



Outreach initiatives to “Nones” in our parish boundaries

There are twice as many religiously unaffiliated, or “nones” as there are Catholics in the 18-29 age group in the U.S., according to an article from the Pew Research Center ‘Think Tank’, ‘*If the U.S. had 100 people: Charting Americans’ religious affiliations*’ by Becka A. Alper and Alexksandra Sandstrom. As we know, many “nones” are former Catholics.

Age 18-29 (in U.S.)



78% of the ‘nones’ say they had been raised in a religious tradition (‘*Why America’s ‘nones’ left religion behind*’ by Michael Lipka, August 24, 2016). The reasons they give for leaving go from not believing the teachings anymore, to finding organizational religion divisive rather than uniting, to deep distrust enflamed by the sex abuse scandals. Most also find religious institutions irrelevant to their lives and concerns.

Various outreach programs like the Diocesan ‘Theology on Tap’ attempt to provide a safe, non-church venue for open conversations on topics that *are* relevant to young adults. The more popular topics include violence, politics, women’s roles, faith and finance etc. Many parishes are initiating creative and meaningful events/discussions with the hope of drawing “nones” and former Catholics back into the fold.

Following are some parishes’ initiatives:

From Sue Howard at Blessed Sacrament: Last weekend when we held our Young Adult Brunch at **Blessed Sacrament, Rochester**, I opened up the discussion of Immigration. Wow, I struck a nerve. The discussion was lively, thoughtful and intense at times. We bantered the problem around for hours. There was also a loud commentary on newscasting and media. I finally had to make them leave:). Did we solve the problems the world-probably not- but we engaged in a deep and meaningful discussion that will test their

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Welcome!

Rosemary Petchell-Nabogis, Schuyler Catholic Community, Watkins Glen

Sr. Sheila Stevenson, RSM,
St. Marianne Cope, Henrietta

Goodbye and thank you to:

Sr. Gert Erb, RSM, Cherry Ridge,
Rochester

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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

As a Pastoral Associate or Pastoral Minister, as you read about the current state of participation in the Catholic Church, you may find yourself discouraged or overwhelmed. Or perhaps you feel energized to get the next program up and running! Reality check: no one program and "none" of us are going to imagine the one solution that brings everyone flocking back to our parishes. What can we do? Right now, with the support of our diocesan partners, many of us are launching ChristLife, Alpha and other evange-

lizing initiatives. More on our experiences in the next issue.

What else can we do? Pope Francis often tells clergy and lay people alike to "go out" beyond our sacristies and churches. If we are to meet people where they are, we know that the "nones" and disenfranchised Catholics are not in our church buildings.

One way to do this is with robust parish participation in social ministry and justice initiatives in the community. Does your parish actively support your local food pan-

try? Are your parishioners actively volunteering alongside others in the community? Do you facilitate this? Are they tutoring or reading in Catholic or public schools that are teaching the underprivileged? Are your youth serving the community with other teens? Does your pastor accept opportunities to engage with your town leaders and other pastors?

"This is how they will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35

Notes From the Harvest

Our parish family at **Church of the Transfiguration** is fully engaged in Discovering Christ as we welcomed over one hundred participants for our first session on 1/17/18. After eight months of planning, training and praying, we enjoyed the fruit of God's grace as many came through our doors to meet each other, and share a meal. They discovered that many were asking the same question as all embarked on the first evening's presentation, "What is the meaning of life?" The Spirit was certainly present as all joined in prayer and song. There was "pin drop" quietness as all were enveloped in the video presentation followed by engaging conversations heard with a touch of laughter now and then. As we looked over the groups settled in tables, appreciating the gift of faith, we were reminded of the power of prayer and God's presence through this ministry who has called many to ask, seek and knock. Our parish is grateful that God's invitation was answered through those we host for a personal encounter and deeper relationship with Jesus. We celebrate those words above our church doors, "Lord, how good it is for us to be here." *Margie Benza, Fairport*

Beginning Sunday, January 28th, the Cayuga County Catholic Teen Group "Emmaus" will begin meeting on Sunday evenings after the 5pm Mass. The location, Champions for Life Sports Center, is a Christian oriented facility and physical activities will be a part of the agenda. *Aaron Wilson, St. Alphonsus Parish, Auburn*

At Church of the Assumption, we've had 50 people participate in the basic 30 week **JustFaith** program who found the experience among the most enriching of their lives. Several of those people head up our various teams and committees addressing various crises, i.e. refugee resettlement, social justice outreach, Rochester Alliance of Communities transforming Society (RocACTS) and more. Presently 16 Christians and 5 Muslims are engaged in a JustFaith module focused on interfaith dialogue, co-authored by Marvin Mich and Deacon George Dardess from our own Diocese. It is going so well that one of our new Muslim friends had us to lunch at their home early in our dialogues. We are respecting one another's faith and deepening our own faith throughout this process; we have heard from the survivors of the Bosnian war, from new refugees and from those who have contributed to the community in the USA for the last 18 years. We experience common ground and are enjoying new found friendships and understandings. This JustFaith program is designed for 8 two and one half hour sessions. We are all committed to extending our dialogues as we love one another.

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 bmcdermott@dor.org; 328-3228, ext. 1287.

“Follow Me, Barbara”

By Barbara Hesenius, Pastoral Associate, St. John of Rochester, Fairport



Barbara Hesenius

I grew up Catholic in the 50's in Boston believing: get well-educated, a handsome husband, good job, nice house, some kids, lifelong friends and travel when possible.

Notice what's missing? No mention of God. After College in 1972 I married my high school sweetheart knowing he was an atheist, yet we agreed it would not matter. I always went to Mass and that was OK for him. We soon moved to a Chicago suburb where I taught public school. I got my MEd. We travelled a lot...no children yet, but we kept trying. Married life was going great for “yuppies” like us!

On July 19, 1978 at 7:40pm God said it was time to change my beliefs. My best friend had invited me to check out this “weird” Catholic Mass with a Healing Service. We went, sat in the last row, and 10 minutes after Mass started I was being “baptized in the Holy Spirit”! I felt extreme heat and dizziness flow through me for about a minute. I was scared for I knew nothing about the movements of the Holy Spirit. God had ambushed me! Like Saul on the road to Damascus, Jesus suddenly revealed Himself which abruptly ended my ignorance of Him and my current independence from Him. Of course, I did not tell my husband about this.

In 1979 we moved to Manchester, NH and I switched teaching from public to

Catholic school. By spring 1983, after 5 years of trying to deal with my faith life, my husband wanted out of our marriage. I was devastated and needed healing. In July Jesus said **Follow Me** to a 2 week Steubenville Bible Institute, where I soon met and befriended many NYC Charismatic Catholics.

In 1984 Jesus said **Follow Me** to NYC where I taught in a Catholic School,

[
But whenever He
again says **Follow Me**,
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]

joined a dynamic NYC Prayer Group and ministered monthly on the Manhattan Healing Team for Charismatic Masses in NYC. I lived there for 2 years.

In 1986 Jesus said **Follow Me** back home to Boston where I worked for the Paulist Leadership and Renewal Project team. We worked with Catholic Parishes to foster effective Lay-Clergy Relationships and develop better parish renewal programs.

In 1989 Jesus said **Follow Me** to Eureka Springs, AR where a Franciscan Monastery named “Little Portion” was founded by Catholic singer John Michael Talbot. This monastic life was for single, married and religious. So I was both monastic and single for God. My spiritual life greatly matured. I also worked at our nearby Retreat Center. I

remained for 16 months, but came to know I belonged outside.

In 1990 Jesus said **Follow Me** to Boston for a “discernment” year. I realized as a Director of Religious Education how my teaching and spirituality could combine.

In 1991 Jesus said **Follow Me** to the Davenport Iowa Diocese in Bettendorf at St. John Vianney Parish. For 6 years as DRE, I had 800 children and 90 catechists in K-8. I also received my MPS in Pastoral Ministry based on the Loyola (Chicago) curriculum.

In 1997 Jesus said **Follow Me** to the Rochester Diocese as Pastoral Associate at St. Vincent's in Corning - 1 of 4 parishes in a cluster with 3 priests, 1 deacon, 2 sisters and myself - using all of our best skills and the Holy Spirit's wisdom each day.

In 2000 Jesus said **Follow Me** to Fairport and to St. John of Rochester with 2600 families needing Communion Services, Matrimony Prep, Baptism Prep, Funeral Services, Funeral Planning, Cemetery Services, Annulment work, Stephen Ministry Director, Bible Study Leader, Home and Hospital Visits, Altar Servers, Etc! I have also preached while in Corning and in Fairport from 1997-2013.

So where will Jesus call me next? I have yet to hear! (I hope to retire in 2020.) But whenever He again says **Follow Me**, then away we will go!

(Continued from page 1)

faith and challenge their thinking. I hope I'm going in the right direction with this- actually I pray that each invitation I make to young adults is one step closer to helping them embrace their faith and to make it a life long quest for genuine truth.

Assumption, in Fairport, was the first in the area to engage *Sacred Conversations* on Race. The curriculum was designed by Interfaith Clergy of Ferguson in response to the unarmed black person who was killed by police. The S. C. on R. program was implemented in 50 urban and rural faith communities in Ferguson before RocACTs (Rochester Alliance of Communities Transforming Society) tweaked them a bit for Rochester which has the worst poverty in the nation for a city its size. Last Saturday a group of engaged parishioners was trained to facilitate a new 8 hr. Sacred Conv. on Race group with 12 white Assumption parishioners and 12 persons of color. Our houses of worship and our ways of praying take on new meaning as we build community finding commonalities in support of our one human family.
Deni Mack, Pastoral Associate

2018 Dates of Interest

<p>Wednesday, March 14 Tuesday, March 27 Sunday, April 1 Mon-Wed, April 16 – 18 Wednesday, May 16 Thursday, May 24 Saturday, May 26 Saturday, June 2</p>	<p>Day of Penance and Mercy. Confessions in parishes from 12:30pm to 7:30pm Chrism Mass. 7:00 pm. Sacred Heart Cathedral Easter Sunday Annual Convocation of Priests and Pastoral Administrators. Pastoral Associates/Ministers Annual Retreat; 9:00-3:30. Notre Dame Retreat House. Registration forms to be sent out soon. Ministerium. RIT Conference Center. 9:00—3:00 pm Speakers: Dr. Susan Selner-Wright and Dr. Pia de Solenni. Diaconate Ordination. Sacred Heart Cathedral 10:00am Priesthood Ordination. Sacred Heart Cathedral 10:00am</p>
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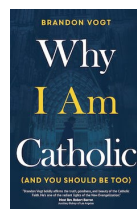
Lenten Invitations from our parishes:

For some of these, you may want to participate in anticipation of doing something similar in your parishes in the future.

Do you have young adults in their 20's and 30's who would like to connect with other's of their age group? **Blessed Sacrament Church** is hosting a Lenten Discussion group every Monday in February from 6:30-8:30pm in the Parish Office Dining Room. We are basing the discussion on Bishop Robert Barron's book and DVD series on Eucharist. This is a great place to come and meet new people and have a chance to talk about faith in an unbiased and non-judgmental way. For more information please see the Diocesan Updates.

Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Anne Cluster is reaching out to neighbors within our parish boundaries during our Lenten Suppers. These are religious communities and organizations who also have a mission to serve our greater neighborhood. We have invited leaders from Temple B'rith Kodesh, Community of the Savior, The Islamic Center, the Mary Cariola Center and Monroe Community Hospital to share their efforts within our community and the challenges that we all face. The suppers will be Wednesdays throughout Lent beginning February 21 at 5:30 - 7:00 pm at the St Anne Social Hall. We would love to have interested people from other parishes join us!

St. John of Rochester in Fairport is welcoming Father Richard Fragomeni on February 12-14 for a tri parish retreat. The topic is: *The Call of Lent: Back to the Basics with Jesus*. This will be three days, mornings and evenings of presentations, sharing and Mass. Each day is hosted by one of our Fairport parishes. See attached poster with details of times and venues. Everyone is most welcome for any part!



Why I Am Catholic (And You Should Be Too)

by Brandon Vogt, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame
 IN: 2017, \$20.00, 174 pp. + notes, I
 SBN 978-1-59471-767-3

Reviewed by Fr. Bob Schrader, Pastor
 Peace of Christ Parish, Rochester

I saw this advertised in *America* and, as we launch locally at the parish into an evangelization effort, found it to be a spot-on motivator *by* a millennial “None” for millennial “Nones” to give our Church a look. As Catholic author/philosophy professor at Boston College, Peter Kreeft, remarks, this is “ideal for ‘nones’ who wonder why any intelligent adult would choose the most counter-cultural religion in the world” (p. i). Vogt is content director for Bishop Robert Barron’s Word On Fire Catholic Ministries, is touted as one of the top 30 Catholics under 30, is author of 7 books, has been featured on CBS and Vatican Radio, became Catholic in 2008, and lives in Orlando with his wife Kathleen and 5 children. It is Barron’s truth, goodness and beauty (see first review above) that led him to embrace the Catholic Church (p. 6) and that forms the 3 Parts of this work. If you know a millennial who has drifted or is searching, give him this book!

Pastoral Associates’/Pastoral Ministers’ Association Executive Committee

<p>PASTORAL ASSOCIATES</p> <p>Cathy Kamp St. Joseph’s, Penfield</p> <p>Sheryl Zabel Assumption, Fairport</p> <p>Tim Smith Transfiguration, Pittsford</p> <p>Bernie Tomasso Sacred Heart and St. Ann, Auburn</p>	<p>EX-OFFICIO</p> <p>Bernard Grizard Diocesan Director , Pastoral Services</p> <p>Betsy McDermott Project Manager, Pastoral Services</p>
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