



## Bereavement Counselling and Follow-up: What Some Parishes Have in Place.

### Bereavement Care at Transfiguration

Our parish offers various styles of care for those grieving the loss of a loved one. A few weeks following a funeral, our pastoral staff contacts the closest loved one to the deceased to check in and share some conversation. Depending on their support system, we may offer our Bereavement Ministry. This offers a fellow parishioner to walk with them through this difficult time in meeting for coffee, a home visit, or just a phone call. This might encompass a few weeks, some months or up to a year. Our ministry has eight to ten trained ministers at any given time and we match them carefully.

Another program offered within and outside our parish in January and September is Grief Share. This thirteen week program offers caring and informative videos, workbook and shared conversation led by two to three trained co-facilitators. This fall begins our seventh session with an average attendance of five to seven bereaved. For more information, visit the Grief Share website.

Accompanying that offer is a special presentation just prior to the winter holidays, "Surviving the Holidays". This is a Grief Share style program in one evening which includes an informative DVD, break out group discussion and a small workbook with suggestions to navigate this challenging time. This is offered in a morning and evening session and led by the pastoral staff.

Our pastoral staff also offers time to chat personally and pass along local group referrals if necessary. The most important

thing we can offer is kindness, care and compassion realizing that every one's grieving journey varies and the true gift is in the listening.

**Margie Benza**, Pastoral Associate

### At St. Ann/Sacred Heart, Auburn

Death: take a minute and think about it. Jesus wept. The shortest sentence in the Bible and one we can all identify with. His tears were for many reasons but certainly because of his feelings for Mary and Martha. They were also for the lack of belief in his power to bring Lazarus back to life although he had already done so for the daughter of Jairus and the widow's son. Martha does tell Jesus that she knows God will give Jesus whatever he asks for but stops short of asking for her brother's return to life.

Now imagine this. Lazarus comes back to life but you have to endure his death a second time. As much as we want the person with us, the pain of grieving is overwhelming. I assist families in preparing funeral services and have heard many times how difficult it is to attend to

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**Welcome!**

**June Sherman**, St. Michael's, Newark



## What's Our Mission?

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

My spiritual director recently asked me, "What do you do?" Good question!

Do you need to think a bit before responding to that question?

The responsibilities of Pastoral Associates and Pastoral Ministers are as varied as the parishes we serve. In the best of all worlds, our charisms and strengths mirror the needs of the faith community and are reflected in our job descriptions. Sometimes we are stretched to meet the needs of our parishes. And, at times, the needs far exceed the hours in the day.

No matter how varied our day to day

work, we all share the mission of the Church: to evangelize. We are all called to share the Good News, to bring the Gospel to the people in our pews and to those who do not yet know Christ. Pope Paul VI wrote in *Evangelization in the Modern World*, in 1975, "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace..." He went on to say that it is the mission of the whole Church to evangelize.

The mission to evangelize is not limited to any one department of

the Pastoral Center or any one member of a parish staff. That's why one topic in this issue of *Gleanings* is asking about what you and your parish are doing in this area of the "New Evangelization."

Many of us are just embarking on ChristLife or the Alpha Course. As we move forward together, it surely will be fruitful to share our experiences, particularly what is most effective in inviting people into deeper relationship with Christ and the Church. Because that is the most important part of what we all do.

## Notes From the Harvest

### *St. Alphonsus Children's Garden a Success!*

by Aaron Wilson, Pastoral Minister, St. Alphonsus, Auburn

2017 saw the creation of a Children's Crafting Ministry at St. Alphonsus Parish in Auburn. The ministry is led by craft savvy parishioners. During coffee hours after Mass, these ladies share their skills with our youth in conjunction with lessons from the Gospels. We also have student-instructor guests from St. Joseph School.



A highlight of summer was the Children's Garden. The season began with lessons of how God has always provided for us since the Garden of Eden. Starter seeds were planted in cups as youngsters learned about the Parable of the Sower and the importance of having good soil. Summer maintenance came with references from the first job being Adam tending God's garden to the importance of the bread for the Eucharist. The season ended with families coming together for a final gathering of the produce. The groups took their bounty to the parish food pantry and received a tour while learning the definition of charity. The fall season begins a series of card and small gift crafting. The children will then share their creations on a field trip to a local rest home.



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](mailto:bmcdermott@dor.org); 328-3228, ext. 1287.

## I Was Born Into a Family of Ministry

By Bernie Tomasso, Pastoral Associate, St. Ann/Sacred Heart, Auburn



Bernie Tomasso

I cannot say that I was brought into ministry as much as I was born into a family of ministry. My parents and grandparents were active in many organizations and we grew up seeing them go to Holy Name, Rosary Guild, Nocturnal Adoration, and working the parish festival. I was in the boys' choir in grammar school and served Sunday Mass into high school. We had a Junior Legion of Mary, Aquinas Institute had a Sodality, and I was active at St. Bonaventure University.

While I was teaching, I was Rep to the Area Council of Churches, and Chair of the Parish Council when the Northern Cayuga Cluster was formed in 1985. I served on the Diocesan Pastoral Council in the early 1980's and the Diocesan Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for over ten years. Social Ministry work in the community with the parish and Salvation Army led to a few years on the Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes Board.

As I neared retirement in 2005, Fr. Burke, who was pastor at Holy Family in Auburn, asked if I was interested in

a position as Pastoral Minister. I accepted in early April and he informed me in late April that he had decided to retire. I then spent two years working with Fr. Dennis Shaw which were very fast paced. We introduced the JustFaith Program, expanded community outreach and weekly coffee hours.

One of my greatest pleasures was visiting the homebound and those in nursing homes.

In 2009, I moved to a Cluster of St. Francis and St. Hyacinth in Auburn which was in the process of forming a new parish. Social Ministry was a large part of my position as we partnered with two food pantries and provided Christmas gifts for parishioners in need as well as Senior Citizens in the community. One of my greatest pleasures was visiting the homebound and those in nursing homes. I learned much about the history of the community which helped since I had not grown up here.

I also received training as a Stephen Leader during this time and began training other ministers. In 2013, Sts. Mary and Martha Parish was formed which resulted in working more in liturgy at St. Hyacinth.

In 2014, I moved to Sacred Heart and St. Ann's where there were expanded opportunities. I was responsible for Baptismal prep and follow-up, RCIA, Eucharistic Minister and Altar Server training, and visiting the homebound and parishioners in nursing homes. When Sr. Chris Treichel, our Pastoral Administrator, retired in June of 2016, I assumed her responsibilities of meeting with families to plan funeral services, and assisting at funerals and baptisms. In the past few months, I have started Bereavement Support Groups which meet weekly. One is specifically for parents who have lost a child to addiction and meets off-site by their choice. Faith is always brought into these meetings. I have been enriched by them more than any other experience in my ministry.

I am a Secular Franciscan and so I close as I would to my Franciscan Family,

Peace and All Good, Bernie



Countless Pastors, Bishops and Cardinals have been highly recommending these evangelization tools as effective ways to rekindle luke-warm faith and bring those without faith to Christ. Many of the DOR parishes have been engaged or are starting these programs. Let's help each other by sharing our experiences, challenges etc. For the next *Gleanings*, if you are hosting either, please share what your challenges are, results you see so far and your overall experience. Let's continue to pray and strive for a true evangelization to take place in our communities!

**With great joy, I recommend ChristLife to parishes and dioceses looking to respond to the Church's urgent call to a New Evangelization." – Most Rev. William E. Lori, current Archbishop of Baltimore, MD**

**"Alpha is for meeting Jesus. What I like in all that I have seen and heard about Alpha is the simplicity. For me, the Christian life has something to do with simplicity, friendship, closeness and joy. That's what I feel about Alpha and I think that's a sign that it works and that it's given from the Lord." -- Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, Austria**

## 2017 Dates of Interest

<b>Tuesday, October 24</b>	<b>Pastoral Associate/Minister Workshop. Welcoming the Story of the Other: The Heart of Evangelization. 9:00-3:30. Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Rd.</b>
Sunday, December 3	<b>Beginning of Advent.</b> Be sure you have your liturgical books!
Wednesday, March 14	<b>Day of Penance and Mercy.</b> Confessions from 12:30pm to 7:30pm
<b>May, TBD</b>	<b>Pastoral Associates/Ministers Annual Retreat</b>
Saturday, May 26	<b>Diaconate Ordination.</b> Sacred Heart Cathedral 10:00am
Saturday, June 2	<b>Priesthood Ordination.</b> Sacred Heart Cathedral 10:00am

*(Bereavement, continued from page 1)*

all the details in such a short time. I am listing some ideas that may help immensely.

- Anyone over the age of 18 should have a Health care Proxy. Forms are available on the table in the vestibule.
- Make a list of banks, life insurance companies, and other financial institutions that you use. Estates can be held up due to items such as these.
- Make a list of your monthly bills. Most need to be notified, particularly utilities and cable. Include passwords.
- Visit the funeral home of your choice and discuss your preferences. Give a copy to one of your children.
- Meet with the minister to discuss readings, songs, or particular requests. These are kept on file.
- Go to the cemetery of your choice and choose your burial site.
- Go to a monument company to choose your stone or urn.

A special note on cremation: The Church believes that the cremains deserve to be buried just as a body would be. The preference is that it be done immediately, although in some circumstances such as a husband and wife sharing the same urn, it can be delayed. They are not meant to be scattered to the wind.

Death is a difficult topic but one that needs to be faced. We do our family a favor by making decisions beforehand. In Jesus' time, one died and was buried that same day with oils spread on the body and then wrapped in a shroud. We have many more decisions to make. If undecided, pray to St. Joseph, the patron of a Happy Death.

Peace and All Good, **Bernie Tomasso**,

### **Grief Continuum at Peace of Christ Parish**

The seven stages on the continuum of grief from dying to the one year anniversary of a death are: final illness, death, funeral Memorial/Mass, burial, reception, bereavement and anniversary of death. The first few stages involve resources, planning, praying with those grieving and above all staff presence throughout. During the post burial period, the Pastoral Associates call to check up on those grieving, and then the Bereavement Coordinator delivers special dishes and invites them to join a monthly bereavement support group, making appropriate professional referrals if needed. A Mass of Remembrance is scheduled in November to which all the family is invited. Finally, at the one year anniversary of the death, the family receives a "Care Note" and Remembrance card from the parish.

**Sr. Marlene Vigna**, RSM

### *Looking for Interfaith Parish Liaisons*

There are so many inter-faith educational, social and service activities going on in the Diocese. Help us share this in the parishes!



If you know of a parishioner who would be a great point person for your parish, please let Betsy McDermott know at  
betsy.mcdermott@dor.org

### **Pastoral Associates'/Pastoral Ministers' Association Executive Committee**

PASTORAL ASSOCIATES

**Cathy Kamp**

St. Joseph's, Penfield

**Sheryl Zabel**

Assumption, Fairport

**Tim Smith**

Transfiguration, Pittsford

**Bernie Tomasso**

Sacred Heart and St. Ann, Auburn

EX-OFFICIO

**Bernard Grizard**

Diocesan Director, Pastoral Services

**Betsy McDermott**

Project Manager, Pastoral Services