this church. They had little or nothing when they started the church. It was a sacrifice."

The biggest modernization of the organ is a component which allows the organist to play tones of the synthesizer right from the organ's keys, with or without using the pipes.

Natalie House, 14, of New Kensington, said no matter how modern the equipment, the pipe organ is unique for her church.

"This has always been a part of the church," House said. "I would really miss it if it was gone."

As an organist for 60 years, Arpad Heutchy, 81, of New Kensington, said he came to hear the quality of the new instrument. Heutchy plays for First Evangelical Lutheran Church in New Kensington.

"I enjoy a good pipe organ," Heutchy said. "The instrument, with a good organist and singing is an important part of the service."



DON WRIGHT, staff photographer

David Richards, owner of Allegheny Pipe Organ, inspects the organ's pipe room.

Musical facts

Here are some facts about the remodeled pipe organ at St. Mary of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church in New Kensington:

- There are 29 rows of pipes, totaling 1,665.
- There are 60 memory pistons.
- There are 30 stops.
- There are 21 chimes to fill 2,720 cubic feet of organ chamber.
- The largest pipe is 16 feet long, made of wood, and is big enough for a small child to crawl through.
- The smallest pipe is made of metal and smaller than a pencil.
- Some of the original pieces that were saved during the remodeling include the oak woodwork, pipe facade and 1,025 original pipes.
- There are new computer components, a digital clock, a bar-graph volume indicator that glows, all new keyboards, all new stop tabs, and a keyed power switch.

— Source: St. Mary of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church



DON WRIGHT, staff photographer

Organist George A. Pecoraro Jr. plays the newly renovated pipe organ.