



Volume 7, Edition 1, April 2016

Our Mission: To inform and educate through our lived faith at St. Anne

**PARISH CONNECTION**

**A Letter from the Pastor**



Justin Vlass & Fr. Foley

Spring at last, spring at last, thank God it's spring at last (until it snowed again)!

With spring comes Easter, First Communion, Confirmations, weddings, graduations along with the not-so-liturgical and formal golf, sailing and walks. It really is a time for renewal of body (some of us not so renewable!), mind and spirit. Often, we are so busy doing things and going places that we fail to stop and smell the roses, so to speak.

Life is not always sweet, but it is always a gift from God to be celebrated and shared. I have noticed so many times, when attending wakes and funerals, the things that are remembered and remain with us are the things that brought us joy – the times spent with each other, the celebration of family and friends.

Let us savor these gifts of God, enjoy the budding spring flowers, the greening of the trees, and the freshness of the air.

Indeed, God is good.

*Fr. John Foley, Pastor*

**St. Anne's Church**  
130 Boston Turnpike  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**VITAL 3.0**

The Diocese of Worcester has partnered with Frank Mercadante and his Cultivation Ministries to assist parishes in implementing Vital 3.0, which helps cultivate a parish and youth ministry that is focused on growing teen disciples. St. Anne's has a team that has been participating in the development of this much-needed service.

We are in the process of assessing our needs and growing our team. We are looking for faith-filled mentors to integrate our youth into the life of the whole parish. We want teens who are willing to share their ideas and needs. The unique focus of Vital 3.0 is that it is parish-based and multi-generational. That means that we need everyone to effectively develop life-long disciples.

Our inaugural team members are Deacon Bill Bilow, Arsenio Vargas, Margot Flionis, Ellie Smith, and Tracy Flynn (chairperson). We have invited another group of parishioners to join our mission. Now we want to reach out to our parish community to let you know that we need everyone's help in making Vital 3.0 a success. We are blessed to have a parish full of faith-filled people. Please consider what you could bring to the Vital table.

*Peace and blessings,  
Tracy Flynn and the Vital Team*

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# YEAR OF MERCY IN ACTION: THE CHURCH'S SPECIAL HOLY DOOR TRADITION

In the city of Rome at St. Peter's Basilica, there is a huge bronze door that is usually sealed shut. It is only opened at the beginning of a Holy Year of Jubilee, in a very moving ceremony by the Pope. This year has been designated a Jubilee Year of Mercy by Pope Francis and so he has unsealed and opened that door, which will remain open for this coming year. Through it will pass thousands of people who wish to enter deeply into the Year of Mercy and signal to the world that they are passing through to a higher state of holiness and are ready to share mercy with others in their lives. This tradition began way back in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII, and there is a jubilee year every 25 years.

This year, however, is special in many ways. Pope Francis has designated that every diocese in the world will have a "holy door" at the Cathedrals and in several other diocesan churches. He has done this in order for everyone to have the opportunity to pass through in his or her encounter with the Lord's mercy and to recognize their challenge to bring that mercy to others.

It was Jesus Himself who said that *"I am the door, and no one comes to the Father except through Me."* And Psalm 118 says, *"This is the door of the Lord where the just may enter."* It is with great courage that a person freely decides to cross that threshold, leaving behind the kingdom of this world so as to enter the new life of grace.

During the past long days of Lent and throughout the Easter season and this Jubilee Year of Mercy, it is our hope and

that of the Pope that we will symbolically pass through one of the "holy doors" available at the Cathedral in Worcester or at one of the other designated churches of the Diocese and at some point receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I pray that this past Lenten season and this Jubilee Year of Mercy brings us all closer to Jesus as we open our hearts to Him and cross the threshold of hope, striving for holiness.

*Fr. Paul O'Connell*

## **HOLY DOOR PILGRIMAGE SITES**

- Cathedral of St. Paul, 38 High St., Worcester, 508-799-4193
- Our Lady of the Holy Rosary at Annunciation, 135 Nichols St., Gardner, 978-632-0253
- Our Lady of the Rosary at Mary, Queen of the Rosary, 7 Church St., Spencer, 508-885-3111
- Notre Dame at St. John Paul II, 446 Main St., Southbridge, 508-765-3701
- Sacred Heart of Jesus, 7 East Main St., Milford, 508-634-5435
- St. Joseph, 49 Woodland St., Fitchburg, 978-345-7997
- St. Joseph Basilica, 53 Whitcomb St., Webster, 508-943-0467
- St. Luke the Evangelist, 70 West Main St., Westborough, 508-366-5502



## **WELCOMING NEW FRIENDS INTO ST. ANNE'S CHURCH: RCIA 2016**

How blessed we are as a parish and as a Catholic community! On Sunday, February 14, a total of 251 men and women were presented to Bishop McManus at St. Paul's Cathedral for the Rite of Election as catechumens and candidates in preparation for their reception into the Catholic Church at the March 26 Easter Vigil through Baptism, Confirmation, and First Holy Eucharist.

From St. Anne's alone, we had four adults in attendance at the Rite of Election. In addition to these four, Bishop McManus confirmed seven adult members from our parish on February 7. What an amazing, moving sight it was to witness



Left to right: Stacy and Vanessa (St. Mary), Ricardo, Crystal and Anna (St. Anne), Nick Morana (RCIA team), Jonathan and Anthony (St. Mary), Kelly (St. Anne)

this many adults preparing for or receiving the sacraments. We are blessed, indeed!

This year, we took a different approach than we had in the past with the formation of our catechumens and candidates. We joined our sister church in town, St. Mary's, to assist a combined total of eight men and women through the RCIA process and another eight adult Catholics being confirmed. Coming together with each other has reinforced that we are a universal church, uniting our local parish communities into the larger body of faith, while also allowing us to share our local talents.

Let us be mindful of the gifts that God has graced us with and pray that our witness in faith will continue to help our local and universal Church to grow. May God bless all this Easter season!

*RCIA Team: Fr. John Foley, Nick Morana, Deacon Peter, Deacon Bill, Msgr. Michael Rose*



***OUR MERCY IN ACTION  
AT ST. ANNE***

**OUR GOAL THIS YEAR IS  
\$91,900.00. PLEASE HELP US IN  
BRINGING CHRIST'S MERCY TO  
OTHERS**

### **ALL ARE WELCOME AT ST. ANNE'S CHURCH!**

No matter what your present status in the Catholic Church, no matter what your current family and marital situation, no matter what your personal history, age, background, race, no matter what your own self image: you are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved and respected here. Please join us at Mass – you'll be happy you did.

## Reflections on St. Anne's Human Services

**D**uring the past holiday seasons of outreach and support, we wanted to say “thank you” to all of our parishioners, clergy, volunteers, donors, the Shrewsbury Police Department and other local organizations for their help and support, not only at the holidays, but throughout the year. Our outreach grows each year, often in different directions. At Christmastime, we completed our annual town-wide Giving Tree program, supporting over 170 children with gifts. Each child received a large bag of toys and clothing. We also had a family adoption program, where a complete family is “adopted” by a generous supporter along with St. Anne’s Church to help this needy family have a happier Christmas.



**H**uman Services also held a very successful Christmas turkey and fixings give-away to over 75 food pantry clients. This event was possible with the cooperation of a very generous local trucking company! Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Food Pantry gave out countless turkeys and holiday food bags. As part of our regular food distribution, we also distributed toiletries, warm coats, pajamas, hats and gloves. Throughout the year, food pantry

volunteers continued to coordinate daily donations of fresh food and bread from local grocery stores and bakeries. At year-end, the Food Pantry had 584 registered households (representing 1,566 individuals).

**W**e are always prepared to give out emergency food to the needy who are not yet signed up with the Food Pantry.

**2**015 was also the year for new babies! Many babies were born in 2015 and early 2016. Our director, Elaine LeBlanc, was busy collecting baby items (and lots of diapers) to help our Food Pantry families welcome these new babies into the world. Schools and religious education classes held diaper drives to help us fill this need.

**A**s our program with challenged adults continues to grow, we have constant new groups of volunteers from programs in central Massachusetts to help us while at the same time learning new skills. We continue to work with the Worcester County Sheriff’s Department, with inmates who are close to release coming to volunteer at the Food Pantry. Each week, they help prepare bags of food and stock our food pantry shelves. This is a great program, which helps them prepare for their release and reintegration to society.

**A**gain, we would like to thank everyone for the continued support. We appreciate our volunteers’ level of dedication in keeping our Food Pantry and Thrift Store running. Some volunteers come for a few hours a week, while others come three to four days a week. Without them, we would not be able to help the many people who benefit from the food pantry and the numerous other programs St. Anne’s Human Services runs on an ongoing basis. Donations keep our Thrift Store running, which in turn help us to support our Food Pantry and other programs.

**W**e are a small group with a big job! Thanks to all, and God bless you!

*Elaine LeBlanc, Kerry Barbour, Evelyn Jenkins, and JoAnn Keegan, Human Services Volunteers*

## **More on St. Anne's Human Services by Evelyn Jenkins, Volunteer**

**Volunteerism (Oxford Advanced Learners' North American Dictionary):** *The use or involvement of volunteer labor, especially in community services.*

**Volunteerism (historical):** *The principle of relying on voluntary action (used especially with reference to the involvement of voluntary organizations in social welfare).*

*The principal that churches or schools should be independent of the state and supported by voluntary contributions (especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century).*

Volunteerism is alive and well at St. Anne's Human Services. Its definition is different for each person, its purpose is self-motivating, and the reward is personal to each volunteer.



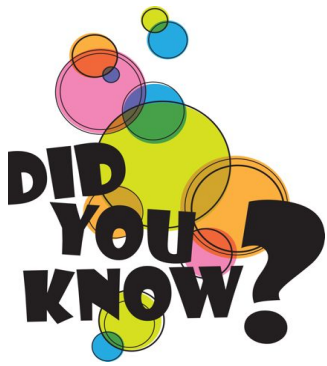
Why do you volunteer? I have asked several people this question over the years, and the answers that come back are varied. Here are a few:

- ***I am retired and want to give back to the community***
- ***Years ago the church helped me out with food and now my life is on track and I want to help others.***
- ***My children are older, and I find I have more free time.***

- ***My friend volunteers and it gives us the opportunity to see each other.***
- ***I grew up at St. Anne's and have great memories of the CYC, and I feel a need to help out.***
- ***When I was struggling, St. Anne's was there for me.***
- ***I get food from the Food Pantry and love being able to give back.***
- ***I knew Peg (Rakauskas) and she always encouraged me to volunteer.***
- ***I feel closer to my parents (who both passed away) when I am at St. Anne's.***

Our volunteers are young and old, men and women, from many different religious and economic backgrounds. We are an eclectic group of compassionate, giving people who all get along, respect each other and are always willing to help each other. We have made new friendships that we probably would not have made outside of St. Anne's. We call ourselves "the church ladies." We laugh, we hug, and we sometimes cry. This is our definition of VOLUNTEERING.





STUDENTS ATTENDING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SAVE OUR CITIES AND TOWNS MONEY. IN SHREWSBURY, THE COST PER STUDENT FOR ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOL IS \$10,763.21. THE TOWN RECEIVES THIS FOR EACH STUDENT, REGARDLESS OF WHAT SCHOOL HE OR SHE ATTENDS. THEREFORE, IN A RECENT STATISTIC, 571 SHREWSBURY STUDENTS ATTENDING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SAVED THE TOWN OF SHREWSBURY \$6,145,792.91.

Mary Courtemanche, our director of religious education for Grades K through 6, asked our first and second grade students their thoughts on religious education. Here are some of their responses:

My favorite things about CCD this year were talking to the priest and learning how important it is to be nice to people. **Lauren**



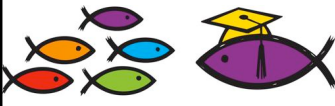
I am learning how special the sacrament of First Eucharist is and how God is watching over us all the time. I like reading and making pictures in the Gold Book. **Drew**



My favorite thing about CCD this year was sharing our feelings with God and learning that God always forgives me. **Ally**



My class is fun and exciting. I love talking with my friends at church! **Adriano**



I've learned about Baptism and do fun things in class. I like doing the coloring. **Anna**

I enjoy going to CCD because we learn about our religion. Once I make my First Communion, I can receive Jesus at Mass. **Samantha**

We learn about Jesus and God. **Brady**  
We learn how to be kind to one another. **Dustin**  
We learn how to stay safe. **Will**  
I should be nice all the time. **Jackie**  
God did many things to help us. **Angel**

**From students in Mrs. Blessington's class:**  
My religious education experience has been exciting and happy.  
We have learned a lot about God and prayers.  
We do fun activities.

## Reflections of a St. Anne's College Student

I was surprised when I was asked to write about my perspective of St. Anne's Church as a college student, because I will admit I wasn't at church every Sunday. This is a prime example of why I love St. Anne's. Everyone is welcome and no one is turned away. My perspective of St. Anne's has changed drastically over the years as I have grown up. When I was younger, church was a place my mother made me go and today, St. Anne's is a place I can call home. Although I attend college in central Vermont, I make every effort to attend Mass when I am home and enjoy seeing the people

at the 7:00 Mass. Having recently been Confirmed, I was exposed to all the services the parish offers – Coffee House, the Food Pantry, the Thrift Shop, and the Medical Clinic, to name a few. St. Anne's serves the entire community, which I think we often overlook.

*Justin Vlass served Mass throughout high school and was a 2015 recipient of the St. Anne's Christian Service Award. He currently attends Norwich University and is majoring in criminal justice.*



### **Our Ambry: What is It? Where is It?**

Affixed to the left wall of the church near the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a wood and glass-enclosed case containing three jars of oil. This case is called an "ambry" and the three jars contain the holy oils used in the celebration of sacraments. The oils are called the oil of catechumens, the oil of the sick and holy chrism.

These oils are blessed by our bishop in a solemn ceremony each Holy Week. Diocesan and religious priests gather with delegates from all our parishes to celebrate this Chrism Mass along with hundreds of other laypeople. Following the Mass, the oils are brought back to our parish by the delegates and presented at the altar during the Mass of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday. They are used throughout the year in the anointing of our sick parishioners, at Baptisms and at Confirmation. Holy chrism is likewise used in the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The use of blessed oil is a tradition reaching back into the early days of the church. The oils symbolize cleansing and strength, healing and comfort, and they are a sign of consecration. Those who are anointed share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit so that their lives may "give off the aroma of Christ."

Anointing with sacred chrism consecrated by the bishop and sent throughout the diocese also signifies our unity of faith with our Shepherd. Signed with this holy oil, the Christian can fulfill his or her purpose, which is to bring Jesus to all people in their challenges of life. As even in the anointing of the sick, formerly called the last rites, the person is strengthened to encounter Jesus Christ. As the prayer suggests: *"If there be any sick among you, let them call in the priests of the church, let them be anointed with sacred oil in the name of the Lord. And the Lord will raise them up and if they be in sin, their sin will be forgiven."* In Baptism, the prayer is *"As Jesus was anointed Priest, Prophet and King, so may you be. . ."* and in Confirmation, *"Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Remember these solemn moments in your life when you pass by and see the ambry.





2015



Above: Abby Blessington, Joseph Cesnickas, Mia Sposato below: Katie Guagnini



Above: Nate Nardella, Liam DeLeon



St. Anne's Youth Choir (above)



"Keep Christ in Christmas" contest winner Colby Belanger (Gr. 6) and Knight of Columbus Jay Gonzalez  
Other winners: Hilary Creamer (Gr. 3), Erin Bis (Gr. 4) and Shannon Clark (Gr. 5)



Katie DeLeon



Antonio Campaniello, Joseph Guidotti, Tyler Jordan