

OUR LADY *Star of the Sea*

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Deacon Anthony Marini's Lifelong Call to Service

INSIDE

- 3 *A Letter From Our Pastor:* Surrounded by Saints and Good Stewards
- 4 A Look Back on Recent Events and Activities at Our Lady Star of the Sea
- 6 The Men's Basketball Group
- 7 Bereavement Ministry Offering Healing and Hope

Ever since his birth in a small Italian village, faith has played an integral part in Deacon Anthony Marini's life. During his childhood, it played a pivotal role in his family's life, a core part of their very identity. And that role only deepened when Deacon Tony later immigrated to the states as a young child. Trying to overcome the cultural and language barriers surrounding him in 1937 Brooklyn, he found himself increasingly drawn to the comfort and familiarity of the Catholic liturgy.

"When we got here to the States, not knowing the language or anything about the culture, I tended to gravitate more toward the Church where I knew what was going on," Deacon Tony says. "The Latin prayers were very easy for me to learn, especially with my Italian background, and I ended up becoming one of the most popular altar servers."

These early years altar serving had a profound impact on Deacon Tony's life, making him fall in love with and seriously discern the priesthood. Life took an unexpected turn, however, when his father passed away, causing Deacon Tony to become the main breadwinner for his mother at the young age of 21. And when Deacon Tony later wed Maria — the two were married for nearly 60 years until her passing in 2016 — all thoughts of ordained life seemed gone for good.



Deacon Tony continues to exemplify a faithful spirit of service both here at the parish and at the Vicar's Landing community, where he currently resides.



Deacon Anthony Marini *continued from front cover*



Beyond his liturgical responsibilities, Deacon Tony has been part of numerous parish Bible studies and prayer groups, has prepared countless men, women and children for the sacraments, was actively involved in Christ Renews His Parish, and would frequently visit the sick and homebound.

Yet, this all changed following the Second Vatican Council, when the permanent diaconate was restored in the Church. Thrilled by the idea of serving the Church in this unique way, Deacon Tony immediately contacted his pastor.

"I was just very attracted to the diaconate," Deacon Tony says. "So, I approached my pastor at the time, sharing my interest in joining. I later contacted the chancery at his advice, but the program was just getting off the ground."

Deacon Tony would have to wait several years before finally becoming part of the first diaconate class for the Diocese of Rochester in 1978. Together with his wife, Maria, Deacon Tony then began a lengthy process of discernment and preparation for this new calling.

"Maria and I truly went through the diaconate formation together," Deacon Tony says. "There were 24 candidates for that first class, and of those about 12 wives, including Maria, came to nearly every class for the next four years. So, essentially we prepared for the ministry together."

United by what deacon refers to as a "triumvirate" between themselves and God, the couple saw their dream finally come to fruition on April 17, 1982, when Deacon Tony was ordained to the permanent diaconate. This launched the Marinis into a life of wholehearted ministry and outreach. The couple became particularly focused on

ministering to the Hispanic community both here in the state of Florida and in North Carolina.

"Our work with the migrant workers was very important to us," Deacon Tony says. "We related to them closely, having both been born in Italy, and saw this as a real opportunity to become that bridge for them."

The Marinis later became part of the Our Lady Star of the Sea community in 1997, when Deacon Tony became the parish's first permanent deacon. With "nothing of diaconate nature" already existing in the parish, Deacon Tony really set the tone by immediately diving into parish life. Beyond his liturgical responsibilities, he's been part of numerous parish Bible studies and prayer groups, has prepared countless men, women and children for the sacraments, was actively involved in Christ Renews His Parish, and would frequently visit the sick and homebound.

"I was always more on the helping side than the leading," Deacon Tony says. "My goal was just to join in and support in whatever ways I could."

Now at age 87, Deacon Tony continues to exemplify that same spirit of service both here at the parish and at the Vicar's Landing community, where he currently resides. For him, that's just part of what it means to be a good steward — his way of continuing to say "yes" to the call and to live out his vocation.

"You never really retire from ministry," Deacon Tony says. "It's a calling from God — a deep desire, deep within your heart, to serve. When I go to Mass and just sit in the pew, I always feel like I should be up there on the altar doing my job. It's a profound calling from the Lord and one that I am deeply grateful for."

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A Letter from Our Pastor

Surrounded by Saints and Good Stewards

Dear Parishioners,

It is June — not quite the heart of the summer, but certainly a time when everything seems to be wrapping up. From school and religious education, to many of our ministries, much is winding down and going on hiatus.

Last month, we celebrated the month of our Blessed Mother Mary. This month, I would like to turn our attention to the idea of stewardship, although that concept is important every month and every day throughout the year.

We do not have to look far to find good stewards. They are all around us. They may be sitting near us at Mass. They may be part of our own families and households. Pay attention at our liturgies as they are always there, serving in a variety of ways. I suppose the big question is, "Do people look at us and see a good steward?" We are talking about more than our parish and the Church here. There are people in our communities and neighborhoods who show us what it means to be a good steward, and they do not have to be Catholic.

In June, we celebrate Father's Day. St. Joseph, the earthly father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may seem to be



overlooked, but we do need to look at him always and especially on Father's Day. He humbly accepted his role much in the same way that Mary did. He does not have much to say in the Bible, indicative of his humility and understanding. Yet he, like Mary, was obedient. He was selfless. He was a worker, and in his own quiet way he was a leader — an example to all of us.

St. Joseph is, as you know, the patron saint of fathers, workers and the universal Church. If we could all em-

ulate Joseph in some small part each day, we would be closer to being the disciples Christ has called us to be.

Sometimes, we Catholics are criticized for using statues, and some may be under the misguided impression that we worship statues. Our country and our lives are filled with statues — for instance, look at Washington, D.C. and its various monuments. Think of Mount Rushmore. People go to see these statues and stand in front of them, sometimes bowing their heads in prayer, or looking at the statue or piece of marble in awe. Does this mean these people are worshiping these statues? Absolutely not.

Let us be proud of our Catholic heritage and let us not be afraid to honor and respect our saints and the saints in our midst, the good stewards all around us. In fact, we must each try to be more like them.

God bless you in all you do.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor





A Look Back on Recent Events at Our Lady Star of the Sea

The month of May was certainly a busy time here at Our Lady Star of the Sea. We celebrated May Crowning on May 6, and during liturgies throughout the month, students from Palmer Catholic Academy and the Faith Formation program at Our Lady Star of the Sea received their First Communion.





Upcoming Events and Activities

Star of the Sea





Camaraderie On and Off the Court

The Men's Basketball Group

One of the more famous quotes from St. Paul is “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.” There is no question that discipline is critical for success in both your spiritual life and a goal many have to stay fit.

That is why we built a gymnasium here at Our Lady Star of the Sea. Of course, while it has offered many possibilities to the school, it has also presented opportunities to the community. One of the people on the fundraising committee for that facility was Dan Devenny. Dan, however, saw things the parish could offer in addition to a place for the young people.

He approached Msgr. Logan as the gymnasium was being built and suggested that it be made available to adults, as well. In fact, he told Msgr. Logan that he had something in mind — and that was the birth of what is today a Men’s Basketball Group.

“I played basketball up through junior college and I not only loved the game, but I found it a great outlet for me with many beneficial results,” Dan says.

Research has shown that playing basketball is a fun and effective form of exercise. While other vigorous aerobic activities offer some of the same benefits, the additional advantages basketball offers makes it an enjoyable and even important part of a person’s lifestyle. Playing basketball can provide stress relief. And if you play a casual game with others, the camaraderie and competition will be a welcome distraction from your daily stresses. Other sports also might relax you, but unwinding with basketball doesn’t require you to be a top athlete or collect a large group of people to play — just taking practice shots by yourself at a local court gives you something constructive to focus on that offers a break from hectic day-to-day life.

Dan would agree, and he sees other advantages.

“There is a great sense of camaraderie among those who participate,” he says. “Not only does it bring us together in something that is enjoyable, it is also good for us in many ways, both physically and in a sense spiritually. Longtime friendships have developed as a result of it.”

When it came to gym availability, Sunday afternoons ended up being a good time for gym access.

“We play from 4 until 6 p.m. on Sunday year-round,” Dan says. “The building of the gym was a community effort, so our approach has been to involve mainly parishioners, but also some men from the community are welcome. We now have between 12 and 15 people who gather to play. We have quite a cross section of ages, but basketball is a team sport, and all are useful. I think our ages range from the 20s into the 50s. Since I fall into that latter group, I know that is the case.”

As Dan points out, for individuals around his age, playing basketball offers a way to engage in fun competition while getting regular, vigorous exercise.

“Basketball also provides constant social interaction, which benefits young and old players alike,” he says. “With all due respect, other sports, such as baseball, softball and soccer, often force players to maintain distant positions for long periods. From a Church perspective, we are taught that our bodies are gifts from God. We are stewards of our bodies, so it is important for us to be fit and healthy. By being like that, we are better able to carry out our God-given vocations.”



If you would like more information, please call Dan Devenny at 904-612-9314 or email him at Dandevenny1@yahoo.com.



Bereavement Ministry

Offering Healing and Hope

Annelie Welch and Leslie Montoya are the facilitators for our parish's Bereavement Ministry support group, but they will tell you that it is the Holy Spirit who truly is in charge.

"It's a very rewarding and fulfilling ministry," Annelie says. "You really connect with people in an intimate, spiritual way. The Holy Spirit really does run the group. [He] brings in who needs to come and connections are made. It's nothing less than Divine Intervention."

"We invite the Holy Spirit to come before we go in," Leslie says. "We pray to say the right thing, and we invite the Holy Spirit to join us to help. It just calms the room."

The group meets once a month in the Browning Center and is open to all — whether someone is from our parish, another parish, non-Catholic, agnostic or atheist, all are welcome. The group will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 6, and then at 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 11.

The meetings bring together those who have lost a loved one, whether it is a child, adult child, parents, sibling or spouse. No one is required to talk during the sessions, but everyone will find emotional support and spiritual support to cope with the grief they are experiencing.

Annelie is a licensed clinical social worker and Leslie is a registered nurse with experience working with cancer patients and their families.

"The meetings open with a prayer and a Scripture reading," Annelie says. "We have something planned but we don't always use it. We have inspirational readings and books and materials available. If someone has an issue, we can discuss that. We believe we're the facilitators. The group creates the environment needed for healing."

Annelie and Leslie also make sure that the environment is a safe one for those grieving.

"It's difficult to talk about a loss, but we are non-judgmental," Annelie says. "The nice thing is, a group member can pick up the phone or send us an email or a text, and talk to Leslie and me. I'm always available to listen to someone in need of support."

"What is great about the group is that for the first time, a person is always afraid to come in," Leslie says. "But they always end up uplifted when they leave. When they come in, they come to a 'safe place,' where they can let their feelings out.



(From left) Leslie Montoya and Annelie Welch, longtime friends, are the facilitators for our Bereavement Ministry. It is an open group and anyone can join at any time. "Because the grief process is unique for every individual, we try to allow each participant to gain a healing experience emotionally, spiritually and physically," Annelie says. "Once an individual has felt healing, they can minister to others who attend the group to help them begin healing. It is truly fulfilling, humbling and inspirational to witness the Holy Spirit's presence working among our members. We pray continuously for our members, those who have been referred to us who may not be attending, and their loved ones. We also pray for the deceased. This ministry is beautiful and sacred."

They are trying to be stoic in front of their family, but they can be open with their feelings here."

One of the emotions many in the group experience is anger with God.

"We tell them it is normal," Leslie says, explaining that members are assured they can be angry but still maintain their faith.

Both Leslie and Annelie also say that serving in this ministry has deepened their own faith. The fact that Leslie and



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Bereavement Ministry *continued from page 7*

Annelie sees God working to heal the group participants also reaffirms their own faith.

"There are things they have received from loved ones that have meaning, significance to them, unexplained things that happen," Leslie says. "I did cancer nursing and I saw a lot of things, and I share with those in the bereavement group. It helps them know that their loved one is in heaven. Having their loved ones visit in dreams is also most reassuring."

Another facet of the ministry is that Leslie and Annelie take the time to send out condolence cards to everyone in the parish who has lost a loved one. The parish office provides the contact information.

"We reach out," Annelie says. "It's really a community service. It doesn't matter what faith is involved. We want

them to have a better quality of life and be able to process their grief. If we can provide spiritual guidance, it's an extra benefit. But it's not our sole purpose. Our main purpose is to be here to support our community, show them the love of Christ and how they can live a life of hope. What we hope for our members is that they are able to find something beautiful — kind of like the grass that grows through the ashes after a volcano erupts. We want new life to grow."

Group members may not be aware, but Leslie and Annelie also provide a very powerful support in their grief journey.

"We pray — Leslie and I pray daily over these folks and their families," Annelie says. "We pray over the souls of the deceased. We're fervent about our prayer."

*If anyone would like more information about the Bereavement Ministry,
please call Annelie Welch at 904-234-8861 or Leslie Montoya at 904-613-0222.*

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m. | Sunday - 7:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Daily (Monday to Saturday) - 8:30 a.m. | Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Wednesdays from 6:00-6:45 p.m.

Saturdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m.