



Father Jerry to Celebrate Fortieth Anniversary of His Ordination

This article was originally published in the Parish Pipeline, April, 2018.

Father Jerry has a fond memory of his uncle coming to the door of his kindergarten classroom and asking Sister Yvonne Marie to send him out so they could go on a ride with his mother and grandmother. This uncle was Father Gerard Lafleur, a priest of the diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts, who was a primary influence in our Father Jerry's life. In fact, Father Jerry was named after this uncle. Uncle Father Gerry affectionately became known as "*Gerry the Greater*," while nephew Father Jerry became "*Jerry the Lesser*." Besides this closeness, his uncle's devotion to the pastoral duties of a parish



priest, and his emphasis on kindness became instrumental in Father Jerry's own pastoral life. "*Be kind, be kind, be kind*" are words Father Jerry found in notes left by his uncle when he died, and he continues to hear them in his heart to this day.

This May marks the fortieth anniversary of Father Jerry's ordination to the priesthood. He was raised in Willimansett, Massachusetts, a suburb of Chicopee, the youngest of six children in a family with French roots. Today, three of his siblings still live in Massachusetts, one lives in Virginia, and another in Florida. He was educated in Catholic schools, after which he attended a community college, and worked with a funeral director. He subsequently earned his Bachelor of Arts, and then later a Master of Arts in Psychology Theology. On May 6, 1978, after completing seminary studies at St. Anthony's on the Hudson, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Howard J. Hubbard at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception here in Albany.

Even as a child, the thought of becoming a priest would enter his mind periodically but then go away. He had a friend who was in a Conventual Franciscan seminary twenty minutes from his home, and as a result, he became acquainted with friars from the order. One Sunday, after teaching a faith formation class at his parish, Father Jerry was invited to visit the seminary with the friars. That trip began a connection with that place in Granby, Massachusetts, a place that he began to visit more frequently. Eventually he decided to join the community of Conventual Franciscans.

Father Jerry's parents supported his decision, as did his uncle. According to Father Jerry, the simplicity and joy of the Conventual Franciscan friars "formed" him, and continue to influence him to this day. His choice to become a diocesan priest stemmed from his desire to live on his own instead of in the community setting of the friary. He came to Albany in 1994 to discern a change to the diocesan priesthood; he chose this diocese because of his prior ordination experience. At that point Bishop Hubbard assigned him to the Church of the Immaculate Conception under Father Connery, whom he credits with helping him adjust to a new and different way of priestly life. After that period of discernment here, he did indeed wish to become a diocesan priest. Then he became the pastor of Saint Mary's in Clinton Heights where he remained for over a decade before returning here to Immaculate in July 2007, where he was named pastor in the wake of Father Connery's retirement.

See Fr. Jerry, page 2

Ministry Update

Immaculate Conception Participating in Activities of St. Joseph's Social Concerns Committee

Monthly Missions 2021/2022

October 2021 – Socks for Catholic Charities *



November 2021 – Veteran needs through Dept of Veterans Affairs



December 2021 – Giving Tree at Immaculate Conception

January 2022 – Catholic Charities Personal Care Closet, Hygiene items (paper towels, toilet paper, facial tissue etc.)

February 2022 – Christ Child Society Baby Shower & Sweet Baskets for Valentine's Day

March 2022 – Patti's Place

April 2022 – Joan Nicole Prince Home

May 2022 – City Mission of Schenectady

June 2022 – Collect Books for Summer Lunch Program



July 2022 – SiCM Lunch Program

August 2022 – Back to School Supply Collection

- Socks are being collected in the Gathering Space at Immaculate Conception through October 31. Adult socks are needed for Catholic Charities.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society at Immaculate Conception collects food throughout the year. Collection boxes are at the entrances to the church.

Fr. Jerry, continued from page 1

Father Jerry enjoys what he does because of the variety and challenge each day brings. Every morning he walks with his dog Grace at 6:30AM. Between the mass schedule, funerals, appointments, writing the bulletin letter as well as his homilies, attending meetings, stopping by faith formation classes, and visiting parishioners who are homebound, or in nursing homes and hospitals, his pastoral duties are 24-7. Beyond that, he has to be ready to alter plans on short notice when emergencies and pastoral needs require such. His favorite task is preparing for and celebrating the Eucharist. Father Jerry also feels a special affinity to spending time with people whose sickness is bringing them closer to death and the journey home to God, including ministering to those families who watch that journey unfold. For relaxation, he likes to garden, and he has always had an eye for nice cars.

Father Jerry sees a role for our church in the larger community. This is why he was happy to accommodate the Board of Elections when they sought the location for a polling place. Another element is that our beautiful and large church is the ideal venue for gatherings such as the musical performances that have been performed here by Auriel Camerata, and the Burnt Hills Oratorio. He sees this as another way of reflecting God's glory. On extremely cold days, Father Jerry makes sure that the church door is open for anyone who needs to come in from the cold. His vision for the parish includes an addition between the Flicker Room and the Hall so that a passageway can be enclosed. This will make for a space more easily traversed, shortening the walk to the kitchen and bathrooms, important for those who serve, and for those who are infirm. He is also deeply aware of the spiritual life of the parish, how prayer, worship, and charity through Christ are the focus of who we are as church at all times. Although it is in the future, he does occasionally think about what life will be like when he retires, and assumes a less rigorous schedule.

To a young person considering a religious life, Father Jerry would advise them to learn about the challenges of the religious life. This includes coming to know themselves and to learn about some of the challenges of vowed or ordained life. He also encourages them to remember that in religious life they will indeed be loved, but not always. Above all, he says that they would do well to remember his uncle's words and to always remember **"be kind, be kind, and be kind."** He also thinks of Jesus calling us to humility as he was, and Pope Francis' call to the same simple life. Therefore he hopes that as he leads us, it is not as a superior, but rather as a first among equals, guiding the parish, but also one who must like all of us, be led by the Holy Spirit. Uncle Father Gerry the Greater would be proud!

Ministry Update

Respect Life Ministry

+Reverend Jerome R. Gingras recently gave us guidance regarding respect for life. The following is an excerpt from his last letter *From the Pastor* to his tri-parish family that was published in the October 10, 2021 bulletin. It is appropriate during this Respect Life Month of October to revisit +Fr. Jerry's pro-life message.

"The month of October is recognized as Respect for Life month by the Church. Of course, we are called to respect life every single day, but we have a special focus at this time of year. One of the ways we can respect life is clear - by supporting pro-life causes. Locally the church and community have the resources of 40 Days for Life that is aimed at eradicating abortion. There is also Birthright, both in Ballston Spa and Schenectady, an organization devoted to helping women with unplanned pregnancies for as long as they need assistance - before, during, and after the baby comes. The church teaches us that respect for life means from conception to natural death. This covers many other issues - from poverty and hunger, violence, capital punishment, and assisted suicide, to name a few. Remember in the Gospel where we are called to give more? If we feel resistant to any of these things, maybe God is asking us to go deeper and to give what we do not believe we can give. Whatever you do, please remember that all life is sacred - without exception."

For more information on respect for life ministry activities, contact Larry Smith at lpjtsmith6@msn.com or 518-384-0882.

The Stewardship Committee needs you!

Think about volunteering to serve on this important committee which oversees several activities, such as the Welcoming and Hospitality Committees, the newsletter, and the Mardi Gras.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Maryann Haskell at maryann.haskell@gmail.com and watch the for the next meeting of the committee.



New Team in the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, under Director Christine Goss, has been restructured with Maria Yorkshire as the Administrative Assistant, Sarah Stygles as Coordinator of Family and Elementary Faith-Formation, and Caitie Lashbrooks as Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.



Maria Yorkshire* grew up in Schenectady near "goose hill". She had moved here from Syracuse with her parents and brother when she was 7 when her father got a new job at GE. She has been married for almost 36 years to her husband Gary and they have a 26

year old son, Joshua.

Maria went to Linton High School (nka Schenectady High). Meeting her husband threw off plans for further education and she began working at Monroe Title Insurance Company at age 18 where she stayed for 31 years. For almost 5 years she worked at Catholic Charities Senior & Caregiver Support Services.

To relax, Maria enjoys spending time with her family and friends, crafting and reading. Actually, Maria has brought her crafting talents to "Cooking and Crafting with the Saints," offered online through the parish Facebook page.

As a parishioner at ICC for many years, Maria has helped out with many ministries. She absolutely loves our parish and was thrilled to find out about the new Evangelization and Catechesis Team. In her new position, Maria's goals for this first year are to support the E and C team anyway she can and to help our young and adult parishioners on their faith journey.

Maria says that the most exciting part of her job, so far, is definitely getting to work with the new team members. "Sarah, Caitie and Christine are amazing and make coming to work every day enjoyable." The most challenging is just being new at a job and learning the ins

and outs of her position which is getting better every day.

Maria is so happy that she can still teach Youth Ministry even with her Administrative Assistant position with E and C. "I get to help with faith formation/youth ministry and teach too!"

*See a full interview with Maria in the October 2020 Pipeline.

Our new coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Caitie Lashbrooks, grew up in Croghan, a small town in upstate NY with her parents and two older brothers. Croghan's claim to fame is its "Croghan bologna" and having more cows than people! Her fiancé, Matthew Levine, whom she met at college, grew up in this area and they decided this would be a great place to call home.



Caitie graduated from Siena College in 2020 with a degree in Health Studies and a focus in Health Sciences. While at Siena, she loved getting involved in various extra-curriculars like the pro-life club, campus ministry, admissions programs, and mentoring program. Fun fact, she also had the opportunity to study abroad in Australia for a semester and was a resident assistant for three years. With her busy schedule, Caitie has always enjoyed relaxing in the outdoors, reading and spending quality time with her friends and family.

Before coming to Immaculate Conception, Caitie worked as a housing advocate at a nonprofit called Lewis County Opportunities in her hometown. She helped those who were homeless or at-risk of homelessness obtain safe and affordable shelter. Some evenings you could even find her as a cashier at the local Wamart.

See Evangelization & Catechesis, page 5

Evangelization & Catechesis, continued from page 4

From Caitie's past jobs and activities at Siena College, there is a theme of serving others and diving deeper into her faith. "In this role, I knew I could do exactly that with populations I am particularly passionate about, sharing my faith with and growing deeper together. I have always loved the verse Esther 4:14 and feel the way the world views our faith, this is God timing."

Caitie is excited and open to see where the Holy Spirit leads her this year and is hoping to build community and rapport with the youth and young adults in the parish. "From the little bit I have done so far, I can tell the most exciting part will be the youth and young adults I get to serve and working on a team that helps me to grow. I think the most challenging part will be getting over any fears I have and not being afraid to just go for it." She is "thrilled to keep getting to know the youth, young adults, and parishioners of our tri-parish community!"

Sarah Stygles, our new Coordinator of Family and Elementary Faith Formation, grew up in Ballston Lake, and was a member of Our Lady of Grace parish, where she was actively involved in the Youth Ministry program. After graduating high school, she attended college and graduate school at Plattsburgh State, earning an undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and doing master's level study in Entomology. She was highly involved with the Newman Center on campus, which was the source of college ministry and mission work for the campus.

About six years ago she moved with her family from Plattsburgh to the Scotia-Glenville area and they became registered parishioners of Immaculate Conception. Even though she grew up as a member of OLG, the IC has always been a bit of a home parish for her as well. "It's where my parents were married, I was baptized, and many of my extended family members worship, as well. I guess I'm lucky to feel like many churches are my 'home parish'. And even luckier to now work in a program that serves a couple of them!"

Sarah has been married to her husband, Jeremy, for 13 years, and they have two children, Juniper and Everett, who attend school in the Scotia-Glenville school district. They also have a dog named Ozzy, and 3 cats; Butternut, Dahlia, and Schnitzel Bean.

For relaxation, Sarah loves being out in nature, hiking, camping, kayaking, gardening, and beekeeping! "I think my love of green things runs deep in my genetics, as I'm part of

the Schultz family that runs a garden center in Glenville (which is where my Honey bees live)." She also enjoys crafting, especially knitting. She feels called to knit hats and up until a couple years ago, questioned why that was in her heart, until she found they are a wonderful item to donate to local charities in the winter.



Sarah has worked in a lot of different industries over the years, and feels like they have helped her gain a broad viewpoint on the world, and also lead her right into ministry. She worked for the NYS DEC as an Environmental Educator, for the Clinton County ARC as a Staff Educator & Untoward Incident Investigator, at Lilananda Yoga as a Children's Yoga Teacher & Community Educator, as a sub in the Glen-Worden Elementary School, as the church secretary at Trinity Presbyterian Church, in Scotia, and as the Family Ministry Coordinator at First Reformed Church of Scotia. While at this last position, Sarah felt she had found her calling, especially the call to work in ministry in her own Catholic faith.

In her new position, Sarah would love to help grow an environment of faith and love that both families and children feel drawn to, a place of peace where individuals feel they are welcome, belong, and are appreciated for their energy and spiritual gifts. "I believe that if people feel comfortable and at home in a faith community, their personal faith grows exponentially. I would also love to empower parents to feel they truly are their children's primary & most important Catechist. A challenge in the job will be the exhaustion that people feel with the pandemic. "I pray that as a community we find ways to recharge our emotional and spiritual energy, and work on healing from any trauma we may be carrying with us, now."

Sarah feels blessed to be given the honor of helping children and their families along their faith journeys. Her door is always open to anyone with questions or concerns about faith formation.

The Tri-Parishes are fortunate to have such faithful, committed, and enthusiastic members on the E & C team.

Spotlight on Dave Wetzel by Annette Botsford

In this *Pipeline* series, we hope to familiarize parishioners with those among us whom we see often but know little about. Readers are invited to contact Annette Botsford at abotsfor@nycap.rr.com with suggestions of future subjects for this feature.



Dave Wetzel accepted the position as Director of Administration and Finance for our three parishes. At the conclusion of his 32-year career as a public-school educator, he was contemplating what to do in retirement. He felt fortunate to be able to retire at age 55, but wasn't ready to stop working. Just as he was retiring, this position became available. He is pleased that he is able to put his many years of

experience as a school administrator to work in a new capacity. Dave's experience in budgeting, program planning, human resources and facility management translated seamlessly to this new job. In this new position, much of his time is devoted to planning and budgeting for the maintenance projects and facility upgrades at the three parishes. New projects seem to emerge every day.

Dave grew up in Niskayuna. He said he had a great childhood free of cell phones, internet and electronic games. As a kid, he and his friends played outside until after dark, when they finally heard their parents calling them to get home (literally yelling out). He feels badly that many children spend so little time playing outdoors.

Church was always a central focus in his Lutheran family. His mother taught Sunday school and his father was the treasurer of the congregation. He routinely attended the church services on Sunday and participated in a youth activity program in the afternoon. Many Sundays he would be an altar server. Several nights each week Dave played basketball with others from the church and also went to choir practice. His family did their best to practice their Christian faith. From an early age, prayer was a daily part of his life as was the importance of serving others.

After graduating from Niskayuna High school, he attended the University at Albany where he received a BA in History and an MA in Social Studies Education. It was there that he met his wife, Kelly. Over the course of many years, when his children were very young, he completed the required coursework to become a school administrator.

Dave's first teaching job was in Amsterdam and then he was hired in Niskayuna. He felt honored to teach with many of the people who were influential during his own high school years. He still regularly gets together with some of those same great people. After nine years in the classroom at Niskayuna High School, he became an Assistant Principal there. After four years, he took a position as a Principal in the South Colonie Central School District. He feels his greatest achievement as a school administrator centers on the focus he brought to acknowledging and understanding the trauma suffered by many children (Adverse Childhood Experiences), which negatively impacted learning and academic achievement.



Dave is the youngest of three children. His 87 year old mother is still a very vibrant individual. She is a devoted grandmother and enjoys Sunday dinners with her grandchildren. Dave and his wife Kelly were married in June of 1990. They have three grown children: Matthew, Mackenzie and Meghan. Their house was once a noisy hub of activity and is now eerily quiet. He and Kelly are looking forward to a future of weddings and grandbabies.

Dave remarked that he lives a very quiet, boring life; which he claims is not a joke! He enjoys being at home and is usually in the middle of some project that Kelly has planned. It usually involves painting inside in the winter and backyard projects in the summer. Vacations are often with the extended family. They had a cruise planned for the summer of 2020, however, COVID resulted in the cancellation of a greatly anticipated adventure with 20 people. Dave credits Kelly as the planner and the person who brings the whole family together. They think of her as the matriarch and is fondly called "Rose" by her family, as in Rose Kennedy.

See Dave Wetzel, page 7;

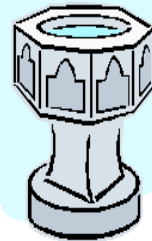
Dave Wetzel continued from page 6

As a graduate of the RCIA program at Immaculate Conception, Dave now leads several RCIA sessions each year. He feels very fortunate to be working with Father Jerry and the great people at Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Grace and Saint Joseph's. The staff at all three parishes have made him feel welcome. He feels that the parishioners are very friendly. He is especially grateful to the trustees and members of the pastoral councils.

As a huge fan of American architecture, he especially likes the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. He remembers writing a research paper about Wright's life and work when he was in high school. He had always wanted to visit Wright's most famous house, Fallingwater, south of Pittsburgh. This September, as most students and staff were heading back to school, Dave and Kelly were making their way to Mill Run, Pennsylvania. They spent four days travelling winding country roads and visiting several of Wright's homes, including Fallingwater. It was truly a "bucket list" experience for him. He was star struck and sent his school friends many pictures.

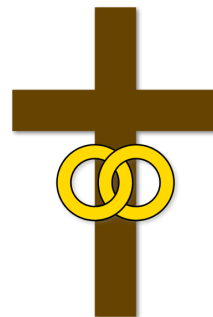
In Dave's words, *"I think everyone has been disrupted by the pandemic in one way or another. Many of us have simply been inconvenienced. Plans have been cancelled, we miss gathering with friends, etc. I am beginning to believe that masks are here to stay in public settings. As I complain about all the inconveniences COVID has brought, I quickly remind myself that I am extremely fortunate my health has not been compromised. I am especially thankful that my family has remained healthy. I have so much to be thankful for."*

Times of Joy Sacramental Milestones



Congratulations and welcome to these children who received the Sacrament of Baptism from June 31, 2021 to October 3, 2021. We pray for the grace these families need to grow in their faith.

Leo Michael Dunbar, child of Kevin & Alicia
Hailey Christine Coleman, child of Adam & Jennifer
Francesca Renee Felano, child of Tim & Kristin
Shane Allen Parker, child of Eric & Jessica
Abby Cora Griffiths, child of David & Allison
Everett Thomas Messare, child of Joseph & Gabrielle



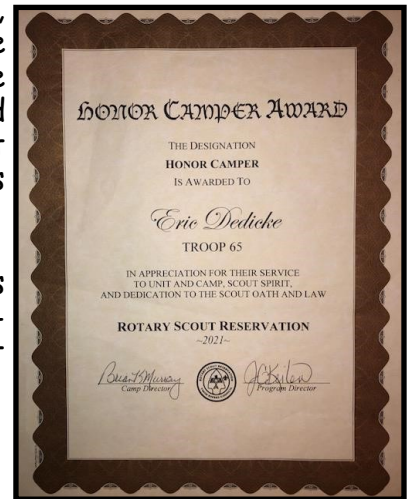
These couples were married between June 31, 2021 and October 3 2021. We wish God's blessing upon them.

Michaela Guzzi to Steven Burpoe
Linda Keays to Joseph Olbrych

Boy Scout Troup 65 News



Boy Scout Troop 65, chartered by Immaculate Conception, had a great summer! After a year off due to the pandemic, the Troop was able to return to camp at Rotary Scout Reservation in Poestenkill. The boys worked on a variety of merit badges and programs, including Astronomy, Geology, Public Health, Stand Up Paddleboard, and Lifesaving. Due to their hard work and discipline, they were also recognized as the Honor Troop and Eric Dedicke (11th grade, Star rank) received the Honor Camper award. But most of all, they enjoyed being together in the Great Outdoors (despite the record rainfall that hit camp the week of July 11).



The Troop is always looking for new Scouts and adult volunteers who enjoy hiking, camping, and community service. Please consider joining the Troop! Contact Mary Elise (Mel) Dedicke at melster10@aol.com for more information.



In this thirtieth-second issue of the *Parish Pipeline*, some of our ministries have updated their activities. Immaculate Conception is fortunate to have many more ministries which will be highlighted in coming issues. For a complete list of ministries,

- see the church website: <http://www.icglenville.com>
- contact Maryann Haskell, 399-6706, e-mail maryann.haskell@gmail.com
- fill in the information below and drop it in the collection basket. You will be contacted.

Name _____ Phone # _____

I am interested in the following ministry/ministries:

January 15-16:
Distribution of the next issue of the Pipeline

January 6: Submissions due