

State of the Parish
July 2008 – June 2009

One of the things I have tried to do during my years as a Pastoral Administrator is write a State of the Parish Address. It gives us an overview of what has and is happening in the parish as well as looking forward to the future. The theme of this year's address is the same as the one I used for the Catholic Ministries Appeal:

Place your gifts at the service of one another (1 Peter 4:10)

I find this a most appropriate theme as one of the first impressions I had of the people at the Church of the Resurrection was the generous putting forth of your gifts. Father George Heyman and I began our time officially at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, June 24th, and met a segment of the community at Mass on Wednesday morning. We were very warmly greeted by them. That day was also my Fiftieth Anniversary as a Sister of St. Joseph and, later Sr. Ann de Porres from Assumption welcomed me with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. The first days were busy getting settled in, updating computers and trying to find out where things were located as well as how things were done.

That first weekend, Father and I introduced ourselves at the Masses and somehow everything got done but I never knew how they were done that weekend. It was amazing! Everything just seemed to fall into place. See what I mean about people using their gifts! Everyone was most welcoming and offered their services. Nancy had done a wonderful job preparing people for the transition which I felt went smoothly. Of course, people missed and still miss Nancy and Father Bill but I assure you that they are welcome here any time.

Many of the committees met over the summer so that I would have the opportunity to meet those involved and hear of the many wonderful things that were and are going on. The seniors who were graduated had a Mass and brunch on July 13th and then on the 19th, the youth and adults went on mission.

In July we were looking for people to lead the Gala, revive the Welcoming Committee, and lead the Mommy and Me group. Sue Geiger and Laura Michatek came forward for the Welcoming Committee but we never found people to take over the other projects. During July, I met the members of the Social Ministry and Stewardship Committees and was impressed by the amount of outreach that you parishioners do.

At this time we brought the holy oils from the chapel and placed them on the shelf behind the altar near the Paschal Candle. I also began to think about a more significant baptismal font. Up to now, a large plastic bowl was used for baptisms was also located on the altar step. After moving the oils, the statue of Our Lady was then returned to the chapel.

We also changed the number of gifts brought up during the preparation of the gifts. Only the hosts and wine are now brought up – work of our hands and fruit of the vine.

Mission 2008 took place July 20-26 in Monroe, NC. This has been in place now for five years and those involved have traveled twice to New York and once to West

Virginia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. For one week, the group is led by an organization called Reach Workcamps that coordinates the work sites and programming during the week. At the workcamp, the groups are assigned to a variety of jobs – repairing roofs, building ramps for the physically challenged, painting, repairing bathrooms, installing gutters, and whatever else may need to be done. While there, the folks interact with the residents and try to bring “Good News” to them. The evenings are filled with prayer, music, a drama, and small group discussions. It is a learning experience for everyone involved.

On July 21, Michelle Andrews-Smith joined us as Faith Formation Coordinator. Michelle came to us from Our Lady of Mercy Parish and began to dig right in. One of the first matters she dealt with was to be sure all our catechists and other volunteers had gone through the training for “Creating a Safe Environment” that is mandated by the Diocese of Rochester. Michelle also noted that the classroom doors did not have a window to allow people to look in. Bringing this to the attention of Bill Knittle, the Business Manager, he approached Buildings and Grounds Committee. Eventually, George Schweinberger and Bill Geiger put windows in all the classroom doors as well as in the doors of the offices and those leading into the worship space.

Fr. Bob Bellini, a Maryknoll Missioner, came to speak in early August. Later in the month, the parish picnic with a Mass was held in Egypt Park. It was a perfect day for such an event and there was more than enough food for all, thanks to Bridget Palleschi and her committee.

September was the startup of many parish activities. Information evenings for RCIA had been held a couple of times during the summer and another evening was held in the fall. It was also the month that **Susie Scoppa** held workshops for our lectors to update them on a few changes, such as: the Book of the Gospels would now be carried in the entrance procession and not the lectionary. No book would be carried out of church. It was also an opportunity to remind the lectors that they were to be proclaimers of the Word, not just readers. Revised guidelines were put in place.

Our catechists were recognized and commissioned for their catechetical ministry for the year. Our Faith Formation Program saw some changes in the sacramental programs. At one time sacramental preparation consisted of 10 classroom based sessions that were done in the format of weekly Faith Formation classes. This past year, in compliance with Diocesan Guidelines on Sacramental Preparation (www.dor.org), there were three preparation sessions for Eucharist and Penance that included parent and child interaction. The sessions consisted of various activities to facilitate conversations of faith between parent and child. Parents are called to be the primary educators of their children in ways of faith; therefore, a retreat style format helps to open up important conversations in the lives of each family. A book was provided for parents to work with their child on at home to delve more deeply into each sacrament. The series chosen has a wonderful internet piece that assists parents in covering the material.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is slightly different in that Michelle works with the candidates during the first two sessions and their parents and/or sponsors join in for the last session.

September is also the time when the Catholic Ministries Appeal gets underway. Our goal was \$39,189. At the end of the Appeal, we had a second collection to help with our shortfall of \$4100. This collection (\$681) and a pancake breakfast (\$381.20) gave us a total of \$1,062.30. However, some people were unable to complete their pledges and so that added to our shortfall. We actually paid the diocese \$4,636.

In October, we placed our refurbished baptismal font and bowl at the church entrance. The stand came to us from the former St. Patrick's Church in Corning and the bowl was the created work of Jim Kozlowski, known as the Wizard of Clay. The stand and the bowl now serve as our holy water font as we enter the worship space. The stand is on rollers and can be moved near the altar for baptisms.

At the end of October, **World Youth Sunday** was celebrated. Our parish is fortunate to have wonderful volunteer leaders under the able guidance of **Cathy and Greg Reitz**.

On Sunday evenings from 6pm-8pm between September and May, both high school and middle school faith formation sessions are offered. Along with the faith formation curriculum and praise and worship music, youth group events are also offered. Some of the social events offered include the corn maze, haunted hay rides, bowling, laser tag, snow tubing, skiing and snow boarding, game nights, random road trips (surprise activities for the high schoolers that take them off-site on Sunday night), guy/gal events, summer pool party and summer Sunday night camp fires. In addition, there are service opportunities and retreats offered to both middle and high schoolers.

Many of our teens serve in a variety of ministries. Some serve as leaders for Children's Liturgy of the Word; others serve as Communion Ministers or Lectors or Hospitality Ministers; some are song leaders and choir members. It is wonderful to have the youth serve others in these ways!

Fundraising is a huge part of youth ministry and the monies raised support the retreats and mission trip along with other youth ministry activities. The fundraisers this past year included the annual Pasta Dinner and Dessert Raffle, Fruit Sale, Car Wash, Bake Sale and Garage Sale.

On November 2nd, we celebrated our annual **Mass of Remembrance**, calling to mind those in the parish and parishioners' relatives who had died during the past year. Our **Stephen Ministers** were on hand at the reception following the Mass and it is comforting to be with others who have had a loss.

Sunday Dinner Ministry hosted a Brunch to raise funds for its ministry. Sunday Dinner Ministry provides hot, nutritious meals for as many as 100 people on the third Sunday of every month. We offer great thanks to **Bev and Mike Rees** who head and coordinate this endeavor.

As part of our JJJAR Adult Education Series, we hosted **Dr. David Stosur** from St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry who spoke on: ***Catholicism: It's Not***

Your Grandparents' Church – 40 Plus Years after Vatican II. It was a most informative evening.

We continued our updating of ministers and met with the Communion Ministers and shared with them revised Guidelines. Since we were nearing the end of the liturgical year, Father George wrote an article introducing us to the Gospel of Mark and about lectures at St. Bernard's that connect with this Gospel. Beginning in Advent, as a diocese we would be reading Mark's Gospel and the ***Spirit Alive!*** project from the diocese would be highlighting the Gospel with suggested readings and reflection questions.

As part of ***Spirit Alive!*** Father George blessed bibles on the first Sunday of Advent. To help families prepare for Sunday Mass, Liturgy Committee provided each household with a copy of ***At Home with the Word.*** This book contains the Sunday readings as well as suggestions on how to use the book, reflections on the readings and an overview of Mark's Gospel. Copies of the ***Little Blue Book*** for Advent were also given to each household. These were provided by the Stewardship Committee.

Doug Parker from Catholic Family Center spoke at all the Masses on the Second Sunday of Advent to share information about the many ministries of **Catholic Family Center**. Our Advent programs continued, especially our outreach to those individuals and families in need and we extended our outreach to families at LaCasa. Your generosity was outstanding! Families were given the gifts and food they needed as well as generous gift cards to help with other needs.

Our Christmas celebrations were well attended and we kept the tradition of the Midnight Mass. Liturgical Arts did a wonderful job of decorating, not only for Christmas, but also for each liturgical season. **Shelley Jentzen** added to the décor by painting a stained glass window in the narthex for Christmas and again at Easter. The seasonal window decorations are a welcome addition to our church.

Another new addition to our building was new exterior doors for front and back entrances. The new doors were installed to improve security as well as reduce heat loss and thereby saving money.

JJAR Planning Group was getting the new **health ministry** plan underway. This plan is to cooperatively develop parish-based health ministries and to enlist volunteers from each parish to work on subcommittees. We have a couple of parishioners who have volunteered their services for this ministry but as of yet, no one who works in the field of healthcare has come forward. I hope we are able to find someone to assist in this endeavor.

In January, Safe Journey reopened thanks to the efforts of individuals and local congregations.

Search Retreat was held again at Camp Stella Maris for grades 9-12. Father George and I motored down and back through a snow storm and joined Father Bill Graf, the Reitzs, other adults and 50 or so youth for a Saturday evening Mass, confessions, and discussions. This three day retreat has been ongoing for over 35 years. During this three day retreat, students experience prayer, music, testimonials from other teens as well as Cathy and Greg, and there is plenty of fun, food and faith. Usually 50-60 teens participate in this retreat.

An **Open Forum** for the parish was held on February 2, 2009 by the Parish Pastoral Council. Its purpose was to give updated information on the parish as well as to answer parishioners' questions and concerns. Jack Finkle, Chair of the Finance Council, gave an overview of the parish's financial condition. The parish was not doing as well financially as in the past. No one had come forward to chair the Gala so that was a loss of \$10,000; collections were below budget; and interest on parish funds had dropped by over 50%. Staff members had been asked to review their portion of the budget to see if cuts could be taken. Jack emphasized that regular and consistent giving on the part of parishioners would help the situation and encouraged people to sign up for EFT. Had our weekly Mass attendance decreased? No! The average weekly attendance is the same as last year but the contributions are down.

Bill Geiger reported for Buildings and Grounds and spoke of the major parish improvements that had been done: new parking lot lights; trimming and removal of branches and trees where needed; a new storage shed; and the new church doors. All projects were carefully studied and researched before undertaken.

Then I spoke about the liturgical changes that had taken place since I arrived and why they were done. New guidelines have been drawn up for altar servers, lectors and communion ministers and are available in the vestry. Until the new Sacramentary is ready, there will be no other changes in this area but we will work on improving what we are doing.

In February, Jack Finkle stepped down as the chair of the Finance Council and Greg Gribben took over the reins. Jack did an outstanding job as chair for seven years and his expertise moved the Council forward.

To help with the winter blahs, *Crazy Cards* was held on February 7th. It was a fun event and you didn't even have to know how to play cards! (It still looked very confusing to me!)

In March, Bishop Clark asked the Monroe County parishes to take up a special collection to assist low-income children receive a Catholic education by providing scholarships to diocesan Catholic schools. The Wegman Family Charitable Foundation offered up to \$2 million dollars for this purpose if the Diocese could raise \$500,000. Parishioners here contributed \$4,578 to this end and that was remarkable!

Lent was also well underway and there were projects such as Operation Rice Bowl, Perinton Food Shelf, the youth's 30 hour famine, a collection for Catholic Relief Services, and JJJAR adult education programs such as Fr. John Cusick at St. John of Rochester Church speaking on "An Adult Appreciation of the Passion and Death of Jesus." At the end of March, Fr. Heyman gave us an overview of the bible as well as the Gospel of Mark - right here at Resurrection.

JJJAR's Health Ministry plan was beginning to take shape and the five parishes were asked to find coordinators for this project in each parish. We had a couple of people step forward as volunteers but no one from the health field.

Bill Knittle, Business Manager, informed the parish that collections are down and, since we didn't hold a Gala this year, we lost another \$10,000 in income. We were still \$4500 shy of our CMA goal. He encouraged parishioners to use EFT to provide consistent, regular giving; to pay for the *Catholic Courier*; to volunteer to help with fundraising. The Parish Pastoral Council had met earlier to brainstorm ideas for

increasing revenue and those suggestions would be given to Finance Council and Stewardship Committee.

Holy Week was soon upon us and thanks to **Brian Waldmiller**, our Music Director, the Liturgy Committee and Liturgical Arts, we had solemn and well planned liturgies that week. At the Easter Vigil, we welcomed **Christina Iannuzzi** and **Charlie Roberts** into the faith community.

In April, the process for finding nominees for the Parish Pastoral Council began. In the mean time, Father George and I headed off to Ithaca to join with the other priests and other pastoral administrators of the diocese for the annual Bishop's Convocation. This is an opportunity for us to meet with our bishop as well as hear presenters on pertinent topics. This year, the speakers were scripture scholars Sr. Dianne Bergant and Fr. John Donahue who explored the texts that will be proclaimed in the weeks ahead. It was a very enlightening three days.

Youth Ministry ended at the end of April and Faith Formation classes concluded the first week of May. Many thanks go to our volunteer leaders and catechists for sharing their faith with our young people.

On May 2nd, the diocesan annual **Stewardship Day** was held at the Church of the Assumption. At the Saturday afternoon liturgy, we re-commissioned our Stephen Ministers. Stephen Ministry has been active here since 1983! **Diane Gribben** has been the leader for this group and has done an outstanding job!

The parish was also busy sending items to the rectory garage for the youth garage sale on May 16 and 17. Despite some rain showers, the sale was a huge success and the youth earned \$1600 for their mission trip. Thanks go to all who donated items and/or worked at the sale as well as those who made purchases.

Plans were also underway in May for "God's Light Youth Choir" from Smyrna, Georgia to stop at Resurrection on its way to Niagara Falls. This ecumenical choir tours parts of the United States every June offering its gift of music to churches and groups along the way. Over 100 youth and adults would need to be housed and fed during their overnight here. Everything worked out beautifully and on June 8th, the choir arrived, was fed through the generosity of parishioners, and the members were taken to homes after the concert. It was an awesome experience for all!

The last weekend of May we had a Pancake Breakfast to help raise funds for parish needs. That same weekend, we took up a second collection to help bridge the gap between our CMA pledges and goals. The generosity of the people and the proceeds from the breakfast reduced our deficit by about \$1,000. About \$3,600 will be taken from our funds to meet our goal.

Pentecost was also that last weekend of May and the time when we usually select the new members of the Parish Pastoral Council. Only three names were received and so these people automatically became the new members: **Joe Marino, Debra Orosz, and Bob Dulan**. The new youth rep is **Max Lazary**.

As well, we thank those who have completed their terms on the Council: **Chuck Armbruster, Barbara Green, Keri Martin, and Bridget Palleschi**. We are grateful for the time, energy and service they have given to the parish.

On Saturday, June 6th, I celebrated a special birthday and a party was held after the 5:00 Mass. I was very surprised by the number of people who came as Canal Days were being held in Fairport and the Belmont Stakes was run that Saturday. I am most grateful to the staff and all who brought food and who came to the party for such a wonderful celebration. The Sisters with whom I live in the Shalom Community at the Motherhouse also came and for most, it was their first visit to Resurrection. They felt very welcomed and at home during Mass and the party.

We honored our parish high school graduates at Mass and a brunch on June 14th. A highlight is the DVD that Cathy and Greg Reitz produce that has pictures of the teens through the years. Each one received a copy. Cathy and Greg do wonderful projects with and for our youth and their dedication to our young people is outstanding!

There are so many opportunities for involvement in the life of the parish here at Resurrection and everything that we do here is **STEWARDSHIP!** Stewardship is the sharing of time, talent and treasure. Some of our many ministries are: Martha Ministry (provides a luncheon for family and friends following a funeral), Stephen Ministry, Prayer Ministry, Liturgical Ministries, Sunday Dinner Ministry, Baptismal Team, Caring and Sharing, Tithing, Dimitri House, Prison Ministry, Clothing Ministry, Shawl Ministry, and Social Ministry, just to name a few of the ministries. Our parish Ministry Booklet found in the narthex has a comprehensive list of all the ministries and the contact person for each one. The more one is involved in the life of the parish, the more one feels ownership and a part of the community.

As we look forward, we have some exciting initiatives that will be getting underway. Resurrection will be the first parish in the entire diocese to offer a complete faith formation program aimed at children with Autism, Asperger's, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, etc. This program will be a team approach with parents, catechists, and volunteers. We are excited to begin this endeavor and informational meetings were held during the month of June. ***Come to Me*** is open to all those in need throughout our diocese.

The Stewardship Committee is very excited by its **Matthew's Talents** initiative. This is similar to a program done in Father Murphy's time called **Mission Possible**. Over the summer, you have been hearing about this endeavor that combines time, talent and treasure. As a result of this project, a Development Committee has been established that will continue throughout the year.

Father George and his presentation on Mark's Gospel was so well received that we are scheduling Father for two sessions this fall. The dates for Father's talks are Tuesday, September 29th, and Monday, December 7th.

Our JJJAR Planning Group is going to seriously study our five parishes and what can be done in light of the priest shortage. Up to this point, the services of our retired priests have played an important role in assisting the parishes but that number of active retired priests is declining. What happens if one of our active priests becomes ill and is off the job, so to speak, for a period of time? How can we rethink our Mass schedules? How can we help one another out? There is much to be discussed and planned for in the future. Besides me, our parish reps to JJJAR are **Bill Geiger, Julie Treis, and Bill Dreitlin**. Look in the bulletin for the JJJAR logo with future updates.

Our financial year ended June 30th and soon you will have a financial report in the bulletin. Anything we can do to help you see how your money is being spent is important to us. Please drop an e-mail or a note in the collection basket to Bill Knittle with your suggestions and/or questions.

Before I end this Address, let me share with you what I see are some of the weaknesses of the parish:

- There are a few chronic complainers who need to re-channel their energies. Many spend time complaining but never offer solutions or speak directly to those with whom they have a “bone to pick.”
- “We’ve always done it this way” is detrimental to the growth of a parish, to committees. People need to be open to new ideas, new ways of doing business.
- Our volunteer base is decreasing. We need **you** to become involved and take ownership of the parish.
- Along with your time and talent, we need everyone to contribute generously to the parish. Some still give a dollar and that is fine if it is the “widow’s mite.” For others, that amount could be increased.

Yes, there are many strengths to be found here at Resurrection:

- You know that you are the Church and you exemplify that!
- There are many gifted people who already share their time and talents generously.
- The warmth and hospitality found here are attracting new parishioners.
- Many things are done without notice or acclamation, e.g. the wooden tub filled with flowers at the driveway entrance, altar linens laundered, kitchen tablecloths and towels washed, plants watered, and so many other things that get done without special attention
- Our various committees are strong and very active. They contribute to the life of the parish. New blood is always needed to carry on the parish mission and vision.
- The Staff here is very committed to you. The staff is comprised of professional, competent people who share their time and talents generously. Support them!
- Youth Ministry here is among the strongest in the diocese and their outreach is wonderful! Continue to support our youth leaders and young people.
- Your concern for the poor and the needy is outstanding! Every time you are approached by any group, you respond with great generosity. Keep up the good work!
- Our parish tithing of 4% every quarter also helps those in need. The Tithing Committee, under the leadership of Gloria Treis, distributed \$12,477.20 this past fiscal year to a number of charities and worthy causes.
- We are fortunate to have a wonderful Music Ministry here. Brian Waldmiller, our cantors, and choir are outstanding.
- Our Stephen Ministers, under the very able direction of Diane Gribben, offer one-to-one ministry to parishioners. They are a vital part of our parish life.
- Now --- add some of the strengths you find here at Resurrection ---

As you can see, there is much that has gone on in the parish this past year and much to look forward to during the coming year. It has been my privilege to serve with you this past year. Together, may we continue to grow in God's love and in the love, care and concern for one another and in our parish's outreach to the neighbor.

Place your gifts at the service of one another (1 Peter 4:10).