



MORE GOOD NEWS



**Remembering
Mount Carmel
School**

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**First
Communion
a family affair**

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There is good news

Amid much evil, there are those willing to help others

Because this brief reflection and article appears in our newsletter called "More Good News," it makes sense to consider things that are of a positive nature — thoughts, events, considerations that raise our spirits and lift our focus to what is good and helpful.

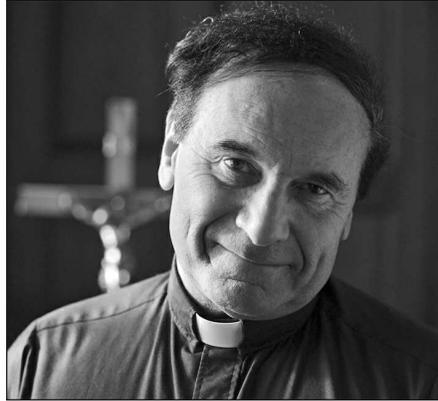
Recently, there was a benefit to assist the family of a beautiful child, challenged with health issues and the expenses of medical treatments and care. The event was a tremendous success with many people showing up.

In the Utica area there are, frequently, such events to benefit persons or worthy causes, in addition to walks for this or that, raising funds for research and help for persons in need. Although employment in this area is not as strong as it could be and financial difficulties are vexing, these events to benefit others are unusually blessed and of great success, compared to other communities.

Many of the folks who plan and patronize such events are believers, "churchy" people of many faith communities prompted by their desire to deliver God's love in very practical ways. While many people of different ages are not so "churchy," their generosity toward these benefits to assist others comes from a heartfelt spirit and the goodness of their intentions.

All of this is good news because it goes against a troublesome trend to be too self-absorbed and competitive to care about the troubles of others. We live in a culture that worships the "Big Me." So many things that are part of life today promote a kind of thinking that says, "I am an extraordinary person," having little heart or time for the care of others.

Maybe another way to put it is that unfortunately, too many today are only concerned



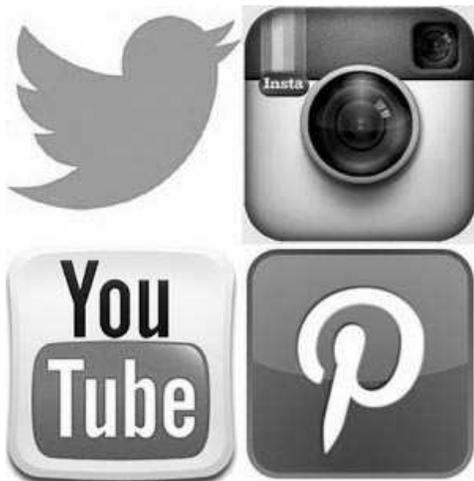
FATHER JIM

with their resume virtues, qualities to advance their promotions or popularity, rather than eulogy virtues that are spoken about at the end of one's life.

The eulogy virtues are kindness, honesty, warm heartedness, service and generosity. These people radiate a sort of moral joy; they get good things done. They perform acts of sacrificial service with the same modest everyday spirit they would display just going to get the groceries. They do not think about how impressive they are "resume virtues," they just recognize what needs doing and they do it.

The wonderful turnout of so many for these fundraising events and benefits tells us that the "eulogy virtues" do lead people to do good, even at a time when much evil is on the prowl. The line separating good and evil passes not through states or classes or political parties, but right through every human heart.

Follow parish on social media sites



Are you into the social media world?

In addition to our parish Facebook sites, we have added some new accounts to keep you informed of what's going on in our parish and diocese.

Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament has added Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest. In addition to connecting to your parish, we are following Pope Francis, the Vatican, the diocese of Syracuse, the Catholic News Service, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and more. Also, you can watch parish videos on YouTube.

You can find the links under PARISH LINKS in the right column on the parish website at www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com. Also new to the website are links to the Diocese of Syracuse sites.



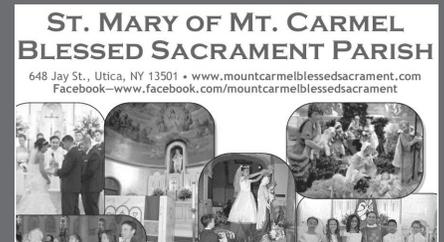
Parish website offers a lot

If you've never been to our parish website at www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com, you don't know what you're missing. It's constantly updated with the latest parish news and announcements. There's even a mobile version for your smart phone. Here is some of what you will find on the site:

PHOTO GALLERIES



PARISH BULLETIN



... AND MORE

- > Father Jim's "Wise and Otherwise"
- > History of the parish
- > Lector, minister, altar server schedules
- > Links to our social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube.
- > Mass schedules
- > Parish news
- > Ministries
- > "More Good News" magazine



ABOVE: The 1947-48 Mount Carmel basketball team. BELOW: Children in the nursery school.

Mount Carmel School forged foundations for life

The landscape of parochial schools of our area has changed dramatically in the last 30 years or so.

In a city that once boasted more than a half dozen elementary schools, an all-boys secondary and an all-girls secondary school system, the Catholic schools in Utica have been whittled down to a single elementary building and a single junior-senior high school.



A.J. VALENTINI

Though the former schools no longer exist, they made a vital contribution to our community in their day. Some of the physical buildings still exist and provide homes to important activities to this day.

Mount Carmel School is one such building. Once an elementary school that

nourished thousands of children since it opened in 1904, the school building now is the Scalabrini Center, home to the Faith Formation program that still is educating children in the beliefs of our Catholic faith.

For more than eight decades, Mount Carmel School built the religious and educational foundation of countless children.

Mary Beth LaNeve, who attended Mount Carmel from 1959 to 1967, remembers the close community formed by the students of the



school. She recalls small classes whose students would move up together through the grades forming friendships and family connections that last until this day.

“My memories of Mount Carmel School are very happy ones,” she said. “Many of the children we attended classes with have become friends for life. We got to know their parents and siblings.”

Mary Beth, who now is the parish administrator, has a special place in her heart for the

Sisters of St. Francis who taught at Mount Carmel.”

“Most of the nuns were kind and had our best interest at heart,” she said. “A special sister in my life was Sister Michaelen Cabral. She was probably the first nun that also let her hair down in front of us. She would tell us about her life as a young adult, her life in the Waves, about how she was almost engaged to be mar-

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A CONVERSATION WITH ... PHIL CORNACCHIA

Secret to a long life: Work hard, stay busy

Phil Cornacchia celebrated his 99th birthday in February. He has lived through World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, two wars in Iraq, and Afghanistan. He was born just 13 years after the Wright Brothers flew the first plane and watched as Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon. He grew up in the Great Depression, and vividly remembers Pearl Harbor, the JFK assassination and 9/11. He has lived through the administrations of 17 of 44 presidents and has witnessed all of the New York Yankees' 27 championships. He said he stays mentally and physically in shape by keeping busy. No one can argue that it works.

You celebrated your 99th birthday in February and are looking forward to your 100th next year. To what do you attribute your long life?

The main thing is I worked hard all my life. I kept busy all the time. I still do.

When you were born, World War I was going on, Woodrow Wilson was president and the Boston Red Sox won the World Series with a pitcher named Babe Ruth. What is the earliest memory you have of your life?

I can remember when I was 5 or 6 years old. I lived down on Jay Street. I was born on the corner First and Catherine streets. Ruffie Elefante and his family lived on the corner facing the Erie Canal.

What was it like growing up at that time?

I went through the Depression. That in itself was an education in itself. Everybody had to work. People were happier then. (Phil sold newspapers, and worked at Chanatry's and Murad's to help the family.)

Is there one thing that stands out the most?

The (Civilian Conservation Corp.) camp where I spent a year and half. It was the best experience of my life. I worked at Roger's game farm in Sherburne where I planted duck farms and fought forest fires. (The CCC was a major part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal that provided unskilled manual labor jobs related to the conservation and development of natural resources in rural lands owned by federal, state and local governments.)

You were married for 69 years. How did you meet Margaret?

I met my wife in Easy Springs on Lincoln Avenue in 1938. We went together for a couple of years. When we were married we didn't have two nickels to rub together.

What was she like?



Phil Cornacchia, an usher at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass, has seen many things in his 99 years on this Earth, so any advice he gives is based on life experience. His words of wisdom to young people are, "Listen to senior citizens. Senior citizens have a lot to offer."

PHIL CORNACCHIA

Age: 99.

Birth date: Feb. 10, 1916.

Birthplace: Utica. Parents came from Italy in 1912.

Family: Married to Margaret for 69 years (She died June 18, 2009). Son Philip D. and daughter Donna.

Education: Utica public schools, took courses at Utica College and Mohawk Valley Community College.

Employment: Among others, sold papers as a kid, worked at Easy Springs on Lincoln Avenue, was counter man at Bagg's Square and spent 40 years on the railroad beginning in 1941.

Things you do in your spare time: Dabble in figures. Doing the morning puzzles.

She was the disciplinarian in the family. I was always working. She stayed home and raised the kids and did a beautiful job.

Is there one thing you remember most about her?

She was great housekeeper and her meals were 97 percent from scratch.

How long have you been coming to Mount Carmel?

All my life since I was 5 or 6. I lived down on the 500 block (of Jay Street) close to church. You can't beat Mount Carmel. Regardless of where I lived I always went to Mount Carmel.

You are there every Sunday at 10:30 Mass in your blue blazer and tie. You also help set up the festival. After all these years, why do you keep doing it?

To me it's a diversion. I like to keep busy.

How did you become an usher?

I've been an usher for 73 years. I started in 1942 and there's a story behind that. During World War II the church had so many people they used to say Mass in the gym (in addition to the church). My father-in-law and I went to Mount Carmel and built a collapsible altar. We would put it up every Sunday and then take it down.

Is there anything special you're thinking about for your 100th birthday?

My daughter wants to give me a big birthday party. I said let's keep it just family. My daughter left Utica and went to Oswego College and went into teaching. She's been away from Utica all her life. She told me to give her a list and she would take care of everything. (Phil still would prefer a family gathering.)

If you could give one piece of advice to young people, what would it be?

They should listen to senior citizens. Senior citizens have a lot to offer.

'I think it's fun to volunteer'

Rachel's always on the run, loves to help other people

Rachel Surace only is 13 years old, but she already knows what she likes and what's important. She has a passion for running, but she's equally dedicated to helping others and volunteering whenever she can. She says it's fun, and it makes a difference for someone else.

My sources tell me you like to run. How did you start running and why do you do it?

I wanted to start running after watching my mom run in several races including the 15K Boilermaker race. I began with the kids run for the Boilermaker, which I did with her at the age of 4.

Do you think you're ready for the Boilermaker?

Yes, I think I am ready. I continue to train and have been increasing my miles. I also have my track and cross-country coaches guiding me on how to prepare myself for the race and they continue to encourage me to do better.

You run cross-country and track. Is there one you like better?

I love cross-country for the adventure, and that sometimes I get really muddy in the process.

While running track, the race is over in a short period of time. What's on your mind when you compete?

I think about going to Hoopla after to celebrate, and I try and think of a good song to help motivate me through the race.

When you run cross-country, you have a lot of time to think. What's on your mind then?

When running cross-country my thoughts depend on the course because I usually try and think about what is coming next depending on the course. Some courses have creeks we run through others have big hills to climb.

In addition to running, you like to volunteer. You even earned a Catholic Charities award for volunteering at United Tenants in Albany. What did you do there and what was that like?

My aunt Erin works for United Tenants in Albany, and when I stayed with her last February and again over the summer she asked if I would like to come and learn about where she works, and I am glad I did because I really enjoyed learning about how she helps people in need. I helped them paint their office space, I answered phones and helped input data into their computer database.

Why do you like volunteering and how do you feel while you're doing it and after you've done it?

I think it's fun to volunteer because I like to



Rachel Surace, center, with her sister Emily, left, and mom, Gina.

RACHEL SURACE

Age: 13.

Family: Father Steve, mother Gina, sister Emily and dog Sadie.

School: Eighth grade at Whitesboro Middle School.

Favorite movie: "Pitch Perfect."

Favorite TV shows: "America Ninja Warrior" and "The Voice."

Favorite book: "You Have Seven Messages" by Stewart Lewis.

Things you like to do in your spare time: Run, being with friends/family, swimming and other water activities at our camp in the summer.

help others and makes me feel good about myself while helping people in need.

You also were a volunteer on the Polar Express in November and December as an elf. Why did you do that and what was that experience like?

Mrs. Gray, my Faith Formation teacher, gave me the opportunity to be an elf for the Adirondack Railroad. I am glad I decided to do it because it was fun and I got to see all the little children smile and laugh.

You have a big sister. Do you guys get along?

Most of the time we do get along and have

fun together. We have a lot in common. We use to dance on the same dance team and we both run cross-country.

Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament has been your home away from home since you were born. You now volunteer at pizza frita sales and are an altar server. What does this parish mean to you?

This parish is like family, probably because my entire family is always there showing me what's important. I still have a lot to learn, but I am still having fun doing it with my family.

Your family members have been a big part of the parish for decades. Do you feel an obligation to continue the family tradition or do you do it because you like it?

Both, because of how important the church and the parish is to my family.

Do you ever talk to your friends about your faith? If so, what do you tell them?

I talk to some of my friends, who are also Catholic. We talk about the things we do in our Faith Formation class and how our courses are done differently.

What do you hope the future holds for you?

Not sure, but for now to continue running and trying become a better runner and maybe someday become a vet.

If you can describe yourself in one phrase, what would it be?

A good friend to others



Noelle Molanare works with her parents, Deanna and Joe Talarico, to make a chalice during a First Communion workshop.

It takes a family commitment to celebrate First Communion

BY FRAN PERRITANO

First Communion is a special time, not only for the children who will be receiving the body of Christ for the first time, but also for their families.

The invitation to the table of the Lord not only is the responsibility of the students, it's a special time for parents to be involved in the faith journey of their children.

And on May 3, 12 youngsters in the Class of 2015 will celebrate their communion with Jesus at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament.

Terri Panuccio, who coordinates the First Communion program and has been involved in Faith Formation for 15 years, said the program is a two-year commitment that follows the guidelines set down by the Diocese of Syracuse.

Terri always stresses the importance of family involvement — and parents taking on the sacrifices it entails.

"The children's responsibilities are to come to class and participate," she said. "The parental responsibilities include making sure their child attends both Sunday morning Faith Formation classes as well as any sacramental preparation classes and workshops regularly."

And that, for some, is a struggle.

"Parents become upset because they don't understand why our parish requires the children to attend both Sunday morning and Monday

MEET THE CLASS OF 2015

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evening classes. They feel it's too much for the children," Terri said. "Because I understand the hectic schedules and demands that our young families face, I reduced the direct prep classes to four classes for Reconciliation and six classes for First Communion, as well as a two-hour workshop, and attendance at the Holy Thursday Mass. Unfortunately, I'm still met with resistance from some of the parents feeling that this is too much."

Terri also emphasized parents need to make weekly Mass attendance a priority.

"Because parents are the first and most important teachers of our faith for their children, it is necessary that they lay a solid foundation for their children and lead by their example."

Sometimes, however, life interferes with the First Communion process, and tough choices need to be made when scheduling interferes with peoples' personal lives.

"Oftentimes, if there is a sacramental class on a Monday evening, parents don't feel it's necessary for the kids to come to class on Sunday morning," Terri said. "But these classes are separate from each other."

With children involved in so many activities,

First Communion class often takes a back seat to a soccer game or cheerleading practice.

"This is one of the biggest problems that we, as Faith Formation coordinators in many dioceses throughout our country, face at every grade level," Terri said. "Sports have become a greater priority, and although I understand that sports are an important part of many children's lives, we need to realize that it's our faith that will get us through some of the most difficult times in our lives, not sports."

"Many parents and kids look at the sports as a possible way to earn scholarships to colleges and they want their children to be a part of a team, but I believe when a child is preparing for a sacrament, their first priority should be the sacrament."

For parents, teaching children the importance of their faith and the sacraments is paramount, especially at this young age because many times those who receive First Communion might not return to church until Confirmation — or at all.

"Because the Catholic Church is known for being a sacramental church, a lot of people feel in order for them to be 'good' Catholics, their only responsibility is to make sure their children 'get' the sacraments," Terri said. "However, being Catholic is more than just receiving our sacraments. It's about being part

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MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOL

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ried — many of life's realities that we as seventh- or eighth-graders would soon be facing.

"I have kept in touch with her throughout my life because she seemed a part of my young life. My husband and I asked her to be the soloist at our wedding. She happened to be in Utica when my son was born. We helped to plan her 25th anniversary as a nun and attended her 50th in Syracuse. She was a great influence on me."

Mount Carmel School's history is a one of struggle and determination.

In 1903, the Rev. Joseph Formia became pastor and found a parish in debt, but nonetheless made it his mission to establish a parochial school. In September 1904, the building was not yet complete, but the Sisters of St. Francis began their work of educating the parish youth surrounded by the on-going cacophony of construction.

When the Rev. John Marchegiani became pastor in 1921, he helped raise funds for the expanding church campus by organizing bazaars and minstrel shows that often featured the children of the parish school. In 1922, the church basement was lowered and a stage for spectacles was built. With funds raised through the various enterprises, by 1928, the school was completely renovated and gained a new gymnasium.

Marchegiani's successor, the Rev. William Pizzoglio, was a pastor and educator. Father Pizzoglio expanded catechism classes and religious instruction for children in the public schools. In 1944, he also established a day nursery for the children of parishioners who were fighting in World War II and whose wives needed to work in local factories producing items used in the war effort. That nursery continued to operate until 1970.

The parish school continued to host a myriad of educational, spiritual and social functions through the pastorates of the Rev. Joseph Berton (1950-64) and the Rev. Peter Bortolazzo (1964-73). Under the Rev. John Corrado and the Rev. Carmen Negro (1973-83), renovations to the school building were carried out.

Despite his many efforts to maintain it, the school was closed in 1986 during the pastorate of the Rev. Henry Benin (1983-1991) as the result of a Diocesan School Consolidation Plan. The devout pastor redoubled his efforts to maintain the usefulness of the building, con-



The Class of 1917.

verting it into the parish catechetical center.

Today, the building is used for a variety of functions. The Salerno Room has hosted Pre-Cana Conferences, social events, meetings, diocesan meetings and classes, and bereavement dinners after funerals. The classrooms, as part of our Faith Formation center, still are used for religious instruction. The gymnasium is used for basketball, pizza frittata sales, flower sales and social events.

John Reale graduated from Mount Carmel in 1984, one of the last classes to pass through the school's doors. He transitioned to public school and found the changing of classes during the day, larger halls and a more diverse student population a bit intimidating at first.

He had to get used to having a locker and all-boys gym classes (at Mount Carmel they were co-ed.). Still, John says academically he was up to the challenge of the new school (Proctor High). His parochial teachers were demanding and worked with him to meet their expectations.

"I had many great memories of my days at Mount Carmel School," John said. "I made many friendships that I still have today, especially my best friend Mike Zasa.

"The nuns and priests of Mount Carmel certainly have played an integral role in my life. Some favorite memories were with Sister Mary Bede in fourth grade. She had us do so much. We learned to square dance in her class and performed for some of the local senior centers. As a class we made a Thanksgiving scene out of clay which was on display at the school. We had a play with real props and furniture that we performed not only on the stage in the former CYO room, but we also performed our play at Conkling School."

Students learned more than just reading, writing and arithmetic.

"We learned respect for one another and became a close family of students from our big brother big sister program with the older grades to just looking out for each other on the playground," John said. "You learned structure and discipline with how to change classes quietly to lining up in the playground each morning single file before entering the building.

"Yes, many great times at Mount Carmel School that to this day has formed my faith life," he added. "I will always treasure those days and will share the memories with my sons."

FIRST COMMUNION

Continued from Page 6

of a family — your parish family."

Her advice to parents is "to truly embrace this journey and be an example of your faith to your child."

"Don't make their First Communion be their last," she said. "Be a true example of our faith to your children and see to it that they attend weekly Mass. It was Jesus Christ who told us to 'take and eat' and 'take and drink.' Communion

is Jesus' way of always being with us. Don't deny your children this wonderful gift."

Despite the challenges, Terri said she reaps the rewards out of what she does and what she teaches the children of the parish.

"The Eucharist is so important to me," she said. "When I see the boys and girls, (some who are now young men and women) receive communion at Mass, I get great joy in knowing that I played a role in their coming to the

Eucharistic table for the first of many times.

"When Jesus ascended into Heaven, he didn't want to leave us. Communion is His way of being with us," Terri added. "When we experience that embrace of Jesus at Mass and look at those who are also experiencing it, we become a family. Just like in our families, when we are together, we feel the love for one another. That experience of our love for God is what makes us a family."

**FAITH BARRES****Age:** 8**Parents:** Francis Barres Jr. and Andrea Zumpano**Brothers:** Patrick and Jude**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

What is my guardian angel's name?

**GABRIELLA BILODEAU****Age:** 7**Parents:** Rick and Josette Bilodeau**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

For a baby brother or sister.

**RYAN CHARLEBOIS****Age:** 8**Parents:** Joanna and Remi Charlebois**Brother:** Remi IV**Sister:** Mikayla**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

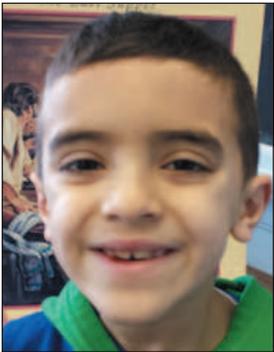
What is it like in heaven?

**ETHAN KIDWELL****Parents:** J.P. and Christina Kidwell, Kimberly and Dan Perry**Brothers:** Ethan, Samuel, Daniel Jr. and Dylan**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

Please watch over my family and keep them safe and help us make good decisions.

**ISABELLA LYNCH****Age:** 7**Parents:** Joseph Lynch and Jessica Kane**Sisters:** Francesca and Cecilia**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

What's your favorite food?

**JOSEPH A.J. MARINO JR.****Age:** 7**Parents:** Joseph and Danielle Marino**Brothers:** Anthony and Christopher**Sister:** Isabella**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

I would ask God if I could visit heaven and see all my family that is there just for one day.

**ANTHONY MICHAEL MARINO****Age:** 7**Parents:** Joseph and Danielle Marino**Brothers:** Joseph and Christopher**Sister:** Isabella**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

I would ask him if my Nana Marino could come back to Earth from Heaven.

**NOELLE MOLANARE****Age:** 7**Parents:** Deanna and Joseph Talarico, Shane Sullivan**Brother:** Luca**If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be?**

How did you make the grass and flowers?

**MARK SCALISE****Age:** 8**Father:** Steve and Diane Scalise**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

I would ask God to cure all people with cancer.

**ANTONIA TARTAGLIA****Age:** 8**Parents:** Anthony Tartaglia and Keri Tartaglia**Sister:** Kayley**Brother:** Santino**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

What is it like in heaven?

**JOSEPH WUN DAN KWAWNG****Age:** 7**Parents:** Dan Hkawng La and Hla Soe**Sister:** Shwe Chin**Brother:** Rumon Gying Dan Awng Lahpai.**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

To make all people nice.

**SU HTWAY****Age:** 8**Parent:** Ah Pin and May Lin**Brother:** Lin Thun Nya.**If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?**

I don't have a question. I would say thank you for my family.