

# OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH NEWSLETTER

Summer 2018



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## Monsignor James C. Turro

*In this issue we are proud to share parishioners' memories of Msgr. Turro over the six decades he has shepherded our parish.*

### The Energizer Priest

By: John Sheerins

History teaches that numerous events occurred in 1948 as our country was in a period of recovery. Life changes were being experienced due to the loss of loved ones. Young women and men were making vocation decisions that would not only affect their lives but also those in the global community.

The Newark Archdiocese would be conferring the Sacrament of Holy Orders on James C. Turro to act in the person of Christ and, unaware at the time, the global community would be the recipient of "The Energizer Priest." PHD, SSL (Licentiate Sacred Scriptures), STL (Licentiate Sacred Theology), BA came about through endless hours of hard work but never interfered with Monsignor Turro's basic kind approach to anyone in his presence.

His trademark three or four sentence power-packed homilies not only trigger one's thought processes, but gently continue to be a reminder of the enormous power of prayer.

As I was working in the publishing industry, it always brought pause to watch, from the early sixties on forward, how his approach as an author was emulated. To this day, Monsignor's reflections bring an inner peace that multitudes benefit from and deeply admire.

Seventy years or 25,550 days of priestly service from continent to continent includes: meeting, greeting, consoling and bringing God's Word to everyone and anyone who has but a moment to listen or take the time to meditate on his reflections. At his most respected age, there do not seem to be many signs of slowing down "The Energizer Priest."

Communities of all denominations have benefited from his spiritual insights and prayerful approach. Seton Hall University's Immaculate Conception Seminary / School of Theology understandably sings his praises with the dedication of the Monsignor James C. Turro Seminary Library. The OLM community has been blessed to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord, all wrapped up in the person of Monsignor James C. Turro.

Our prayers of thanksgiving are many for his presence among us.

*Please see Monsignor Turro on page 4*

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## Getting to know...

*Last summer Fr. Joe and Fr. Patrick came to OLM to serve as our Pastor and Parochial Vicar. We welcome them again and offer this opportunity to “take a closer look.”*

## Rev. Msgr. Joseph Chapel: A Pastoral Tale

By: Celeste T. Villegas

What is endearing about our new pastor is his unassuming nature. Despite having served in varied capacities as professor, mentor, spiritual director, confessor, and associate dean, Rev. Msgr. Joseph Chapel introduced himself to OLM parishioners as “just a local boy.” Growing up in River Vale and Westwood, later joining our parish, and gradually becoming involved, were certain personal experiences that formed the good ground on which the seed of a priestly vocation was planted. Passing OLM every day to and from work, he finally wandered in .... and the rest is history!

His gift to OLM is a spirituality that will enable many to see God in all things. His vision of inclusiveness, OLM without walls, where strangers become family, extends to the underserved and to our missing friends and neighbors. His mission

work over the last 15 years in Brazil, Ecuador and El Salvador illustrates a dedication to an apostolate on the front lines. It provides the foundation of a pastoral leadership entrusted to God’s mercy, love and providence.

Through seemingly labyrinthine ways, Monsignor Chapel indeed has come home again to answer and share the call to Christian service and outreach in our midst. His stewardship at OLM, will help to ensure “Christ’s truth ... (to) always and totally affect our daily life,” (Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*). It is the main ingredient in creating “the sense of ... warmth and friendship needed to build, nurture and create community,” the recipe that will continue to transform OLM into a tried-and-true welcoming parish.

May Monsignor Chapel’s force be with us at OLM for a long, long time!



Fr. Joe with Sandra Aquino at her First Communion.

## Rev. Patrick Seo: A Tale of Discernment

By: Celeste T. Villegas

By all indications, as His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Tobin, Archbishop of Newark, told Fr. Patrick Seo at his May 27, 2017 ordination, “(He) has not chosen Jesus; our Risen Lord has chosen (Fr. Seo) to go forth and bear fruit that will remain.” Why else would Fr. Seo, “in his third year at Thomas Jefferson Medical College” decide instead “to become a physician of souls?”

The sense of restlessness he experienced in his medical school years, upon reflection, suggested to Fr. Seo that God was asking more from him. He could not, in good conscience, merely follow in his family’s footsteps, although medicine clearly was a noble profession. Spending a month in prayer and contemplation at a Carthusian Monastery in Vermont, and after months of spiritual direction, he was able to realize that his vocation story would be played out, not in religious life after all, but in the diocesan priesthood.

Fr. Seo returned to Newark, NJ and worked for a year at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, NJ. to discern his next step. Subsequently, he entered Immaculate Conception Seminary in South Orange, NJ.

Ordained to the priesthood as his path to holiness, Fr. Seo, our new Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Mercy Parish now tends to the spiritual care of his flock who, according to him, are “a wide range of people with a variety of needs” – not far-fetched from those he encountered in his medical rounds. Fr. Seo clarifies, “The diocesan priesthood is the family medicine of the spiritual life ... it is exciting to see how the Lord uses me to deliver His grace.”

May the Holy Spirit’s inspirations continue to allow Fr. Seo to respond promptly and wholeheartedly to His invitations and lead us to our shared goal addressed to him every day.

We at OLM, meanwhile, thank the Good Lord for Fr. Seo’s discernment choice.



As usual, Fr. Patrick found working on his homily in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

### Prayer for Priests

Gracious and loving God, we thank You for the gift of our priests.  
 Through them, we experience Your presence in the sacraments.  
 Help our priests to be strong in their vocation.  
 Set their souls on fire with love for Your people.  
 Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.  
 Inspire them with the vision of Your Kingdom.  
 Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel.  
 Allow them to experience joy in their ministry.  
 Help them to become instruments of Your divine grace.  
 We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest.  
 Amen.

## Monsignor James C. Turro Seminary Library

### Dedication

At the dedication of the Msgr. James C. Turro Library on October 28, 2007, the current Library Director, the Rev. Lawrence B. Porter stated:

“Monsignor James Turro has had a paramount role in the history of this seminary library. Among the five priests who in the 150-year history of this library have held the title of director, no one has held that title so long and amid so much trial and turmoil as did Monsignor Turro. James Cyril Turro was director of this library for 45 dramatic years, from 1959 to 2004.”



The Honoree



Cardinal Tobin with Msgr. Turro

### Monsignor James C. Turro Seminary Library

The Monsignor James C. Turro Seminary Library is the research library for Seton Hall University's Immaculate Conception Seminary / School of Theology. The library's resources include over 70,000 books and 400 periodicals, housing a substantial collection of videos, DVDs and Sacred Music CDs, all of which support the educational and spiritual formation of our students. For the advanced scholar there are many critical editions of the major biblical and theological sources; for the pastoral minister a variety of catechetical and education resources are available.

**Monsignor Turro:**

**Parishioners' Tributes**

**Holding on to Hope**

By: A Grateful parishioner

Years ago, my son was not communicating with any family member. We did not have any news about how he and his wife were. As the years passed my prayers seemed unanswered. I spoke to many priests about this heartache and asked them to pray for our family.

On a retreat Monsignor Turro was there hearing confessions. I told him about my sadness, and how difficult it was trying to hold on to hope. I said that if my son had a baby I would never see this grandchild. Monsignor Turro said that he saw it differently – he said that my son should have a child, and then he would know what it is like to be a father. I had never thought of it that way, so I prayed for a change of heart.

About three weeks later my grandson was born and my son began to be a part of our family again.

Thank you, Monsignor Turro, for your words of wisdom and compassion.

**Caravan in the Desert**

By: Carolyn McNamara

At one of our first Masses at OLM my husband Jack and I sat down after the Gospel and I bent over to help our 2 year-old Laura sit on the kneeler as she usually did. All of a sudden I realized everyone was standing again for the Creed.

Had I missed the homily? On the way home I got a longer embellished recital of a story about how barking dogs do not discourage the caravan in the desert.

Often over the next forty years we were reminded of that concept. Keep going! Don't get discouraged! It's only barking dogs! The Lord is with us!

Father Turro was the homilist.

**I know Conshohocken!**

By: Rosemarie Kelly

One day I stopped to say hello to Fr. Turro. I mentioned that I was originally from Conshohocken, PA. Within seconds he said, "I know Conshohocken!"

Now, not too many people, if any, were familiar with this city whenever I mentioned it. Fr. Turro, however, remembered St. Matthew church where he married a young couple. This was the same church where my husband Larry and I were married.

**Italian-Speaking Instructor**

By: Rosemarie Myers

Recently, while I was on a retreat with the Associates of the Sisters of St. Lucy Filippini, I picked up a book about the nuns who came to this country to minister to the Italian immigrants. Many of them studied with Italian-speaking instructors at Darlington Seminary and became teachers in this area. We were blessed to have the Sisters here at Our Lady of Mercy School.

One of the young priests who taught the Sisters was none other than Fr. Turro.



**Rev. Msgr. James C. Turro**

Fr. Turro was here for the dedication of the present OLM church in 1964!

## Showing Up:

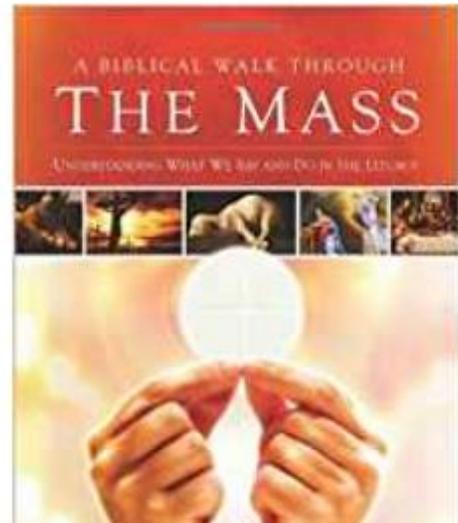
### The Mass and Other Spiritual Opportunities

By: A Fellow Parishioner

In this parish, which I regard as my spiritual physical home, I have shown up often and have received the riches of the love and care of our priests, the comfort of OLM friends, and the sense of belonging I feel in our beautiful church. I deserve no praise or accolades for having come here. As Monsignor Turro has said many times we have a homing device in our DNA, “We are wired for God.” My wiring brings me here. I conceive that my wiring is not for religion — an organized belief system, but for the life giving Spirit of God. This Spirit is present in all of nature — the flowers that spring up in the tiny crevices, the creatures that live in dark places, and the people who endure debilitating hopelessness and suffering.

As nature’s highest form of life we humans can go beyond turning toward sunlight or sensing the nearest water source. We have the capacity to allow our mind/body and emotions to inform us to seek and to move toward where we are fed spiritually, where we can find love and hope in an imperfect, uncertain, and sometimes threatening world. My parents chose religion for me as a source of security and community. I learned from them to look up in praise and prayer for something beyond myself. How lucky I have been!

Not long ago I once more dipped into the spiritual well by showing up at a series of enrichment classes offered by at OLM on the Mass. Thirsty again, I found what I needed — a deeper understanding of a resource I tap into regularly, the Divine Liturgy. From this study of the Mass I became more aware that before “showing up” for this sacred act of love and worship, it is important for me to prepare myself by approaching with openness and intention to engage in relationship with my priest and my community. Grace could be available for me if I take an active part in mind, body and spirit. I see this attitude as the opposite



of simply complying with an obligation to attend Mass or to go through the motions of showing up in body only, so I could tell my conscience I was there.

My presence to God’s Presence is key. The “*Biblical Walk through the Mass*” focused on the three parts of the Mass. The **Introductory Rites** — I approach the Divine Liturgy with humility to be able to be receptive to God’s Grace and in awe of the Divine.

In the **Liturgy of the Word**, I open myself up to take in the Scripture of the Old Testament, the sacred readings of the Acts of the Apostles or the epistles, and stories of Jesus’ life in the gospels. In our group study, I enjoyed listening to the personal sharing of our group members and their understanding of the Scriptures. I imagined Jesus talking about Scripture with the elders in the synagogue. I felt close to Him there. When I hear the readings at Mass, if I am really listening, there is a personal message for me about hope, about love, about my own path in life. Jesus, in the Scriptures, is speaking to me.

Please see “Showing Up” on page 9

## Keeping God in Our Lives

*Earlier this year, the newsletter staff reached out to parishioners (both young adults and seniors) to find out about how we keep God in our lives, either through the daily lives of young adults or through marriage. Here are the thoughts of a few parishioners.*



### Finding My Own Path

By: N. Buonarota

This spring I attended the First Communion of a close family friend. First Communion is a time when we take a “first step” towards something greater. In our lives there are many “first steps,” big events like a wedding or a cross country move, and small events like deciding if I am going to put smooth or chunky peanut butter on my morning toast. Every day is the beginning of the rest of our lives. It is an amazing perspective to take because each day we have the opportunity to be better than the person we were yesterday.

While waiting for the First Communion Mass to begin, an old friend walked up to me and asked if I enjoyed writing. I replied, “I enjoy helping my friends. How may I be of service?” She was looking for a high school or college graduate to help write a short piece discussing how they had kept God in their life.

For a while, my relationship to God wasn’t that great. Surprisingly, the first time I deeply thought about it was while altar serving at a Mass. The other altar server asked why I did it. I said, “Because it is what we are supposed to do,” but I didn’t have a personal reason. Over the next few years, these themes of letting others tell me how I should practice my faith, trying to fit into someone else’s view of what it meant to be holy, and blindly going

through the motions because “that’s what they told me to do,” kept me from truly experiencing a relationship with God.

Eventually I realized I was making things needlessly complicated. My answer was in front of me the whole time. My relationship with God was MY relationship! I needed to find my own path, figure out how I fit into it, what I want out of it, and what I want to contribute to it.

So for me to tell you how to keep God in your life would seem hypocritical. But since I was asked how I did it, I will say, “love, passion, and sharing.” For me, God is love. If I can find the beauty and love in things, then God can never be too far away. When I combine that love with a goal, it turns into passion, which I can then bring with me every day as I try to live my life and become a better person. Then, once I have accomplished a goal, I try to share it with my loved ones, emulating how Jesus shared everything He had with us, asking us to do the same in His memory and so I try.

In conclusion, I maintain my relationship with God like I maintain a relationship with any other person. You must tend to it; nurture it; practice it. But most importantly you should find your own path, not someone else’s. Good luck and God bless you on your new beginnings, big and small, each and every day.

## A Gift to You on Their Golden Anniversary

From Jim and Laretta Miller



It is now in our retired years that we have the time to dialogue and truly consider one another's take on daily events, pressures, and challenges before having to react to them. We are both so strong-willed and independent and had the tendency to charge ahead without respectfully considering the other's feelings. I honestly regret that we didn't make time for this joint thoughtful approach previously. Another improvement to carry forward would be to bring God into these "powwows" with prayers for wisdom followed by prayers of gratitude for His blessings.

So those of you considering marriage, take great care in choosing your life partner. Seek someone who has the same solid values as you. Seek fulfillment and joy in one another as you journey through life. Be willing to compromise, but never compromise your values and faith in God's plan for you.

Jim and I were both brought up in strong Catholic families, with parents, grandparents, and special aunts and uncles as memorable role models. We

attended Catholic elementary and high schools and chose to altar serve, join Sodality, and get involved in service projects in our parishes. Each of us was the eldest of seven children, which gave us many opportunities to model our faith for them. Attending Sunday Mass was never questioned and we shared a strong devotion to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. We married in August 1968, shortly after Jim got his orders to go to Vietnam towards the end of his Marine Corps commitment. Fervent prayer sustained us through this difficult time as Jim's division really was in harm's way. He admitted to me only recently that he never expected to make it back home. Prayers of gratitude were then lifted to God, as we both knew that He is the source of all blessings. Over these past fifty years we have constantly turned to God as we faced many challenges — employment, having children, raising our beautiful three daughters, one with special needs, and caring for aging parents. We truly experienced His supportive Presence, His friendship, and His graces.

### Keeping God in Our Marriage

By: Anita Minnick

We were married on April 4, 1964 in Sacred Heart Church in Glendale, NY and received a crucifix as one of our many wedding gifts.

Even though at the time we thought it was an unusual gift, we hung it in our bedroom in our apartment. A year and a half later it moved with us to our first home and then in 1970 it made one more move into the house where I still live.

In all those years only Jesus' hand broke off once and had to be re-glued. Whatever we glued it with, it is still holding strong. I think of that as our

marriage too. It was a happy, fun marriage that produced three children and six grandchildren and it too, stayed glued no matter what!

Tragedy occurred. 9-11 took our son-in-law, cancer took our daughter-in-law and almost 3 years ago my husband Howard, died suddenly in front of me. Now that I am a widow, I seem to need that crucifix even more.

I like to think that this simple crucifix kept God in our marriage for better or worse.

### Marriage Blessing

Look down with favor, O Lord  
 on these Thy servants,  
 who, by Thine Divine  
 Authority,  
 are one in Holy Matrimony.  
 Grant Them Thy loving  
 protection  
 through days of lasting peace,  
 and bless them with the love  
 of their children's children.  
 Amen.

We received this "Marriage Blessing" shortly after our wedding on January 30, 1971. It has been hanging in our bedroom ever since, blessing us through the years. (Children's children seemed so far away.)  
 Diane and Ralph Meyer

*Showing Up continued from page 6.*

Finally, in the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**, with gratitude we give our gifts to God through the intercession of our priest, our intermediary. Jesus gives Himself to me as I open my heart to Him. I am invited to receive this gift. Over and over again it is made available to me. I have the opportunity to join with the Divine and with the community of believers as one body in a sacred experience that is real and alive right now, not just a memorial of an event from long ago.

I came away from my course with a deeper appreciation of the Mass and a greater reverence

for this opportunity to give of my time and attention and to receive so much more in return. I am a regular at trying to keep in touch with my "wiring" and respond to the hunger and thirst for something more. Being with people with whom I can talk about God and faith is nourishing for me. That might be through my connection to a prayer group or a ministry that is meaningful to me. I picture the image of reaching up and reaching out as a way of keeping my spiritual compass headed toward true North. Try showing up with an open heart and I believe you will find a path to renewal, replenishment, and growth.

**Author recommendation:** *Making All Things New* by Henri Nouwen, (1981).

## Reflections

### Find Your Own Calcutta

By: Celeste T. Villegas

Having to wade through the complexities characterizing our world today can bring on extreme anxiety. At times, we may feel we are at some crossroad. Since we are Christians, however, our one and immediate concern should be how we can “win souls for Christ.” The *Catechism* teaches (Article 1861), “Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation.”

“Find your own Calcutta,” Mother Teresa had been known to say to those who admired her work with the Missionaries of Charity. According to the Saint, “Holiness is not the luxury of a few; it is everyone’s duty: yours and mine.” Fr. James Martin, SJ, author of *My Life with the Saints*, agrees that sanctity is within our reach “without becoming a social activist like Dorothy Day or a contemplative like Thomas Merton.” The starting point is where we are. “Find your own Calcutta” individually by experiencing the presence of God in our lives and in the lives of the people with whom we live and work ... and doing it with love.” That is an important first step to making the mission a reality in the everyday. Make “holiness an endpoint” by looking for ways to use talent and time to serve.

At the spring Ministries Fair, Our Lady of Mercy Parish proved to be audaciously rich soil for “fraternal service and dedication to the church.”

Support from the beginning of life to the end of life, direct services to address peoples’ current needs, efforts to sponsor social change that will remove the causes of social problems – these are among many ministries that capture the warm hospitality and welcome felt in the parish. It is a salient point for those who aspire to become “the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold” (Matthew 13:23). Moreover, various existing prayer groups also call for the inclusion of a diverse group of Catholics.

Without a doubt, you can really “find your own Calcutta” and your church mission right here and now. If we choose to shape and share our spiritual journey on earth, specifically at OLM Parish, then we will discover that truly life is not only about self-involvement (as in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, Luke 18:9-14). Life is about love of God and of neighbor. How best can we answer God’s invitation to live out our unique vocations? Live life with hope and purpose. “Find your own Calcutta,” minister in the parish and beyond, and “win souls for Christ”, your own and others.

Carolyn McNamara, Coordinator, 201-746-0315  
Mary Francis Martin, Rosemarie Myers, Christine Venusti, Celeste Villegas

**WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBER-MARY FRANCIS MARTIN!**

**Contributors:** N. Buonarota, Rosemarie Kelly, Diane and Ralph Meyer, Jim and Laurretta Miller, Anita Minnick, John Sheerins.  
Also contributions from “a Fellow Parishioner” and “a Grateful parishioner.”

**We can’t do it without you!  
“One Good Read Deserves Another!”**

**Please send your Ideas. Your Articles.”  
Submit to Carolyn McNamara or drop off at the rectory church office**