

MORE

GOOD NEWS



FESTA ITALIANA

Decades of memories,
devotion to Our Lady

PAGES 4-5



Summertime reflections

Thank you, Lord, for this season of sun and slow motion, of games and porch sitting, of picnics and light green fireflies on heavy purple evenings, and praise for slight breezes.

It's good, God, as the first long days of your creation.

Let this season be for me a time of gathering the pieces into which my business has broken me. O God, enable me now to grow wise through reflection, peaceful through the song of the cricket, re-created through the laughter of play.

Most of all Lord, let me live easily and "grace-fully" for a spell, so that I may see others' souls deeply, share in a silence unhurried, listen to the sounds of sunlight and shadows, explore barefoot the land of forgotten dreams and shy hopes, and find the right words to tell another who I am.

Thoughts to bring along on a summer day

- The most destructive habit: worry.
- The greatest loss: self respect.
- The ugliest personality trait: selfishness.
- The greatest "shot in the arm:" encouragement.



FATHER JIM CESTA

- The most effective sleeping pill: peace of mind.
- The most powerful force in life: love.
- The most worthless emotion: self pity.
- The greatest joy: giving.
- The most satisfying work: helping others.
- Our greatest natural resource: our youth.
- The greatest problem to overcome: fear.
- The most crippling failure disease: excuses.
- The world's most incredible computer: the brain.
- The greatest asset: faith.
- The most powerful channel of communication: prayer.

CATHOLIC Q&A

Is gossiping a sin?

Question: Is gossip a mortal sin?

Answer: To really ask this question, we must consider the Eighth Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness."

In its reflections on this commandment, The Catechism of the Catholic Church invites us to not only think about what bearing "false witness" means, but to also consider how we understand the truth and how we communicate more broadly. This is why so much of this section of the Catechism has to do with the gift of language. With this in mind, we will notice that the word "gossip" isn't used by the Catechism. Instead, we find the words "detraction" and "calumny," which are two forms that gossip can take, and both can be quite serious.

First, detraction is the of revealing "another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them," without morally valid reasons. Calumny, by extension, is saying something about another person that is untrue, and it is sinful because it "harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgements."

In all our communication, we have to always recognize that we have a moral obligation to the truth and to always work to protect the reputation and honor of our neighbors.

Gossip can, in fact, prove to be a very serious sin. After all, the Catechism reminds us: "No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it." When we have gossiped, especially if we are aware we have damaged another person's good name or reputation, we want to make every effort

to undo the damage we have done, including seeking the grace and forgiveness offered in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Anointing of the Sick?

Question: Can anyone offer the Anointing of the Sick to a sick or dying person, or is that only something a priest can do?

Answer: The Letter of James speaks to us of the ancient tradition of a special anointing and blessing of those who are sick: "Is there anyone sick among you? Let him send for the presbyters of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord ... If he has committed any sins, they will be forgiven him."

This passage forms the foundation for the theology of the sacrament that we call "Anointing of the Sick." In keeping with what we read in the Letter of James and the ancient tradition of the Church, the anointing of a person of who sick or dying many only be performed by a priest or bishop.

Although deacons and other members of the Church are not able to celebrate the sacrament with a person who is sick, we can read sacred scripture and pray with and for those who are ill. Resources such as the "Book of Blessings" also contain special blessings that can be celebrated by deacons or lay ministers.

In the end, we want to be sure that we show a special care and concern for the sick, helping them to always experience God's loving comfort through made tangible through our acts of charity and service.

— 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

- ABOUT THE PARISH**
- 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: stmaryscat@nydi.org
 - Hearing impaired: Listening devices available in the sacristy.
- MASS SCHEDULES**
- Weekend**
- 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.
- Weekday**
- 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.
- Holy Days**
- Consult the bulletin and website.
- SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**
- Saturday: 3:45 p.m. at St. Anthony & St. Agnes Parish and by appointment by calling Mount Carmel parish office.
- 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.
- ORDER 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 in our community. Call the parish office.
- PARISH STAFF**
- Pastor: Rev. Jim Cesta
 - In Residence: Rev. Luis Olguin
 - Trustees: Riccardo 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 Perittano



... 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



More than a good sport

Dave Fontaine builds career on something he loves

To say Dave Fontaine loves sports is an understatement. For most of his life, sports have been the foundation on which he has excelled, not only as a player in his younger days, but leading and setting an example for young men and women. Also a part of that foundation is his faith, which has grounded his life.

Looking at your resume, you love sports. Tell us how your love of sports came about.

My love of sports started early and shaped nearly everything that followed. I played football, basketball and baseball in high school, but baseball, the first organized sport I played at 8 years old, became a passion and the one that opened the door for me to compete through the collegiate level. It also gave me something even more meaningful: lifelong friendships that remain a big part of my life today. My years playing sports, especially baseball, taught me discipline, teamwork, resilience and the value of relationships that stand the test of time. Sports became more than competition; they became a foundation for how I approached leadership, relationships and challenges throughout my career.

You spent 24 years at Utica College / University in various positions in the sports department — from 1989 to 2000 and then as athletic director from 2012 to 2025. Please describe what those experiences were like.

During my first 11 years at Utica I did just about everything you can imagine in an athletics department. I ran the intramural program, which was my primary role. I scheduled leagues, supervised officials, organized tournaments and made sure students had the best experience possible. I also taught fitness classes, worked on NCAA compliance, served on several committees, handled home-game management, recruited and coached softball, and jumped in wherever I was needed. While doing that, I was attending graduate school at Syracuse University part time. This was long before online classes or hybrid learning existed. If you wanted a master's degree, you got in your car, drove to campus, sat in a classroom, and then drove home, often late at night. It made for some long days, but it was worth it.

After your first 11 years at UC, you left and entered the pharmaceutical industry as a sales representative. Quite a change in careers.

After 11 years at Utica, I reached a point where I needed a new challenge. The long days and late nights eventually catch up to you. I started at Utica when I was 22, full of energy, but by 33 I was at a different stage of life. I also knew Jim Spartano, the athletic director, wasn't close to retirement. So, if I wanted to grow professionally, I had to make a move. The pharmaceutical industry offered exactly that, an opportunity to stretch myself, develop new skills and broaden my experience in ways that



Dave Fontaine brings his mother, Delores, 95, to Mass every Sunday. "What started as a routine has become something I genuinely enjoy. At 95, she still has her sense of humor, she still bosses me around, and being with her is definitely a blessing. We laugh a lot and keep things light. Those moments remind me how fortunate I am to still share this time with her."

would ultimately serve me well when I returned to Utica.

At Johnson & Johnson (two years) and later GlaxoSmithKline (nine years), I worked in the GI and Respiratory divisions. My work centered on sharing clinical information, supporting healthcare providers and sharing where certain treatments might fit into patient care. Over time, I built strong, lasting relationships with physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses and office staff, relationships that remain in place today.

You returned to your first love as Utica University's athletic director in 2012.

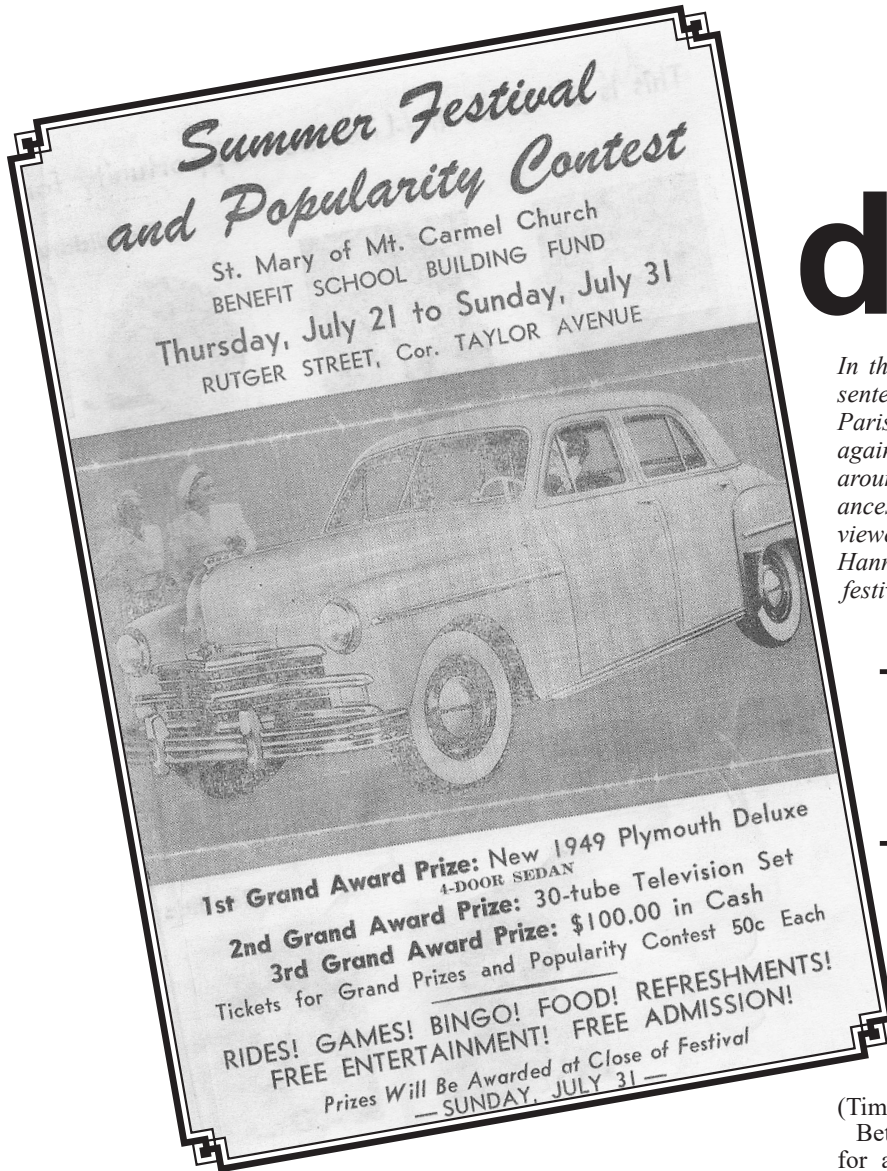
My path back to Utica was simple: Jim Spartano — a Hall of Famer, a mentor, my former baseball coach and someone I deeply respected — was retiring. I knew opportunities like that don't come around twice. If I didn't pursue it then, I might never get another chance to return to my alma mater in a leadership role. I was grateful President Todd Hutton took a chance on me and offered me the athletic director position. My time as Athletic Director was an honor and a privilege. It was especially meaningful to become the AD at the same place where, as a young man, I was a baseball student-athlete myself. To return decades later in a leadership role was something I never took for granted.

My responsibilities certainly changed from
Please see DAVE FONTAINE, Page 7

Dave Fontaine

- **Family:** Wife Tammy; stepfather to Raymond and Andrew; father-in-law to Amaya; parents Delores and the late Salvatore (Steve) Fontaine. Dad died in 2012. Mom turned 95 on May 31; brother Brian
- **Education:** Notre Dame High School Class of 1985, associate degree from Mohawk Valley Community College in 1987; bachelor of science degree from Utica College in 1989; master's degree from Syracuse University in 1992.
- **Employment:** Currently director of the Clark Sports Center in Cooperstown; director of Intramurals, softball coach and assistant athletic director at Utica College (1989–2000); professional sales representative, Janssen (a Johnson & Johnson company (2000–2003); senior executive sales representative, GlaxoSmithKline (2003–2012); athletic director Utica University (2012–2025). Retired from Utica University in January 2025 (24 total years of service).
- **Things you like to do:** Time with family and close friends, woodworking, attending country concerts, jogging, golf.
- **Favorite places to travel:** Nashville; warm climate destinations.

Sweet memories of fun, devotion



TOP: A brochure from the 1949 Mount Carmel "Summer Festival and Popularity Contest" depicting the grand prize of a 1949 Plymouth Deluxe.

RIGHT: Dominic Timpano stands near the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel upon which dollar bills are pinned. The tradition continues today.

FAR RIGHT: A prayer card of Our Lady of Mount Carmel from 1935.

Photos courtesy of Betty Arcuri



In the summer 2012 edition of "More Good News," we presented the following article on the history of the Mount Carmel Parish Festival. We thought it appropriate to present it to you again in our 130th year for a refresher for those who have been around for a while and for others who might not know the ancestral dedication to our parish. Two of the people interviewed for the original article — Rosemarie Chiffy and Marge Hanrahan — have since passed, but their knowledge of the festival still lives on.

By FRAN PERRITANO

It's a lot of money. \$10,000.

That's a great prize to win if you bought a \$20 Buona Fortuna ticket for this year's Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish Festival.

But if you were around in 1949 and had 50 cents to spend on a raffle ticket at what was called the Mount Carmel Bazaar, you had a chance to win something really special — a car.

Yes, a car. A spanking, brand new 1949 Plymouth Deluxe four-door sedan. No, it didn't have a moon roof, six-disc CD player or air conditioning (unless you opened the windows), but it was a car.

It sold for \$1,850, about \$18,000 in today's dollars.

(By the way, in case you win the \$10,000 this year and want to know how much that was worth in 1948, you would have about \$96,000 to spend.

(Times, they are a changin'.)

Betty Arcuri has been around for a while. She remembers that 1949 festival because it didn't take place at Mount Carmel.

"I can especially recall the festival in 1949, which was held at St. Louis Gonzaga Church, perhaps because they had more space at the time," she said. "There was a Popularity Contest held and tickets were sold for 50 cents each.

"The contest involved voting for a Queen, Junior Queen and King. The contestants who sold the most tickets won the title. The winners would receive a wrist watch to the Queen and Junior Queen, and a motion picture projector for the King. The ticket-



Festival a tradition for generations

winner prizes included a 1949 Plymouth Deluxe four-door sedan as first prize, a television set as second prize and \$100 in cash for third prize. What a deal!"

The candidates for Queen that year were: Mary Ann Tringo, Joan Pucine, Joann Rossi, Helene Farina, Norma Gumina and Janet Barone.

Those vying for Junior Queen were: Lucille Scalzo, Joan Trino, Louise Columbro, Sandra DeFazio, Mary LoCash and Camelita Torchia.

While there were 12 young ladies in the running, only four lads sought to be King: Joseph Mango, Frank Longo Minozzi, Anthony Comito and Philip Spartano.

Who won? Sorry, we don't know.

Rosemarie Chiffy vividly remembers the 1949 bazaar, but not in a fond fashion.

"It was not very successful," she said. "It rained on Saturday — what mess! Carrying everything up there was not feasible."

No one seems to know when the festival first began or how long it's been going on, but however long it has been around, there always is one constant — pizza fritta.

"Pizza fritta was always the big seller," Rosemarie said.

It's still a best-seller every year, and that never will change. What did change was the amount of work to prepare it.

"Pizza fritta workers didn't have all the equipment they have now," Rosemarie said. "The ladies mixed the dough by hand for many a year. There was no kitchen upstairs (it was in the basement of the school). We had to use old pitchers up and down the stairs. But everyone had fun."

What has made the festival special is that it celebrates the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the patroness of our parish.

"July 16 was a most important date in the parish when I was a kid," Rosemarie said. "The celebration was centered on the feast day. The bazaar was chaired by various societies, which were plentiful at the time — Mount Carmel Men's, Mount Carmel Ladies, Adoration, Holy Name, etc.

"For many years, I'm talking about the '80s and '90s, chair people of the festival held a prayer service before opening night and on Sunday morning. Chair people would lead the procession."

Betty agrees that the Blessed Mother is, and always has been, at the heart of the celebration.

"My Mom, as other women in the parish, religiously made their novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which culminated in a candlelight procession followed by a visit to the festival grounds and perhaps a tasty sausage-and-pepper sandwich.

"My memories of the Mount Carmel Parish Festival go back to a time when it was the highlight of our summer," Betty said. "There weren't many families who went on vacations to theme parks and such, so the festival was our summer treat. My Dad, who was the parish sexton at the time, was fully involved in the preparations, and we children looked forward



Photos courtesy of Rosemarie Chiffy

ABOVE: Parishioners in the early 1940s walk up the steps to the church on Catherine Street during the procession in honor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. **BELOW:** Checking out the equipment in the new first-floor kitchen where it is today.

to a weekend of food and fun."

Long before Turning Stone Resort Casino arrived on the scene, the festival was the place to be — it had a gambling tent.

Marge Hanrahan recalls when her father (Joe Laria) used to have the make the rounds of the grounds picking up cash, and he wasn't taking any chances.

"My Dad loved to hunt, so, of course, he had pistols and rifle permits always updated," she said. "When it came for a pickup, my Dad always went to the gambling tent (yes, gambling). In that tent were Pete Paleschi, George LaNeve and Peter DeSarro.

"Of course, my Dad had his shoulder holster on unclipped with the gun ready in case he needed it. I would get so nervous, fearing he would shoot off his foot. This went on for years."

And Joe's armed protection didn't stop there.

"One year, (my brother) Anthony was on finance, and after the festival they went to Oneida National Bank to make the night deposit drop," Marge remembered. "Anthony drove the car and my Dad went shotgun. He got out of the car and escorted Anthony to the drop deposit."

Fortunately, Joe's gun never left the holster.

Rosemarie never toted a gun, but her memories of the festival hit the target.

"I remember my Uncle Bill Rizzo ran a blanket stand," she said. "They even had a chicken stand. There were always two bands — the Red Band (La Banda Rosa) and the White Band, because they wore white uniforms.

"The bazaar moved to its present site when Father Berton purchased the land adjacent to the school in the 1950s. More stands were included



along with the Mount Carmel Dramatic Guild, which ran bingo each night on the grounds.

"We had terrific prizes — toasters, radios, bicycles, dishes and a variety of household items. We ran bingo for at least seven years."

Young or old, the festival still is a special time.

"As children, we looked forward to seeing an uncle, aunt or cousin who would give us some change to play games, enjoy a ride or buy whatever food we favored," Betty said. "Sometimes, we overdid it and had to go home and drink some 'brioschi' (that was our Italian Alka-Seltzer).

"Times have changed, but the tradition of our parish festival remains. Now, my children bring their children, and I look forward to giving them money to enjoy the treats that children enjoy today.

"It is so good to know that some traditions do continue, and I still look forward to the festival each year where I get to see so many faces of the past who I'm sure feel as I do in connecting to our special days gone by."



*"Father, forgive them
for they know not
what they do."*

To err is human, to forgive divine

It might be hard, but there's power in forgiveness

An article in "Vatican News" written by Andrea Monda speaks about the literary masterpiece "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien and its Christian imagery.

One of the author's critics claimed the trilogy's hero, Frodo, really was a traitor and should not be praised. Tolkien responded, "The 'salvation' of the world and Frodo's own 'salvation' is achieved by his previous pity and forgiveness of injury."

It occurred to me that there isn't a lot of "forgiveness" going around today. Grudges fill our political discourse, our international conflicts and to a certain degree our own interactions with others. To hold the upper hand is to own "the power," and the world today is obsessed with it. Forgiving is interpreted by many as relinquishing power or sign of weakness.

It may be argued, however, that forgiving is the demonstration of power over the aggressor.

Society encourages us to achieve, to succeed,

to win, to come out on top, to be the "best." In doing so we often dismiss others' achievements, feelings, personal space, aspirations or property. They become an incumbrance, a bother, an obstacle to our own success. We may even eventually begin to see them as enemies.

We get so wound up with our own trajectory that we ignore even our closest loved ones and confidants and how they have supported us on our journey. In doing so we can inflict great injury, whether physical or emotional, on others. We, in turn, become the aggressors.

Do we really need to do that?

The Bible teaches us that we must forgive those whom we perceive as our offenders or enemies. Ephesians 4:32 instructs believers to be "kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." In Matthew 6:14-15, we are told that if you do not forgive others, God will not forgive your trespasses. We are even told how much we should forgive in Matthew 18:22 when Jesus says that we should forgive "not seven times, but seven times seventy," using an extreme number to indicate that forgiveness should be limitless.

Forgiveness can be a release. In Buddhism, forgiveness is viewed as a tool for self-liberation. It doesn't necessarily absolve someone of

guilt but is rather a release of anger, resentment and ill-will to free one's own mind from suffering. In other words, resentment or hatred cannot be terminated by withholding one's own contempt. Forgiveness is the only way to end the cycle.

When an individual is consumed by hate or resentment over a perceived, or real, transgression of another, that person is often the only person in that situation to feel stress. Often, the target of hate or resentment is oblivious to the transgression and feels no grief. Then, what is the point? Serenity is power, and forgiveness can be its key. Forgiveness lifts the burden on one's shoulders and is a step toward personal peace.

hen, what is the point? Serenity is power, and forgiveness can be its key. Forgiveness lifts the burden on one's shoulders and is a step toward personal peace.

It may not be easy for us to forgive. But if Christ, after being flogged, tortured, nailed to the cross, stabbed in the ribs and asked to drink bile from a sponge, can summon the words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," we should follow His example.

Shortly after saying those words, the Savior was released from his mortal suffering and joined his Heavenly genitor.

Perhaps, if we mere mortals can forgive, even venial transgressions, we can take a short step toward Paradise as well.



A.J. VALENTINI

DAVE FONTAINE

Continued from Page 3

my earlier years. I was now responsible for the overall direction of the entire department; 25 intercollegiate sports, 700 student-athletes, and all full- and part-time staff and coaches. I served on the President's Cabinet, held leadership roles within the Empire 8 Conference, was part of Middlestates Assessment, executed contracts, created policies and procedures, added sport teams, was a member of the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee for Division I, II and III, assisted in hosting national tournaments, worked closely with staff to ensure studentathletes had the best experience possible and was part of other university initiatives to name a few.

Being the athletic director at Utica University was one of the great honors of my career. It allowed me to give back to a place that shaped me, and to help shape the experiences of thousands of student-athletes who came after me. My goal was always to leave it a little better than I found it and pass it along to the next person to do the same.

After retiring from the university in 2025, you became director of the Clark Sports Center in Cooperstown, which many people only know as the site of the Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony. But there's a lot more to the job than that.

My role as director is to support our area directors so they can do what they do best. They are the ones who run programs, manage events and keep the building moving. I'm fortunate to work alongside the talented department directors and administrators on our staff. My job is to help them succeed by providing structure, clarity and consistency so they can focus on serving our 5,800 members and the community.

A large part of that work involves creating and refining policies and procedures, the steady, behind-the-scenes efforts that keep a facility operating safely and smoothly. Whether it's improving communication, tightening processes, securing necessary resources or clarifying expectations, I see my role as helping people do their jobs with confidence and support.

I am responsible for the oversight of the facility, including staffing, scheduling, programming, member experience, maintenance coordination, budgeting and long-term planning.

You had several career paths but have seemed to end up where you want to be. What advice would you give young adults and workers pursuing careers?

My career wasn't a straight line, and I've learned it doesn't need to be. My advice isn't unique, and it's nothing that hasn't been said thousands of times before, which is why it may be worth considering. Follow the things that genuinely interest you, and don't be afraid to pivot when life presents a new direction. Put in an honest day's work, and don't hesitate to do a little extra; small things build trust and open

doors. Treat people with respect because relationships will carry you farther than titles ever will. Don't burn bridges — the world is smaller than it seems, and paths have a way of crossing again. Take pride in your work, and when you make mistakes, own them, learn from them, and move forward. Failure helps to shape you.

Above all, hold on to your moral compass. It's easy to get caught up in ambition or the noise around you, but perspective is everything. Step back and remember that things often unfold for a reason. Sometimes the closed doors protect us, and the open ones guide us. In short, keep your heart steady, your gratitude strong, and your faith at the center. When you do, God has a way of working out the pieces you can't yet see.

You're a prostate cancer survivor. Please describe your journey.

A simple routine prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test was the first sign something might be wrong. I had no symptoms and didn't feel sick, which made early detection even more important.

On June 7, 2021, I underwent a radical, nerve-sparing prostatectomy. Remarkably, I was able to return home the same day after the three-hour surgery. The first week of recovery was humbling, and I was fortunate that my wife took time off from work to care for me. I was back to work two weeks post-op, though in hindsight, I probably should have given myself a little more time for my body to heal. I was moving pretty slow at that point, but I was there, in my office. Within eight months or so, I was back to 100 percent. I'm always willing to share this journey with anyone going through something similar. Every case is different, but if hearing my experience helps someone feel less alone and gives them a sense of what to expect, I'm glad to offer it.

I credit my doctor at Upstate Medical, Dr. Gennady Bratslavsky, for giving me clear direction and exceptional care. He didn't just treat me, he also successfully treated my mother and my brother. Thank God, we are all doing well.

Being cancer free today is something I'm deeply grateful for. It gave me perspective on health, family, faith and how vulnerable and fragile we really are.

Every Sunday, you take your mother, De-lores, to 11 a.m. Mass. She's 95 now. What has that experience been like for you — and your mom?

Every Sunday, I take my mom to 11 a.m. Mass, though some days I'm not sure if I'm taking her or if she's taking me. What started as a routine has become something I genuinely enjoy. At 95, she still has her sense of humor, she still bosses me around, and being with her is definitely a blessing. We laugh a lot and keep things light. Those moments remind me how fortunate I am to still share this time with her.

For my mom, I think it brings comfort, the familiarity of church, the rhythm of the week and the chance to be out in the community. But

more than anything, I think she values the time together. At her age, every moment feels meaningful, and I don't take that lightly.

I'm also deeply grateful for the relationship my wife Tammy has with my mom. Watching the two of them together, the kindness, the patience, the genuine affection means more to me than I can put into words. It gives my mother a sense of security, and it gives me a sense of peace.

These Sundays have absolutely changed my perspective. They slow me down. They remind me that life moves quickly, and the things we think are urgent often aren't. Sitting next to my mom each week, knowing how much she's lived, how much she's seen and how much she still enjoys the simple moments, keeps me grounded. It reminds me to appreciate what's right in front of me, to be present, and to hold on to the people who matter most.

How has your faith journey influenced your life?

When I look back on my journey, I can see how my faith was shaped long before I understood it. I grew up in a home where faith, family, love and support were constants. My parents lived their faith quietly and consistently — church every Sunday, prayers before meals and before bed, and a sense that God was simply part of everyday life. Only later did I realize how much those routines became the foundation I still stand on.

That foundation was strengthened by my family. My aunts and uncles, many of whom have passed, lived their faith through humility, resilience and the way they cared for others. My Aunt Marion, my last living aunt, continues to embody that same grace and steadiness. My brother Brian, my cousins and close friends were part of that same circle, and together they created a community where faith wasn't something you talked about, it was something you lived. All of them shaped me in ways I didn't fully appreciate until I was older.

As I grew, faith became something I had to choose for myself. I found, like many people do, I turned to God when life felt uncertain or I was in need of help. It wasn't about dramatic moments, more about grounding myself, finding clarity, and knowing I wasn't carrying everything alone. I also found real peace at Mass, a quiet that helped me reset. Priests like Father Jim Cesta, Father Joe Salerno and Father Paul Angelichio have each, in their own way, deepened my connection to the Mass and to my faith.

I try to live my faith through how I treat people and how I show up each day. I fall short at times, but those moments remind me why faith matters, it keeps me humble and keeps me learning.

Today, my faith isn't loud. It's steady. It guides how I navigate challenges, how I see people, and what I value. In many ways, it brings me back to the example my parents, my family and the people closest to me lived every day, that faith is demonstrated in how you live, how you treat people, and how you show up each day.



We all scream for (you know what)!

Following the novena on Wednesday, June 24, the Salerno Room was filled with people enjoying the first Ice Cream Social sponsored by the Social Ministry. Participants lined up and were treated to ice cream with their choice of several toppings, including Our Lady of Mount "Caramel" sauce. There also was fruit punch, coffee and water to wash down the dessert.



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