At the fall workshop we sat around our lunch tables talking about best funeral practices. We also solicited more ideas from ministers that could not attend the workshop. Following are some of the ideas shared from pastoral associates and ministers from all over the diocese.

Preparation for the funeral
The practice I use I learned from taking a course on grief and learning Jewish practices. From their wisdom they said that it is worthless to tell someone "I'm sorry for your loss", in fact it often burdens people. Instead, what I learned is to give the space to them and at the right time I ask them to "tell me about the person they loved." I now share in whatever they are going through without any expectation or needing to say something. I am there for them and whatever they need.  Tom Ruda

Others:
◊ Have the family members tell you stories or memories or qualities of the deceased and share the notes with whoever is doing the homily so that it can be more personal. Joe Erway
◊ Offer a list of readings and hymns and make it clear that we will help them as much or as little with the planning as they desire. Pat Meyer
◊ Email information to family if out of town.
◊ Either the pastor, PA or on occasion, deacon, goes to the funeral home about 15 minutes before calling hours to pray with the family. This allows us to pray in a calm atmosphere without interrupting conversations during visiting hours. Marianne Antczak
◊ Availability of good, accessible materials for their planning (on website, and in an organized folder) http://www.sjcpenfield.com/index.cfm?load=page&page=250, and offering a customizable worship aide/program. Cathy Kamp
◊ Have well-formed servers and be prepared to talk about what the Church teaches TODAY about cremation, Christian burial. Cathy Kamp

The funeral itself
Six years ago the "Remarks of Remembrance" were moved to after the Opening Hymn and I highly recommend this

(Continued on page 2)
placement. The benefits of immediately hearing about the person sets the right tone of prayerful understanding for the rest of the Mass, helps the priest to coordinate and embellish his own remarks later on and definitely relieves the eulogist’s anxious burden of waiting before being able to speak! Barb Hesenius

Others:

◊ We offer a funeral program for the mass, so that those attending can follow along. Lori Cunliffe,

◊ Before the Opening Prayer, we introduce who will be proclaiming the readings and who will be giving the eulogy, if one is included. This makes those who will be reading a bit more comfortable knowing that I will announce when they need to come forward. June Sherman

◊ Our pastor (or his delegate) delivers a homily that is completely unique to each person. This is really impressive when we have two funerals back-to-back that use the same readings! Marianne Antczak

◊ The Presider both sprinkles and incenses cremains which are covered with a smaller sized pall. Marlene Vigna

◊ At the end of a funeral, we invite each member of the immediate family to sprinkle the casket with holy water. The presider sprinkles last. Marianne Antczak

Following the funeral

When appropriate (eg, infirm immediate family members, terrible storm, burial at another time), we will say the prayers of commendation right in the narthex. Marianne Antczak

Others:

◊ Our Martha Ministry prepares a luncheon for all who attend the funeral; this is very much appreciated by the family. There is no charge for this service although we do accept any donation if offered. (Many shared this)

◊ Following the funeral, within the next couple weeks, I try to send the families a card letting them know that they remain in our prayers. Pat Meyer

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As of January 13, Holy Family in Auburn has received $51,268.00 in gifts and pledges towards the new roof. We still have a ways to go but this is a 3 year project and we have been collecting for 6 months. With all the commitments to Diocese, Parish regular expenses, community, taxes, family etc. I think we are doing very well. Helen Delaney

We had wonderful numbers attending our Christmas liturgies and now we are beginning to prepare for Lent. I will be giving a presentation on January 23rd entitled, "Footsteps of Faith: Recognizing and following the Holy Spirit In Our Lives." I hope to offer some thoughts on the theology of the Holy Spirit as well as how to recognize the Spirit's presence in the ordinary and extra-ordinary moments of life. Pat Meyer

St John of Rochester is worshipping back in our newly renovated church. Our new altar was consecrated by Bishop Matano on January 10th. Alleluia!! Amy Voll

Pastoral Associates’/Pastoral Ministers’ Association Executive Committee

Sue Howard
Blessed Sacrament, Rochester
Amy Voll
St. John of Rochester, Fairport
August Misiurewicz
Peace of Christ, Irondequoit
Sr. Marlene Vigna, RSM
Peace of Christ, Irondequoit
Ex-Officio
Bernard Grizard
Diocesan Director, Parish & Clergy Services
Betsy McDermott
Project Manager, Parish & Clergy Services
Karen Rinefiend
Coordinator of Leadership Formation for Parishes, St. Bernard’s School of Theology & Ministry
I was not raised as a Christian or in any other faith. My grandparents all grew up as Catholics but left the church after they immigrated to the U.S. My parents considered themselves to be agnostics or free thinkers, and my father sometimes wondered how modern people could still be religious. But they were some of the finest and most generous people I have ever known.

When I was 15, I decided that I did believe in God and headed off to a small Protestant church, a short walk from my home. I was baptized on the day before my 16th birthday. Didn’t really understand what baptism meant; just knew that was how you joined a church.

By the time I was in college I had stopped attending church and had decided that Christians were basically hypocrites. I felt that way until I was in my 30’s with a few exceptions. One was the brief time I taught in a Catholic girls’ high school. I had tremendous respect for the sisters who staffed the school and who really cared about the students’ education.

...It’s been a truly amazing journey—an honor and a joy to serve with the people of God.

One year during Lent, I was shopping with a Catholic friend on Hudson Ave. We went into Holy Redeemer Church, still a Catholic parish at the time. As I entered the worship space I had an overwhelming feeling that I was home, and why was I still fighting it?

After several months of thinking about this, I went to see Fr. Tim Horan at Assumption Church in Fairport. He said to me that I had experienced the Holy Spirit when I visited Holy Redeemer. I wanted to run out of his office! But—I kept coming back, and I eventually became an RCIA candidate at the Church of the Resurrection. It was an incredibly beautiful experience, and I finally realized what I wanted to do when I grew up—ministry.

I applied to St. Bernard’s, and Fr. Sebastian Falcone was kind enough to allow me to enter the MA in theology program without having all the undergraduate requirements.

I began working as a pastoral associate in the diocese in 1988 and have never looked back. It’s been a truly amazing journey—an honor and a joy to serve with the people of God. One great privilege I’ve had has been to accompany RCIA catechumens and candidates on their faith journeys, something I’ve been doing for almost 25 years.

Submitted by Sue Howard, Pastoral Associate at Blessed Sacrament and St. Boniface
Dates of Interest

Tuesday, March 25, 2014  Diocesan Day of Penance, *More details to follow.*

Tuesday, April 15, 2014  Chrism Mass, 7:30 p.m., Sacred Heart Cathedral

Monday-Wednesday, April 28-30, 2014  *Priest Convocation*

Friday, May 2, 2014  Annual Diocesan Musicians' Dinner, 6:00 pm, Rick's Prime Rib

*Pastoral Associates/Ministers Spring Retreat, 9:30-3:30,*
   Notre Dame Retreat Ctr.  *Registration details to follow soon! Save the Date!*

Thursday, May 8, 2014  *Gathering of the Ministerium, Details to follow.*

Wednesday, May 21, 2014  *Deacon Ordination, 10:30 am, Sacred Heart Cathedral*

Saturday, June 7, 2014  *Priest Ordination, 10:30 am, Sacred Heart Cathedral.*

Prayer Circle

(These will not be shared on the 'Updates', but only in issues of "Gleanings" going directly to Pastoral Associates & Ministers)

- For Sr. Patricia MacDonald, RSM who has suffered a stroke.
- One of our pastoral associates asks for prayers for the staff at his parish who are facing retirements, health issues, and other challenges.
- For Sr. Dorothy Mary Leising, SSND, who turns 90 (or 22.5) on Feb, 29. Still active as a Parish Minister, she runs circles around everyone!

Question for next Issue

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Who has ideas or best practices *that work* for reaching out to inactive Catholics and younger adults?

*Please send your thoughts to Betsy McDermott at bmcdermott@dor.org for next ‘Gleanings’*

Elections

Elections for the Pastoral Associate and Pastoral Ministers Executive Committee will be held at the Spring meeting on May 8th. The Nomination Committee will be sending out a call for nominations by mid February. The positions open are *Chairperson* and *Treasurer*. Nominees must be active members (regular participants) of the PA/PM Association and presently employed as Pastoral Associates or Pastoral Ministers in the Diocese of Rochester. The terms are for 3 years. To learn more about the duties of these two positions please refer to your Constitution.

For a copy, please email Betsy at bmcdermott@dor.org.