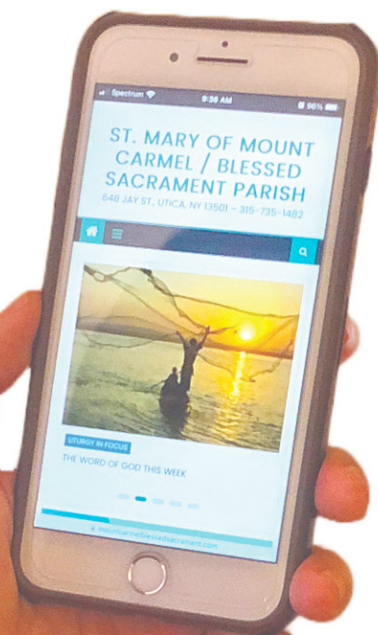


MORE GOOD VIEWS

**Reaching
the faithful
in the 21st
century**

Page 3



**Meet the First
Communion
Class of 2023**

Pages 4-5

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

We all are 'Body of Christ'; let's share it with children

Spring season, First Holy Communion and blessed weddings all add to keeping the Easter message and melody going beautifully.

This issue of "More Good News" highlights the wonderful children celebrating their first Eucharist.

For those of us who are so privileged and honored to partake of the Blessed Sacrament so often, the Easter season affords the opportunity to renew our treasuring of this sacrament so central to our faith.

Woven through the practice of our Catholic faith always has been and always will be our belief and conviction the Christ's real presence is held within the blessed bread and consecrated wine. We take the Lord at His word — "This is my body ... this is my blood."

To receive Holy Communion is to enter into a real encounter with the Lord, crucified and risen.

These children who are so happy about their First Communion hopefully will, as time goes by, have a hunger and desire for many more encounters with Jesus in the sacrament we cherish.

So important is the example of their good parents in these first months and years after their children's "first" Holy Communion — the faith is caught more than taught, person to person, parent to child.

A very beautiful and significant part of the Eucharist is that this Blessed Sacrament makes



FATHER JIM CESTA

of all of us a "body of Christ."

When we hear the phrase "the Body of Christ" and take the Eucharist and respond "Amen," we are affirming that it is the Lord's real presence and also that we are part of the church, which is Christ's Body, all of us assembled together.

It is truly sad and unfortunate if a child's First Communion ends up being the last communion for a long time, when someone or family is not present with the assembly at Mass. We then are not quite the best body of Christ that we should be.

Maybe a good and easy way to describe the wonderful gift of the Eucharist is to say when the real presence of Christ is celebrated with those who really are present, the miracle happens and the blessings blossom like the spring growth all around us.

CELEBRATING THE SAINTS

St. Joseph the Worker

Feast Day May 1

To foster deep devotion to St. Joseph among Catholics, and in response to the "May Day" celebrations for workers sponsored by Communists, Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St. Joseph the Worker in 1955.

This feast extends the long relationship between Joseph and the cause of workers in Catholic faith and devotion. Beginning in the Book of Genesis, the dignity of human work has long been celebrated as a participation in the creative work of God.

By work, humankind fulfills the command found in Genesis to care for the Earth (Gn 2:15) and to be productive in their labors. St. Joseph, the carpenter and foster father of Jesus, is but one example of the holiness of human labor.

Jesus, too, was a carpenter. He learned the trade from St. Joseph and spent his early adult years working side by side in Joseph's carpentry shop before leaving to pursue his ministry as preacher and healer.

In his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, St. Pope John Paul II stated: "The Church considers it her task always to call attention to the digni-



ty and rights of those who work, to condemn situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated, and to help to guide (social) changes so as to ensure authentic progress by man and society."

St. Joseph is held up as a model of such work. Pius XII emphasized this when he said, "The spirit flows to you and to all men from the heart of the God-man, Savior of the world, but certainly, no worker was ever more completely and profoundly penetrated by it than the foster father of Jesus, who lived with Him in closest intimacy and community of family life and work."

— Source: www.franciscanmedia.org

PARISH WEBSITE

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



St. Mary of Mount Carmel Blessed Sacrament Parish

www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com and www.facebook.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament

ABOUT THE PARISH

Address: 648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501

Telephone: 315-735-1482; Fax: 315-735-8806

Office hours: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday

Closed on Friday and national holidays

Faith Formation and Sacraments Center: 315-724-3950

Email: stmaryuta@syndio.org

Hearing impaired: Listening devices available in the sacristy

MASS SCHEDULES

Weekend

Saturday: 4:30 p.m. (livestream on parish YouTube channel)

Sunday: 8 and 10:30 a.m.

Weekday

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8:30 a.m.

Rosary for the unborn and Divine Mercy Chaplet: Thursday after Mass

Holy Days

Consult the bulletin and website

RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 3:45 p.m.

MARRIAGE

Couples must make arrangements six months in advance.

BAPTISM

Call the parish office to arrange. Parents must attend a preparation class prior to the baptism of their child.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Adults or children, 7 or older who have never been baptized or confirmed or received the Eucharist, are invited to call the parish office for information about this process.

NEW PARISHIONERS

Welcome to our parish family. We invite you to become an active participant of our parish community. Please be sure to register by calling the parish office.

PARISH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Jim Cesta

In Residence: Rev. Luis Olguin

Trustees: Rocco Arrisi Sr. and Bill Tibbault

Parish Office Manager: Terri Piazza-Panuccio

Faith Formation & R.C.I. Terri Piazza-Panuccio

Faith Formation 7-10: Anne Carbone-Elacqua

Music Director: Peter Elacqua

Website Manager, Bulletin Editor: Fran Perritano



... and more

Scan the QR code below to get the mobile version of the website and save it to your home screen. Here's some of what you'll find:

- Wedding Planning Guide.
- Funeral Service Planning Guide.
- Weekly prayers, reflections, photos, videos and more to enrich your faith.
- Photo galleries
- Mass schedules



COVER STORY

Spreading the word in a high-tech society

Parishes utilize modern tools to reach congregations

By FRAN PERRITANO

When Jesus and his apostles roamed the Middle East during His three years of ministry, there were very few ways to spread the Word of God. It basically was Jesus and his disciples walking from town to town, preaching the Good News and attracting converts and followers.

After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, letters were written to groups of people such as the Hebrews, Corinthians and Thessalonians.

Fast forward to today. In the modern age, technological tools now aid in spreading the faith — apps, websites, Facebook, Twitter (even the pope has an account), Instagram, livestream Masses, computers, tablets, cell-phones, email — the list goes on and on.

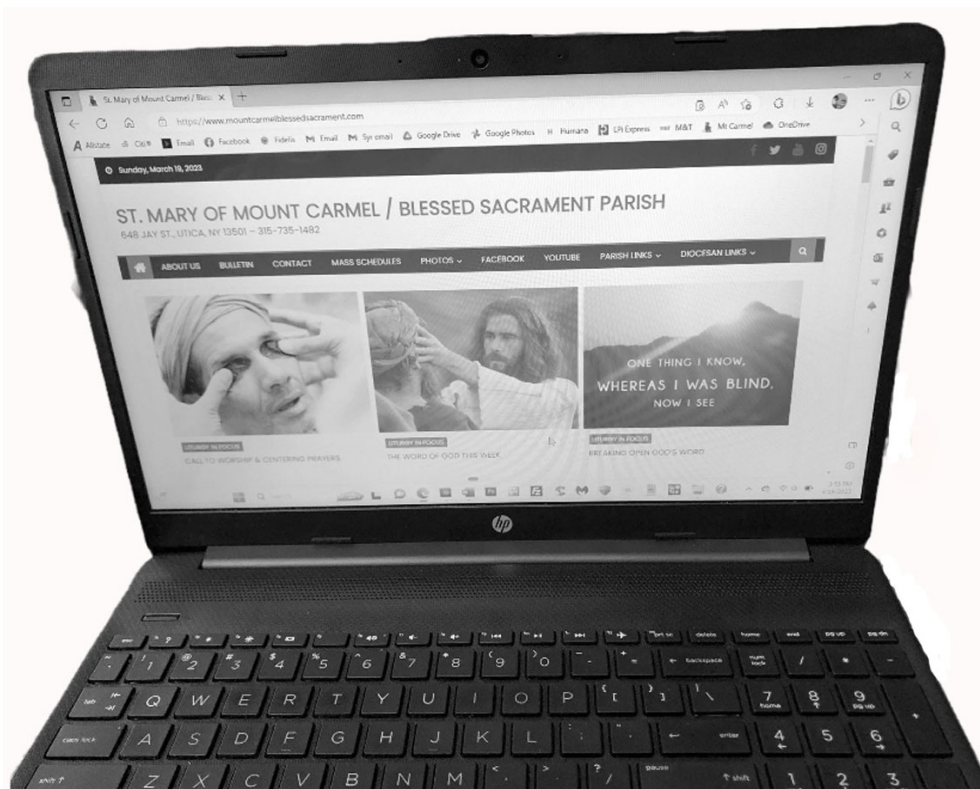
It's a changing world for the Catholic Church. "Unfortunately, in this day and age, if you don't keep up with technology you fall behind," said parishioner Cathy Poccia. "Considering a large majority of our parishioners didn't grow up with technology or have a job that required knowledge of it, it may present a challenge for them, and the bulletin suffices for them. However, for our younger parishioners, technology is a way of life for them. With that being said, I think we are moving in the right direction if we want to keep the younger generations engaged. I'm sure most of them head to the website for information as opposed to calling the parish office."

Tech in our parish

Our parish website (www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com) began in 2011 and is updated constantly to bring the latest news, features, schedules, prayers and much more. There also are wedding and funeral planning guides, in addition to the weekly Liturgy in Focus section that offers reflections, music and video explanations of that week's scriptures. The site attracts anywhere from 400 to 500 viewers daily. We also have a mobile version of the website for your smartphone.

The parish's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament) keeps friends and parishioners informed about the latest happenings.

On our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/c/StMaryofMountCarmelBlessedSacrament), you can find livestream Masses, weddings and funerals; Father Jim's homilies; our parish history video series; and videos from the Parish Festival. The site has about 350



Our parish website (www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com) began in 2011 and is updated constantly to bring the latest news, features, schedules, prayers and much more.

subscribers.

We livestream weekend Mass, and weddings and funerals when requested. During the height of the pandemic, weekend Mass was recorded so that people could watch from home when churches were closed.

We're also on Twitter and Instagram.

The parish magazine "More Good News" is in its 12th year. We've produced more than 45 issues.

The parish also has an email directory of nearly 200 people that is used to keep parishioners informed.

The weekly bulletin has been redesigned to make it easier for parishioners to see what's happening.

Parishioner Leigh D'Agostino said the increased tech presence over the last few years "shows others what a vibrant parish that we have."

"Personally, I use the site and emails daily,"

said Leigh, who chairs the Buona Fortuna raffle for the Parish Festival. "I check the lector Mass schedule and review the prayers I may be needing from the bulletin before I get to Mass. I am sure it is helpful in planning funerals and weddings with families who may not attend Mass on a regular basis. It gives them information and understanding of what can be included in each liturgy."

"Social media has also enhanced our sales of Buona Fortuna tickets each year," she added. "Individuals reach out to non-parish members for sales of this important fundraiser. I find the site and social media posts interesting in seeing the success of our Faith Formation program with each new season or event."

"Overall, I feel our website is a leader in showing other parishes how a site should look and what information should be available. The key to a successful site is to keep it managed

Please see **TECNOLOGY**, Page 7

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS OF 2023



Talia

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What's your favorite pet?



Ronald

Age: 6

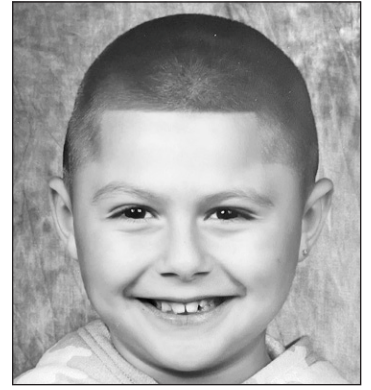
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? To see my dog again and break a world record.



Leyla

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Why do animals and humans have to die?



Giovanni

Age: 8

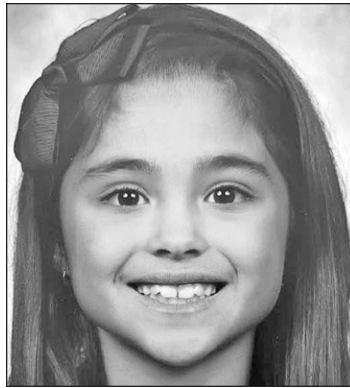
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Could you bring my dog Bella back? I miss her.



Charlee

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? If God can make everyone I know and my dog live forever.



Tessa

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Tell my family in Heaven I love them.



Grayson

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is it like in heaven?



Brian

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? God, do you hear my prayers?



Ja Seng Htoi

Age: 8

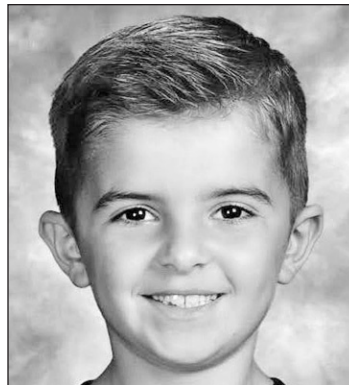
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What do you look like?



Ja Seng Ing

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What age will I be when I am very old?



Santino

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is your favorite sport to play?



Mila

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Could you bring our dog Bubby back?

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS OF 2023



Carly

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? How does it feel to be God's son?



June

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? I want to be a father because I love Jesus.



Patrick

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? For a ticket to "Moana" in Hollywood and to tell Poppy that I love him.



Parker

Age: 7

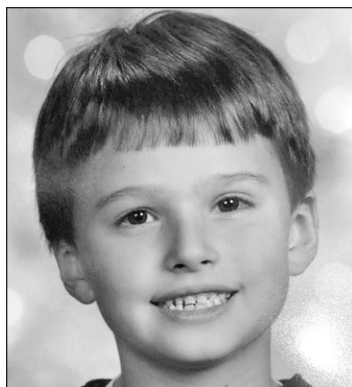
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Is heaven a real place?



Dominick

Age: 8

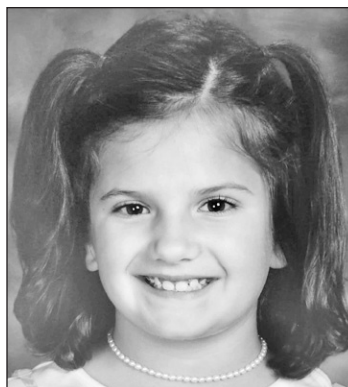
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? For a quiet house.



Alex

Age: 7

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? How long has the Earth been around?



Natalie

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is Heaven like?



Tressa

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Why is the sky blue and not purple?



Hailey

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? For a baby sister.



Salvatore

Age: 8

If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? For peace on Earth.



Kateri Tekakwitha: Beacon of faith, symbol for her people

As stated previously in this magazine, our small corner of the country is blessed with multiple examples of Christian virtue. The Mohawk Valley can lay claim to several saints recognized by the Catholic Church.

In winter edition of “More Good News” we presented the story of St. Issac Jogues and the North American Martyrs of Auriesville. In this issue we discuss St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American to be recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church.

Kateri was born in 1659 in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon, the very place where Jogues, the French missionary, endured some of his most difficult life events nine years before. Her mother, Tagaskouita, was Algonquian and had assimilated into the Mohawk people, possibly as a captive from a skirmish. This practice had become common to replenish native populations that were decimated by the diseases brought by European traders and missionaries.



A.J. VALENTINI

Tagaskouita became the wife of Kenneronkwa, the chief of the Mohawk. Therefore, Kateri was a high-born woman of her people.

Though of noble birth, Kateri might have been a bit clumsy as her native name, Tekakwitha, translates as, “She who bumps into things.” Regardless, the young Kateri would learn to fend for herself as at 4 years old her parents and younger brother died in a smallpox epidemic. Though she survived, her face would carry the scars of the disease and her eyesight and general health continued to be weak for the rest of her life.

Adopted by an aunt, she learned the typical chores of the women of her people, such as processing animal skins and making clothing from them, making mats and baskets of plants, as well as how to raise and tend to crops to nourish the community.

About the time of her 10th year, Kateri’s family was forced to flee its village from an attack by the French. Her uncle, who had become chief, brokered a peace with the invaders by allowing French Jesuit missionaries to live among the Mohawk people. The goal of the missionaries was to convert the native people, but that was met with resistance. In fact, one of Kateri’s cousins had converted and abandoned the tribe to go live among the French. The chief forbade, therefore, his niece from even talking to the missionaries. The ban failed in 1669



At age 13, Kateri informed her aunt that she wanted to defy custom and not marry. In 1674, she expressed her desire to learn about Christianity to a priest. Kateri began her formal training and was baptized in 1676.

when the Mohawk were attacked by another tribe, the Mahican, who wanted to control the local fur trade.

Kateri and other Mohawk women worked alongside the Jesuits to care for the wounded, and this exposure had a profound effect on the girl. By age 13, Kateri informed her aunt that she wanted to defy custom and not marry. In

1674, she expressed her desire to learn about Christianity to a priest. Kateri began her formal training and was baptized in 1676. Taking the name Kateri was an homage to St. Catherine. Her conversion did not sit well with her people, who ostracized her and even accused her of witchcraft.

So Kateri left her ancestral home and moved to Kahnawake, a safe community for Christian natives, near Montreal. There she was once again able to meet her cousin, and her mother’s friend took her into her longhouse. Together with a new friend, Maria-Thérèse, another native girl around her age, she grew in spirituality and conviction. The two young women pushed each other in their religious fervor. With their spiritual adviser, Father Claude Chauchetière, they became examples and teachers in their community.

Kateri challenged her faith in ways that today we might find rather Medieval. She and Marie-Thérèse practiced ritual fasting, self-mortification and asceticism (extreme self-denial), intending to bring themselves closer to God. Father Claude would have to step in at times to prevent the girls from causing themselves irreparable harm.

Even so, with her already weakened state of health, Kateri was not able to withstand the punishment. On Aug. 17, 1680, Kateri passed into the Lord’s embrace while surrounded by her community. The observers swore that upon her passing her facial lacerations from the pox disappeared and her skin became radiant (to them a sign of her blessedness). Her story of sacrifice and devotion spread far and wide through a book written by Father Claude. Her burial place became a destination for pilgrims and many miracles were attributed to her intervention.

Kateri was canonized in 2012 and is known today as “The Lily of the Mohawks.”

In Fonda, just down the road from the Shrine of the North America Martyrs, there is the St. Kateri Tekakwitha Nation Shrine and Historic Site.

Although she has become a figure of veneration, the Native American community also sees her as a victim of the colonization of the Americas. She is a symbol of how life for the indigenous peoples was changed forever with the collision of their culture with that of the Europeans.

Sources: <https://wams.nyhistory.org/early-encounters/french-colonies/kateri-tekakwitha/>; <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-kateri-tekakwitha/>; https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=154

TECHNOLOGY

Continued from Page 3

with new and timely information.”

Priestly points of view

Three priests very familiar to the Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament community all had similar experiences of how evangelization worked while growing up and after they were ordained.

Our own Father Jim, and the Revs. Joe Salerno and Scott VanDerveer, said before websites, social media and other technology the main sources of reaching out to the faithful were bulletins, societies, homilies, social events and personal contact.

Though those methods still are viable in parish life, it's possible that more people are reached with the incorporation of newer technology, especially over the last few years during the pandemic.

“I would say that (about) 10 years ago, we were beginning to see reaching out using some apps and some technology; smartphones came around not long after I was ordained,” said Father Scott, a former parishioner and now pastor of St. Mary's Church in Glens Falls who was ordained in June 2013. “And so that's when we started seeing apps on phone. So, you could stay a little more connected to your parish. But I would say that we've seen an explosion since the time of the pandemic.”

He said his parish incorporates a lot of technology.

“We have a livestream that that gets around 700 views,” he said. “We have a very good slick, well-designed website. And we really work to reach out to people electronically, whenever possible, since most of our folks that we're looking to engage are out there. ... We're trying to show them that some of what they're surfing for out there, some of what they're scrolling for, is available not online or in apps, but in this community. My YouTube channel has 1,800 subscribers, and I post not only my weekend homily, but I often post inspirational messages every week.”

Father Joe, former Mount Carmel pastor and current pastor of Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish (who is retiring in July), said the newer methods are useful.

“It can be, especially when you want to reach out beyond the committed congregation,” he said.

His parish has incorporated things such as Facebook, email, parish and diocesan web pages, and livestreaming daily and weekend Masses.

Father Jim cautioned that though technology is welcomed and helpful, there's no substitution for personal contact.

“At a certain age, it's sometimes difficult to master technological methods,” he said. “There's nothing better than face to face — being with and present to the unchurched in ordinary daily times and places and encouraging faith at funerals and weddings.”

Parishioners chime in

Some of the parishioners on our email list ex-



St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish

1.2K likes • 1.2K followers



Call Now

Liked

Message

Our parish uses many technological tools to reach out, including our website, Facebook page (above), YouTube, livestream Masses and more.

pressed their opinions on the tech changes over the years:

• **Nicholas Farina:** “The YouTube channel is especially helpful. It allows those of us to virtually attend Mass each weekend who are limited by disabilities — medical and physical — from being in attendance at weekly Mass in complete safety. (There's) no way to express the thanks for the very tech-savvy parishioners who provide this invaluable service.”

• **Fred Valentini:** “As a lector, I often check the schedule on the website. I do this even though I keep that info on a paper calendar after we receive the quarterly hard copies. I just don't carry those around with me. Using my phone, all that information is at my fingertips. I also know folks out of town/state keep up with what's going on in the parish through the website and videos.”

• **Connie Watkins:** “I enjoy the ‘More Good News’ magazine. It gives me a chance to know more about our parishioners and their families and to meet new parishioners. I don't use the livestream, but it's very nice to have it available. I did use it during the pandemic, which was very helpful.”

• **Angela Ferdula** said though she believes what the parish does is “useful and helpful,” she does offer one caution.

“My question is how do you think they get people back into the flock?” she asked, “Since the pandemic I think some people may still be afraid to be with a crowd, but I think some got too comfortable watching Mass on YouTube or television from their homes. How does the parish entice the congregation back into church?”

The future

Though Fathers Jim, Joe and Scott all agree technological evangelization is important and here to stay, it's still old-fashioned human contact that's paramount.

Father Joe, ordained in 1980, said reaching the faithful now and in the future is a combination of the old and new.

“There is no one thing,” he said. “It's a matter of using all available things effectively — personal contact, effective preaching, good liturgy as well as technology.”

Father Jim, ordained in 1974, said in the future he would like to “promote ‘mentor’ models for youth and those acquiring sacraments — practicing Catholics mentoring and sponsoring with those non-practicing.”

Father Scott said despite its ability to reach more people at once, technology does have its drawbacks.

“It does create the difficult situation of having people be able to almost be voyeuristic with their faith,” he said. “They can watch Mass from a safe distance. They can keep the community at arm's length. They can consume sacramental moments and celebrations without having the community ask anything in return or make demands on them, their time or their treasure. I do think there is a danger of people being too selective in how they engage.”

He agrees the personal touch still is the best way.

“It is always a person-to-person encounter that evangelizes,” Father Scott said. “I do not believe, for example, that you can put a notice in the bulletin saying join a small group today and expect that people will do it. I think that when we find that the main method we've used is making an announcement, or putting something in a bulletin, we find that very few people respond. We often blame them. We say, ‘Well see, there's no interest, or people are getting lax, or there's not as much faith today as there used to be.’ And I think we can see that that's not the case.”

“We need to go to people one on one and say, ‘I see you having these gifts. I really would love for you to consider doing this. I think your life could be improved by this.’ One of the things I would also say is that in going one to one with people, we're encouraging the kind of people that we want to have engaged in our church.”



Holy Week, Easter celebrations

