

MORE

GOOD NEWS

50

YEARS OF PRAISING
GOD THROUGH SONG

*'Sing to the mountains,
sing to the sea. Raise
your voices, lift your hearts.'*

We contribute to what's good and bad in the world

A profound gap exists in our lives and in our world.

No matter what our religion, race or location on the planet, and whether we are rich, poor or something in between, we all know this tension from experience: There's a gap between what the world is and what we wish, hope or believe it could be. And if we're honest, we likely feel the same tension deep within ourselves.

On the one hand, I believe I am good and I have some things to offer this world. And yet I wish, or hope, or believe I could somehow become better, happier, healthier, more peaceful, more loving, more effective. More or less: Less selfish, angry, anxious, busy, fearful, doubtful.

The gap between what we desire and what we experience is real. In our efforts to confront the gap, we squelch our desire for a better world or a better life. We lower our expectations, numb our pain, distract ourselves or simply look the other way.

One thing is certain: we all contribute, in some way, not only to what is good in this world, but also to what is broken, what is sinful. For "all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

We may eat too much, drink too much, watch too much TV, binge on social media, escape into erotic or emotional fantasies, gossip about the wrongdoings of others, or strive desper-



FATHER JIM CESTA

ately to prove our worth by attaining success or riches.

It is the most unimaginable, shocking claim: the Creator of all, the perfect, loving and good God, became a man, lived in our broken world, and experienced the weight of our sin, while never sinning. He felt the gap of this world in his hunger, loneliness, weariness, disappointment and pain.

Grace is not a mere "thing" or "substance." It is not magic. Nor is it quantifiable. Grace is not so much an "it" or "what" as a "who." Grace is God's gift of his very self to his creation.

Grace is the gift of God's love poured out for us in big and small ways: from the ultimate gift of salvation to God the Father's quiet ready response to our daily needs. Grace is God himself walking with us through it all.

CATHOLIC Q&A

Changes to Mass

Question: Why do we make changes in the Mass? Some seem so small and unimportant. Are they really necessary?

Answer: The celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of our identity as Catholics. Our purpose as a Church community revolves around the Eucharist. Everything we are and everything we do is measured not only by how well we celebrate, but also by how well we live the sacrament. If that is so, then we as a community will always strive to celebrate the Mass as best we can. The reasons for some changes might seem more obvious than others, but there is a reason behind each one.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal is the introduction to the Missal that contains all the prayers for the celebration of the Mass. The Order of Mass we use now was issued in 1975 and as often happens over the course of years, some questions have come up about the proper way of doing some things and whether or not other practices are acceptable. These changes clarify some things and make the celebration of the Mass more meaningful for everyone.

The opportunity is presented to us to better learn and understand each part of the Mass, which in turn should help us deepen our appreciation for its beauty and meaning. We will be a

better Church if we have a clearer understanding and knowledge of who and what we celebrate.

Is it right to sue?

Question: Is it right to sue someone? Isn't it a way of getting revenge?

Answer: Revenge is inflicting harm for harm's sake, the idea of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and then some. There is often a fine line between justice and mercy, between compensation and forgiveness. Unfortunately, things can happen to us that cause harm, suffering and damage, regardless of people's intentions. When someone is hurt, especially in such a way that special care or treatment is required, the cost of that care needs to be paid.

In a perfect world, those with special needs, handicaps or disabilities would find the help and care they need, including those who are injured or hurt. But justice is not always forthcoming, and people are not always fair. So, using the legal system to right a wrong is sometimes the only option.

In some cases, it is the only way that people can get the help they need and deserve. However, frivolous lawsuits, or "fishing for money" is not only unfair, but immoral as well. The law is there to protect people and making use of it when necessary is a good thing.

— Liturgical Publications

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



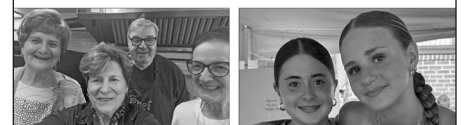
BULLETIN



St. Mary of Mount Carmel Blessed Sacrament Parish

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>ABOUT THE PARISH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address: 648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501. • Telephone: 315-735-1482; fax: 315-735-9806. • Office hours: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Closed on Friday and national holidays. • Faith Formation and Sacramental Center: 315-724-3950. • Email: stmarysca@nytulio.org • Hearing impaired: Listening devices available in the sacristy. <p>MASS SCHEDULES</p> <p>Weekend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday: 4:30 p.m. at St. Anthony & St. Agnes Parish • Sunday: 8 and 11 a.m. at Mount Carmel; 9:30 a.m. at St. Anthony. <p>Weekday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday and Tuesday: 8:30 a.m. at St. Anthony & St. Agnes. • Thursday and Friday: 8:30 a.m. in our parish. • Please note: No morning Mass if Utica schools are closed due to inclement weather. <p>Holy Days</p> <p>Consult the bulletin and website.</p> <p>SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday: 3:45 p.m. at St. Anthony & St. Agnes Parish and by appointment by calling Mount Carmel parish office. | <p>MARRIAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Couples must make arrangements six months in advance. <p>BAPTISM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the parish office to arrange. Parents must attend a preparation class prior to the baptism of their child. <p>ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>NEW PARISHIONERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to our parish family. We invite you to become an active participant in our community. Call the parish office. <p>PARISH STAFF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastor: Rev. Jim Cesta • In Residence: Rev. Luis Olguin • Trustees: Rocco Arcuri Sr. and Tony Leone • Parish Office Manager: Terri Piazza-Panuccio • Faith Formation K-6: Terri Piazza-Panuccio • Faith Formation 7-10: Anne Carlone-Elacqua • Music Director: Peter Elacqua • Website Manager, Bulletin Editor: Fran Peritano |
|--|--|



... 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





In 1976, the Rev. Gino Marzola envisioned a group of young people whose musical talents and abilities could enhance worship in our parish. His dream became a reality that has lasted for five decades.

Father Gino's dream in harmony 50 years later

Half century of sacred music and ministry resound today

Fifty years ago in 1976, the Rev. Gino Marzola, then our associate pastor, had a dream to begin a small group to provide contemporary music from the sanctuary for the Saturday Vigil Mass.

He gathered young people from CYO who could play instruments or were willing to sing. CYO adult sponsors such as Mary and Joe Teti became very involved in supporting the singers accompanied by guitar, flutes and clarinets. Father Gino asked guitarist Karen Cichon (now Elacqua) and Peter Elacqua (pianist, vocalist) to lead the group. They had just graduated from SUNY Oswego that year.

Parishioner Angela Barresi (now Ferdula) soon joined the new group of about 20 people as did Jackie Mancuso (now Thibault), now a parish usher and whose husband, Bill, is one of our parish trustees.

"Peter had asked me to be part of this new chapter of music at Mount Carmel including guitars, flute and chimes," Angela recalled. "I loved it. We were a little family, and we used to gather right on the altar until the group grew and then we were in the choir loft. I guess I still love it because you will find my husband and me cantoring the 8 o'clock (Sunday) Mass every week."

Before the Rev. Joe Salerno was ordained, he was a formative member of the group helping it to understand the role of worship and the Sunday reading themes so it could plan appropriate music for each week. For several years before he was ordained into the priesthood, Father Joe was our first parish cantor, leading the assembly in song every week.



Members of the Folk Group gather in the home of Mary and Joe Teti in the mid-1970s.

In the beginning ...

The group, based in a guitar music repertoire from the late 1960s and early '70s, was initially called a "Folk Group." Liturgical music from that era was very inspired by creation and community themes. The Folk Group was highly encouraged by the parish (especially many senior citizens) and began to accept invitations to sing at other venues: hospitals, other churches, senior centers, Utica political events and regional seasonal celebrations. The group gave its first parish Advent / Christmas concert in 1977. In those early years, concerts also often included parish children, adolescents, adults and local musicians and artists not from our parish who

loved being part of our presentations.

By the early to mid-1980s, the St. Louis Jesuits began composing a new wave of church music inspired by scripture. Their music had richer, complicated harmonies, more moderated and advanced tempos, and featured lyrics and melodies that remain in the mainstream of church music today — songs such as "Be Not Afraid," "Like A Shepherd" and "Behold the Lamb of God."

Our Folk Group then became a Folk Choir, differentiating it from the parish "Senior Choir." New psalms encouraged more participation from the assembly. Vatican II had long

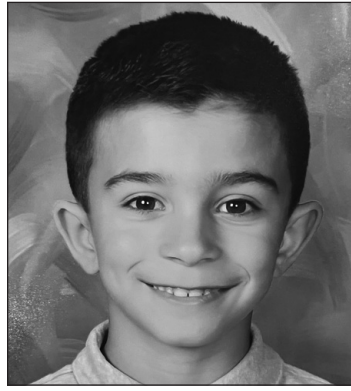
Please see FOLK GROUP, Page 7

FIRST COMMUNION 2026



Frank

Age: 9
Parents: Frank and Maria
Sibling: Carmine
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What happens when we die?



Rocco

Age: 8
Parents: Matthew and Jessica
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Can I have a pirate ship that would look like a pirate ship from a long time ago?



Farah

Age: 7
Parents: Nick and Ashley
Sibling: Leyla
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Are you always with me though I can't see you?



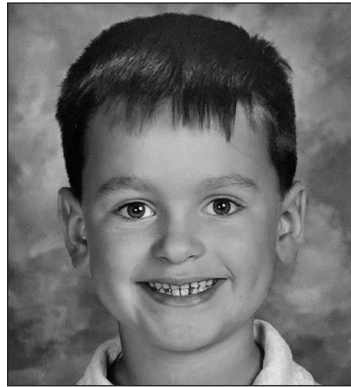
Alivia

Age: 8
Parents: Stacey and Matthew
Sibling: Matteo
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Why is the world so big?



Giuliana

Age: 7
Parents: Michael and Danielle
Siblings: Francesca and Michelina
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? To help the world be a better place.



Christopher

Age: 8
Parents: Chris and Rochelle
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Where were you baptized?



Stassi

Age: 7
Parents: Richard and Anastasia
Sibling: Bruno
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Please bring Apollo back from heaven.



Enzo

Age: 8
Parents: Erin and Carmen
Siblings: Oren and Rocco
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Did you have fun before TV and video games?



Luke

Age: 7
Parents: Mel and Danielle
Sibling: Stella
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Could you give everyone in the world food?



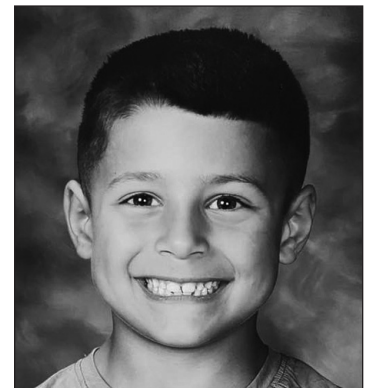
Giada

Age: 8
Parents: Robert and Amanda
Sibling: Gennaro
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? To help people who are sick get better.



Mila

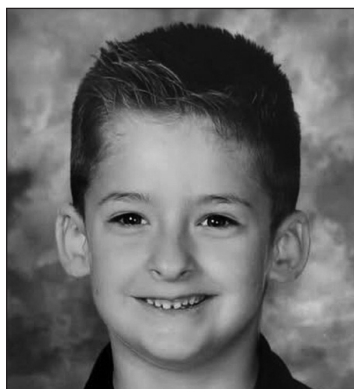
Age: 7
Parents: Gianna and James
Sibling: Audrina
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What does it look like in heaven?



Julian

Age: 7
Parents: Santina and Kelly
Siblings: Taysom and Adrian
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Do you have a pet?

FIRST COMMUNION 2026



Luca

Age: 8
Parents: Michael and Danielle
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What is big Nani doing in heaven? Can we play with toys in heaven?



Kylie

Age: 8
Parents: Mandy and Eric
Siblings: Milania and Mia
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? For nonnie and papa to live forever.



Alessia

Age: 7
Parents: Kenny and Ashley
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What's your favorite color?



Leonella

Age: 7
Parents: Marita and Don
Sibling: Lucia
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What did you do when you were a kid?



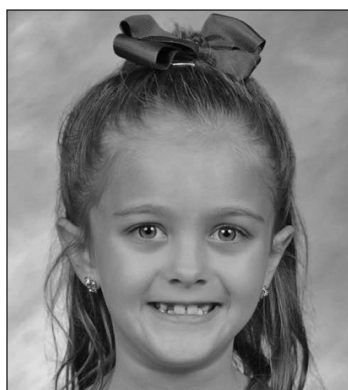
Nella

Age: 7
Parents: Peter and Danielle
Siblings: Nina and Peter
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? When will you come back down?



Adelina

Age: 7
Parents: Matt and Angela
Sibling: Emily
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Can you protect my sister?



Cassidy

Age: 7
Parents: Matthew and Trista
Sibling: Vincenzo
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? How do you help all the people on Earth?



Camila

Age: 7
Parents: Jennifer and Angel
Sibling: Santino
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Why are people mean to each other?



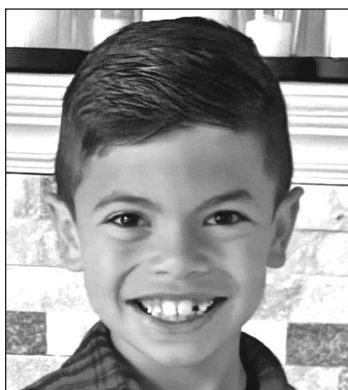
Stella

Age: 8
Parents: Michael and Pamela
Siblings: Makayla and Dominic
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Would you be able to make my friend Cassidy better? Please.



Vincent

Age: 7
Parents: Vincent and Dana
Sibling: Domilic
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? How is my dog, Ellie Mae? Are you having fun with her in heaven?



Aiden

Age: 8
Parents: Rick and Sarah
Sibling: Gabriella
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? Why do people lie?



Elvina

Age: 7
Parents: Neilson Nei and Lucy Thin
Sibling: Shandi
If you could ask Jesus one thing, what would it be? What will heaven be like?

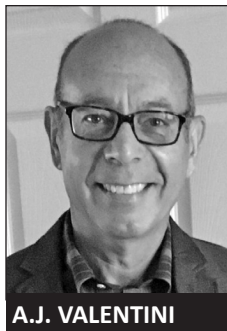
Music to soothe the sorrowful soul

Parish's funeral services help comfort the living

In this issue of "More Good News" we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of our Music Ministry, which began in 1976 as the Folk Group.

Of course, we all enjoy the enhancement of weekly Masses with the contribution of our choir and musicians under Peter Elacqua's direction. There is another component to that ministry, however that has become a hallmark of our parish. Anyone attending a funeral service here has surely experienced our comforting, melodious accompaniments to the departure of a loved one.

Over the years of his tenure, Peter has built a core of singers and musicians who regularly provide their talents to create solemn but loving memorial tributes. With Peter at the piano, Anne Elacqua at the organ, frequently the sublime sound of Olga Mege-dyn on violin, choir members and various other instrumentalists, a soul-lifting atmosphere permeates our services.



A.J. VALENTINI

Arguably, funeral services are more for the living than the deceased. Our dearly departed have already begun their journey. They no longer "hear us" in a literal way. But those of us who remain are just beginning to deal with our new reality without them.

Often, the families of the deceased request favorite hymns or musical selections to cling a little longer to their loved ones. Sometimes, it is left up to Peter to choose music for the occasion. Adding an appropriate musical dimension to an already emotional ceremony can be challenging. The goal is always to bring peace to the mourners and a fitting tribute to the ones we are sending on their infinite voyage.

Videos of possible music for funeral services is found on the parish website at www.mount-carmelblessedsacrament.com.

That endeavor has a long history in the musical canon. Some of the most sublime music ever written was created to commemorate the deceased. In Mozart's "1791 Requiem," widely regarded as the best of all, the poignant Lacrimosa captures the tears shed and plea for mercy and hopes for eternal rest. The composer



The ceiling mural over our choir loft of St. Cecilia, patroness of music, inspires and (hopefully) protects the singers, musicians and musical director of St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish in their ministry to accompany Masses, funerals and other liturgical events at our parish.

further that plea in the movement called "Agnus Dei" (Lamb of God). It is difficult to feel unmoved as those chords waft above the listeners' heads.

The famous Italian opera composer, Giuseppe Verdi, premiered his "Messa da Requiem" in 1874. Although he demonstrated "fluent invention, beautiful sound effects and charming vocal writing," some critics said it was too theatrical.

The famous "Dies Irae" (Day of Judgment) from this work shocked the audience with crashing percussion, loud brass and back and forth choral repetition (and can often be heard on the soundtracks of movies in scenes of turmoil and vengeance). The "Agnus Dei" movement is decidedly more peaceful, starting with an unaccompanied soprano duet that is later picked up by the full choir and orchestra.

Johannes Brahms in his "German Requiem" (1868) uses German texts from the Lutheran Bible rather than the Latin liturgy, focusing on comfort for the living. Also, Gabriel Fauré in

his "Requiem" (1890) created a work famous for its calm, serene and melodic approach, focusing on peace rather than judgment. In fact, Fauré has been quoted as saying, "It has been said that my 'Requiem' does not express the fear of death, and someone has called it a lullaby of death. But it is thus that I see death: as a happy deliverance, an aspiration towards happiness above, rather than as a painful experience."

Our approach here at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament is very similar to Fauré's approach.

Many composers have challenged themselves with creating beautiful, meaningful and soothing music to help us, the living, to accept this passage into eternity and send off the souls of our beloved with a sweet sonic tribute.

In our own way — thanks to Peter, Anne the choir and musicians — our parish attempts to fulfill that quest. It is our intention that mourners leave the church after services with cherished memories of the deceased and, hopefully, a song in their hearts.

FOLK GROUP

Continued from Page 3

encouraged these changes, and Mount Carmel led the way in our area for the vision of Pope St. John XXIII. Our Folk Choir merged Gregorian chant and traditional Latin Mass parts and music into its repertoire. That has never ceased even to this day.

The decades of the 1990s and afterward witnessed significant developments in church music. Writers such as Marty Haugen, Bob Hurd, David Haas and Rory Cooney added theological interpretation to scripture. Their lyrics and music challenge and inspire us today.

This music opened church doors to many other instruments including piano, organ, percussion, strings, woodwinds and brass. Surviving even until now are parish favorites such as “Here I Am Lord,” “All Are Welcome,” “You Are Mine,” “Jerusalem My Destiny,” “Covenant Hymn,” “We Will Serve The Lord,” “Eye Has Not Seen,” “Shepherd Me O God,” “Gather Us In,” “We Walk By Faith” and “We Are Many Parts.”

Peter, Karen and many choir members attended several national conferences and workshops for liturgical music. There, they gained a deeper understanding of the need for good inspiring music to create beautiful and memorable worship experiences.

Parental guidance

When the Folk Group was formed, Mary Teti and her husband, Joe, were fully on board.

“My husband, Joe, and our three children were all in the original full group,” Mary said. “Joe played sax and clarinet. Our son Joey Jr. played the guitar. Donna played the flute and Fred played the guitar.”

Oftentimes, Mary would host the group in her home.

“I organized gatherings — for example, always having dessert in the CYO room after Holy Thursday concerts,” she recalled. “We had gatherings at our home, filled with singing, eating, friendship and holy Mass with all of us as a unit gathered in prayer and song.”

Mary said the dedication of the youth of the parish made the Folk Group the foundation of what today is the Music Ministry.

“The Folk Group brought together a dream of Father Gino,” she said. “It brought together a group of teenagers and CYO members, CCD teachers, teen Mass lectors and volunteers and much more. This was a time when the youth of our parish were very involved, and the folk group was like the culmination of all the efforts. These teens were dedicated, happy thoughtful, young adults who personified what being a young Catholic was. Their friendship and dedication were something to behold and look up to and appreciate.”

One of those teens, Maria Nole (now Sportelli), said she will never forget the summer of 1978.

“I was 14 and about to start high school when I decided to volunteer for the annual church festival,” she said. “Someone suggested I join the Folk Group, and looking back, it was one of the best decisions I ever made.”

She said they practiced every Sunday night,

Who’s who in the parish’s Music Ministry

- Our current weekly instrumentalists include Anne Elacqua (organ), Cheryl Robinson (piano), Carmella Brown (flute), Olga Megdyn (violin), Rick Chainey (bass), Vincent and Michael Elacqua (guitar) David Elacqua (percussion).
- Weekend singers are Rosanne George, Karen and Lois Elacqua, Joanne Vanderwood, Amy Perritano Eddy, Marlene Mazza, Kathy Grandinetta (original folk group member), Patty Cichon, Sandra White, Maria Quintal, Sue Costanza, Sharon Persbacker, Maria Kozak, David Struz, Mario Scalzo, Ted Camesano and Fred Valentini.
- Others such as Scott Perritano, Marc Delmonico, Lee Priore, John Reale, Bob Fontana, Joe Elacqua, Joe Caruso, Kitty Jones, Serafina Sciortino, Sarah Crill, Kim Bywater, Vanessa Jones, Nicholas Elacqua, David Elacqua, Katherine Elacqua, Matt Elacqua, Anthony Ruggiero, Sharon and Steve Kukowski, Donna Caleo, Scott and Shane Bonney and Scott Rutledge join us for holidays with other instrumentalists and singers who “come home” to be with us.
- Often members of Historic Old St. John’s choir join us for concerts. Father Joe Salerno, Father Tom Servatius and Father Scott VanDerveer, (all former members of our choir before they were ordained) usually come back to sing concerts with us or sometimes join us for other occasions.
- God has blest us richly with such talented members now and throughout our past. Our heartfelt prayers hold many singers and instrumentalists who have died or are unable to join us because of distance, age or physical disabilities. We remember them fondly when we see their names on our music or associate them with certain pieces we sing.
- Four years ago, we began a funeral choir that sings at every parish funeral. Several people from other parishes joined our funeral choir as “regulars” — Bob Heins, Patty Durante and Liz Moreland. Karen and Darren Pohorecki from St. John’s in New Hartford also join us for funerals when needed as do Pat Marthage and Joyce Showalter from Historic Old St. John’s in Utica.
- Visitors are always welcome. Our choir and instrumentalists are friendly, hospitable and always open to new people joining them. If you are curious or interested, come upstairs before or after Mass to speak with Peter, Anne or any choir member.

and those four years of singing with the group were a blessing and helped shape her into the adult she is today.

“I met so many wonderful people, like Peter and his brothers. They were all so talented either singing or playing a musical instrument,” Maria said. “Not only were we friends, but they were like a second family to me.”

“Being a choir member gave me the confidence to eventually sing solo at competitions and for the weddings and funerals of those I love. I sang in other choirs over the years, but none were as meaningful as Mount Carmel. It is my second home.”

Parish’s musical heritage

Mount Carmel always has had a rich musical heritage that began with another Scalabrini priest and pastor — the Rev. William Pizzoglio, who wrote, published and orchestrated several full Masses and hymns in English, Italian and Latin.

As early as the 1940s, Mount Carmel developed a reputation for creative liturgical celebrations that included strings, brass, timpani and organ from the choir loft.

Gordon Schindler’s father, George Schindler, was our first organist hired by Father Pizzoglio, and the legendary Helen Ehlinger succeeded him. Both were very talented accomplished organists who dedicated their lives to enhancing quality music and providing beautiful liturgies for our parish.

Eventually, the Folk Choir combined with the Senior Choir and moved to the loft. Kay Maggio, Anne Candido and Peter, long-time members of the Senior Choir, remained in the newly combined choir. They sang for major celebrations and feast days accompanied by or-

gan and an entire range of instrumentation under Peter’s direction. They soon began giving other seasonal concerts and provided meditative “Gethsemane” music after Holy Thursday services. Many who used to visit churches on that night chose to visit Mount Carmel last or came early and remained in our church quite late. One time, an entire bus of people joined us on that night. And at times, people came from other parts of the diocese as far as Oswego for our Holy Thursday meditation to accompany adoration.

Older — but still singing

After 50 years, our choir has aged a bit, and the loft steps have become problematic for many. These deterrents, magnified by the fact that so many members moved away over the years, or became disabled with sickness, have dwindled the membership of our parish choir.

Now, microphones are needed to keep the sound full. Luckily, our choir still is a group of good, dedicated spirited people who care about each other and who love to pray through music. Some members of our present choir attend more than one liturgy per weekend. God still graces us with opportunities to include several instruments at our weekend and holiday Masses.

Since our early history, the legacy of music has been a charisma (gift from God) for our parish. The hope is it continues in the years ahead. We are thankful to God for the gift of music borne in and through our community. As church evolves and spirituality develops, we hope our music and liturgy will reflect those changes and inspire our growth in faith. We are so very grateful to our parishioners who join us in song and support and affirm us so often. We love this parish!



Celebrating Holy Thursday, Easter Vigil



View photo galleries on the parish website at www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com