

MORE GOOD NEWS

Immaculata Medallion symbol of unselfish service

PAGE 3



*"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another
as good stewards of God's varied grace."*

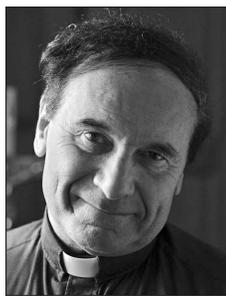
1 Peter 4:10

There's nothing 'ordinary' about this time of year

During the mid winter doldrums, it would be easy to consider this time between the conclusion of holy holidays and the arrival of the new year and the coming Lent, to be oh so ordinary, a bit boring and subdued.

But, of course, it isn't at all, even though the Catholic calendar calls these weeks "ordinary."

This time of the year, especially for people of faith, can hold a special richness of its own. As this edition of our parish publication "More Good News" celebrates a spirit of volunteerism and those who offer time, talent, treasure and so much energy to the faith, so this "ordinary" season of the church can be just as full and rich and uplifting as those big days of Christmas, Easter and other holy days that are so very special that we cherish them.



FATHER JIM

Actually, during mid-winter there are many opportunities to volunteer and get involved not only in parish life, but also in the wider community in which we live.

Maybe the places left by some of our snow birds during these months are an invitation to others to get involved. Really, every hour of the day and every season of the year have something special to give us, but oftentimes we cannot make ourselves present to meet the gift.

Many spiritual people and those who take

“Whether someone might be considering some volunteer participation in the parish or the community — school, sports, worthy causes, whatever it might be this time — these ordinary weeks of January, February into March can be just as much a blessing as Advent and Christmas or Lent and Easter.”

time to reflect on the deeper things in life tell us that it is important to be attentive to the present moment — it has been called “the angel of the hour.” Whether someone might be considering some volunteer participation in the parish or the community — school, sports, worthy causes, whatever it might be this time — these ordinary weeks of January, February into March can be just as much a blessing as Advent and Christmas or Lent and Easter.

Not too long ago, Pope Francis, speaking to millions of young people gathered for a Catholic youth event, said they should not turn into couch potatoes ... well, that is a good phrase for anybody of any age. So many have so much to offer that can lift up our wonderful faith and the places where we live and work.

The words ordinary and routine can sound somewhat boring, but not when we meet the “angels of the hour.”

PARISH MINISTRIES

Below are several parish ministries that reach out to our parishioners and the public. For a complete list, visit www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com. If you are interested in joining one of these groups, call the parish office at 735-1482.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The goal of this committee is to provide opportunities for parishioners to get together, enjoy themselves and meet other parish community members through a variety of social activities. These activities are varied in nature and are for all age groups to take advantage of. This committee meets when needed prior to a planned activity, and always is looking for new members.

MOUNT CARMEL SOCIETY

The Mount Carmel Society is the oldest society of the parish, it is comprised of men and women. This group offers spiritual support and sponsors various parish activities. This society meets quarterly after attending Mass as one body.

ST. ANNE SOCIETY

The purpose of the society is spiritual and social. Several fundraising events are scheduled throughout the year. The society contributes the proceeds from these events to various projects for the benefit of the parish and other charitable needs. Membership is open to all adult women.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

We have a great need for volunteers helping to keep the parish grounds well-maintained. Some jobs include weeding, trimming and planting. Also, anyone willing to volunteer in helping with small jobs involving basic plumbing, carpentry and electricity will be notified on an as-needed basis.

PARISH WEBSITE: THE LATEST INFORMATION

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

A Community on a Journey of Faith November 21, 2011

ST. MARY OF MT. CARMEL BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH
648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501 • www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament

Divine Liturgy
Saturday 4:30 PM
Sunday 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM
Reconciliation: Saturday 3:45 PM

Parish Office
Parish Office: 735-1482
Fax: 735-1483
Email: parish@mtcarmel.org

Parish School
St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Blessed Sacrament Parish School
648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501
Phone: 735-1482
Fax: 735-1483
Email: parish@mtcarmel.org

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... AND MORE

- Father Jim's "Wise and Otherwise"
- History of the parish
- Lector, minister, altar server schedules
- Mass schedules
- Parish news
- Ministries
- Event calendar
- Weekly reflection on Sunday's readings
- "More Good News" magazine
- Links to our social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Immaculata Medallion recipients 'humbled'

Diocese honors those for service to parish community

By FRAN PERRITANO

The sun's brilliance illuminated the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse on a crisp Sunday afternoon in December.

Inside the magnificent edifice honoring the Blessed Mother there was plenty of warmth as an overflow crowd of family and friends were there to honor 105 people who were recognized for their dedication and love of their parishes.

Those select people from parishes throughout the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse were there to receive the Immaculata Medallion, given to those who were chosen by their pastors as emblematic of their service to their parish families.

Victoria Perritano – Vicki – was one of the chosen 105. She was the seventh person in the last six years to be selected from Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament for this honor.

For Vicki – who is a Eucharistic minister and the person who gets things ready and serves the 8:30 a.m. daily Mass – the honor brought her to tears.

"I was very humbled, because whatever I do it is done with all my heart," said Vicki, a parishioner for 87 years. "I truly enjoy what I do.

"The Immaculata Medallion means so much," she said. "I feel the Blessed Mother is always with me, protecting me and watching over me no matter what I do."

The Immaculata Medallion is an award recognizing and honoring those who generously and unselfishly give of themselves to their parishes and whose love for the church has been shown through their devotion to the Holy Father and to the diocese.

On one side of the medal is the image of the Immaculate Conception, the patroness of the Syracuse diocese. On the other is the image of the cathedral.

Rosemarie Chiffy was the parish's first recipient of the award in 2011. David Struz was honored in 2012, Dennis and Helene Toczala

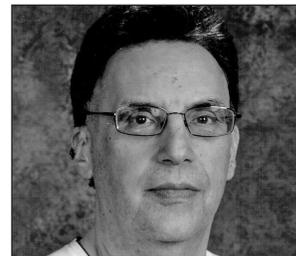
Please see IMMACULATA, Page 7



Vicki Perritano with her 2016 Immaculata Medallion.



Rosemarie Chiffy: 2011 recipient



David Struz: 2012 recipient



Helene and Dennis Toczala: 2013 recipients



Lucille LaVine: 2015 recipient

The Immaculata Medallion is an award recognizing and honoring those who generously and unselfishly give of themselves to their parishes and whose love for the church has been shown through their devotion to the Holy Father and to the diocese.

A CONVERSATION WITH ... MARIO SCALZO JR.

It all computes for Mario

Mario Scalzo has worn many hats in his life. He loves music, sings in the choir, plays many instruments and has been a member of several marching bands. Professionally, he might not be Bill Gates or Steve Jobs, but he had a hand in helping develop high-tech equipment in use today. His passion now is volunteering, whether it is teaching senior citizens how to send an email or volunteering in many aspects of parish life.

You really love music. You've played the clarinet most of your life, you sing in the choir and played in marching bands, including La Banda Rossa. Where did you get your love of music?

The first week I started playing the clarinet, our tenant heard me and told my parents he was going to take me to play in the Frankfort Veterans' Band — an Italian symphonic band. The professor was 70 years old and wrote special beginning clarinet parts for me for all of the Italian operas, Italian symphonic marches and classical pieces we played. That's all I knew. In high school I also played the saxophone and bassoon, and played in the band (clarinet), orchestra (bassoon) and dance band (saxophone). Never liked the music of my generation or later.

What does music do for you?

It relaxes me and brings me to a different time when people enjoyed life and it wasn't a rat race like today.

You love marching bands, having participated in several, and marched and played all over the Northeast and Canada. What's it about marching that you love so much?

It's extreme discipline and dedication and the precision and musical interpretations are fantastic. In my own experience, the competitions in high school marching band and drum corps enabled me to make and retain friendships with members of our competitors off the field, some of which I still communicate with.

Prior to your retirement, you lived in Rochester and Syracuse, and while working for Mohawk Data Sciences was assigned positions all over the country. What kind of work did you do?

I was employed in several areas of computer technology. I have managed the development of systems for several major companies that involved inventory management, manufacturing, online banking, voice recognition and library document management. I have spent a year in Columbus, Ohio, a year in Denver, Colo., and several years traveling throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico managing the development of customized systems in support of marketing activities. I managed the



Mario Scalzo is a proud grandpa during the 2016 parish festival.

MARIO SCALZO JR.

Age: 69.

Occupation: Retired. Formerly worked for Mohawk Data Sciences in Herkimer and was a technology development manager for The Bank of New York Mellon.

Family: Wife Carmelann. Children: Mario III and wife Carrie and daughter Elizabeth in Rome; Andrea and husband Robert Willson and daughter Bianca and son Robert in New Port Richey, Fla.; Maryangela and husband Steve with twin daughters Tressa and Natalie and newborn Sophia in New Hartford.

Education: Roscoe Conkling School, Thomas R. Proctor and Utica College.

Favorite books: "Jurassic Park" and "The Hunt for Red October."

Favorite movies: James Bond, "Gone With the Wind."

Favorite TV shows: "Big Bang Theory," "The Blacklist," "Scandal."

Favorite musician: Glenn Miller Band.

Favorite quote: "Lead, follow or get out of the way!"

implementation of DMV systems in New York State and Colorado; Social Services systems in Canada and managed joint development of

systems with developers in the U.S. and United Kingdom.

How difficult was it traveling all over and raising a family?

It was extremely difficult considering our children were small at the time. While in Denver for that year, I returned home every other weekend. There were no such conveniences as cellular telephones, Skype or FaceTime, Facebook and texting. Communication consisted of calling home evenings or emergency contacts through my local office. It all ended when my wife posted a picture of me on the front door with the message, "If this man comes to the door, let him in. He's your father!"

Looking back on it, did you enjoy the work and was it fulfilling?

Yes. I was on the bottom floor when the PC was developed and responsible for a large amount of technology and systems utilized today. I saw it grow from a box the size of a large desk to what they are today, which includes desktops, laptops, notebooks, iPads and even telephones. I wish I were still involved in the development of technology as I can't imagine what's in the future!

You volunteer at Parkway Senior Center and Mohawk Valley Institute for Learning

Please see MARIO, Page 7

At 13, Alana has big dreams

Alana Batson is an ambitious 13-year-old. She loves sports, especially basketball, is a musician, excels in school and volunteers in her parish. That's just the beginning as she has set high goals for her life.

You play soccer, basketball and softball, and also have run some races. How did you get interested in sports?

I started playing soccer with AYSO at the age of 4. I grew up watching my older cousins play basketball and baseball and wanted to get involved and be on a team. I also started playing T-ball when I was 5 and Bidy Basketball shortly after and became involved with running the Boilermaker youth runs at that time, too.

What's your favorite sport?

Basketball is my favorite sport to play. I love to play it because all my cousins play and it's also my favorite sport to watch. Every day I work at it and improve and this grows my love for the sport.

You also are a downhill skier. When did you start skiing and how did you get interested in that?

I started skiing when I was 3 because my mom loves to ski, too. She wanted me to learn so we could enjoy the winter activity together.

Skiing is a lot of fun, but very fast. Do you ever get nervous about traveling so quickly?

Yes, at times it gets difficult, but if you are having fun, you forget about being scared.

You also work out in a Crossfit program. What exactly is that and why do you like it?

Crossfit is a specific fitness program that involves lifting weights and using your own body's ability for resistance. I like working out at Crossfit because it helps me get stronger for my sports and keeps me healthy.

Do you hope as you get older to keep up with your athletics in high school and college?

Yes, my goal is to play basketball at the college level. I currently play on Whitesboro's junior varsity basketball team and in an AAU league. I also play soccer and softball for my school.

You're a musician in the school band and a member of the National Junior Honor Society. What do you enjoy about music?

I play the flute and enjoy being a part of our school band and how great the finished pieces sound at the end of the semester. I feel that music helps me utilize a different part of my brain, which in turn helps me learn more.

What do you like most about school and what do you like the least?

I enjoy seeing my friends in school and learning new things. Some of my favorite classes are physical education, art, science and Spanish. The thing I like least would probably be having too many tests on the same day.

In addition to your busy schedule, you also



At age 13, Alana has learned a great deal about faith. "I've learned that you need faith to get you through difficult times in your life and to give thanks when good things happen."

ALANA BATSON

Age: 13.

School: Eighth grade at Whitesboro Middle School.

Family: Mom Gina, Dad Jeff, dog Chase.

Favorite TV show: "Dance Moms" and watching basketball.

Favorite movie: "Miracle."

Favorite book: Alex Morgan's "Breakaway."

Favorite musician: I like all different music.

Things you like to do in your spare time: I like to play a lot of different sports. I also like to spend time with my family and play with my dog.

are an altar server. Why did you want to be a server and what's your favorite part about being a server?

I served twice monthly at the 8 a.m. Mass. I wanted to be part of the Mass and wanted to see it from a different perspective. My favorite part of altar serving is being involved in the

Mass and the fact that Father Cesta makes it more enjoyable to participate.

Our parish is known for its pizza frita, and you work at the booth during the festival. Why do you do it and what do you like about it?

I like working the pizza frita booth so I can be involved with keeping our parish traditions going. It's hard work, but it's an honor to make a difference in our parish community.

What does being a parishioner of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament mean to you?

I like the feeling that our parish family is really like a big family. Everyone helps out and does their part to work together and improve our parish community.

What have you learned about what faith means to you in your young life?

I've learned that you need faith to get you through difficult times in your life and to give thanks when good things happen. I enjoy participating in our faith formation classes because there is always more to learn.

Make 2017 year of volunteer

Contributing your time and talent can be very rewarding

"I hope everyone shows up tonight," said Vicki Perritano as she paced the floor in the sacristy about a half hour prior to 2016's Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.

I had heard similar concerns from Marge Hanrahan prior to numerous 10:30 a.m. Sunday Masses over the years.

Generally, the folks who volunteer their services in the various parish ministries are pretty reliable. You can count on them showing up for their appointed duties. When there is a conflict, one only need contact the coordinator of the ministry, who in turn is able to find another person to fulfill that task. But it's getting tougher.

Father Jim has beseeched the congregation at various times to give a hand. For the most part he has been successful. There have been occasions, however, when there have been scrambles to find the necessary



A.J. VALENTINI

bodies to perform various ministries. In a parish that literally consists of thousands of members one would think that this wouldn't be the case. Let me tell you it does happen.

All of us have obligations to families, jobs and friends. Sometimes, when health issues burden loved ones, their pain becomes our own. Our children's busy schedules keep us running shuttle services, support groups and pit teams to keep them on track. Sometimes our jobs consume us with deadlines and duties that convince us that the place would collapse without us. Friends might not have the same priorities as we do and we hate "being out of the loop."

All these encumbrances are understandable. But sometimes you need to step away to get your bearings, to re-establish your serenity, to "cool your jets." Contributing even a small bit of time to the parish can be a positive release for that pressure.

We like to keep our kids busy because we know, "an idle mind is the devil's playground." We live vicariously through our children. Their successes and failures become our successes and failures. We also know that many of our children pull away from the church as they grow older. Couldn't we model a bit more participation to encourage them to do the same? If they felt like more of a part of the community, they would have more of a reason to stay with the community.

No one is indispensable to a job. Leaders of countries come and go and yet the Earth still turns and people go about their daily business.



There are numerous opportunities to participate in parish life at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament, such as becoming an altar server, working at the parish festival, becoming part of the music ministry or working with our children in Faith Formation.

The parish doesn't ask you to give up your day job. It only requests a small part of your time and talents. The Dow is not going to collapse because you give an extra hour per week to St Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament.

Speaking from personal experience, the parish doesn't have favorites. If the same faces show up at Mass or at church functions it's because those folks are the ones willing to give their time. Others are not excluded. The parish loves to see new faces in various roles in the ministries.

No talent is too modest to not be of use to the parish. Often, the mere presence of another person is a comfort to the sick or grieving. It doesn't take a PhD to pitch in at a festival, distribute communion or sing a hymn.

If you don't like to read in public, hand out sacraments or chair a committee. Think of the parish like an orchestra in which all the instruments contribute to produce a wonderful sound. Even the guy standing in the back who waits for that one moment to strike the triangle, adds another layer to a lush performance. The rest of the time he is just another one of the percussionists.

We hope you will consider sharing some time with us. The list on this page contains some of the ministries in which you could lend a hand. The entire list of ministries is online at www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com. Call the rectory at 735-1482 to sign up.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Here are some ministries in which you can volunteer. The complete list can be found on our parish website at www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com. Call 735-1482 for information or to sign up.

LITURGY: Altar cleaning/decorating, altar servers, Eucharistic ministers, funeral altar servers, greeters, lectors, liturgical committee, music ministry, ushers.

FAITH FORMATION: Children's liturgy, marriage team, religious education, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, youth ministry.

PARISH OUTREACH: Bereavement visitation, flowers to the nursing homes and shut-ins, food pantry, funeral lunches, Hope House meal serving, ministry for persons with disabilities, Neighbor to Neighbor, parish nurse ministry, prayer line, pastoral visitors, social committee.

ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIETIES: Mount Carmel Society, St. Anne Society.

STEWARDSHIP: Buildings and grounds, collection counters, parish festival, parish office.

MARIO

Continued from Page 4

in Retirement. What exactly do you do at those places?

I develop and teach computer courses to their members. I have standard courses including Computer Basics, Computer Security and Word Processing beyond Words. However, as needs arise, I will also develop and customize courses based upon the organization's needs. In some cases I develop and teach some interesting topics. For example, I have a course that creates digital presentations where members can share memories including photos, art and video clips put to music.

How fulfilling is helping out our seniors?

It is extremely fulfilling. A lot of them have their computer and it is their only communication with the outside world. I have made home visits for those who are unable to come to the senior center or MVILR. A lot of their children provide their parents with computers and expect them to learn email and be proficient to communicate with them. They are very responsive to me because I take the time to explain whatever they need to know and I generally will explain it in terms that they can relate to.

At Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament, you were a past Parish Council member, past head of altar servers, a member of the Social Committee, past finance chairman for the festival, past co-food chair for the festival, choir member for more than 35 years, developed mushroom stew recipe for the festival, member of the marriage team and assist in altar decorating. The question: Why do you do it?

Why not? It's my parish and I have received all my sacraments here. I want to see us exist for at least another 120 years. We are the future of our church, and part of the church is the social activity. It's where we meet and share memories and have great times. It's keeping our young involved, and anything I can do to keep us vibrant, I will do it.

You'll celebrate your 45th wedding anniversary to Carmelann this year? What's your secret to your success?

It's unconditional love. Carmelann is my best friend; my confidant. I am not one to show a lot of outward emotion, but it's there. Whatever we do, we try to do it together. Early on in our marriage we had a lot of setbacks that would have torn other couples apart. For us,

between our faith and love, it brought us closer. It's funny how we are at the stage of our lives where we can complete each other's sentences or even blurt out the same comments at the same time. We used to laugh when our parents did that.

Our parish obviously means a lot to you. How would you describe your "marriage" to our parish?

It's funny you should ask. When we returned after living in Syracuse (1977) for several years, we tried closer churches, but we felt uncomfortable and not welcomed. We came home to our families' church. Heck, we were 14 years old before we realized that not every priest spoke broken English! Our parents were involved and we just got involved. So my "marriage" is strong and committed. It's beautiful and our services just entice me to return week after week.

What's the best advice anyone has ever given you?

Don't be afraid to be yourself, truthful, honest and be prepared.

What would you like people to remember most about Mario Scalzo?

My sense of humor — sick as it is.

IMMACULATA

Continued from Page 3

in 2013, Gordon Schindler in 2014 and Lucille LaVine in 2015.

Compared to many, Dennis and Helene Toczala are relative newcomers to the parish. They have been parishioners since 2007 when they moved to the area from Florida to be near their grandchildren.

When they were named the 2013 recipients, they were "surprised."

"We never considered ourselves as suitable candidates for this award," they said. "Although we feel honored and appreciate the recognition, it was not part of our intention for volunteering. It made us feel a little uncomfortable at first. But, eventually, we were thankful to Father Cesta for nominating us and we were pleased to have many parishioners congratulate us for this award. We hope to be deserving."

The Toczalas have volunteered in the marriage preparation program and eventually moved on to volunteer with the Retrouvaille marriage program at the Good News Center. Dennis served on the parish council for one term and they both serve at funeral Masses. Helene is a Eucharistic minister and they both lector at weekday Masses. They also help out at the flea market during the parish festival.

"On our day off, we volunteer at Abraham House."

While the Toczalas have been part of the parish family for about 10 years, Lucy LaVine has been around just a bit longer.

"I have been a parishioner of St. Mary of

Mount Carmel since I was baptized, which brings me to my 83rd year and counting," she said.

When Father Jim told her in 2015 that she was going to receive the award, "I was stunned and humbled."

"What I do as a volunteer, I do with all my heart, and didn't expect to be rewarded for it," she said. "It is the ultimate in rewards, for the Blessed Mother has always been very special to me."

Lucy volunteers as a Eucharistic minister, a lector, a meal server at Hope House, a greeter at the 8 a.m. Mass on Sunday mornings, an altar server at funerals and a parish office helper.

Rosemarie Chiffy, a parishioner for 90 years, was the first recipient of the award.

"Father announced at a St. Anne's dinner that I would receive the award and I was quite taken aback," Rosemarie said. "I did not feel worthy of the award. It has always been my thought that volunteering and helping out at your parish was what a good Christian does. It never occurred to me that I might receive accolades for the work that I have done over the years.

"Although I felt this way initially, I was also quite honored to receive this medal, not only for myself, but for my mother and grandmother who gave so much of themselves and taught me what it means to give for the benefit of others."

Rosemarie has volunteered over the years in many areas. Currently, she coordinates pas-

toral visits, trains and schedules lectors and Eucharistic ministers, coordinates funeral lunches, takes care of altar linens, is on the Liturgy Committee and works in the sacristy. She also is president of the St. Anne's Society and co-chairwoman of the Mount Carmel Society.

David Struz has been a parishioner for about 35 years. He's a lector, sings in the choir, volunteers at the festival and works with the parish's Burmese community.

Receiving the award in 2012 was very humbling.

"It, hopefully, will encourage other people to volunteer," David said. "It is an honor I hope to live up to."

One thing all seven Immaculata recipients agree on is the importance of serving the parish.

"Volunteers are the lifeblood of the parish," David said. "Volunteers are the voice, hands, ears and eyes of the church. The more dedicated volunteers keep the parish vital in today's world."

Lucy said, "With our parish being a busy one, it is important for those who are able to come forward and help in any way they can. It is so rewarding to touch and, hopefully, to better the lives of others."

The Toczalas agreed volunteers "are the lifeblood of parish life."

"They try to set an example of serving the needs of the faith community," they said. "Hopefully, they inject enthusiasm, generosity, love and acceptance. We learn best when we work with others in a spirit of cooperation."

