

SACRED HEART BEAT NEWSLETTER

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Some Things Give Life a Special Value

Some people may think Susan Romeo has been dealt an unfair hand in life. But for those who take the time to get to know her, they will understand she firmly believes there is a purpose for everything God does.



*Susan Romeo with her beloved pet
Kitty Fat Cat*

Susan inherited the neuromuscular disease Charcot-Marie-Tooth Syndrome (CMT) from her father. In the entire United States, there are only 125,000 people with this rare disease. The young Massena woman has been battling different stages of it since childhood.

Along with dealing with CMT, Susan also deals with the daily loss of one of her brothers, who died a few years ago in an accident.

But what some people may see as tragedy, Susan sees as God's way of making her see things a bit more clearly, or with a different perspective. A few years ago she injured her feet and continues to go through rehabilitation to hopefully someday walk again.

"I was always so busy. It was like God literally sat me down so I could listen," she said with a broad smile. "I thought I was patient and understanding before...now I've been made to be that way."

"I see God has a purpose for everything. No one may like the situation they are in, but faith is everything," she added. "He gives you strength when you need it. It's about perseverance."

During some of Susan's rehabilitation she has talked with others going through rehab as well. "I work at trying to cheer them up, and I listen to them," she said

Susan did her undergraduate work at Nazareth College, and then started her Masters degree work at Syracuse University. It was upon the completion of her first year at S.U. that she injured her feet. "I would still like to finish my Masters, but I don't have a van with a lift—so transportation (to Syracuse) is an issue," she said.

Susan's career has led her down a path of helping others. She has worked in Student Support Services at SUNY Potsdam, and for residential group homes such as with the A.R.C., Christian Group Home and Cerebral Palsy. She is also involved with the Cerebral Palsy of the North Country's board, and volunteers her time at the St. Regis Nursing Home, and also speaks with Clarkson University students in the physical therapy and occupational therapy field.

Her work with the Cerebral Palsy Board deals with her personal health care management. Susan is a single home owner and manages her own health care. "I am coming up with ideas on how people can be independent and manage their own health care. I hire people myself and also let them go," she pointed out.

Along with helping others, Susan's life has also directed her to help pets in need. She has had a dog, gerbil and rabbit that were all rescued by her. Her "roommate" is a beautiful cat, Kitty Fat Cat, who Susan also rescued.

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ON THE BEAT

Maintenance Projects Fill Summer of '06

Ed Gilbo Keeps It Going

Parish employee Ed Gilbo can hardly keep up with the projects Fr. Don has lined up.— the regular ones and the new ones.

Ed was found on a tractor mowing the yard and keeping a wary eye on the roof of the church early in the summer. Three men were walking the peak of the church roof like

tight-rope walkers. "That's a family concern," explained Ed. "Two brothers and their sons out of Port Byron. That's all they do."



Ed in his garage office

Ed was hired by Msgr. Floyd Brown over 19 years ago. He and his wife Lila have 2 sons Jason and Justin. They arrived here from North Carolina so they could raise family. Ed's mother and sister live in Massena.

Through the years Ed has served many pastors, each pastor with his own agenda. Under Msgr. Pendergast, Ed had to remove the communion rail, much to the ire of a few parishioners. "But that's what Msgr. Pendergast wanted and I had to do it his way," said Ed. Since then Ed has followed the directions of Fathers Wright, Morgan, and now Fr. Don. "But it's not just the pastors I have to please. I also do what the sisters ask at the convent." And indeed, he has remodeled and repaired the convent, an on-going process that never seems to end.

Over the years Ed has also been asked to replace a boiler at St. Mary's, do necessary repairs at St. Lawrence in Louisville, and St. Joseph's. "My job is never boring," Ed remarked. "I like it." For almost 20 years Ed Gilbo has been quietly working and directing work behind the scenes so life in our parish can go on.

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Working High Up: A Family Tradition



From right: owner Donald Dennis, Jr. and his son, Jessie, brother Randy and his son

Heights don't frighten the Dennis family. Hailing from Port Byron, NY, they are specialists in roof and steeple work. Any high climbing type of work, in fact. The first week in June Statewide Roofing team caught our eyes as the men

worked on the church roof. Donald Dennis, Jr. owns the Statewide Roofing Company. There are 4 workers: Donald and his son, Jessie are partnered with Donald's brother Randy and son. Donald took the job over from his father and uncle. In fact, it has been a family business for several generations. Statewide Roofing Company began coming at the request of Sacred Heart pastor Msgr. John Pendergast.



When you see this truck, look up!

Each year the team surveys the steeple and roofs of our church and school to discover what needs to be repaired. This June they spent a brief 3 days doing the repair work. Jessie and Randy are the climbers for the steeple work. It's a

special skill requiring balance and accuracy to maintain a solid footing or to repair while dangling from a couple of ropes. But it is also a special skill to evaluate the "health" of the copper slate materials used.

Donald noted that the copper sheathing on the steeple and other places on the roof can last 50 to 70 years before disintegrating. Acid rain and other elements in the air eat away at the copper. He checks the color. Copper-colored copper is new. Brown color tells the men that it is beginning to wear. When green it is thinning out, at its least protective stage, and needs replacing.



Hanging by a "thread", Randy and Jessie swing into position to replace worn copper sheath on tower steeple.

The slate tiles, however, are more fragile. When the men came the first time 150 tiles needed to be replaced. Donald noted, "The roof, the lower levels especially, were in very bad shape." Small adjustments made annually help to prevent radical repairs. Besides replacing them, the men straighten those dislodged by snow and ice. This year, only 6 tiles needed replacing on the church roof and 1 for the school.

As we go in and out of the church and school, we are un-

aware of what it takes to keep these beautiful buildings intact. The stained glass windows, which require a certain expertise to sustain, also are in need of being re-leaded. Yearly checks of the stone walls is another task the Pastor, Building & Grounds and Finance committees have on their docket.

Trinity Gets Touch Ups , Too



Pictured here is Ed cleaning Trinity's boiler. Cleaning and inspecting boilers for rectory, church and school are a big part of Ed's summer chores.



Ed and workers transform a ground floor storage room into a work/rest room for teachers in Highland wing of Trinity.



Two work at replacing copper seams, slate and ice/water barrier on north tower.

These buildings have been a part of our memories and hopefully our life routines. They are part of our spiritual heritage keeping us anchored in life giving values. It is the tangible symbol of the Faith anchoring our personal, family and community life.

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Convent Gets Its Face Lift, Too

Fr. Don's plans include renovations to the first floor of the convent known as the "convent meeting room". This north wing of the convent was added to the original house in the 1950's.



Brainard workers take advantage of dry sunny weather to pry off and replace the roof on front of the '50s wing. Rear roof was done several years ago.



New modern windows give assurance of a more comfortable convent meeting space for parishioners this winter.



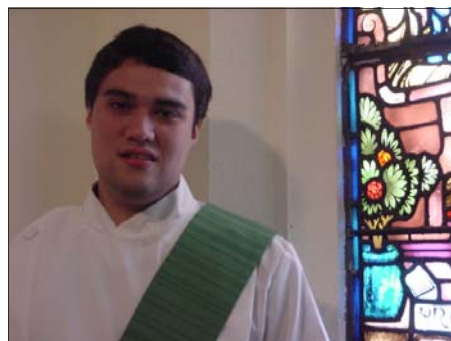
Reconstructed entry way to the meeting room will provide shelter from wintry winds.

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Deacon Bernie has our prayers for his last year

There must be something in the air or soil around Mooers. We have had quite a number of young men become priests from that area. Our summer intern Deacon Bernard Menard's home is there.



Deacon Bernard Menard acquired some attentive and appreciative listeners while preaching here this summer.

What drew him to the priesthood? "I grew up with it. My uncles were a big influence and I had a close relationship with my pastors," said Bernie. His uncles are Fr. Gilbert Menard, retired at Peru. Uncle Fr. Clarence is an Oblate of Mary retiree in Texas.

"In high school I became aware of the clergy crisis and began thinking: Who would help out?" That happened at the end of his first semester at Oneonta College. Bernie felt that he had to explore the priesthood

call and settle the question that had been shadowing him.

That was when Bernie transferred to Wadhams Seminary. After 3 years, Bishop Brzana sent him to the North American College in Rome for studies. The program required students to spend their full 2 years of study in Europe. He decided that that was not the way he wanted to go and returned. In August 2003 he began his theological studies at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore with 12 other classmates. Bernie was the only Ogdensburg seminarian.

Back at St. Mary's now, he will return in the spring for his ordination. We keep him in our prayers.

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FAITH ISSUES

Jesus' Wish: "That All May Be One"

GMMA. These initials have appeared in the local newspaper and our bulletins from time to time. They stand for Greater Massena Ministerial Association. The group is composed of pastors of Episcopal, Methodist, Catholic and other local churches calling themselves Christian. Actually the initial group was formed in the 1950's by Massena's Protestant church pastors for their own support. One of Vatican Council II's effects was to put questions in peoples' minds about what the Catholic Church was up to. It was to answer some of these questions that a priest from Sacred Heart was asked by one of the ministerial group to speak at one of their meetings.

Jesus prayed at the Last Supper before his death: "I pray not only for these but also for those who through their word will believe in me. May they all be one as you Father are in me and I am in you. May they be one in us; so the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:20-21)

While attempts at repairing the fractures in our Christian family were made in the past centuries, the world was not ready, it seems. Today energy and will from the Holy Spirit are moving us to reconnect our family of believers. It is called Ecumenism.

Why is this happening now? Many threads of reasons are at work. Overall, perhaps, the developments in world-wide transportation and communications have brought us face to face with each other as never before in history. The past century's many conflicts which have brought death and destruction of people causes us to rethink our priorities.

In the 19th century, Protestant churches initiated great and widespread missionary efforts. It was discovered that each group seemed to be competing. The question for these churches was: "Why are we competing when preaching the one and same Jesus Christ, as Savior?" For the Catholic Church in the same period Italian nationalism replaced the Pope as ruler of the city of Rome (and a large part of Italy) with an Italian national government. The Pope (and Church) in a sense was liberated from being a political figure to being what he was supposed to be, a spiritual leader. The question for the Catholic Church, then, became: "What really is our mission in the world?"

The Holy Spirit used these events and the questions they raised to prod some genealogical work on the part of the churches. Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox found themselves sitting at the same library tables, pouring over the same ancient texts and history, sharing their discoveries. All were looking at the same foundations and discovering where current understanding in each of the churches needed some adjustment.

More could be said about the many dialogues of theologians, activities of pastoral people, and those in social justice to bring all of us together around Jesus. And here in our community as in many others around the world, Jesus' followers are beginning to find their way to each other. In today's fractured and conflict-ridden world, the Holy Spirit seems to be moving us to a closer living out of Jesus' Last Supper prayer.

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WELCOME TO OUR NEWLY BAPTIZED PARISHIONERS:

Lauren Abigail LeBire, daughter of Marilee (Trudeau) & Michael LeBire

Colin Mannix Patterson, son of Maribeth (Love) & Paul Patterson

Garrett Anthony Weir, son of Mary (McCauley) & Bryant Weir

Devlin Patrick Germano, son of Emily Ruth (Conlon) & Javan P. Germano

Salvatore Giovanni Perretta, son of Kerri (Taraska) & Kevin Perretta

Sarah Christine Tilley, daughter of Angela (Meraglia) & Edward Tilley

Hayden Patrick McGregor, son of Catherine (Smith) & Brandon McGregor

Isaiah Larry Lawrence, son of Alicia M. (Colombe) & Andrew Lawrence

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