

MORE

GOOD NEWS

ST. MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL / BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH - SPRING 2016

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Meet the First Communion Class of 2016

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Loved ones still alive in new way

Unlike the Christmas celebration, the Easter season continues and echoes its message "Christ is Risen" for many days and several weeks.

The church's faithful with glad hearts celebrate the Lord of Easter and our personal hope for resurrection all the way to Pentecost.

How do we experience in a real way something of that Risen Life? Especially, how do we touch the lives of loved ones, passed beyond our sight but present to us in blessed and beautiful ways?

Really, it was explained at the resurrection of Jesus.

On that morning, Mary of Magdala went to the tomb to anoint the body. She encountered at the empty tomb an angel-like figure who said, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead?"

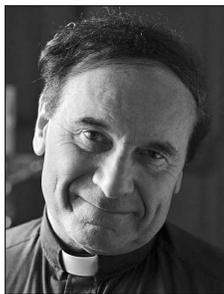
The angel is telling us that cemeteries are not the place to find those who have passed away, but they now are alive in a new way. Good though it is to visit and honor the places where mortal bodies are laid to rest, angels are there to send us back into life.

Part of the Risen Life means we will meet the ones we no longer can touch when we put ourselves in situations where their souls, their lives once flourished. Our loved ones live where they always have lived and it is there that we find them.

Simply put, we find our beloved dead by entering into life as fully as we are able. We encounter them and connect with them in the areas of life they excelled at that they enjoyed, they loved.

This communion of saints, the belief that the living who struggle, the dead alive in God's presence and those helped by our prayers, being purged and prepared for glory, this is an ancient and venerable belief of the church. So if a loving woman, mother of a family and friend to others, was selfless and generous to a fault during her life, when those who cherished her also are selfless and generous, then they touch her life again, she's present and "risen" to them after her passing.

The Eastertime message is that we can meet those loved ones again at our tables, in our places of play and work, in decisions that are great or small in so many daily ways.



FATHER JIM



Wearing the "Committee of Excessive Shrubbery Transport Association (CESTA)" T-shirts are, back row, from left: John Reale, Gordon Schindler, Nick Elacqua, Matt Elacqua, David Elacqua, Mike Elacqua and Beth Elacqua. Front row: Russell Sortino, Katherine Elacqua, Re Chiffy, Serafina Sortino and Mike Zasa.

Easter flower crew blossoms; T-shirt symbolizes relationship

Each year, a group of dedicated volunteers decorates the altar for Easter. Some have been doing it for years.

More recently, many of the parish's young people have been helping.

This year, a T-shirt was created to signify that relationship. The front of the shirt reads, "Join the Cestivities," in honor of Father Cesta, which has his photo on the shirt. In the flowers are pictures of longtime volunteers John Reale, Gordon Schindler, Mike Zasa and Re Chiffy. The back reads, "Committee of Excessive Shrubbery Transport Association," aka CESTA.

The idea blossomed after Good Friday services in 2015. Anne Elacqua, director of the junior-senior high school Faith Formation program, said the kids were carrying flowers from the gym to decorate the church and they were joking about making shirts saying they were Cesta's slaves.

"They joked about coming up with a name for themselves and they came up with CESTA (Committee of Excessive Shrubbery Transport Association), and the idea of putting Father Cesta in the middle of the flower pot with John, Mike, Rosemary and Gordon on the other flowers as they are the main people who are in charge of decorating the church," Anne said. "They joked that next year it would be great to all have shirts, and when they carried over the first load of flowers from the gym they would all wear their T-shirts as a team.

And they did.

After Good Friday services March 25, the kids put them on and walked over carrying the



Join the Cestivities!

flowers.

"John, Mike, Gordon and Rosemary loved them," Anne said. "We ordered them shirts, too, and they put them on. Father Cesta loved it, too."

The CESTA youth crew is composed of several Elacquas: Katherine, Matthew, Michael, Nick, David and Beth. Serafina Sortino, who is one of the dancers during Holy Week services, and her brother Russell also joined in,

"They all were so creative in figuring it out," Anne said. "They love Holy Week and absolutely think it's the best time of the year."

On Sunday, May 1, 14 children will receive their First Holy Communion at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament. It's a special time for family, friends and parishioners as these children welcome Jesus into their hearts and souls for the first time as the body and blood of Christ.



JULIANA ALLEN
 Age: 7
 Dad: Justin
 Mom: Tina
 Sister: Layla
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is your favorite song?



ALEXANDRA DONLON
 Age: 7
 Dad: Edward
 Mom: Jaime
 Sister: Mia
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? How do you keep people safe?



ALEXA GALIMO
 Age: 8
 Dad: Sean
 Mom: Tracy
 Brother: Andrew
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What color is your favorite?



SYDNEY HAYES
 Age: 7
 Mom: Sharon
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is heaven like?



MATTHEW KERNAN
 Age: 8
 Dad: Adam
 Mom: Kelly
 Brother: Anthony
 Sister: Arianna
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? How long were you on Earth?



SEBASTIAN KNOOP
 Age: 8
 Dad: Shannan
 Mom: Tennille
 Brothers: Lennon and Hudson
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? To bless my family.



MYOSUTMAI LAHEM
 Age: 7
 Father: Normai Lahtem
 Mother: Myo Myo Win
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What's your favorite thing?



PAIGE LaPLANTE
 Age: 8
 Dad: Chad
 Mom: Lisa
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? For my family to be healthy and happy.



NOBEL MOON
 Age: 7
 Father: Ta Pi
 Mother: Pa Sor Paw
 Sisters: Hser Nay Moo & Lydia Moo
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? To protect my family.



EMILY PAW
 Age: 7
 Father: Saw Se Moe
 Mother: Eh Thi Paw
 Sisters: Rosy Tah, Saw Reh Oo, Kardio KeeDoh
 Brother: Prie Bee Ya
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is your favorite pet?



HE NAY SOE
 Age: 8
 Father: Oo Then Soe
 Mother: Bet Bet
 Sisters: Paw Lar Wah, Hey Nay Blu Doh
 Brothers: Hae Nay Hso and Hay Ye Doh
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? To watch over my family.



JOSEPH SPECIALE
 Age: 8
 Father: Joe
 Mother: Kristen
 Brother: Christopher
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Can you see my dog Sabrina in heaven?



GABRIELLA TRUNFIO
 Age: 8
 Dad: Tony
 Mom: Sarah
 Sister: Abigail
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What year did you die in?



NATALIA VIOLA
 Age: 7
 Dad: Zack
 Mom: Ona
 Brother: Santino
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is your favorite color?

A CONVERSATION WITH ... MARY SINISCARCO



The Siniscarco family, from left: Fallon, 13; Mary; Shaelin, 16; husband John; and John, 18. Mary and her husband have been married for 21 years.

A true-to-life Bronx tale

Mary Siniscarco didn't grow up in Central New York like many of the parishioners of St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament. She's originally from the Bronx, but yet she calls the area her home and feels like she was "born and raised" in the parish. One unusual note, however, though she's from the Bronx, her favorite baseball team might surprise you.

Many of our parishioners are home grown, native to the area. You grew up in the Bronx. What was that like?

I grew up in the north Bronx, right on the border of Yonkers. I grew up in Woodlawn, which was predominantly comprised of Irish Immigrants. My parents were both born in Ireland, so I am first generation Irish. I have a brother and a sister, and we are all one year apart, so we had similar social circles growing up. Back then, we lived in a close-knit neighborhood where we spent lots of time with our friends and families. I can recall having the best time at our annual block parties. I had a wonderful childhood.

The Bronx can be stereotyped as a tough place. Was it like that for you and your family?

There are so many different neighborhoods within the Bronx; some are pretty tough and others, not so much. My particular neighborhood was safe and not the stereotypical depiction of the Bronx. To this day, you can still walk through the neighborhood and feel fairly safe.

Since you grew up in New York City, were you able to take in the amenities of the Big Apple?

There really is a difference between growing up right in the heart of New York City and growing up in one of the boroughs. I really did not spend a lot of time in the heart of the Big Apple, per se. I spent more time in the surrounding areas of the Bronx, such as Riverdale and Bainbridge. However, I can recall some memorable times in Central Park, Times Square, Greenwich Village and Washington Square Park.

Silly question: Why don't you have a Bronx accent?

I actually do! Some words are a bit more Bronx-prominent than others, such as "coffee, water, talk" — I have the stereotypical Bronx

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MARY SINISCARCO

Age: 48.

Occupation: Occupational therapist for more than 25 years. Assistant professor of health studies at Utica College and also the chairwoman of the health studies program.

Education: Bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from Utica College, master's degree in health education from SUNY Cortland.

Family: Married to husband John for 21 years; son John, 18; daughters Shaelin, 16, and Fallon, 13.

Things you like to do in your spare time: We love to watch our children's sporting events for soccer and track.

Favorite book: "Jesus Calling" by Sarah Young.

Favorite movies: "Shawshank Redemption," "Forrest Gump."

Favorite TV show: "House of Cards."

Favorite musician or musical genre: I love all genres of music, but I really enjoy classic rock of the '80s and '90s.

Favorite quote: "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

The music speaks to Michael

Singing or acting, youngest of 5 loves performing arts

Michael Morrissey grew up in a crowded home. He is the youngest of five children, but he's been able to make his own mark at age 16. Though his family is "really big on sports," he's found his own path. He loves acting, playing a musical instrument and singing, including in the church choir.

You grew up with one brother and three sisters. What's it like being the youngest in a family of seven?

Oh goodness, what a question. I mean it has its ups and downs. Well for one thing, I love when my mother sticks up for me in every situation and then my siblings get annoyed at me even more. It's also nice because I love to see myself getting older and more mature and becoming more like my siblings; however, it's very sad watching my siblings grow up and leave while starting their lives.

It's been my experience that the oldest child tends to get disciplined more and for each sibling after that, parents are a bit more lenient. Do you think you've had it easier than the rest of your siblings and maybe got away with more?

Absolutely not. I think my parents learned from their past. The older siblings and the younger ones grew up in a slightly different time, and it is a different time than it was before. The world is a lot scarier than it was. So, I think my parents are trying to figure out this new generation of kids.

You like to play tennis. How did you get involved with that and do you like to play competitively or do you just like to play for fun.

When I was younger, I took tennis lessons up on the Parkway. I play for school now and, of course, I would like to win, but I learned that I can't win them all. I play to have a good time.

You sing, including in the parish choir, play the violin, act and are vice president of the Drama Club at Proctor. What do you like about acting and singing?

I really can't tell you. I wasn't really influenced, it just sort of happened. My family was always really big on sports, but I just get this thrill when I sing or act. Maybe it's the fact that I get the freedom to portray a character in any way that I would like.

How did you get started playing the violin? What do you like most about playing?

I started out playing the saxophone. But



Michael Morrissey, second from left, and his family at Breakfast with Santa in December.

MICHAEL LEONARD MORRISSEY

Age: 16.

School: Thomas R. Proctor High School.

Grade: 10th.

Family: Parents Patrick and Rosemary Morrissey. Brother Patrick and his girlfriend. Sisters Jenae, Danielle and Maria. Nephew Patrick Edward Morrissey III.

Things you like to do in your spare time: Sing, act and play tennis.

Favorite movie: I love so many I don't think I have a favorite. However, I do like musicals a lot.

Favorite TV show: I like to watch "Face Off" on Syfy.

Favorite musical artist or genre: I really like to listen to show tunes, but I can listen to anything.

Favorite quote: "Don't dwell on the past; focus on the future."

toward the end of fourth grade, I didn't really like playing it that much. So, I went to the orchestra teacher and asked him if I can join orchestra and play the violin. The next year I played in the orchestra and I just loved it. I love when the whole orchestra comes together to play a song. I just love to hear all of the different instruments and their parts.

You also like singing in the choir. Why?

It's just something I love to do. I may not be the best singer, but it's just something I love to do. Again, I just really like to hear all of the voice parts and their harmonies. Something about it just gives me a thrill.

You've been a parishioner of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament since you were born. What does this parish mean to you?

This church is a major place in my life. Church won't be the same if it wasn't in Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament.

You volunteer a lot in the parish, including being an altar server, working at the festival and even at Faith Formation events. Why do you do it and what do you get out of it?

When I work the festival and volunteer at Faith Formation events, it doesn't feel like I'm volunteering. I have a lot of fun.

What would you tell young people if they were interested in coming to our parish?

I actually do tell people to come with me to church. I know this isn't what the church is about, but I tell them that the music portion of the church is just amazing and breath taking. I feel that the music makes every Mass. I think that we have the best music around.

What do you hope the future holds for you?

I hope that I get to live my life to the fullest. I don't want to have any regrets. I'm going to take any opportunity that I get. I don't want to think about what could have been.

On each day of the year, holy saints remembered

Many of us carry through life at least one name other than that from our paternal ancestry or, in the case of many women (although this is changing) from a spouse.

Often, our “first names” are called our “Christian names,” as they have been handed to us with the attributes of a certain saint or holy person in mind. Yes, it’s true that some of us carry the names of immediate relatives, but many of those names, too, can be traced to a Christian origin.

In many Christian countries people celebrate their “name days” (in Italian “onomastico”). Each day of the Christian calendar is dedicated to a holy person’s memory. In our country people still universally celebrate St. Valentine on

Feb. 14 and St. Patrick on March 17. Italian Americans celebrate St. Joseph’s Day March 19 as well.



A.J. VALENTINI

If we take a look at any month of the year, we can find one or several holy persons whose memory is celebrated on each particular day.

Let’s take a look at some days in May, which in totality is dedicated to the devotion of the Blessed Virgin but whose individual days celebrate the memory of a myriad of saints and holy people.

May 3: St. James, called James the Less to distinguish him from the other apostle James, brother of John, also was a close relative to Jesus. He wrote the first Catholic Epistle and was the first bishop of Jerusalem. St. Paul called James a “pillar of the Church” and consulted him on the Gospel. He is patron of hat makers.

May 4: St. Robert Lawrence is one of 40 martyrs of England and Wales who suffered after Henry VIII broke with the Church of Rome. He refused to sign an oath of supremacy and was tortured and executed.

May 5: St. Angelo was born of Jewish parents who converted to Catholicism. He was a Carmelite who went to Sicily as a missionary. In Palermo alone he was able to baptize more than 200 Jews. Though his message was welcomed by many Sicilians, he was killed by a band of known ruffians. Dying, he prayed for the Sicilian people and his assassins.

May 10: St. John of Avila studied law in Salamanca and later left the university to become a hermit. After going to Alcala he was ordained and became famous for his fiery ora-



There are many saints who are honored at St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament. Many of the statues that represent the saints are found in several areas of the church. There are others who are remembered in the Hall of Saints in the vestibule leading into the sacristy from the Jay Street entrance to the church.

tory against the evil of his times. Briefly imprisoned by the Inquisition, his popularity grew. He was the spiritual adviser to St. Teresa, St. Francis Borgia, St. John of the Cross and St. Peter of Alcantra. He is patron of Spain.

May 14: St. Maria Dominic Mazzarello was the co-foundress of the Daughters of Mary Auxiliatrix and collaborator of St. John Bosco. When Bosco received approval of Pope Pius IX, she became the first superior general of the Salesian Sisters. By 1900 she had helped found 800 foundations.

May 18: St. Eric was the king of Sweden. He codified the laws of his land and fought the pagan Finns. He convinced English Bishop Henry of Uppsala to evangelize the Finns. Eric

was killed by Swedish nobles under the influence of the king of Denmark. Though never officially canonized, he is considered the patron of Sweden.

May 22: As a little girl, **St. Rita** wanted to enter a convent but was forced into an arranged marriage at 12 years old. Her husband was abusive and part of a violent feud between rival families that went on for years. Rita was able to tame her husband somewhat, but he was killed by a rival. After his death and that of two sons, she again tried to enter a convent but was turned away because of the history of her deceased husband. Eventually, after a plague

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REMEMBERING

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killed some of the most violent perpetrators of the feud, she was able to partake in religious life. As a member of the order she performed her duties admirably and received a spontaneous wound on her head like that inflicted by Christ's crown of thorns. Bedridden from tuberculosis, she requested a rose from her old family garden, and though it was January, one was found there. After her death, her body never deteriorated and was placed in a shrine in Cascia. She is considered the patroness of impossible cases, difficult marriages and parenthood.

May 23: St. Julia was born in Africa to noble parents. When her people were conquered she was sold as a slave to a pagan merchant. While traveling with her master to France, they were hosted in a non-Christian land. The governor of that place wanted Julia to partake in a pagan festival. She refused. The governor offered to buy her, but her master valued her more than all the possessions of that man. While the master was sleeping, the governor had Julia brought before him and tried to force her to participate in his rituals. Because she once again refused him, she was struck on the face, had her hair torn out of her head and hung on a cross until she died.

May 24: St. Jessica's name is a derivative of Joanna. She was the wife of the steward of King Herod Antipas. She was one of the women who helped Jesus and the apostles. She also was one of the three women who discovered the vacant tomb of Jesus on Easter morning.

May 30: The patroness of France, **St. Joan of Arc** also is the patroness of soldiers. As a child she believed she heard the voices of St. Michael, St. Catherine and St. Margaret. At the time, her country was in conflict with England. With obstinate determination, she convinced the French army, and later her king, of her purpose to help drive the foreigners out of France. Clothed in borrowed armor and with a borrowed horse, and despite the doubts of the military and crown, she helped in driving the English from Orleans (thus her title the "Maid of Orleans"). With this victory she turned the conflict from a political invasion to one of religious import. After several more battles, Joan was captured and tried in a trumped-up trial. Her most famous exchange with her accusers astounded the court. They asked her if she knew she was in God's grace. If she answered yes, she would be tried for heresy, as no person could be sure to be in the state of grace. If she answered no, she would be confessing her guilt. She famously answered, "If I am not, may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me." She was denied protections as a woman and eventually found to be a heretic and witch. She was burned at the stake in 1431.



Celebrating a century of life and service

Parishioner and usher Phil Cornacchia celebrated his 100th birthday Feb. 10, 2016. After the 10:30 Mass on Sunday, Feb. 7, the parish honored him with a 100th birthday cake in the Salerno Room. Three days later, more than 150 people gathered at Daniele's at Valley View to pay tribute to Phil. To what does he attribute his long life? "The main thing is I worked hard all my life. I kept busy all the time. I still do."

MARY SINISCARCO

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accent when saying those words. When I talk to my family and friends from downstate, the accent totally comes right back!

You gotta be a Yankees fan, right?

I am probably not going to be too popular with this response, but, no, I am not a Yankees fan. My family and I have vacationed in New Hampshire every summer for the last 16 years, so I have been inundated with the Boston Red Sox. So, if I had to pick a baseball team, it would be the Boston Red Sox — a pretty taboo choice for a girl from the Bronx.

How did you end up in the Utica area?

I attended Utica College for four years, and while attending Utica College, I met my husband, John, who was born and raised in East Utica. After graduating from Utica College, I actually returned back home to work. That is where I was offered my first job, the job of my dreams. We long-distanced dated for over two years and then I decided that moving to Upstate New York was where I wanted to be all along. Despite being born and raised in the Bronx, I consider myself an Upstate New Yorker and absolutely love living here. I wouldn't trade it for the world.

You've been an occupational therapist for more than 25 years. How did you get interested in that career and what do you get out of it?

I always wanted to be in a helping profession within the medical field. My aunt was actually the one who mentioned occupational therapy to me. I did not know what it was at the time, but I did some research on the field and absolutely fell in love with it. It is so multifaceted and the opportunities are endless.

You also are an assistant professor of health studies at Utica College and chairwoman of the health studies program. How did you end up becoming an instructor?

I was an adjunct instructor at Utica College for over 10 years, teaching a course here and there, but I always managed to keep my hands in academia while maintaining a full-time job as an occupational therapist and raising my

family. I have been employed at Utica College for the last seven years.

Like many of us, it seems Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament is your second home. How did you end up becoming a parishioner?

As mentioned earlier, my husband was born and raised in East Utica and he attended St. Mary of Mount Carmel grammar school. He was a parishioner of Mount Carmel his entire life. As soon as I stepped into St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church, I fell in love with it, too. We were married at St. Mary of Mount Carmel and all three of our children were baptized and received their Holy Communion and confirmation at St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament. Our youngest daughter will be making her confirmation in a few more years.

What does this parish mean to you?

This parish represents tradition and family, a family that is always welcoming with open arms. I have been part of the parish for 20 years, but I feel like I was born and raised in this parish. It has always felt like home.

You also help out teaching the children in our Faith Formation program. What do you get out of that and what do you hope the kids learn from you?

I love teaching the little ones. They are so filled with the Holy Spirit. It is amazing to witness. They are very responsive and are proud of their faith. They have actually taught me so much about my own faith as well. I try to reinforce that it is so important to make a difference in the world and to the lives of others. I reinforce that they can make a difference, no matter their age.

As your children get older, what is the one thing you hope they've learned from you?

I hope that they have learned that they have gifts that have been bestowed on them through God and that if they follow God's will, they will find their destined path. I hope they realize that the No. 1 priority in life is God and family, and that both need to be nurtured in order to thrive.



Holy Week: Remembrance, celebration of joy



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