



Gleanings from the Vineyard

Evangelization around the Diocese

Many parishes in the DOR hosted *ChristLife* or *The Alpha Course* this past year, some for the first time. We asked for leaders to share their insights and advice.

CONTRIBUTING PARISHES

Peace of Christ, Rochester, **St. Mark's**, Greece, **Transfiguration**, Pittsford, **St. Joseph's**, Penfield, **Our Lady of Lourdes/St. Anne**, Rochester, **St. John the Evangelist**, Greece, **St. Marianne Cope**, Henrietta, **Assumption**, Fairport.

ATTENDANCE

All participating parishes, large and small, were pleased at the turnout. Peace of Christ averaged 120 guests and St. Mark's has consistently had between 40 and 50 people. It appears most participants were already parishioners although Our Lady of Lourdes/St. Anne was also able to host two groups of RIT and U of R students. The number of small groups in each program went from 4 to 17, with 7 to 10 people at a table.

PREPARATION

All contributors mentioned months of prep work: being trained to lead, training other leaders and volunteers, setting up dinner strategies, publicity and planning details. Both programs take a tremendous commitment from the staff of the parish and rely heavily on volunteers. In the case of St. Joseph's, 30 people were trained to be facilitators or leaders plus a myriad of volunteers for dinner, attendance taking etc. Most parishes began planning six months to a year in advance. "This program is the culmination of a lot

of hard work from some very dedicated volunteers, and of course, a lot of prayer!" (St. John the Evangelist, Greece).

DIFFERENT WAYS OF HOSTING MEALS:

All agreed that the meals were a "pivotal" part of the programs' success. Some shared it was also the most difficult. Surprised that almost every parish handled dinners differently, it seemed good to list the creative approaches:

- Hospitality Committee of 8 that planned all meals, cooked & cleaned up.
- A "super volunteer couple" took care of everything; planning, cooking, cleaning.
- One volunteer parishioner who formed a kitchen crew who did all the meals.
- Different people from the parish volunteered to host for one week.
- The Knights of Columbus provided all meals for one 10 week session.
- Various ethnic groups of parish took 2 weeks each and served ethnic foods.
- Hospitality committee of 4 plus 12 cooks. Each week four of the cooks made the same recipe (from *ChristLife* website) for 25 people each.
- Participants signed up for one time each to bring their crockpots with assigned

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What's Our Mission?

By Cathy Kamp, Pastoral Associate, St. Joseph's Parish, Penfield
Chair of Pastoral Associates/Pastoral Ministers Association Executive Committee

In August 2017, a little late in the game, St. Joseph's looked into *ChristLife* with the help of Linda Mehlenbacher and Don Smith. We were excited to participate in training and make a long-range plan. Our pastor, Fr. Jim Schwartz, was excited too and wanted to come up with an immediate plan. Though many thought we would fail, we set out to start in November, just three months later.

What made that possible was the leadership of our parishioners. A core group of six of us trekked to the Diocese of Steubenville to join them for a *ChristLife* training in late September. In early November we launched a *Discovering Christ* pilot for 25 parish leaders. Most of them are now our broader team and together successfully implemented a Lenten *Discovering Christ* course for 100.

Encouraged by *ChristLife* to continue training, 10 of us are committed to the April training in Rochester; and

Fr. Jim and I plan to attend the National Conference in June. I must confess I was somewhat blindly being led along this path to more training without giving much thought to the "why" of it. I had a significant "ahah" moment when I had the opportunity, with my daughter, to attend Mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ellicott City, MD where one of the *ChristLife* video presenters, Fr. Eric Arnold, is pastor.

On this second Sunday of Easter, Fr. Arnold was presiding. Here I witnessed the fruits of what the training and adopting an ongoing curriculum of parish evangelization is all about. Although words cannot adequately capture what I experienced, this faith community is alive in the Spirit! Youth and adults alike came joyfully into Church. The music lifted us up with the *ChristLife* signature mix of familiar hymns and contemporary Christian worship

hymns. And throughout the liturgy, Fr. Arnold never missed an opportunity to connect with the assembly. His message was simple and profound—Jesus desired for his disciples to have peace in their hearts and he desires the same for us today. He invited the assembled parishioners to make that their common prayer for each other, and especially for the teens among them.

The point is this: evangelization programs are not "one-and-done." We—staff and parishioners—have to sustain them. We need to renew ourselves and continue learning so that we can bring our communities along until each parish is alive in the Spirit, welcoming spiritual homes for those just returning to the Church and seeking Jesus. May we all have peace in our hearts as we commit ourselves to the primary mission of sharing the Gospel.

(Evangelization...continued from page 1)

ingredients for that week's menu (from *ChristLife* website) and also brought desserts another time. The parish provided salad and bread each week. Had set of volunteers to set up and clean up.

At least one parish accepted free will donations to cover the cost. In another where parishioners took turns, the pastor offered to reimburse the food up to a certain figure.

Meal Challenges: Dietary restrictions- lactose intolerant, gluten intolerant, and vegans. The amount of work involved in feeding 40-120 people every week is a lot. Some meal coordinators are hesitant to volunteer for another session.

OTHER PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Some spaces not big enough; competition with other parish events

Commitment and length of the programs

Dealing lovingly with bizarre comments during small group sessions

Participants who came with outside agendas

Acoustics for the small groups

Weather. A couple of parishes were forced to cancel a session.

A few complaints about the videos:

ChristLife: Protestant language, only male speakers, 50's theology

Alpha: Dynamic to the point of distraction, difficult for older people to hear because of diversity of accents/cultures.

Overall feedback on the videos from both programs, however, was, "a strong affirmation for the teaching videos and for the small group discussions that followed."

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“On the Road...”

By Nancy DeRycke, Pastoral Associate, Our Lady of Lourdes + St. Anne Parishes, Rochester



Nancy DeRycke

As I reflect on my 45 years of church ministry, it seems appropriate that retirement comes during the Easter season. I like to think of my life as being on a walk on the Road to Emmaus.

From the early years until now my heart has been burning within me to somehow recognize & share the Good News of God’s love in the work I do. And like the disciples walking to Emmaus, my heart burns with hope & wonder.

I learned about church ministry early on by being with my Mother, Lois, as she not only was the first lay teacher at St. Pius Tenth School but also the one who organized many of the special parish Liturgies. Then while in college, Sr. Kay Heverin hired me as Religious Ed Assistant. That got me started. I developed a strong desire (another heart burning) to help people—children & adults—see that Church (and therefore in some ways, God) could be seen as much more than laws and rules and regulations.

I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, following the urge to minister in the church. As DRE, then Pastoral Associate, College Chaplain and Pastoral Administrator, I have worked with

some of the finest of the church--religious, lay & clergy through the years. And I have met some extraordinary, faithful people in the congregations I have served. They have taught me humility, and to see God in so many situations & questions, challenges & healings, joys & sorrows. Their hearts burn with faith and the ability to see God in everyday life. As a young Chaplain Intern at Rochester General Hospital, I learned the importance of listening, never assuming that I know what is underneath the surface. I went out to Seattle to get Masters degrees in Theology and then to St. Bernard’s for a Masters in Divinity.



When I left the convent, I realized even more deeply that the “burning desire” to work in church ministry was still there; I was relieved & blessed when Bishop Clark affirmed that. It was a new chapter of the same book. And when Ron and I married each other, I was so grateful that Ron could relate to being church together. In my ministry, there have been “God-moments” around almost

every corner that have kept me going, which always lead to the old question “what does it mean to BE church?”

I’m grateful to all with whom I’ve worked, most recently Fr. Gary Tyman, Jim Lawlor & Betsy & John McDermott at Our Lady of Lourdes+St. Anne. And thank you for the comradery of many of you who are pastoral ministers as we’ve walked this journey of faith together. Please forgive anything that needs to be forgiven if there have been bumps or bruises along the way. And to those who have more recently come into this field, you have my profound admiration and prayer that you will experience the joy and challenge, and have and BE support to many faith-filled people. I also pray you will not let some tough or negative experiences sour you or dishearten you to all the good that is possible in the church if we continue to work together and respond to the Spirit who works in unexpected ways.

As the prophet Micah encourages, may we all continue to: “Act justly, love tenderly & walk humbly with our God....”

If I can ever be of assistance to you (talks, retreats, RCIA presentations, prayer services, etc.), please feel free to contact me: 585-747-1310

NancyDeRycke13@gmail.com.

Goodbye and thank you to:

Nancy DeRycke

Our Lady of Lourdes/St. Anne

Amy Fernaays

Church of the Assumption

Betsy McDermott

Diocesan Liaison

Drew Desmarais

Peace of Christ

Dawn Burdick

St. Benedict

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Sacred Heart and St. Ann, Auburn

Welcome to:

Deacon Bill Rabjohn

Our Lady of Lourdes/St. Anne

2018 Dates of Interest

Wednesday, May 16	Pastoral Associates/Ministers Annual Retreat; 9:00-3:30. Notre Dame Retreat House. Registration forms to be sent out soon.
Thursday, May 24	Ministerium. RIT Conference Center. 9:00—3:00 pm Speakers: Dr. Susan Selner-Wright and Dr. Pia de Solenni.
Saturday, May 26	Diaconate Ordination. Sacred Heart Cathedral 10:00am
Saturday, June 2	Priesthood Ordination. Sacred Heart Cathedral 10:00am
Friday and Sat, August 3&4	Mercy Spirituality Center 40th Anniversary Program: “Becoming the Church We Dream Of” and “Dreams into Action”. Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester, NY 14610. hrockwell@mercyspiritualitycenter.org .

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MOST VALUABLE ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM

“...the relationships! People formed friendships and soul friends at their tables and many witnessed to having a transformation in their relationship with Christ and their prayer lives.”

- Deepening of faith and relationship with Jesus by those who had come seeking to discover him in a more meaningful way
- Sense of community and new friendships
- Giving a language and vocabulary with which to share one’s faith with others
- Strengthening sense of community within the parish
- So far this has been, for our faith community, a clear sign of people's desire to deepen their personal prayer & relationship with Christ and with one another
- People loved talking about faith issues and ask questions they’ve always wondered about
- Learning the basics of our faith through teaching videos and hearing the experience of so many others

GOALS AND HOPES

All the parishes plan to continue to offer these evangelization tools. Almost everyone worded their hopes going forward in words similar to the following quote from Cathy Kamp:

***“One hope is to move beyond the engaged parishioners who represented most of our participants this past year and to invite more people back to the Church or to the Church for the first time. Another hope is to see the high energy and excitement of the ChristLife (Alpha) sessions reflected at Sunday liturgy and all aspects of parish life and discipleship.*”**

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: An invitation to move closer to God in all things.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are a collection of meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices designed to help open us to a greater awareness of God working in our lives. These practices are meant to be engaged with, rather than studied. You will be invited to bring all of yourself — your imagination, memories, heart and intellect into the experience in order to step closer to God.

Though traditionally offered during 30 days of silent retreat, Mercy Spirituality Center offers the Ignatian ‘Retreat in Daily Life’ which takes place over a period of 30 weeks. Each week, you will receive a new teaching, as well as guidance from a certified prayer guide. Retreatants can choose to attend 30 weekly sessions on Wednesdays, beginning 9-26 -18, at Mercy Spirituality Center, 65 Highland Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620 or to participate virtually using Skype or FaceTime and SoundCloud.

Want to know more? Contact Holly Rockwell by phone at 585-473-6893 or email hrockwell@mercyspiritualitycenter.org.

Or come to an information session: Thursday, May 3, 7-8:30 pm or Wednesday, May 23, 10-11:30 am. Pre-registration appreciated, but not required. Call 585-473-6893 or email info@mercyspiritualitycenter.org.

Looking for a Spiritual Director?

Contact the Mercy Spirituality Center for names and information at info@mercyspiritualitycenter.org.

We are delighted to print articles, meditations, parish stories, prayer requests, book reviews etc. from pastoral associates/ministers of all parishes and ministries in the Rochester Diocese. We also are looking to highlight one pastoral associate/minister per issue so that we can all get to know our colleagues in the vineyard. Please submit ideas and contributions often to Shannon.loughlin@dor.org; 328-3228, ext. 1218.