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Meditation garden captures the past at St. Ann's Church in West Bridgewater

The completion of the vision coincides with the church's 70th anniversary.

Photos

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The Enterprise

Bishop John Dooher blesses the newly-created meditation garden at St. Ann's Church recently as the Rev. Edward McDonagh looks on.

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West Bridgewater – A nine-month vision of community, commemoration, and peace culminated recently in the completion of the meditation garden at St. Ann's Church, coinciding with the church's 70th anniversary.

The garden features hundreds of bricks arranged in a terrace format, many featuring engravings to honor anniversaries, birthdays, the living and the dead – as an ongoing connection to the St. Ann's community.

The bricks represent lifelong landmarks with inscriptions that run the gamut from gratitude: "In honor of a great American Antonio Fiumara" and "Eternal Gratitude Rev. John Mansfield 1979-1991," to tenderness: "Kay and Duke, Ann and Bob Always in my heart," and "William J Murray a wonderful father ... keep the faith."

Framed in summer glory with petunias arrayed in shades of purple, pink and white, the garden includes benches donated by parishioners.

Bishop John Anthony Dooher said a Saturday, July 26 gathering after the evening Mass was "to bless this holy site which is engraved with names of those who have gone before us and those who are present ... all people who have touched the building and life of the parish."

"It's such a special occasion to bring the parish of St. Ann's together," said Arlene Stefano, a parishioner who resides in Bridgewater. The church has more than 500 families in its parish, but also played a central role in the town's early social history. The church was the founder of the only Little League baseball in the 1960s. In the 1970s, the baseball organization evolved into today's WBYAA.

"It's a wonderful celebration ... six days' worth," said parishioner Charlotte Hasomeris of East Bridgewater, referring to a trip several members took to Quebec in honor of St. Ann's Church in Canada. "It's nice to see the families coming and having fun, and the Mass and

dinner tonight and it goes on tomorrow," said Hasomeris, referring to the family fun day and other festivities during the weekend.

She said she purchased bricks in the garden as Christmas gifts for her two married children to commemorate her children and grandchildren.

"The most important part of a parish life are the people who pass on the faith and I'm speaking of the catechists," said the Rev. Edward McDonagh, pastor of St. Ann's Church.