



The Immaculate Connection

Newsletter of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church
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Thoughts from Fr. Chumo: The Celebration of the Eucharist

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Pleasant weather is finally here after an exceptionally long and cold winter. I am profoundly thankful to God for His blessings to us all as a parish family. I always thank God for the gift of each member of our parish; together we make the Body of Christ.

The subject to which I would like to call your attention at this moment is the ending of *The Year of the Eucharist*. The heart of every parish is the celebration of the Eucharist. From the Eucharist flows all worship, prayer, devotion and all that pertains to faith formation. Each time we celebrate the Eucharist we place ourselves in direct contact with Jesus' paschal mystery. The Eucharist is the soul of the Church. It embodies everything that is dear to Jesus; everything He stands for and wishes for His disciples.

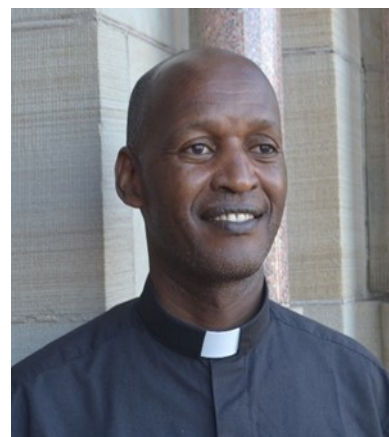
What is the most important aspect to reflect on during the Year of the Eucharist? What did we do as a parish family in honor of the Year of the Eucharist? What would we do moving into the future after reflecting on the Eucharist? It is not easy to summarize everything in a short article.

In the Eucharist is the real presence of Christ among us. He is truly present whenever we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. If we believe in His real presence in our Liturgical celebration, how should we respond to His gracious presence? Christ is God with us! He invites us to share His life with him. Our response should be that of joyful faith that never tires or leaves God's presence. Why do we have many empty pews in our

Churches is the lack of faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. There is a greater need for more faith. Faith is a gift that we must ask from God.

During The year of the Eucharist we did catechesis on the Eucharist during Mass. We did emphasize the need to prepare well to encounter Jesus by prayerfully reading the Sunday readings during the week. Intentional preparation for the Eucharistic celebrations includes celebration of the Sacrament of reconciliation, devotion to prayer life, and acts of charity.

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Fr. Augustine Chumo

Book Review: *The Mystical City of God*

By Wendy Babiak

In an age when people are accustomed to receiving information in smaller and smaller packages written in increasingly debased language, some will think me unhinged to recommend a tome of 4,000 pages, written nearly 400 years ago in a style that even at that time would have been considered elevated. Let them call me unhinged, then, because I do recommend with all my heart that you read *The Mystical City of God*, by Venerable Mary of [Ágreda](#). Will it take you a long time to finish? No doubt. But no one says you must finish a book within any set time (the joys of being done with school), and it will be worth every minute (and every flip through the dictionary). I read a bit every night in bed, and I'm currently 30% into my third reading. It's been my nightly reading for years. Confession: I read it on my Kindle, which is easier on my wrists, and makes looking up words a matter of holding my finger on it. If you don't have an e-reader, this book is the perfect reason to get one. If you get it in traditional book form, it's broken up into four volumes.

So, what is it about? Just the life of Our Holy Mother. But this isn't any old book of Mariology. It's a Mariologist's source material. It's the lifework of a visionary Franciscan nun tasked with recording, in utmost detail, the entire arc, from the conception of the Most Blessed Virgin in the mind of God before Creation to her crowning in heaven after her glorious Assumption. Along the way you get a crash course in the virtues because she can't describe how each is perfected in Mary Most Holy without going into a deep discussion of them all, and how they operate and develop in tandem with each other. Another confession: on my first reading, I found this part tedious, (get on with the narrative!) but in the subsequent readings, after I tried with little success to cultivate the virtues, I paid more attention, realizing what an invaluable catechesis this part of the book offers. You also get to know Sts. Joachim and Anne, her parents, which is a blessing. St. Joseph, barely mentioned in the scriptures, comes to life in these pages. And it's a deep scoop into Our Lord's life, from the moment the Word of God is joined in the hypostatic union to the holy humanity at the Annunciation, His Nativity, His Sacred Childhood, His Baptism, Transfiguration, the Last Supper, and agonizing descriptions of His Passion. What transpires at His Resurrection will warm your heart. Your understanding of all the mysteries of the Holy Rosary will be enriched, which can only render your prayers more efficacious and pleasing to God.

Woven throughout, from the very beginning when the angels were tested by the image of the woman in the sky crowned with twelve stars, and their submission to their Queen or rebellion against her dividing the good angels from the fallen, is the battle with Satan and his minions. What we learn about them, their operations, their hatred for Our Mother and her children, remind us what Our Savior saves us from. One more confession: their presence in the narrative also makes it more exciting! What scenes: the meek Virgin leading them along like chained beasts by the supernatural reigns handed to her by Our Lord as He dragged the Sacred Cross up to the hill of Calvary, forcing them to witness their defeat and our redemption, only to have her fling

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them to the deepest recesses of Hell at the moment of His death, imprisoning them for three days, which they used to hatch all the heresies that would ever be spread. (No one who reads this book will repeat the mistake of failing to don their spiritual armor.) Her skirmishes with the devil don't end there. There's a weeks' long battle at sea on the way to Ephesus after Our Lord's Ascension, as Satan tries hard to snuff out the infant Church by killing Our Mother. But the power of God is in her, and we're shown why the demons fear her very name.

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Youth Perspective

By Maria Robinson

My name is Maria Robinson, and I've been involved in Immaculate Conception for my entire life. I am currently an altar server, cantor, a member of the contemporary choir, the director of the children's Christmas pageant, and most recently, the youth representative for parish council. Despite these numerous activities, I can still sometimes find it difficult to live a life of faith. So, when the youth minister, Rich, asked me to write about being a young disciple, I didn't know where to start.

For a while I believed that a youth is just like everyone else in the Church, but I've come to realize the challenge that we face is one other members of our community might not have to. We live in an era where the dangers of the secular world are romanticized and made appealing, and many teens are expected to have that same state of mind.

In public schools, our beliefs are constantly being belittled and challenged by other students. It can be difficult to remain resilient in the face of those who laugh at us for our faith. But I am reminded that the reward in the end is far greater than fitting in with the crowd. Sometimes I feel very isolated in these situations, but the community of other young Catholics is strong. Through our parish youth groups and other parish activities we have the ability to bond through the beliefs we share and have fun while doing it. The sense of unity that is present in any situation when we gather, whether it be a small group every Sunday or the 25,000 at NCYC, is unbreakable.

As we endure the challenges that life throws at us, God is there every step of the way to guide us. For a while I forgot about this - I was used to keeping my religious life to Sunday mornings.

Eventually, I became more aware of His presence throughout the week and in all aspects of what I do, and my life improved considerably. I am less stressed out over insignificant things, and I know that I will be guided by Him through everything. The difficulties we young Catholics face will make us stronger and better prepared for the future, and through our faith we will be made stronger. It is often said that we young people are the future of the Church, but we are also the Church now and we want to contribute everything we can to keep our faith alive. We want to make the world a better place, and we can do so by being the example Jesus wants us to be. I encourage all young people to not be afraid to live your faith, and by doing so, you might change the world one life at a time.

*Such is the confidence that
we have through Christ
toward God. 2 Corinthians 3:4*



Maria Robinson

Photo: Denise Robinson

Parishioner Profile: *Vinton Stevens*

Story and Photo by Rich Rasmussen

In speaking with Vinton “Bo” Stevens about his life and journey of faith, I am reminded of the Johnny Cash song, *I’ve been everywhere*. To say that his journey of faith has taken many roads is an understatement.

Bo grew up in Elmira, NY and his family was Buddhist. He had no real exposure to Christianity until he entered Notre Dame High School in the 10th grade. Although he didn’t realize it at the time, God had placed some very influential people in his life at Notre Dame that led him to his Christianity and Catholic faith. Many of you will recognize Fr. McDonough, Sr. Mary Walter and Sr. Edwina as “faith heavy-weights”. Although they were highly influential, Bo felt he had to explore spirituality some more. This included visiting Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India for three and a half months, where he participated in a 10-day, 100-hour meditation retreat.

As time went on, he struggled through a variety of things that life threw his way and he continued to feel a sense of restlessness. This restlessness led him on a deeper search for meaning and faith. That search has led him through 23 countries (I told you he has been everywhere). Through his search of faith, he says that “after 40 years of searching I realized that I still had no answers for my purpose in life.” He also realized that, like most of us, he had to come to grips with

his own humanity. This realization is what helped lead him to the Catholic Church. He recognized that there must be something greater than ourselves and that his life was created for a purpose.



Through his journey, there was one particular book, *Sophie’s World*, that helped him get to where he is today. The book basically addressed three questions that most of us grapple with from time to time: “Who are you?”, “Where did you come from?”, and “Why are you here?” After reading and reflecting on the book, Bo realized that he had set the bar in life way too low. He realized that God was calling him to something more, and to a relationship with Him. As a result, he began the RCIA process in 2017 and entered the Church during this past Easter Vigil.

Vinton “Bo” Stevens at home in the Immaculate Community

I asked Bo what advice he would you give to those that might also be spiritually restless. He responded, “pray, listen, discern, and be open to what God is calling you to.” Bo also practices meditation and would be happy to speak to anyone who has questions or is interested in how to incorporate meditation into their prayer life.

God might not be calling us to all that Bo has experienced, but He does call us all to be open. May we all have that similar sense of surrender that Bo has had: there are amazing things God can do through us.

Summer at Immaculate Conception

All Events held in the Church unless otherwise indicated:

Carges=Carges Hall, GGPC=George Green Parish Center, YR=Youth Room-former Gift Shoppe

Weekend Masses

Saturdays – 4:30 pm

Sundays—8:30 and 10:30 am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays – 2:30 pm-4:00 pm

or by appointment

Food Pantry every Tuesday – 1:00 pm (Carges Hall)

Pietra Fitness every Wednesday—3:00 pm (GGPC)

JULY

Wednesday, July 4. Independence Day

Office Closed

Mass @ 9:00am

Monday, July 9

1:00pm-Cemetery Grp (GGPC)

July 14/15

Food for the Poor Missionary @ Masses

Monday, July 16

3:30pm-Finance Council (GGPC)

July 21/22

Maryknoll Missionary @ Masses

Monday, July 23

12:10pm-Communion Service

July 28/29

Propagation of Faith Missionary @ Masses

Monday, July 30

12:10pm-Communion Service

AUGUST

Thursday, August 9

1:00pm-Bible Study (GGPC)

Sunday, August 12

12:00noon-Parish Picnic (Cass Park)

Monday, August 13

1:00pm-Cemetery Grp (GGPC)

Wednesday, August 15

7:00 am & 7:00pm – Masses for The Assump-
tion of Mary

3:00pm-Pietra Fitness (Carges)

Thursday, August 16

1:00pm-Bible Study (GGPC)

Friday, August 17

2:00-9:00pm-Parish Directory Portrait Sessions
(Carges)

Saturday, August 18

9:30am-4pm-Parish Directory Portrait Sessions
(Carges)

Monday, August 20

3:30pm-Finance Council (GGPC)

Wednesday, August 29

3:00pm-Pietra Fitness (Carges)

5:30pm-Contempt Grp Meet New Director

7:00pm-Service Team (Carges)

Thursday, August 30

1:00pm-Bible Study (GGPC)

Beginning in SEPTEMBER:

Adult Choir every Tuesday at 5:30pm

Contemporary Group every Wed at

5:30pm

Coffee Hour after Sunday Masses every

2nd and 4th Sunday

Monday, September 3, Labor Day

Office Closed, Mass @ 9:00am

Tuesday, September 4

5:30-7:30pm-Adult Choir Resumes

Wednesday, September 5

3:00pm-Pietra Fitness (Carges)

5:30-7:30pm-Contemp. Grp Resumes

Thursday, September 6

6:00pm-Parish Council (Carges)

Friday, September 7

2:00-9:00pm-Parish Directory Portrait Sessions
(Carges)

Saturday, September 8

9:30am-4pm-Parish Directory Portrait Sessions
(Carges)

Monday, September 10

6:00pm-Evangelization (GGPC)

Monday, September 11

1:00pm-Cemetery Grp (GGPC)

Sunday, September 16

12:00pm-HS & MS Youth Group and FAMBRE
Kickoff (YR)

Monday, September 17

3:30pm-Finance Council (GGPC)

Wednesday, September 19

7:00pm-Knights of Columbus Ithaca Council
(Carges)

Sunday September 23

7:00pm-Parish Mission w/ Steve Angrisano
(Carges)

Monday, September 24

10:30am-Cayuga Ridge Mass

7:00pm-Parish Mission w/ Steve Angrisano
(Carges)

Tuesday, September 25

7:00pm-Parish Mission w/ Steve Angrisano

Wednesday, September 26

7:00pm-Service Team (Carges)

Saturday, September 29

1:30-4pm-Discovering Christ (Carges)

Sunday, September 30

1st Penance Enrollment @ Masses

11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)

2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)



OCTOBER

Thursday, October 4
6:00pm-Parish Council (Carges)

Saturday, October 6
10:00am-1st Penance Prep (YR)
1:30-4pm-Discovering Christ (Carges)

Monday, October 8. Columbus Day
Office Closed
Mass @ 9:00am

Thursday, October 11
1:30pm-Titus Towers Service

Saturday, October 13
1:30pm-Discovering Christ (Carges)

Sunday, October 14
11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)
2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)
5:00pm-FAMBRE (YR)

Monday, October 15
1:00pm-Cemetery Grp (GGPC)
3:30pm-Finance Council (GGPC)

Thursday, October 18
4:00pm-McGraw House Service

Saturday, October 20
Box of Joy Kickoff
1:30pm-Discovering Christ (Carges)

Sunday, October 21
Box of Joy Kickoff
2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)

Wednesday, October 24
7:00pm-Service Team (Carges)

Thursday, October 25
7:00pm-Liturgy Committee (GGPC)

Saturday, October 27
1:30pm-Discovering Christ (Carges)

Sunday, October 28
11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)
5:30pm-Catholic Charities Peace Mass

Monday, October 29
10:30am-Cayuga Ridge Mass

NOVEMBER

Thursday, November 1, All Saint's
Masses at 7:00am, 12:10pm & 7:00pm

Saturday, November 3
9:00am—3:00pm-Discovering Christ Retreat (Carges)
10:00 am Mass of Remembrance

Sunday, November 4
11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)
2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)

Wednesday, November 7
9:00—11:00am-Early Bird Mass Scheduling (Carges)

Thursday, November 8
9:00—11:00am-Early Bird Mass Scheduling (Carges)
1:30pm-Titus Towers Mass
6:00pm-Parish Council (Carges)

Saturday, November 10
10:00am-1st Penance Prep (YR)
1:30pm-Discovering Christ (Carges)

Sunday, November 11
3:00pm-Senior Thanksgiving Dinner (Carges)

Monday, November 12
1:00pm-Cemetery Group (GGPC)

Tuesday, November 13
6:00pm-Evangelization (GGPC)

Wednesday, November 14
7:00pm-Service Team (Carges)

Thursday, November 15
4:00pm-McGraw House Mass

Saturday, November 17
1:30pm-Discovering Christ-Final Session (Carges)

Sunday, November 18
11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)
2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)
5:00pm-FAMBRE (Carges)

Monday, November 19
3:30pm-Finance Council (Carges)

Thursday, November 22, Thanksgiving
Office Closed,
Mass @ 9:00am

Friday, November 23
Office Closed
Mass @ 9:00am

Monday, November 26
10:30am-Cayuga Ridge Mass

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 1
10:00am-1st Penance Prep (YR)

Sunday, December 2
11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)
2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)
2:00-5:00pm-Service Team (Carges)

Thursday, December 6
6:00pm-Parish Council (Carges)

Friday, December 7
5:30pm-Feastday Vigil Mass

Saturday, December 8. Feast of the Immaculate Conception
10:00am-Mass with Bishop Matano followed by reception in Carges Hall

Sunday, December 9
11:30am-1:00pm-Service Team (Carges)
11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)
2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)

Thursday, December 13
1:30pm-Titus Towers Service

Saturday, December 15
11:00am-Penance Service

Sunday, December 16
11:45am-HS Youth Group (YR)
2:30pm-MS Youth Group (YR)
5:00pm-FAMBRE (Carges)

Monday, December 17
3:30pm-Finance Council (Carges)

Thursday, December 20
4:00pm-McGraw House Service
7:00pm-Liturgy Committee (GGPC)

Sunday, December 23
12:00-1:30pm-Extra Choir Rehearsal

Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve
Office Closed
4:00pm-Pageant & Mass
9:30pm-Pre-Mass Choral Concert
10:00pm—"Midnight" Mass

Tuesday, December 25, Christmas Day
Office Closed
10:30am-Christmas Day Mass

Thoughts from Fr. Chumo (continued from page 1):

We have a good practice in our parish of Eucharistic adoration on the first Fridays 7:30am – 11:00am and first Saturdays 3:00pm – 4:00pm of each month. I encourage all parishioners to find time during these days to spend time with Jesus. Lately, we have experienced low attendance. There is nothing to compare with the time spent with our Lord. Bring family and friends to Jesus!



Daily Mass will be celebrated in our parish all days of the week. Additional Mass on Saturday 8:30am means more spiritual opportunities for us and the many people who visit our area. As we all know Ithaca attracts people from the entire nation and beyond.

The Eucharist calls us to do outreach. As we share in the Eucharist and are spiritually nourished, we must think of the millions of people who go hungry in need of material food. There is so much in the world that ruffles our spirits, so much that saddens and depress our sisters and brothers. As a Eucharistic community, we are called to reach out to all in charity and express our solidarity to those in any kind of need. Peace and blessings upon you all. Amani kwenu!

Fr. Augustine Chumo



Book Review: The Mystical City of God (continued from page 2)

We're also shown why she carries, among her titles, that of Mother of the Church. In the twenty-one years she spent helping to grow the nascent Church after Christ's Ascension, she not only fought the devil, but oversaw the writing of the Apostle's Creed and its dissemination, and the writing of the gospels; but she spent uncounted hours in prayer, reliving Christ's Passion daily, face down in the form of a cross, shedding copious tears, praying for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of all the members of Christ's Mystical Body throughout time. That includes you and me.

I realize private revelation makes people nervous (as it should...there's a lot that's been "revealed" privately that turns out to reveal more about the psyche of the "visionary" than about any eternal truths), but this book has two things going for it that inspire my trust, and should inspire your confidence in what it tells us about the Holy Mother and the plan of salvation: The Spanish Inquisition (hardly known for their laxity) went through it not once, but twice, with a fine-toothed comb, and found nothing in it in error theologically or that contradicted the scriptures, and, even more impressively, the body of Sister Mary of Jesus is not only incorruptible, but looks like she just lay down for a nap. Why she's not yet a saint is a mystery. Maybe God has waited so she can be canonized in our time and thus spur a wide readership of her book, now that it can be accessed so easily, and now that we so need Holy Mary's help to bring peace and hope to the world. For this book will do nothing if not inspire trust in both her love for us and the power of her intercession.

Immaculate Conception Church
113 North Geneva Street
Ithaca, NY 14850

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*"This is the day that the
Lord has made, let us be
glad and rejoice in it."
-Psalms 118:24*

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Pastor

Fr. Augustine Chumo

Editor

Christen Bonacci

Design and Layout

Elizabeth Burns

Contributors

Wendy Babiak
Fr. Augustine Chumo
Rich Rasmussen
Maria Robinson