

ST. MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL / BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH - WINTER 2019

MORE

# GOOD NEWS



## NEW BEGINNINGS

Marriage, baptism offer fresh start for couples

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*THIS ISSUE A GIFT OF WARD ARCURI LAW FIRM*

## CELEBRATING THE SAINTS

### Our Lady of Lourdes

Feast Day Feb. 11

On Dec. 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in the apostolic constitution "Ineffabilis Deus."

A little more than three years later, on Feb. 11, 1858, a young lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous. This began a series of visions. During the apparition on March 25, the lady identified herself with the words: "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Bernadette was a sickly child of poor parents. Their practice of the Catholic faith was scarcely more than lukewarm. Bernadette could pray the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Creed. She also knew the prayer of the Miraculous Medal: "O Mary conceived without sin."

During interrogations Bernadette gave an account of what she saw. It was "something white in the shape of a girl." She used the word aquero, a dialect term meaning "this thing." It was "a pretty young girl with a rosary over her arm."

Her white robe was encircled by a blue girdle. She wore a white veil. There was a yellow rose on each foot. A rosary was in her hand. Bernadette was also impressed by the fact that the lady did not use the informal form of address (tu), but the polite form (vous). The humble virgin appeared to a humble girl and treated her with dignity.

Through that humble girl, Mary revitalized and continues to revitalize the faith of millions of people. People began to flock to Lourdes from other parts of France and from all over the world. In 1862 Church authorities confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions and authorized the cult of Our Lady of Lourdes for the diocese. The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes became worldwide in 1907.

Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage



and healing, but even more of faith. Church authorities have recognized more than 60 miraculous cures, although there probably have been many more. To people of faith this is not surprising. It is a continuation of Jesus' healing miracles — now performed at the intercession of his mother. Some would say that the greater miracles are hidden. Many who visit Lourdes return home with renewed faith and a readiness to serve God in their needy brothers and sisters.

There still may be people who doubt the apparitions of Lourdes. Perhaps the best that can be said to them are the words that introduce the film The Song of Bernadette: "For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible."

Source: [www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org)

### St. Dominic Savio

Feast Day March 10

So many holy persons seem to die young. Among them was Dominic Savio, the patron of choirboys.

Born into a peasant family at Riva, Italy, young Dominic joined St. John Bosco as a student at the Oratory in Turin at the age of 12. He impressed Don Bosco with his desire to be a priest and to help him in his work with neglected boys.

A peacemaker and an organizer, young Dominic founded a group he called the Company of the Immaculate Conception which, besides being devotional, aided John Bosco with the boys and with manual work.

All the members save one, Dominic, would, in 1859, join Don Bosco in the beginnings of his Salesian congregation. By that time, Dominic had been called home to heaven.

As a youth, Dominic spent hours rapt in



prayer. His raptures he called "my distractions." Even in play, he said that at times, "It seems heaven is opening just above me. I am afraid I may say or do something that will make the other boys laugh." Dominic would say, "I can't do big things. But I want all I do, even the smallest thing, to be for the greater glory of God."

Dominic's health, always frail, led to lung problems and he was sent home to recuperate.

As was the custom of the day, he was bled in the thought that this would help, but it only worsened his condition. He died on March 9, 1857, after receiving the last sacraments. St. John Bosco himself wrote the account of his life.

Some thought that Dominic was too young to be considered a saint. St. Pius X declared that just the opposite was true, and went ahead with his cause. Dominic was canonized in 1954.

Source: [www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org)

## PARISH WEBSITE

Visit [www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com](http://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 Mt. Carmel Blessed Sacrament

*A Community  
on a Journey of  
Faith*

**Weekend Masses**  
Saturday 4:20pm  
Sunday 8:00am & 10:30am  
Reconciliation: Saturday 3:45pm

**Weekday Masses**  
Mon/Tue/Thurs: 8:30am  
Friday: 8:30am - Mass or Communion Service  
Rosary for the Unborn and Divine Mercy Chaplet  
Thursday after Mass  
Holy Days consult bulletin

**BAPTISM**  
Congratulations! Please call the parish office to arrange a Baptism, we parents are encouraged to attend the parent class before the birth of your child.

**RCCA**  
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.

**HARRISBURG**  
Couples must make arrangements six months in advance.

**NEW PARISHIONERS**  
Welcome to our parish family. We invite you to become an active participant of our parish community. Please be sure to register by using the parish office. Also hearing assistance for hearing impaired.

**PARISH STAFF**  
Pastor: Rev. Jim Costa  
Coordinator of Faith Formation: Terri Francisco R-K  
Coordinator of Faith Formation-Anne Carbone Elacqua T-  
In Residence: Rev. Luis Ojigin  
Music Director: Peter Elacqua  
Business Administrator: Mary Beth LaNeve  
Maintenance: Patrick Zosa  
Parish Publicist: Fran Perritano

**CONTACTS**  
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**OFFICE HOURS:**  
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM - Noon Friday 6:48 AM '05

All bulletin items are to be submitted in writing by 12:00 noon

648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501 •  
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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.

# New year brings renewed hope and promise

By **FRAN PERRITANO**

A new year — always filled with anticipation and renewed hope.

And new beginnings.

In our parish in the coming year, many couples will celebrate their new beginnings by pledging themselves in marriage before God, and others will be welcoming children and baptizing them into the faith.

Those sacraments are just the beginning.

“From the vantage point of faith, there are wondrous chances for new beginnings,” Father Jim Cesta said. “There are folks of various ages who have already chosen to begin again practicing our Catholic faith with being present at weekend Mass and wider involvement in parish life.

“Baptism for an infant or adult is always a new beginning,” he said. “It’s called the Sacrament of Initiation, the first day we get the nickname ‘Christian.’ Blessed marriage in the church, First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Holy Orders (ordination) all have the blessings of a new beginning about them. Even making a good confession, trying to avoid an old and harmful sin, is a new beginning. That’s why a person feels better about a new start upon walking from the Sacrament of Penance to a new day.”

Two couples who celebrated new beginnings in the span of just over a year are Richard and Anastasia Ferrone and Matt and Angela Pastor.

Richard, 29, and Anastasia 23, began a new life together when they were married by Father Jim on Aug. 5, 2017.

Nearly 14 months later, another new beginning for the couple — their daughter Stassi Grace was born Sept. 25, 2018.

Quite a year for the couple.

“I knew that I wanted to spend forever with Rich,” Ana said. “We got married, and shortly after I became pregnant with our daughter and it couldn’t have been more perfect. Since we were friends for a while and also engaged for two years, I was more than ready. I knew Rich would make a great dad as he already is an amazing husband.”

Rich described the year as “rewarding, challenging and so exciting.”

“We made some pretty major life changes in a short period of time, but I wouldn’t have had it any other way,” he said. “I knew Ana was the one for me and marriage is something we both strongly believe in. We also both knew we wanted to be parents and feel so blessed to have had Stassi so early in our marriage.

Rich and Ana said becoming parents is one



**ABOVE:** Matt and Angela Pastor and their daughters Emily, 7, and Adalina, 7 months. “We’ve learned that no family is perfect, and even non-traditional families are still a family,” Angela said.

**LEFT:** Ana Ferrone holds her daughter Stassi as Father Jim baptizes her as dad Rich looks on. “It was amazing having Stassi baptized at Mount Carmel by Father Cesta,” the couple acknowledge. “It is so special knowing all three of us have made that sacrament in the same place.”

**ON THE COVER:** Rich and Ana Ferrone on their wedding day on Aug. 5, 2017.

Please see **NEW BEGINNINGS**, Page 7

## A CONVERSATION WITH ... PAT ZASA

# 'Life should be about doing good for others'

*Pat Zasa says he always tries to have a positive outlook on life — with a sense of humor. He enjoys helping out people who are in need. He's in charge of maintenance in the parish and enjoys working at church, meeting different people and doing whatever he can to help. His mantra: "Life should be about doing good for others."*

**You're in charge of keeping the parish grounds in top shape, including the church, rectory and the former school building. Describe a typical day in your job.**

A typical day involves opening the church, making sure it's clean, warm in winter or cool in the summer; cleaning of the school and rectory. In the summer I'm very busy outside; and winter also with the snow.

**Your job involves more than cleaning. You've also worked on many other projects in the parish that many might not know about. Please describe other work you have accomplished.**

Many of my projects included installing a new gas heater in the gym, repairing some of the roofs, painting the boiler room, installing new tile, painting the festival room, remodeling the office in the rectory, remodeling the CYO room, building speakers in choir loft, etc.

**You enjoy the outdoors, including fishing, biking and kayaking. What do these activities do for your life?**

I love to be active outside. It keeps me healthy and I like looking at nature.

**You also enjoy traveling. What are some of the places you have visited? Do you have a favorite?**

I've been to Italy, Aruba and Mexico. I would say Italy was my favorite.

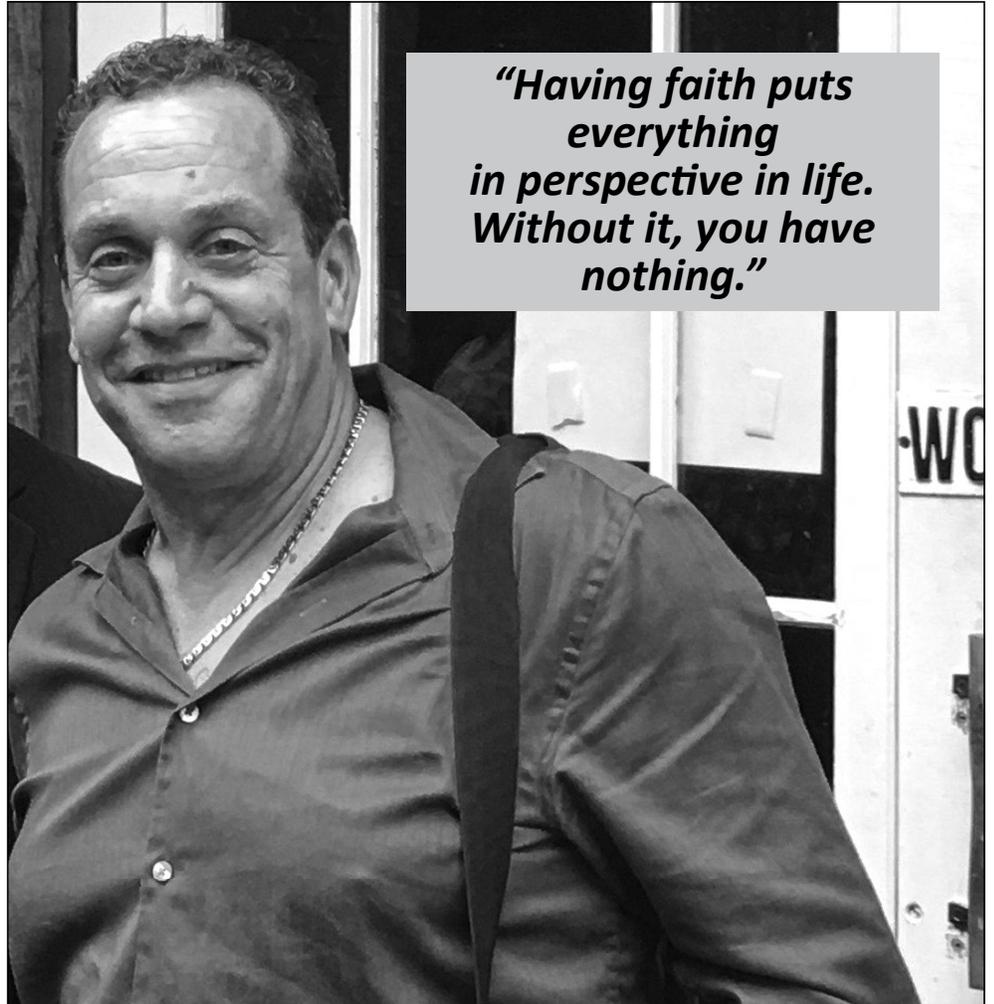
**You have two sons — Mitchell, 21, who is in his third year at Champlain College in Vermont who is studying gaming design and producing, and Patrick, 27, in his eighth year as a journeyman (in HVAC) in Local 58. What has being a dad meant for you?**

It's very rewarding watching both my sons doing well. I'm very proud of them. I always taught them to enjoy life, respect others, be a hard worker and always do your best.

**You'll be getting married in August to your fiancée Margherita. What are you looking forward to in your new life?**

After we are married to continue to grow together, laugh and enjoy each other and hopefully travel to other countries.

**Life has kind of come full circle for you. You attended Mount Carmel School and you**



*"Having faith puts everything in perspective in life. Without it, you have nothing."*

**now have an important job in the parish. Is working here more meaningful than doing the same job elsewhere?**

Yes. Working at church is very rewarding. Everyone is easy to work with. We have a lot of volunteers who do so much. Father Cesta always keeps it interesting. He's very easy to work for and always fun.

**Like all families, there are good times and tough times. How has your faith helped you in times of need?**

Having faith puts everything in perspective in life. Without it, you have nothing.

**What do you hope the future holds for you?**

Just to relax, stay healthy, happy, laugh, enjoy family and continue to help others.

## Pat Zasa

**Age:** 54.

**Resides:** Utica.

**Family:** Fiancée Margherita Schuller; sons Patrick Jr., 28, and Mitchell, 21; brothers Joe, Rock and Mike; mom Carol.

**Occupation:** In charge of parish maintenance; spent 18 years as a sheet metal worker and foreman and 12 years in sheet metal union.

**Education:** Mount Carmel School and Thomas R. Proctor High School.

**Interests:** Traveling, fishing, biking, kayaking and spending time with family and close friends.



One of Mari-Lea Gazzal's passions is music. "Music has always been a big part of my life. ... It speaks to my soul because I am happiest when I am singing or listening to music. It just makes me happy and my soul happy."

# Life is a grand adventure

From kayaking to parasailing to sharing her faith, Mari-Lea does it all with gusto

*Mari-Lea Gazzal has myriad interests including kayaking, swimming, fishing, four-wheeling, being very adventurous, singing and acting. And those are just a few. But what keeps her grounded is her faith, which she shares enthusiastically.*

**You appear to be quite the outdoors woman, going to your family's camp on Otter Lake since you were a child. You love kayaking, swimming, fishing, four-wheeling, among others. What attracts you most to those activities?**

I have always had a love for the outdoors because it's so much fun and a big way for me to de stress. It allows me to appreciate the little things in life. I would rather spend two hours four-wheeling than two hours on my phone.

**You describe yourself and being adventurous. What has been the most adventurous activity in which you have participated?**

The most adventurous activity has been parasailing. They take you on a small boat in the middle of the ocean, attach you to a couple straps hooked onto a half parachute; as the boat speeds up you shoot up in the air and ride around in the air behind the boat. There were such beautiful views of the ocean and this was such a great and fun memory that I have with my mom and sister. Something that I would really love to do would be skydiving or motocross races, just because I think it would be cool and I love a good adrenaline rush.

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## Mari-Lea Gazzal

**Age:** 17.

**Resides:** Frankfurt.

**Education:** Senior at New Hartford Senior High School.

**Interests:** Kayaking, swimming, fishing, four-wheeling, being very adventurous, singing and acting.

**Favorite movie:** "Dear John."

**Favorite TV show:** "Shark Tank."

**Favorite musical genre:** R&B.

**Favorite quote:** "Let all that you do be done in love." (I Corinthians 16:14)

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**Singing and acting also are passions. How did you learn to love those talents?**

I have a very loud and big personality so it has always been a natural talent and hobby to sing and act.

**You are part of the parish music ministry. You said singing in church "speaks to my soul." Describe what that means.**

Music has always been a big part of my life and I said it speaks to my soul because I am happiest when I am singing or listening to music. It just makes me happy and my soul happy.

**You also are very involved in the parish, teaching eighth-graders in Faith Formation. How is your faith strengthened by teaching younger minds?**

My faith is definitely strengthened by teaching younger minds because they give me a deeper, different and better understanding of how the young teens perceive Jesus and our ministry. I teach such great minds and I always say that you can learn anything from anyone no matter the age or experience.

**A few years ago you were involved in Notre Dame Vision, where students travel to the University of Notre Dame to interact and share with other teens from across the country. How was that experience for you?**

I loved being at Notre Dame Vision because I learned that faith brings people together from all around the world. I met people from Spain, China, Canada and California. It was such a positive and moving experience that I will remember forever.

**Many teenagers shy away from religion, but not you. How did you become such a faith-filled person at such a young age? Who have been the major influences in your faith life?**

My cousin Christine Gray and Anne Elacqua. I have a major influences as well as my Me-Ma (my confirmation sponsor) and my parents. They never pushed faith on me — it just happen naturally. (I was baptized and receive communion because of my parents faith, but they always wanted me to never feel like it was a

Please see MARI-LEA, Page 7

# St. Luke the doctor offers unique perspective

*“The angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.’”*

These are, perhaps, the most familiar lines from the Gospel according to St. Luke (2:1-14) that we hear at the Christmas Midnight Mass, and of course, every year in “A Charlie Brown Christmas.”

It is fitting that we continue our series on the first followers of Jesus with a discussion of the great evangelist, a follower and companion of St. Paul.

You will recall that in our previous issue of More Good News it was stated that Paul’s mission was to deliver the word to the Gentiles. Luke may have been one of his greatest protégés.

Little or nothing is known of Luke’s early life. It is assumed by many that he was a



A.J. VALENTINI

Greek and a Gentile. Euse-

bius tells us he was born in Antioch, Syria. He also might have been born a slave, who by luck or chance was trained to be the family physician to persons of the noble class. Either way, evidence of him being a non-Jew lies in Paul writing in Colossians (4:10-14) of his companions “of the circumcision” (Jews) and then including Luke separately as “the good doctor.”

Being a Gentile colored Luke’s writing. In his account of the Passion he says that one of the thieves — a heathen, crucified with Jesus — obtains salvation. This is a radical statement from a religious tradition that reserves the “glory” for the chosen.

In Luke’s telling of Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son, he shows how even the ones who lose the righteous path along their way through life may repent and receive the ultimate reward.

In addition, Luke’s background as a doctor gave him unique perspective on human suffering.

In his beloved recounting of the parable of the Good Samaritan (only Luke recorded this), he not only addresses our previous point of Luke’s attention to the non-Jews and outcasts, he describes the suffering of the traveler who is beaten, stripped and robbed and left to die by the side of the road. Luke’s interpretation of Je-



Like the other evangelists, St. Luke often is portrayed in art with, or as, an icon. His symbol is an ox or calf, a symbol of sacrifice.

sus’ story recognizes that even the “uncircumcised” are capable of empathy and good works.

In the recounting of the episode of the cleansing of the lepers, Luke tells us that of all those who were cleansed, it is only the Samaritan, a non-Jew, a Gentile, who comes back to thank Jesus. For this writer, that shows that Luke had no patience for those who expected deliverance just because of their birth into the chosen group.

He shows that deliverance is earned and should be acknowledged gratefully. Luke’s passage says: “Jesus asked, ‘Were not all 10 cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?’ Then he said to him, ‘Rise and go; your faith has made you well.’”

Luke was by Paul’s side from about 51 AD to 61 AD when Paul was imprisoned in Rome. Paul recognized his disciple’s loyalty saying: “And after everyone else deserts Paul in his final imprisonment and sufferings, it is Luke

who remains with Paul to the end: ‘Only Luke is with me’” (2 Timothy 4:11).

Luke felt an obligation to write for posterity in a way that was accessible, comprehensible and would continue to inspire. He was adamant that facts contained in his writings were accurate. Subsequent study has proven his veracity. He said: “Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I, too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you.” (Luke 1:1-3).

Like the other evangelists, Luke often is portrayed in art with, or as, an icon. His symbol is an ox or calf, a symbol of sacrifice. He said to also have been a painter, having created various holy images. One legend says he even painted the famous Black Madonna of Czestochowa. Luke is the patron of artists and physicians.

## NEW BEGINNINGS

Continued from Page 3

of the best things that have happened to them. They say they have grown closer just by talking about how they will raise their children in the Catholic community and making other decisions that will affect their lives.

"I really think about every decision I make now since it will affect not only me, but my husband and my daughter," Ana said. "Maybe before I was a little more rash with decisions."

Matt Pastor and Angela Pastor also had a year of new beginnings in 2018. They were married and also had a baby — daughter Adalina, 7 months old. She joined big sister Emily, age 7.

Their path to the altar was a bit different than the Ferrones.

Angela already was a mother to Emily when she and Matt started dating. For him, Angela having a child "didn't change how I felt about her."

Angela, however, was more cautious.

"(Dating) was difficult because I knew I had to find the right person for not only me, but my daughter as well," she said.

The couple became engaged on Christmas Day 2016.

"I felt like it was time," Matt said. "I was excited, nervous and ready for it. I was excited to make the family bigger and official."

Angela said she "was initially nervous, because I wanted to make sure this was the right decision for all of us."

"I knew that Matt was the right choice though, so I was excited," she said.

Matt describes the new beginnings in 2018 as "emotional, joyful and indescribable." Angela said "2018 was a year that completed our family. It's almost surreal how far we have come and I'm excited for the future."

Both couples said faith has played a role in their relationships.

"In fact, our first 'date' was a Mount Carmel function at Tiny's Bar and Grill," the Ferrones said. "It is important to both of us that we are both Catholic, both grew up in Catholic homes



**Matt and Angela Pastor on their wedding day.**

and continue to practice our faith at Mount Carmel."

Rich and Ana said it was special having their child baptized at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament — the parish in which they grew up.

"It was amazing having Stassi baptized at Mount Carmel by Father Cesta. It is so special knowing all three of us have made that sacrament in the same place."

"We have been parishioners of Mount Carmel our whole lives. We were both baptized, received first Holy Communion, Confirmation and marriage. We were both also altar servers when we were younger. We regularly attended religion, weekly Mass and received all of our sacraments here, so having our daughter baptized in the church was a definite."

Faith also is important for the Pastors.

Angela, 29, always has been a member of Mount Carmel. Her parents were married here and they attended 8 a.m. Mass every Sunday.

Matt, 27, was raised Catholic. He was born in Rochester and attended St. Theodore's Church, and then St. Mark's Church once he moved here. He started attending Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament once he and Angela started dating.

"We try and go to church every Sunday morning with the girls. We always feel better after leaving church."

As their lives progress in the coming year, both couples are looking forward to their new families and the blessings and challenges it brings.

"There are definitely struggles, especially when it's not possible to see eye to eye on every single subject; however, with a lot of communication, anything is possible," the Ferrones agreed. "There will be disagreements and you will not agree on everything, but that's fine. You don't have to agree on everything as long as you continue to grow together and express love for each other."

The Pastors also have advice to share.

"We've learned that no family is perfect, and even non-traditional families are still a family," Angela said. "At the end of the day, we do what we think is best for our family and we are all one unit. Don't worry so much about what others think. If you are happy, and have a happy family, that's all that matters."

Father Jim said starting anew can be good for everyone.

"Sometimes we sing or pray that our God is a God of second chances — another opportunity to start over," he said. "Reflecting on this idea of a new beginning leads us to realize the whole church and our individual lives are always in need of starting again because we fall flat on our face, we take two steps backward rather than forward. It's part of life and learning."

"Happy New Year is what happens when renewal, reform and new direction open the door to a new beginning."

## MARI-LEA

Continued from Page 5

chore). It was never a chore for me; it was always a positive fun experience that I love and that my family supports.

**How do you share your faith?**

I've made lots of friends from going to church but also made friends at my school through talking about my faith. It's very easy to start those conversations because the first thing I say is always something about music. Music brings people together, so when I say I sing at church people always seem to just join in on the conversation or ask questions.

**You describe church as "the one place I feel so safe and happy in." Please explain what you mean by that.**

Church has always been a way for me to de-stress, and when my life was very dark and negative, praying was something that was a positive thing, never something that felt judgmental, I just felt happy there. It's hard to describe, but having gone through some dark times, praying made me feel safe and not alone.

**Leading by example seems to be in your DNA as you encourage younger people to get involved in the parish. Why is that important to you?**

I have always been a leader never a follower. I just have always had my own vision for what I want and what I need in life. Church is just a priority to me and sharing my faith just comes naturally. It's very easy for me to have conver-

sations about people's beliefs and what they value. I don't really realize how young I am compared to some other people that share their faith in our parish. I love having conversations with people my age and younger, especially about faith because I think everyone has their own perspective.

**What do you hope the future holds?**

I hope to continue teaching religion and singing because it strengthens my faith and allows me to share mine with others. Plans that I have outside of church are to go to college, travel around the world, try tons of new foods, explore and find new hobbies, make lots of friends, and I pray that one day I have my own family.

# 'A Jazz Nativity' brightens season



A special performance of "Bending Towards the Light ... A Jazz Nativity" was presented Tuesday, Dec. 18, by Chelsea Opera and Kindred Spirits from New York City, along with Central New York's most acclaimed jazz instrumentalists. View more images at [www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com](http://www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com).

