

MORE GOOD NEWS

ST. MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL / BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH - FALL 2015



Receive the Holy Spirit

PAGE 3

THIS ISSUE IS A GIFT OF SAMMY AND ANNIE FOODS AND CAFÉ

Immigration: Time to reflect on how we view the issue

“The scum of creation has been dumped on us. Some of our principal cities are more foreign than American. The most dangerous and corrupting people have invaded us. The vice and crime which they have planted in our midst is sickening and terrifying. The manufacturers are mainly to blame. They wanted cheap labor, and they didn't care a curse how much harm to our future might be the result of their heartless policy.”

If you might think these words were recent and commenting on the influx of immigrants from other places into our American cities and places, you'd be very wrong. The words above were published in 1919 in Georgia, and the writer was commenting on the immigrants pouring in from Europe. Those immigrants were Italians, Poles, Jews and Russians.

Now in 2015, a century later, some of those immigrants' great-grandchildren have been cheering Mr. Trump as he denounces the latest generation of immigrants, in remarkably similar terms.

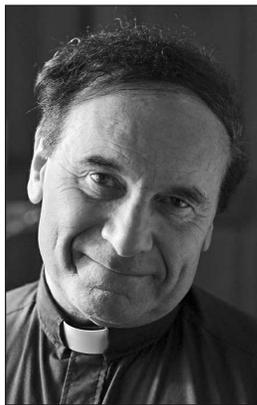
For those of the Christian and Catholic community of faith, it is important that we reflect upon and decide what our opinion is concerning those who seek to enter this nation. As a church, some might not agree with the stated position of our American bishops about keeping the door open, giving care and offering help and assistance, even to those who are illegal — not following the rules of immigration.

Many good and devout Catholic people are included in those who favor the door to freedom and opportunity swinging open for those

who are legally entering.

While visiting our American cities recently, Pope Francis spoke about being the son Italians who migrated to Argentina years ago seeking a better life. They did it legally, according to the rules.

As Pope Francis has invited us to celebrate a year of mercy beginning Dec. 8, however, perhaps mercy, a break, a loosening of the “rules” is in order toward even illegal immigrants.



FATHER JIM

Any immigrant can tell you the exact date, time, circumstances, everything they first noticed when arriving in this United States. It always is a life-changing experience, turning a new page, breathing the first gulp of free air.

Sometimes we forget to truly appreciate the gift of life given here.

In the upcoming months of political campaigning for the highest office in this land, many words will be spoken and written about the significant situation/crisis surrounding immigration, especially from the lands to the south of us — Mexico and Central America and also from war-torn and violent

places such as Syria.

Each of us should reflect, consider ... dare we say pray ... and take a stance and fashion an opinion.

Probably the indifference of too many people will only intensify the problem. Most of our families and most of us are the children and grandchildren of those who came over years ago, usually with not much more than a handful of money and a heart full of hope and promise.

PARISH MINISTRIES

Over the next several issues of “More Good News,” we will list information on several parish ministries. If you are interested in any of the following, call the parish office at 735-1482.

ALTAR CLEANING/DECORATING

This group of volunteers cares for the sanctuary by cleaning and decorating with emphasis on special occasions to include picking up flowers, hanging wreaths, etc.

ALTAR SERVERS

Altar servers assist the priest at Mass. The boys and girls are third through 12th-graders who have received their First Communion. They carry the cross, bear the book, and set the altar for consecration. Altar servers play an important role during special liturgical celebrations and are scheduled for the Mass of their choice.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Eucharistic ministers are commissioned by the pastor to distribute the body and blood of Christ at all liturgical celebrations. All ministers are trained prior to being commissioned. Eucharistic Ministers are scheduled to serve every eight to 12 weeks at the Mass of their choice.

FUNERAL ALTAR SERVERS

These volunteers are adults that assist at all funeral services. Commitment and scheduling for this group are flexible.

GREETERS

Greeters arrive 20 to 30 minutes prior to weekend Masses and stand at each entrance to welcome parishioners and visitors.

LECTORS

Lectors proclaim the Word of God during liturgical celebrations. Lectors are scheduled at the Mass of their choice.

PARISH WEBSITE: THE LATEST INFORMATION

Visit www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com for the latest parish news and announcements. There's even a

mobile version for your smart phone. You can donate online and check out our social media sites and more.

PHOTO GALLERIES



BULLETIN

A Community on a Journey of Faith November 21, 2015

ST. MARY OF MT. CARMEL BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH
 648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501 • www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament

Divine Mass
 Saturday 4:00 PM
 Sunday 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM
 Reconciliation: Saturday 3:45 PM

Special Events
 Nov. 21: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
 Nov. 22: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 23: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 24: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 25: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 26: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 27: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 28: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 29: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Nov. 30: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Parish Office
 648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501 • 735-1482
 Fax: 735-1483
 Email: parish@mtcarmelblessedsacrament.com
 Website: www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament
 Twitter: [www.twitter.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament](https://twitter.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament)
 Instagram: www.instagram.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament
 YouTube: www.youtube.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament

... AND MORE

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



Parents, Spirit guiding lights

Confirmation teaches young adults to look beyond themselves

By FRAN PERRITANO

We always hear that when we were baptized, it wasn't our choice. Our parents made the decision for us.

When it's time to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, we're told it's the decision of the young adult.

Parents, however, play a crucial role in helping to form that choice.

"As a parent, you guide your child," said Anne Elacqua, Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament's Faith Formation director for the junior-senior high school program. "You teach them how to get dressed, how to cross the street, how to say their ABC's and their prayers. You watch out for their best interest. You feed them and clothe them. You bring them to the doctor and dentist for checkups. You send them to school to learn reading, writing and arithmetic.

"Teaching them about their faith is no different. It is part of your role as a parent. You made a promise to God during their baptism. It is important for you to bring them to Faith Formation classes to learn about God and to weekly Mass."

And on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 14 young adults finalized that choice they made in collaboration with their parents, guardians and sponsors as they received the Holy Spirit when they were

Confirmation 2015

- Anthony Alsante
- Frederick Alsante
- Michael Arabia Jr.
- Nicholas Commisso
- Zachary Commisso
- Gabriella DiSpirito
- Matthew Elacqua
- Bethany Geary
- Keaton Kukowski
- Julia Ollerenshaw
- Ariana Robertello
- Shaelin Siniscarco
- Emily Surace
- Joseph Dominick

confirmed.

Oftentimes, it's the parents who have to make sure their child makes the right decision. "I have had students tell me that their parents are making them go to class," Anne said. "I tell them to give it a try and be open to the experience. Usually by the end, they don't feel that it was awful and they were happy that they did receive the sacrament.

"As a parent, our role is to look out for our child's well-being – physical, mental and spiritual. You wouldn't let your child miss doctor

appointments because they didn't want to go. It should be the same with attending class."

The Confirmation experience has changed over the years and is much different than it was for many of us. Youngsters are invited to start preparing for Confirmation in the ninth grade and continue into 10th grade to fully cover the material they need to know. It's not only learning the spiritual part of the sacrament, but living out the gifts of the Holy Spirit by engaging with and helping others.

Hence, community service has become a major component.

"Each year in our program, a student is required to give between 10 and 15 hours of service each year," Anne said. "Once they enter 10th grade, they have to do 20. It is very easy to do. Many of them volunteer at school, working concession stands at sporting events; they work at our parish festival; they work our pizza frita sales (which they love doing), and many baby sit, mow lawns, shovel snow and are altar servers at Mass or sing or play musical instruments in the choir.

"They have also collected food and items for the Utica Zoo; collected hats, mittens and scarves for the children at Thea Bowman house; and we have also made Easter baskets

Please see CONFIRMATION, Page 7

VIEW A CONFIRMATION PHOTO GALLERY AT WWW.MOUNTCARMELBLESSEDSACRAMENT.COM

A CONVERSATION WITH ... JAMEO HTOOSAY



Jameo Htoosay and Mary Coe several years ago lived in refugee camps in Thailand. They found their way to the United States, came to Utica, met and fell in love. They were married at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament in August.

Winding road leads to love

Jameo Htoosay is 26 years old. He came to Utica alone about two years ago after living in Burma until he was 15 and then spending eight years in a Thai refugee camp. Mary Koe is 20 years old and came to America with her family almost six years ago after being born in a Thai refugee camp. Jameo works at St. Elizabeth Medical Center as a medical interpreter. Mary graduated from Thomas R. Proctor in 2014 and now studies radiology at Mohawk Valley Community College. As fate (or the hand of God) would have it, they met and fell in love. On Aug. 8, they were married at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament and enjoyed a reception in the church social hall. Jameo tells their story.

What was your wedding day like for the both of you?

It was a blessed privilege for us that we got a chance for our wedding at Mount Carmel Church and it was the most beautiful day of our lives. I personally never thought I would meet my wife, who is a Catholic, but as the will of the God, I met her and I am blessed to have our wedding in the holy Catholic Church. The day was a perfect day for us, and on behalf of my wife and me, I sincerely thank the church, Father James and the community of

the holy Catholic Church as I have received a warm welcome.

How did you meet your bride?

I met my beautiful wife on her father's birthday, and my father-in-law still keeps saying that I am a gift of his birthday for his daughter (as I am a hard-working and nice young man). It wasn't my first time that I met her on that day because I had seen her at the place where I worked where she was also working for a short period of time. It's been roughly a year that we've been a couple.

When you first met, was it love at first sight?

I personally didn't think I would have married her until I met her on her father's birthday. And I didn't plan to go to the birthday party because I usually worked late, but I did, somehow, and met the beautiful and happy family of her parents, herself, two little brothers and one sister. As I am a loner here in America, I was thirsty for family warmth and dreamed of getting love from a family. Since both my parents have passed away and since I am thousands of miles far away from my brothers and sister, my life here in America is as a tree in the desert. That's why I was getting close to my wife's



Please see WINDING ROAD, Page 7

Nick has good game plan

Though he's busy, athlete realizes faith, family, helping others are important in life

Nicholas Commisso is a very involved person. He plays football and basketball at Oriskany Junior-Senior High School, and is a member of Student Council and several other organizations at school. In his 16 years, he's learned the value of teamwork, doing things for others and the importance of family and faith. In fact, his favorite times are Sunday dinners at his grandfather's house.

You are involved with many organizations at school. You're the junior class president and are part of Student Council, SADD, Science Club and Rachel's Challenge. What have you learned about yourself by taking part in these activities?

I've learned ... that I really enjoy helping and doing nice things for others.

You are a captain on the varsity football team and you also play basketball and baseball for Oriskany. How did you get interested in sports?

I became interested in sports for many reasons. One reason is because I have been playing baseball since I was 5 years old. I really enjoy being part of a team and working together to accomplish a goal.

If you could only pick one, what is your favorite sport?

My favorite sport is football because if you want a play to be successful, everyone has to do their job and work hard for the play to work. Also, in football everyone has to work hard if they want to win games.

Do you have aspirations of playing sports in college? Where would you like to attend?

I have aspirations of playing sports in college, but I know I will have to continue to work extremely hard if I want that to happen. I am not sure where I would like to attend yet.

What has playing on teams taught you?

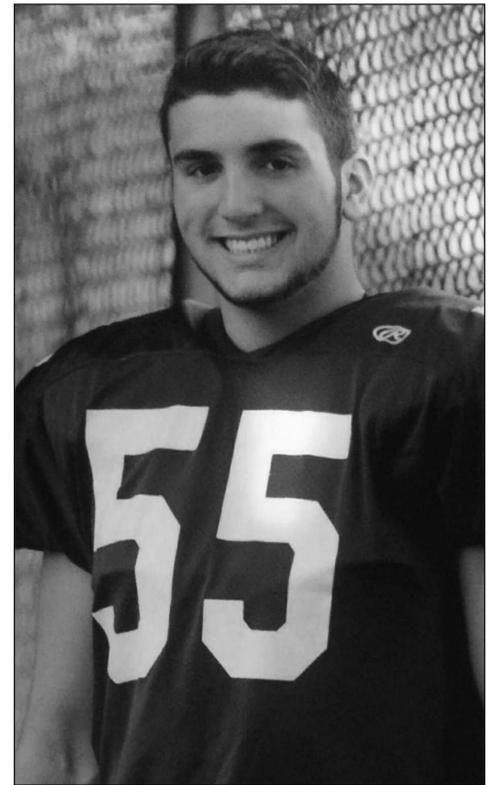
Playing on teams has taught me that you can't be successful unless you work together and to never give up.

Sunday dinners at your grandfather's house take precedence over friends and sports any day. Why is that so important to you?

Sunday dinners at my grandfather's house are very important to me because I enjoy spending time with my family and being able to talk to them while enjoying delicious food.

Why is family so important?

My family has always been a huge part of



Nick Commisso plays baseball and football at Oriskany Junior-Senior High School. "I became interested in sports for many reasons. One reason is because I have been playing baseball since I was 5 years old. I really enjoy being part of a team and working together to accomplish a goal."

Nicholas Commisso

Age: 16

School: Junior at Oriskany Junior-Senior High School

Family: Dad, mom, two sisters and a brother

Things you like to do: Play sports, read and spend time with my family and friends

Favorite athlete: Steph Curry

Favorite TV show: "Friends"

Favorite book: "American Sniper"

Favorite movie: "Sandlot"

Favorite quote: "Heroes get remembered, but legends never die."

my life and I know they will always be there for me whenever I need them.

You attended Vision 2015 at Notre Dame University over the summer. Please describe that experience?

It was an amazing experience. I was able to meet new people who all shared the same faith as me. I enjoyed it because people from all around the world had the same values and beliefs as me.

If there was one thing you learned there

that impacted you the most, what would it be?

Treat others the way you want to be treated. I believe that impacted me the most because I think that if everyone did that the world would be a better place.

Faith is important to you. Who did you learn that from and why is it important?

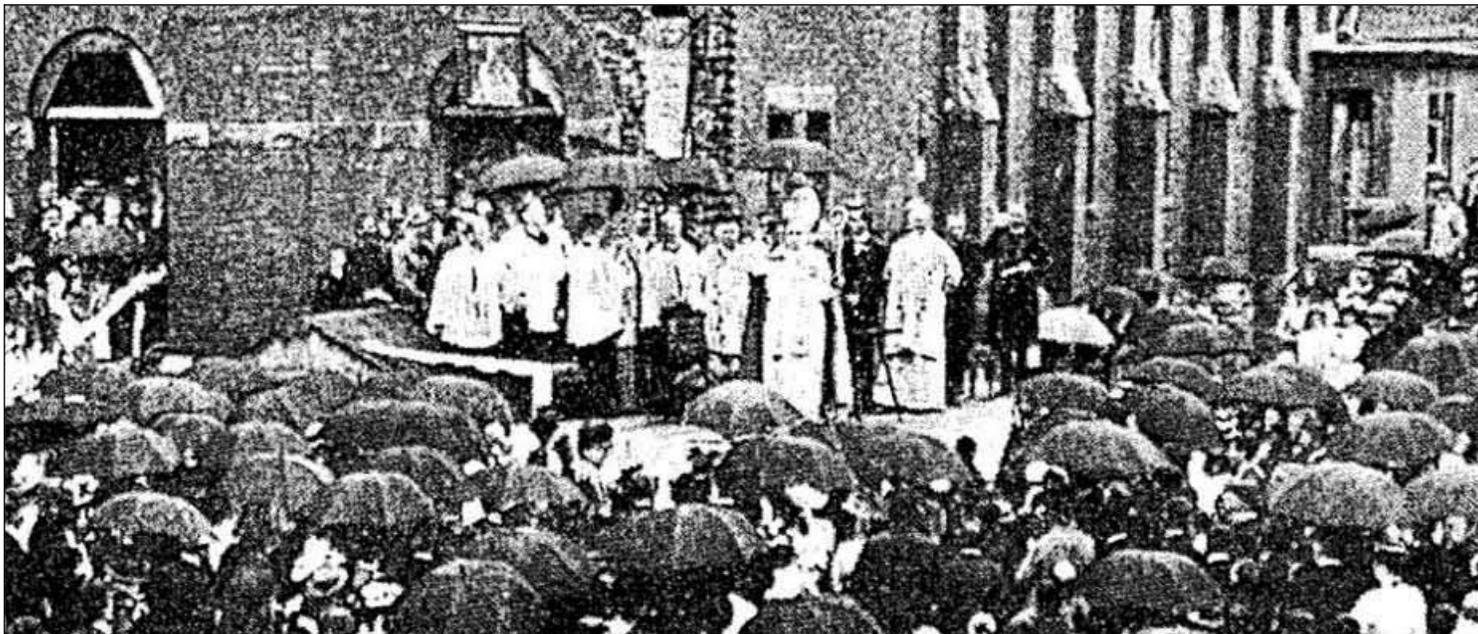
I learned that faith is important from my parents. It is important to have a strong faith so that you can have a better connection with God.

You made your Confirmation at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament in October. What does this parish mean to you?

This parish means a lot to me because it's special to my family. We attend Mass as a family. My parents were married at this parish. My dad and his eight brothers and sisters went to school here. My mom has been teaching religious education here since I was 2 years old. I was baptized and made my First Communion in this parish, so it means a lot to be confirmed here.

If you were to share your faith with your friends, what would you tell them?

I would tell them that my faith is always welcoming to others and that having a strong connection with your faith can help you live a happier life.



Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini blesses the cornerstone of St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church on Sept. 15, 1901.

Mount Carmel's 'godfather'

Bishop Scalabrini played major role in development of East Utica parish

In the late 1890s, the Italian community of Utica had become so large that Monsignor Lynch of St. John's Church assigned his assistant, the Rev. Antonio Castelli, to work with them.

It was he that urged the new immigrants to establish their own parish. With meager donations from the parishioners and the help of Syracuse diocese's Bishop Patrick Ludden to get a loan, Father Castelli was able to initiate the construction of the new place of worship's foundation. He began celebrating the Mass in December 1896 in the basement of the yet unfinished building.



A.J. VALENTINI

Once debts had been cleared on their rudimentary church and adjoining rectory, a cornerstone was laid and blessed by Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini on Sept. 15, 1901. The modest building was completed by June 1902, and Father Castelli required an assistant and future successor to his nascent parish. Bishop Ludden, through Bishop Scalabrini, found the Rev. Joseph Formia to aid, and later assume the duties of Father Castelli.

So, who was this Bishop Scalabrini and how did he and the other priests of his order play

such an important role in the life of our parish for 89 years?

Giovanni Battista Scalabrini was born the third of eight children on July 8, 1839, in Mornasco, province of Como, in northern Italy. His biographers say he was a brilliant student and was ordained a priest at age 24 in 1863. He longed to be a missionary, but his bishop assigned him to teach at the minor seminary. He later became its rector. His gifts at administration and command of church doctrine were rewarded when he was appointed the Bishop of Piacenza.

As a witness to the mass immigrations of Italians to the Americas and elsewhere, he realized there would be a real need of the pastoral care of those good Catholics spread across the globe. On Nov. 28, 1887, he founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, which now is recognized as the Scalabrini Fathers and Brothers. The goal of this newly formed order was to "maintain Catholic faith and practice among Italian emigrants in the New World."

Bishop Scalabrini's personal philosophy truly was in keeping with the hopes and dreams of the hard-working Italian immigrants striving for the American dream. His motto was, "Make yourself everything to everyone." He was well known for his tireless work ethic. He was known to have said, "We are in the



On Nov. 28, 1887, Bishop Scalabrini founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, which now is recognized as the Scalabrini Fathers and Brothers. The goal of this newly formed order was to "maintain Catholic faith and practice among Italian emigrants in the New World." The Scalabrini fathers served Mount Carmel for 89 years.

hands of God, but we must not sit there idly."

He clearly was a "doer," yet, he was considered accessible, open, direct and, at times, vulnerable. He handled his business rationally and knew how to measure any impulsive decisions.

Pope John Paul II beatified Scalabrini in November 1997. Our former parish school is

Please see SCALABRINI, Page 7

CONFIRMATION

Continued from Page 3

for the children there, too. As a group, we spent a Saturday at the Utica Zoo raking and helping to get it ready for the spring season. Our service has been very diverse.”

Shae Siniscarco, one of those confirmed, said it’s nice to volunteer.

“I’ve learned that it’s important to give back to the community and people who are in need,” she said.

Julia Ollerenshaw said community service has taught her “that there are people that have it worse than me and I should appreciate what I have.”

Anne has been the Faith Formation coordinator since 2010 and has been involved with it for years prior. She gets joy and satisfaction from that role and what the program is able to accomplish.

“I think the high point seems to be watching the students mature in their faith and finally understand what it is all about,” she said. “When we moved receiving the sacrament to junior year, the maturity of the students really helped them to fully comprehend the importance of Confirmation. I also like to see the students take on adult roles such as Eucharistic ministers and lectors. Many have done so and I am so proud of them.”

There is one low point: “When you don’t see them in the pews after they receive the sacrament.”

If there is one thing Anne hopes the students have learned after the process, what would it be?

“I would hope that they learn that God is there for them and that He is only a conversation away,” she said. “God is the one to dump the bad on when things get low, and He is also the one to thank when things are going well. I would hope that they learn to be true to themselves and that God loves them unconditionally, that they should be proud to be a Catholic and trust in God. They each have gifts to give and that they have the tools inside to figure that out and become the wonderful person that God knows that they can be.”

WINDING ROAD



Jameo and Mary’s wedding reception in the social hall of the church.

Continued from Page 4

family as the days went by until I decided to request to marry her from her parents.

What was it like in your native land and why did you come to the United States?

My life back in Burma was chaos, and also in Thailand, and I was not being recognized as a human being. My life in the refugee camp is nothing more than a bird in a cage, but I tried not to be a bird; rather, I tried to be an eagle that would break away from the cage. As I wanted to be who I am, I invested my entire time in the refugee camp in school and study. I was in a refugee camp in Thailand when I was 15 years old and I finished school in camps. I sought an opportunity for further education and I was chosen for scholarship in a Thai city for a year with three-month internship overseas in Indonesia. I have learned to speak English since then and it was an advantage for me when I came to America.

It’s a brave decision to leave one’s country and go to one that is so different. What were your feelings at the time?

I like to try new things -- it was my hobby since I was a child. I enjoy doing things I have never done and also visiting new places. As a

young man back in Thailand, I enjoy American music and movies (I have learned English from music and movies, too.) As I realized I had no future in the camps, of course, I just sought to get to the place where I was supposed to be ... America! I waited for seven and a half years to get to America, and since I knew I was going to America, I prepared myself in order to adapt: culture, languages, basic communications such as Google, social media and so on.

What are your thoughts about Utica?

Utica is like a picture full of colors, colors that present diversity all over the world. I would imagine my life would be totally different if I am relocated in places such as Alaska or states that don’t have any migrant population. But I am glad I was relocated to settle my new life in the place where people like me have been relocated. I got a lot of help from the community when I first came here to Utica and am thankful of the people who have helped me settle my life.

Would you ever like to return home?

I would return home one day for a visit, but from now on my life is here in Utica and here in America, the place where human being is recognized with dignity and as who we as a human being are.

SCALABRINI

Continued from Page 6

named in his honor.

As many parishes in our diocese and indeed, across the nation, have been forced to shutter their doors, this parish — our parish — has endured. Perhaps it has something to do with a distant Italian bishop and his followers who helped sustain us for almost nine decades and his spirit, like a good godfather, who watches over us still.

A bust of Bishop Scalabrini hangs in a niche near the Jay Street entrance of the church.



Bishop Scalabrini’s personal philosophy truly was in keeping with the hopes and dreams of the hard-working Italian immigrants striving for the American dream. His motto was, “Make yourself everything to everyone.”

Summer full of fun

Thanks to the efforts of many people, parishioners and friends of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament enjoyed a number of activities during the summer. They included our Parish Festival, golf tournament, trip to Yankee Stadium, a night at Vernon Downs and the barbecue for all the parish volunteers.



To view more photos from these events and others, visit www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com and click on PHOTOS