

# OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH NEWSLETTER

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*Pope Benedict XVI has declared a "Year for Priests" beginning on June 19, 2009. He has said that it should be a time for priests to pray and to celebrate their priestly vocation.*

*How can we, the laity, celebrate this year?*

*Pope Benedict invites us to join in praying for priests and priestly vocations, and to celebrate the lives of priests. With this issue we ask you to say the "Prayer for Priests" (found on the next page) as part of your daily prayers, at Mass, or in your ministry groups.*

*We thank Fr. Bob and Msgr. Carl for sharing what their vocation means to them. In our Spring issue we will hear from Fr. Charles and Msgr. Turro.*

## Rev. Robert T. Ulak

### Seeing God Fully Alive In Each Other

By Father Bob Ulak

This summer has celebrated two anniversaries ... the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Moon Landing and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Woodstock. As I listened to commentaries about them, I realized how many people were not around for them. And as I write this I realize that when they took place, I had just been ordained a deacon and was looking toward a May ordination to the priesthood in 1970. All seems so far away yet so close.

We (at least I) didn't look at a Pre-Vatican II Church or a Post-Vatican II Church. Our concern was how much of our first Mass would be in English and how much would be in Latin. We tried



Fr. Bob, OLM's computer whiz at work.

to prepare for both. As a seminarian, I had worked in Newark during the "riots." I was at Catholic University in Washington at the time of the Vietnam War protests. I saw the church as having a great role in healing and witness.

So...my first assignment was to Corpus Christi in Hasbrouck Heights, very far from an inner city parish and not like any parish I had worked in while in the seminary. It was a great assignment; I stayed there for 24 years. The great thing was not the accommodations or the cook but the people. Not perfect people (hope

Please see *Year For Priests* on page 2

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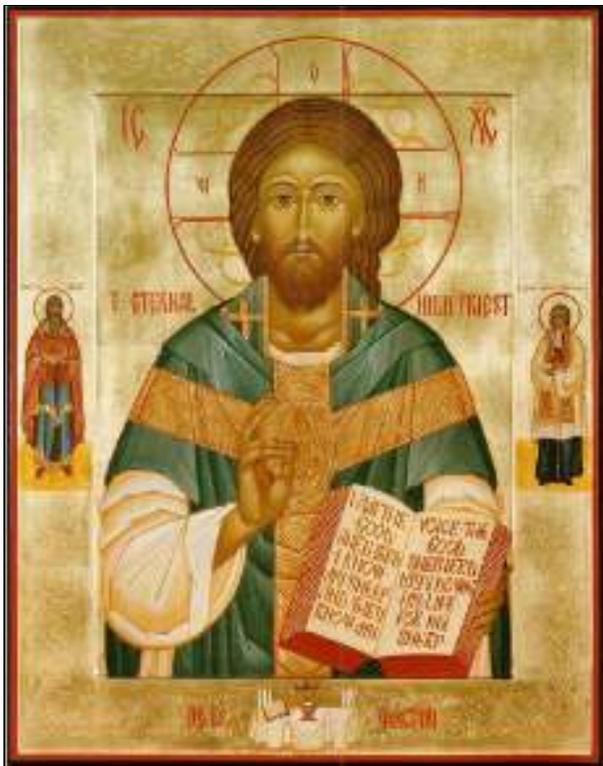
this does not offend any past parishioners who now live in Park Ridge), but people who were interested in their community and parish. They worked hard to keep a school. (Gee – two bingos a week). Together we worked bingo, watched over CYO basketball games, planned for weddings, worked pre-Cana, buried relatives and friends.

The greatest lesson was that a specific organization in the parish was not an end in itself – every organization was there to help people encounter Christ. I think that has been the greatest lesson of my life. I hope my sermons reflect that.

So what else do I like to do? Well I have “played” with computers since 1984. I still am amazed how you can touch so many parts of the world. I have for many, many years enjoyed photography. One of my graduation gifts from grammar school was a camera. Growing up I was amazed at the pictures my father took in China in 1939.

More recently I have begun to travel a lot more than ever before. What I enjoy about traveling is meeting so many different people. Last July in the Canadian Rockies, I met families from Australia, Poland, and an eight generation resident of Banff, Canada. I enjoy going to the gym most mornings. It’s a great way to meet parishioners and town residents in a totally different atmosphere. Only God knows what will interest me next.

Now the newsletter’s staff closing question – what part of being a priest do I most enjoy? The answer is one that has changed yet stayed the same. Soon after ordination to the priesthood I ran across a quote from St. Irenaeus “Gloria Dei vivens homo” – the glory of God is man fully alive. I have tried to live that quote. I hope that with success and failure, I have helped bring St. Irenaeus’ words to reality. I enjoy being part of a priesthood that helps myself and others “see God fully alive in each other.”



Year for Priests  
June 19, 2009 - June 19, 2010

### Prayer for Priests

Dear Lord,  
we pray that the Blessed Mother  
wrap her mantle around your priests  
and through her intercession  
strengthen them for their ministry.  
We pray that Mary will guide your priests  
to follow her own words,  
“Do whatever He tells you” (Jn 2:5).

May your priests have the heart of St. Joseph,  
Mary’s most chaste spouse.

May the Blessed Mother’s own pierced heart  
inspire them to embrace  
all who suffer at the foot of the cross.

May your priests be holy,  
filled with the fire of your love  
seeking nothing but your greater glory  
and the salvation of souls.

Amen.

Saint John Vianney, pray for us.

Please see *Year For Priests* on page 3

## Msgr. Carl Hinrichsen

### Helping People to Achieve the Purpose of Their Creation

By John Rokoszak

Back from an eight-day trip to Russia, Msgr. Carl Hinrichsen sat down with me to share some thoughts on his priesthood in light of the “Year of the Priest” called by Pope Benedict XVI.

Msgr. Carl began by recalling family stories he heard about his “Uncle Frank,” his mother’s brother who had been a priest, but died when Msgr. Carl was a child. These early recollections, later coupled with wonderful encounters as a high school student with priests such as Fr. Thomas, who taught him at St. Benedict Prep in Newark, laid the foundation for his own calling to the priesthood.

Following his ordination in June of 1955, Msgr. Carl was assigned as a curate at St. Leo in Irvington. This first assignment not only introduced him to parish life, but also afforded him the opportunity to teach theology to sophomores in high school. Msgr. Carl also served as a curate at Mount Carmel in Ridgewood.



Msgr. Carl taking a breather from his pastoral activities.

After receiving his doctorate in Church History from Catholic University in Washington D.C., Msgr. Carl taught at Darlington Seminary in Mahwah for eleven years. He also served as a weekend assistant at St. Catherine in Glen Rock. Msgr. Carl quipped, “I experienced all the joys and benefits of parish life, without the headaches of administration.”

After a brief time at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Maplewood, Msgr. Carl was named pastor of Most Blessed Sacrament Parish in Franklin Lakes for seventeen years. It was here that he met Fr. Charles Granstrand who served as his assistant. While at

MBS, Msgr. Carl oversaw the construction of a new church, as well as the growth of many new parish ministries and outreach programs.

When I asked him what he missed most about the Pre-Vatican II Church, he quickly responded, “A greater sense of reverence for the sacred.” He went on to say that what he has come to appreciate and enjoy in this Post-Vatican II Church are the tremendous contributions of lay people to active participation in the life and work of the church. On his wish list for parishioners today is feedback on homilies. He said it would be great to know when your words are making a difference in people’s daily lives.

Although officially “retired” Msgr. Carl is as active as ever. He continues to enjoy playing tennis, as well as pursuing his boyhood hobbies, such as casting metal figures, and collecting coins and stamps. He enthusiastically shares these hobbies with students at Our Lady of Mercy Academy

throughout the school year. He also diligently recruits and prepares boys and girls to serve at Mass.

Let me end with some words from Msgr. Carl himself, when I asked him what part of being a priest he most enjoys. “Knowing that if I am successful in my ministry, I will help people to achieve the purpose of their creation as stated in the old Baltimore Catechism: ‘Why did God make Me? To know him, to love him, and to serve him in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.’”

## The Eucharistic Ministry

### Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



All of us notice them leaving their pews to go to the altar just before Communion. But unseen by most of us, they also distribute Communion to the homebound, and to people in nursing homes and hospitals on Sundays and during the week. Officially, their title is “extraordinary” ministers of Holy Communion, to set them apart from the ordained or “ordinary” ministers - priests and deacons. By introducing Eucharistic Ministers to assist in the distribution of Communion, the Church hopes to allow for more reverence and less rushing during this time of the Mass. Their service also helps to keep the time of this part of the Mass in proportion to the earlier Liturgy of the Word.

Here are some comments from our present Eucharistic Ministers, who encourage you to join them in their extraordinary ministry.

*Workshops for Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion are offered by the Archdiocese of Newark. Look for the next schedule workshop in the parish bulletin.*

#### **A little history of the Eucharistic Ministry by Ellen Dougherty**

In 1974 the Archdiocese of Newark encouraged parishes to establish a Ministry for Lay Eucharistic Ministers to assist in the distribution of Communion at Sunday Masses and to make home visits.

Our Lady of Mercy Parish was one of the first parishes to select a group of parishioners for training as ministers. Weekly training sessions were held at Felician College for several Sundays. The Biblical foundation of the Eucharistic celebration was reinforced. The practical aspects of the distribution of Communion at Mass were discussed in workshops. At the conclusion of training, the new ministers were invested by Archbishop Thomas Boland.

Soon after, the ministers began service at the Sunday Masses rotating through the schedule.

Today they are assigned to a particular Mass and/or day to visit the nursing home.

After the 12:30 p.m. Mass several ministers went to the two or three senior residences then in the parish bringing communion and the prayers of the parish family to the residents much as they do today after the 9:30 p.m. Mass.

Subsequent groups were trained in the parish by then assistant, the Rev. Raymond McKeon.

#### **My experience by Clare Spitsen**

I decided to become a Eucharistic Minister when I saw the need for this ministry in hospitals and for home bound parishioners. My father so appreciated receiving Communion from Eucharistic Ministers in these settings. At the time, the need for ministers for the parish Masses was not as great as it is today. I went to Pascack Valley hospital for many years as part of a team from surrounding parishes. Besides serving at the altar in OLM, I also serve at the nursing home/assisted living.

#### **A Reflection by Ryan Cruz**

A few years ago, I was honored to be asked by Fr. Charles to become a Eucharistic Minister. I viewed his invitation as a great opportunity to participate in a liturgical ministry and to strengthen my faith through a more active involvement during Mass. Thus far, I have truly enjoyed my experiences as a Eucharistic Minister. It has allowed me to meet and develop friendships with several members of the parish as well as share my Catholic faith and commitment with others while serving the spiritual needs of the parish community.

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**Thoughts from two of our newest ministers**

**Joanne A. Gordinier**

Ultimately, I wanted to become a Eucharistic Minister to help out at the OLM parish. I am thankful to be part of such a wonderful community at OLM and I saw that they had a need and I knew I could help. I also wanted to do it to honor my mother who died in February 2008 of Alzheimer’s – she was the one who took me and my three sisters to church every Sunday when we were young. She encouraged us to continue to strengthen our faith when we got older. I hope my sons will someday help in the same way.

**Kelley O’Donnell**

I watched my sons, now young men, grow into their roles as altar servers; how proud they were in 5<sup>th</sup> grade when they could become altar servers, how proud their father and I were of them to WANT to be altar servers. I watched them with a little jealousy; I too wanted to get involved with the

Mass, to touch fellow parishioners this way.

So for a number of years I waited for my opportunity to become a Eucharistic minister. For a long time it seemed that it was not to be. The complexity of life seemed to get in the way: work, family, working concession stands and other volunteer commitments. Then, this past spring the opportunity came up and I had no schedule conflicts. I enjoyed my trip to Newark with my fellow parishioners. A journey we took one morning to learn about the ministry. I was moved by the speakers who shared their experiences in the ministry, which only reinforced my commitment. I knew this was the right time in my life.

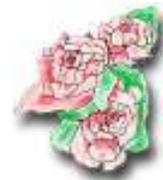
I thank each of you for the opportunity to share with you the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, a chance to make eye contact with so many of you and experience the strength of your faith, and the gift that you give back to me. So after many years of working concession stands I now have the opportunity to serve others something far more precious than ever before.

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**The Respect Life Ministry**  
**Protecting the Quality of Life**

By Art and Carol Lavis

The popular Bishop and television star Fulton J. Sheen inspired an idea over fifty years ago: why not enter into daily prayer for an unborn baby whose life was threatened by abortion? He recognized that American values were becoming increasingly secular, relativistic, and individualistic. Many years before it came to pass, he foresaw that our society might reach the point of legalizing abortion on demand.



He was inspired to compose the following prayer:

“Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn child that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion.”

**Spiritual Adoption Program**

Considering that today the United States has one of the highest abortion rates in the world, with over 3,300 abortions taking place every day, these

*Respect for Life* from page 5

prayers are needed more than ever. When combined with educational posters showing the monthly development of the unborn baby and a call to support programs for the couples involved in the decision to “Choose Life” for their pre-born, the Spiritual Adoption Program is a powerful way to demonstrate our love for all human life from conception until natural death. Bishop Sheen and his followers recognized the mystery of this unique program: we will not know in this life how many lives were saved by this effort—but one day we will know. We are thankful to Fr. Charles and the staff for supporting this program at OLM.

### On Protectress of the Unborn

As a powerful reminder that Our Lady of Guadalupe holds the title of Protectress of the Unborn, the Respect Life Ministry displayed at OLM a 4' x 6' image of Our Lady from October 16<sup>th</sup> through November 2<sup>nd</sup> offering many opportunities for focused prayer and meditation.

### On Respect Life Month

October was “Respect Life Month” and there was a special brochure inserted in each OLM bulletin for families to share and discuss. The brochure provided information that parents could use to educate their children about the uniqueness of each new life conceived, about how each child is made in the image of God, and about the basic principle that “the means does not justify the ends” as in the destruction of human embryos for stem cell research. The Ministry salutes those parents who have chosen life for their babies even though society may be pressuring them to abort them.

### On the NJ Bishops' Effort

The Respect Life Ministry also lends its support to NJ Conference of Bishops' educational effort to uphold traditional marriage. Its strong statement supports the complementarity of the marriage of a man and a woman as opposed to same sex “marriages.” It celebrates the marriage of a man and a woman as the fundamental unit of society. Petitions opposing the legalization of same sex marriage in New Jersey were available for signatures on two weekends in September.

### On Health Care Reform

The Respect Life Ministry also urges all to keep informed of and respond to the controversial provisions in the federal health care reform legislation that provides for federal funding of abortion, rationing of health care based on age and “quality of life,” and massive cuts to spending on Medicare for seniors in order to pay for coverage for those under 65. With more and more “baby boomers” becoming eligible for Medicare, proposed cuts could seriously diminish the availability of quality health care for seniors. The Health Reform legislation as currently proposed will mandate payments for abortions (i.e., via our taxes we become accomplices in the destruction of unborn lives). Abortion is covered under “family planning.” Unless abortion is specifically excluded, we will be forced to pay for abortions. Planned Parenthood's abortion facilities are the biggest winner in this allocation of funds.

If you have questions about any pro-life issues or if any students would like to write papers on pro-life issues, we encourage you to call Carol or Art Lavis at 201-391-6431, Sunday Ruvolo at 201-236-9868 or Theresa Corcoran at 201-782-0408.

### Looking Ahead: Advent/Christmas Season

November/December 2009

**November 29:** Advent Begins.

**December 8:** The Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation).

**December 12:** Our Lady of Guadalupe.

**December 25:** Christmas.

**December 27:** The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

January 2010

**January 1:** The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation).

**January 3:** The Epiphany of the Lord (Magi/Three Wise Men).

**January 10:** Baptism of the Lord.

Visit the websites below for scriptures, Church Traditions, Advent and Christmas activities:

[www.usccb.org/advent/index.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/advent/index.shtml)  
(United States of Catholic Bishops).

[www.blestarewe.com/litcal](http://www.blestarewe.com/litcal) (*Blest Are We* - Religious Education Program).

[www.webelieveweb.com/liturgical\\_year.cfm](http://www.webelieveweb.com/liturgical_year.cfm)  
(*We Believe* - Our Lady of Mercy Academy).

## OLM YOUTH MINISTRY

### Serving the Parish and Community

By Noreen Hunt

*“My dear children, let us love not only with words and with our lips, but in truth and deed.” (1 John 3:18)*

As many of you are aware, the sacrament of Confirmation takes place each May at Our Lady of Mercy Church. Our candidates start preparing during their sophomore year in high school and work with the coordinator of the Youth Ministry, Jenn Kavanagh, to fulfill their requirements.

Service projects are required by the Archdiocese for Confirmation in order to help the candidate to better understand Jesus’ teaching and the Church’s mission. Ten hours of service are required of each confirmation candidate, and Service/Reflection Journals must be completed. Service hours may be done through school or town projects, but volunteering in the OLM parish community is mandatory.

There are teens who volunteer for several different projects during the preparation year, and there are those who start earlier by giving of their time as altar servers or members of the Choir/Music Ministry. During the summer, teens clean and paint around the church campus and assist at the Vacation Bible School and the parish picnic.

When school is in session, some teens find the time during their busy schedules to help change the missalettes in the church pews, pack and deliver donated food for the Social Justice and Peace Ministry, and help out with the Children’s Liturgy at the 9:30 a.m. Mass. Several teenagers come weekly to help the volunteer Religious Education teachers in the K-6 and Junior High programs, and with the N.I.C.E. session each Sunday. Our second graders who are receiving First Eucharist attend workshops where teens



The Youth Ministry Team. Left to right: Bella Pic, Youth Group Coordinator; Jenn Kavanagh, Coordinator, Youth Ministry and Noreen Hunt, Program Assistant.

help them with their projects. Volunteers also come to the OLMA after-school program to help out. Last year almost 40 Confirmation candidates participated in the CROP walk for hunger, raising more than \$2,700 in donations to help fight world hunger.

In recent years, our Youth Ministry teens volunteered their time and talents to a number of outside organizations, such as Spectrum for Living, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Special Olympics, Interreligious Fellowship (IRF) Homeless Shelter, Bergen Bassmasters, American Cancer Society and Habitat For Humanity. Others that have benefited from our Youth Ministry include local elementary school fairs, food drives, OLMA Sports program, local libraries, camps for mentally impaired children, soup kitchens, senior citizens, and scouting and tutoring programs.

The Youth Ministry at OLM is actively involved in service to others and their church.

# Vacation Bible School

## “Living the Lord’s Prayer”



Safari participants at their daily assembly before starting their hunt.

Our Lady of Mercy gym was transformed into “The Gospel Light’s Kingdom of the Son” during the week of August 17 - 21. Over 70 Parish children (grades 1 thru 6) and 55 volunteer teens and adults participated in a safari exploring the words of the Lord’s Prayer through activities including arts and crafts, games, Bible readings and skits, singing and dancing. The safari ended on Friday evening, when more than 200 parents and relatives joined the safari to enjoy a potluck dinner followed by entertainment by the VBS safari adventurers and a display of their arts and crafts.

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### In Memoriam

We remember and pay tribute to Jim Dlugos who died on August 11, 2009. He was a World War II veteran, enlisting at the age of 18. In retirement Jim volunteered to resume the publication of the *OLM Parish Newsletter* to commemorate OLM’s centennial.

**Contributors:** Ryan Cruz, Ellen Dougherty, Joanne A. Gordinier, Msgr. Carl Hinrichsen, Noreen Hunt, Art and Carol Lavis, Kelley O’Donnell, John Rokoszak, Clare Spitsen, Fr. Bob Ulak

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