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A Message from our Rector, the Very Reverend David R. LeFort

We recently concluded the Easter season—and as we enter summer—let us continue to reflect on the profound message of walking in the bright Light of the Risen Christ. We sense “change”, don’t we?

Throughout our Lenten observances, we were invited to see where we have come from and where we’ve been, and with fresh eyes, we were then encouraged to see anew who we are: sinners who walk various paths within the world; God willing, souls seeking the path that is trod by the Lord Himself in our midst. And in that penitential season, we were challenged to choose that holy path, where suffering can be ameliorated, where isolation can be overcome, where fear can be calmed, sickness can be healed, and a new order can be established after the pattern of our Paschal Lord.

And now He has risen! And the Risen Jesus Christ invites us to leave the old order behind and cling to Him in our midst. To see Him in our sisters and brothers, and in the various circumstances of our lives being lived every moment of every day. With the resurrection, we no longer have to dwell among filth or sorrow or pain; we can take a new path shrouded in the mystery of God’s grace. And if we do, this path will fill you with joy!

So, the spiritual environment in which we dwell has now changed: we walk knowing that Jesus has overcome the evil that once weighed each of us down. His death was physical; His body lay lifeless. And His resurrection, too, was real. So real, that it reversed the course of death, and such a change can be our lot as well. We don’t have to settle for anything or anyone else, just Jesus, the Lord who endured all things in order to give us this freedom, this choice, this newness. It’s now up to us to make our choice. Let us

choose to take hold of this new spiritual truth and help the world—our neighborhoods, homes, streets and communities—change, as well, for the better.

With the newness of the Holy Spirit, let us offer new sacrifices in joyful love; with the newness of holy water having been poured freshly upon us, let us share the blessedness of our faith lives with those who cannot yet see Him; with the newness of the Light of the Risen Christ, let us selflessly guide others to the bright path of faithful friendship in His light. In this way, our new lives will joyfully shine forth as a beacon for those who have not yet changed. And this could be the best gift we can make in thanksgiving for the gift that has been newly shared with us this Easter Season: the bright Light of the Risen Christ. Alleluia!

A truly blessed summer to each of you and all those you love.

—Rev. David R. LeFort

Reflections on This Past Lent and the Paschal Triduum at Our Cathedral

By Dale King



A CORRECTION

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THE CATHEDRAL CHRONICLE, THE ARTICLE ON THE LIFE AND RETIREMENT OF SR. MARGARET MARY CONTAINED AN UNFORGIVEABLE ERROR. OUR BELOVED SISTER WAS REFERRED TO AS SR. MARY MARGARET. OF COURSE, EVERYONE KNOWS SHE IS THE INDOMITABLE, INSPIRATIONAL SR. MARGARET MARY. A CORRECTED VERSION OF THE ARTICLE IS AVAILABLE ON THE CATHEDRAL WEBSITE.

- RICHARD CAPULLO

This past Lent and Paschal Triduum has been a profound and joyous time at our Cathedral, full of all we have come to appreciate and value about this special time of the year. The penitential season of Lent began with Ash Wednesday. Three Masses were said that day and at each Mass ashes were blessed and imposed as we began this important time of preparation for the great celebration of Easter. This day also began the traditional forty days of fast and abstinence. This is a time where we seek to renew and reaffirm our Catholic faith through greater prayer and reflection.

Lent ends with the beginning of the Paschal Triduum in the early evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This is the liturgical celebration that commemorates the Last Supper of our Lord with his disciples. It includes the washing of feet which is symbolic of the selfless giving of our Lord when he washes the feet of his disciples. Afterwards, the Holy Eucharist was reserved for adoration and prayer throughout the evening until Night Prayer at 10:00 PM.

Each of the next two days of the Paschal Triduum, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, included a profound liturgical celebration. Good Friday's liturgy celebrates the Lord's Passion. The liturgy begins with the celebrants entering in silence as they process to the altar and prostrate themselves. Later in the liturgy all will join in the Adoration of the Holy Cross as they approach the cross to venerate it and adore it. To mark the solemnity of the occasion all those present depart in silence at the end of the liturgy.

In Holy Saturday's liturgy we await the resurrection of our Lord. This is the Vigil of Easter in the Holy Night. In this liturgy the celebrant blesses the Fire and prepares the Paschal Candle to signify the light of Christ and the end of darkness. This is also the night that we bring new adherents to our faith forward for baptism and confirmation. This year five new Catholics were confirmed and of these five, two who did not already have a Christian baptism were baptized.

The five newly confirmed Catholics had already spent months in studying scripture and in prayerful reflection as part of the Cathedral's RCIA program. They entered the program in the prior Fall and started a process of formation that led to their acceptance of our faith. One of the coordinators of the Cathedral's RCIA program is Darryl Michael, a long time member of the Cathedral parish. Darryl states that "it's a wonderful feeling to help these people grow in the Catholic faith." It is fitting that at this time of renewal of our own faith we also celebrated the new faith of these five individuals.

On the last day of the Paschal Triduum, Easter Sunday, we joyously celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord. This is the day we prepared for throughout the Lenten season. Through prayerful reflection and devotion we now ready receive the light of Christ in our lives and share this joy with others.

Welcome Mark Ciavardoni, Social Services/Food Pantry Director

By Richard L. Capullo

The retirement of Sister Margaret Mary left a temporary gap in the running of the Food Pantry. Fortunately, our very dedicated and capable volunteer staff was able to keep the program running while a replacement was found.

On October 15, 2018, Mark Ciavardoni was hired. Mark's life journey took him full circle. Born in Troy, New York, Mark attended Catholic Central High School and Siena College. One year after graduating from Siena, he left the area to pursue an extraordinary career and 35 years later returned to the Capital District, a place he always considered home.

Mark's first move was to Northern Virginia where he became a contract negotiator for the Navy and then worked as an Analyst for the U.S. Air Force staff at the Pentagon. His federal service also included working in contracting and system acquisition in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy.

While working for the Government, Mark earned a law degree from Catholic University Law School. He left the Government in 1987 to practice law. He became a criminal defense lawyer defending the indigent in Washington, D.C.

Mark's next career move was in the technology industry where he was Vice President and General Counsel for a Tech company in Rockville, MD. He remained in this position for 5 years before moving into Human Resources and Operations in leadership positions with various non-profit and for-profit organizations.

After 35 years residing in Virginia and living the intensive D.C. lifestyle, it was time to come home. "I was looking for a more balanced lifestyle. It's nice to be back" he said. He appreciates being able to spend time with his two daughters and three grandchildren who live here. Today, Mark works exclusively for the Cathedral's Social Service Unit which includes the Food Pantry.

When asked about his impressions of the job and the Food Pantry, he stated that he was still learning a lot about the operation. "The volunteers have been very helpful" he said. "We focus on providing healthy, high quality food to our guests.

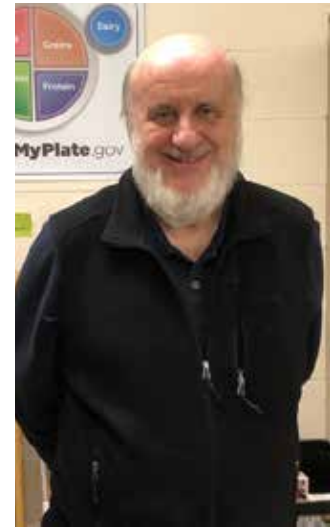
He explained that "we work to educate the clients on how to make good food choices." At the same time Mark was happy to see "how receptive many guests are to receiving information on nutrition and on making healthy food choices. The volunteers are knowledgeable and communicate very well with our guests."

"Currently we have 25 core volunteers, we'd like to build to 35. On certain days we have more needs than other days. Also, we need help filling in when volunteers are on vacation" he said. Volunteers work one day a week from 10 a.m.– 12 noon. Mark said he interviews prospective volunteers and explains the various ways they can help so that they have a good understanding of the role.

Many retirees and others look for ways they can put their free time and talent to use; to make a difference in this world. Your Cathedral parish offers that opportunity. Feeding the hungry and caring for the less fortunate are what we are commanded to do as Christians. Of course, volunteering is not just for retirees. Anyone is welcome. "We are blessed to have the wonderful students from Bishop Maginn who help on food delivery day. They are enthusiastic and very helpful every week on a busy day."

"In addition to volunteering, donations are always welcomed whether monetary or food donations" Mark said. "We are fortunate to have so many committed donors and we are grateful for their support which is vital in helping us to fulfill our mission."

If you would like to inquire about opportunities to serve your fellow man, contact Mark Ciavardoni at 518-463-2279.





Meet Melissa Martínez, Liturgical Coordinator

By Barbara Palumbo

Parishioners may have noticed sometime back in the fall of 2018 that there was an additional name on the Bulletin cover: that of Melissa Martínez in her position as Liturgical Coordinator. Since this is a new position, some may wonder what exactly is a Liturgical Coordinator and what are the duties and responsibilities. The position, although new to our parish and even to our diocese, is not new to the Catholic Church. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2010),

It is desirable, at least in cathedrals and in larger churches, to have some competent minister or master of ceremonies, to see to the appropriate arrangement of sacred actions and to their being carried out by the sacred ministers and lay faithful with decorum, order, and devotion. Liturgical functions that are not proper to the Priest or the Deacon ... may even be entrusted by means of a liturgical blessing or a temporary deputation to suitable lay persons chosen by the pastor or the rector of the church. (Part III, Sections 106, 107)

Father LeFort recognized the necessity for such a person at the Cathedral and approached Melissa one morning after Mass and asked if she might be interested in serving as Liturgical Coordinator for the parish. The position summary, as written in the job description, states that the Liturgical Coordinator “provides for coordination of liturgical celebrations offered at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Albany. This person, as a minister, works collaboratively with other staff and volunteers in further advancing the mission of the Church through prayer and worship. This person must have a knowledge of, and an ability to convey effectively, the official teachings of the Catholic Church, and demonstrate a fidelity to those teachings.” The job description further lists the duties and responsibilities and the qualifications and skills necessary for the job. Melissa’s education and experience, in combination with her deep faith, makes her well suited for the job.

Dr. Melissa Martínez was born in Brooklyn where she lived for the first four years of her life before moving to Puerto Rico with her parents. She was raised as a Roman Catholic, but began taking her faith very seriously in her early adulthood, embracing the liturgy and prayer as a way of life. Melissa has attended daily Mass since the age of nineteen while attending college. She found that her calling is to serve others wherever and whenever she is needed. This calling led her to pursue a career as a psychologist, and after obtaining a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Tulane University in New Orleans, she returned to Puerto Rico for advanced coursework. Melissa became reacquainted with her soon-to-be husband, Jorge, who returned to Puerto Rico to attend graduate school in dentistry after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania. The next several years were busy ones for her: while earning her master’s degree, she and Jorge were married. Before returning for her doctoral studies, their daughter Melissa Cristina was born, and after receiving her Ph.D., Melissa and Jorge were blessed to expand their family with the birth of their son, Jorge Jr.

Once in the work force, her career path was one involving the church. In Puerto Rico, Dr. Martínez worked in the Archdiocesan Major Seminary, teaching human formation courses, and at the Pontifical Catholic University of PR as a guest lecturer in courses including psychology, human development and anthropology. In 2008, she was sponsored by the Bishop to join a formation program for priest, religious and lay Catholic psychologists serving pastoral ministry in the Institute for Psychological Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland, and subsequently at the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Latin American Episcopal Council), better known as CELAM. Dr. Martínez was assigned to an Ad Hoc Committee of Mental Health Professionals consisting of eight persons (two women and six men) from the clergy and the laity whose task was to help the church in the wake of the sex abuse crisis. In 2015, she became an advisor

to the Department of Vocations and Ministries of CELAM, and in 2017, just before moving to Albany NY, she collaborated at the Second Latin-American Encounter of Rehabilitation Houses for the Clergy and Consecrated held in Guadalajara, México.

Then in 2017, Jorge came to Albany to interview with a local dental private practice, and on Palm Sunday that year, Jorge and Melissa attended Mass at the Cathedral where they met Bishop Scharfenberger who gave them a special blessing in Spanish, making them feel right at home. Jorge subsequently joined the dental practice, and Melissa and their son arrived shortly thereafter, and once established in Albany, the family became parishioners of the Cathedral. Jorge Jr. continued his education at Bishop Maginn High School, graduating a year later.

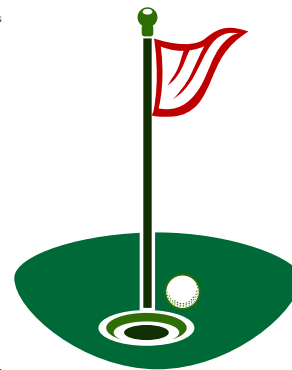
Melissa considers a liturgical coordinator to be a major factor in establishing the spirit of hospitality and harmony in all liturgical celebrations—the glue that holds the liturgy together as a unified whole. Melissa stated that the central figure in her life is Jesus Christ who guides her in all things, while her leadership style is based on a saying accredited to St. Augustine: “in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

Besides her part-time position here at the Cathedral, Melissa volunteers at St. Peter’s and Albany Medical Center Hospitals as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. In addition, she is a faculty member at St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry in Albany. Melissa has been collaborating with area parishes by holding “listening sessions” to help parishioners deal with their faith during the crisis in the Church.

Melissa Martínez, welcome to the Cathedral community, and may you enjoy many years of friendship, blessings and joy in our midst.

The Cathedral's 21st Annual Golf Outing

On June 17, 2019, the parish community held the 21st Annual Golf Outing at Wolferts Roost Country Club. It was an enjoyable day of golf with friends and fellow parishioners, along with a cocktail hour and dinner. The event helped raise funds for the preservation of the Cathedral.



Amazon Rebate Growing

By Richard Capullo

Although it's not an eye-popping number, the latest check sent to the parish from Amazon Smile, the charitable arm of Amazon, was \$116.75 received in February. This is the largest check received since the parish enrolled in the Amazon Smile program in 2016. All funds received are earmarked for the restoration of our historic Cathedral. Although the amount we received seems meager, it does indicate that our program is growing in support. This could either mean that the number of users is increasing or, those that are using the site are increasing their purchases.



As a refresher, Amazon has a special online site dedicated to supporting qualifying charitable organizations. The Cathedral parish is qualified and is registered. For every \$1 spent through the Amazon Smile site, .05 cents is donated to the parish. Refunds are sent to the parish each quarter when the rebate that is due is over \$50. Purchases made on amazon.com will NOT generate a donation to the Cathedral; it must be the amazon smile site.

If you haven't signed up yet, please consider doing so. It is a painless way to support the Cathedral restoration. If you are making purchases through Amazon anyway, nothing changes except the website.

Go to: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/14-1347444>.

If you are having trouble registering, don't give up. Call the parish office 518-463-4447. Leave a message that you need help registering for the Amazon Smile website. Give the office your phone number and the best time to reach you. I will call you back and will help you register. Thank you for your support

Cathedral Brunch – A Huge Success

By Richard Capullo

Each year, parish members and friends look forward to the annual Cathedral Brunch. It is probably the most anticipated parish social event of the year. And, why not? It's a time to renew old acquaintances, make new friends, enjoy stimulating conversation and feast on a sumptuous buffet.

The event was held on Sunday, April 28th at Wolferts Roost. Fr. LeFort welcomed everyone and led us in an opening prayer. I am sure I speak for all who attended in thanking Maura Moneymaker for, once again, organizing this joyous event. We hope even more will join us next year. We want to get to know you and include you in any and all our Cathedral parish activities.



*Scene from the Annual Parish Brunch:
Mary Lu Mattingly, Maura Moneymaker,
and Brian Gurley.*

Did You Know?

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception has its own first-class relic of St. Jean Vianney, a piece of bone. The relic was presented to the Cathedral in 1935. It is kept with the Cathedral's relic collection in the Main Altar.



Are You Traveling This Summer?

Looking to attend Catholic Mass while you're away from home? Check out www.Masstimes.org or call 1-800-627-7846 for times and directions to the Catholic Church nearest you!

Please, remember your Cathedral Parish offertory envelope when you are away.

Thank you!

Cathedral Chronicle Committee

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