

Sacred Heart Beat

Sacred Heart Parish, Massena, NY - (315) 769-2469
www.catholic-church.org/massenasacredheart

November 2007

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Elsie Scruggs—Nursing Home Music Lady

Every Wednesday afternoon Elsie and Carl Scruggs pack their music and head off for the St. Regis Nursing Home. Every Wednesday afternoon they walk into a room full of residents and their families who are waiting for a chance to experience God in their lives. Every Wednesday afternoon Elsie takes her place at the piano while Carl tells the worshippers where to find the opening hymn. And they begin to sing.

For more than 15 years, the Scruggs have played a part in the weekly Mass at St. Regis Nursing Home.

“These are lovely people who deserve a chance to experience God where they are,” said Elsie. “Carl

and I feel privileged to be able to do this. Many of these people I have known long before they came to St. Regis. God gave me my talent and I feel He has asked me to share it with them. Some day I hope someone will be doing it for us.”

‘Doing this’ involves more than just sitting at the piano. Elsie begins the morning by finding the scriptures for the day, choosing what is appropriate for Father and then finding music that goes with the scripture message. She plays older hymns that the residents are familiar with, rather than choosing more contemporary music,”...because this is what they know, what they can relate to.”

“I can’t imagine not spending a Wednesday after-



Elsie and Carl keep memories alive with their music

noon at the nursing home,” Elsie said. “There’s a sense of peace there. I believe in what I’m doing; in what God has asked me to do.”

Stewardship means not just sharing your money, but your time and talent as well. Thank you, Carl and Elsie for your gift of stewardship for the people of Massena

ON THE BEAT

MOMS Offers Support & New Horizons

Many mothers wish they had the time to curl up with a good book, but many find it hard to justify the time taken away from their families. Massena/Louisville mothers involved in MOMS (Ministry of Mothers Sharing) have found a way to reconcile themselves with sticking their noses in the occasional novel, however. They are “reading for a reason...” “books that have transported them to new times and places, and taught them an armload about women’s issues all around the world.

Last year the ladies read *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant, and *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden. Both books were celebrated with discussions and potluck

dinner with foods from the heroines’ countries. This fall, the ladies are currently reading *Left to Tell* by Immaculee Ilibagiza. All three books, although distinctly different, have helped the group understand how fortunate they are to live in the time and place they do, and with the love of God.



MOMS with their tots pose in a MOMS family group

Faith In Focus

God is at the center of MOMS, a group that was formed almost four years ago and modeled after the national group started in St. Paul, MN. About 20 mothers and grandmothers regularly attend monthly evening meetings and /or a twice monthly morning MOMS & Tots playgroup. They also plan the occasional special field trip for dinner and a movie. They have been to places like St. Ann's Shrine in VT and the ecumenical Women of Faith conference offered in Western NY.

Monthly meetings are held at the newly renovated Jessie Carey room in the convent. The ladies begin with a prayer and icebreaker followed by the evening's topic and business meeting.

Projects Expand Skills

Topics cover a wide variety of subjects from house-cleaning to abstinence and chastity. Basic flower arranging and cake decorating lessons, also. A Christmas cookie exchange will celebrate December. As always, the group will ring in the New Year with family caroling at the nursing home.

The new year will quickly bring with it a 7-week workshop written by the national group and offered by local MOMS participants. This workshop was what had originally inspired the fledgling group in Fall 2003, and these same ladies want to give the same spiritually uplifting program to others in the area.

March brings the group together for a soup supper and April for another project activity. Summer is break time. It allows the women to focus independently on the two things that brought them together, God and motherhood.



Play room in the ground floor of rectory is a child's "heaven"

New Membership Is Welcomed

Massena/Louisville MOMS and MOMS & TOTS playgroup is open to pregnant women, mothers,

grandmothers and care-givers of all ages. For information you can reach Mary Grogan (769-5687) or Candace O'Neill (769-6540).

PARISH LIBRARY OFFERS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARISHIONERS



Shirley Grow and Stella Jessmer are hard at work cataloging

Whether you are looking for something targeting spiritual life, theology, scripture, history of the Catholic Church, or a good biography, Sacred

Heart's parish library awaits your visit. It is located off the left side corridor to the sanctuary where it has been since it began mid-1990's.

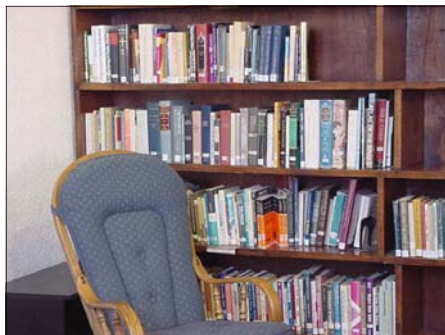
There is a large selection covering many aspects of the spiritual life by noted authors. The Scripture section has a wide choice from background on the books of the Bible, geography, life in biblical times, interpretation, etc. Church worship, history, theology can be tapped into. Help in various life crises and social issues can be found. Biographies, especially of saints, are great reading.

Magazine Reading Also There

Sister Juliana pointed out that along with the many books, there are also a number of magazines. America is a Jesuit publication with short articles from reliable religious writers. Bible Today has articles dealing with all aspects of Scripture from history to archeology to understanding the background of the books. Catholic Parent provides a variety of suggestions for activities and enhancing ways to bring the faith to children. Spiritual Life, a small but helpful publication from the Carmelite Fathers, contains great insights on prayer and spiritual life. National Catholic Reporter gives the reader a vigorous look at national and international events affecting the Church.

The library is open during regular church hours,

typically 7 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Saturday and 7 AM to 5 PM on Sunday.



You can relax in a rocker as you check out a book to borrow

Simple Steps For Use

First time visitors to the library are asked to fill out a card with their name, address and phone number and file it in the registration box. When signing out a book, sign your name on the card in the back of the book and put it in the clear, plastic box. The library operates on the honor system.



Full shelves, a TV, and magazines provide opportunities for 'growing your faith' on your own'

Books may be looked for by author, title or subject by checking in the file boxes on the shelf by the sanctuary windows. We use the Dewey system.

Library Committee Assists

The Library Committee helps catalog books, will look toward promoting library use and finding ways to finance new book purchases. Current members are Shirley Grow, Stella Jessmer and Kathy Adams.

“We would like to build up the fictional section with notable Catholic fiction,” said Sr. Juliana. “Fiction touches people in a special way. It helps unlock some of the deep Christian values God put in all of us.”

GIFTED ARTISTS GIFTING CONTINUES

Visits to parishioners introduce one to some wonderful people whose lives are touched with grace

and gift.

Becoming an artist was sort of an accident for **June Saucier**, resident at St. Regis Nursing Home. She was a secretary at the Xerox Company in Webster, NY. She moved within the company from secretary to drafting department and finally ended up in the book publishing section.



Helen Alpaugh, an older co-worker, was at the drawing board next to hers and was an artist in her own right. An excellent one apparently. “I was so interested and asked her so many questions,” says June, “that finally, catching on to my interest she asked me, ‘Why don’t you try it.’” Taking June with her they bought art supplies and began the lessons.

They began with water colors. “How come you started me on water colors? That is the hardest technique,” she asked her teacher. The reply? If you can do water colors, you can do anything.

What makes June’s paintings special is that they are truly “memory pictures”. All are paintings of family events and places important in their life. The people depicted are family members. Three of her paintings are on her walls at St. Regis.

Mary Boyer, better known to her friends as Betty, was born in Montreal and brought up there. It was her marriage to her husband Bob, a Massena man, that brought her to the area.

Unlike June, Betty was deep into art from the age of 12, taking lessons at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art. She tells of the time when the director/teacher at the school, Dr. Arthur Lesmer, believing she could do better, took her painting, threw it on the floor and stomped on it saying she could do better. “Well, my mother would like it!” replied the fisty

and indignant young artist.

As it turned out Betty had the stuff of artists. She went on to exhibit at the Museums in Montreal and a couple of exhibits here in the states.



In the 1980's a visit to a carving shop in Clayton started Betty on another artistic avenue. Still life was her favorite theme in painting and birds in her carving ventures. In this she did not have a teacher. "I just talked to carvers and by going around to shows picked up what I needed to know to do it," she says.

What did art work mean to you? "I found it very relaxing. And people enjoyed looking at my work," she says.

Since 2000 Betty has had to cope with serious eye problems. How does she deal with it? "There is not much you can do about it. Yet people continue to enjoy my work. That helps!"

FOCUS ON FAITH

"It has been the Church's custom in funeral rites not only to commend the dead to God, but also to support the Christian hope of the people and give witness to its faith in the future resurrection of the baptized in Christ."

(Decree of Congregation for Divine Worship)

November is a time in the Church Year when it looks at death: what comes before, during and after. It is an opportunity for us to review what the Church teaches about this universal experience. One can begin with the readings for All Saints and All Souls day masses.

God is present in all moments of our life, brought to us through the ministering Body of Christ, the Church. When we are sick or frail, when we are dying, when our physical remains are being laid to rest, the Church is there to support, intercede, honor, re-

member the individual and his/her family.

Along with Baptism and Eucharist, the Anointing of the Sick has the most direct testimony from Scripture and earliest liturgical practice.

In Sacred Scripture there is a gradual unveiling of human understanding of this crucial moment of life. Genesis 2:17 identifies death with sin. Chapter 5 of the same book speaks of it as in the normal course of human life. Job and the Maccabees further insight speaking of God's vindication for the sorrows in this life and of prayer for the dead.

But it is Jesus Christ in His life, death and resurrection who reveals the full meaning of our human destiny. Rather than the obliteration of the human person, Jesus, in His experience, presents us with further data.

First, suffering is part of life on this earth in this bodily form with death as the closing experience.

Second, in light of Christ's resurrection and continued risen encounters with His followers, we understand that death is not the end of the human person. Our spiritual element, soul, with its consciousness survives the separation from our material bodies.

And third, in the suffering and dying experience we confront our still-present selfishness. It is the final opportunity to give ourselves totally into God's hands.

All of this is the foundation for the Rites of Anointing the Sick, Viaticum to the dying (anointing and final Communion), and the three moments in the Funeral Liturgy.

After all, we are the Temples of the Holy Spirit and part of the Communion of Saints with a further destiny awaiting us.

Contributors:

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