



“This is a very special ministry that generates great benefits and blessings not only to those who receive the Eucharist, but also to those who deliver communion.”

A VERY PERSONAL MINISTRY EUCCHARISTIC MINISTRY TO THE HOMEBOUND

If you were ill or disabled and couldn't attend Mass or receive the Eucharist, would you miss that weekly communion with the Lord? Recently several parishioners shared their personal experiences in St. Hilary's Eucharistic Ministry to the Homebound. Pastoral Minister Sister Marlene LoGrasso, OSU, explains the ministry she oversees: "Our mission is to take the Eucharist to parishioners who are not able to come to Mass on Saturday or Sunday."

"This is a very special ministry that generates great benefits and blessings, not only to those who receive the Eucharist but also to those who deliver communion," Sister continues. "Parishioners may be surprised to know the size and scope of this parish ministry. Approximately 70 parishioners (Eucharistic Ministers) take the host to parishioners every week. They serve approximately 170 people who reside at home or in short-term or long-term care facilities, including assisted living and independent living facilities or nursing/rehabilitation facilities."

loss for me. So now that I am homebound, the Eucharistic Ministry is an extremely important part of my life."

A great pairing

Larry continues: "This ministry keeps me connected to St. Hilary through Denis Ross, who comes to visit me Sunday afternoons. I look forward to his visits. He is so kind in sharing his time with me. I enjoy talking about my family and hearing news of his family, projects, and travels."

Barbaranne, who is Larry's caregiver, comments: "Denis's Sunday visits are a bright light in the week. Sister Marlene did a brilliant job of pairing Dad and Denis. They have developed a close relationship, and they both appear to enjoy their time talking together. Denis is sensitive to my father's fluctuating stamina and knows how long to visit. For Dad, it's a visit with a good friend, with the special blessing of shared religion and, of course, communion."

Mutual blessings

Longtime parishioner Laurence Gervais is an enthusiastic recipient of this ministry. Larry lives in his own home in the company of his daughter Barbaranne Mitchell and her husband, Steve. When asked about the benefits of receiving communion in his home, Larry declared: "This ministry is absolutely a blessing to me, and it provides a superb, continuing connection to the Parish community and the Church. I am no longer able to attend Church, which was a very important part of my weekly activities. Not being able to go to Mass regularly was a big

Brothers in Christ

"To me, Dad and Denis are true brothers in Christ," continues Barbaranne. "Denis shifts wonderfully from a social visit to the giving of the Eucharist, which is done in great reverence. The service is very moving as Denis reads the Gospel and says the Eucharistic prayers before giving Dad communion. This ministry has been a blessing to both Dad and me."

Denis Ross has been a Eucharistic Minister to the Homebound for over 15 years, serving a series of parishioners. "I'm not sure everybody in our parish knows about this ministry, but I

INDEX

Eucharistic Ministry to the Homebound	1 & 6
From sorrow to joy – Journeying through Holy Week	2 & 3
Welcome this year's RCIA members	4 & 5
How to share your Easter joy	7

From sorrow to joy

Journeying through Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 17 • Holy Thursday, April 21 • Good Friday, April 22 • Holy Saturday, April 23 • Easter Sunday, April 24



Parishioner Rob Sharkey—who holds a Master’s Degree in Ministry and is currently working toward certification as a Pastoral Minister—shares his understanding of the significance of Holy Week. Rob reflects on our spiritual journey through Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. “I think Holy Week is probably the most important week in the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church,” Rob observes. “If Jesus had not suffered for our sake and risen from the dead, we would not have salvation and the forgiveness of our sins. We would still be exiled from God.”

In this article, Rob shares his reflections on Jesus’ powerful journey through Holy Week—and thus our own, if we choose to journey with Him. In Rob’s own words...



Palm Sunday

“Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, when we hear the Gospel narrative of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Crowds lined the streets, waving palm branches and shouting ‘Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.’ (Matthew 21: 9).

We receive blessed palms at Mass to remind us of Jesus’ triumph. When I receive the palm branches, I feel that I enter spiritually into the crowd that day as they cheered Jesus. As I reflect on this, I think about how wonderful it was that so many people greeted their Lord God and friend with shouts of welcome and praise.

On the other hand, where were these loyal followers five days later as Jesus was being led to the cross? Could they have feared for their lives and for their reputations as followers of Jesus? Would I have had the strength to put my reputation on the line? Also during the Palm Sunday Mass, we read the passion account of Jesus’ agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, His arrest and trial, His scourging and crucifixion.

Holy Thursday

“The Triduum, the three-day observance at the end of Holy Week, begins on Holy Thursday. On this day, the Church commemorates the Passover meal—the Last Supper that Jesus

shared with his disciples before enduring his unspeakable torture and trial in front of Jewish and Roman authorities. At the Passover meal, Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Gospel reading at the Holy Thursday liturgy is from John 13, which gives an account of how Jesus washed his disciple’s feet during the Last Supper. Jesus did this in order to teach his disciples and all of us the importance of serving each other. In Verse eight, Peter tells Jesus, ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Peter reacts this way because, in ancient Jewish culture, it was customary for servants to do so after the master returned from a long journey.

Good Friday

“We continue the journey with Jesus to Good Friday, when we follow the Stations of the Cross for the final time during the season, followed by the Good Friday service. During this service we hear the story of Jesus’ passion and death, again from the Gospel of John. This celebration is meaningful to me because Good Friday is reported to be the actual day of the week on which Jesus was crucified. For me, the cross is a paradox: on the one hand it is a cruel instrument of torture. On the other hand, it is a symbol of our salvation. This reminds me of Jesus’ words in the Bible: ‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ (John 15:13).

“As I meditate on the passion of Jesus, I am amazed by the different feelings that arise in me. It seems incomprehensible how Jesus, an innocent man, suffered such agony for our sake. Paul reinforces this idea of Jesus taking on our sins in 2 Corinthians 5:21, when he writes: ‘For our sake He made Him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.’ This is why it is so significant that out of sadness of His agony can come such joy. Through the suffering of Christ, God offers us the forgiveness of our sin, which leads to our salvation and the ultimate prize, the gift of eternal life.”

Who killed Jesus?

Rob observes: “At an earlier point in my faith journey, I tended to externalize the responsibility for Jesus’ death, focusing on the actions of historical figures such as the Jews, Pharisees and Roman officials. However, as my understanding evolved, I recognized that all of humanity bore responsibility. As my faith journey progressed further, I began to realize that I was just as responsible as the rest of

humanity for the death of Jesus because of my sinfulness. This realization was painful, and thus Good Friday became an especially poignant reminder of my sorrow for the suffering that the Lord endured for me. However, because I was willing to feel my sorrow more deeply, the joy of Easter took on a greater intensity for me.

Holy Saturday

“I look forward to Holy Saturday, the end of Holy Week, when the church celebrates the Easter Vigil liturgy. During the liturgy of the Word, we receive a summary of our faith history: it begins with the Genesis narrative, which recounts the creation of the world, and culminates with the apostles going to the tomb and finding it empty. The joy of the resurrection is remembered, and our lives are renewed. Salvation is ours because of the gift of our loving savior, Jesus Christ.”

Easter

He is risen! Alleluia!



“If Jesus had not suffered for our sake and risen from the dead, we would not have salvation and the forgiveness of our sins. We would still be exiled from God.”

- Rob Sharkey

He is risen! Alleluia!

After attending catechetical sessions together every Wednesday night since September, nine adult members of this year's RCIA group (Rite of Christian Initiation) will be received into the Catholic Church on Holy Saturday, April 23, at the Easter Vigil Mass. All nine will receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation. In addition, four members of the RCIA group, called Catechumens, will be baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass; five members, known as Candidates, were baptized previously in another faith.

Welcome this year's RCIA members

Celebrate with them at the Easter Vigil Mass!

This year's RCIA members generously share the reasons why they chose to enter the Catholic Church, as well as giving us insights into their experience of the RCIA program.

LAURA



Laura Hearty

After I was married and started a family, my thoughts were that I was going to be an outsider in my own family. I grew up with a strong Christian foundation, and changing your thoughts happens over time. Now is my time. My last child will be celebrating his First Holy Communion this spring, and with the upcoming Easter Vigil, my family will now be one faith. Then we all can celebrate the Holy Eucharist together as a family.

RCIA had been a scary thought for me in the past. Would I be able to keep my commitment to this? Yes, absolutely I have! All of the team members and sponsors have been so helpful and supportive. Each of them has shared themselves and their faith with us every week, along with some laughs and tears. In my entire life I have never met such a devoted group of people. I get more excited every day about reaching my desire to become part of such a wonderful faith community. I also thank Pat Schnee for encouraging me from the beginning, and I am thankful that Pat will be there for all of us this Easter.

SANDI



Sandi Dangel

I was baptized and raised in a Presbyterian faith but did not go to church or practice the faith for years. After meeting my husband, I started to attend Mass with him at St. Mary's in Akron and have continued to attend with him for 23 years. I knew in my heart that I needed to go to church but wasn't sure if I wanted to become a Catholic. It just felt right being there at Mass with him, but I didn't feel like I was a part of the Church, since I couldn't participate.

After a brief meeting with Father Steve, I knew that now was the time for me to become part of my husband's faith. I can't explain why, but, while talking to Father Steve, I just knew I wanted to become a member of the Catholic family and also St. Hilary Church. I am looking forward to my journey as a Catholic at Easter.

RCIA is a wonderful way to learn about the Catholic religion. Pat Schnee; my sponsor, Barbara Lopane; and all of the team members bring each week a different subject to discuss on the Catholic religion. Without being a part of RCIA, I would not have met some of the nicest members of the Catholic family.

MONICA



Monica Conley

Growing up in my faith and religious practice was always very personal. It was when I met my fiancée, who is Catholic, that I had found someone to share my beliefs with. Upon discussing our future, we both knew we wanted to build a strong foundation for our future family in the Catholic Church.

The most rewarding aspect of the RCIA program for me is having the Catholic Church "family" to support me throughout my faith journey. I know I can come to RCIA class with any questions or concerns. Without any judgment or hesitation, someone there is always willing to listen and help me understand God's loving ways. As a Catechumen, Monica will be baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass.

MICHAEL



Michael McCall

My friend Patrick inspired me to look into joining the Catholic Church.

RCIA has changed my life. I have felt so welcomed in the group. I have felt so uplifted and very positive. I want to thank everyone who has made this possible for me. The most rewarding part of the RCIA program for me has been the concept that receiving communion brings union with Christ, or becoming one with Him. As a Catechumen, Michael will be baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass.

RACHEL



Rachel Hazelett

I was led to explore entry into the Catholic Church because I wanted to be able to teach my daughter about God and also to form a relationship with God myself.

I love all of the people who have welcomed me into the Church and have been with me through this journey. I now feel like I will always have a family here. As a Catechumen, Rachel will be baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass.

Three of the ten children of Henry Drechsler and Jennifer Bessemer-Marando will be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday.

HALEY



GINGER



BRICK



KIM



Kim Savula

I decided to explore entry into the Catholic Church because my husband and son are both Catholic. My son is in the second grade at St. Hilary School and is now going through his preparation to receive his First Holy Communion.

Everyone in RCIA has made me feel really welcomed into the Catholic community.

YING LIU



Ying Liu

I decided to join the RCIA program because my husband is a Catholic.

Before I started learning about Catholicism, I thought the rules set by the Church were very strict, or in other words required a very stringent environment. But actually, Catholicism talks a lot about forgiveness. As a Catechumen, Ying will be baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass.

Haley Dreschler is 14 and a student in grade 8 at Copley Middle School.

Ginger Bessemer is 11 and a student in grade 4 at Fort Island Elementary School in Copley.

Brick Bessemer is 9 and a student in grade 3 at Fort Island Elementary School.

When asked what led the children to attend the RCIA program for children, their mother, Jennifer Bessemer-Marando, replied: "I am Catholic, and as a family I wanted all the children to be of the same faith. All three of the children are very positive about their RCIA experience and are always excited to go to the class. They do their homework with no complaints and have enjoyed the process."

Jennifer observes: "What they are learning in RCIA is definitely becoming a part of their lives, because they often discuss it at home and compare what they've learned in class to what's happening in the family."

MATTHEW



Matthew Salmon

My family inspired me to join RCIA. It is important to me that we are able to celebrate our faith together as a family.

The RCIA program has been an amazing experience. As a result, my faith life feels very enriched!

PAUL



Paul Preston

My wife is a "cradle Catholic." I've always noticed with awe the sense of peace that Catholicism inspires in her. I wanted the same for myself.

“...when I tell them that I am there to offer communion, there is a noticeable change in their demeanor.”

—Jean Biggens



Laurence Gervais



Denis Ross

think it is really an important one, for both the giver and the receiver. This ministry really is about building a relationship, which develops over time. It's very personal. Larry is a great guy, and I look forward to my visits with him.”

When asked about the biggest impact this ministry has made on his life as a Eucharistic Minister, Denis replied: “I think it's helped me realize how precious life is, and how important are the relationships and friendships we establish in our lives—not only with family, but also with friends.”

Advice to future Eucharistic Ministers

Asked about his advice for someone considering this ministry, Denis observed; “I think the most important thing is that you really have to want to do this. It is a real commitment. And you have to be patient, considerate, flexible, a good listener, and willing to share about yourself and your own life. I also think it's important to make a real distinction between visiting and the giving of the Eucharist. You have to shift gears. I estimate that I spend between 30-60 minutes at each visit, depending on circumstances. It's a very special experience.”

A Godsend to Diana

Parishioner Diana Wiant lives at home with her husband, Harold. Currently she is not able to come to church and so receives the Eucharist every Thursday morning from parishioner and Eucharistic Minister Nick Dannemiller. Diana spoke about her experience of having the Eucharist brought to her home by a fellow parishioner:

“It is very comforting to me to receive communion. I was without the Eucharist for a time, and that was difficult for me. Mr. Dannemiller has been such a Godsend to

me, and he really does a wonderful job. I look forward to our visits. He asks about how I'm feeling and is interested in my health. We also talk about spiritual things, which I really enjoy. And he even helped me get on the computer and taught me how to look things up. We've gotten along very well, and we keep in touch by phone. Mr. Dannemiller also helps people at Hospice. I really recommend this ministry to others who may need it.”

At Windsong Care Center

Parishioner Jeannie Biggins has served as a Eucharistic Minister to Catholic patients in residence at Windsong Care Center for a number of years. Parishioner and Eucharistic Minister Suzanne Scarpitti helps her there each week. Recently Jeannie spoke about her experiences at Windsong: “It really strengthens my faith when I approach very ill patients who don't seem to be alert to their surroundings, because when I tell them I am there to offer communion, there is a noticeable change in their demeanor. They respond, accept the host and show real gratitude that someone has stopped to pray with them. It is encouraging to me, because so many of them do not have many visitors and express their sadness that they are not at home. Their gratitude makes Jesus so much more alive to me, when I see their changes.

“Some want to chat and have someone spend time with them. I have gotten close to some who really want to share. When they die, it strengthens me to know that their walk with Jesus took them home. I have actually kept in touch with the daughter of one of the former patients. She visited with her mother every day, and I feel certain she is lost without her mom.”

Jeannie reports that she and Suzanne serve the Eucharist to groups as small as seven

and to gatherings as large as 20 patients or guests, depending on how many Catholics are in residence there. They conduct a communion service once a month, reading the Gospel for the coming Sunday and a Gospel reflection, followed by communion for those who can attend. She and Suzanne spend about ninety minutes each month at Windsong. “For those who cannot attend our monthly service, we go room to room. There we chat and pray with those who respond to us. We also are privileged to be there with patients when the priests come to give them the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. When we tell them the priests are coming and they will be anointed, they become so happy. There is a whole different kind of energy when that happens.

“Many times, those who are very ill will seem unresponsive when we enter the room. But when we tell them we are there to pray with them and begin to pray aloud, we can see that they are praying along with us. I am always encouraged by that evidence of their faith.”

If you feel called

Sr. Marlene observes: “As you can see, there are options within the Eucharistic Ministry to the Homebound—visiting a person who lives in their home or visiting residents at an assisted living or independent living residence or nursing home. If anyone feels a special call to be a Eucharistic Minister to the Homebound or if you know of someone who would benefit from receiving the Eucharist through this ministry, you may contact me at the parish office at 330 867-1055, ext. 206, or marlene@sthilarychurch.org.”

On a personal note, the parish offers heartfelt condolences to Sr. Marlene, whose sister, Loretta Kling, who was a resident at Pine Valley Care Center, passed away on March 1st.

How to share your Easter joy!

Ideas for kids and parents

A family play—the rolled back stone

Before you eat your Easter dinner, why not act out a short and easy play about the followers of Jesus who found that his tomb was empty when they rolled back the stone! They were very surprised when an angel messenger announced, 'Jesus is not here. He has risen from the dead.' Then they see Jesus on the road! Look up the following stories from the Bible and decide which version you would like to act out— *Mark 16: 1-6; Matthew 28:1-11; Luke 24:1-8; or John 20:1-13.*

All you need is a few sheets for costumes, a pretend rock, a few lines to tell the story, and a few people to act it out. Have fun, and show how amazed and joyful you feel when you discover the miracle that Jesus is alive again!

Draw the cross on foreheads and say this...

Invite all the family and guests at your Easter dinner table to mark each other's foreheads with the sign of the cross and say "Christ is risen! Alleluia!" Say it with the joy we feel to know that Jesus has risen and has saved us all.

All say a prayer of joy

Invite each guest at the Easter dinner table to say a prayer of joy by thanking Jesus for the blessings they are most grateful for. At the end of all the prayers, ask your guests to say together three times: "Christ is risen! Alleluia!"

Pictures of Jesus on the table

Make place cards for your Easter dinner table and decorate them with small, happy pictures of Jesus that you find on the internet. This will remind everyone of why you have gathered together to celebrate Easter.

Decorate your house with pictures

Draw happy pictures of your friend Jesus to remind everyone of how beautiful He is and how much He loves us all.

Before you color your eggs

Before you color your Easter eggs, use a wax crayon to draw a picture of the cross or of Jesus. This drawing will be visible after the egg is colored.



HAVE YOUR EASTER FOOD BLESSED!

Put the main ingredients for your Easter dinner in an Easter basket and take it to church on Holy Saturday at 2:00 pm to have the food blessed by Father Steve.

Some families take the following foods, which are symbolic of Easter:

EGGS- represent the glory of the Resurrection.

BUTTER- represents that Jesus was an Innocent Victim.

BREAD- represents the basic food of life. It reminds us that God sent manna (bread) from heaven to feed the hungry Israelites when they wandered in the desert. It also reminds us of the parable of the five loaves and two fishes, which Jesus miraculously multiplied to feed thousands of people who had gathered to hear him speak.

SALT- represents the truth of God's word.

VINEGAR, HORSERADISH OR SOUR CREAM- remind us of the bitter gall that the soldiers gave to Jesus on the cross, when he cried out, "I thirst!"

MEAT (ham, veal, sausage or lamb), represents survival.

CHEESE- reminds us of the old custom of fasting from dairy products on some days in Lent.

Have fun making up other foods to put in your Easter Basket and tell what that food could remind us of. (Perhaps something sweet could remind us of how good God is to us and how sweet His love is.)

April 2011



St. Hilary Catholic Parish
2750 West Market Street
Fairlawn, OH 44333-4236

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID
AKRON, OH
PERMIT NO.373



INSIDE:

Eucharistic Ministry to the Homebound

From sorrow to joy –
Journeying through Holy Week

Welcome this year's RCIA members

How to share your Easter joy

This Newsletter is brought to you
by the Stewardship Committee at
St HILARY PARISH CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
2750 West Market Street
Fairlawn, OH 44333-4236
Phone: 330-867-1055
Fax: 330-869-2312
eMail: church@sthilarychurch.org
Web: www.sthilarychurch.org

Have feedback on this newsletter?
Contact Lyn Schott at 330-867-1055

Karen Moran, Writer
karenmoranwriting@gmail.com

©2011 St. Hilary Parish All rights reserved.

CALENDAR FOR HOLY WEEK

Evening of Sacred Music
Sunday, April 17
7:30 pm

Mass of the Lord's Supper
Holy Thursday, April 21
7:30 pm

Outdoor Stations of the Cross
Good Friday, April 22
12:00 pm

Indoor Stations of the Cross
Good Friday, April 22
2:00 pm

Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Good Friday, April 22
3:00 pm & 8:00 p.m.

Youth Living Stations
Good Friday, April 22
8:00 pm

Blessing of Food
Holy Saturday, April 23
2:00 pm

Solemn Easter Vigil
Holy Saturday, April 23
9:00 pm

Easter Sunday Masses
April 24
7:30 am
9:00 am
10:45 am
12:15 pm

CORRECTION: In last month's newsletter (March edition, page 3), an error was made in the email of Carol Malick in the article about the young woman who was inspired to walk away from the abortion clinic when she was approached by a member of the Respect Life Committee. If you would like to respond to Carol, who is co-chair of the St. Hilary Respect Life Committee, to help Courtney, contact Carol at carol@malickphoto.com.