

ST. MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL / BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH – WINTER 2012

MORE GOOD NEWS

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build faith
foundation

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Look forward to a new year, not back to past tribulations

While the New Year still is new, I suggest that our resolve and resolution be to act more like a glowing fireplace radiating warmth and light rather than embers almost burnt out.

This suggestion is for individuals as well as our parish community all taken together.

Some have found it tempting to lose belief in the future. Times are tough for various reasons, but this new year, now unfolding for us – 2012 – has the possibility for so much good and what is blessed.

Many are discovering, for instance, that we can be happy with less “stuff” and more good times with family and friends. It would be too easy to consider that politics, moral scandals, our nation’s prestige, the economy and even climate change are all getting troublesome – but really, no more or less than any other moment in history.

We are strong, good and usually have our hearts in the right place.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor and the beginning of the Second World War, Winston Churchill spoke describing the American people saying, “Do not think you have gone this far because you are made of sugar candy.”

Actually, the real “new” resolutions seem to be made as we journey deep-

er into winter – February and March – when there is time to step back and consider the “whys” of life. Why am I here? What is my purpose in being here? Where am I headed?

Our faith should show us the way in this new year. Feed your faith, and your doubts and timid ways will starve to death.

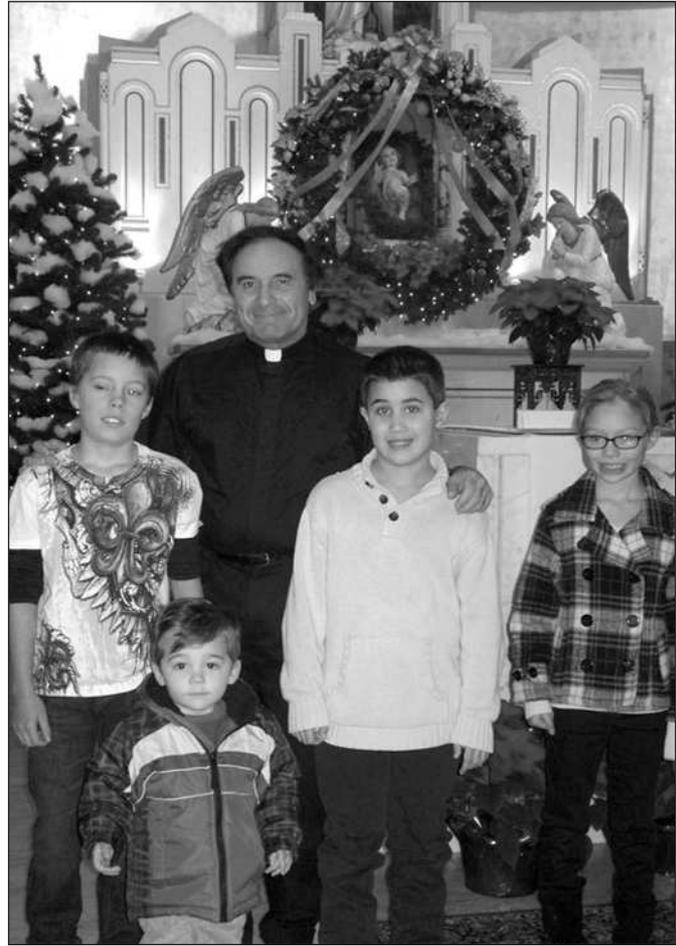
Our faith tells us that this can be a good and blessed year because more people treasure life than despise it, more would rather heal others than injure them, and more find satisfaction in building up instead of tearing down.

You see, it’s faith that makes all the difference in the world or in any new year. Let go of what is past history – old grudges, leftover worries and ancient memories.

One of the best suggestions for a new year was spoken by a wise person once: “Don’t put a lingering question mark where God has already put a period. Let the past be past.”

At the New Year’s Eve table, little Johnny burped and Papa said, “What do we say after such a big burp?” And Johnny said, “Happy Neeeeeeew Year”!!!!

Father Jim



**“Don’t put a lingering question mark where God has already put a period.
Let the past be past.”**

Bishop honors Re Chiffy with an Immaculata Award for service

Rosemarie Chiffy was honored in December 4 with the Immaculata Award, given by the Diocese of Syracuse.

This award honors lay people who generously give of themselves in service to the parish, whose love of the church has been shown through their devotion to the Holy Father, the diocese and parish — the unsung heroes in our midst who build up parish communities by extraordinary service in parish ministry and volunteerism.

The Most Rev. Robert J. Cunningham, bishop of Syracuse, presented the awards in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

in Syracuse.

“In conjunction with the 125th anniversary of the Diocese of Syracuse, I felt it important to honor the unsung heroes whose love of the church has been shown through their devotion to the Holy Father, to our diocese and to their parish,” Cunningham said.

Cunningham commissioned a special medallion called the Immaculata Medallion that was presented to the honorees during the service.



The Immaculata Medallion was designed by Baker Liturgical Art LLC. On one side of the bronze medal appears an image of the Immaculate Conception, the patroness of the Diocese of Syracuse.

The reverse features an image of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. This award was instituted in 2011 as part of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the diocese.

Honorees were nominated by their pastor and/or parish council in recognition of their volunteer roles in their parishes at the request of Cunningham.

Building a foundation of faith

Religious program coordinators help mold children

At one time or another on our earthly journey, there come one or two defining moments when the course of one's life is irrevocably altered.

Terri Panuccio and Anne Carlone-Elacqua are no exceptions.

Terri and Anne coordinate St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament's Faith Formation programs – Terri for children kindergarten through sixth grade, and Anne for grades 7 through 10.

For Terri, her life-altering moment came after a bitter separation from a friend.

"I was hurt by a friend and we weren't speaking," she said. "Of course, when we handle situations our way, human nature tells us to get even and seek vengeance against those who hurt you. We all know this is not the right way to handle situations, as that only causes more problems.

"One day, I was driving in my car thinking of ways to get even when I heard a very audible voice say, 'Terri, don't worry, I will take care of it.' I knew it was God, and at that moment I gave all my anger, hurt and frustration to Him. Shortly thereafter, my friend and I were able to talk and resolve our differences."

For Anne, it was a close encounter to death and a health crisis that solidified her course.

"I had a horrific car accident at age 16," she said. "They didn't know if I was going to make it through the night. But God was there for me. He guided the doctors and helped me through my long recovery. It was my strong faith that got me through that very difficult time."

Her faith was emboldened again last summer.

"I was diagnosed with colon cancer. Because my surgeon was not completely satisfied with some of my test results, he pushed for

ONLINE

Visit www.mount-carmelblessed-sacrament.com for photo galleries of the Faith Formation children in class, dressing up for All Saints Day and serving pizza frittata. Click on the "Faith Formation" link for more on the programs.

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More photos



Faith Formation for the younger students has a focus for each grade level. Grade 1 is The Trinity, Grade 2 is Jesus, Grade 3 is The Church, Grade 4 is Morality, Grade 5 is The Sacraments and Grade 6 is The Hebrew Scriptures.

TERRI PIAZZA-PANUCCIO

Age: 47.

Occupation: Substitute teacher in the Utica School District.

Parish position: Coordinator of Faith Formation for grades K-6.

Education: Associate degree in liberal arts and sciences/elementary education from Mohawk Valley Community College. Enrolled in the Formation for Ministry program through the Syracuse Diocese. (Will be commissioned a lay minister for catechetical leader in May by Bishop Robert Cunningham.)

Family: Husband, Nick (20 years), daughters Nicole (18) and Maria (16), son Vinny (14).

Things you like to do in your spare time: Photography, shopping, spending time with my family.

Favorite quote: "Life is a journey, not a destination."



ANNE CARLONE-ELACQUA

Age: 48.

Occupation: Organist and substitute teacher (former owner/director of Magic Penny Nursery School).

Parish position: Coordinator of Faith Formation for grades 7 through 10. Also has been coordinating RCIA and some adult faith formation.

Education: Master's degree in from Touro College; bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in psychology in the educational setting from Empire State College; associate degrees from Mohawk Valley Community College; Thomas R. Proctor High School.

Family: Husband, David, sons David Jr. and Nicholas.

Things you like to do in your spare time: Read, bake and cook.

Favorite quote: "There is always a reason for everything that happens. Sometimes we may not understand it at the moment, but one day we will figure it out and hopefully learn from it."



At 16, Kenny independent, a real leader

Kenny Lacy and his family have been parishioners for many years. He's been an altar server and a lector. He likes being his own man.

How would you describe what Kenny Lacy is like?

I would say I am respectful, a leader, outgoing, athletic, talented and intelligent.

What are some of your favorite things to do?

Play video games with friends, watch the Atlanta Falcons play every Sunday, watching Syracuse basketball, get together with my family on the holidays, play baseball and basketball, and sing in the school choir.

What's your family like?

My family is very close. We get together with our other family members every Sunday to watch football together and have Sunday dinner.

Who has been the biggest influence in your life so far?

I'd have to say my father. He's instilled good values in me. He is a great father and husband. He's taught me how to be a hard worker, he's taught me right from wrong and to always be the best I can be.

Is it tough being an older brother? Do you feel any responsibility to set a good example?

Sometimes it can be tough being the older brother, especially when my brother was younger because he used to try to do anything that I did. We get along good, we are close and I'm glad we have each other.

You've been coming to church for a number of years. What's your earliest memory of going to Mass?

I remember when I was about 5 or 6 years old going to Easter Vigil Mass. I remember everyone holding candles in the dark, and because I was so young it seemed like the Mass took forever.

What do you like most about Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament?

I enjoy listening to Father Cesta's sermons. I also enjoy the friendly atmosphere when I attend Mass and I always have a good feeling when I leave.

You were an altar server for a long time and you're now "retired." What did you like best about being a server?

I enjoyed being on the altar and participating in Mass alongside of father. I also enjoyed training the younger altar servers when I had to, and I like participating in the special Masses and holiday Masses.



The Lacy family, from left: Kenny, Diane, Kenny Sr. and Dante. Kenny says his father has been the biggest influence in his life. "He's instilled good values in me. He is a great father and husband. He's taught me how to be a hard worker, he's taught me right from wrong and to always be the best I can be."

KENNY LACY

Age: 16.

School: Thomas R. Proctor High School.

Grade: Junior.

Family: Mom, dad and one brother.

Employment: Work in the summer as a park adviser at Proctor Park.

Favorite book: "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Favorite movie: "Space Jam."

Favorite TV show: "X Factor."

What you like to do for fun: Play baseball, basketball and football with my friends; play video games; and I love singing.



Kenny loves sports, including baseball, basketball and football.

You're now a lector? Why did you want to become a lector?

One Monday night in religion class, Father Cesta asked if I would be interested in becoming a lector, and since I knew I wouldn't be an altar server much longer, I still wanted to participate, so I became a lector.

Lots of young people don't like to talk about religion. What about you?

I would not go out of my way to bring up the subject of religion, but if it ever were to come up in conversation, I would not be shy to share my beliefs.

If you had a chance to tell your best friend about what your religion means to you, what would you say?

I would tell them that religion is a way for me to get away from the rest of the world for a little while and that it is a time for me to bond with God for guidance.

What's the one thing about yourself that you're most proud of?

I'm most proud of the fact that I have my own mind and make my own decisions.

What does the future hold for Kenny Lacy?

Hopefully in the future I will be going to Syracuse University to pursue my desire to be a sports broadcaster or a crime scene investigator.

Does not going to church make me a bad person?

Dave Perritano has encountered a dilemma many Catholics face. Because of one circumstance or another, he doesn't attend Mass on a regular basis. He wonders if that makes him a 'bad Catholic,' even though he does many other things the gospel teaches us to do. He submitted, in part, the following. His dad, Fran Perritano, in his counterpoint, offers his response to his son.

By DAVE PERRITANO

I'm a 30-year-old overnight news producer in North Carolina. I'm Utica born and raised, but after I graduated from Syracuse University, I've lived in Long Beach, Calif., Binghamton, and Wilmington and Durham in North Carolina.

I have been lucky enough to have been a part of three wonderful parish communities - their one thing in common: they were all in New York. Out west and here in the South, Catholicism can be in the minority, so worship options are limited.

So, my question to you is, does it make me a bad Catholic because I have lost my enthusiasm about attending Mass weekly? When I'm home, going to Saturday evening or Sunday Mass comes just as easy to me as brushing my teeth. It's just something you do. And I enjoy it. Here, it feels like a burden for something unfulfilling.

While many may disagree, I believe church is someplace you should WANT to go, not just some place you HAVE to go. You want your kids to like vegetables because they're good for you, but how effective is force feeding?

I think in the end, we'll all be judged on how we live our lives. So, if I no longer attend Mass regularly, or could be considered one of the PACEs (Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Christmas and Easter attendee), will I not be allowed to pass through the pearly gates?

Now, take into account that for the past three years I've volunteered for a few hours weekly at the University of North Carolina Children's Hospital. I also donate yearly to the hospital's fundraiser, and to a similar one at Duke Children's Hospital, just to name a few.

So, if I choose to make productive use of my Catholic upbringing, does that count in my favor?

Let me know, and I'll see you at Easter!

By FRAN PERRITANO

As the years have gone on, I have determined in my mind that the rules of the church are guidelines to make us better people.

You are doing what the gospel teaches - caring for others, being a good person and leading a good life.

As far as going to church, you were spoiled. You grew up in Mount Carmel, a great parish with a beautiful church, excellent services and understanding priests.

You said you had similar experiences at Syracuse University and in Binghamton, but things went south when you went South.

One thing my age and wisdom have given me is that you get out of life what you put into it.

It was your involvement with the people. At Mount Carmel, you were involved in the parish since you were a kid. At Syracuse, you were involved with a good priest and a great group of friends. In Binghamton, it was more of the same. You were even a lecturer there.

It was your involvement with the parish community, not the building, not the services, not the beautiful artwork.

If you're bored with a situation in a church you visit, why not try to make a difference. Get involved. Meet the people. Make new friends. Offer your expertise to help make the parish grow into what you know a parish can be.

My advice is not to look back at the way things were for you, look ahead at the possibilities of what they can be.

I can guarantee that practicing your faith and being with others can help you cope with life's disappointments. It also will greatly enrich your life and give you peace.



"If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."

Eldridge Cleaver in a 1968 speech

Pay a visit to the Hall of Saints



A.J. VALENTINI

Many of our readers are familiar with the room directly behind the St. Joseph altar on the southwest corner of our church. Some might not know it exists.

In any case, if you happen to go there (the entrance is just off the corridor to our Jay Street entrance), you might find some of our parishioners paying reverence before one of several statues of holy figures. The origins of these statues go back to the early members of our parish.

Parishioner Felicia Grassi, 87, recalls how her mother and some of her other friends from Missanello, in the Basilicata region of Italy, collected donations by going door to door throughout East Utica to purchase the statues of saints Donato, whose feast is celebrated on Aug. 7, and Rocco,

whose feast is celebrated on Aug. 18 and 19 in their native town. For them the presence of these patrons from their former lives far away brought comfort to them here in their new lives in America.

In the collection one can find Santa Rosalia, patroness of Palermo, Sicily, whose festival still takes place in the chapel across the street from Mount Carmel/Blessed Sacrament. St. Lucy, the one celebrated in the famous song "Santa Lucia," and patroness of the eastern end of Sicily, particularly Siracusa, also is there.

But who were these saints, and why were they so revered by our early parishioners? Below is what we learned.



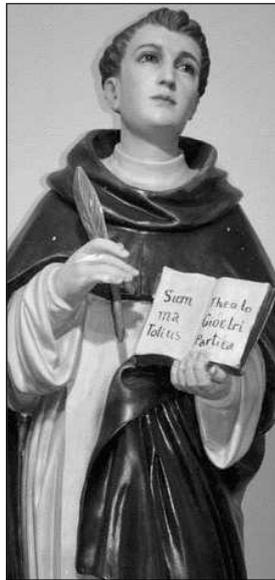
SANTA ROSALIA

Santa Rosalia, also called "La Santuzza" in Sicilian, was born to a noble family who claimed to be descended from Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor. Appalled by the sinful world she lived in, she became a hermit living on Mount Pellegrino, near Palermo, where she died alone in 1166. During a plague in 1624, she appeared to a hunter and showed him where her mortal remains were. She instructed him to take them into the city. After a solemn procession through the streets, the remains were given a proper burial and the plague ended.



ST. DONATO

Although our statue says San Donato Missanello on its base, all research we found either in English or Italian points to the St. Donato who was born in Turkey and as a boy came to Rome. Persecuted by the Roman emperor, his parents were killed and he fled to the city of Arezzo. There he became a follower of the monk Ilariano, and later ordained a priest under the bishop Satiro. He was credited for many miracles and eventually became the bishop of that city. His many miraculous works drew the attention of the Roman prefect who had him decapitated on Aug. 2, 362, for the practice of magic.



ST. THOMAS ACQUINAS

St. Thomas Aquinas is one of the 33 "Doctors" of the church, those select people who have been accredited with establishing the precepts of our religion. He was born in Roccasecca (between Rome and Naples). He joined the Dominican Order and attended the University of Naples. Combining his classical training with religious dogma, he became one of the Catholic Church's foremost theologians. In Aquinas' view, man existed at the junction of the corporeal and spiritual; his body is a manifestation of the material world and his soul is his link to the infinite. Heavy stuff, even for theologians.



ST. LUCY

St. Lucy is known as the patron saint of sight. She was of a noble family of Siracusa and was to be married off but refused to marry a pagan, vowing rather to remain a virgin. She was reported to the Roman authorities who tried to bring her to a brothel. By Divine force she became immovable and could not be taken away. A local guide in Siracusa told us they gouged her eyes out. They next tried to burn her, but she was impervious to the flames. At last she was struck on the neck with a sword and died. She was buried in Siracusa, but during the Saracen occupation the Venetians took her remains to Venice. Her feast, Dec. 13, heralds the coming of Christmas.



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the patroness of the Carmelite Order, originally hermits who lived on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land in the 12th and 13th centuries. Tradition says that Mary gave a brown scapular to an early Carmelite, St. Simon Stock. The scapular is a sign and pledge of devotion to the Holy Mother and an incitement to imitate her virtues of humility, chastity and prayerful spirit.

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- ◆ St. Rocco
- ◆ Our Lady of Fatima

HALL OF SAINTS

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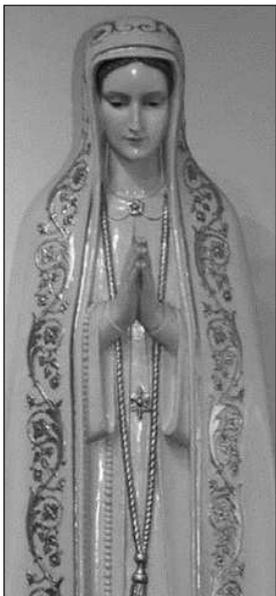


Directly behind the St. Joseph altar on the southwest corner of our church, just off the corridor to the Jay Street entrance, you might find some of our parishioners paying reverence before one of several statues of saints.



ST. ROCCO

Little children love the statue of St. Rocco because he is shown with a dog that has a loaf of bread in his mouth at his side. A French nobleman born in 1340, he was left an orphan under the care of an uncle. Dedicating himself to God and the Virgin, he gave his wealth to the poor and took an oath of poverty. He went to Italy to administer to the sick and contracted the plague. He became very ill and had an open sore on his leg. Living in a cave, a local dog took to bringing him bread from his master's table. Curious to see where the dog was going with his bread, the master followed him to the cave. The man took Rocco back to his castle and nursed him back to health. St. Rocco is the patron of victims of plagues and other illnesses.



OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Our Lady of Fatima is sometimes called Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. The story goes that Mary appeared to three Portuguese children on the 13th of six consecutive months in 1917. It was during the World War I and there was global turmoil. A lady in brilliant white, as the children would later say, told them that people needed to be penitent and dedicate themselves to the immaculate heart of Mary. In her three prophecies she is said to have predicted the beginning of World War II, the shooting of Pope John Paul II and the peace that would follow if Russia was dedicated to Mary. More than 70,000 pilgrims joined the children on the last apparition and many of them reported seeing the sun dance and brilliant colors shooting forth from it. The Catholic Church has declared the events of Fatima "worthy of belief."

FAITH FORMATION

Continued from Page 3

additional testing," Anne said. "They found an issue with my spleen. This past August, I had the colon cancer removed and my spleen. Upon further testing of my spleen, it was found that it had a lymphoma. ... Through the prayers of so many people, I was blessed that I did not have to have any further treatments.

"God truly was there for me and has always been. He is my rock."

Terri and Anne have channeled their life experiences into guiding the religious education for the children of the parish.

Faith Formation for the younger students has a focus for each grade level. Grade 1 is The Trinity, Grade 2 is Jesus, Grade 3 is The Church, Grade 4 is Morality, Grade 5 is The Sacraments and Grade 6 is The Hebrew Scriptures.

When the students move on to seventh grade and beyond, the lessons get more in depth.

"The Syracuse diocese has what is called 'learned outcomes' that are the concepts, topics, etc., that they want our students to learn about," Anne said. "They are built on each year going deeper in meaning at the grade level that the student would be. There are many for each grade."

Terri and Anne realize they only have the students for a short period of time every week. They know that the first – and best – teachers come from the home, and that sometimes is a problem when the adults don't follow through on their responsibilities.

"I understand that parents and children are busy nowadays, and church is not on the top of everyone's priorities, but when a child is baptized into the Catholic faith, the parents are given the responsibility of training their children in the practice of our Catholic faith," Terri said. "They are the first and best teachers of our faith. The church is there to help the parents along on the journey.

"As with building a good house, you need a solid foundation, otherwise the house will

cave in. If parents don't start educating their children early on about God and their faith, and building that firm foundation in Christ, eventually everything in life will start to fall apart. ... Unless the faith is lived and reinforced in the home, the children will have a difficult time living and growing in their faith."

Anne said that some parents have told her when they bring their children to church, the kids don't pay attention or hate coming.

"My response is, 'Where are you sitting?' To which they usually respond, 'In the back,'" she said. "I tell them move to the front and give them a play-by-play commentary when necessary. You will find that if they can see what is happening, they will pay attention and want to know what is going on.

"If you are 3 to 4 feet tall and only see tall backs in front of you, it is hard to pay attention. When parents would take my advice, they would tell me, 'You were right, what a difference it made.'"

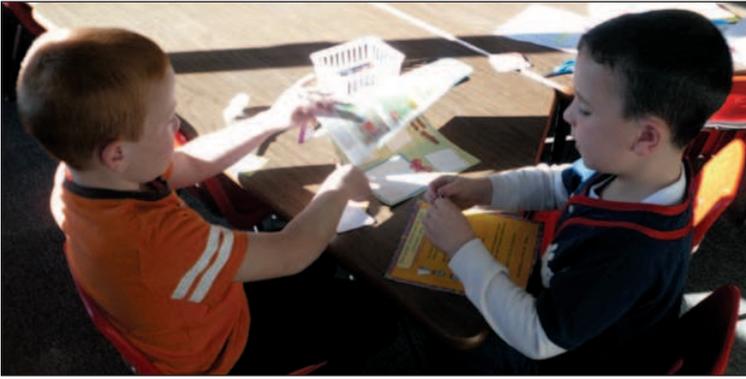
Terri and Anne are dedicated to doing what they can for the children. One added bonus for both women is they get something in return for giving their time and talent.

"Being able to share my faith and love of God with so many incredible people is a true blessing for me," Terri said. "I have met many wonderful families and children throughout the years. Knowing I played just a small role in so many people's faith lives is so rewarding and fulfilling. Hopefully, the seeds of faith that I have help to plant will bear much fruit for both the children and parents."

Anne said her life has been enriched as well.

"It has helped me to grow in my faith," she said. "Working with the older students, I have come to get a better understanding of how they think and what is important to them as young adults. We have a great group of kids here and whenever I ask for help, they are there. Their positive attitude is contagious."

Fran Perritano



‘Let the children come to me’



View more photos of the Faith Formation program at www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com