

Getting to Know Fr. Joseph O'Brien

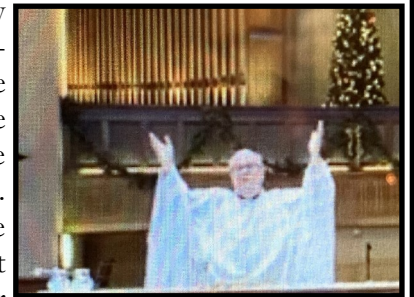
Born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, his family moved to Troy when Fr. Joe O'Brien was three years old and his father had taken a job with Ford Motor Company in Green Island. The oldest of six children, Fr. O'Brien attended St. Patrick's Parish School and graduated from Catholic Central High School. He went on to receive a Bachelor's Degree in Management and an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. After this, he worked for Union Pacific Railroad in New York City for three years and General Electric in Schenectady for seven. He says that education and experience in the business world have helped him to develop an awareness of the importance of collaboration.



Fr. O'Brien had thought about becoming a priest when he was in high school, but he decided to pursue other interests. The call to the priesthood surfaced again while he was working, and after a period of prayer and meeting with spiritual advisors, he entered the seminary at Catholic University in Washington. Since his ordination at thirty-six, he has always served in the Albany Diocese-at St. Mary's in Glens Falls, Blessed Sacrament in Hague, St. John the Evangelist in Chestertown, St. James in North Creek, Sacred Heart in Lake George, Holy Spirit in East Greenbush and Blessed Sacrament in Albany. When he is not with us now, he still goes where he is needed; for example, he often says Mass at St. Paul's Church in Hancock, Delaware County.

Fr. O'Brien's sermons are the result of prayer, reflection and preparation. They put the readings into historical and spiritual context and connect

to contemporary life and experience. When he talked about the doctors of the church like St. Ambrose, he suggested that we pray over



scripture and see how it motivates us. An Advent sermon urged listeners to take time to let the Advent message soak in, to go slowly on this journey of heart and mind. Both his homilies and prayers of the faithful demonstrate his concern for the poor, the homeless, the hungry especially since the pandemic has affected people's ability to earn a living.

When he has time to relax, Fr. O'Brien enjoys reading, particularly non-fiction like history, theology and faith, and writings about people. He appreciates the quiet and beauty of nature as he experienced on walks after our recent snowfalls. Also, while his father and a sister died recently, his mother and surviving siblings live close by.



When his time with us is over, Fr. O'Brien will be given another assignment. In the meantime, we are fortunate that he is sharing his knowledge, spirituality, and compassion with us.

Ministry Updates

Pastoral Care & Faith Formation by Madeline Fretto



As we all know, 2020 was not the easiest year for anyone. Many traditions, vacations, and special events have been cancelled. However, opportunities to help people in our own communities were still able to occur. One of the programs, now in its 6th year that continued without a hitch, was the Intergenerational program of the Faith Formation children K-6, and our home bound parishioners, along with residents of Glendale Home.

Bearing in mind that normal attendance in Faith Formation was not reached this year, and all classes have to be held virtually, the response we received from 143 parents and children was completely overwhelming. The recipients were so delighted by the beautiful and generous gifts, and inspired by the heartfelt, creative cards made by the children.

Pastoral Care and Faith Formation want to extend our sincere thank you to all of the parents and children for bringing hope and love to these very special people during the Christmas season. We are well aware that our families are struggling in many different ways during this Pandemic, and we never forget how fortunate we are to have such a caring and generous parish family here at Immaculate Conception.

May 2021 be a bright year for all.

Contact: Madeline Fretto, Director of Faith Formation
Rachel Winters, Pastoral Care Coordinator



Glendale resident Joann Blanchard



Book Club by Simone McGuinness

Book Club has settled into a new normal of a Zoom meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. In November we had a “Thomas Merton experience” exploring Merton’s biography, summaries of his writings, and philosophy. In December we read an article by Catholic blogger Laura Phelps encouraging readers to look up and find the beauty and joy in life, even in a pandemic!

Additionally, our Bra Drive in Late November-early December was a huge success. The women at the City Mission Family Life Center were able to have a ‘bra party’ courtesy of the 150 bras that were collected.

In 2021 Book Club is planning to return to reading and discussing books now that there is more accessibility to libraries. Our first book on deck for February is The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek.



If you would like more information about our group, please contact Simone McGuinness at 518-399-9506 or check out our page on the parish website under the Parish Life tab.

DO YOU NEED FOOD?

If you need food or know someone who does, please contact the church's office at (518) 399-9168. St Vincent de Paul can help!

Ministry Updates

Times of Joy—Sacramental Milestones

Congratulations and welcome to these children who received the Sacrament of Baptism from October 9, 2020 to January 13, 2021. We pray for the grace these families need to grow in their faith.

Leonidas Roman, child of Jorge & Christina

Tiffany Jane Quibido, child of Tommy & Jhona

Molly Katherine Socha, child of Grant & Erin

Vivian Eleanor Jordan, child of Justin & Cassandra

Sebastian Rocco McLaughlin, child of Ryan & Marie

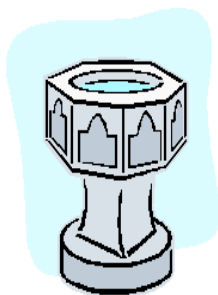
Jack Turner Brockmann, child of Tanner & Dana

Taylor Evelyne DiMaso, child of Ryan & Lindsay

Sophia Belle Palazeke, child of Jonathan & Stephanie

Parker Rain Spanswick, child of Michael & Alyssa

Oliver Robert Pisani, child of Nicholas & Megan



Fran Szpylczyn a Contributor to New Book of Reflections

Deacon Jim Knipper began Clear Faith Publishing in 2012 with the release of *Hungry, and You Fed Me: Homilies & Reflections for Cycle C*. The net proceeds from the sale of the book were donated to four charities that feed the hungry. Following this, two other books were published: *Naked, and You Clothed Me for Cycle A* and *Sick, and You Cared for Me for Cycle B*. These three titles have won many awards and raised over \$100,000 for a dozen charities that feed, shelter, and counsel the needy.



A Stranger and You Welcomed Me: Homilies and Reflections for Cycle B is the company's most recent publication. It includes homilies for each Sunday, Holy Days, and funerals. The contributors include a variety of religious and lay writers, including our own Fran Szpylczyn, whose writing "Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel Rejoice! To You Shall Come Emmanuel!" is about the readings for the Third Sunday of Advent.

The book is available in paperback and Kindle formats from Amazon, or you can order a copy through Fran by contacting her in the office.

Morning of Service—2020

Our fifth annual Morning of Service took place on November 7, 2020. Approximately 190 individuals and /or families participated in the service project, which was chaired by Janice Zaengle and Jeanne Behr. Conditions surrounding the pandemic necessitated several changes in the day from previous years. For example, off-site projects were limited to those that could be done outdoors with the exception of the Regional Food Bank which has an established procedure for volunteers. Sites like nursing homes, shelters, and soup kitchens which had been so popular in earlier years, were not available, but 48 parishioners still participated in off-site projects. It was a beautiful warm day for our volunteers and they busily cleaned flush markers and mapped veterans' graves at St. Anthony's Cemetery, cleaned up and planted at Yates family Cemetery, cleared trails and cleaned the drainage swale at Anchor Diamond Park, cleaned and manicured the grounds at Joan Nicole Prince Home and sorted and packaged food at the Regional Food bank.

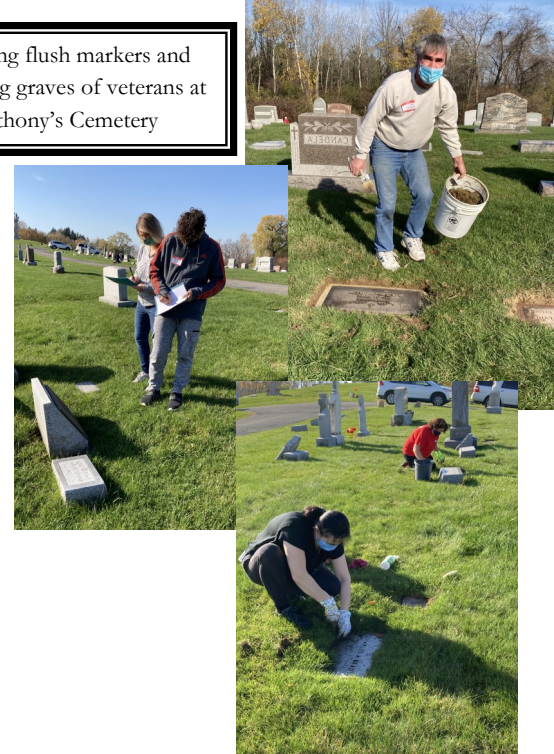
On site projects which had been done by groups meeting in our Parish Center were completed by volunteers in their own homes using kits that had been prepared by the team leaders. The take home project kits were very popular and there were 6 project kits to choose from with 30 kits per project. Volunteers had two weeks to complete them. Approximately 140 Parishioners made: over 60 no sew fleece scarf and hat sets for Bethesda house (+ an additional 48 made by team leader/helper for this project), 65 foam wreathes for homebound parishioners/and or nursing home residents, 90 hand stenciled infant bibs for Northern Rivers, and 120 handmade Christmas cards for the military and National Guard. 100's of stars were cut from flags and packaged for Stars for Troops, and many photographs were archived for the Town of Ballston.

Comments or suggestions, including interest in having the kit option next year can be emailed to icservicechair@gmail.com.



Ballston Historian Rick Reynolds (l) with volunteers

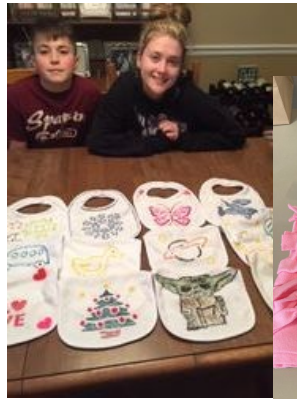
Cleaning flush markers and locating graves of veterans at St. Anthony's Cemetery



Regional Food Bank



Anchor Diamond Park



Joan Nicole Prince Home



Town of Glenville
Yates Cemetery



THANK YOU TO GLENVILLE HANNAFORD



St Vincent de Paul's Society is extremely grateful for all the help Hannaford Supermarket in Glenville has given us for the past five years! They are always finding ways to aid us in feeding at risk families.

Frequently, throughout each year, we buy Hannaford food gift cards to give to families along with food items. Hannaford always includes extra gift cards to supplement our supply. The supermarket also gives SVDP food items the customers have donated for needy families. This past holiday season they generously contributed the money they made from the sale of Hannaford bags to SVDP! We could not have a better neighbor!

Spotlight on Carol and Paul Heckman 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.



There are so many people we see at Mass daily and on the weekends in the parish center and working on the grounds outside. With the pandemic, many people are still involved with keeping the daily activities going at Immaculate Conception. There are those who help remotely from home, work behind the scenes on site and others are quite visible. In this issue we feature a couple who have stayed active in their ministries throughout the pandemic.

Meet Paul and Carol (nee Cappello) who both grew up in Schenectady. Originally, their families were only a few blocks away from each other. The Heckman family moved to Niskayuna when Paul was just two years old, so they never met until college. Paul is one of seven children and Carol has one sister. Paul's heritage dates back to the Mayflower and Carol's parents were first generation Italian immigrants, which makes for an interesting blend of culture in the family.

Both Paul and Carol received a solid foundation in the faith back in the days of the Baltimore Catechism. Carol attended Immaculate Conception School in the

Bellevue section of Schenectady and Paul attended St Helen's School in Niskayuna. The seeds of faith planted during those years remain with them today. Both attended Notre Dame/ Bishop Gibbons High School, but Carol transferred and graduated from Mont Pleasant High School and Paul went on to graduate from Niskayuna High School. They were introduced by Carol's roommate at Hudson Valley Community College in 1970 where Carol was studying Dental Hygiene and Paul was a liberal arts major. Paul also attended Hunter College in New York City, majoring in Economics. They were married on June 8, 1975 at the Immaculate Conception Church in Schenectady. Paul was a senior at Hunter College, and they started out their life's adventure together in Manhattan. Carol worked in an upscale dental practice for a prominent periodontist on the Upper East Side and Paul was a fulltime student and part time taxi driver! It was a humble beginning but one that provided many valuable lessons in life experience while living and working in midtown Manhattan! (many rosaries were prayed by their mothers!)

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Carol and Paul Heckman, continued from page 6

Paul started his work career at General Electric which prompted their return to the Capital Region. Paul is a graduate of the Schenectady Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program, President of the Leadership Schenectady Alumni Association and recipient of the prestigious Lawrence Award in 1994 and a twice nominee for the GE Phillippe Community Service Award. During his tenure at GE he completed the Manufacturing Studies Program and became a trustee of the GE Hall of History Foundation. He was employed by GE for 18 years in Financial Services and then worked for the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation during which time he also chaired the Schenectady Heritage Area Advisory Council. The remainder of his work career, up to retirement in 2017, was as a Senior Sales Executive in Commercial Print employed by Konica Minolta.

Carol worked as a dental hygienist in the specialty of periodontics then in several general dentistry practices in the area but her employment in the practice of Dr. G. Kirk Gleason DDS is where she found her niche and retired from that practice in 2018 after almost 40 years. Carol also served on the Advisory Board for the Dental Hygiene department at HVCC and did public health education presentations for elementary and nursery schools. Carol worked in various areas as a volunteer in the Burnt Hills School District at elementary, middle and high school and chaired the Friends of Music organization from 1996-98.

In their words: “We are blessed with two wonderful daughters, Lauren Patterson and Lesley O’Donnell, two great sons-in-law, Jake and Mike and six grandchildren (soon to be seven!)” Both their daughters attended Burnt Hills Schools, received all their faith formation at Immaculate Conception, as well as the sacraments of Eucharist, Confirmation and Matrimony. They both graduated from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Lauren has an undergraduate degree in education and Master’s in theology from the JPII Institute at Catholic U. Lesley has a bachelor’s degree in music (Musical Theatre). They have both had successful career experiences in their chosen professions and are now raising their families. They are so happy that after many years of living in Washington DC, Vermont, and New York City their children and families have settled in this area and have returned to their roots. Lauren and Jake are parishioners at Immaculate Conception and their children, Nathanael and Juliana are altar servers. Lauren’s children are homeschooled and are a part of the St Peter’s Homeschoolers. Lesley and Mike are parishioners at St Mary’s Church in Ballston Spa and their children attend St Mary’s School. The tradition of Catholic education continues with their grandchildren. “We are so pleased to have the seeds of the faith established in this generation as well.”

Retirement has given Paul and Carol the opportunity to focus on what’s most important to them (God and family) and then still have time for some fun! “We are passionately prolife/ profamily and so we are most fulfilled when we are serving our own young family members. We feel strongly that ‘charity begins at home’ so before

we minister to others we support the needs of our own family. We babysit our grandchildren, Claire and Paul, while Lesley teaches voice two days a week and then, of course, there’s always time to spend with Lauren’s four children as well. You’ll often find us at playgrounds, picnic spots, sporting events, museums and libraries and of course, Jumpin’ Jacks with the kids. We have met so many retired grandparents like ourselves doing just the same.”

When not with their family they are probably working on the ministries they are involved in, socializing with friends and extended family, hiking, gardening, and traveling. Paul enjoys an occasional game of golf too. Carol sticks to mini golf!

Their most exciting trip was to Italy three years ago where they had audience with Pope Francis in St Peter’s Square. They were only about 12-13 feet from his “Popemobile” as it slowly passed. “We’ll never forget his smile!” They would very much like to return to Italy but also to continue to explore our own beautiful country. They have had wonderful trips to Washington, DC when their daughters studied and then lived there. They have seen Pope Benedict when he was at Catholic University, President Bush at the National Prayer Breakfast and most recently, prior to COVID, they were privileged to have had a private tour of the West Wing of the White House. (Their niece had connections!) “Washington, DC is tops on our list of favorite places to visit! The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, our National Shrine, feels like home to us now. It sits on the campus of Catholic University and is a must see for any Catholic tourist in DC.”

After traveling to the Grand Canyon, they were motivated to see more of our country’s National Parks. Kennebunkport, Maine is their special getaway place every summer. Some of their best memories were made when they rented a big house on the ocean for the whole family to enjoy. Paul and Carol usually manage to get in a long weekend there for just the two of them also. They love to stay at the Franciscan Guest House in Kennebunkport. Its peace and scenic beauty is like a mini retreat for them. A favorite day trip is to the Divine Mercy Shrine at Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Mass.

Of course, the pandemic has changed so much of this. They have no plans to travel anytime soon. They have become committed to frequent outdoor exercise, walking in their neighborhood or hiking on the many scenic trails this area provides. Peebles Island is one of their favorites. They plan to try out their new snowshoes at Indian Meadows next snowfall. On walks in their development, they have chatted with neighbors whom they might never have met when driving in their cars. During the summer months, they were able to entertain family on their deck and socially distanced in their yard as well as taking in some outdoor dining with friends. Now, in the winter months, they plan to continue to hike and keep in touch with extended family and friends on Zoom. “We’ve learned how

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Carol and Paul Heckmen, continued from page 7

to simplify our needs and wants through this pandemic and that has been a gift. Our wanderlust isn't as great now and we're embracing being "homebodies."

Carol and Paul have been involved in many ministries throughout their 34 years at Immaculate Conception. Carol has been a catechist for 34 years teaching elementary through Confirmation. Paul and Carol team taught Confirmation and are now leading the RCIA program along with their daughter, Lauren. Paul has been a lector, choir member and served as president of the Parish Council in 1995. Carol has been in the choir for 15 years as well.

When asked about their involvement with the church, they responded, "We were drawn into various ministries as our faith grew and as we accompanied our children in their faith journey. The Cursillo movement, Renew and the Life in the Spirit Seminar were diocesan movements taking place at the parish level which drew us in, empowered our faith and impacted our lives tremendously. 'Bloom where you are planted' is a Cursillo slogan and IC is fertile ground to blossom in the faith."

Paul volunteered for the Northeast Airshow in 1988, serving on the Executive Committee in '89. The show raised funds for the American Red Cross and the Empire State Air Museum.

Paul has been involved with Residents Encounter Christ (REC) prison ministry for almost thirty years and has ministered at Mt MacGregor, Hale Creek, Comstock and Watertown. He has directed several REC weekends and also served as a team member. Sadly, all prison retreats are on hold for now due to COVID-19 restrictions. He is president of the Board of

PerpetuaLifeCare, Inc and Carol is on the board as well. This is a Pro-life organization which promotes the culture of life through educational programs and support for marriage and family, crisis pregnancy, infertility and Theology of the Body teaching resources for priests. (PerpetuaLifeCare.org)

Carol is the Secretary for the Service Team of the Albany Chapter of Magnificat. Magnificat hosts three to four meals a year for women of the diocese with a witness speaker, fellowship and vibrant praise and worship. Magnificat has flipped to Zoom events during the pandemic and has a weekly rosary prayer group for anyone interested.

Both Paul and Carol have participated in pro-life events with 40 Days for Life and have attended the National March for Life in Washington, DC as well as local rosary processions at the Capitol and at Planned Parenthood in Schenectady.

"This past summer, with the help of two of our older grandchildren, we delivered lunches to local school kids who are in need of a free lunch program. There were so many in our very own neighborhoods who came on hard times during this pandemic. This was an eye-opening experience for us and our grandchildren as well."

Paul and Carol said, "We are so grateful for the faith community here at IC and the leadership of all the pastors and associates in past years who have so impacted our life in the faith and continue to do so. Most importantly, we are grateful that our Church remains open and Masses are livestreamed and in person and the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith, is still being offered to us. We prayerfully look forward to the future when we are all together again and the warm fellowship of the community at IC can be experienced. This is the place we truly encounter Christ and are learning to become his hands and his feet. Our home, our hearts and a huge chunk of our life is here in this place!"

In this twenty-ninth 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:

April 17 & 18:
Distribution of the next
issue of the Pipeline

**April 7: Submissions
due**