



The Immaculate Connection

Newsletter of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church
Volume 18, Issue 2 Advent 2019 Ithaca, New York

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

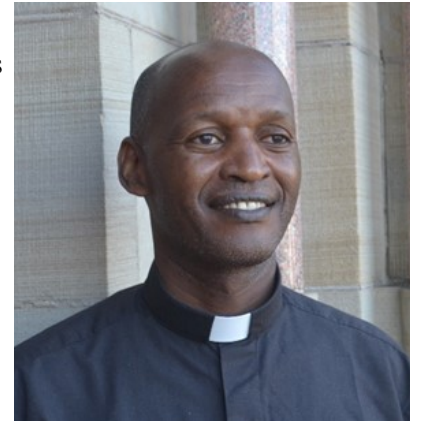
I thank God once again, for this opportunity to express my cordial greetings to all members of our parish family. As I begin my fourth year in this great parish, I wish to express my sincere and deep gratitude to God for His graciousness and to you, parishioners for your love and deep faith in the Lord. I have been greatly touched and inspired by your strong faith and fidelity to the Good News of our salvation. Thank you! The spirit of devotion to prayer, worship, community building, and joyful service to needy continues to grow in our parish.

Before I continue to share some thoughts in this newsletter, I wish to say a few things about the current problem facing the local church and indeed the Church universal. The issue of sexual abuse is a grave sin to say the least. I express my sincere apology to all victims and their families for what they have had to endure. Sin afflicts individuals in ways known to them alone, deeper than we can ever imagine. My heart goes out to all victims and their families. I continue to pray for healing and justice. The Body of Christ has been deeply wounded. We are all hurting. Every sin is an offense against all the other members of the Church. I am sorry not to be able to address this matter adequately. My prayers and hope are that we all turn away from sin and embrace the message of Jesus. Sin is more dangerous than physical illness. It targets the soul. Thanks be to Christ our savior who died to save and liberate us from the yoke of sin and death. Evil has no place in the life of a Christian. We belong to God.

Our Bishop did give a detailed response to this issue that we shared in our parish bulletin. The response is still available on the diocesan website. Parishioners are also encouraged to read the questions and answers regarding the implication of bankruptcy on parishes provided by the diocese. Should anyone need more explanation on this matter, do not to hesitate to contact the diocese at any time, the Bishop is fully committed to the protection of all against this vice.

Amid this challenge, God wants you and me to be winners. He wants us to have the power to overcome evil in our life, and every attack of Satan seeking to destroy our relationship with Him. How can we be winners? Left to our human frailty we cannot stand. Jesus admonished us "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and it shall be done for you." (Jn 15:7) Jesus promises that we will receive great power through this relationship of love with him. This is a great invitation to be in union with Jesus, to be of one mind and heart with our Lord. Then His power will flow into, and through us to our families, the community around us, and indeed into the rest of the world.

Every parishioner I speak with would like to see our parish grow and flourish. For this to happen, we look to St. Paul for inspiration. He says, "God, with all His abundant wealth in Christ Jesus, will supply all your needs." (Phil.4:19) For us to thrive and grow as a parish, our lives must be anchored in Christ Jesus and His teaching. When we are in union with our Lord and with one another we can do great things in His name.



Fr. Augustine Chumo

Exodus 90

By Joseph Miller

Here in North America in the 21st Century, living is easier than it has ever been in the history of mankind. Not many of us worry about having a warm place to sleep, food to eat, or clothes to wear. It's easy to become self-absorbed, to forget our blessings, and to not think about the source of all goodness. When life is good, we tend to forget about God. We tend to become trapped, enslaved, by the things that make life easy.

A group of men have banded together to help each other break free from the slavery of worldly entrapments through a program called Exodus 90. Exodus 90 is a spiritual exercise that brings men together to help each other become better husbands, fathers, and followers of Christ. It is based on the traditions of the Desert Fathers of the early church. It is based on the fundamentals of scripture, prayer, fraternity, and asceticism. Members commit to daily reflections on scripture and a nightly *examen* - a self-evaluation of the day. Each local group gathers at least weekly for faith-sharing, prayer, and mutual support in maintaining commitment to the practices. The ascetic practices of Exodus 90 include fasting, abstaining from sweets and alcohol, avoiding electronic entertainment, avoiding material purchases, and (most popular) cold showers.

These practices of prayer and self-denial have helped Christians follow God more closely for centuries. The program enables men to break free from the addictions of food, alcohol, pornography, material possessions, unhealthy relationships, and a stagnant faith. Exodus 90 was developed by Father Brian Doerr at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Maryland to help men preparing for the priesthood, but the program has expanded to men of all walks of life worldwide. Daily reflections are online and there is a small monthly cost.

Last year a group of 12 men formed an Exodus 90 chapter here in Ithaca. Some have moved away, but many of us are planning to re-commit in 2020. The program runs 90 days, starting on January 12 and ending on Easter Sunday. We welcome new members to our group which has been meeting early on Saturday mornings. We also encourage formation of other groups - starting dates and meeting times for new groups are completely flexible. If you are interested in becoming a better man, more information can be found at exodus90.com, or contact Joseph Miller at 413jmill@gmail.com.

Something New at Calvary Cemetery

By James Moravec

There is something new coming to Calvary Cemetery on Five Mile Drive, Ithaca. The Immaculate Conception Parish Cemetery Committee is studying alternative interment options for our deceased loved ones.

For several years now we have recognized an increase in the number of interments of cremated remains at Calvary Cemetery. Over the last several years, the percentage has risen from 28% to the current 57%. Although there is presently an area designated in the cemetery for in-ground interment of ashes, the committee has decided to study the option of above-ground interment of urns.



*Calvary Cemetery
Columbarium Concept*

This would be accomplished by positioning a columbarium on the cemetery grounds in the open space just east of the Queen of Peace Mausoleum. By definition, a columbarium is a group of niches (spaces) which contain cremated remains. One or two urns can be interred in one niche. An example of a columbarium with a walkway is shown here. The committee also plans to develop a memorial garden with seating around the columbarium. We have received landscaping advice from Mr. Mitch Glass who is a Visiting Lecturer at Cornell University.

A project of this magnitude in our cemetery will require substantial financial support. The price per niche (holding 2 urns) is yet undetermined as we need to establish the cost of the columbarium plus the cost of the garden. It is, however, the committee's desire to make this an economical alternative to in-ground burials.

The Committee did a survey this summer and many parishioners showed an interest in columbarium interment. It is important to determine if parishioners would be willing to make pre-payments for niches since funds will be needed to make the initial purchase. The committee is asking parish members to think about their final arrangements and if columbarium interment is of interest, to please e-mail or leave a text message to the below contacts. We would like to create a list of interested people.

There would be no commitment expected at this time because we have not yet determined the prices. We will provide you with more information as it becomes available. Updated information can also be found under the Cemetery section of the church web site at www.immconch.org. Contacts are e-mail James.Moravec@DOR.org. Text: 607-279-0505 or Kathy Schwoeble e-mail rudykathy@aol.com. Text: 607-227-5855.

Going...Gone

By Rich Rasmussen

In my 18 years of ministry with young people and families I have witnessed a lot when it comes to trends, the family unit, and identity and participation as a Catholic. As you look around on any given weekend, I am sure that all of you have the same question; “where did everybody go?”

It is no secret that Mass attendance has dropped within the past decade in Catholic churches, as has attendance at non-denominational and protestant churches across the country. There has been such a decrease in people associating themselves with the Catholic church, or even any religion, that it sparked a joint research study between CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) and St. Mary’s Press. What came from the study poses a great challenge for many churches. Below are some key statistics from the research and what we as a parish community can do to better evangelize to young people and families within our parish as well as to those who are on the fringes.

From the study, we learned that there are 20 million former Catholics, most of whom leave church affiliation before age 21. Thirty-five percent of former Catholics are between the ages of 18-29, and 54% of the unaffiliated Catholics are between the ages of 30-64. This group of non-affiliated Catholics has been coined the “Nones.”

When individuals were asked “at what age did you stop identifying as Catholic,” the median age was 13. It is important to note they were asked about when they stopped “identifying as Catholic” not when they stopped attending Mass. This is an important distinction with great implications. That means that young people may be at Mass, in our religious education programs and preparing for sacraments, such as Confirmation, but they have already mentally, emotionally and spiritually checked out. The big question is “why?” What I would argue is that many communities have been good at helping young people with being “churched” but have not done as well with helping young people and families being “Gospeled.” When asked why they no longer affiliate, the answers are wide and varied; which means that there is no one single solution.



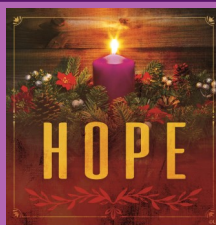
Bob McCarty, former Executive Director of The National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry and key contributor to the research, states that young people have 5 basic hungers. They are searching for meaning and purpose, seeking connection, seeking recognition that they have gifts and talents to offer the faith community, longing for a sense of the Holy, and strive for a deep sense of justice - meaning they want to help others to better their lives. The underlying question of young people is “where are my hungers being fed?”

The question for us as a parish is “are we helping young people in our parish feed these hungers? Do we welcome young families, children and teens? Do we see them as a gift to our parish or do we see them as a distraction? Do we help young people as they struggle with and explore the question of the meaning and purpose God has for them? Do we encourage them to use their gifts and talents and allow “mistakes” as occasions for growth and learning rather than being critical of those mistakes? Do we provide opportunities to experience the Holy and welcome their participation and leadership in community devotions? Do we seek out their help and welcome their participation in service on parish committees and service to our community? Feeding these hungers is not simply an issue to be addressed by a pastor or by parish staff. This is a community issue that requires effort from our entire parish.

Our Church is at a key point in history. Our greatest challenge is passing on faith to younger generations in a secular age. We are each called to help young people foster a faith they claim as their own and one that they believe with their hearts truly matters? We must work to make our faith not just a cognitive one but an affective one; one that is not only of the head, but of the heart. When we do that, we feed the hungers of our young people and help them experience the Gospel in a very real way. So, how can you help feed these hungers? As one responsible for ministry to young people and families in our parish, I encourage you to pray about how you can feed the hungers of our young people. If you are called to do that in a more formal way, please feel free to contact me at the parish office 607-273-6121. If you want more information about the study or to view a video regarding the results and implications, I am also happy to provide it to you.

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All photos by Ann Woodard

2019 Parish Picnic at Cass Park

Immaculate Conception Calendar

Fall 2018

Note that although the calendar entries below are accurate at the time of newsletter publishing, there are occasional changes to these events. Please check in the weekly bulletin or on the parish website calendar for updates.

CH=Church PC=Parish Center PH=Parish Hall YR=Youth Room (former shop)

Food Pantry EVERY Tuesday at 1:00pm (PH)

Adult Choir EVERY Tuesday from 5:30-7:30pm (CH)

Contemporary Group EVERY Wednesday from 5:30-7:30pm (CH)

Coffee Hour after Sunday Masses EVERY 2nd & 4th Sunday.

Pietra Fitness EVERY Wednesday at 3:00pm in the Parish Hall

November 2019

Wednesday, November 20

NCYC
7:00pm-Service Team (PH)

Thursday, November 21

NCYC
7:00pm-Liturgy Committee (PC)

Friday, November 22

NCYC

Saturday, November 23

NCYC

Sunday, November 24

NCYC

Monday, November 25

10:30am-Cayuga Ridge Mass

Thursday, November 28

Thanksgiving Day
Office Closed Mass @ 9:00am

Friday, November 29

Office Closed Mass @ 9:00am

December 2019

Sunday, December 1

11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR)
2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR)

Thursday, December 5

6:00pm-Parish Council (PH)

Friday, December 6

7:30am-First Friday Exposition (CH)
7:00pm-Praise/Worship/Ador. (CH)

Saturday, December 7

10:00am-1st Penance Prep (PH)
3:00pm-Holy Hour Exposition (CH)

Sunday, December 8

11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR)
2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR)
1:00pm-Service Team (PH)

Thursday, December 12

1:30pm-Titus Towers Service

Saturday, December 14

11:00am-Penance Service (CH)

Sunday, December 15

11:45am-Pageant Rehearsal (CH)
11:45am-HS Youth Grp (YR)
2:30pm-MS Youth Grp (YR)
5:00pm-FAMBRE (PH)

Monday, December 16

10:30am-Cayuga Ridge Mass

Thursday, December 19

4:00pm-McGraw House Service
7:00pm-Liturgy Committee (PC)

Friday, December 20

9:00am-Finance Council (PC)

Sunday, December 22

11:45am-Pageant Rehearsal (CH)
1:00pm-Extra Choir Rehearsal (CH)

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Office Closed
4:00pm-Pageant & Mass
9:30pm-Pre-Mass Choral Concert
10:00pm-” Midnight” Mass

Wednesday, December 25

Christmas Day Office Closed
10:30am-Christmas Day Mass

January 2020

Wednesday, January 1

New Year's Day—Office Closed
Mass at 9:00am

Friday, January 3

7:30am-1st Friday Exposition (CH)
7:00pm-Praise/Worship/Ador. (CH)

Saturday, January 4

3:00pm-Holy Hour Exposition

Sunday, January 5

11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR)
2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR)

Thursday, January 9

1:30pm-Titus Towers Mass
6:00pm-Parish Council (PH)

Sunday, January 12

11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR)
2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR)

Monday, January 13

1:30pm-Cemetery Committee (C)

Thursday, January 16

4:00pm-McGraw House Mass

Sunday, January 19

11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR)
2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR)

Monday, January 20

Martin Luther King Day
Office Closed Mass @ 9:00am

Wednesday, January 22

7:00pm-Knights of Columbus 4th degree (PH)

Friday, January 24

9:00am-Finance Council (PC)

Sunday, January 26

11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR)
2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR)
5:00pm-FAMBRE (PH)

Monday, January 27

10:30am-Cayuga Ridge Mass
Wednesday, January 29
7:00pm-Service Team (PH)

February 2020

Saturday, February 1

3:00pm-Holy Hour Exposition

Sunday, February 2

11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR)

Monday, February 3

Blessing of Throats after 12:10 Mass
6:00pm-Building & Grounds Committee (PC) (cont. on page 6)

Our Growing Parish

By Maureen Seeley

We are pleased to recognize our newly registered parishioners and the parishioners who have successfully completed and received the sacraments.

Robert S. Gibbons

Shannon & Paul MacCarrick
and daughters Elizabeth & Charlotte

Gloria Proveda and son Luis Toriche
Sally & Ronald Regoird

We congratulate the parishioners who received the sacrament of First Holy Communion:



Jose Aguirre

Benjamin Jump

Owen Maxson

Ava Schmidt

Camden VanCleaf

We congratulate the parishioners who received the sacrament of Confirmation:

Paul Alcolea
Liam Cooper
Emily Jones

Nina Lyons
Aria Petrella

Magdala Jeudy
Allan Charles Runions II



We welcome and congratulate our newly Baptized members:

Christopher Kal-El Vladimir Parks
Parents: Christopher & Anna Parks

Elijah Sieverding
Parents: Stefan Sieverding & Stacey Dimas

Nora Parks
Parents: Michael & Jessica Parks

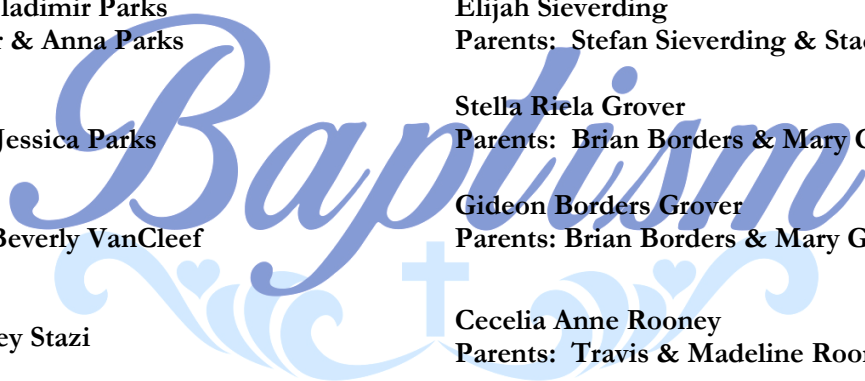
Stella Riela Grover
Parents: Brian Borders & Mary Grace Grover

Camden VanCleaf
Parents: Chance & Beverly VanCleaf

Gideon Borders Grover
Parents: Brian Borders & Mary Grace Grover

Tony Angelo Stazi
Parents: Kyle & Kasey Stazi

Cecelia Anne Rooney
Parents: Travis & Madeline Rooney



<i>Calendar (cont. from page 5)</i>		
<u>Thursday, February 6</u> 6:00pm-Parish Council (PH)	<u>Monday, February 17</u> President's Day Office Closed-Mass at 9:00am	<u>Monday, February 24</u> 10:30am-Cayuga Ridge Mass
<u>Friday, February 7</u> 7:30am-First Friday Exposition 7:00pm-Praise/Worship/Adoration	<u>Wednesday, February 19</u> 7:00pm-Service Team (PH)	<u>Wednesday, February 26</u> Ash Wednesday Masses at 7:00am, 12:10 & 7:00pm
<u>Sunday, February 9</u> 11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR) 2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR)	<u>Thursday, February 20</u> 4:00pm-McGraw House Service	<u>Thursday, February 27</u> 11:00am-Exposition 5:30pm-Contemporary Grp (CH)
<u>Monday, February 10</u> 6:00pm-Evangelization (PC)	<u>Friday, February 21</u> 9:00am-Finance Council (PC)	<u>Friday, February 28</u> 6:00pm-Stations of the Cross (CH) Stations of the Cross EVERY Friday at 6:00pm
<u>Wednesday, February 12</u> 7:00pm-Knights of Columbus 4th Degree (PH)	<u>Sunday, February 23</u> 11:45am-HS Yth Grp (YR) 2:30pm-MS Yth Grp (YR) 5:00pm-FAMBRE (PH)	
<u>Thursday, February 13</u> 1:30pm-Titus Towers Service		

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*“Advent is a journey toward
Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be
drawn by the Light of God made Man.”
—Pope Francis*

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