

# The Weave

Advent/Christmas 2018

Volume 23 Issue 1

A Newsletter of St. Mary Parish Family, Franklin MA

## Parish Update

by Fr. Brian Manning

So much goes on in our Parish and things keep flowing, so I thought I would use this opportunity to get everyone to the same page on information about our life and Community.

The great news is that the work for our major Welcoming Initiative from the Parish Plan is proceeding along day by day. Those who drive by the church building can see the steel erected on the side and the backhoes and bulldozers working on creating the plaza area outside the addition. Inside the Church building we are at the "tiling phase" on the lower level. The contractor says that is a good sign(!) and that means things are moving along well. Upstairs, the temporary wall is down so that the glass walls of the Narthex may be installed and the tiling of the upstairs areas may take place. The addition should soon start to rise as the bricklayers will be here soon. Two items which will require a longer time are the following: the elevator which will arrive in boxes in January 2019 will need a 3-week period or so to be assembled and installed, and then the time starts for its inspection. We cannot use it until it is completely certified. The outside lift will remain in use until the new elevator is online. Also the two stained glass windows made dark by the addition will be mostly removed in January to be put into frames. When they have been removed, lighting will be installed and then the windows will be returned.

This work is on its own unknown time line. We hope to have most of the space back before Christmas. Indeed, this would be a great gift to all of us. All of this work and expense is so that we have dignified and easy access and use of our beautiful Church for Mass, Services and Programs. This great hope and dream which is slowly becoming a reality is being supported by many faithful contributing Parishioners. We all owe those who have made and honored their commitments many prayers of gratitude.

According to our Parish Plan 2017, we have three major Priorities. We recognized that the Welcoming Initiative would draw the most effort, time, and attention for two years and that it was the key to creating an environment that enabled us to welcome more people. This Priority is well underway and is proceeding accordingly. Another Priority was Vocations. The suggested process for this Priority has only been followed in limited ways. We have made the theme a public and conscious prayer at our Sunday Eucharistic Celebrations and have invited smaller groups in our Parish to take this to their prayers. We have had several vocations in the last few years, both to Priesthood and Consecrated Life and also several "in the pipeline." Our third Priority of Adult Faith Formation has been successful

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## The Meaning of the Birth of Christ

by Joan McGuire

With Christmas songs filling the airways in October along with early "Black Friday" deals flooding our emails it is no wonder that we are already being filled with the stress of the secular season.

Our hope in regaining the true spirit of Christmas is in the Gospels. The two narratives of Jesus's birth give us a warm picture of the event but John gives us the stark truth. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." These words of the Gospel reveal God's true purpose in creation. We were not created merely for the function of knowing and serving Him. He wants a relationship with us. God wants each of us to call Him by name as He knows each of us by name. Jesus was the Father's way of revealing this to us. He is the living example of this relationship.

Before Jesus was sent, God tried to take the first steps of friendship with the Jews. He called Moses His friend, made a covenant with them as His Chosen people. He took up residence with them through the "Ark of the Covenant" and later in the temple's "Holy of Holies." The relationship was not understood.

With the arrival of Jesus a new door opened between God and Man. Jesus was not the Law of God incarnate but the person of God made flesh. Jesus did not come "to set an example." It may seem so in the Gospels, but in his time Jesus

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## A Season To Seek

by John M. Ristaino

Another year is winding down and we are seeking out another new year with hope. We are a society that seeks. The human race is always seeking. We seek answers to questions. We seek to lose weight. We seek out bargains. We seek to eat healthy. We seek new recipes. We seek the acceptance of friends, family, and neighbors. We seek to be accepted by a college and we seek to be hired by an employer. We seek to be better, to win and to triumph. We seek fame and fortune. We seek quiet times. We seek peace. We seek justice. We seek to love and we seek to be loved. We seek to fit in and we seek to stand out. We seek the comfort of yesterdays and we seek the promise of tomorrows. We seek every day. We are seekers.

What do we seek from God? What do we seek from our Catholic Faith? What do we seek from St. Mary Parish? It is the time of year to reflect and we should reflect upon and think about what we are spiritually seeking.

How do you seek God? Where do seek God? Why do you seek God? God is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. It is right to seek God. "The wise still seek Him" is a phrase often seen and heard at this time of year. Are you among the wise? Do you seek Him? There is no one perfect way to seek Him. There is no one perfect place to seek Him. If there were, Faith and life would be much easier. Seeking Him takes effort. Seeking Him takes making Him a part and priority in your life. Seeking Him takes faith, it takes hope and it takes love. Seeking him also takes time. God awaits us seeking him twenty four hours

per day, three hundred sixty five days a year. God is worth seeking.

What do you seek from our Catholic Faith? Where do you seek this? How do you seek this? As Catholics, we are the Church. The Catholic Faith depends on us as much as we depend on it. Prayers, Mass, education, Sacraments and quiet reflection are all ways we can seek our Catholic Faith in deeper and more meaningful ways. "Seek and ye shall find." What his phrase doesn't instruct in is this; if you choose not to seek, you will not find. Perhaps on your journey to Christmas this year and/or as part of your resolutions for 2019, you can choose to seek out our Catholic Faith in new and dynamic ways. If you don't seek, you will not find.

What do you seek from St. Mary Parish? Our wonderful parish enjoys an incredibly beautiful church building which sits prominently across from the Franklin Town Common in a place many consider the heart or main cross-roads of town. It is a Catholic church and a place for us to worship. It comes alive with the sounds of faith, hope and love each time a Mass is celebrated. Do you seek out St. Mary Parish as a place to celebrate Mass? St. Mary Parish welcomes you to seek a spiritual home at Mass each week.

This same church building that houses the celebrations of the Mass, also houses the St. Mary Parish St. Vincent DePaul Society. This group of Parishioners and members of the Greater Franklin Community support those who seek assistance with food and basic necessities of life. Do you seek such support? Please let us know by calling 508-918-2291. Do you seek to assist people in need? Please consider putting your Faith into action. You can seek out additional information at <http://www.stmarysfranklin.org/svdp>.

Do you seek volunteer opportunities in your daily life? Perhaps you volunteer as a coach, a director, a carpool driver or some other capacity. Do you volunteer at St. Mary Parish? If not, please know in this season of seeking that St. Mary Parish is seeking volunteers in all of its ministries. Please visit our Parish website to see a full list of volunteer oppor-

tunities: <http://www.stmarysfranklin.org/> The volunteer opportunities are found under the "Parish Life" tab. In this season of seeking and throughout the entire year, St. Mary Parish seeks you. St. Mary Parish seeks you to be a more committed and active member of our Faith and Parish.

It is the season of seeking. We seek Christmas. We seek the babe in the manger. We seek our Savior. We seek out the perfect gifts. We seek to find and use the most beautiful decorations. We seek to celebrate with family and friends. We seek warmth. We seek peace. In this season of seeking: Do you seek God? Do you seek your Catholic Faith? Do you seek St. Mary Parish? If you are seeking remember to "knock and it will open unto you."



### ...The Meaning of the Birth of Jesus

(Continued from page 1)

was not only known as a teacher and a healer but as a person. What caused so many problems with the Religious authorities was that their religion was a set of beliefs and actions that must be done in order to please God. Jesus changed that. He showed us that we are called to a constant relationship with God expressed by our action to those we meet daily. Two proofs of this is that when Jesus was to leave us, He promised to send the Holy Spirit, "the mind and heart of God" to be our constant guiding companion, and His words: "Love one another as I have loved you" and "whatever you do to the least of my brethren you have done it to me."

Let us rejoice in the birth of Christ our Guide in the way of Loving Relationship.



#### The Weave

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## ...Parish Update

*(Continued from page 1)*

in an unexpected way: We now have two new significant Programs for Women and Men. They are based on the Bishop Baron Catholicism Series. With a delayed time line, we will be pursuing electronic on-line learning resources for Parishioners. What is wonderful is that our Plan has prompted all of us to move forward in developing our Faith Community and personal faith. This Plan is an infrastructure which allows us to walk in faith, but to adjust as the pathway turns in our Parish Community Life.

We have now constructed a most beautiful and serene Garden of Remembrance Mausoleum for the Cremains of our Loved Ones in our Cemetery on Beaver Street. This special Garden allows us to inter our Loved Ones with respect, grace, and so that we are able to find peace. Folks have been searching for a Place of Honor and Respect for their Loved Ones' remains and now we provide this space. Folks have told me that they were unhappy with leaving their Cremains on shelves and in closets. Certainly it is important to recognize that how we care for a Loved One's Cremains is important. A visit to our Parish website ([stmmarysfranklin.org](http://stmmarysfranklin.org)) or a call to our Parish Office 508-528-0020 to Trish Murphy can help you make the arrangements for purchase and interment.

This past weekend, November 9 to 12 was Veterans Day Weekend. Many events happened this past weekend, in fact when all the numbers are added up, over 6000 people attended Masses or Services in our Church from Friday evening until Monday mid-day. Many of the guests were deeply impressed by the beauty of our Church and how well it is maintained and cared for, even in the midst of construction. The tasteful and thematic decorations of our sanctuary enhance in subtle ways our worship. Color, texture and light contribute to beautiful liturgical celebrations. Terry Kerr has certainly given our Parish a great spiritual gift in his shared talent and hard work in preparing and offering music which brings us closer to our God. Our Masses and Service are indeed deep and rich spiritual events with his musical gift. Our Guests remark frequently on the inspiring music that is sung at our services and Masses. We are blessed with a beautiful and cared for sanctuary, inspiring music and spiritual homilies.

It was wonderful to see the special Welcome given by our young people Greeters at the Confirmations this past week end. They certainly left our guests with a warm and positive memory of St. Mary's. Almost 250 young people received the Sacrament of Confirmation at three Masses. Bishop Robert Reed, Bishop of the West Region, was main Celebrant of the Mass and Conferring Bishop. His words of advice to our young people were deep and insightful. Mr. Roger Gullo, the Confirmation Program Director, is an excellent model of faith and service for our young people as they grow in forming a young adult identity as a believer.

I also attended and participated in the Veterans Memorial Service on the Common on Sunday afternoon. The new memorial walkway was unveiled and dedicated to our "fallen heroes." The Program was thoughtful and reflected the high regard of all who honor those who have served or are now serving.

Our Saint Vincent de Paul Society continues its dedicated and quiet work of caring for our fragile and needy. Their work is so generously supported by you. Your financial support and also purchase of groceries and supplies which you carry to the church baskets are critical supports for them. I know in this coming season with the Giving Tree and all, you will continue to give gracious and strong support. Each time you help, remember the words of Jesus "as you help the least of my brethren, so you do (help) me. Welcome into my kingdom."

There is more to write about, but this is long enough. In the next edition I will write more about our 201 Main Street Property and how we will be discussing how this part of our Patrimony can support the long-term Mission of our Parish.

Saint Mary's is indeed a vibrant and thriving parish because of you and all who commit themselves in service and support throughout the year. It actually takes hundreds and hundreds of volunteer hours on a weekly basis for Saint Mary's Community to have this gift of a wonderful Life of Faith. I acknowledge not only the Ministerial, Pastoral, Professional and Support Staff who all work on this goal, but recognize more importantly the giving Parishioners who support us by the generous financial support and their hours of service. Certainly we all have much to thank our God for in our Parish life at Saint Mary's Franklin.

## View From the Pew

*by Joan McGuire*

### We See What We Are

Some years ago I had the opportunity to attend a Catholic-Buddhist retreat directed by a Catholic missionary from the Middle East and a Buddhist monk. We were given short parables to think about during the day in silence and then in the evening session discuss what we learned. The priest used parables from the Gospel and from Rumi, a 12<sup>th</sup> century Persian philosopher. This parable from the Buddhist monk was, as many are, anonymous.

"A Buddha was sitting under a tree. A trim soldier walked by, noticed the monk was fat and said, "You look like a pig!" The Buddha looked up calmly and said, "And you look like God." Taken aback, the soldier asked the Buddha, "Why do you say I look like God?" The Buddha replied, "Because we don't really see what's outside of us. We see what's inside of us and project it out. I sit under the tree all day and think about God, so that when I look out that's what I see. And you must be thinking about other things."

As Christmas approaches, I am more conscious than usual that we are all children of God and if I don't project it that way in my actions I must look within myself and take stock of what I am harboring within myself. As a calming technique before bed I look over the day and examine how I interacted with people I came in contact with. For some people there is a sadness over a loss of a family; others are harried by lack of money, lack of time, lack of health or just lack of energy for the Christmas seasons. Jesus took people just as they were and He always left them feeling better. It doesn't have to be an enormous gesture of good will - a passing smile, a quick "hello" or "have a good day."

Any act that makes someone feel noticed is the kind of gift Jesus gave each person as he moved though his days on earth and the same kindness to others is the gift he would most appreciate from you on His birthday.

  
 GOOD WILL TO MEN



## Mark Your Parish Calendar

**Nov. 22 Thanksgiving**  
**Nov. 25 Baptisms**  
**Nov. 27** Mass at Franklin nursing home  
**Dec. 1** Pageant Rehearsal, 8am  
**Dec. 2** Baptisms  
**Dec. 2** Baptism Class, 1:30pm  
**Dec. 3** Caring Tree Gifts due  
**Dec. 5** Mass at Atria  
**Dec. 8** Pageant rehearsal, 8am  
**Dec. 8** K of C Card Drive, after Mass  
**Dec. 9** K of C Card Drive, after Mass  
**Dec. 9** Protecting God's Children class  
**Dec. 9** Lessons and Carols, 3pm  
**Dec. 12** Mass at Forge Hill  
**Dec. 16** Baptisms  
**Dec. 18** Mass at Nursing Home  
**Dec. 23** Baptisms  
**Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Masses**  
**4pm Upper Church, Lower Chapel, Horace Mann Auditorium w/Children's Pageant**  
**6pm, 7:30pm, Midnight**  
**Dec. 25 Christmas Day Masses**  
**9am and 10:30am**  
**Dec. 26 NO Morning Mass**  
**Dec. 30 Baptisms**  
**Dec. 31 New Year's Eve**  
**Mass: 4pm**  
**Jan. 1 New Year's Day**  
**Masses: 9am & 10:30am**  
**Jan. 2** Mass at Atria  
**Jan. 6** Baptisms  
**Jan. 6** Baptism Class, 1:30  
**Jan. 13** Baptisms  
**Jan. 17** CWC Meeting, 7pm  
**Jan. 20** K of C Coffee and Donuts  
**Jan. 20** Baptisms  
**Jan. 27** Baptisms  
**Feb. 3** Scout Sunday  
**Feb. 3** Baptisms  
**Feb. 3** Baptism Class, 1:30  
**Feb. 6** Mass at Atria  
**Feb. 10** Baptisms  
**Feb. 17** K of C Coffee & Donuts  
**Feb. 17** Baptisms  
**Feb. 24** Baptisms  
**Mar 2** Morning With Jesus  
**Mar 3** K of C Coffee and Donuts  
**Mar 3** Baptisms  
**Mar 6 Ash Wednesday**  
**Mass at 7am & 7pm**  
**Prayer Service:**  
**12:15pm, 4pm**  
**Mar 6** Mass at Atria  
**Mar 10** Baptisms  
**Mar 10** Baptism Class, 1:30  
**Mar 17** K of C Coffee and Donuts  
**Mar 17** Baptisms  
**Mar 24** Baptisms  
**Mar 31** Baptisms  
**April 1** Mass at Atria  
**April 7** K of C Coffee & Donuts  
**April 7** Baptisms  
**April 7** Baptism Class, 1:30pm

## Enjoying Jesus' Company

by Father Jack Sullivan

Terry Kerr has expanded the Christmas repertoire of our parish choir by including "A Gallery Carol" which begins: "O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth. For this is the birthday of Jesus our King, who brought us salvation, His praises we'll sing." Terry is alert to the daunting challenge of including something new in our parish observance of Christmas, the liturgical commemoration of the birth of Jesus.

The second century bishop and theologian Saint Irenaeus of Lyons freshened the Christian imagination by proclaiming that Jesus Christ "brought all newness in bringing Himself" (Adv Haer 4.31.1). Irenaeus also observed: "...God indeed needed no one's company, but he shared his company with those who needed him" (Adv Haer 4.14.2-3). A few years ago Rowan Williams, the retired Archbishop of Canterbury, echoed Irenaeus by reminding us that Jesus is not the Savior we deserve, but the Savior we need.

To say something new about Christmas this year, I will rely upon the official prayer-texts of the Roman Missal. On December 22 the friends of Jesus delight in this prayer-request that "those who confess his Incarnation with humble fervor may merit his company as their Redeemer." A prayer on December 25 expands our imaginations by seeking that we "may also delight in his gladness in heaven" (Christmas, during the night). The human experience of arranging the figures of a nativity set reminds many people that Jesus enjoys company. During his lifetime Jesus enjoyed the company of human beings, making his home with the human family. Jesus still enjoys our company so we sing in the Christmas carol *Hark the Herald Angels*: "pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel." Jesus is one of us, a brother to all of us.

Artisans from Naples are renowned for beginning the custom of expanding the number of persons who gather at the manger-crib of the baby Jesus. A manger scene in Taormina, east Sicily, imaginatively includes a woman bringing a basket of freshly baked loaves of bread as a gift to Mary and Joseph. Catholic imagi-

nation suggests that she had interrupted her night/early morning work at the local bakery to come to the Savior's birthplace in Bethlehem. The woman baker at the Infant's crib teaches us a lesson about devotion during a busy life. So many years later we continue to rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ. As we complete our work projects and household chores, or even in the middle of our competing schedules, we visit the Lord Jesus Christ's crib. May our Christmas celebration this year resemble the experience imagined in the charming song *The Little Drummer Boy*: our newborn King and Savior smiles at us.



**Advent and Christmas  
Liturgical Celebrations**  
**Feast of the Immaculate Conception  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
**Holyday Mass:**  
**Saturday, December 8**  
**8:00am**  
  
**Lessons and Carols**  
**Sunday, December 9**  
**3:00pm**  
  
**Christmas Eve  
Masses:**  
**4pm (3 Masses); upper church, lower church, Horace Mann Auditorium with the Children's Pageant**  
**6pm, 7:30pm**  
**\*\*Midnight Mass\*\***  
**Christmas Day**  
**Masses: 9am and 10:30am**  
**No Morning Mass on December 26**  
  
**New Year's Day  
Feast of Mary,  
the Holy Mother of God**  
**Vigil Mass**  
**December 31**  
**4pm**  
**Holyday Masses:**  
**Monday, Jan. 1**  
**9am and 10:30am**

## Sick? Disabled? Lonely? We Can Help

by Stephen May

Since ancient times, the reason churches have reserved Holy Communion in tabernacles following Mass was not in case they needed extra hosts for an unexpected, large crowd at the next Mass, but rather because the Catholic Church has always mandated that sufficient Communion be retained as viaticum for those who are dying and for those who are unable physically to make it to Mass. Too often, the faithful who are ill or disabled are deprived their rightful and accustomed place in the Eucharistic feast, but it is the right of every baptized Catholic to receive regular Communion, and it is the privilege of every cleric and lay Eucharistic minister to distribute it to any parishioner, whether in the church building or elsewhere.

Whether you or your loved one can walk up the stairs at St. Mary's or not, every member of St. Mary's is a vital, active member of the community and deserves access to Holy Communion. We are very fortunate at St. Mary's to have a terrific team that can ensure that no one feels marginalized in our Eucharistic community.

If you know someone who is Catholic and would like to receive Holy Communion in their home or in their long-

term care facility, just once, or on a regular basis, St. Mary's is here to help. If the parishioner is in Franklin or a neighboring town, even if they are not active, the pastoral team, or a trained parishioner is willing to ensure that your loved-one's desire for Holy Communion is fulfilled.

Additionally, there are some people who are homebound or in a facility that may already have their desire for Communion fulfilled in another way, but could benefit from a simple pastoral visit. Such visits could be for prayer, companionship, or just to talk about the Red Sox! Your parish is here to help these folks, too.

Typically, pastoral visits take place Monday through Friday during the week, but in some cases weekend visits can be arranged.

Every outreach visit is unique. There is no set "script" for any visit. Our goal is to meet the pastoral needs of every parishioner, regardless of what those needs are. To set up a visit for yourself or a loved one or friend, please contact Stephen May, Pastoral Assistant, at 508-528-0020 x13, or at [smay@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:smay@stmarysfranklin.org).

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### PARISH COMMUNICATION

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This parish is very large and active. It is important for us to be able to give you accurate information and for you to be able to contact us as needed. If you wish to contact anyone at the rectory we can be reached by phone, 508-528-0020; Fax, 508-528-1641; or email. Here are email addresses for the clergy, Religious Education and rectory staff:

Father Brian Manning: [bmannings@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:bmannings@stmarysfranklin.org)  
 Father Jack Sullivan: [jsullivan@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:jsullivan@stmarysfranklin.org)  
 Deacon Guy St. Sauveur: [deaconguy@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:deaconguy@stmarysfranklin.org)

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 Terry Kerr, Music Director: [terry.kerr@att.net](mailto:terry.kerr@att.net) 508-541-3286

If your parish group or organization would like to place a notice in the bulletin, we must receive it **in writing (email is preferred)** by 5pm Sunday afternoon for the following weekend. Information can also be submitted for inclusion on the parish website at any time. Bulletin or website information can be emailed to [parishpublishing@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:parishpublishing@stmarysfranklin.org)

**If your organization is planning to use any parish facilities**, such as the church, church hall, lower church meeting rooms or the school, for your meetings, events, etc. it is **necessary** that you call and reserve the time and place that you want. This is the **only** way that you can be assured of having your activity at the desired location.

**CHECK OUT OUR PARISH WEBSITE:** [www.stmarysfranklin.org](http://www.stmarysfranklin.org). There is a wealth of information available there.

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### A Christmas Blessing for the Home

Loving God, as we gather at Christmas around the manger, which reminds us of the birth of your Son, we ask you to dwell in our hearts and our home.

Bless every member of our family, and strengthen the bond of love among us.

May we joyfully praise you like the angel choir that announced the birth of your Son to the shepherds watching over their flocks.

May we show your love to others with the same brightness of the star that guided the Wise Men to offer gifts to the newborn King.

Make our family holy, just like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, so that we may always live in peace and love. Amen.



### A Festival of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>  
 at 3:00pm in the  
 Upper Church.

"Lessons and Carols" is a ceremony of sacred readings and music of the Advent and Christmas Season.

Please come and Rejoice  
 in preparation of the  
 birth of the Holy Child!!



## St. Mary's Music Notes!!

by Terry Kerr

**Adult Choir:** The St. Mary Adult Choir kicked-off their 2018 - 2019 Choral Season with the celebration of the St. Rocco Mass of Thanksgiving in October. Rehearsals are in full-swing in preparing for the Advent and Christmas seasons! The Adult Choir is always looking for new members. The Adult Choir rehearses on Thursday Evenings from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. in the Upper Church. Stop by and give it a try!

**A Festival of Lessons and Carols:** St. Mary Parish will present our Fifth Annual “*Festival of Lessons and Carols for Advent & Christmas*” on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. in the Upper Church. “Lessons and Carols” is a ceremony of sacred readings and music of the Advent and Christmas Season. Please come enjoy the readings and carols of the season on December 9<sup>th</sup>! What a great way to prepare for the upcoming Christmas season!!!

**Glory to the Newborn King:** St. Mary's Adult Choir Christmas CD is available for purchase by calling the rectory or emailing our Music Director, Terry Kerr. The CD is a great stocking-stuffer or the perfect gift for all those people on your shopping list that are just so tough to find just the right present!! Please pick one up, enjoy the music, and support your parish!

1 CD - \$ 20.00  
2 CD's - \$ 35.00 (\$17.50 each)  
3 CD's (or more) - \$ 45.00 (\$ 15.00 each)

## Coming of Age - The Confirmation Preparation Program

by Roger Gullo

“When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things.” (1 Cor 13:11). In his letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul describes how he was “coming of age” in his understanding and proclamation that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and that He is the way, the truth and the life.

The Confirmation Preparation Program, directed by the Confirmation Director of the St. Mary's Religious Education Staff, is an assembly of over 400 area Catholic students in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades (typically) who are “coming of age” in the teachings of Jesus Christ and their proclamation that He is the way, the truth and the life. This two-year program prepares each young adult with the wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and fortitude to enter their adult lives as one with Jesus Christ and their Catholic faith. In the Sacrament of Baptism, these young adults entered into the gateway to life in the Spirit. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptismal grace is completed as each of the young adults become perfectly bound to the Church and enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. With the indelible seal of the Holy Spirit, they enter into their adulthood as true witnesses of Christ and become obliged to spread and defend their Catholic faith by word and deed. (CCC 1285)

Our most recently confirmed 11<sup>th</sup> grade Catholic students, completing the Confirmation Preparation Program in 2016 and 2017, were confirmed on November 9 and 10, 2018. 205 Confirmandi perfected the grace they received in Baptism with the receiving of the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Confirmation conferred by Bishop Robert Reed, West Regional Bishop of our Archdiocese. The offering of the Holy Eucharist and Sacrament of Confirmation was conducted in three beautiful Masses; one on Friday evening, and two on Saturday. Bishop Reed administered the rite of Confirmation in a way that the Confirmandi, sponsors, parents and loved ones will long remember; a delivery with enthusiasm and enlightenment throughout the Mass. His homily brought a message to the Confirmandi that included recognizing that they will never be the same after receiving the Holy Spirit; and that they should open their hearts to the Spirit

as they are guided in their vocations and lives. His Excellency also shared a little-known secret with the Confirmandi – the secret that our very own Father Brian Manning was his Confirmation Sponsor.

The Confirmation Candidates' preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation occurs over a 2-year period. Preparation includes the conduct of *Works of Mercy and Service*, attending a mid-program *Retreat* and attending 12, 2-hour lessons from the “*Decision Point*” Confirmation Preparation program; a new program St. Mary's instituted in 2015. The *Decision Point* program is brought to us by Mr. Matthew Kelly of the Dynamic Catholic Institute. As you may recall, Matthew Kelly is the author of several books, including the Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic, Rediscover Catholicism, Resisting Happiness, and Perfectly Yourself that have been provided as gifts from Father Brian to parishioners over the past several years during Advent and Lenten Season Masses.

The *Decision Point* program has been quite successful over these past three years since we first instituted it for our Confirmation Candidates. This program has engaged our candidates with multi-media presentations, small group level discussions on insightful questions and bible verse look-up challenges. This increase in engagement of our Candidates on the discussion topics has been made possible through the success of the junior leadership of over 60 volunteer Small Group Leader (SGL) positions. Away from the classroom, this program has also provided an opportunity for parents, sponsors of Confirmation candidates and all parishioners to re-experience the knowledge and understanding of being confirmed into the Catholic faith and living out that faith through word and deed.

I invite you to learn more about the St. Mary Confirmation Preparation Program by visiting the *Confirmation Preparation Program* located under the *Religious Ed* menu on the St Mary Parish website (<http://www.stmarysfranklin.org/>). In addition, I highly suggest you visit the *Decision Point* program website (<https://dynamiccatholic.com/Confirmation>) and discover the ways our Confirmation Candidates, and those recently Confirmed, are opening their lives to the Holy Spirit and surrounding it by the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

(Continued on page 7)



## The Power of 40 – Celebrating the People of St. Rocco and Looking Ahead

by Sarah Drake

The change of seasons brings about reflection, introspection and new vision and this was especially felt this fall by the multitude of volunteers who had brought the Feast of St. Rocco to life every August for the past 40 years. August 12, 2018 marked the last day of the final Festival of Food so lovingly run by members of St. Mary Parish. To honor the hundreds of volunteers who made the feast a part of their summer, a Mass of thanksgiving and reception of gratitude was held on October 6, 2018 to begin the transition from one tradition to the next.

The Mass and reception on October 6 brought 40 years of faith, family, community and tradition full circle. Fr. Michael Guarino, the brainchild of the event in 1979, was the principal celebrant of the Mass. His moving homily was built on the theme of the number 40 in the Bible. He pointed out that the Israelites wandered the desert for 40 years; Moses, Elijah and Jesus fasted in the desert for 40 days; and the great flood lasted 40 days. “In the bible, the period of 40 days, weeks or years often precedes an event in which God himself speaks.” He encouraged all present to “look for what God is trying to say now. How is he speaking and what is the message?”

The atmosphere in the church evoked memories through the decades. Various clergy who were instrumental in festival highlights throughout the years concelebrated with Fr. Guarino. Distinguished guests, including 40-year volunteers like Peter Brunelli, were seated in the front row. Music Director Terry Kerr obtained an audio copy of “Glorioso san Rocco”, traditionally sung in small villages in Italy during the Feast of St. Rocco, and transcribed it so the St. Mary Choir could sing it for all to enjoy. Even the flower arrangements in the sanctuary – red carnations and white football mums sparsely arranged among greenery – were recreated from pictures taken at the original Mass.

Following the Mass over 300 guests, made up of St. Rocco volunteers from throughout the years and their families, attended a reception of appreciation at the Guidrey Student Center at Dean College. The hall was decorated with appreciation and love. Small details brought back emotions from

individual and collective festivals – a memory banner with names of deceased volunteers, food banners from booths, aprons worn by those serving food, St. Rocco t-shirts from throughout the year – all provided the backdrop for the celebration. “The decorations were us,” said Roberta Trahan, one of the original “Rockettes” and 40-year member of the DeBaggis family Italian pastry booth. “It was like walking into Rocco.”

Table decorations included pictures from the festival taken throughout the 40 years, affixed to red, white or green cards. These memories lent to discussions and sharing. Additional special memorabilia on Fr. Guarino’s table added even more memories. Everything was a conversation piece. “It was like a Franklin community homecoming, a class reunion of sorts” said John Ristaino, longtime volunteer and long-time volunteer at the Italian sub booth.

Tim Hurdelbrink, vice-chair of the parish council, thanked all who were involved over the years. He noted that “the parish is like one big family, and how do families celebrate when they get together? Over Food!” He presented Peter Brunelli, long time chair and 40-year volunteer, with a commemorative plate in the name of all volunteers. After the presentation Hurdelbrink joked, “What better award for a festival that celebrates with food, than a commemorative plate!” These plates were also presented to other 40-year volunteers, festival chairpersons, and founding festival members after the reception.

The decision to end the 40-year festival celebration was done so as to preserve and advance its original intent, “to celebrate a religious, social and cultural event” as described in a letter from Fr. Guarino the first year. “This is an important moment in history for the future of the parish, to honor the goal set forth by the founder 40 years ago” reflected Fr. Brian Manning, pastor of St. Mary Parish. “Our parishioners will have a fond memory of how it all ended and will create new traditions that reflect the essence of our parish family today.”

With the closing of the last Festival of Food and the honor to all volunteers bestowed, a new tradition will take shape.

The Feast of St. Rocco, an official feast day in the Catholic faith, will still be celebrated on the second Sunday in August at St. Mary Parish. It will include a special Mass of healing and hope beginning with a procession of the smaller statue of St. Rocco, as has been tradition for the past four decades.

But those faithful who have an affinity to the patron saint of healing will be able to enjoy a time of reflection all year. The statue of St. Rocco that has been permanently located “in the field,” the location of the festival grounds for 40 years, is about to begin a new journey. Donated by parishioner Nick Verna in 1959, who credited his recovery from a long illness to the patron saint of healing, the statue will soon assume permanent residence outside the new church addition in the “Piazza di San Rocco” which will be a beautifully landscaped area for prayer and reflection. It will be a lovely place to pay tribute to the beloved saint of healing at any time. As one tradition ends and another begins, Fr. Brian encourages everyone to “listen and pay attention to what’s next. Good things come from God if we listen and look.”

For more information about the Feast of St. Rocco over the years, please visit the St. Mary Parish website at [www.stmarysfranklin.org](http://www.stmarysfranklin.org) or the St. Rocco Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/stroccoofeastfranklin/>.

### ...Coming of Age - The Confirmation Preparation Program

(Continued from page 6)

In the next edition of the Weave, I will discuss the Confirmation Preparation requirements and how the Confirmation Candidates’ take the steps towards the Sacrament of Confirmation. We ask that you please pray for our young adults, our volunteer Religious Education teachers, and the Religious Education staff as our youth “come of age” in their Catholic faith.

(Part 1 in the series).

# CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

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Bells Cards Decorations Gift Mistletoe Pie Reindeer Tinsel Wreath  
 Candles Celebrate Eggnog Holiday Noel Poinsettia Ribbon Tree  
 Candy Cookies Fruitcake Holly Ornament Presents Stockings Wrap

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