

ST. MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL / BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH – SUMMER 2014

# MORE GOOD NEWS

MT. CARMEL SOCIETY

## Mary, Queen of the Festival

PAGE 3

THIS ISSUE IS A GIFT OF THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE CLUB  
OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY AND SMITH PACKING

# Try sowing some seed for God

After a long and unrelenting winter, and a short wet and cool spring, it certainly is good to see things in blossom and those summer backyard gardens growing with flowers and vegetables.

Sowing some seed for God this summer might be a worthy reflection and effort on the part of each and all of us.

What does this mean?

Maybe simply putting a smile on your face, even when you're not in the mood. Or being good to someone who is not very good to you.



FATHER JIM

Perhaps sowing some seed for God involves being grateful for where you are and what you already have.

Some say, "That can't be right, I'm uncomfortable. I'm not in a good place. Somebody

is not treating me right."

But others will tell you, even testify, that God will not allow challenge to come into our lives unless some good can possibly come from it. In other words, many will say nothing happens TO us, it happens FOR us.

For example, that person who is so hard to get along with? He's not happening to you, rather for you. God can use that person to let you grow, to fashion an even better character.

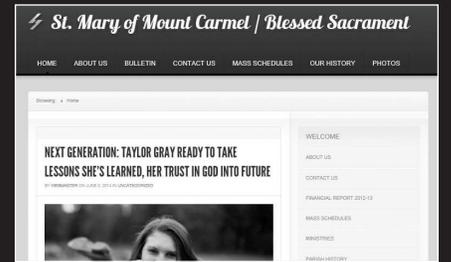
God uses a difficult person, like sandpaper, to rub the rough edges off us. The next time you see that person say with a smile, "Thank you so much for everything you do for me." Then you might have to pick him up off the ground.

The summer garden is where seeds are sown. Our ordinary living, day by day, these summer months that seem to go so fast, is the time and place to sow seeds for the good things of God.



## Tee it up at second annual golf tournament

The second annual Restoration & Preservation Golf Tournament is Sunday, Aug. 10, at Stonebridge Golf and Country Club in New Hartford. Registration is at 10 a.m. with a shotgun start at 11 a.m. The cost is \$75 per golfer, which includes lunch, drinks and an Italian buffet dinner. For information or to participate, call the parish office at 735-1482, or check out our parish's website at [www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com](http://www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com). Last year, more than 70 golfers participated in the best-ball event that raised more than \$9,000 for the parish.



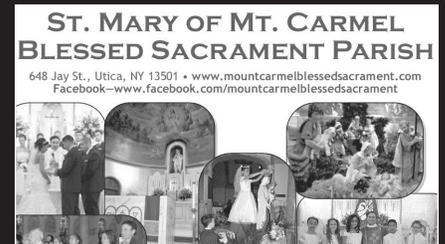
## Check out our parish website

If you've never been to our parish website at [www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com](http://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 Faith Formation website and Facebook page, parish Facebook page, Daily Readings, Catholic Sun
- > Mass schedules
- > Parish news
- > Ministries
- > "More Good News" magazine
- > Videos

# Blessed are you among women

Parish festival filled with food, fun, frivolity – and devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

By **FRAN PERRITANO**

For generations, it's been about her. Always has been. Always will be.

Decades ago, the primary reason for the founders of the then-Mount Carmel Church festival was to honor the patroness of the parish – Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

It hasn't changed.

Angelo Amodio is chairman of this summer's festival that runs Friday through Sunday, July 18-20. It's his second straight at the helm, and the 11th time he's been in charge.

And he does it for one reason.

"My primary reason for the work I do is my complete and total devotion to the Blessed Mother," he said, noting that many others have the same cause.

"Our parish has been fortunate to have practically the same people come forward to chair a particular booth year after year," Angelo said. "Why do they do it? They do it because of their devotion to this beautiful church, their devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and because they also have a lot of fun."

The festival takes place each year coinciding with the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on July 16.

According to the traditions of the Carmelite order, on July 16, 1251, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite. During the vision, she revealed to him the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, popularly known as the Brown Scapular. A century and a quarter later, the Carmelite order began to celebrate on this date the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The feast celebrates the devotion that the Blessed Virgin Mary has to those who are devoted to her, and who signal that devotion by wearing the Brown Scapular. According to tradition, those who wear the scapular

faithfully and remain devoted to the Blessed Virgin until death will be granted the grace of final perseverance and be delivered from Purgatory early.

While honoring Mary is the primary focus, the festival also is the parish's primary fundraiser.

In 2013, the festival raised more than \$109,800. After bills were paid, the parish netted about \$49,440. In 2012, the festival grossed \$94,811, netting nearly \$42,000.

For the last 18 years or so, the Buona Fortuna raffle has been a major part of the fundraising. Last year, more than \$29,000 was generated through selling the \$20 tickets, with \$15,500 paid out in prize money. In 2012, ticket sales generated more than \$28,000, with

\$15,500 paid out in prizes.

Marge Hanrahan has been in charge of ticket sales for a number of years. She said the fundraiser is "extremely important."

"Money raised from Buona Fortuna is used for upkeep of the church or school (building)," she said.

Marge said the idea of Buona Fortuna came about around the parish's 100th anniversary in 1996. Prior to that, raffle tickets were sold for \$1 apiece with less money raised and fewer prizes paid out.

For her, the task of making sure ticket sales are brisk is a challenge and a blessing. "It can become a worry for me," Marge said. "I want to do better than the year before. And even though we manage to, I still hold my breath and pray that we will. Our parishioners (both sellers and buyers) always come through. I don't have to tell

## ITALIAN FESTIVAL

**When:** 5 to 11 p.m.

Friday and Saturday, July 18 and 19; 1 to 7 p.m.

Sunday, July 20.

**Where:** Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish grounds.

**What:** Food, pizza frita, entertainment, rides, children's games, flea market and more.



Please see **OUR LADY**, Page 7

## A CONVERSATION WITH ...

# RE CHIFFY

*You know who she is. She's the one making sure there are lectors and Eucharistic ministers. She's the one checking that everyone is in the right spot during special church celebrations. She's the one who was given the Mohawk Valley Chapter of New York State Women Inc.'s Unsung Heroine Award this year and the Immaculata Award from the Syracuse Diocese that honors lay people who generously give of themselves. She's Re Chiffy.*

**You've been a member of the parish family for years. What's so special about our church?**

The spirituality and friendliness of the people are what make Mount Carmel so special. It was through the prayers and outreach of fellow parishioners that I was helped many times.

**Your family has been involved here for a number of years. What are some of your favorite memories?**

There have been five generations of volunteers in our family, so volunteerism has been a huge part of my life. Some of my favorite memories of the church are: During the Easter season the priest would visit and bless each home. That was always a special day. Of course, our parish life was also our social life in those days. Everything revolved around our church. Mount Carmel had so many societies that there was a function every week: spaghetti suppers, pizza frita and dances. There was a great sense of community.

**There have been a number of priests who served at Mount Carmel. Do you have a favorite?**

I received something of value from each of the priests who have been stationed at Mount Carmel. The faith that I have was nurtured by the Scalabrini priests. As to a favorite, I would have to say Father Joseph Salerno, as he taught me how to be truly ecumenical.

**You attended Mount Carmel School. What do you remember most about those years?**

I have so many memories of my time in Mount Carmel School. For one, the annual minstrel show. It didn't matter if you had any special talent, if Sister said "you will sing," then you sang. It was a lot of fun because rehearsals were during school hours. I will never forget the "clicker" that all the nuns used to keep order in the school (instead of verbal cues, they would use the clicker to let us know when to stand, kneel, etc. during services) The nuns taught us not only reading, writing and arithmetic (not to mention religion), but how to grow up to be responsible, caring men and women of the community. They were kind and nurturing teachers.

### RE CHIFFY

**Age:** 87.

**Family:** Daughter Maria and her husband, Bill; son Christopher; grandchildren Sean and Mia.

**Education:** Mount Carmel School and Thomas R. Proctor High School.

**Previous employment:** Utica City School District.

**Things you like to do in your spare time:**

Read, take day trips, socialize with friends.

**Favorite book:** "Keys of the Kingdom."

**Favorite movie:** "My Fair Lady."

**Favorite TV program:** Turner Classic Movies.

**Favorite quote:** "You shall only pass through this world once, so any good you can do, do it."



I loved my time in their care.

**What inspires you to volunteer so much?**

My grandmother started me working at the rectory at 13 years of age. I would write cards, sort envelopes and perform general office work. My mom did altar clothes and altar server robes. My father was a chauffeur for the nuns for many years. These were among some of the things we volunteered for. My parents' actions inspired me to continue their work once they could no longer contribute in that way. It has been such a huge part of my life that I could not imagine a life without the church and my work there.

**Are there times when you say to yourself, "Let someone else take care of it."?**

There are times I might feel that way, but I always remember what my mother said, "Just offer it up to God."

**Like many people, you've been through your ups and downs. How have you coped when life throws you curveballs?**

Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been my

strength through the years and I have always had good family support. I have great faith that God will take care of things, and I try to keep a positive attitude. Attitude and faith are key in coping with life's ups and downs.

**Who was your hero?**

My mother was my hero. She instilled in me the knowledge of how to live a full and happy life by following God's way.

**What's the best advice anyone ever gave you?**

My parents offered me some of the best advice I ever got in my life. They taught me to never let the sun go down on your anger and to live life to its fullest and never waste a day.

**What's the best advice you could offer someone else?**

Make use of the talents and gifts God gave you. "Be the best you that you can be!"

**How would you like to be remembered?**

I want to be remembered as someone who took what the Lord blessed me with and shared those gifts with my community and friends.



# Trying to be the best he can be

Keaton: 'No matter where you come from, we're all the same'

*At age 14, Keaton Kukowski is a throwback to a bygone era. He loves watching old movies, is named after a famous actor and one of his favorite movies stars Abbott and Costello. On the other hand, he is a modern-day teenager who is comfortable with who he is and his faith.*

**I understand you and your dad like to watch old movies. How did you get into vintage films?**

My mom loves watching them with us, too. My parents grew up watching old movies and they passed along their interest to me. It's something we all enjoy doing together.

**You're named after the actor Buster Keaton. What do you think about that?**

I am named after Buster Keaton and I think that's cool. Not many people know who he is, so I enjoy telling them that he was a talented and popular comedian in the 1920s. Most people think I'm named after the actor Michael Keaton!

**You're one of the veteran altar servers. What do you like best about serving?**

I like helping out in the church community by serving at Mass. It also gives me the chance to see some friends and make new friends with the other servers. I remember when I started out as an altar server and the more experienced ones showed me the ropes. They were very friendly and helped me learn, so I'm glad that I can pass that along to the younger servers now.

**Last year, you were one of the young people from the parish who attended Vision**

## KEATON MARSHALL KUKOWSKI

**Age:** 14.

**Family:** Dad Stephen, Mom Sharon, plus five furry siblings.

**School:** Sophomore at Notre Dame Junior-Senior High School.

**Things you like to do in your spare time:**

Drawing, running, watching movies, playing video games.

**Favorite book:** "The Hobbit" by J.R.R. Tolkien.

**Favorite movie:** "Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein" and "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey."

**Favorite TV show:** "The Regular Show."

**Favorite quote:** "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us." — Gandalf from "The Hobbit."



**2013, a Catholic youth conference at the University of Notre Dame. How did that experience affect you?**

Attending ND Vision affected me in a positive way. It made me think about others around me and what I can do to help those in need. It also helped me work toward being a better person. I met a lot of nice kids from around the country. We got to hang out and talk about our faith and

share our interests. It was a lot of fun.

**If there was one thing you learned there that will stay with you forever, what would it be?**

I learned that no matter where you come from, we're all the same.

**Do you now find it easier to talk about and share your faith with others?**

I'm not shy about my faith and don't mind sharing it with others. I always try to do the right thing and treat others the way I want to be treated, so that's a big part of sharing my faith.

**Have you started to think about college and what you might like to do in the future?**

I have thought about college. I love to draw, so I've thought of going to school for animation to create storyboards for cartoons you might see at the movies or on TV. I also like U.S. history, so I'm thinking of studying that, too. I have some time to decide, though.

**Do you have a hero?**

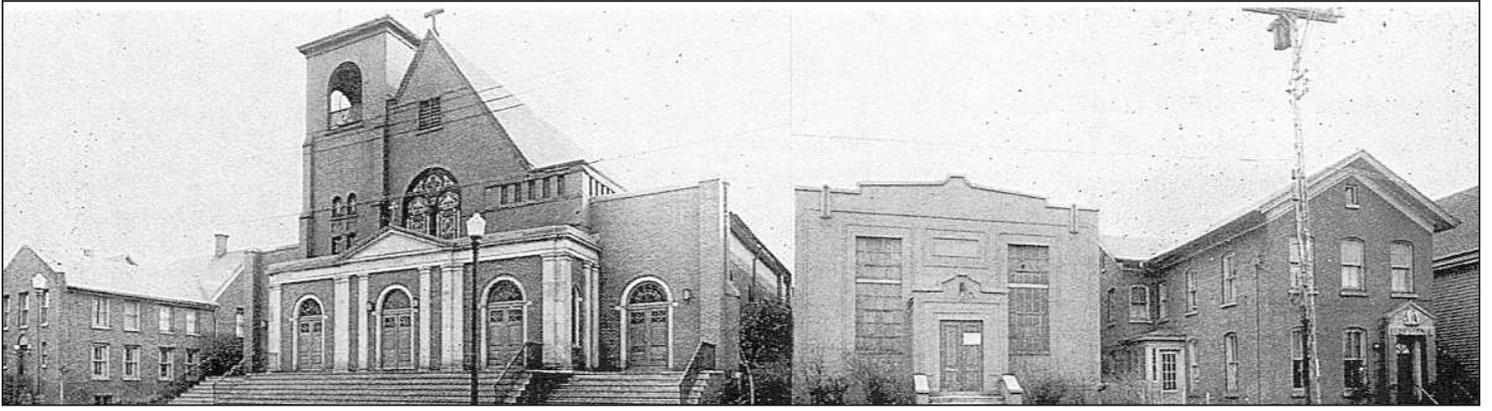
There are a number of people, and even characters in movies and literature that I admire; Gandalf in "The Hobbit" because he gave himself up for others, Indiana Jones because he's adventurous (and knows his history), and my Mom and Dad because we have such a great relationship.

**How would you describe who Keaton is?**

A friendly person who cares about others.

**How would you like people think about you?**

I'd like others to look at me as a "go-to guy" who they can rely on, trust and be there for them.



The landscape of the neighborhood around St. Mary of Mount Carmel has changed since the church was established in 1896. This is how the block along Catherine Street looked at the parish's centennial in 1946. From left: the convent, church, gymnasium and the nursery.

# THAT WAS THEN ...

## Neighborhood around Mount Carmel has changed dramatically since 1900s

The neighborhood surrounding Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish hasn't changed much over the last few decades.

The church still is the focal point of the area, with the very-recognizable rectory sitting across the street from the church, with Six Nations apartments to the west and the Santa Rosalia Chapel immediately to the east.

But did you know it wasn't always that way?



**A.J. VALENTINI**

Did you know that the rectory once was attached to the church?

Did you know there were two breweries within walking distance of the church?

Did you know houses once were prolific in the neighborhood?

Many changes have taken place since the first time the parishioners of "Santa Maria di Monte Carmela di Utica" celebrated Mass in their Catherine Street home in 1896. At the time only a basement had been built.

The members of the parish were not wealthy by any means, yet managed to add a rectory on the back side of the church for their pastor and emerge debt free by 1901. It wasn't until 1906 that the main church was completed. Prior to 1896, the small Italian American community worshiped as a part of the congregation of what now is Historic Old St. John's Church.

The pictorial records of our immediate



Everyone is familiar with the parish's rectory on Jay Street. Before 1960, however, the rectory was next to the school building and attached to the church.

neighborhood at the turn of the 20th century are scant. Those pictures of places east of Genesee Street that we still have from that period focus on impressive buildings and parks closer to downtown.

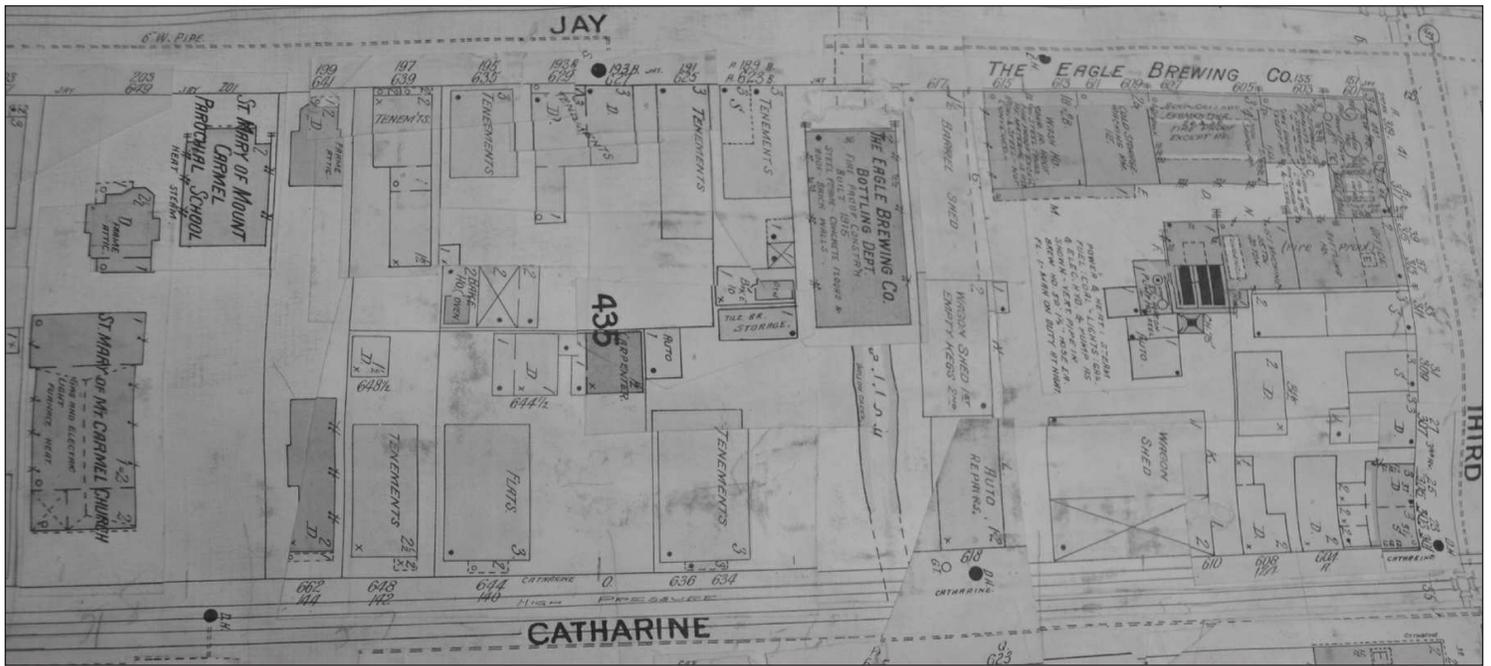
On a recent visit to the Oneida County Historical Society's archives, I got permission to study a huge volume of city maps created in 1899.

The area around the parish essentially was a mixed-use zone of tenements, small homes, industry and small retail stores. Back then, of

course, the Six Nations housing development didn't exist. Catherine Street continued west through there. The area bordered by Jay, Catherine and Third was the home of the Eagle Brewing Co. Another brewery, Gulf Brewing Co., was at 610 Jay. These days most of us only think of the F.X. Matt Brewing Co. in Utica, and that is on the West Side.

The Right Size Underwear Co. and the Firshing Knitting Mills were west of the church on the north side of Catherine Street.

**Please see NEIGHBORHOOD, Page 7**



COURTESY OF ONEIDA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The area around St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church, far left, essentially was a mixed-use zone of tenements, small homes, industry and small retail stores. The area bordered by Jay, Catherine and Third was the home of the Eagle Brewing Co., top right. Another brewery, Gulf Brewing Co., was at 610 Jay.

## NEIGHBORHOOD

Continued from Page 6

Where Route 5S cuts its lazy curve through the neighborhood once flowed the Erie Canal. Along its banks were coal yards, railroad yards, warehouses and more mills.

At 638 Bleeker St. was the National Catholic Welfare Council Club, which had an auditorium next door. And lest you think that the Asian community is a new arrival to our city, there was a Chinese laundry at 620 Bleeker. Over on Mary Street there was the

Italian Settlement House and School.

With employment opportunities, stores and services nearby, St. Mary of Mount Carmel was well positioned for its immigrant parishioners, who without the need for transportation could work, live and worship in a confined area. There were even the East Utica Public Baths at 654 Jay (just west of the rectory) to serve all those cold water flats in the area.

So, I guess you might say the neighborhood was bustling with activity, but, perhaps, not particularly photogenic. It didn't boast stately

mansions, remarkable architectural monuments or elegant, flower planted public parks. What it did have were industrious people, working diligently to become part of the American dream.

Even a hovel can be a mansion to a house-proud matron. Our church, over the years, has become recognized for its artistic expression of faith. And the backyard gardens of the locals have produced treasures for the table, preserving traditions and nourishing generations.

## OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Continued from Page 3

you that; you can see it every time we ask for a donation — whether it's Christmas toys for the children, or pencils and crayons for the beginning of the school year. We are generous. God bless the Mount Carmel family."

While the festival takes months of preparation — planning starts in January — those responsible for making it happen have a lot of work to do but also get a lot of enjoyment out of it. They see the fruits of their labors in changes that have been made through the years to all those who volunteer their time and talent.

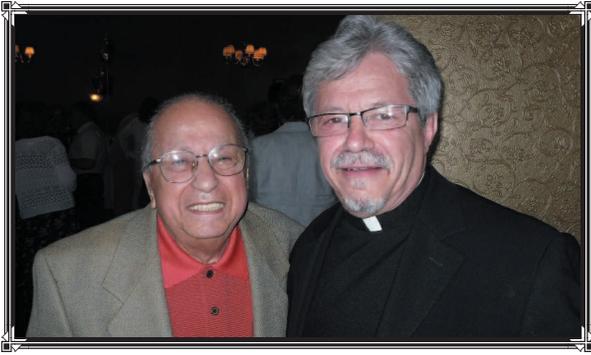
"I have been working at our festivals from the first year I was married and I have observed the transition from our volunteers having to cook under hot tents with a number of stoves and huge pans, to a much easier setup for the food booth, which is a big money-maker for us," Angelo said.

"Years ago, most households had only one person working full time, which left us with an abundance of mostly women who had much more time to devote to our festival. Times have changed, and with the two parents now working, it is harder to depend on volunteers like we did before."

And it's those volunteers that help keep the tradition and the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel alive.

"Volunteering to work at the festival is a way of giving to your church and a way of celebrating the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, who is by far one of our most powerful saints," Angelo said. "No one chairperson can put on such a large event without the blood, sweat and tears of a number of many devoted people who appear on the scene year after year ready willing and able to help. I have been very fortunate to have good people on my team and I thank God for that."





# A TOAST TO 40 YEARS

Father Jim Cesta was ordained on May 18, 1974. Family, friends and parishioners of St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish celebrated the 40th anniversary of Father Jim's priesthood on Sunday, May 18, 2014, with a special Mass and a celebration at Danielle's in New Hartford.

