



Jubilee Year of Mercy: an experience and an invitation

By Nancy DeRycke

Pastoral Associate of Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Anne

At Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Anne we are trying to make the most of the "Jubilee Year of Mercy". We will focus on a different Corporal or Spiritual Work of Mercy each month.

For January, we are reflecting on "Sheltering the Homeless". We began by inviting Sr. Grace Miller, RSM, from the House of Mercy to speak at all Weekend Masses (an energetic challenge since we have 6 Liturgies every weekend between the two churches!). Also at our 4pm Saturday St. Anne Mass and 10:30am Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes, we had the House of Mercy Gospel Choir lead all the music! The congregations' response at both worship sites was overwhelming. We had many extra guests who heard by word of mouth about them coming. (The Hibernians attended the 4pm Mass and then their wives came back again for the 10:30 the next day for more!)

I encourage any parish who may be looking for a way to be inspired by their spirit and genuine "mercy" to invite these wonderful folks to join your congregation. It gives your own musicians a well-deserved "day off", and helps the congregation experience these folks in a beautiful way! We invited people to bring in items from a

wish list provided by Sr. Grace, and to offer their services for things needed. We are also in the process of signing folks up to cook parts of meals (the House of Mercy serves over 100 every day of the year!) and others to deliver and serve them, giving people a chance to get to meet those they serve. We have already had many requests for them to return again to our community!

Along with the group came a "door" that they made at the House of Mercy with beautifully etched Works of Mercy on it. They talked about it (and the door at the Vatican), and encouraged us to literally walk through the door looking for our lives to become more merciful and kind to all we meet from then on. The door will remain at our Cluster temporarily, to remind us of the ongoing need for living mercy everyday.

When the next parish invites them to come, the door then goes to that parish. **Consider inviting this ministry to your own parish community.** They are a real inspiration; and Sr. Grace tells the story of a local "Mother Teresa"-style ministry.

Peace and blessings for us to have, share and BE mercy to others.....

Know of a parishioner who would be a great **Interfaith Liaison** between your parish and the Diocese? Please contact Betsy McDermott at bmcdermott@dor.org with a name and to learn more information.

Welcome
to new roles or parishes:

Sr. Barbara Baker, Resurrection, Fairport
Katherine Cappuccio, St. Paul, Webster
Carol Tamandl, Holy Family, Auburn
Richard White, Holy Family, Auburn

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The Time to Reflect on Mercy is Now

By Cathy Kamp, Pastoral Associate, St. Joseph's Parish, Penfield

Chair of Pastoral Associates/Pastoral Ministers Association Executive Committee

In most of our parish communities, we are immersed in activities to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy. It's good to take a step back and remember what it's all about.

In Pope Francis' recent book, *The Name of Good is Mercy*, he comments on why he has been saying since the beginning of his papacy that this is the time. "Yes, I believe that this is a time for mercy. The Church is showing her maternal side, her motherly face, to a humanity that is wounded." In referring to the Church as a "field hospital," he says that he thinks of the Church as a place "that warms people's hearts with its closeness and nearness."

As lay pastoral associates and ministers,

there is much to ponder in these words. Are we working to make our faith communities places where the wounded feel welcomed, warmed and healed, places where the Lord's merciful embrace is experienced? Do we allow others to warm our hearts? Do we feel the closeness and nearness of God's mercy?

Many times it is we, and our co-workers in ministry, who have the opportunity to be the face of God's mercy for another. Asked to clarify the difference between mercy and compassion, Pope Francis said, "Mercy is divine and has to do with the judgment of sin. Compassion has a more human face. It means to suf-

fer with, to suffer together, to not remain indifferent to the pain and suffering of others. It is what Jesus felt when he saw the crowds who followed him." Jesus allows himself to be drawn in. "This is the compassion that nourishes the awareness that we, too, are sinners".

Do we have a healthy desire to overcome indifference and enter into the suffering of others? Do we allow that involvement to nourish our own souls?

Take a day away and ponder mercy in your ministry this April 14 at the Pastoral Associates/Pastoral Ministers retreat!

Notes from the Harvest: Pastoral Associates and Ministers share their experience on the topic of taking days off, vacation time and avoiding burn-out

I have a dedicated day off where I schedule my appointments and family time. I have a trained funeral team that handles funerals on Mondays. Office staff and other PA's handle any family meetings that need to take place. Without this structure, early burnout is around the corner.



I try very hard to take Thursdays off, although I like to refer to my day off as a "moveable feast" - in that sometimes I take a different day off if it fits my schedule better. I also usually don't work on Saturday other than evening Mass. That being said, I can go 2 weeks without a day off. Although it is a good rule of thumb to always have some Sabbath time during the week, I also now know, after being in parish ministry for a few years, that my need to take time off changes depending on the season and my own personal energy. If my energy is high and I am not unhappy working a lot, I do so. When my energy gets low or going to work seems more like a burden, I schedule more time off. It works for me.



For me there is a heartfelt obligation/responsibility/desire to be present to the parishioners when they are in need. Time off is secondary to presence. I have always been in a small staff situation so this is particularly true. Someone needs to be present to a parishioner regardless of days off. I am the one parishioners are most comfortable with so it is me they call.



So far I get all my vacation and try to take Friday off, but often lose this as well as holidays due to funerals or other pastoral needs. As many of us, I work many more than 35 hours, with evening meetings, spiritual direction (which I am trained to do) and other life/spiritual events.



At my current assignment we take 2 days off each week but occasionally come in for a funeral if we are close to that family. We can take that time off because our pastor suggested we take it! (and I am not the only PA). We have trained parishioners to help families

prepare funerals and set up for liturgy. At previous assignments I had one day off each week and for 6 of those years I had one day off every 13 days! **Not healthy!!** Our pastor encourages us to take vacation time, or alternate time off if I need to work.



I've actually gotten better about making sure I take my days off (which is Fridays only), unless we have a funeral. Taking more than a couple days off at a time for vacation is difficult because our pastor has concerns about Mass flowing well if I am not here on weekends (what if we are short of ministers, the lector does not show up, etc.). However, he has never said I cannot go away, but I know he gets stressed when I do.



I'm off from Thursday afternoon through Saturday morning. Almost always have Friday off--except for major holy days. It works for me. Yes, I get to take my full vacation.



God uses our brokenness to make the world a more perfect place

By Rich Rasmussen, Pastoral Associate, Elmira Catholic Parishes



Rich Rasmussen

Hello everyone! My name is Rich Rasmussen and in October 2014 I became one of the Pastoral Associates with the Elmira Catholic Parishes. If someone would have told me 30 years ago that I would be working in parish ministry I would have shaken my head in total disbelief and told that person they were crazy. Now, I have a similar conversation with God every day because I am simply amazed that this is where God has asked me to be.

You see, my vision when I was in high school was to become a successful corporate lawyer, living in a suburb and living an extremely comfortable life. Little did I know that God had a different idea; asking me to receive a degree in Social Work, to work with youth and families at Hillside Children's Center, then with adults with Developmental Disabilities at the Franziska Racker Centers in Ithaca, NY and United Cerebral Palsy in Horseheads, NY then to eventually respond "yes" to the call of youth and family ministry at Immaculate Conception Church in Ithaca for 13 years. It seemed I had found my niche at Immaculate Conception only to be asked to shift gears once again to come to Elmira to coordinate RCIA and minister to the homebound

which was outside of the comfort zone that I had known for 13 years. I guess one could say I went from a typical youthful vision of making millions as a lawyer to making tens of dollars working in parish ministry. One could also say that I HAVE NEVER BEEN HAPPIER accepting the call to parish ministry.

Through my 15 years in parish ministry I have come to understand more clearly our human need for community, sharing of our faith and our need for a sense of belonging. I am not sure that I would have had the ability or taken the opportunity as a lawyer in the "rat race" of seeking individual success to understand these needs. Don't misunderstand me; there are many faith-filled lawyers who do understand this very well. I am simply saying that I am not sure that I would have been able to do it.

I have never been happier accepting the call to parish ministry!

I have come to understand that we all share a part of the human condition. Contemporary Christian Music artist, Jason Castro states that we are all "the same kind of broken." Whether

we are physically or emotionally "broken" we share in that brokenness and are called to assist each other in whatever way God calls us to. That is my hope for this ministry that I have been called to. When I look at my own brokenness I can tell you "it isn't pretty." However, the words spoken by Jesse Manibusan at our Diocesan Youth Convention many years ago have stuck with me and have helped me be a better minister. He said "we are all perfectly imperfect." God uses our imperfections to make the world a more perfect place. Although this is somewhat of a paradox, God uses them in such a way that "perfects" the lives of those that we serve in nursing homes, hospitals, their own homes when they are unable to get out to mass, to the grieving, the spiritually dry. Our brokenness, when we are keenly aware of it, gives us perspective and a sense of understanding so that we may become better ministers. My belief is if God can do all of this with brokenness then I guess God has some really big plans for me and I would imagine many others.

I am truly humbled and blessed to have been called into parish ministry as a Pastoral Associate in the Diocese of Rochester. I look forward to getting to meet more of you at our April gathering. Until then, thank you for reading and may the peace of Christ fill your hearts and your homes.

Question for next issue of Gleanings. Please share your experience and thoughts (bmcdermott@dor.org).

How do you reach out to/evangelize the next generation?

Message from the Finance Department

A financial fraud and financial abuse hotline has been established to report concerns related to financial fraud and abuse at the Pastoral Center, parishes, schools and/or agencies. Anonymous calls may be made to the Hotline at 585.328.3228, ext. 1266 (or toll-free to 800-388-7177, ext. 1266.)

Even a suspicion of financial irregularities is an important call. Remain anonymous if you like, but please leave enough information that an investigation into the situation is possible.

2016 Dates of Interest

Wednesday, February 17	Leadership Skills training Workshop. “Everyone is More Important Than You; Don’t Let the Customer Service Kill you”. Presented by Don Boise. Register online at: http://www.stbernards.edu .
Tuesday, March 22	Chrism Mass. 7:00 pm. Sacred Heart Cathedral.
Wednesday, March 23	Lenten Day of Recollection. 10:00-3:00 pm. Notre Dame Retreat Center. Abbot Gerard D’Souza, OCSO of the Abbey of the Genesee.
April 11-13	Annual Convocation of Priests and Pastoral Administrators.
Thursday, April 14	Spring Retreat for Pastoral Associates/Ministers. 9:00-3:00 pm. Notre Dame Retreat Center. Details to follow.
Wednesday, May 4	Annual Gathering of the Ministerium. Speaker: Professor Scott Hahn, Ph.D., The Father Michael Scanlon Professor of Biblical Theology and the New Evangelization, University of Steubenville.
Saturday, May 28	Deacon Ordination. 10:00 am. Sacred Heart Cathedral.
Saturday, June 4	Priest Ordination. 10:30 am. Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Pastoral Associates’ and Ministers’ Spring Retreat!!

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, April 14**

Fr. John Rose and Meghan Robinson

will lead us in a day of prayer, music and reflection on the theme of Mercy

Look for registration materials and details coming soon!

Gleanings Newsletter

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 our colleagues in the vineyard. Please submit ideas and contributions often to bmcdermott@dor.org; 328-3228, ext. 1287.

Pastoral Associates’/Pastoral Ministers’ Association Executive Committee



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What’s going on in the parishes this winter?

Church of the Assumption, Fairport:

- ◆ We host homeless families in January; offer another study group on *Laudato Si* in February and March.; 8 groups completed *JustFAITH@God@Creation* Cries for Justice 8 session module; one group was led by a local rabbi. These groups put practical ways to cut energy use in our church bulletin each week and our bulletin features a Pope Francis quote each week.
- ◆ On the theme of Mercy, Assumption hosts Sr Gracie Miller in February; Gerry Straub, modern day St Francis in February; A retreat led by Fr. Reiser, pres. of McQuaid Jesuit HS in March; Fr. Michael Costik on Mercy in Music in April and Bp. Emeritus Clark in May.

Parishes of St. Mary and St. Matthew, Livonia:

- ◆ We are offering two retreats, *The Sacred Story Examen* and *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. These will enable us to acquire an “attitude of the heart” and to find God in all things, as encouraged by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*, and also a six week Bible Study titled, “Jesus the Healer”.

St. Lawrence, Greece:

- ◆ Fr. Lee Chase and Fr. Scott Caton offered four weeks of talks on mercy.