

Illuminations

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1

DECEMBER, 2006

The Church of St. Anselm, Wayside, NJ



Highlights:

- *A Miracle in Our Midst, Page 2*
- *Message from the Desk of Fr. Gene, Page 3*
- *New Parishioners, Page 3*
- *Notes from Parish 'Town Meeting,' Page 4*
- *Moving Forward as a Community, Page 5*
- *St. Anselm Christmas Memories, Page 6*
- *Holiday Events for the Kids, Pages 7*
- *Baptisms, Page 8*
- *The Way to Wayside, Page 9*
- *'A Cup of Christmas Tea,' Page 9*
- *Stewardship 2006, Page 10*
- *Golden Jubilee at St. Anselm, Page 12*

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing! St. Anselm Prepares for Christmas

- *Illuminations Staff*

As 2006 draws to a close, Catholics all over the world are preparing for the most holy of days — Christmas, the day of Jesus', our Lord and Savior's, birth.

This issue of *Illuminations* features stories, events, and ideas that we hope will help each of us find that special place in our hearts reserved for the joy of Christmas. There are events for parishioners of all ages as well as inspirational stories of how some parishioners came to call St. Anselm their spiritual home.

Other parishioners have answered the call and shared their own personal stories about memories of Christmas here in our Parish. So, as you put the finishing touches on your tree and wrap that last present for Aunt Sally, please take time out to join us in the celebration.

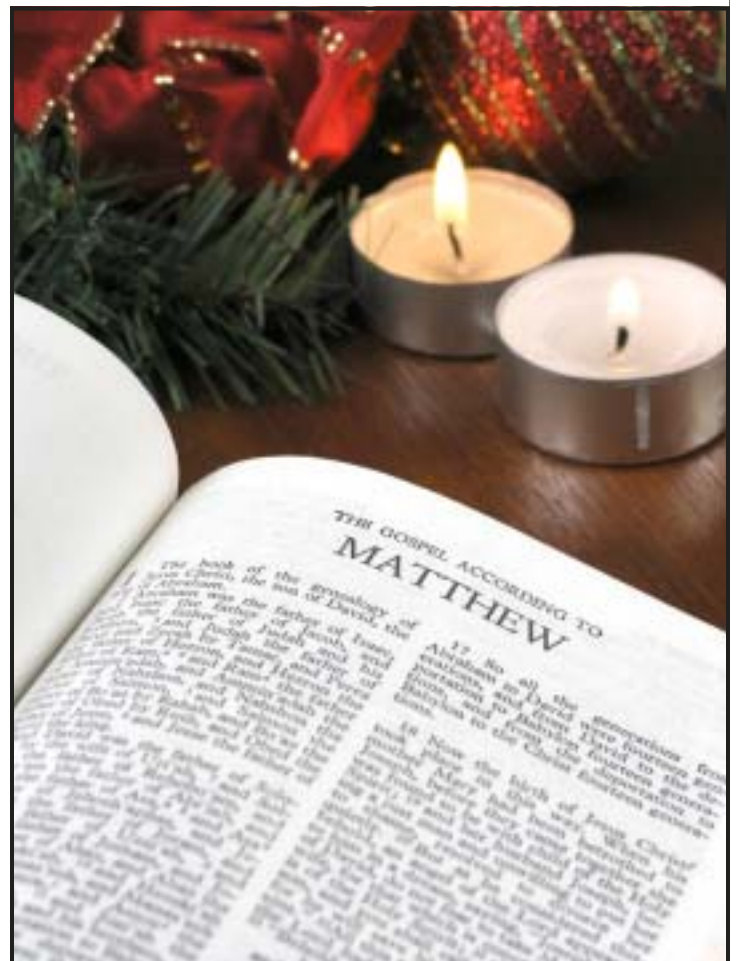


Christmas Weekend

Saturday, December 23 – 5:30 p.m.; Sunday, December 24 – 9 a.m. (****Please note: there is no 11 a.m. Mass****)

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 5 p.m.; Midnight Mass at 12 a.m.



Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel which means 'God is with us.' (Matthew 1:23)

Christmas Day

Monday, December 25 at 9 and 11 a.m.

New Year's Weekend

Saturday, December 30, 5:30

p.m.; Sunday, December 31, 9 and 11 a.m.

New Year's Day

Monday, January 1, 2007 – 9 a.m.

Sunday's Child is Always Happy: A St. Anselm Baptismal Miracle in our Midst

- By Frank Coyle

"Days of the Week"

Monday's child is fair of face,

Tuesday's child is full of grace,

Wednesday's child is full of woe,

Thursday's child has far to go,

Friday's child is loving and giving

Saturday's child works hard for a living

*And the child that is born on the Sabbath
day is bonny and blithe, and good and happy.*

Every baptism is a special sacramental experience for the individual, family, and body of Christ. Baptism is the most important day of our lives – the day the Christian community welcomes new members into a reunion with God through his "eternal waters," as Henri Nouwen states in his book, *Return of the Prodigal Son*.

Our parish gives us the privilege of experiencing many baptisms as part of the Liturgy on a regular basis. Some baptisms, though, take on an even more miraculous magnitude due to a special set of circumstances. It's true: miracles are happening right in our midst.

Our Pastor, Fr. Gene, states that, "Baptism is the great call to discipleship." For St. Anselm parishioners Virgil and Johanna Icasiano, that call to discipleship included a test of faith that would affect their lives forever as they brought a new life, that of their first child, to the Christian community in the spring of 2005.

One night that April as he returned



Virgil, Johanna, and little Virgil Icasiano are all smiles.

home from work, Virgil found his wife on the floor unresponsive. As a result of her type-1 diabetes, Johanna had gone into a diabetic coma when she was just over three months pregnant. Virgil dialed 9-1-1, and as paramedics stabilized Johanna for the ride to Jersey Shore University Medical Center, he began to realize that he and his wife were facing a true crisis. When Johanna arrived at Jersey Shore, she was admitted to Room 301 of the Intensive Care Unit – her "home" for the next 14 weeks.

During the first nine weeks at Jersey Shore, Johanna was in a vegetative state with only glimpses of consciousness. Virgil

dreaded seeing different physicians enter the room in those early days as they tried unsuccessfully to find what's

called a "purposeful response." His greatest fear was that they would say there was no hope and that Johanna would not wake up from her coma. Virgil spent night after night at Johanna's bedside and countless hours in solitude wrestling with the question of how he could possibly go on if Johanna did not survive this crisis.

"I had to surrender myself to God," Virgil said about his ability to cope. "From the beginning, I realized there was very little I could do for Johanna. I knew she was in God's hands and I had to accept God's purpose, whatever that was to be." He felt that these were his darkest days – the ones that challenged his faith and hope to their fullest.

During those 14 weeks, Virgil met Fr. Charles Flood, a Trinitarian priest whose mission was to serve the sick in New Jersey. He joined Virgil and Johanna's mother in a circle of prayer

**"SOME BAPTISMS...
TAKE ON AN EVEN
MORE MIRACULOUS
MAGNITUDE DUE TO
A SPECIAL SET OF
CIRCUMSTANCES."**

Continued on page 11

A Message from the Desk of Fr. Gene

- by Fr. Gene Vavrick

We live in a profound time of change that has come about much more rapidly than change did before the 1960s. I believe that in these days, every parish has to ask, "Why are we here and how are we going to live the mission of Jesus Christ?" I believe that the key to more effective ministry is being intentional and conscious, taking the time to plan and to "re-imagine" ministry in ways that may be different from what has been done before.

To that end, our Parish Council has just put together a parish "plan" that will help our whole community be more intentional about who we are. We looked at all aspects of our parish life, surveyed and collected input from all of the major areas and constituencies of our parish. Some of the results have been surprising as others have been quite predictable. All of the results are important to look at. We have listened, we have shared, and now we have put together a plan to help us stay a vibrant faith community in the coming days.

St. Anselm may not look like other churches, but I ask you to think about

the following questions: Is the Gospel being preached? Are the poor being attended to? Are people praying and trying to live lives that are holy and just? Are we sharing our faith with each other, with our young people, with those who come to us searching?

The answers to these questions really lead us to return to our Mission Statement as a parish and that's what our recent planning process has endeavored to do.

Catholic parishes are in a state of change. One in four parishes in the United States does not have a resident pastor. That number is quickly becoming a reality here in the Diocese of Trenton. What does this mean for St. Anselm?

First of all, it means that we must be prepared for the time when there may not be any ordained male celibates available to be the full time resident pastor. We need to prepare our lay people to become qualified leaders of prayer, to be qualified business managers of our parish, and to continue our outreach to the poor and marginalized of society. To that end, we continue to support our parishioners who are willing to be trained as lay



ecclesial ministers and the ongoing formation of all liturgical and pastoral ministers in our parish.

The whole point of the recent parish planning process and the ongoing formation for our leaders is to continue to live our Mission as the Church of St. Anselm in this time of rapid change and new models of ecclesial ministry.

We seek to continue to be a people of hospitality, concerned for the neglected, and to be a community that rejoices in the unique ways God has called us to live the Gospel. Let's pray that we can continue to live the truth in love.

1

St. Anselm Community Welcomes New Parishioners

The faith community of St. Anselm extends a warm welcome to the following individuals and families who have recently joined our parish:

- Mrs. Christina Barsoum
- Mr. & Mrs. Anthony and Florence Bancala
- Mrs. Melissa Bellottie
- Mr. Ricardo Benitez
- Mr. & Mrs. Adam and Colleen Bixby
- Mrs. Barbara Calabrese
- Mr. & Mrs. Daniel and Patricia Cavalli
- Mr. & Mrs. Patrick and Diane Conte
- Mr. & Mrs. Frank and Marianne Cue
- Mrs. Diane Cugliari
- Mrs. Carla Cusate
- Dr. & Mrs. William and Kimberly Derrickson
- Mrs. Alessandra DiMeo
- Mr. & Mrs. Daniel and Mary Farrell
- Ms. Tara Ferguson
- Mr. Manuel Flores
- Mr. & Mrs. William and Dorothea Forte
- Ms. Lorraine Gribben
- Mrs. Kathy Holobowski
- Mr. & Mrs. Thomas and Mary Kathleen Johnson

Continued on page 5

'Town Meeting' Yields Goals and Objectives

- By Carl Lillvik

On October 22, nearly 50 people attended the Parish Town Meeting to discuss the draft goals and objectives for the Parish. Ten pages of notes were taken and, after review and revision, a set of goals and objectives were approved by the Parish Council on November 12. Many of the comments from the meeting will be used to develop action plans to carry out these objectives.

The approved goals and objectives, as outlined below, are the core of a Parish Plan that will guide Parish Council actions for the next several years. The final plan will be posted on the parish Web site and will be available from the Parish Office.

Long-Range Goals and Objectives – 2007-2010

"It is the mission of the Church of St. Anselm to live the Gospel by forming a Catholic community to foster personal and spiritual growth, and justice and peace in the community at large. This shall be accomplished by preaching the Word, celebrating the sacraments, serving the parish and the community, and celebrating our community spirit."

Foster Personal and Spiritual Growth

Goal 1: Enhance St. Anselm's program for personal and spiritual growth.

St. Anselm's religious education program through confirmation age is very strong with active participation. However, there need to be additional opportunities, increased awareness and coordination of existing programs and ministries that provide for continued growth and support.

Objectives:

- Establish a comprehensive

religious formation process that will provide life-long learning for all stages through adulthood

- Achieve active participation by the parish in adult formation activities by June 2008
- Expand ministries to and by youth and young adults

Foster Justice and Peace

Goal 2: Improve the ability of individual parishioners and the parish at large to take actions that will foster justice and peace in the community at large.

Fostering justice and peace is a significant action component of the parish's mission statement that defines the way the Church of St. Anselm will live the Gospel. The current parish environment needs to be improved to encourage and allow parishioners to express their concerns about issues limiting justice and peace in the community at large.

Objectives:

- Establish a process to annually identify peace and justice issues in which St. Anselm's parish can actively participate as a whole or individually
- Recruit active volunteers to lead and participate in peace and justice activities

Preaching the Word

Goal 3: Continue to provide liturgies that encourage living the Gospel, invite participation, and strengthen parishioners' abilities to live their daily lives.

Liturgies at St. Anselm are an important part of the lives of most of the parishioners. Careful consideration needs to be given to their structure and conduct.

Objectives:

- Provide educational information on the elements of the Mass and the attendant protocols
- Encourage people to participate in the liturgy and its planning

Celebrating the Sacraments

Goal 4: Refresh the way St. Anselm's parish implements the tenets established by Vatican II.

Over a period of time and with the addition of new parishioners, there is a tendency to lose understanding of why St. Anselm does things the way it does. Therefore, there is a need to reexamine and refresh the culture that exists at St. Anselm.

Objectives:

- Conduct an educational series on the tenets of Vatican II
- Regularly schedule sacraments with St. Anselm parish community participation

Serving the Parish and the Community

Goal 5: Improve service to parishioners and the community.

To take the parish to a higher level of service, improvements are needed to make the parish more "user-friendly."

Objectives:

- Conduct an analysis of parish office operations to determine optimum staffing, hours of operation, and needed parish policies and procedures
- Establish a leadership training program to help develop committee leaders

Continued on page 8

Moving Forward as a Community

- By John Boyko

At the beginning of 2006, St. Anselm was a parish in transition. Last May, Fr. Bob retired and we received Fr. Gene as our new, at the time, Parish Administrator. We also saw the result of a consolidation by the Diocese Trenton. As transitions took place, many questioned how we maintain “who we are” in light of these changes.

At the start of my term, I realized that many of our annual activities will continue to take place under the direction of each committee chair. My focus became managing any changes facing our parish community. As a result, I set my sights on creating a long-range parish plan.

In order to move forward to protect “who we are,” we first needed to understand who we are. Thus began several rounds of parish surveys.

Many of the notions we held were confirmed by historical data and further supported by the survey data. We also received some surprises about the makeup of our community and our community participation. Most importantly, we determined specific goals and objectives that our parish

community felt we needed to accomplish to become a better parish.

Of all the accomplishments from this year, the parish planning process was the most difficult and time-consuming effort.

We should all feel proud of developing this plan since it puts St. Anselm within a small group of parishes – only two percent throughout the country – that have a plan in place. You cannot go forward into new territory without a map to guide you, and this plan is that map. It will serve as a path that future Parish Councils can follow. For more specific information about the goals and objectives that will now be a part of each Parish Council agenda going forward, please refer to our parish web site.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to have served as your Parish Council President. Without the support, hard work, and diligence of the Council, we could not have accomplished our goals this year. Thanks to each and every member of the Parish Council for their hard work. I would especially like to thank and recognize those that served on my ad hoc committee to create a long-range parish plan. They spent countless hours gathering data,

preparing surveys, sifting through data, and developing goals and objectives.

On a final note, I would like to introduce your new Parish Council for 2007:

President – Peggy Whiteside

Vice President & COR – Kathy Batdorf

Secretary – Bill Sirnack

Communications – Mike Bellina

Human Concerns & Social Justice – Marsha Van Note

Parish Life – Mary Buchwald

Liturgy Committee – Joe & Beth Henderson

Spiritual Life – Jim Moseman

Youth Committee – Kim Connelly

Stewardship – Bob Welch

Finance – Carl Cappodonna

Consultors – David Galusha, Aleta Galusha, Judy Faunce, Jim Connolly, Ellie Cosgrove, and Maureen Connolly

Please join me in welcoming our new Parish Council. May they be blessed with God’s grace and guidance for a productive and effective year.

1

St. Anselm Welcomes New Parishioners, cont’d

Continued from page 3

- Mr. & Mrs. William and Ester Jordan
- Mr. & Mrs. Christopher and Brenda Kelly
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert and Mary Kelly
- Mr. & Mrs. Tom and Maria LaSala
- Ms. Ramona Lerner
- Mrs. Mary Lippart
- Mrs. Elizabeth Mikorski
- Ms. Mary Murphy
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael and Maria Novick
- Mrs. Cathy Ann Oliff
- Mr. & Mrs. Frank and Grace Randazzo
- Mr. & Mrs. Thomas and Gina Ravaschiere
- Mr. & Mrs. Thomas and Barbara Schember
- Mr. Sal Signorelli
- Ms. Mary Surman
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert and Sommer Van DeBoe
- Ms. Melissa Vezina
- Mrs. Karen Walker-Bradley

1

St. Anselm Parishioner Christmas Memories

Christmas day 2005 was a very special day for me. It was my mother's first visit to St. Anselm. My mother, at 95, had just moved to an assisted living residence closer to me and was staying with me for the holidays. Prior to the move, Mother lived in her own apartment with a caregiver. As with many elderly, she was unable to attend Mass, and that Christmas day was her first time in a church in many years.

What a wonderfully warm welcome we received. We arrived early and I wheeled her to a side aisle where the wheelchair would not block the aisle. As always, the St. Anselm community welcomed us and Mother had a big smile on her face. At the kiss of peace people came from across the aisle and in back of us to lean over and bless her. I was so happy to share St. Anselm with her. When the Mass ended, my neighbors from Rolling Meadows and other St. Anselm friends made a special effort introduce themselves and wish us a Merry Christmas. How blessed I felt to be a part of such a loving family. It was the start of a lovely day and a beautiful memory that I will treasure.

My mother passed away in July and she came back to St. Anselm again, but for the last time. Once again a warm St. Anselm's welcome awaited her — and I was comforted by the memory of that Christmas day. Thank you all! I am so privileged and blessed to have found St. Anselm's community.

- Marcia Van Note



As I stood in the hallway, dressed in my Santa suit with a bag of toys in my hand, I could hear our guests and their Interfaith Hospitality hosts singing a merry rendition of "Jingle Bells." That Christmas Eve, 2001, St. Anselm was hosting four homeless families, including seven children ranging in age from 2 ½ to 13.

To make their holiday a bit more merry, the overnight hosts, Terry and Doug, had arranged a Christmas sing-along in one of the classrooms, that would conclude with a visit from

Santa with gifts for everyone. I was to wait in the hallway until my cue — the song "Here Comes Santa Claus" that would be sung right after "Jingle Bells."

As I was beginning to hear that last "...in a one-horse, open sleigh" the littlest guest, Brianna, unexpectedly ran into the hallway and bumped into me. She screamed and ran crying back into the classroom, completely startled by my presence. No matter. I stepped into the classroom with a hearty "Ho-ho-ho" to be hugged and greeted with big smiles from the other children. Every now and then, Brianna would peek up at me from her mother's lap between sobs. As our gathering went on, she warmed up to ol' Santa, and before the evening's end, she was sitting on my lap smiling with her new baby doll.

The next evening, Christmas day, I found Brianna proudly showing her baby doll to Baby Jesus in the church's crèche. The Santa scare was forgotten, and the joy of Christmas was alive and well in her 2 ½-year-old heart.

- Carl Lillvik

Continued on page 7

My Best Christmas Present

I started teaching many years ago. I remember my first year well, as it was very exciting.

My school was in a small town in Massachusetts close to an Air Force base. Many of the children were from military families but others were from families that worked at the base. My class consisted of 23 children from both backgrounds. One little girl stood out with an infectious smile. Her name was Fanny.

Fanny lived in a nearby trailer park with a number of siblings and only one parent.

As an infant, Fanny was in a fire and was badly burned. Unfortunately it left her with no ears. She was such a happy child and had such a winning personality that you were unaware of her deformity.

When Christmas rolled around I decided to have a party. It was great fun. We had cupcakes and ice cream and we all made macaroni wreaths to take home. I remember spraying so many macaroni wreaths with gold paint that even today I can't look at macaroni. At the end of the day, when all the children left, I remember looking up and seeing Fanny standing in the doorway,

clutching a napkin. She came up to me and said, "I made this just for you," and handed me the napkin. In between the folds was one Oreo cookie. I looked at her with that smile on her face and I hugged her. I whispered in her ear, "don't tell anyone but this is the best Christmas present I have ever received."

In that moment I saw love and innocence in the eyes of a child. Even though that happened many years ago I never forgot Fanny. How fortunate it was for me that God let a little girl give me the gift of an Oreo cookie.

- Merie Carcich

Celebrate the Season with Kids

- By *Maria Bonenfant*

In this issue of *Illuminations*, we talk about the many ways that St. Anselm provides a warm, welcoming sense of community during the Christmas season. If you have children, you may want to join in on the following traditions this year, and experience that sense of community as a family.

St. Nick's Party: Ever popular each year, this event is a wonderful opportunity for children of all ages to see their friends and to tell Santa what they would like under their Christmas trees this year. There will be a Christmas craft and snacks to keep everyone busy until Santa arrives. Parents are welcome to take their own pictures with Santa. Join in on **Sunday, Dec. 17th at 3 p.m. in the Learning Center.** Sign-up sheets are in the church lobby; if possible, sign up before hand so planners have an idea of approximately how many children will be there.

Christmas Sing-Along: Fun for the whole family, this is a chance for singers of all abilities to make their hearts merry by joining in a chorus of traditional Christmas tunes. The "price" of admission is a plate of cookies to share with everyone. The singing starts **Wednesday, December 20th at p.m. in the worship area.**

The Christmas Manger: Our manger scene with live animals has been a favorite tradition each year at St. Anselm, especially with children, since 1985! This year, why not give your kids an opportunity to feel important by helping out? Sign up sheets will be in the lobby for volunteers to feed and clean the animals. Volunteers are needed twice a day (before 9 a.m. and before 6 p.m.) from about a week before Christmas, until they leave, usually about 10 days after Christmas. Even if you are not able to maintain the crèche, bring your



The guest of honor at the St. Anselm St. Nick's party with one of his elves.

kids to say "hi" to the animals and keep them company for a while. The manger is located in the front yard of the Church near the entrance to the parking lot.



St. Anselm Parishioner Christmas Memories, cont'd

Continued from page 6



A few years ago, when our daughter, Olivia, was 4, my husband took her to the St. Nick's party at St. Anselm. She was eager to spend some time alone with Daddy, and to get away from her one year-old brother, whose need for parental attention was really cramping her style. Besides, her friend Emma was going to be there and Olivia couldn't wait to see her and Santa too. (She was dying to tell Santa how she wanted a Cinderella doll for Christmas.)

When she got there, Olivia found her friend and the two of them settled in to make their craft. It was a Christmas angel, complete with sparkly halo and

white dress. Every now and then, she would look over her shoulder to make sure Santa hadn't arrived yet.

As she finished her craft and ate her cookies, the jolly old elf made his way into the room. She patiently waited in line for her turn to sit on his lap.

When her turn finally came, she sat on his lap and told him what she would like under the tree. He promised her that he would bring it and then asked her what she would like today. "Would you like a frog or a bear?" he asked. "A bear," she replied (the frog would simply not be dainty enough).

Santa reached deep into his bag and declared "Frog!" as he pulled out the wrong toy. He tried again. "Frog!" he said. He tried a third time. "Frog!" he said again, as he pulled yet another

frog from his bag. At this point, Olivia was absolutely tickled that Santa could just not get this right without a good deal of trial and error. "Bear!" he finally said as he pulled out the object of her desires from his big Santa bag.

When Olivia and her daddy came home, I asked how their visit with Santa went. Olivia proudly showed me the angel she made and they both relayed the story that I just retold. And then, Olivia thoughtfully paused and said, "Mommy, I think there is more than one Santa Claus." "Why is that?" I asked. "Because the Santa at the mall had glasses and a skinny beard, and the Santa at church had no glasses and a fat beard." Every year since, we've just waved at the mall Santa from a distance!

- *Maria Bonenfant*

'Town Meeting' Yields Goals & Objectives

Continued from page 4

- Develop a plan to make full use of the parish data system to provide accurate reports for use in administering the parish
- Develop a comprehensive two- to three-year facilities improvement and maintenance plan

Goal 6: Expand internal and external participation in parish.

With less than 50 percent of the families participating in parish activities and with minimal parish growth, there is a need to establish methods and programs that will encourage active participation of those within the parish and the community.

Objectives:

- Conduct a survey of non-participating parishioners to determine their needs
- Market St. Anselm's to the

community at large as an open Vatican II parish

Goal 7: Revitalize the financial aspects of being a stewardship parish.

"RETAINING THIS COMMUNITY SPIRIT REQUIRES REGULAR RECOGNITION AND AWARENESS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR."

St. Anselm has a strong volunteer base that gives its time and talents to operating the parish.

As a stewardship parish with minimal requests for funds or discussion of finances, it appears that the

increasing cost of parish operations is not being adequately met by the collections.

Objective:

- Increase parishioner understanding of the treasure aspects of being a Stewardship Parish

Celebrating our Community Spirit

Goal 8: Continue to find ways to retain St. Anselm's reputation as a welcoming and friendly community.

St. Anselm's is known as a welcoming and non-judgmental community that takes pride in its spirituality and service. Retaining this community spirit requires regular recognition and awareness throughout the year.

Objectives:

- Plan for and conduct an outdoor 35th Anniversary Mass
- Improve the registration, welcoming, and parishioner recognition process to encourage more active participation in the parish.



Rejoice

St. Anselm Baptisms

St. Anselm welcomes our newest members who recently celebrated the sacrament of Baptism. Congratulations to all the parents and Godparents.

- Molly Arcara
- Jenna Augusta
- Makena Augusta
- Julia Biasi
- Molly Burden
- Nicolette Cataneo
- Jake Chrobocinski

- Natalie Chrobocinski
- Robert Fraser
- Connor Hansen
- Shawn Karaty
- Michael Kasun

- Trevor Marovich
- Molly McAdorey
- Frank McCann
- Amanda McLeod
- Michael Oltarzewski
- Declan Sales
- Mia Shea
- Katherine Smith
- Nicholas Williams
- Maxwell Wright



The Way to Wayside — My Journey to St. Anselm

- By *Betty Christie*

I was born and raised Jewish. Then, at the age of 56, I was directed to a profound spiritual change in my life.

The statue of the Blessed Mother captivated me in a store.

Noticing this, the shopkeeper told me that he now saw a “Jewish mother for a Jewish girl.”

During the following year, I began to have “experiences” with Jesus in which he would appear and communicate to me. He began to touch me in a special way although I had no idea why. When I asked Catholic friends, I was told to “just go with it.” I did, and found that I was beginning to feel that Jesus was my friend, and He was with me to provide comfort and peace.

After several of these experiences, I

sought the advice of a minister friend in Monmouth County, as I felt it was time to communicate with a Catholic priest and I was not sure where to go. My friend knew me and my interests. She recommended St. Anselm parish



and Fr. Bob. I met with him on December 31, 1999 and started the RCIA program in January 2000. My life was changed forever.

I found a spirit-filled group of people who facilitated the RCIA program and I just relished each and every meeting. My sponsor became my guide and

mentor through the program.

At the Easter Vigil in 2000, I received the sacraments of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation. My friend and family did not understand what I was

doing or why. Then they saw the glow and serenity in my eyes, and they understood that I had finally found what I had been searching for all my life.

I became a member of the Parish, joined the

Bereavement Committee and facilitated several bereavement groups.

Due to illness, I cannot attend mass at St. Anselm as often as I would like.

When I go to other parishes closer to where I live, I realize that there is ‘no place like home’ — the parish of St. Anselm in Wayside.

1

Enjoy ‘A Cup of Christmas Tea’

- By *Sandy Mullarkey, Pastoral Associate*

The Christmas and holiday season can get hectic for just about everyone. From decorating and parties, to cooking, baking, and shopping, the list goes on and on.

What is the true meaning of the Christmas season? Is it giving the \$600 video games or hosting the most elaborate Christmas parties? Is it shopping “until you drop?” Holiday advertisements bombard us with unrealistic expectations and our “to-do” lists seem to go on forever.

A few years ago, I received a book, *A Cup of Christmas Tea*, by Tom Hegg. It is a short story describing a letter from an infirm and elderly great-aunt who hopes her nephew can make time to drop by for a cup of Christmas tea. The author forces himself to fit in a visit that he fears will be depressing, only to find a house lovingly filled

with childhood memories and a great-aunt whose eyes still sparkle and whose words still encourage.

When we make time and look into the eyes of the grief stricken, lonely, ill, elderly, oppressed, or marginalized, we find and share moments of hope that can last a lifetime. We need to remember the words, “whatever you did for one of my people, you did for me.” (Matt. 25:40). We need to see the face of God in everyone we meet.

We all have family, friends, or neighbors that may need an uplifting visit or call. Making a short visit to someone who is alone or who is experiencing a difficult time can be a very satisfying experience. Making another person happy is a double gift — a gift for you and a gift for the other.

Like the author of *A Cup of Christmas Tea*, you may have mixed feelings

about visiting someone who may be sick or alone. The anticipation of the visit may stir up feelings of anxiety — whether it be seeing a formerly healthy, vibrant person who is now weak and frail or visiting someone struggling through their first Christmas following the death of a loved one. Perhaps your visit will bring a smile or a bit of sunshine in the midst of a storm.

Your generous gift of time will be rewarding, and you will be repaid with the true meaning of “Joy to the World.”

Our busy lives leave little room for visiting the infirmed, weak, and elderly. I hope after reading this article, you will think of a relative, friend, or neighbor that would enjoy a visit from you, to share a “Cup of Christmas Tea.”

1

Stewardship 2006: Many Hands Yield Results

- By John Boyko

As we celebrate the season of Advent, it's important to note that we are near the end of the current Parish Council term. Here's a summary of our Committees' work for the parish over the past year:

Administration of Properties – Pat McDonald, Chairperson

We were fortunate this year that the Administration of Properties committee was able to focus on maintenance of our parish environment rather than repairs. Projects included gutter and window cleaning, fish pond maintenance, heating and air conditioning, painting, mowing, and snow removal.

Liturgy Committee – Joe and Beth Henderson, Chairpersons

The Liturgy team coordinates all aspects of worship in the parish, from the Sunday Liturgy to managing the various Liturgical Ministries. This year, the team revitalized the committee and ensured representation from all liturgical ministries, reinstated the sending forth of Christophers at the 9 a.m. Mass, and much more.

Stewardship Committee – Bob Welch, Chairperson

Focused on promoting stewardship and coordinating Time & Talent, Registration, and Witness Weekend, this Committee stood apart from the Finance Committee for the first time this year.

Human Concerns & Social Justice – Terry Wood, Chairperson

In helping to keep the spirit alive in our community this year, this committee collected hygiene items for The Center, held Equal Exchange Coffee and Bread for Life sales, provided speakers and coordinated 90-second letters regarding the moratorium on the Death Penalty, and much more.

Communications Committee – Anita Nixon & Bill Simack, Chairpersons

Through various vehicles, this committee makes our community aware of activities that enhance our personal, spiritual, and social lives. This year, the committee revised the welcoming book, published four issues of the *Illuminations* newsletter, upgraded the library with a copy machine, PC with internet connection and printer, new TV, new DVD/VHS player, and new books, publications, DVDs, and videos, and much more.

Education Committee – Mary McKennedy, Chairperson

Operating under the Religious Education department, this committee focuses on the educational needs of the adult parish community. It is currently in need of a chairperson, as the committee chair was vacated this summer due to personal demands.

More than 800 children from our parish currently participate in the Religious Education program run by Jan Santinello.

Youth Committee – Kimberly Connolly, Youth Minister

In its efforts to engage young people in an intimate and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ, the Youth Committee participated in a variety of events, including the Diocesan Youth Conference and the NJ Catholic Youth Rally.

Parish Life Committee – Kathy Batdorf, Chairperson

This committee coordinates social and community gatherings of the Church of St. Anselm in a spiritual way. In 2006, the Committee introduced new events and orchestrated such favorites as our coffee and donuts every third weekend, Wellness, blood pressure, and LifeLine screenings, our "Open Mike Night," and the International dinner.

Spiritual Life – Jim Moseman, Chairperson

In fostering a prayerful and spiritual attitude, this committee helps us to be more aware of God in our lives. During the past year, it supported the parish retreat, started spiritual book clubs, and introduced a form of contemplative prayer at Taize prayer services among other accomplishments.

Finance Committee – Carl Cappadona, Chairperson

The Finance Committee is responsible for the parish budget, operations, investments, and financial reports. In 2006, this committee changed to a fiscal calendar to reflect the Diocesan calendar, participated in long-range planning, and changed investment funds, resulting in higher returns.

Community Outreach (COR) – Peggy Whiteside, Vice President & Chair

COR provides needed funds to individuals facing unexpected financial hardship and to organizations that provide assistance to the sick, poor, and disabled. Our parish dedicates 10 percent of all weekly collections for this purpose. Through November 2006, the committee considered requests from 39 individuals and organizations, which represents a 34 percent increase over last year.

Companions on the Journey – Sandy Mullarkey, Pastoral Associate

Through six-week group sessions run before Advent and during Lent, this program focuses on faith sharing, which connects our everyday lives to our faith. Participants support one another's efforts to work, play, and live in the company of God's presence each day. Companions and Spiritual Life also ran this year's enlightening Parish retreat, which was attended by 85 people.

Sunday's Child: A St. Anselm Baptism Miracle

Continued from page 2

in the hospital room. Fr. Charles came every morning and gave Johanna a blessing and became a great comfort and friend of the family.

Eventually the doctors began to prepare Virgil for the worst, telling him that if Johanna were to recover, she would have awakened within the first three days. Medical teams assisted her around the clock in hopes that Johanna and the baby could make a miraculous recovery.

Throughout the ordeal, the baby continued to test positively as Johanna struggled to produce any signs of consciousness. Doctors later stated that the unborn baby – who would also be given the name Virgil – actually kept Johanna alive during the critical months in the coma. The baby and mother were relying on each other to survive, and the baby produced just enough life support for Johanna's body to get through the critical period.

The Holy Spirit is the giver of life, and that gift comes in many ways and through many people and means – even in the presence of an unborn baby. Johanna remained in a vegetative state for weeks, but then she began making progress. Finally, after weeks of slow progress, doctors acknowledged she was out of the coma. Her primary doctor told her husband that Johanna was “doing much better” and was responsive to all commands during an examination.

Virgil couldn't believe the news: after weeks of stress and fear, his faith and fortitude and an incredible hospital staff had sustained the family through the crisis. He was able to speak to his wife for the first time and have her respond in simple ways after weeks of silence.

After awakening, Johanna remained at the Jersey Shore ICU and continued to improve. She was able to speak and became an inspiration to the staff. The nurses grew very fond of Johanna and organized a baby shower on her behalf that summer. The staff and hospital

unit had become Virgil's second family – one for which he will always be grateful.

Doctors were hoping Johanna would reach at least 34 weeks gestation before delivering her baby, but her water broke at 29 weeks and she underwent an emergency Caesarean

section. Virgil Calvin Icasiano was born on Sunday, July 31, 2005. He weighed just 2 lbs., 1 oz. and measured 11 inches long.

The elder Virgil thought it would be best to have the baby baptized as soon as possible, and Fr. Charles, who spent so many days and nights with the family, came to provide the sacramental ceremony. It was midnight on August 1 when baby Virgil answered his call to discipleship in the presence of Fr. Charles and Johanna's parents. Virgil spent his first months in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, where he struggled to make steady progress. Today, Virgil Calvin is a beautiful, healthy 16-month-old boy with a bright future.

After undergoing extensive physical and cognitive rehabilitation that taught her to walk and climb stairs, Johanna returned home in October 2005. She is still recovering from the effects of the coma and continues to face physical and mental challenges with her blood sugar and cognition problems. She is still in need of daily attention due to her blood sugar and will need medical attention for an extended period. Nevertheless, the couple continues to put their trust in

God, knowing that everything they need has been given and will be provided fully.

Johanna is expecting again, 16 months after the birth of Virgil. All three Icasianos look forward to the arrival of a second child in March 2007. In addition, Johanna hopes that eventually further recovery will allow her to pursue a law career, as the news that she passed her bar exam came while she was in a coma.

Many groups at St. Anselm prayed for the couple during the ordeal. Those prayers remain important to the family with the daily challenges that every family faces. They continue to rely on God for daily direction and the continuous blessings that God always promises and provides each family of faith.

“THE BABY AND MOTHER WERE RELYING ON EACH OTHER TO SURVIVE.”

Humor: The Spirit of Giving?

Fr. O'Shea, the parish priest in the village, was giving a sermon about charity.

He said, "The trouble with the world today is that some people have too much and others have too little. We must give of ourselves and our worldly goods to help the less fortunate."

He said to Harrigan, "If you had 10,000 pounds, wouldn't you give half of it to the poor?"

He said, "I would that, Father."

Fr. O'Shea said, "If you had two greyhounds, wouldn't you give one of them to your neighbor next door?" Harrigan said, "No."

The priest said, "And why not?"

He said, "I have two greyhounds."

Illuminations Staff

Editorial Staff:

Diane Antunes	John Boyko
Frank Coyle	Kristen Indahl
Phyllis Lockwood	Ed McCarthy, Editor
Sandy Mullarkey	Anita Nixon-Sirnack
Nick Petrillo	William Sirnack
Maria Bonenfant	Fr. Gene Vavrick
Betty Christie	Carl Lillvik

Artwork:

Mary Pacheko

Photography:

Anita Nixon-Sirnack Mary Anne Spina

Production:

Omega Graphics, Shrewsbury, NJ
(800) HEY-OMEGA
www.heyomega.com

Golden Jubilee at St. Anselm



Photos Courtesy Anita Nixon-Sirnack

Mercy Sisters Mary Mason (r.) and Vida O'Leary (l.) celebrated their 50th years as professed Sisters of Mercy with the St. Anselm parish community on Saturday, Nov. 4, following the 5:30 p.m. Mass. Today Sister Vida works as a hospital chaplain at the Booker Cancer Unit of Riverview Hospital in Red Bank; Sister Mary is a member of the staff at Epiphany House in Asbury Park.

Church of St. Anselm

A Stewardship Parish

Fr. Gene Vavrick, Pastor

1028 Wayside Road
Wayside, New Jersey 07712
(732) 493-4411
www.stanselm.com

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage

PAID

Asbury Park, NJ

Permit No. 155

