



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

Gleanings from the Vineyard

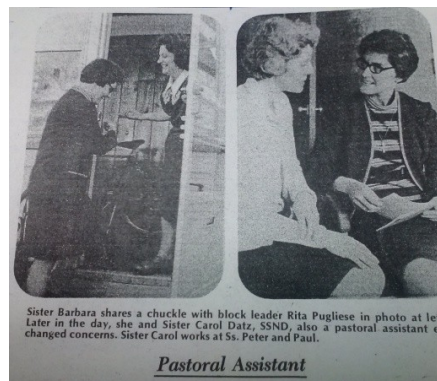
History of Pastoral Associates in the Rochester Diocese

The Diocese of Rochester has a history of firsts in the area of ministry: the first permanent deacon in the US, (1969) the first US Catholic seminary to grant a ministry degree to a woman, the first Muslim Catholic Alliance in the world (2003), and the first pastoral assistant in the country (1965).

According to Fr. Joseph Hart, when Holy Name of Jesus Church was built in 1964, no associate pastors were available for the growing congregation. The population of Greece was exploding due to the surge of workers needed for the expansion of Eastman Kodak's plants on the west side. Because two other churches were already being built in Greece, St. Charles Borromeo and Our Lady of Mercy, priests were in short supply. Fr. Thomas Reddington, the pastor of Holy Name of Jesus, hired Sr. Mary Jo Langie, RSM to help with religious education. In 1965, realizing that he needed her involved in much more of the day to day ministries of the parish, he created a new role, originating the job title of 'Pastoral Assistant'. Sr. Mary Jo promptly began to visit the sick, direct sacramental training and help distribute Holy Communion at the crowded Sunday

Masses. She became the first full-time, salaried, non-ordained pastoral assistant in Rochester and the country.

Within three years other pastors began following suit, appointing Sr. Elaine Ryan at the Cathedral and Sr. Catherine Heverin at Holy Spirit. Two more years passed and there were three more sisters assigned to be pastoral assistants at various churches.



Sister Barbara shares a chuckle with block leader Rita Pugliese in photo at left. Later in the day, she and Sister Carol Datz, SSND, also a pastoral assistant exchanged concerns. Sister Carol works at St. Peter and Paul.

Pastoral Assistant

Courier Journal, June 19, 1974

By 1974 there were over twenty sisters involved in parish ministry and by 1975 there were more than 30 with the number growing rapidly with each year. Today

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Different Ministries Covered by Pastoral Associates/Ministers

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|---|----------------------------|
| Hospital Visitation | Faith Formation |
| Preaching/Reflecting | Bulletins/Newsletters |
| Communion Services | Fundraising |
| Funeral Planning | Liturgical Preparation |
| Counseling | Social Activities |
| Religious Education for Children and Adults | Justice & Peace Activities |
| RCIA | Jail and Prison Ministry |
| Bible Study Leadership | Sacramental Preparation |
| Small Group Leadership | Neighborhood Dinners |
| | And so much more.... |

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there are 84 pastoral associates/ministers employed in the Diocese of Rochester.

Since many of the sisters were educators, they often ran the religious education programs, but also took over many of the other ministries previously run by the priests. Depending on the parish needs and locale, pastoral assistants found themselves visiting the sick, homebound, prisoners, and elderly, running faith formation, youth work, preaching, teaching bible studies and much more. One sister was so active in so many ministries that she was known as 'The Flying Nun' by the parishioners of St. Patrick's Church in Mt. Morris. Sr. Angela Sutula described her job for the *Courier Journal* as, "It's just going anywhere to help anyone". (September 3, 1975)

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan was an avid supporter of the new ministries emerging during the 70's. In an article in the *Courier Journal* about ministries in the Church, he explained the

duties of pastoral assistants and then added, "Most are woman religious at present but hopefully they will more frequently include many single and married laity" (May 11, 1977). A week later in the *Courier Journal*, he continued the conversation:

Many of our priests have done much to train the men and women who are emerging pastoral leaders in today's Church. They have not clung to the many roles assigned them before Vatican II, but have rejoiced at the adaptations, however unsettling and confusing this time of change has been.

Of course, the assumption of new roles by the laity has depended much on their own enthusiasm and deep faith. Without their willingness to take risks in ministry the new directions suggested at Vatican II would never have occurred.

(*Courier Journal*, May 18, 1977)

As the ministry of pastoral assistant grew, so did the need for some formal guidelines, education and job

descriptions. In July of 1977, the diocese began a formal continuing education program at St. Bernard's Seminary "to provide training for Church leaders, lay, clerical or religious." In 1980 the first lay pastoral assistant, by the name of Marge Dewitt Cappola, joined the ranks of pastoral assistants by joining the staff at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Today the majority of pastoral ministers are lay women, and to qualify for this position, one must earn a Master's in Theology and Ministry.

Although the name of the position has changed to Pastoral Associate or Pastoral Minister, the mission is the same today as voiced in 1984 by Nancy DeRycke (currently Pastoral Associate at Our Lady of Lourdes, Brighton and St. Anne, Rochester), "striving to share the responsibilities of enabling individuals and groups to develop their gifts, grow closer to God and each other, and realistically build Christian community."

(*Courier Journal*, October 7, 1984)

History gleaned from *Courier Journals* over the years by Betsy McDermott

Pastoral Associates'/Pastoral Ministers' Association Executive Committee

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Blessed Sacrament, Rochester

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Notes from the Harvest

- ◇ Two pastoral associates at St. Joseph's Church Penfield, Jim Gulley and Cathy Kamp, having an intense October, offering a month-long study of St. Francis and drawing correlations to our present day papacy--a tough subject to cover in 4 sessions! Blessed to be collaborating with parishioner Jeanne Mooney. Peace and good. *Cathy Kamp*
- ◇ As far as what I am grateful for in my ministry, I am honored to serve the Church, the People of God, in the capacity as Pastoral Associate. I find it humbling because I feel so unworthy to hold this position when I see the holiness of parishioners and staff around me. My particular challenge for this week is keeping things running smoothly in the absence of our pastor, Fr. Jeff Tunnicliff, who is on retreat. *Patrick Meyer*
- ◇ The excitement is building as St. John of Rochester looks forward to returning to our renovated church. Worshipping in the gym has served us well, but it will feel like going home, when we can celebrate Mass in the church. We are looking forward to many updates in technology and audio visual possibilities. The addition of stained glass, mosaics, and in the Spring, a new 30 rank organ provide much to celebrate. We are very grateful for the many gifts we have been able to share in rebuilding our parish and look toward the future with joyful anticipation. We hope to return in Advent. *Amy Voll*

Sr. Marlene Vigna, RSM

One of the first pastoral assistants in Rochester shares her story...

Reflections on

Becoming a Pastoral Associate

I always wanted to be an English teacher. There was a time in my life when I measured success as teaching English at the university level and I worked many summers at Indiana University to obtain that coveted Masters in British and American Literature in order to realize that dream. But as I approached my goal, other questions arose hammering on the surface of my consciousness, demanding my full attention. As satisfying as that initial challenge seemed, there was something important missing and I found myself being pulled more and more strongly toward a call that was just being made available to women in the Diocese of Rochester: becoming what was then termed a "pastoral assistant."

That "something missing" was becoming a pastoral presence in the manner that Jesus modeled.... teaching, healing, listening, caring, being awed at the privilege of entering people's lives at critical moments and walking faithfully beside them on the journey. So, immediately after completing studies at Indiana, I enrolled in the Institute for Pastoral Studies at Loyola University, Chicago

and devoured everything I could find about lay ministry in that post Vatican Council II world.

Simultaneous with this exploration, I was teaching at Bishop Hogan Junior High School, a clustering of St. John the Evangelist and Blessed Sacrament 7th & 8th grades. The new co-pastors decided to open a position

...I am willing to walk faithfully and lovingly beside the others who also travel this mystical and transformative path.

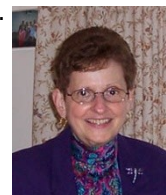
for a pastoral assistant the following spring and I was delighted to be hired and try my wings. I learned that there is great value in being "on the job" while pursuing the appropriate academic degrees. Supplementing the summer studies at Loyola, were course selections each semester in scripture, homiletics and theology as well as three units of CPE taken at St. Bernard's and the University of Rochester Medical Center...such pivotal and formative experiences which anchored even more firmly my conviction about the direction in

which I was being led.

Back in the '70's it was a new phenomenon for women to take an active, visible leadership role in parish life. Let me share a story. There was an older parishioner, an aggressive military-type who pretty much scowled at me that entire first year. One Sunday morning, while greeting people after liturgy, he remarked, (in an affable tone I did not expect), "I've been watching you, and it has occurred to me that if your plane has been shot down, it doesn't matter whether your parachute is pink or blue." A very high compliment from him.

I've discovered the dimensions of this ministry are as many and varied as the spokes of a wheel whose center is Christ...and my desire is to make life's journey less solemn and lonely because I am willing to walk faithfully and lovingly beside the others who also travel this mystical and transformative path.

Sr. Marlene Vigna is a Pastoral Associate at Peace of Christ, Rochester. She is also on the Pastoral Associate Association Executive Committee.



Sr. Marlene Vigna

Newsletter

The Pastoral Associates'/Pastoral Ministers' Association Executive Committee has decided to start a quarterly newsletter. Our hope is that, by sharing our experiences as lay leaders in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, we can offer support to one another and feel more connected even though we are spread out and fulfill a variety of different functions.

We are looking for pastoral associates/ministers from all parishes and ministries to share stories, successes, questions, prayer requests and information. This is to be a newsletter written by us for us! Please submit ideas and contributions as often as possible to Betsy McDermott at bmcdermott@dor.org or call 585-328-3228, ext. 1287.

Dates of Interest

Month of November
Saturday, Nov. 9, 2013

National Family Caregivers Month
Keeping Your Eyes on the Living Christ -Fr. Augustine Chumo
9 am-12 pm, Sacred Heart Cathedral. Celebrate Black Catholic History Month!



Tuesday, Nov 19, 2013

Women of Peace - Etty Hillesum & Corrie Ten Boom
7 – 9 pm at Mercy Center; Fee: \$20

Monday, April 14, 2014

Diocesan Day of Penance (Holy Week) *More details to follow.*

For the as yet to be announced Ministerium Day details and ongoing course offerings, see the St. Bernard's School of Theology & Ministry website: <http://www.stbernards.edu/>



Interested in meeting more often in small groups??

The Executive Committee has been discussing the idea of having small group meetings according to regions for the purpose of support and the sharing of best practices on a variety of relevant topics. They would be organized by you as often as your region decided to meet.

In order to assess the level of interest, we are asking you to fill out the attached survey and return it to:



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or by mail to:

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