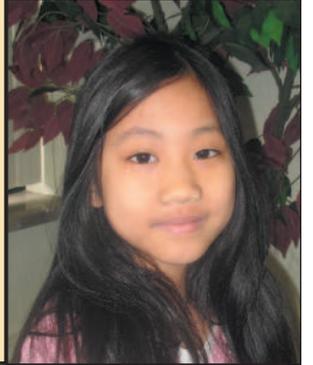




ST. MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL / BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH
SPRING 2014



MORE
**GOOD
NEWS**



MEET THE FIRST COMMUNION CLASS OF 2014 – PAGES 4-5

Life of a priest is 'wondrous, taxing, fulfilling and blessed'

At the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse during Holy Week, the young Deacon Jason Hage assisted our bishop who blessed the chrism oil that will be used June 7 to anoint Jason at his ordination as a brand new priest.

I reflected on what a delightful connection it all was — and on my 40th anniversary coming soon.

Where did the time go? How many great parishes and wonderful persons of all ages have I had the privilege of knowing, befriending and serving in times of happiness, and times of loss or sadness, tragedy and success.

The life of the parish priest is truly wondrous, taxing, fulfilling and blessed. At times there are too many people who seek too many things from the priest, all at the same time. Sometimes, there is no one around when some company would be welcomed.

The words of Pope Francis said in a recent talk about vocations ring true: "A vocation

flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people"

So many good, faithful, big-hearted, even really fun and dedicated Catholic folks of every age are there in our parish communities. I've had the blessing of being in five or six of those "households of faith" over 40 years.

Perhaps to be outgoing, open to new people of every sort, able to make friends with those we call the "unchurched" is a help for a parish priest in these days when we have to meet them where they're at rather than expect them to come to that altar.

But the place of the priest who is more reflective with an aura of prayerfulness, a more stay-at-home and devoted agent of God is equally effective and needed. In whatever way the parish priest does it, each with their own style, what counts is to make evident the qualities that St. Paul encouraged in the new young "priest" Timothy (read the Epistle to Timothy).

Paul said: "I remind you to stir into flame the gift bestowed upon you when my hands were placed upon you. The spirit God has given us is no cowardly spirit, but rather one that makes us strong, loving and wise."

Today, a lively, creative parish priest who is happy in his chosen life can influence people in many ways and make being Catholic a cherished and enjoyable blessing, helping each person whether a kid or a golden-ager become the person Christ invites them to be.

Many years ago a pope was visiting some priests at the Vatican. One said he was a professor in a great university, the other a secretary to a powerful bishop. The third priest said he was only a parish priest with the care of souls.

The pope knelt before the third one and asked for his blessing.

What a life it is, a worthy vocation, a way to help make people and situations a bit better, to live as a member of many families yet not really belonging to any one.

To share many sufferings and penetrate the deepest secrets; to help heal wounds and to be a part of so many celebrations and times of joy.

To take the word of the Gospel, week after week and work it through, much like an artist with a canvas before him, to apply that word and make it helpful for God's people gathered.

This is the life of a priest.



FATHER JIM

Social Committee calendar of events for 2014

Here are some of the major events the Social Committee is planning for this year. If you have any ideas for activities or care to assist by chairing an event, contact Carmelann Scalzo at 797-0253 or Laurie Siniscarco at 797-8238.

Bistro

June 25, Marian Corridor



Chicken barbecue

September



Trip to Yankee Stadium

June 29 vs. Boston Red Sox



Wine country trip

November



Ladies Tea

September



Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 7



Vernon Downs

September



Christmas Gala

Dec. 13 at Danielle's



A CONVERSATION WITH ...

Mike Zasa

Mike Zasa is one of many parishioners who consider Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament their second home. In addition to teaching at Notre Dame Junior-Senior High School, Mike shares his talents in the parish by volunteering to teach courses and conduct programs – trying to give back to the parish that has given him so much. He even cooks a mean pizza fritta.

You're one of many people that grew up at Mount Carmel. What does this parish mean to you?

The parish is like my second family. I've spent as much time helping out in church as at my house.

You attended Mount Carmel School. What do you remember from those years?

I remember the Franciscan Sisters who were very gentle reminders of God's love and gave me a great education (academic as well as religious).

Did you have a favorite nun at the school?

My favorite teacher was Sister Jacqueline. She had a good sense of humor, was very down to earth and gave me a great love for religion with a healthy image of God.

Who is your all-time favorite priest of the parish?

Father Henry Benin because he was a progressive thinker yet very gentle.

You do a lot of volunteer work in the parish, teaching classes, conducting programs and offering your time and talent. What motivates you to do it?

I want to give back to the people of the parish that first nurtured and educated me in the faith.

Is there one person while you were growing up that was the person who helped instill the faith in you?

Mrs. Flora Elacqua. She was my kindergarten teacher as well as one of my Confirmation teachers. She was a gentle, faith-filled woman who modeled faith in action.

I believe you wanted to be a priest. Apparently, the calling wasn't for you. What happened?

I originally wanted to be a Scalabrini missionary. My confirmation was a key moment in



Mike Zasa, left, believes in giving back to the parish that he said has given him so much. That's why he volunteers his time and talent. "I want to give back to the people of the parish that first nurtured and educated me in the faith." At right is his good friend John Reale in the kitchen cooking pizza fritta during last year's festival.

my life. The longer I studied and grew in my faith experiences, I realized that I did not need to go the farthest ends of the Earth to spread the Good News. I did a year of student teaching and realized that was my true calling and have been at Notre Dame for 18 years.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever given?

Take time to minister to yourself or you won't be able to help anyone else.

What's the best piece of advice you could give someone?

Be the best you can be. Give back to others. Be gentle on yourself and others.

Final question: If you were pope, what changes would you make?

I would follow the leadership style of Pope Francis. He tries to find a middle ground. He tries to be pastoral without giving up the call to challenge ourselves to follow gospel mandates.

MIKE ZASA

Age: 44.

Occupation: Teacher at Notre Dame Junior-Senior High School (Grade 10 Morality/Peace and Justice; Grade 12 World Religions and Spirituality; Spanish 2).
Education: Mount Carmel, Proctor and Utica Senior Academy, St. John's University and Catholic Theological Union.

Family: Three brothers, father deceased, mother, three nephews, one niece.

Favorite book: "The Shack."

Favorite movie: "It's a Wonderful Life."

Favorite TV show: "Monk."

Favorite entertainer: Robin Williams.

Things you like to do in your spare time: Short term, games on iPad (freeway solitaire); long term, travel.

"The parish is like my second family. I've spent as much time helping out in church as at my house."



PATRICK BARRES
Age 8

Second grade

Family: Mom Andrea, Dad Francis, sister Faith, brother Jude, three grandmothers and grandfathers, four aunts.

Things I like to do: Play baseball, football, basketball, video games, Monopoly.

If I could ask God one thing ... How do we help feed the hungry?



JAYDEN DIMEO
Age 7

Second grade

Family: Mom Marlo, Brother Jared, Grandmother Rosalie, uncle Lou Parrotta.

Things I like to do: Play football and basketball, iPad and iPod, watch sports on TV and go to Comets games.

If I could ask God one thing ... How is Poppa doing? Is he having fun in heaven?



AUGUSTINO DO
Age 6

Second grade

Family: Maw Do, Khe Meh, Aja La, David Chan, Augustino Do.

Things I like to do: Draw

If I could tell God one thing ... I love you God and please help my family.



EANNA DURSO
Age 8

Second grade

Family: Mom Danielle, Dad Raymond, Grandma Deborah, Grandpa Raymond Sr., aunts, uncles.

Things I like to do: Rock climbing

If I could ask God for one thing ... World peace.



JOSEPH EDDY
Age 7

Second grade

Family: Mom Amy, Dad Steve.

Things I like to do: Watch TV, movies, draw, play with my toys.

If I could ask God one thing ... Why do you like children?



GIULIA FANELLI
Age 8

Second grade

Family: Dad David, Mom Maria, Sister Gianna, Brother David.

Things I like to do: Cheerlead, art, ski, read.

If I could ask God for one thing ... World peace.



ISABELLA GRAZIADEI
Age 8

Second grade

Family: Dad Carlo, Mom Donna, Sister Gabrielle.

Things I like to do: Dance, art, sledding, fishing.

If I could ask God for one thing ... Good health for everybody.



BROOKE GULLA
Age 7

Second grade

Family: Mom Rosanna, sister, aunt, cousin, grandparents.

Things I like to do: Read, go to the movies.

If I could ask God for one thing ... World peace.



ANTHONY KERNAN
Age 8

Second grade

Family: Dad Adam, Mom Kelly, Brother Matthew, Sister Arianna.

Things I like to do: Play sports, Roller Blade, swim, play with my brother and sister.

If I could ask God one thing ... Where did you come from?



GIANNA LOPICCOLO
Age 7

Second grade

Family: Dad Dave, Mom Johanna, Sister Alivia

Things I like to do: Dance, draw, swim.

If I could ask God one thing ... How did you make people?



ANGELO MOSCA
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Dad Joe, Mom Julie, Brother Joey

Things I like to do: Baseball and football.

If I could ask God for one thing ... To all people, happiness and health.



GIULIANNA NOLE
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Dad Robert, Mom Marguerita, Brother Robert III, Sister Gianna.

Things I like to do: Sing, dance, art, spending time with family, eat good food.

If I could ask God for one thing ... Joy and happiness.



GIULIA PARISE
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Mom Jennifer, Dad Gregg, Brother Gregory, Sister Gianna.

Things I like to do: Doing nails with my sister, reading books to my brother and doing gymnastics with friends.

If I could ask God for one thing ... To have my dog Petey back.



AVA POST
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Dad Daniel, Mom Maria, Sister Talia.

Things I like to do: Dance, read, color, draw, swim.

If I could ask God for one thing ... How did you make the Earth?



ANDREW SCALISE
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Dad Vincent, Mom Jennifer, Sister Adrianna.

Things I like to do: Play football and basketball.

If I could ask God for one thing ... Happiness for my whole family.



GABRIEL TAVAREZ
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Mom Raquel, Dad Irving, Sister Samantha.

Things I like to do: Talk.

If I could tell God one thing ... I love you.



ROBBY WILLSON
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Mom Andrea, Dad Rob, Sister Bianca.

Things I like to do: Play sports, watch hockey, eating.

If I could ask God for one thing ... Can you please watch over my loved ones and keep them safe?



MATTHEW WITTE
Age 7
Second grade

Family: Mom Lynda, Dad Donald, Brothers John and Corey, Sister-in-Law Katrina.

Things I like to do: Play with my dad.

If I could ask God for one thing ... Always be happy and healthy with my family.



SHWE ZIN
Age 8
Second grade

Family: Mom Hla Soe, Dad Soe Tun, Brothers Wun Dankawing and Rumon Gying Dankawng.

Things I like to do: Play with my brothers and watch movies.

If I could ask God for one thing ... To be a good student and a good person.

A heavenly challenge



PHOTOS BY A.J. VALENTINI

Serafina Vetrano Gape recently restored some of the murals in the church. “The artwork is truly amazing! It’s like you would see if you went to Italy — no surprise there, since it was done by Italian artisans. But while other churches have beautiful artwork in the altar area, this church has artwork throughout its nave. Everywhere one looks is beautifully painted artwork. Attention to detail runs end to end with no shortcuts anywhere.”

Helping to restore church’s beautiful architectural heritage a labor of love

When a large bubble in one of the canvases attached to the ceiling of the west nave of the church appeared and began to detach itself, it was clear — we needed a restoration.

Though some people think of our ceiling as “frescoed,” it is not. Frescoes are painted directly on damp plaster and are absorbed into the surface, becoming part of the structure. They only come down when the whole ceiling or wall collapses.

The medallions and their accompanying



A.J. VALENTINI

“graffiti” in the cross-vaulting of the west and east naves of our church last had a restoration in 1971. Over time with expansion and contraction, humidity and water damage, the glue that held the artwork in place had lost its adhesion and plaster to which it was attached had deteriorated.

The person who had done that last restoration was Agostino Vetrano. With a degree from the University of Palermo and years of experience with his father and brothers in Italy, he had come to this country in 1978. He worked on many churches and even did portraits of several pastors.

His daughter Serafina, who has studied fine arts and frequented many professional workshops all over the country, joined him

in his work and learned on-the-job techniques of restoration. Agostino worked until his death in 1978 and Serafina took over the family business. It obviously was a no-brainer as to whom Father Jim Cesta needed to call for this latest challenge.

I had the chance to sit down with Serafina and her husband, Bill Gape, while they were putting the finishing touches on one of the sections of the east nave. She graciously allowed me to observe and ask several questions about her work.

She told me that this isn’t the first time she has worked at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament; in fact she showed me several areas that have come under her hand, includ-

Please see RESTORATION, Page 7

“I love to paint, so that part is always a joy to do. Sanding surfaces never appealed to me, but the paint job is only as good as the surface it’s painted on.”

Serafina Vetrano Gape



RESTORATION

Continued from Page 6

ing the trompe l’oeil and angel medallions under the choir loft. Trompe l’oeil is a technique that fools the eye into thinking a flat surface has three dimensional molding or decoration.

Out of curiosity, I asked Serafina in what other mediums she has worked. She says for her personal enjoyment she has been creating with pastels. Professionally, she has restored and painted statues, designed stencils (using stained glass motifs from particular churches), and done gold-leafing, glazing, wood-graining and created faux marble surfaces.

Asked what was involved in our restoration, she described the process.

“The canvases had to be removed without causing more damage,” she said. “If the ceiling behind it had plaster damage that had to be addressed with new plaster. Both ceiling and existing canvas has to be cleaned of old plaster and adhesive, along with the mold which was the result of water damage.

“Once the walls and canvas are adequately prepared, the canvas is then reattached back in place, and any artwork that is damaged must be repaired. I use oil paints (as did the original artist), so this means that there has to be a waiting period before portrait varnish can be applied. So scaffolding had to be moved back and forth several times.”

Asked what parts of the process she likes and which are not her favorite, she replied, “I love to paint, so that part is always a joy to do. Sanding surfaces never appealed to me, but the paint job is only as good as the surface it’s painted on.”

Clearly, she trusts husband Bill’s hand

because he was doing some of that plaster reparation on the niche of Our Lady over the main altar on the day I was there.

Serafina said restoration jobs can take various amounts of time. Ours took approximately five weeks.

A few years back she worked on the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Syracuse and had six others working with her. That job lasted five months. Another job in Passaic, N.J., took a summer. She and Bill would work there all week long and come home on weekends.

In comparison to other churches, Serafina commented on Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament saying, “The artwork is truly amazing! It’s like you would see if you went to Italy — no surprise there, since it was done by Italian artisans. But while other churches have beautiful artwork in the altar area, this church has artwork throughout its nave. Everywhere one looks is beautifully painted artwork. Attention to detail runs end to end with no shortcuts anywhere.”

Serafina and Bill have enjoyed working at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament.

“It’s been wonderful! Everyone has been warm and friendly,” she said. “All the personnel have been so helpful; their love and dedication shows. Mass participants stop by and talk with us, one even brought candy for Valentine’s Day. I would really like to thank everyone for making us feel like part of the community.”

And we would like to thank the Vetranos and Gapes for all the care they have given to their work here. The painting of the baptism of Christ where the grand piano is now, and where the baptismal font used to be, is an original by Agostino Vetrano.



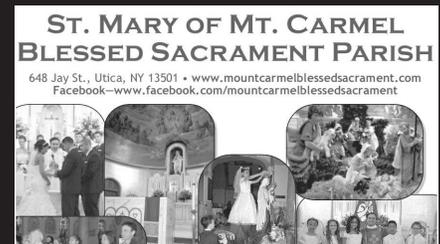
Check out our parish website

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 Faith Formation website and Facebook page, parish Facebook page, Daily Readings, Catholic Sun
- > Mass schedules
- > Parish news
- > Ministries
- > “More Good News” magazine
- > Videos



‘Always be true to yourself’

Taylor Gray ready to take lessons she’s learned, her trust in God into the future

At the tender age of 17, Taylor Gray has squeezed a lot out of life. The high school senior has enjoyed and learned life lessons from dancing, has shared and learned more about her faith by traveling to Notre Dame University and she is ready for the future as she heads off to college later this year.

You’ve been a dancer for a number of years. What are the lessons you learned from that discipline?

With hard work and dedication you can excel in just about anything.

You’re finishing your high school years. What has that been like?

You begin to realize you are leaving many friends and family shortly. It’s bittersweet in many ways, but I am ready to move on.

You’ve been accepted at SUNY Canton and will be leaving home. Are you excited, scared, both?

I am more excited than scared. I am looking forward to making new friends and living in a college setting.

What lessons have you learned from your parents that will carry on when you are away from home?

Always be true to yourself and make sure you find a little humor in every day.

You plan to study funeral adminis-

tration. How did you become interested in that?

During a Health Careers class, I was exposed to a gross anatomy lab on a field trip to Upstate Medical Center. It was then that I became interested in autopsies and began exploring careers in the mortuary science career field. I hope that exploring this in college leads me into the medical examiner or forensic pathology fields.

Those of us who have been parishioners for a number of years feel a close connection to our parish. At your young age, do you feel the same?

Absolutely. Especially when it came to the support I have been given from all our parishioners on my fundraising and trip to Notre Dame Vision.

What was that like and what did you learn from it?

Notre Dame University has been a place where I’ve connected with so many people that are proud of their faith. The speakers really helped me to understand that during high school, a lot of labels can be given to you. With the support of God, teens can break out of these with more self-confidence. Your spiritual community and true friends will always be there for

you. I also find that when I am in Mass, I have a deeper understanding of the importance of my personal relationship with God.

How would you describe that relationship?

Attending Notre Dame Vision made me realize how to reflect and absorb so much more of my relationship with God. I have found a way to pray to him on a more personal level which I didn’t understand before.

Is it difficult being a teenager and following the teachings of the church?

Not really, when you have true faith in God.

What advice would you give your friends about the importance of faith?

Don’t let anyone change your outlook on faith. Do not follow peer pressure, but look for positive people to surround you with good values and faith will always be there.

What do you hope the future holds for Taylor Gray?

First, I hope to do well in college. I know that no matter what, my friends in my parish will always support me, no matter what the future brings for me.

TAYLOR GRAY

Age: 17
School: Thomas R. Proctor High School.
Grade: Senior.
Family: Father Jim, mother Christine, brother Steve, 19.

Favorite movie: “Frozen.”

Favorite TV shows: “Walking Dead,” “Pretty Little Liars.”

Favorite music artist: Luke Bryan.

Things you like to do in your spare time: Dancing, hanging with friends.