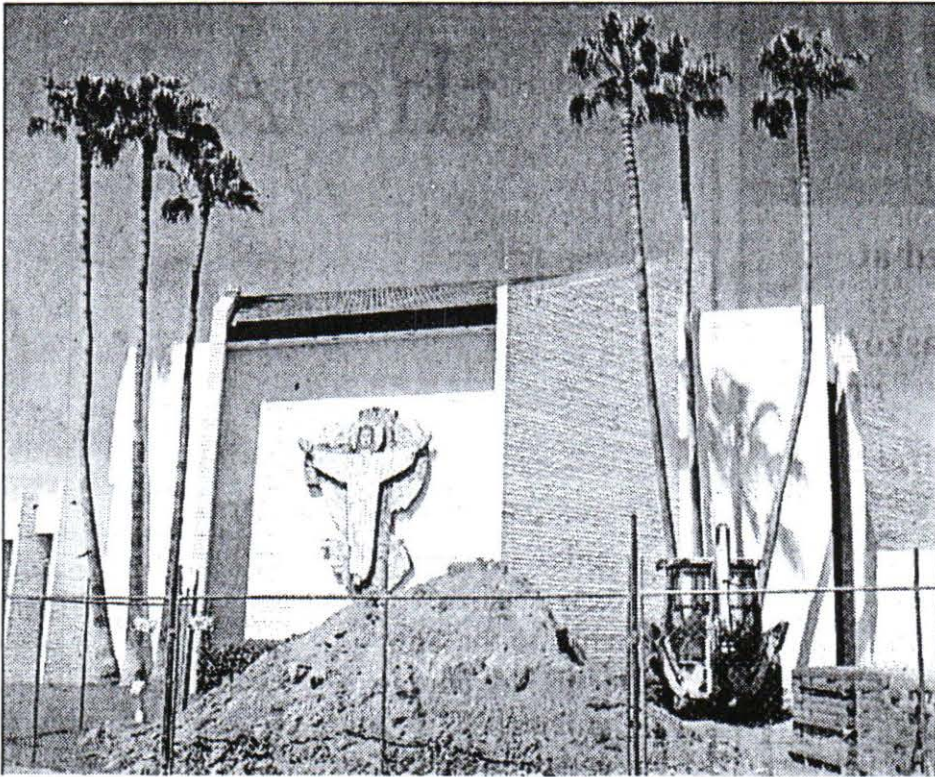


# Holy ground



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

A backhoe sits poised for work at St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church in Sun City where workers have begun adding an adoration prayer chapel near its tabernacle and altar, and expanding the area in the church complex used by Interfaith Services for its adult day health program. Construction started July 1 and is expected to be complete in 90 days, church officials said.

# THE PRIDE of St. Clement

*Church celebrates 25th anniversary*

By CHRISTINE A. GOW  
Staff writer

**T**om Flynn moved to Sun City 25 years ago, planted roots in an area church and settled in.

He wouldn't dream of moving. He loves Sun City and he adores the people of St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church. As the congregation gears up to celebrate its 25th anniversary, Flynn digs out an old file of church memorabilia, dusts it off and flips through the letters and photographs. He is reminded of the early days of St. Clement.

**Oct. 23, 1970**

The Rev. Harry Morgan arrives in Sun City to start a new parish. He celebrates Mass in his Sun City home at 10840 Tropicana Circle.

"It was not unusual to have Mass in a house when there wasn't a church," Flynn recalled.

"And it made me think of my service in World War II. The chaplain had Mass in an upstairs room in a house on the base," he said, noting that the first church roster listed 167 members.

**Nov. 1, 1970**

The congregation moves to an interim home, Lundberg Mortuary Chapel, then located on the site of Sunland Mortuary and Cremation Center. Sunday Masses continue to be celebrated there until the parish finds a permanent home. Weekday Masses are still celebrated at Morgan's home.

**Dec. 1, 1970**

Edward A. McCarthy, bishop of Phoenix, declares the establishment of St. Clement of Rome. This day marks the birth of the church.

**June 16, 1971**

McCarthy authorizes a loan for the construction of a church facility. In December, a church building committee is organized to develop plans for a permanent home. Committee members are Flynn, Herb Gitzinger, Dick Meinert, Jack Dunford, Karl Topel, Olive O'Reilly and Al Tomitz.

Members find an architect, contractor and developer. They look at carpet and tile samples and select patterns for the stained-glass windows. Then they choose a site, 15800 Del Webb Blvd.

"I was very pleased with the church facilities.

"It was like you had died and God sent you to heaven," he said.

**Oct. 27, 1994**

Breslin dies and D'Eon becomes the pastor of St. Clement.

**March 1995**

D'Eon officially is appointed by Bishop Thomas O'Brien of the Diocese of Phoenix.

**Nov. 1, 1995**

Renovations to the church are complete, pushing the east wall of the sanctuary 20 feet to the edge of the bell tower creating a choir loft for the church's 50-member choir. A handbell practicing room also is added for the 10-member handbell choir.

**Dec. 1, 1995**

St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church celebrates its 25th anniversary.

**May 1972**

The Rev. William Waldron succeeds Morgan. By this time, the church has grown to 800 members.

In the fall of 1972, an architect and construction company are selected to build the church and parish hall for \$75,000. In the winter, the ground is broken for the parish hall.

**May 31, 1973**

McCarthy and Del E. Webb are on site to break the ground for the church. Seven months later, in December, construction of the parish hall is completed and Mass is celebrated Dec. 22.

The parish hall includes a kitchen,

stage and bingo room.

**April 1974**

Construction of the church is complete, with plans on the drawing board for a rectory and prayer garden.

On Good Friday, April 12, 700 people attend the first Mass.

"It was a happy celebration. We had our church," said Flynn, who has served the Catholic church his entire life.

**July 1993**

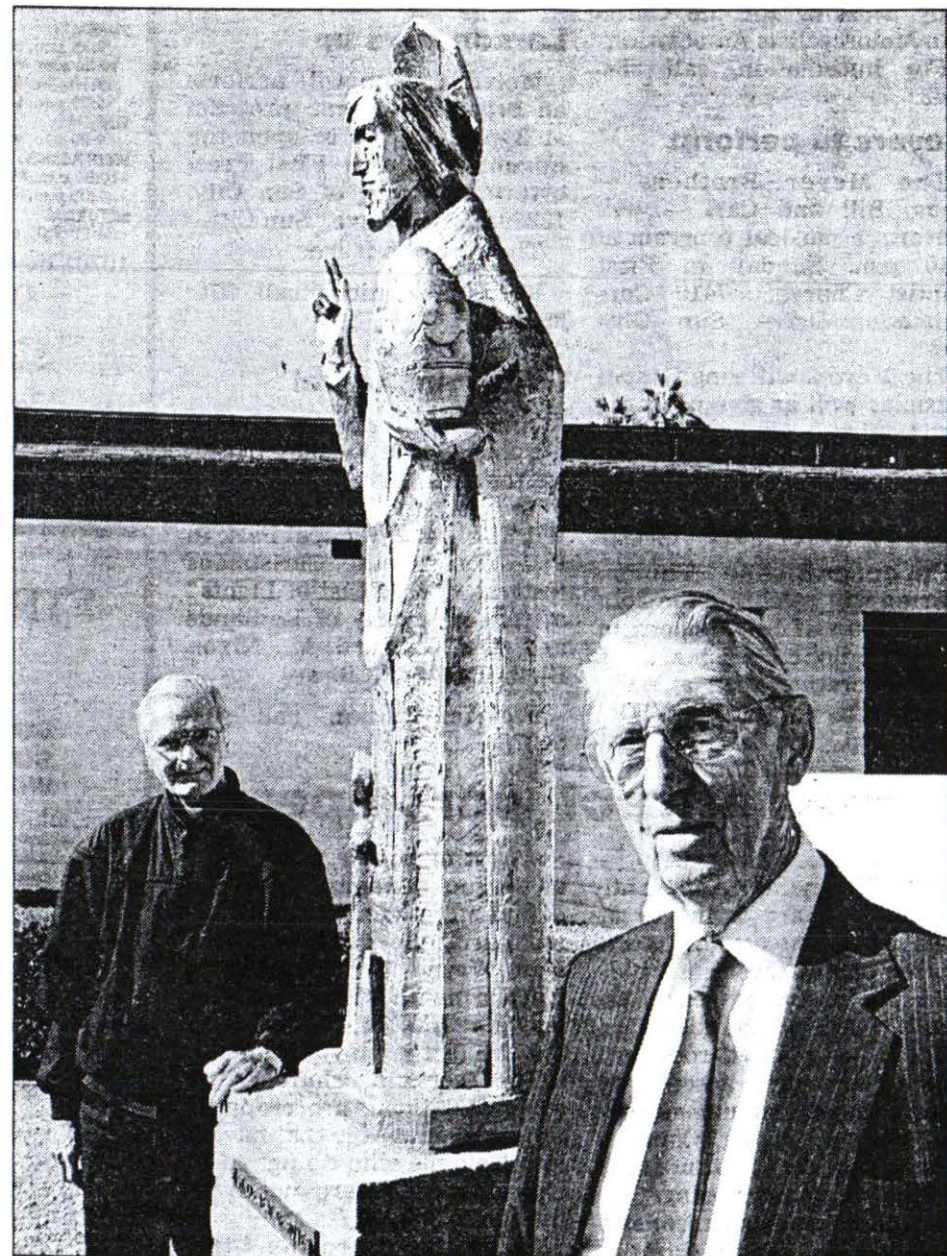
The Rev. Theodore Breslin succeeds Waldron and the Rev. Earl D'Eon becomes associate pastor. Father D'Eon comes to Sun City from a mission near Kingman. He is immediately impressed with the church and surrounding community.

"It has a beautiful environment," D'Eon said as he reminisced about his appointment to St. Clement of Rome.



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Music director Mike McGraw, in above photo, works with organist Lucille Nallin, left, and keyboardist Elizabeth Manske. At right, the Rev. Earl D'Eon, left, and longtime member Tom Flynn stand with a statue of St. Clement of Rome, for whom the church is named.



# Church grows through its music

By CHRISTINE A. GOW  
Staff writer

SUN CITY — While construction marks changes under way on the exterior of St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church, the real changes are going on inside the church.

Visit on a Saturday night or Sunday morning and watch the place come alive with music. The congregation's participation in worship goes beyond what the church has ever experienced.

Tom Engelhardt has noticed the change.

"There is more participation and more enthusiasm for the musical program," said Engelhardt, a 12-year member of St. Clement. "There's an interest in music as part of the religious activity."

Engelhardt attributes the change mainly to one man — Michael McGraw, St. Clement's director of music and liturgy. McGraw was hired 1½ years ago, coming from St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church. He's been an organist since age 16 and a choir director for 18 years.

"The whole musical program was conducted on a volunteer basis. It was conducted by volunteers, played by volunteers and sung by volunteers," Engelhardt said. "As such it lacked the professionalism we acquired when we hired Michael. He brought in a variety of music and enthusiasm for the musical program and participation has increased substantially."

McGraw, however, credited the change to another man. The Rev. C. Theodore Breslin, who died last October, was instrumental in the purchase of an electronic organ that

**'There is more participation and more enthusiasm for the musical program. There's an interest in music as part of the religious activity.'**

**Tom Engelhardt  
St. Clement of Rome  
Catholic Church**

changed the way the congregation worships, McGraw said. Church officials declined to release the cost of the organ.

"The congregation sings out now," said Elizabeth Manske, an organist and 12-year member of St. Clement. "We heard

nothing (from the congregation) before."

More than 2,500 families from the Sun Cities, Surprise, Peoria and Glendale attend St. Clement, at 15800 Del Webb Blvd. The church offers two Saturday evening and four Sunday masses. Twenty minutes of the 50-minute mass is devoted to music.

"The music ministry is such an integral part of our ministry," McGraw said as he played a few lines of "All Creatures of Our God and King" on the organ. McGraw is one of seven organists.

"Our concern is full, active, conscious participation and that certainly has happened in the last year and a half," he said.

Almost two years ago Breslin, then pastor, began asking the church membership what their needs were in order to better serve them.

"By taking care of the physical needs, we take care of the spiritual needs," McGraw said. "That's what our Lord did. He took care of the physical needs by feeding people, and then took care of their spiritual needs."

Church members asked for a new parking lot with more light, which they received last October.

Choir members requested "a good instrument and a choir area," McGraw said. Now, with the organ purchased and installed, the church staff is granting the choir's second wish — a place to sing. There has never been a formal choir loft in the 25 years of St. Clement's existence.

Construction on the loft began Aug. 15 and is expected to be completed November 1, All Saints Day, McGraw said. Church officials declined to release the cost of the project.

Renovations will push the east wall of the sanctuary 20 feet to the edge of the bell tower and create a space large enough for the 50-member choir to perform, McGraw said.

A handbell practicing room also will be added for the 10-member handbell choir, and the bell tower will have a new carillon system, controlled by a keyboard.

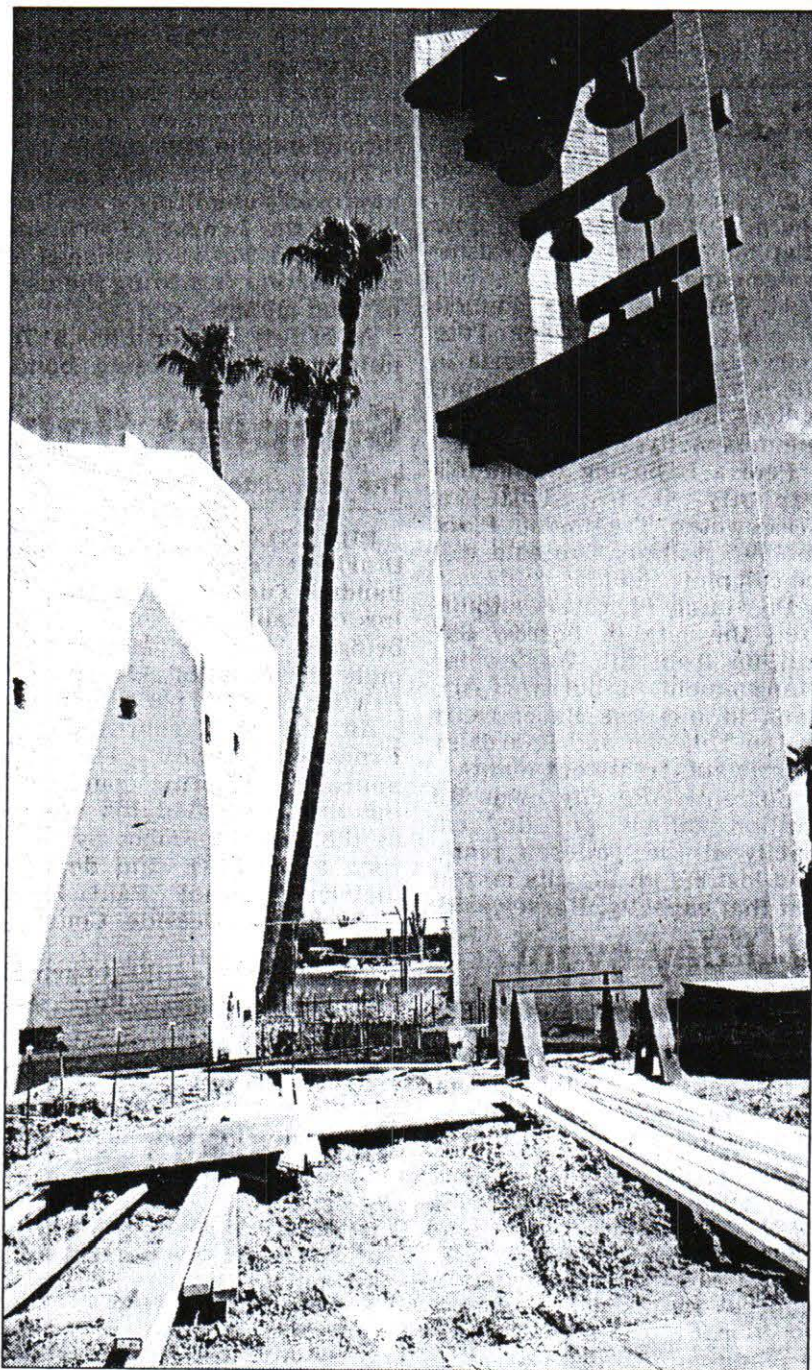
The brightest and most beautiful part of the construction project is the eight stained-glass windows that will be added to the east wall, McGraw said.

The construction hasn't kept people from attending St. Clement, and it hasn't changed the way they worship, McGraw said.

"Usually you expect change

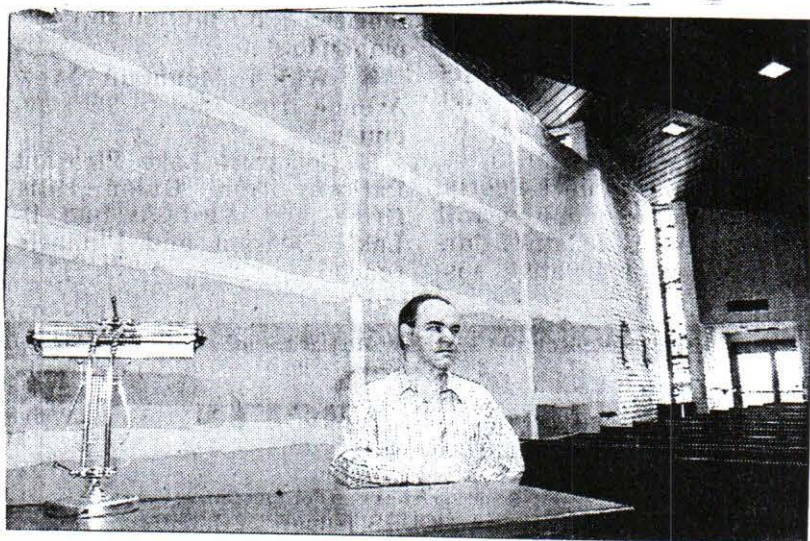
to be a negative thing, but in this parish the congregation sees change as positive," he

said. "It's a wonderful community. People are very welcome and open to change."



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Construction is under way on the expansion of St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church in Sun City.



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Michael McGraw, director of music and liturgy at St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church, stands in front of the future site of the church's choir loft.

B4 NEWS-SUN SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1987

# St. Clement serves area Catholics

News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — In 1970, when the Catholic Church of St. Joachim and St. Anne started to get crowded at Mass the Catholic Diocese of Phoenix decided the Sun City area needed another parish.

Four years later, after conducting some services in the chapel at Sunland Cemetery, St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church was built at 15800 Del Webb Blvd. The church was named after the fourth pope of the Roman Catholic Church, St. Clement.

The Rev. William Waldron recalls the church's leading pastor, the Rev. Harry R. Morgan, as a man with the needs of his parish in mind.

Waldron, who was also a pastor at St. Clement when it opened its doors, says there were about 150 people in the congregation at that time. Now, he boasts a following of 3,500.

He also says he doesn't expect his congregation to grow since it has leveled off at 3,500 for several years.

One reason for the leveling effect is because of the church's territorial boundaries, Waldron

says. Those wishing to practice the Catholic faith who live within the east and west boundaries of Sun City and between Grand Avenue and Bell Road must go to St. Clement, Waldron says.

Most of the construction and growth has been completed in those areas so Waldron doesn't foresee any increase in population to boost the congregation's size.

Francis Bechtel, an associate pastor at St. Clement, says the parish serves the spiritual needs of those in 2,000 area households.

Waldron's job, he says, as the church's leader deals mostly with trying to "assist people in their relationship with God ..."

Having an elderly congregation, Waldron says, makes part of his job easier because "there is a much greater incidence of mature faith."

On the other hand, he also says there are more cases of sickness and death in the area than in most other congregations because of the advanced ages of those in the parish. That causes him to spend more time away from the church than the average pastor.

Bechtel has been at St. Clement for 13 years and sees his job responsibilities as "to glorify God, praise God, fulfill the spiritual needs of the people" and to help those in the parish to reach their goals.

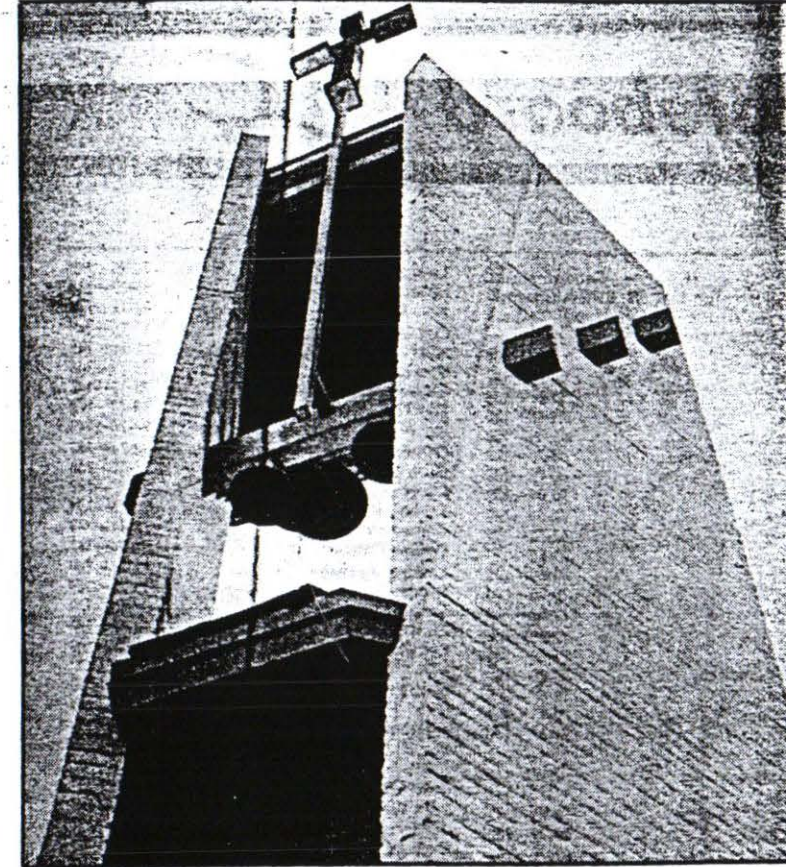
It is the responsibility of the people, he says, "to be witness to the teachings of Christ and exemplify them in the conduct of their individual lives."

There are rules everyone in the church must abide by, Bechtel says. Some of those include following the Ten Commandments, attending Mass and Holy Eucharist, going to confession and supporting the church with their "time, talent and treasure."

He says the rules of fasting and abstaining from certain foods at particular times are not strictly enforced anymore. The difficulty in carrying out the acts and a lack of meaning have made their importance slip.

The pope coming to Phoenix Sept. 14, is something that's kept the pastors busy. Waldron says the parish has 850 tickets available for the Mass and a lot of time has been spent arranging rides.

Information: 974-5867.



The belltower of St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church at 15800 Del Webb Blvd. (News-Sun photo)