

Spring 2010

OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH NEWSLETTER



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH, 2 FREMONT AVENUE, PARK RIDGE, NJ 07656

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Have you responded to Pope Benedict's invitation to pray for priests? As you read this newsletter, you are urged once again to celebrate the lives of priests, especially the priests of Our Lady of Mercy Parish, by praying for them.

An international gathering of priests will be held in Rome from June 9 – 11, 2010.

For more information on the Year For Priests, see www.usscb.org.

We thank Msgr. Turro for sharing his thoughts in this issue of the OLM Newsletter. You can read the previously published reflections by Fr. Bob and Msgr. Carl by accessing the Fall 2009 Parish Newsletter at www.urolm.org. Click on "Parish Newsletter," and scroll to Previous Issues, Fall 2009.

Msgr. James Turro

Dedication to Christ and the Church

Interviewed by: Ann Marie Dong

Q. Do you have an early memory of priests that may have lit a spark to follow in their footsteps?

A. Yes, I served in my parish as an altar boy and had great respect for the parish priests. When I later attended a Jesuit prep school, I admired the priests I encountered all the more. I came to understand that a priest should be judged by his dedication to Christ and to the Church – that is the most outstanding characteristic of a priest.



Msgr. James Turro

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Q. What was your first assignment?

A. My first assignment was at Holy Trinity Church in Hackensack. To this day I can not imagine a better way to be broken into a priest's way of life! Holy Trinity was a very active parish with seven priests on the staff. Some of the priests taught in the high school at that time. The good spirit that prevailed in the parish was notable.

Please see *Year For Priests* on page 2

Year For Priests from page 1

Q. Do you have any hobbies or take part in other non-church activities?

A. No, I do not have any hobbies, but I do enjoy travel. I have occasion to travel because of my assignments. Every summer, for example, I visit Seattle, Washington, St. Louis, Missouri, and California on assignments. I also enjoy listening to classical music while I am driving in this area.

Q. What part of being a priest do you most enjoy?

A. I truly enjoy being able to offer the Mass, to worship God.

Q. What do you miss about the pre-Vatican II Church?

A. The sense of the holy, that one can experience in the Church edifice has changed. I recall entering into a Church and being aware of the deep silence, a silence that spoke of the presence of God. There is a difference in the general attitude of reverence shown by people today.

Q. What is the best part of being a priest in a post-Vatican II Church?

A. There is a closer relationship between priest and people now. Sometimes in the past, the reverence for priests spilled over into being a fear; that is not the case now.

Q. What changes in the Church do you believe we will see in the future?

A. With time, the Church will bring back attitudes of prayer and reverence for customs that were jettisoned in the late 1960's, especially with respect to the Blessed Sacrament. Some say that the stronger the parish, the more prayerful the attitudes.

Msgr. Turro is the author of Reflections and Conversion: Reflections on Life and Faith. These books are available in the parish library located in the Gathering Space. Excerpts from Reflections also can be accessed by visiting the parish website.



Happy Anniversary

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

Fr. Charles Granstrand	December 17, 1966	44 years
Fr. Bob Ulak	May 30, 1970	40 years
Msgr. Carl Hinrichsen	June 4, 1955	55 years
Msgr. James Turro	May 22, 1948	62 years

Thank you for all you do for us and congratulations on the anniversary of your ordination!

Bob Miller

How a Prayer Experiment Changes Lives

Every Thursday evening, at 8 p.m., since October 1980, men and women, young and old, enter a house in Park Ridge, NJ. For several hours they seek to be consoled for a malady that continues to spread to the present day unemployment. No invitations are sent and all are welcome. More than 2000 people have since entered, seeking emotional, psychological and “how to” advice on securing a job or changing careers.

It began quite simply when Bob Miller was on a business trip and picked up a copy of *Guideposts* that the hotel provided for its guests. The story he read was about some men in Cincinnati who had business, unemployment, or family problems, but who found solutions after taking part in a “prayer experiment.” He found this story about ordinary laymen like himself intriguing, but then forgot about it.

On the plane trip home, he found the magazine again in his attaché case, although he didn’t remember packing it. Soon he was reading the same article again and wondering if it could really be as simple as the article made it seem.

The next day a friend called him to say that he had lost his job and mentioned two others who were out of work also. Then it hit him: “Was the Lord trying to tell him something by the article in the *Guideposts*?”

Bob decided to send for information on the program called “The National Experiment,” an Outreach Program supported by Norman Vincent Peale, called “the most widely read inspirational writer of a generation.” Bob wrote notes to a growing list of people he had heard about in the meantime. He even sent one to a college friend he hadn’t seen in ten years. He invited them to his home on Thursday evening. The day before the get-together a packet of information arrived. Perfect timing!

Six people showed up for the first session, including his college friend who asked Bob how he knew the friend needed help. Bob had to say, “I didn’t.”

Bob began that meeting by saying, “This may be crazy, but we’re here to try an experiment in prayer.” Then he went over the National Experiment guidelines with them. They had to accept each other, as they were, where they were. They had to be honest with each other, sharing their failures, successes, and pain. They had to trust and encourage each other. There should be



Bob Miller

no criticism or attempts to give “advice.” At the end of that first meeting, each person was assigned a “prayer buddy,” a person he would pray for, and who in turn would pray for him for 30 days. The ultimate purpose of any method of prayer is to bring you into a relationship with Jesus Christ. The 30 Day Prayer Experiment lets you begin where you are, at any level of faith or doubt. It opens doors through which God can enter and touch you. They agreed to meet again each Thursday.

Things began to happen. Not suddenly, like magic, but gradually. As time passed, individuals who had been bitter and withdrawn or whose boisterous laughter had masked anxiety, talked about their innermost fears and hopes. In the very act of sharing, there was a kind of healing. The men were experiencing the truth of St. Paul’s words “to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (*2 Corinthians 1-4*)

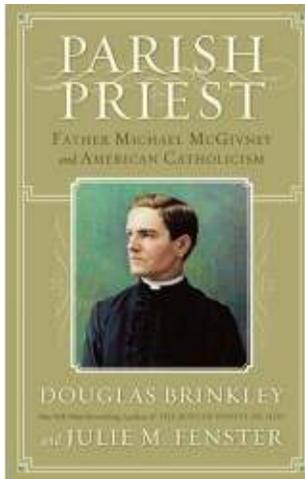
Bob was glad he responded to God’s cues 30 years ago. It has been such a rewarding Ministry because for many, losing a job offered a chance to make some fundamental changes in their whole life. It marks a turning point in how they live. It gives them the chance to wrestle with the question, “Why am I here on Earth?” We want to do more than plod through life.... we want to find that special joy “that no one can take from us,” which comes from having a sense of purpose or mission. Jesus wants us to use our unique skills and talents. Through this outreach, many are finding out that with Christ as their Helper they can be confident and strong. The seven most important words that will change lives are: “I can do all things through Christ.”

All are welcome, every Thursday night, at 7:30 p.m., except for Thanksgiving, 228 Vittorio Court, Park Ridge, 201.391.0657.

Parish Priest, Father Michael McGivney, and American Catholicism

By Douglas Brinkley and Julie M. Fenster

Reviewed by: Art Lavis



Michael McGivney was born in Waterbury, Connecticut in 1852, the son of a large Irish Catholic immigrant family. McGivney's father worked in one of the many growing manufacturing establishments in the state.

McGivney discerned a vocation to the priesthood early in life. He was initially educated for the

priesthood at a Jesuit seminary in Canada. His education was interrupted by the death of his father. He returned to study with the Vincentians in Niagara Falls and the Sulpicians in Baltimore where he completed his studies before ordination in 1877. A seminary education in that period encompassed rigorous studies in the classic languages as well as philosophy and theology. He was an outstanding student. He also was involved in theatrical productions and played baseball.

Following his ordination, Father McGivney was assigned as a curate in St. Mary's Parish, New Haven, Connecticut. During this time many immigrant men joined secular fraternal societies. McGivney saw the need to establish a Catholic men's fraternal organization independent of the Catholic hierarchy but faithful to the Church. He envisioned the society as fulfilling two needs: to reinforce the Catholic identity of its members, and to provide for the widows and orphans of the members through a low cost life insurance program.

He was described by a contemporary as having "a soft pleasant voice attracting attention by his perfect diction." Another characterized him as having overflowing good humor as well as a deep sense of piety and orderliness. He possessed a natural charisma, and earnestness of manner.

Working with Catholic laymen in his parish, McGivney provided the strong and effective leadership and vision needed to found the Knights of Columbus (K of C) in 1882, and to create the impetus for its subsequent growth. He became the first Chaplain of the order. The name of the order was chosen to show patriotism, to attract members of all ethnicities, and to reflect the ideal of Catholic manhood. After an initial period of internal strife, councils were first established in nearby communities and then throughout the state. By 1888 there were 43 councils with a total of 4,020 members. In 1888 a council was established in Rhode Island, signaling the subsequent expansion of the order throughout the United States and beyond. McGivney died in 1890 at age 38.

The order reached a membership of 800,000 by its 40th anniversary in 1922. Today there are over 1.7 million Knights in the US, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, the Caribbean, Central America, Guam, Saipan and Poland. The hallmarks of the order are charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism.

"The authors provide a readable and sympathetic portrait of the priest-founder of the Knights of Columbus and an insight into the period in American history in which he lived."

Please see *Book Review* on page 5

Book Review from page 4

Expanding beyond its initial focus of providing insurance for its members, the Knights have become a major charitable and Catholic evangelization organization. The Knights contribute to the Vatican and to innumerable charities on a local and national level. The Knights run an annual charity drive to benefit the intellectually disabled. They have been major supporters of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

They have responded enthusiastically to the papal call for the spread of the Culture of Life. They lend support to the annual March For Life in Washington, D.C. and to efforts to legally define marriage as between a man and a woman. They educate their members and the public about Church

teachings on abortion, embryonic stem cell research, family values and other respect life issues.

On March 15, 2008 Pope Benedict XVI approved a decree recognizing the heroic virtue of Father Michael J. McGivney. The pope's declaration significantly advances the priest's process toward sainthood and gives McGivney the distinction of "Venerable Servant of God." If canonized, Father McGivney would be the first American born priest to be so honored.

A copy of this book is available in the parish library located in the Gathering Space. For more information about the Knights, contact Charles Ryan, Grand Knight of Our Lady of Fatima council here at OLM. His phone number is 201-573-9457.

A Catechist's Reflection

Time and Commitment

By: Marilyn Laquidara

It has been an honor and a pleasure being a volunteer with the Religious Education Program for these many years. Looking back, I would never have guessed at how quickly these 30 years have gone by. By being part of this program, I have learned from and been inspired by many fine people with whom I have been involved at Our Lady of Mercy Parish.

I enjoyed chaperoning the YCS overnight Confirmation retreats. The experience made me



Marilyn Laquidara

realize how receptive the teens were to open dialogue about the pressures in their own lives and how learning more about their faith gave them inner strength. Knowing that their friends felt the same way helped them form bonding relationships.

Beginning with Adult Education, then joining Fr. Richard Ehrenberg's youth program, allowed me to focus and feel more comfortable with the young fifth grade students I now teach. I feel fortunate to have known Sister Beatrice, to have worked with Sisters Anita and Elizabeth and to have been inspired by Sister Jane, a former Principal at OLM.

Amy Ballanco, as the Religious Education Program Coordinator, is right on target, meeting the needs of the children while educating parents with the Sacrament Workshops. We are blessed to have so many wonderful volunteers who dedicate themselves each week teaching and sharing their faith with the children.

Volunteers, like Marilyn, are the heartbeat of our parish life. Parents and parishioners alike have come forward to help support the effort to pass on the faith to our young people. How about you? No former teaching experience is required. Just a desire to share your faith. You can find more information regarding OLM's Religious Education Programs by visiting www.urolm.org, or calling Amy or Diane Manzione at 201-391-3950.

Eleanor Bowen Celebrates 101 Years



On January 22 Eleanor Bowen celebrated her 101st birthday with a breakfast buffet in the Gathering Space with friends and family, including sons Peter and Tony. Pictured to the left with Eleanor are Tony and his wife Eileen. Eleanor can be found at the 8:30 a.m. Mass most mornings.

She fondly calls her friends there the “8:30 bunch.” Some of them take turns driving her to Mass.

Girl Scouts Earn Bronze Award

By: Kathy Contratto

Our Lady of Mercy Academy 6th graders from Girl Scout Troop 441 earned their Girl Scout Bronze Award, the highest honor a Junior Girl Scout can earn, and bridged to Girl Scout Cadettes last fall.

The girls’ Bronze Award project culminated with a donation of much-needed software to record the reception of Sacraments such as Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation and Matrimony. The Rectory personnel are elated to have such useful software.

Pictured are the girls at the church rectory with Father Bob.



OLM Ministries: The Gift of the Spirit

“There is diversity of gifts, but the Spirit is the same. There is diversity of ministries, but the Lord is the same. There is diversity of works, but the same God works in all.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

The English word “ministry” derives etymologically from Latin *ministerium*, which is equivalent to Greek *διακονία* / *diakonia*. Both are often also translated as “service.” OLM is blessed with many ministries and organizations that serve our parishioners and our surrounding communities. What gift of the Spirit have you received in order to minister to others?

For information regarding these ministries, refer to the OLM website www.urolm.org, the *Directory of Parish Ministries* located in the carousel in the Gathering Space, or call the Rectory at 201-391-5315.

Education

Bible Study (Little Rock Scripture Study)
Book Study/Discussion
Book Sale
Catechists
English as a Second Language
Gathering Space Library
OLM Academy
OLM Parish Newsletter
Religious Education: K – 6th
Respect for Life
Vacation Bible School
Youth Ministry/Young Adult Ministry

Liturgy

Altar Servers
Children's Liturgy
Eucharistic Ministers
Ministry of the Word (Lectors)
N.I.C.E (Needs In Catholic Education)
Music
Ushers
Water plants

Ministries of Service

Family Promise
Food Pantry/Blessed Sacrament
Knights of Columbus
Overflow Shelter for Homeless
Soup Kitchen of Hackensack
Stewardship Council



Recreation

Acoustic Cafe
Moms and Tots
OLM Sports Committee
Picnic

Sacramental Preparation

Baptismal Preparation
Pre-Cana
RCIA
Confirmation Preparation

Social Concerns

Birthright International
Habitat for Humanity
Haiti Twinning Parish
Legislative Alert
Social Justice and Peace Ministry

Spiritual Life

Associates of St. Lucy Filippini
Cornerstone Retreats
Cursillo
Family of God Prayer Group
Lay Carmelites
Nocturnal Adoration Prayer Vigil
Projecto Guadalupano
RENEW Small Christian Groups
Recitation of the Rosary
Rosary Altar Society

Support Groups

Bereavement
Community Counseling
Healing Family Ministry
Lazarus Ministry
Ministry to the Unemployed

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COME JOIN US TO WORK ON THE NEXT EDITION OF THE PARISH NEWSLETTER.

We're on the web. Visit us at www.urolm.org.

Our Lady of Mercy Church
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Park Ridge, New Jersey 07656

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Acoustic Café
Fall Events

September 18 The Kennedys
with special guest Patrick Fitzsimmons

October 16 Buskin & Batteau

November 20 Freedy Johnston

For show times visit Our Lady of Mercy website at www.urolm.org.