

MORE

GOD NEWS

Answering the call

Year of Vocations to begin

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OUR PARISH HERITAGE

Part 3 in a series
of articles about
the history of our parish
leading to the 125th
anniversary in 2021.

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Father Jim blesses his parents, MaryAnn and Carmen Cesta, after his ordination May 18, 1974.

Ushering in a different era

Ushers take on new responsibilities amid pandemic

By **FRAN PERRITANO**

Barbaro Joe Carino wanted to become an usher more than 20 years ago.

There was one obstacle, however, she encountered — she's a woman.

"I wanted to be an usher for a while, but ushers were only men," Barbara Jo said. "Every week, (the person in charge of the ushers) was looking for men to be ushers. Every week I told him he should get women. This went on for a while. One week he came to me and said he talked to Father Joe (Salerno), and I could start the next week. I have been an usher ever since.

That was in 1999. Now, she's in charge of the group of 15 — 11 men and four women.

This year has been a time of change, and that includes the ushers. In past years, parishioners were used to being greeted by an usher and noticed them once again when they took up the collection.

In this era of a pandemic, the ushers have taken on new roles.

"We direct the people to the pews using social distancing in all sections and answer any questions they have," Barbara Jo said. "At the end of Mass, we hand out the bulletins, directing the people to leave one pew at a time. There is no collection; the collection baskets are at the back of the church for them to put their donations in."

Nick Panuccio is head usher at the 8 a.m.



Barbara Jo Carino has been an usher since 1999. Though she was turned down on several occasions when she wanted to become an usher more than 20 years ago, because at the time only men were ushers, she now is in charge of a group of 15, four of whom are women.

Sunday Mass. He's been an usher for 26 years.

"As a head usher, I unlock the church for the 8 o'clock Mass," he said. "I walk around the church to check and clean the pews to make sure there are no papers or garbage. Before the COVID-19 restrictions, I would also make sure there were enough hosts and wine, clean purificators, hand towels and corporals, and would put the offertory gifts on the table, then choose a couple of people to bring them up during the offertory.

"I organize all the ushers and make sure there are enough to help with collection, and open the doors and greet people as they come into church. I also fill the bulletins after communion, although right now we hand them out to everyone as they leave church because of COVID-19, and I watch out to make sure everyone is safe during Mass."

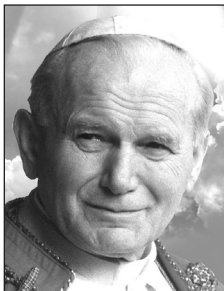
Joe Furgol is head usher at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. He's been serving as an usher
Please see USHERS, Page 7

CELEBRATING THE SAINTS

St. John Paul II

Feast day Oct. 22

Born in Wadowice, Poland, Karol Jozef Wojtyla had lost his mother, father and older brother before his 21st birthday. Karol's promising academic career at Krakow's Jagiellonian University was cut short by the outbreak of World War II. While working in a quarry and a chemical factory, he enrolled in an underground seminary in Kraków. Ordained in 1946, he was immediately sent to Rome where he earned a doctorate in theology.



Back in Poland, a short assignment as assistant pastor in a rural parish preceded his very fruitful chaplaincy for university students.

Soon, Wojtyla earned a doctorate in philosophy and began teaching that subject at Poland's University of Lublin.

Communist officials allowed Wojtyla to be appointed auxiliary bishop of Kraków in 1958, considering him a harmless intellectual.

Elected pope in October 1978, he took the name of his short-lived immediate predecessor. Pope John Paul II was the first non-Italian pope in 455 years. In time, he made pastoral visits to 124 countries, including several with small Christian populations.

John Paul II promoted ecumenical and interfaith initiatives, especially the 1986 Day of Prayer for World Peace in Assisi. He visited Rome's main synagogue and the Western Wall in Jerusalem; he also established diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Israel. He improved Catholic-Muslim relations, and in 2001 visited a mosque in Damascus, Syria.

The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, a key event in John Paul's ministry, was marked by special celebrations in Rome and elsewhere for

Catholics and other Christians. Relations with the Orthodox Churches improved considerably during his papacy.

His 1979 visit to Poland encouraged the growth of the Solidarity movement there and the collapse of communism in central and Eastern Europe 10 years later.

One of the most well-remembered photos of John Paul II's pontificate was his one-on-one conversation in 1983 with Mehmet Ali Agca, who had attempted to assassinate him two years earlier.

In his 27 years of papal ministry, John Paul II wrote 14 encyclicals and five books, canonized 482 saints and beatified 1,338 people. In the last years of his life, he had Parkinson's disease and was forced to cut back on some of his activities.

Pope Benedict XVI beatified John Paul II in 2011, and Pope Francis canonized him in 2014.

— www.franciscanmedia.org

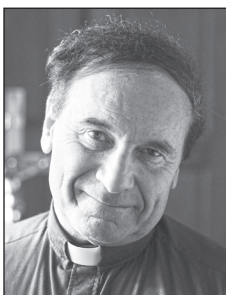
Life of priest challenging, but vocation rewarding

Brendan Foley is a seminarian preparing to be a priest in the Diocese of Syracuse.

A graduate of Scranton University, he surrendered plans to be a physical therapist, and inspired by the example of clergy whose lives witness to the joys of their vocation, Brendan looks forward to sharing in the priesthood.

The vocation and calling of the Catholic priest is to make a connection between the Gospel and the ordinary lives of people struggling to be pleasing to God and being the best version of themselves.

Whether it's in experiences of baptisms, weddings, funerals, counseling, weekend worship or just plain being with the people served, a good priest finds much gladness and satisfaction in living the vocation of being a bit of the presence of Jesus to others.



FATHER JIM

Nov. 1-7 is National Vocation Awareness Week — an annual celebration of the Catholic Church in the United States dedicated to promote vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life through prayer and education, and to renew our prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations.




In our diocese, Bishop Lucia has declared a Year of Vocations starting Nov. 14.

Really, the priest today, though faced with challenges unheard of years ago, tries to get to Heaven by leading others there.

The patron saint of parish priests, St. Jean Vianney, was lost looking for his parish and village assignment. The saint told a kid on the road, "You show me how to get to the town called Ars and I'll show you how to get to Heaven."

We must know and remember that some years ago almost every Catholic family had an uncle who was a priest or an aunt a nun. Well, those days are gone.

It used to be three or four priests served one parish. Now, sometimes one priest must serve three or four parishes. Maybe it's the Lord's way of pointing toward new or cre-

NEW YORK STATE DISCERNMENT RETREAT

**Have you felt the invitation to follow
Jesus Christ as a Catholic priest?**

Come and See!

- ❖ Gather with other young men from across New York State who are considering the call to the priesthood
- ❖ Hear dynamic talks on the priesthood delivered by NY Vocation Directors
- ❖ Meet seminarians and hear their stories
- ❖ Enjoy Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as well as time for silent prayer
- ❖ Have an opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- ❖ Take your spiritual life to the next level

When? January 3rd thru Jan 5th, 2021
Sunday Evening to Tuesday Morning

Where? The Good News Center
10475 Crosby Manor Rd.
Utica, NY 13502
(315) 735-6210

Registration: Please contact Elizabeth Garn at EGarn@syrdio.org or speak with your pastor.

www.vocations-syracuse.org

If you or someone you know might be considering the priesthood, the New York State Discernment Retreat in January at the Good News Center could prove to be very informative.

ative solutions for the future.

What is worth knowing is vocations for the most part flow from the blessed and sacramental marriages and families of our faithful people.

It's rare, and almost impossible, for a person to be "called" to priesthood or consecrated religious life from a situation of couples

living together without blessed marriage. We know the decrease in church vocations has expanded with the increase of marriages not happening.

Much joy and the unfolding of a great life is possible for the one who accepts a vocation to the priesthood. So many priests say they wouldn't change it for the world.

A CONVERSATION WITH ... MARY LOURDES MARTIN

Out of the darkness, her light shines bright

Mary Lourdes Martin wasn't dealt the greatest hand in life. Born premature and blind since birth, Mary has made the most of her 67 years on this Earth. With the love and guidance of her parents early on, and the passion for not letting anything hold her back, Mary has worked hard to now hold the winning hand.

Your entry into this world was very traumatic. Please describe what happened.

I was premature baby — I was in the hospital 2½ months. I was given an overdose of oxygen and it caused blood vessels behind eyes to burst causing me to be blind. My parents, James and Jane Martin, were shocked, but they learned to cope. They were very supportive of me. They named me Mary Lourdes after the Blessed Mother, and dressed me in blue and white for seven years in honor of the Blessed Mother. We visited shrines, but no cure was received.

You grew up the youngest of four children, and despite your blindness, you are a very positive person. How do you do it?

My mother was my first teacher — she taught me how to pray, urged me to develop my skills and not feel sorry for myself and just deal with it. I developed a positive attitude early on, which bolstered my confidence in myself. I love to find ways to solve a problem, especially as it concerns mechanical things or “gadgets.” My dad supported me by modifying the home or creating implements — by making wooden signature guides so I could sign my checks. He created a board with holes for throwing bean bags, modified a checkerboard so I could play checkers, and numerous other things.

What was your childhood like?

When I was about 3 or 4 years old, my mother asked me to take a book from the shelf and she would read it to me. I said, “Mom, why can’t I feel the pictures and the print on the page? It’s blank.” She replied, “That’s because your eyes are broken. You’re blind. If I could give my life savings to correct it I would, but you’re just going to have to deal with it. I don’t want to hear any more talk about it.”

Music is a big part of your life.

I was given a toy piano, and after listening to a song on the record player, I was able to play the tune on my toy piano. My godmother taught me to play the ukulele; I also learned the baritone ukulele. My parents gave me a portable organ for Christmas. Early in my work career, my parents bought me a spinet Hammond organ. My family also had a piano, but I preferred the organ for its variety of functions. I later purchased another organ, and finally a



PHOTO BY THOMAS LOUGHLIN JR.

Music has been a big part of Mary Lourdes Martin's life. "My parents gave me a portable organ for Christmas. Early in my work career, my parents bought me a spinet Hammond organ. My family also had a piano, but I preferred the organ for its variety of functions. I later purchased another organ, and finally a Hammond Aurora Classic organ."

Hammond Aurora Classic organ.

You never let your disability interfere with your education, attending elementary schools in Utica and then the former Utica Catholic Academy. What were those years like?

In sixth grade, I got better at typing. My mother made sure I practiced typing every day, especially during summer months (when other children were out playing). I graduated with honors from elementary school and attended Utica Catholic Academy from 1968-1972. Students were very helpful, guiding me to classes, etc. I joined the Glee Club for short while (Angela Nassar was my teacher), but I dropped out to pay more attention to my coursework. Because of my mother's intervention in the education system, I was able to take the college prep and SAT exams in

Please see MARY LOURDES, Page 7

Mary Lourdes Martin

Age: 67.

Education: John F. Hughes and Roosevelt elementary schools, Utica Catholic Academy, attended D'Youville College in Buffalo, Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Albany Association of the Blind.

Employment: Retired. Worked for 31 years at the state Department of Transportation in Utica.

Interests: Knitting, attending Planet Fitness, latch-hooking, using the talking software on her computer, shopping on QVC, listening to audio books, watching TV, watching movies that use descriptive video for the blind, giving advice to help solve others' problems, caring for her budgie parakeet “Chipper,” lecturing at Mass. **Favorite book:** “The Guardian” by Nicholas Sparks.

Favorite TV show: “Jeopardy,” “Cash Cab.”

Favorite quote: “He has made everything beautiful in its time.” — Ecclesiastes 3:11

He's a doer — and a thinker

Antonio loves law, political science, philosophy

Antonio Ricco is a busy young man attending college, participating in many activities and has hopes of going to law school. He does take time, however, to contemplate on the deeper meanings in life and society.

You're a sophomore at the College of the Holy Cross. Needless to say, it hasn't been a typical year in college. Describe what it's been like for you.

This year for my fall semester I am all online for my four classes. This is very strange after becoming accustomed to both living and learning on campus. As a student, I personally prefer in-person education. The experience of truly being in a classroom and meeting professors in person is unmatched. Although this semester is unorthodox, I still find myself learning more and more every day from my professors.

Why did you pick Holy Cross?

While applying to colleges, my father had suggested that I apply to Holy Cross. Upon getting accepted I began to research the school and its academic programs. From what I saw I was impressed by the school's Political Science department and the academic rigor. But what truly sold me on attending Holy Cross was when I visited the campus for the first time. The architecture of the school was stunning, and the students I met were unlike any other students I had met.

You're majoring in political science and philosophy. Why are you interested in those areas?

From a young age I found myself drawn to history in school. Later in high school, during my free time I began to read works like "The Prince" by Machiavelli and was fully hooked. From then on, all I wanted to learn about was related to politics, whether it be American politics or political theory. My interest in philosophy came to me by accident. Whenever I was relaxing I was often thinking about the question of life, the world and society. In school, I began to read and do research on philosophers ranging from the ancient Greeks to post-modernists. After doing this reading I realized that there was an entire subject of academia dedicated to pondering life and society. And with this realization I fell in love with philosophy.

You hope law school is in your future. Why do you want to become a lawyer and be part of the law field?

As a person I have always considered myself to be litigious in nature. In normal life I have always been interested in debates and discussions. Practicing as a lawyer would allow me to do what I love, along with helping society.

At school, you are a member of the Mediation Team. What's that all about?

The Mediation Team is one of the school's trial teams. Mediation is a form of alternative dispute resolution. Please see ANTONIO, Page 7



Antonio Ricco and his grandmother Phyllis Ricco. "I believe that my faith balances me out as a person," Antonio says. "Whenever I find myself lost or concerned with something, I know that my faith will aid me in finding the right path."

Antonio Ricco

Age: 19.

Family: Father Anthony Ricco, grandfather Anthony Ricco (deceased), grandmother Phyllis Ricco, uncle Ross Ricco, aunt Mary Ricco.

Education: Graduated from New Hartford High School in 2019; attending the College of Holy Cross.

Things you like to do: Listen to podcasts, reading, hiking, lifting weights, playing volleyball with friends, spending time with my family.

Favorite book: "On the Road" by Jack Kerouac.

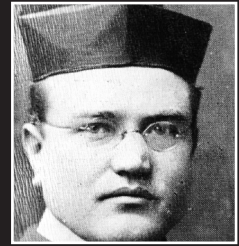
Favorite TV show: "The Twilight Zone."

Favorite movie: "Joker."

Favorite musician or music genre: Miles Davis.

Favorite quote: "An unexamined life is not worth living." — Socrates

Formia establishes school, convent



REV. JOSEPH FOMIA



Mount Carmel School Class of 1921, the last class to graduate when Father Joseph Formia was pastor of Mount Carmel.

This is the third in a series of articles highlighting the history of our parish leading to its 125th anniversary. Previous articles and issues of "More Good News" are available at www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com.

1903-1933

Father Joseph Formia fostered the growth of the parish by establishing a parochial school and convincing Joseph Tomaino, a prominent parishioner to donate a home next to the church for use as a residence for the nuns who taught in the new school.

After 18 years at the helm, Father Formia returned to his native Italy and passed away, befittingly, on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16, 1942.



A.J. VALENTINI

On June 21, 1921, Father John Marchegiani became pastor of our parish. He was responsible for many repairs to the existing buildings and had a corridor from the rectory to the sacristy built. He was not shy about contributing his own manual labor to his many projects.

At the suggestion of Bishop Grimes, who had visited Mount Carmel and noted its well-attended services, not only was the church enlarged by two naves, the basement was lowered and made into an auditorium and the convent was enlarged.

In 1933, Marchegiani left Mount Carmel to become Provincial Superior of the Eastern Province of the Scalbrini Fathers in New York City.

Source: History of St. Mary of Mount Carmel (prepared by the History Committee for the 1996 centennial celebration)

MARY LOURDES

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braille. My diploma was written in braille. I also taught a mini course in how to read braille to 10 fellow high school students. In high school, I won third place in a nationwide contest for an essay on blindness.

After high school, you spent a year at D'Youville College in Buffalo, and then moved to the Albany area to obtain schooling through the Albany Association of the Blind. You also received training at the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. What did you learn at these places?

I received training during high school on how to use a white cane. CABVI also assisted me over the years in learning various functions and helping to orient me to my new apartment. I received rehabilitation, orientation skills, mobility and daily living skills. I also took an office training course of study.

Getting into the work world must have been different for you. What was it like?

In 1976, I interviewed with the New York State Department of Transportation in Albany, and before I completed my office training course I was hired. Before fully assuming those duties, from June 1976 to February 1977, I worked under the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program to gain further office training. I also got additional orientation and practice by working for the state Department of Taxation and Finance in Albany two-and-a-half days per week.

My work coach in Albany looked for job openings and found one for me with the state Department of Transportation in Utica. I worked there for just over 31 years retiring in 2009. At times, I felt left out of the department's social gatherings, but after several years I became more accepted by my co-workers. While on the job with



"Keeping a positive, upbeat attitude is of the utmost importance," Mary Lourdes says. "I strive to be a happy person, living life to the best of my ability. I believe there is a reason for everything, and that you must learn to deal with what you are given."

the DOT — first as a dictating machine operator and then as a keyboard specialist — I learned to use various technology devices to perform my duties. Early on, I used the "OPTICON," which read the printed word to me via vibration, letter by letter. In 1991, I started using computer with "talking" software.

You lector at Mass. Why did you decide to do that and were you nervous the first few times reading from your braille book?

Father John Rose asked me to give a talk on disabilities when he was pastor. I could not say no to a priest, so I went ahead and gave the talk. I was nervous but did fine. Afterward, Sister Betty Giarrusso, with encouragement from my sister Pat Carroll, asked me to try lectoring, and said that the Holy Spirit would help me. I then

contacted Rosemarie Chiffy in response to an ad for lectors to sign up. She set up practice time for me to read. I did well and got on the roster of lectors. I was nervous the first few times but not so much anymore.

You were a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament for years. How did you feel when the parish was closed?

I was sad upon hearing that Blessed Sacrament would be closing. St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament seemed to be a very welcoming parish, so I eventually got used to it. I love the music, enjoy the Mass along with Father Jim's homilies, and find the parishioners to be friendly. Father Rose was instrumental in helping to make the transition from Blessed Sacrament to Mount Carmel easier for me.

What does being Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament parishioner mean to you now?

I am very happy there with the Mass, the music and the people. I especially appreciate Father Jim's jokes and sense of humor. It's amazing to me how he can so easily give his sometimes lengthy homily without, I am told, any notes.

Karen McBride is your good friend who was very instrumental in helping with this article. What are your feelings about her?

Karen came into my life in January 2004 when I was unsure as to how I would get to church. Sister Betty put me in touch with Karen, who lived not far from me. We got acquainted and have been good friends ever since.

What advice would you give to those who are having difficulties in life?

Keeping a positive, upbeat attitude is of the utmost importance. I strive to be a happy person, living life to the best of my ability. I believe there is a reason for everything, and that you must learn to deal with what you are given.

ANTONIO

Continued from Page 5

tive dispute resolution in which the parties to a lawsuit meet with a neutral third-party in an effort to settle the case. The third-party is called a mediator. In this club, it is my job to act as one of three positions — mediator, lawyer or client.

For this club we travel to national and international competitions, where we are rated based on our ability to properly handle legal cases from all three positions. In our last competition, the Mediation Team traveled to Toronto, Canada, where one of my teammates and I placed fifth for Lawyer/Client teams. I prefer Mediation over Mock Trial because Mediation is much less hostile, and is more collaborative.

You also are in the Philosophy Club and the Outdoors Club. What kind of things do you do in those endeavors?

In the Philosophy Club, we meet once a week and discuss newly emerging philosophical questions. The Outdoors Club takes students on trips throughout the year for hiking and other outdoor activities. My favorite activity we

did for this club was traveling to Walden Pond, where Henry David Thoreau reflected on life and simple living.

Has your family always been parishioners of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament?

My family has been going to Mount Carmel for generations. I was baptized and confirmed at Mount Carmel.

What do you like most about our parish? What does it mean to you?

I love the people that attend church and also the church itself. Everyone at Mount Carmel is always friendly and seems to be community-oriented. I also believe that Mount Carmel is one of the most beautiful churches I have ever seen. These two elements make me look forward to attending Mass every Sunday.

Please describe what part faith plays in your life.

I believe that my faith balances me out as a person. Whenever I find myself lost or concerned with something, I know that my faith will aid me in finding the right path. I also believe that my faith guides me in making wiser

and kinder actions.

Many younger people don't usually talk about religion with their friends. Do you, and what do you talk about?

Although many young people do not discuss religion, I find that my friends and I discuss our faith quite often. While at school, my closest friends and I attend Mass together every week. After most Masses, while eating breakfast, we almost always talk about the specific teaching from that Sunday's Mass.

What do you hope the future holds for you?

In the soon future I look forward to graduating from Holy Cross. As you know I would like to attend law school. Following law school I would like to settle down and begin working in the field of corporate law. While working I would like to get married, have children and focus on raising my family.

In five words or fewer, describe Antonio Ricco.

A modern day renaissance man.

Big appetites at food drive-thru

Our parish hosted its first Famous Food Fall Drive-thru the weekend of Oct. 17 and 18. The event was a fundraiser because we were unable to host the annual Italian Festival and golf tournament this year. Served during the Saturday drive-thru were sausage and peppers sandwiches, mushroom stew, meatballs and pasta fagioli. It sold out in 45 minutes. And on Sunday, the all-time favorite pizza frita was available.



Nick Panuccio, left, and Joe Furgol have each been ushers for more than 20 years each. Nick is head usher at the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass and Joe at 10:30.

USHERS

Continued from Page 2

since the Rev. Henry Benin was pastor.

"My best friend, Phil Cornacchia, was head usher and asked me to volunteer; how could you say no," Joe said.

Phil was the longest-serving usher until he died at age 102 a few years ago.

"I have extra duties," Joe said, many of which have changed during the COVID era. "I get to church at 9:45, go to the rectory to open the safe for counters, go over to church to put bulletins in church, get parishioners to take (the gifts) to the altar. After that I make sure all aisles are covered for the collection, bring the collection to the altar, and after communion I bring the collection to rectory to be counted. ... When everyone leaves church I close up."

When the church reopened after the coronavirus lockdown, there were many changes. Parishioners have to wear masks, social distance, sign in at the door and remain in their pews until dismissal. The ushers are the ones who guide them.

Nick said there have been minor problems, but the people have become acclimated.

"In the beginning, people wanted to sit where they always sat, but because of COVID-19, we have to seat people starting from the front of the church going to the back, and if they aren't from the same household, they have to be seated six feet apart," he said. "When I see people not following the protocols, I politely tell them if they do not adhere to our safety measurements they will have to leave."

All the ushers agree that they do what they do because they love the parish.

"It is where I grew up," Barbara Jo said. "My grandmother lived in the building where our rectory is today. She worked in the nursery and school. We lived in West Utica and always came to Mount Carmel for Masses, sacraments, novenas, missions, festivals, etc."

Nick said Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament is "home."

"We are a very warm and welcoming parish, and everyone is like family."

Usher lineup

4:30 P.M. SATURDAY

- Barbara Jo Carino
- Tony Felitto
- Joseph Martin
- Mark Kelly
- Rocco Verdura

8 A.M. SUNDAY

- Nick Panuccio
- Tony Leone
- Norm Peek
- Marie Mastro
- Bob Cimbalo

10:30 A.M. SUNDAY

- Joseph Furgol
- Loraine Bolen
- Scott Bolen
- Jackie Thibault
- Bill Thibault

"We are a very warm and welcoming parish, and everyone is like family."

Nick Panuccio
head usher
at the 8 a.m.
Sunday Mass