

# **The Goodnewsletter**

*A Newsletter for Members of St. Ann, St. Vincent de Paul  
& St. Patrick Parishes*

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Volume 3 - Issue 3

December 2015

*The parishes of St. Ann, St. Patrick  
and St. Vincent de Paul welcome  
Monsignor John J. Bonzagni  
as our new pastor!*

*We look forward to many years  
of your spiritual guidance  
and friendship.*

## ***Editor's Note***

by Deb Kuni

In this issue of our tri-parish newsletter, we offer a big warm welcome to our new pastor, Msgr. John J. Bonzagni. Monsignor John comes to us from Lenox Dale, where he has resided for many, many years. He also works in Springfield at the Tribunal. Please make him feel welcome and know that he always available to help you with whatever is on your mind!

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and safe and happy New Year. Let's hope 2016 is a productive, stress-free year, full of adventure and laughter!

### **CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**

**BY CAROL KIRBY**

The Circle of Friends is a ministry under the arm of the parish council's Community Outreach Commission. Circle of Friends is a group of caring volunteers from St. Ann and St. Vincent de Paul parishes that have offered their assistance to grieving families when the family has requested the use of the family center for a reception following the funeral of a loved one.

We also occasionally assist at church functions and receptions after the baptism of a baby at the family's request. The Circle of Friends will assist the families with the process of the reception, from start to finish.

We start by setting up the family center with tables and then set up the food the family has arranged for prior to the end of the funeral. We then help serve those who attend the reception and when the reception is over we package up the remaining food for the family to take home. Our team will then clean up the family center after the family has left. The number of volunteers has now grown to 43.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have offered their time and talent to help make the Circle of Friends ministry a huge success!!!!!!!

If you would like to join this very worthwhile ministry please call Parish Council Community Outreach Commission member Carol Kirby at 637-2188.

We have found this ministry really makes you feel good to know that you have helped someone at a very difficult time in their life.

*Wishing everyone a very blessed holiday season.*

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### **Christmas Day in the Morning**

**By Pearl S. Buck**

He woke suddenly and completely. It was four o'clock, the hour at which his father had always called him to get up and help with the milking. Strange how the habits of his youth clung to him still! Fifty years ago, and his father had been dead for thirty years, and yet he waked at four o'clock in the morning. He had trained himself to turn over and go to sleep, but this morning it was Christmas, he did not try to sleep. Why did he feel so awake tonight? He slipped back in time, as he did so easily nowadays. He was fifteen years old and still on his father's farm. He loved his father. He had not known it until one day a few days before Christmas, when he had overheard what his father was saying to his mother. "Mary, I hate to call Rob in the mornings. He's growing so fast and he needs his sleep. If you could see how he sleeps when I go in to wake him up! I wish I could manage alone. "Well, you can't, Adam." His mother's voice was brisk. "Besides, he isn't a child anymore. It's time he took his turn." Yes," his father said slowly.

**Christmas Day continued on next page**

## Christmas Day continued.....

"But I sure do hate to wake him."

When he heard these words, something in him spoke: his father loved him! He had never thought of that before, taking for granted the tie of their blood. Neither his father nor his mother talked about loving their children--they had no time for such things. There was always so much to do on the farm.

Now that he knew his father loved him, there would be no loitering in the mornings and having to be called again. He got up after that, stumbling blindly in his sleep, and pulled on his clothes, his eyes shut, but he got up.

And then on the night before Christmas, that year when he was fifteen, he lay for a few minutes thinking about the next day. They were poor, and most of the excitement was in the turkey they had raised themselves and mince pies his mother made. His sisters' sewed presents and his mother and father always bought him something he needed, not only a warm jacket, maybe, but something more, such as a book. And he saved and bought them each something, too. He wished that Christmas when he was fifteen, he had a better present for his father. As usual he had gone to the ten-cent store and bought a tie. It had seemed nice enough until he lay thinking the night before Christmas. He looked out of his attic window, the stars were bright.

"Dad," he had once asked when he was a little boy, "What is a stable?"

"It's just a barn," his father had replied, "like ours."

Then Jesus had been born in a barn, and to a barn the shepherds had come...

The thought struck him like a silver dagger. Why should he not give his father a special gift too, out there in the barn? He could get up early, earlier than four o'clock, and he could creep into the barn and get all the milking done. He'd do it alone, milk and clean up, and then when his father went in to start the milking he'd see it all done. And he would know who had done it. He laughed to himself as he gazed at the stars. It was what he would do, and he mustn't sleep too sound.

He must have waked twenty times, scratching a match to look each time to look at his old watch -- midnight, and half past one, and then two o'clock.

At a quarter to three he got up and put on his clothes. He crept downstairs, careful of the creaky boards, and let himself out. The cows looked at him, sleepy and surprised. It was early for them, too.

He had never milked all alone before, but it seemed almost easy. He kept thinking about his father's surprise. His father would come in and get him, saying that he would get things started while Rob was getting dressed. He'd go to the barn, open the door, and then he'd go get the two big empty milk cans. But they wouldn't be waiting or empty, they'd be standing in the milk-house, filled.

"What the--," he could hear his father exclaiming.

He smiled and milked steadily, two strong streams rushing into the pail, frothing and fragrant.

The task went more easily than he had ever known it to go before. Milking for once was not a chore. It was something else, a gift to his father who loved him. He finished, the two milk cans were full, and he covered them and closed the milk-house door carefully, making sure of the latch.

Back in his room he had only a minute to pull off his clothes in the darkness and jump into bed, for he heard his father up. He put the covers over his head to silence his quick breathing. The door opened.

"Rob!" His father called. "We have to get up, son, even if it is Christmas."

"Aw-right," he said sleepily.

The door closed and he lay still, laughing to himself. In just a few minutes his father would know. His dancing heart was ready to jump from his body.

The minutes were endless -- ten, fifteen, he did not know how many -- and he heard his father's footsteps again. The door opened and he lay still. "Rob!" "Yes, Dad--"

His father was laughing, a queer sobbing sort of laugh. "Thought you'd fool me, did you?" His father was standing by his bed, feeling for him, pulling away the cover. "It's for Christmas, Dad!"

He found his father and clutched him in a great hug. He felt his father's arms go around him. It was dark and they could not see each other's faces. "Son, I thank you. Nobody ever did a nicer thing--" "Oh, Dad, I want you to know -- I do want to be good!" The words broke from him of their own will. He did not know what to say. His heart was bursting with love. He got up and pulled on his clothes again and they went down to the Christmas tree. Oh what a Christmas, and how his heart had nearly burst again with shyness and pride as his father told his mother and made the younger children listen about how he, Rob, had got up all by himself.

"The best Christmas gift I ever had, and I'll remember it, son every year on Christmas morning, so long as I live."

They had both remembered it, and now that his father was dead, he remembered it alone: that blessed Christmas dawn when, alone with the cows in the barn, he had made his first gift of true love.

This Christmas he wanted to write a card to his wife and tell her how much he loved her, it had been a long time since he had really told her, although he loved her in a very special way, much more than he ever had when they were young. He had been fortunate that she had loved him. Ah, that was the true joy of life, the ability to love. Love was still alive in him, it still was.

It occurred to him suddenly that it was alive because long ago it had been born in him when he knew his father loved him. That was it: Love alone could awaken love. And he could give the gift again and again. This morning, this blessed Christmas morning, he would give it to his beloved wife. He could write it down in a letter for her to read and keep forever. He went to his desk and began his love letter to his wife: My dearest love...

Such a happy, happy Christmas!

## Religious Education

We began the year with our new time for First, Third, and Fourth grades and moving our 5th -10th grades to the Family Center. All seems to meet the approval of the students, parents, and teachers. We have three new teachers this year; Miss Keator for First Grade, Ms. Adriana Lugo for Third Grade, and Mr. Jeremiah Ames for Fourth Grade. Fr. C.J. was teaching our Confirmation classes. Who will continue that will be decided.

Thirteen 11th Grade students were confirmed at St. Ann's Church on October 18th. All families were invited to a reception in the Parish Center.

Kindergarten meets the first Sunday of each month in the Parish Center during the 9:45 Mass. The First grade, also, meets in the Parish Center during Mass on the first and second Sunday of the month. The Second, Third and Fourth Grades' meet at 8 on Sunday mornings. It is wonderful to see the classes attending Mass with their teacher or families.

Our New Spirit Retreat was Oct. 20th for our middle school students. As usual, they had a great experience. Pat was overjoyed at our students' enthusiasm, faith and politeness. Many students want to go to Camp Holy Cross this summer to extend their experiences.

The 3rd- 4th Grades and other students participated in a Saint project for All Saint's Day. Many students drew a picture of their Saint and dress-up in costumes. Harper Jaehnig received a gift certificate to The Heritage for dressing up as St. Andrew with a very big fish. The pictures are displayed on the prayer railing at Church.

We pray for our deceased friends, family members and those who have no one, every week in November. Mt. Carmel Care Center asked us for Thanksgiving cards for their residents. The cards were thoughtful as well as festive.

All classes participated in PROJECT CHRISTMAS CHILD. We pray that we are even more successful than last year.

On Dec. 20th, our 5th-10th grade students will be cleaning our Church to get ready for Christmas. We hope all parents and students join us in this holiday tradition. There will be a pizza dinner for all those attending.

Peace,  
Joan Davis

## 2015 Christmas Mass Schedule

### Thursday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve

4 p.m. - Children's Pageant / Vigil Mass - St. Ann Church

6 p.m. - St. Vincent de Paul Church

6 p.m. - St. Patrick Church with Fr. Mike from the Marian Fathers

10 p.m. - St. Ann Church

### Friday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. - St. Ann Church

## The Deacon's Corner

### Deacon Dan Romanello, KM

Throughout Church history, Deacons have played a vital role in serving the needs of the faithful through humble service - *diakonia*. Described below are two of the most notable:

#### St. Stephen

As recorded in Acts 6:3-6, St. Stephen was one of the original seven deacons elected and ordained by the Apostles to care for the socially marginalized, including widows and the poor. A Jew living in the Hellenic provinces and relative of St. Paul, he also was the first Christian martyr and role model for all those ordained to the diaconate throughout the centuries.

Scripture tells us that St. Stephen was a man “full of faith and the Holy Spirit” and that God worked numerous miracles through him. His preaching exuded such wisdom and grace that many who heard him became followers of Jesus. Incensed by Stephen's success, enemies of the early Church – the Sanhedrin- plotted against him just as they had against Christ by enlisting individuals to falsely accuse him of blasphemy, of speaking sinfully against God.

Courageously standing up to the great assembly of his antagonists and evincing the face of an angel, St. Stephen proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. Further enraged by this public proclamation of deep, abiding faith, his adversaries rose up and shouted at him. Stephen looked up to Heaven, and exclaimed that he saw the heavens opening and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Covering their ears, his foes refused to listen any further. They dragged St. Stephen outside the city of Jerusalem and stoned him to death while the saint prayed for Jesus to receive his spirit and not to punish his enemies for killing him.

St. Stephen's martyrdom is believed to have taken place in 36 AD, just three years after the death and resurrection of Christ.

His feast day is December 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### St. Francis of Assisi

While many people mistakenly believe that St. Francis of Assisi was a priest, he was, in fact, a deacon.

Born Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone in 1181 and informally named Francesco, Francis was the son of a wealthy silk merchant who deliberately abandoned a privileged lifestyle in order to commit himself completely to a life spent in humble service to God.

It often is said that no one throughout the ages has been more singularly dedicated than Francis in authentically imitating the life and work of Christ. He displayed an exceptional affinity for the Eucharist – a stigmatist who bore the wounds of the Jesus, Francis held a deep respect for the priests who carried out the sacrament. Founder of the men's Order of Friars Minor; the women's Order of Saint Clare; the Third Order of Saint Francis; and the Custody of the Holy Land, he celebrated and venerated poverty as an essential lifestyle for those seeking to faithfully follow Christ.

His spirit of *diakonia* is contained in these moving words from one of his letters:

“We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh. Rather, we must be simple, humble, pure. We should never desire to be over others. Instead, we ought to be servants who are submissive to every human being for God's sake. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on all who live in this way and persevere in it to the end. He will permanently dwell in them. They will be the Father's children who do his work. They are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Canonized in 1228 by Pope Gregory IX, St. Francis is the patron of both animals and nature. He is credited with the aphorism “preach always and use words if necessary”.

His feast day is **October 4<sup>th</sup>**.

## Faith

A true gift given by our Creator

The ability to overcome our innate need  
to control our lives

The ability to replace that need with  
Trust in God

The ability to reverse conventional thinking  
And years of training

Complete faith is not possible  
Without God's Spirit

Faith is based on the ultimate wisdom  
That we were created by God  
And that God is able to work  
All things into his plan

The chaos of the world  
Gives way to order  
The pain of the world  
Gives way to comfort  
The burdens of the world  
Give way to serenity  
The anger of the world  
Gives way to love

To live in Faith is  
Truly a Gift.

### **Did You Know?**

- Did you know that St. Ann Parish has an account with ParishPay? ParishPay is a service you can use to automatically make a donation to St. Ann Parish. You can sign up for an automatic monthly amount (until you cancel it), or just make a one-time donation.
- Visit [ParishPay.com](http://ParishPay.com) to sign-up or contact St. Ann's church office and Debbie will help you set it up. You have a choice of where your donation is made from; your checking account, your savings account or your credit card, if you want your donation to be made once a month or twice a month - you can select the option that fits your budget.
- This is a free, and easy way to take care of your parish financially, whether you are in town or not, all year long. If you would like more information, please visit the ParishPay website or call the church office.

12<sup>th</sup> in a series of articles from the Spiritual Life Commission regarding traditions of our faith.



### WHEN IS CHRISTMAS?

### WHEN WAS CHRISTMAS?

Christmas; not on December 25th? We can't imagine! Christmas was not even on the church calendar until about 200 AD when Egyptian theologians placed the date of Christ's birth on May 20th in the 28th year in the reign of Augustus. Others have calculated the date to be the 19th or 20th of April, 28th of March, actually credited authorities have, at one time or another, placed Christmas in every month of the year. Much of the discrepancies that occur are due to miscalculation from one calendar to a new one, previous celebrations of pagan holidays, habitual to local customs. The placement of leap year days in different months of the various calendars also account for the differences as time goes on. It took two more centuries for the Church in Egypt to celebrate the December date of Christmas.

Jewish tradition is that great men live a whole number of years, without fractions, so if Jesus was considered to have been conceived on March 25th, this would lend to a December 25th birth, he died on March 25th which coincides with the date they believe that the world was created or their 14 Nisan of the Jewish calendar ". It is also the date of the Passover and the Exodus.

"O the splendid and divine providence of the Lord, on that day, the very day, on which the sun was made, the 28 March, a Wednesday. Christ should be born. Based on this translation of Genesis, Malachi said, "Unto you shall the sun of righteousness arise and healing is in his wings."

"But our Lord, too, is born in the month of December...the eight before the calends of January (25 December)..., "But they call it the 'Birthday of the Unconquered'. Who indeed is so unconquered as Our Lord...? Or, if they say that it is the birth of the Sun, He is the Sun of Justice."

The Gospel of Luke, cited by John Chrysostom in 386 trying to unite the Church in Antioch in observing the December 25th birth by preaching that Zachary( John the Baptist's father) had entered the Temple on the Day of Atonement (September) and received the announcement of John's conception. Six months later (March), the Annunciation to Mary that Elizabeth is in her 6th month and Mary's "be it done unto me..." would result in a December birth for Christ.

Churches that use the Gregorian Calendar, I.E. the Western world, celebrate Christmas on the December 25th date. The Armenian Church uses the Gregorian Calendar but observes Christmas on January 6th. Eastern Orthodox churches use a Revised Julian Calendar and also observes a December 25th date. Ethiopian, Coptic and Julian calendars mark December 25th as Christmas but it corresponds to our January 7th date.

It appears that the Church in Rome always celebrated the December 25th date as early as 205 and always separately from the Epiphany. In the early Middle Ages, the Epiphany overshadowed Christmas Day. Later on the Eastern Churches separated the two feasts marking January 6th as the Epiphany and still remains the dominant feast. Christmas Day gained in prominence after Charlemagne was crowned Emperor in 800 as was King William I in 1066 and King Edmund was anointed on Christmas day in 855. By the high Middle Ages it had become a prominent holiday.

Some countries today, especially in the Near East, northern Africa and China do not observe a formal public holiday for Christmas. Russia prohibited it from 1917 to 1991 under its atheism policy.

There is consensus among those who state that the actual day and year of Jesus' birth cannot be determined but it is a celebration of making redemption possible. It is the Incarnation of the One who became like us in all things but sin and humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross.

## SACRAMENTAL SERIES – PART 4

### Deacon Dan Romanello, KM

Sacraments are outward, visible signs instituted by Christ to impart grace to those who truly believe in Him.

#### Confirmation – Sealing Our Baptismal Vows

Confirmation, also called *Chrismation*, is the third and final sacrament of initiation in the Roman Catholic faith. The reception of this sacrament builds upon what was begun in Baptism and nourished through receiving the Holy Eucharist. Confirmation completes the process of initiation into the Christian community and matures our souls for the important apostolic work that lies ahead in each of our lives.

It's important to recall that the Holy Spirit first is introduced to a Christian Catholic at their baptism - the three persons of the Trinity all are invoked during the sacramental rite. The Holy Spirit descends upon the person, accompanied by the Father and Son just as he did at Pentecost.

Called *Confirmation* because the faith given in Baptism now is confirmed and made strong, those who receive the sacrament sometimes are referred to as *soldiers of Christ*. This title isn't a military designation but rather signifies a spiritual duty to fight the war between good and evil, between light and darkness as authentic followers of Christ.

*Confirmandi* – those being confirmed – are required to have attained sufficient age and reason necessary to willingly and knowingly accept responsibility for their faith and spiritual destiny going forward. When a person is confirmed, they receive the same gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit that were imparted on the apostles at Pentecost.

Traditionally, the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity. These are human qualities that can be activated by the Holy Spirit. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord, gifts of supernatural graces given to the soul.

As part of the sacramental ritual, those being confirmed choose a name to complement the one given to them at their infant baptism. This appellation normally is one of the canonized saints of the Church or a hero from the Bible.

The rite of Confirmation may take place either during a liturgy or outside the Mass. The normal presider over this sacramental rite is the local Bishop who vests in red to symbolize the tongues of fire seen hovering over the heads of the apostles at Pentecost. Each *confirmand* comes forward, accompanied by his/her sponsor, and stands or kneels before the bishop while the sponsor lays one hand on the shoulder of the one being confirmed. The chosen confirmation name is spoken and the bishop anoints the Oil of Chrism (the same oil of royalty used during Baptism) on the person's forehead. He then pronounces his/her name aloud and intones "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." The confirmand responds, "Amen." The bishop then says "Peace be with you" and the person responds "And with your spirit".

As previously noted, only the bishop confirms the Catholics in his diocese. However, priests can be delegated to confirm adult converts from other religions when they're brought into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil and have completed the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program in the parish.



## From Our Parish Nurse. . . .

Happy Holidays everyone! As we approach the year 2016 the Lenox Environmental Committee wants to reach out to all townspeople with their new initiative of "Go Green in 16". I know we all make lists of promises for the New Year so why not make an effort to do something for each other in a small way. Following is a small piece written by the committee.



### DID YOU KNOW?

1. Babies' and children's developing brains and bodies are extraordinarily vulnerable to toxic chemicals
2. One in-ten school absences are due to asthma
3. Commonly used house hold cleaning supplies, air fresheners and other household perfumes, and all aerosol sprays are toxic and have been implicated in triggering asthma and other allergy episodes
- 4 Its easy to be fooled by labels -buy certified green products: Label claims aren't always true. Cleaning supplies certified by Green Seal or Eco Logo meet green standards.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- \*Avoid scented products.
- \*Wash and dry clothes with unscented laundry detergent, fabric softeners, and dryer sheets.
- \*Use unscented or non aerosol versions of household cleaning products and avoid scented candles or room fresheners. Avoid scented products.
- \*Wash and dry clothes with unscented laundry detergent, fabric softeners, and dryer sheets.

### SIMPLE GREEN CLEANSER TO MAKE YOURSELF:

All-Purpose Cleaner  
1 2/3- cup baking soda  
1/2 -cup liquid Castile or Murphy Oil Soap  
1/2 - cup water  
2 tablespoons vinegar  
16-oz bottle with flip cap

Mix baking soda and liquid soap in a bowl. Add water, then add vinegar. Pour into squeeze bottle. If too thick, add water. Shake well.

Merry Christmas to all. Stay healthy and safe,

*Dianne Romeo*

On Nov. 15, the US celebrated America Recycles Day. The EPA estimates the average person throws away 70lbs of clothing per year. That adds up to over 2 billion pounds!


Please consider bringing your give-away clothing to The St. Pauly Textile Clothing Shed located in the back of St. Patrick's parking lot. The goal of the St. Pauly Company is to keep used clothing out of the landfill and getting those clothes to people in need who can use them.



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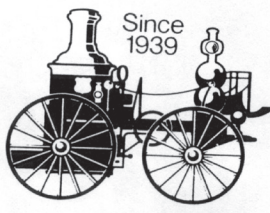
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Lenox, MA

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# OUR CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Sept. 2015 ~ Dec. 2015

## St. Ann Parish

### New Members

Daniel & Patricia Flynn  
Marcin & Sylvia Zygawski  
William Jeffrey Knauth  
Jackson Scott Kruse  
Lilly Kelley Bingham  
Samantha Elizabeth Simonelli  
Anna Sinclair Artist  
Margaret May Shanahan  
Emily V. Sottile  
Timothy & Cathleen Morey  
Kaylee B. Morey

### Baptisms

Luke Robert Farkas  
Cora Lynn Welch  
Jessie & Heather Kowalski  
Ernest & Suzanne Malafronte  
Alfred & Paul Bingham  
Jessica Roemischer  
Jameson Jack Gray  
Hailey Noelle Blesser  
Feni Elizabeth Field Anoushian  
Damiara Sophia Lesse

### Deaths - R.I.P.

Kenneth Hamberg  
Nancy Roux  
Clara Gennari  
Rita Mackey  
Edward Daley  
John Mazur  
Michael Hedges  
Patricia Kelly

## St. Vincent de Paul Parish

### New Members

### Baptisms

Karmyn Jean O'Leary  
Hudson Stone Beckwith  
Roque A. Bienvenue

### Deaths - R.I.P.

## St. Patrick Parish

### New Members

### Baptisms

### Deaths - R.I.P.

Ronald Paul  
Paul Kelleher  
Richard Salvatore Jr.  
Christine Skorput  
Rose Balestro