



My Journey to Priestly Ordination

By Deacon Mike Melanson



My journey to priestly ordination, when I look back at my life, was the farthest thing from my mind. I have been a deacon for the past 26 years and love every aspect of my ministry. But as I look back in time, I believe it all started about 4 months after the passing of my wife Peggy. After 50 years of marriage, and as I write this, I am totally amazed as to how long that actually is, the woman whom I was totally in love with, was an integral part of my being, was the real reason for any accomplishment in my life, passed from my arms to the arms of our loving Lord, Jesus Christ, into paradise. Needless to say, anyone who has lost a spouse or any loved one can verify the darkness of those days. The time following Peggy's death was a very dark, lonely time. I had never lived alone at any time in my life. I was immediately thrown into a realm of depression, fear, and loneliness. I had to learn many things if I was going to survive. I don't really know how to cook, or wash clothes, or clean the house, or just about any household jobs. I was 72 years old, in desperate need of my wife's help but realized that was never ever going to happen. I was all alone.

In those dark months, God was so close to me,

holding me when I needed a hug, listening to me when I needed to talk, talking to me when I needed to listen, and showing me his absolute love for me while my tears prevented me from seeing any of this. My once very good prayer life almost disappeared. But God was just beginning to perform many miracles in my life. His love and mercy flowed out from his infinite glory, and was mine for the asking.

So I began to pray in ways that I never did before. One day at our church, all alone, in the dampness of a flood of tears, I cried out to our God, "What do you want me to do with the rest of my life?" Desperate for just about anything, what was going to happen was truly the farthest thing I could have ever imagined. I clearly and undoubtedly heard the Holy Spirit direct me: "SHOW MY PEOPLE HOW MUCH I LOVE THEM." When I asked for clarification, I received none. I guess that's how God works. I received the directive, and now, the "how to" was up to me.

Through extensive prayer for advice and clarification, I found myself trying to grab hold of my new reality, that I was now a widower, like it or not. But then it clicked. A widower. I'm no longer married. Could God possibly want me to apply for the priesthood? This was too crazy to believe. The more I tried to disprove this in my own mind, the more I felt his gentle calling to pursue this. So, I mustered up the strength and courage to talk about this to Fr. Jerry and the Director of the Diaconate for our diocese. Knowing that a Deacon reports directly to the bishop, I was advised to make an appointment to speak to Bishop Scharfenberger. His complete approval and wonderful conversation at our meeting, told me to begin the application

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Ministry Updates

RCIA Welcomes Three Seekers by Kim Klementowski Photographs by Julie Ashcroft

The goal of this ministry is to help guide seekers along their faith journey, teach them about our Catholic faith and assist them in receiving the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Eucharist and Confirmation) enabling them to be full members of our Catholic faith and our wonderful parish.

In August, our process formally began for welcoming all seekers wishing to come into full communion with the Catholic Church by receiving the Sacraments of Initiation. This year, we are pleased to welcome and assist 3 amazing young women coming through the RCIA process. Each candidate will introduce themselves below. Please keep them in your prayers as we draw closer to the Easter Vigil.



I'm Jessica Fragnoli. I'm 29 years old, married to Nick Fragnoli and have two children, Tristan (5) and Abby (1). I am currently a homemaker and stay-at-home Mom but before that I was and still am a Licensed Practical Nurse. I grew up in Catskill NY with both my parents and my older brother. I was baptized and confirmed in the Methodist Church. My faith became stronger after having children and I look forward to learning and growing in the Catholic Church.



Hello! My name is Danielle Grant. I have lived in Burnt Hills for about 30 years and I love the community! I have a long-haired Chihuahua named Bailey; he's the cutest! My fiancé and I met in May 2017, were engaged in November 2017, and are looking forward to our upcoming wedding on March 16, 2019. I have really enjoyed the RCIA program and look forward to learning more and becoming part of the Catholic faith. Thank you for all of the love and support as I continue this journey!



My name is Jenny Lynn Farina. I grew up locally, in West Glennville, and I was raised in the West Glennville Reformed Church. My passion for serving others led me to a career in the dental field where I have worked for over 12 years as a Dental Assistant. Additionally, my educational background in the arts and love for the outdoors keeps me busy drawing, painting, sculpting, gardening, fishing and cooking too!

Ministry Updates-cont.



New Fellowship \Service Ministry Seeks Members and Ideas



We are currently considering a new Fellowship and Service Ministry for our parish. We are a large parish made up of people in various stages of life. The hope of this ministry would be to establish deeper connections among all parishioners.

Fellowship is defined as “friendly association, especially among people who share similar interests.”

In a world that is often viewed from behind a screen, or scrolled through on a handheld device, the need to connect with people face-to-face is perhaps more necessary than ever.

The Fellowship/ Service Ministry would provide opportunities for us to get together, to know one another more and to have some fun, as well as providing community outreach opportunities.

Some of the fellowship ideas that have been proposed are: visits to museums; community events; breakfast or coffee after Mass; sporting outings such as biking, hiking, kayaking, skiing and ice-skating; movies, concerts and theater shows; trips to see local college games.

Grow in the spirit

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds (*Hebrew 10:24*) by providing outreach to the community throughout the year. There are so many community service ideas, the possibilities are endless. Some thoughts in continuing works of service are, but not limited to: City Mission, Animal Protective Foundation, and Senior Center.

We are in the information gathering stage for this ministry so **PLEASE** feel free to share your thoughts and ideas with us.

For fellowship ideas or questions, please contact Cindy Peterson at 518-630-9323 or at cindy3pete@gmail.com.

For service ideas or questions, please contact Jeanne Behr at 518-495-5644 or at jeannebehr@gmail.com.

On February 2nd and 3rd we will have information available in the gathering space during Hospitality as well as a table set up during our Parish Mardi Gras Celebration in March, with the hopes of launching a kick-off event this spring. Stay tuned!

Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus



The Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus Council 10013 donated over 40 gifts to Catholic Charities Christmas Family Support. During Lent, they will be helping with the Knights Friday Fish Fries.

Contact: Geraldine Havasy: 518-406-5675

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I never intended to desire to become Catholic until I met my fiancé and began attending mass regularly. I gained an understanding, love and deep desire for the Holy Eucharist which has now led to my desire to become Catholic. In addition to the beauty of the mass, I came to know and appreciate the sense of community and kind people here at the Immaculate Conception Church. I look forward to what the future holds and sincerely thank you all for your warmth and making me feel so genuinely welcome.

We sincerely hope you will join us at the Easter Vigil to witness these amazing women come into full communion with our beautiful Catholic Faith. On behalf of our candidates and our entire RCIA team, thank-you for your loving support.

Contact: [Kim Klementowski: 518-384-2234;](mailto:Kim.Klementowski@518-384-2234)
kdklem2@gmail.com

MORNING OF SERVICE 2018

Immaculate Conception parishioners serve Christ and the community with love, mercy and humility.

By Jeanne Behr and MaryAnn Johnson, Planning Committee Co-Chairs



Congratulations Immaculate Conception! On Saturday morning, November 3, hundreds of volunteers lovingly provided over 800 hours of service to our local community. We participated in 28 different projects, both on site in the parish center and off-site at agencies in Scotia- Glenville, Schenectady, Albany, Ballston Spa, and Latham. We made fall decorations for Jack’s Place, “plarn” for grounds mats for the homeless, Christmas cards for active military, baby/toddler blankets for Northern Rivers Early Childhood Learning Center, memory book pages for Albany Med NICU, welcome cards for the Ronald McDonald House, pet toys for Saratoga County Animal Shelter and fleece scarves for Bethesda House. We made meals for the Salvation Army Booth House, City Mission, Jack’s Place and Habitat for Humanity. We visited patients at Baptist, Glendale and Heritage Home. We cleaned, sorted and organized inventory at the Regional Food Bank and Things of My Very Own. We painted at the Schenectady Day Nursery and YWCA. We did yard work and/or washed windows for the Joan Nicole Prince Home, Jack’s Place, Towns of Ballston and Glenville. We cleaned vans for Catholic Charities Transportation Program. We helped build at Habitat for

Humanity.

“It takes a parish” of generous, talented and caring people to make this project a success. Thank you to the over 350 children, teens, young adults, parents, individuals, families and groups who answered Christ’s call to serve His people at the Parish Center or at local agencies.

Much appreciation to the consultants and assistants: Tom Bigos, Karen Bond, Fran Bosher, Michelle DiLorenzo, Katie Dobies, Pam Durrant, Bill Gray, Denise Frailio, Kathy Frisic, Father Jerry, Marge Kopcik, Edda Roemelt, MaryBeth Sankowski, and Fran Rossi Szpylczyn.

Thank you to the on-site team leaders, who were the creative hand-on organizers in the Parish Center: Patti Brousseau, Carol Baumgartner, Judy Buckley, Doris Carlson, Lisa Casapullo, Christine DiDinato, Sylvia Lott, Maryann Haskell, Theresa Markowicz, Elizabeth Mendez, Mary Perry, Michelle Perry, Andrea Sheridan, and Laura Weaver.

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process and talk to Fr. Anthony Ligato, Vicar for Vocations, for further instructions. The Bishop made a phone call and got me an immediate appointment with Fr. Anthony.

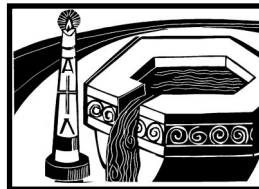
The application process is very extensive. The application itself was over 10 pages long and required 5 additional recommendations from at least 2 additional priests. Also required are meetings with the diocesan review board consisting of Fr. Anthony Ligato, Vicar of Vocations, 3 other priests and one lay woman for one hour each, a full day psychological exam and evaluation at a national psych center in Pennsylvania, and additional graduate courses from St. Bernard's School of Ministry and Theology at the Albany branch, where I had completed my graduate studies in 2008. There was one stipulation and that was I wait for 1 full year from the death of my wife, before my application would be finalized, a policy which I completely support.

Wow, I'm not 25 years old as a lot of men are when they start this process. But I was convinced that this is what God was calling me to do, so, I figured, let's get started. I began my seminary work in August of this year. I will continue my seminary training and classes this coming January 2019. I received a phone call and a letter explaining that my many years of diaconate experience and my MA Degree would move me along on the journey to priestly ordination. And recently, I received wonderful news. I was told that I will be ordained to the priesthood on June 15, 2019 at 11:00 am at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany. Everyone is invited to attend. I hope to see you all there.

I guess I could sum this all up with the following. Our God loves us so very much. His ways are not always our ways, but when we listen to Him, miracles can happen. God loves you so very much. At my first Mass following ordination, I'll "SHOW" you just how much.

Many blessings to you for the New Year.

Times of Joy—Sacramental Milestones



Congratulations and welcome to these children who received the Sacrament of Baptism from October 1, 2018, to January 13, 2019.

We pray for the grace these families need to grow in their faith.

- Riley Sullivan, child of Eric & Kaitlin Amell
- Brody William, child of Brent & Danielle Roberts
- Noella Grace, child of Morgan & Jessica Montone
- Bose Easton, child of Justin & Cassandra Jordan
- Reese Elizabeth, child of Robert & Tiffany Krawiecki
- Paul James, child of Stephen & Sarah Little
- Joseph Charles, child of Joseph & Pamela Coons
- Cristian Eli, child of Dennis & Yanitza Torres
- Asher John, child of Jonathan & Erika George
- Connor Stephen, child of Michael & Bridget Canary
- Keagan Michael, child of Sean & Shannon Diminick
- Claire Irene, child of Brian & Sarah Brewer
- Mia Isabel, child of Matthew & Meredith Franze

This couple was married between October 1, 2018, and January 13, 2019. We wish God's blessing upon them.

Amelia Zaengle to Joseph Jackson, Jr.

Spotlight on Julie Ashcroft 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.

*Those who can, do. Those who can do more,
volunteer. ~Author Unknown*

Julie was already an active member of the Immaculate Conception Church community when she decided to stop working 5 years ago. Although she was already involved, she had more time at that point. It just seemed a natural process. She met with Fr. Jerry and told him that she'd like to get more involved with the church. She asked him where he thought she would be needed. He was very attentive and took the time to prepare for their meeting and offered suggestions. Julie says, "I love my faith, our parish family, and I felt an immediate liking to Father when he came to Immaculate. In one of his first homilies he discussed Mary and Martha. I have always been a Martha, serving others, not Mary who sat at Jesus's feet. He said, 'Someone has to serve the chips'; meaning Martha wasn't all that bad! I whispered to my husband as we sat in the pew, 'I like this guy!'"

Julie and her husband John live in Glenville in what they call their first and last house. Julie was born and raised in Utica, NY. She met John while they were in high school. After high school, she went to Utica College of Syracuse University. Following her undergraduate studies, she attended Albany Medical College and became a Physicians Assistant. She has worked at Albany Med in internal medicine and then in private practice finishing in pediatrics.

Julie and John married in 1990. They have two sons, Matthew, 24 years old and Adam, who is 22. When the boys were 11 and 14, the family moved to England with John's job. Wanting to experience the atmosphere, they went to a pub and sat at a table. But they didn't get waited on. Eventually they found out that you must go up to the bar to order and also know what number table you



are sitting at. That was one British custom they learned with some embarrassment. While in England, she said her neighbors were wonderful and loved to tell her that she had an accent.

Julie considers herself retired now. But it appears that she hasn't slowed down one bit. When her boys were younger, she taught religious education at Immaculate Conception for about 10 years. Then she was involved for about 10 years with RCIA. Now, she continues to be a busy bee, volunteering in many capacities at ICC.

Julie co-leads the ushers and greeters, volunteers in the rectory, helps decorate the church, is on the stewardship and hospitality committees and is secretary of the liturgy committee. Julie is a baker and photographer for events at the church. As a photographer, she takes pictures at church events, such as: Mardi Gras and special liturgies. She will then send some to the Evangelist, or post them on Facebook or the church website.

See Julie Ashcroft, page 7

Julie Ashcroft, continued from page 6

Outside her church activities, Julie likes to cook and hostess. She is a neighbor anyone would love to have. She hosts soup dinners with her neighbors, is the person called on to watch a house when someone is out of town, and makes caramel apples for the neighborhood kids on the 1st day of school. She even gets notes from kids that have graduated and miss the apple treats. She keeps physically active by running or attending exercise classes at the YMCA. In her spare time, she likes scrapbooking, gardening, and decorating. Her mantra is things should be practical and pretty.

Julie and her husband love to travel. They have been all over Europe and to Japan and Hawaii. They have a trip to Iceland planned with their sons in 2019. They will be in St. Thomas in January. This past November, she and her husband visited Louisville, Kentucky, (Churchill Downs, tasted Kentucky bourbon), Graceland, and New Orleans (among other places) with the purpose to see old historic hotels and taste regional food.

Julie has not retired, instead, she has used her energy and positive attitude to serve and spread cheer to her family, friends, neighbors and church community.

Volunteers are love in motion! ~

Author Unknown

Morning of Service, continued from page 4

Thank you to the off-site team leaders, who were our community ambassadors at local agencies: Michelle Boretti, Sue Breslin, Mark DiMartino, Sandy Frisone, Georgiann Holm, Ron Johnson, Kim Klementowski, Nancy Lethbridge, Joyce Maddalone, Debbie and Bob McGuire, Suzi Mongin, Tammie Pantalone, Peter Sheridan, Michael Schwedatschenko, Terry Stroble, Gavin Vuillaume, Paul Welsh and Tom Zaengle.

Jeanne and MaryAnn are enormously grateful to the members of the planning committee who devoted endless hours and effort to organize MOS 2018: Julie Ashcroft, Joan Bunn, Roz DiDinato, Christine Goss, Jason Marion, Kris McKonville, Marge Rizzo, Lynn Winterberger, Audie Van Buren and Maria Yorkshire.

The people of Immaculate Conception Church heard and answered Christ's call to go out and serve with mercy, compassion and humility. Through their selfless acts of kindness, these volunteers brought hope, love, and encouragement. It is difficult to judge how much a fresh coat of paint, clean windows, a raked yard, a hand written card, an unsoiled van, a warm scarf, updated clothes, or common household items can mean to a person or family who are hurting or who are in need. The atmosphere of giving, friendship and comradely among the parishioners was inspired by a spiritual sense, that through their humble, selfless acts of kindness and compassion, **the people of Immaculate Conception made a difference in the world that day.**



Joyce Maddalone Praised by Southern Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Southern Saratoga County recently visited Mother Teresa Academy to celebrate the school's move to a new location and to praise the school's founder Joyce Maddalone. The Academy opened its new location and expansion at 1 Executive Park Drive in Halfmoon. Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh, Halfmoon Deputy Supervisor Paul Hotaling, volunteer Ambassadors, and staff of the Chamber joined in the celebration. Joyce was praised as "one of the best examples of a dedicated community servant and spiritual leader" in southern Saratoga County.

According to the Academy's website, "Mrs. Maddalone followed her vision and listened to God's voice when He told her to go and open a school where children would learn to apply Catholic Christian values to their everyday lives. It was then that Mother Teresa Academy was founded in 2006." Besides being the founder, Joyce now serves as the Academy's Marketing Director.

Congratulations to Joyce, and thank you to Jerry Havasy for passing along this good news.



In this twenty-first 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 27-28:
Distribution of the next issue of the Pipeline

April 15: Submissions due