

# Holy Family Church Newsletter

March 10, 2007

## A Letter From Father O'Connor

My Dear Parishoners,

Young Catholic adults 18 – 26 are really hungry for God, they feel a very real, deep desire to grow in their faith and spirituality. They also have a strong Catholic identity but do not feel much of a commitment to the “institutional” church or its moral teachings. For example 58% of pre-Vatican II Catholics said abortion is a core Catholic teaching but only 7% of young adult Catholics said so. 62% of the pre-Vatican II generation said premarital sex is always wrong while 21% of young adults said so.

At the present time all the parishes in the Albany diocese are involved with the pastoral planning process named “Called to be Church”. Our hopes for the future of our parish are strong yet the figures I have just quoted from a book to be published this month, “American Catholics Today, New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church” by James A Davidson and Dean R. Hage are quite unsettling. It appears that we are struggling valiantly to hand on our faith to our children but the results are disappointing. You yourselves must notice that most of us at Mass are from this pre-Vatican II generation.

Where do we turn? How do we plan for the future of our parish? First of all we rely on the parents of our youth. They are “the first teachers and the best teachers of their children in the ways of the faith”. The rest of us need to be there for these parents and their children in

whatever ways we can.

I am very grateful for the ministry of our Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry, Zac Suflita. He is deeply committed to our young people and very resourceful.

It is so important that we focus on our ministry to our young families and their children. I would be most grateful for your suggestions. It is my hope that a vibrant ministry to our young families will breathe new life into our parish and make our pastoral planning a fruitful endeavor.

Please pray for our parishes and one another.

Love,  
Father O'Connor

## A Message from the Deacon:

Unhooked: The New Culture  
by: Richard H. A. Washburn, Deacon

“By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Gospel of John 13:35

All the statistics seem to indicate that we are plagued by an epidemic. An epidemic that we created ourselves and it appears to have positive results, but in reality the results are “shall we say” less than stellar.

I don't know how to address it, and I really don't even feel comfortable writing about it, but I feel now is the time to truly address it. The holy and love filled season of

Lent is the most appropriate time to talk about our own behavior, so here goes. If I upset someone, I'm sorry. If I didn't upset you, then I'm upset with myself, because it means that perhaps I haven't brought the topic up more clearly.

Statistics "show a significant decline in teen pregnancies" in the past decade or so, and "a slight drop in the proportion of high school students having intercourse." These are both wonderful statistics that make parents and grandparents feel great; However, have you ever wondered what the circumstances were behind the numbers?

In some recent undercover investigative articles published by The Washington Post and some research conducted by its author show some strange trends that have developed by America's youth.

about the surge in casual sex among youth. And, Laura Session Stepp's recent book, "Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love and Lose at Both," has been a fascinating read about how students have been formed. Specifically, they've been pushed to stay focused on school and dispense with any distractions. What can be a bigger distraction than "love?" What seems to have developed is a mechanism where people (and not just young adults) are detaching one component of expressing love, with their emotions.

Although researchers seem to have been focusing on the statistic of pregnancies, and who has a girlfriend or boyfriend, what they're

Youth meaning from thirteen and fourteen-year-old to college-age students in their mid-to-late twenties. Trends that include sexually promiscuous behavior, but behavior that is specifically designed to not get the participants' emotionally involved in their sexual encounter and would not result in pregnancy. Yes, read that sentence again, you heard me correctly. "Young people have virtually abandoned dating and replaced it with group get-togethers and sexual behaviors that are detached from love or commitment and sometimes even from liking (the other person)."

I know what you're thinking. What is he quoting from? Well, NBC News has been discussing recent statistics on their news programs and website

now noticing is the "lack of love" in their behavior. Have you noticed how angry people get when driving to work? Did you notice how cruel some young people can be when talking about someone who is supposed to be their friend? It all plays into the same thing. We've become so focused on our careers, success and money, that we're not focusing on forming lasting, loving relationships with other people. More importantly, we're not allowing ourselves to develop a love of God, because there is NO time to go to Church. There is soccer practice, college entry exam study groups, meeting with college recruiters and everything else we see is more important than forming a loving

relationship with God and His Church.

The article says, "Parents seem largely unaware of this or of how firmly **hooking up** has taken hold in young people's imaginations and lives." Sex is not something I feel I should be "preaching on," but I do think parents and guardians should feel encouraged to have conversations with their children. Not necessarily about sex, but about the importance of love, and formulating healthy loving relationships.

When I have the distinct honor of leading Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings at seven during Lent, there is nothing that makes me feel more "love" than hearing about a man who gave himself for me. When I experience Penance Service at 3:15 before the Vigil Mass on the first Saturday of every month; I feel emboldened and comforted I know what true love is supposed to be, one that is wrapped in forgiveness and service. What could be better examples of true love? "All people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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"Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love and Lose at Both"

by Laura Sessions Stepp.

"Unhooked: The new culture of casual sex."

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## Pastoral Council News

Reported by John McGowan

This article covers news from the Holy Family Pastoral Council meetings of January 8 and February 5, 2007. Please see a separate article on the recent joint council meeting held with Nativity/St. Mary's. The PC extends a big "thank you" to Cathy Graziano who left the council in January after several years of service. We expect Colleen Riozzi to join the group soon. In other administrative news, John McGowan and Jim Rush will serve another year as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

The council came up with a list of possible renovations to the church and rectory that we might want to undertake as time and money permit. This list was turned over to the Maintenance Committee. Father will set up a meeting with that committee to discuss the list. In connection with this, we also discussed the possibility of putting signs on Routes 66, 9 and 9H letting people know that Holy Family is located a short distance off the main route in Stottville. This might lure travelers or be of service to anyone looking for a Catholic Church. Finally, we extend appreciation to Frank Genovese for putting new glass in the backdoor of the church entryway, erecting new handicapped parking signs in the parking lot and for putting in a new floor in the choir area.

Good work Frank!

Nancy Leonard will begin to work on a project to improve communications among the various

volunteers who work on the committees and other church groups. We are going to set up mailboxes in the church for the committee chairpersons and other key people. This will be a first step in the process. The ultimate goal is to set up a system to make sure information gets to the people it needs to reach. This will also be a big help to Father.

Father and John McGowan have recently been discussing, with Agnes Donlon of Catholic Charities, what the parish might do in a small way to reach out to those less fortunate in our community. We had spoken to Agnes in very general terms, so we invited her to talk to the council. Unfortunately, the frigid temperatures froze her car battery, so we'll reschedule her visit. Look for more news on this in the future.

The council also discussed issues that came up at the joint council meeting and the recent events in Called To Be Church. Please see separate articles on these.

Remember that the Pastoral Council is a planning and visioning group for your parish. If you have any suggestions or questions, talk to any member of the council, Deacon Rick or Father.

### Called To Be Church - Pastoral Planning

Reported by John McGowan

The Core Team members from Holy Family participated in the first planning session at St. John's in Valatie on January 16, 2007. This was mainly a sharing and team-building session so that the teams from the four churches would start to

feel comfortable working together for the next 18 months. A summary of that meeting was presented in the report that was distributed with the bulletin at the Masses of January 20-21.

That summary mentioned the parish profiles, which gave a statistical snapshot of the four parishes in our planning group. Please see the chart (elsewhere in this newsletter), which shows a comparison of the 4 parishes on a number of measures. These figures were compiled late last year. The number of baptisms, marriages, etc. are for the 2005 calendar year.

The February meeting of the Planning Group is going to deal with the subject of evangelization. The Core Team has received background material to read in preparation for the meeting. You'll be seeing a summary report on the activities and outcomes of that meeting as a bulletin insert.

As we stated in the last news-letter the team will be communicating with you in various ways. Bulletin inserts (Called To Be Church News) will be issued regularly. This is one insert you don't want to throw away! Not that any-one would discard any of the informative inserts we hand out with our bulletins. But if you miss a Called To Be Church news insert, you can go to our web site where all the reports will be posted. The website is at: [www.rcda.org/churches/holyfamilychurch/](http://www.rcda.org/churches/holyfamilychurch/) and when you get to the site, click on the "What's New" link. You'll find all the Called To Be Church newsletters posted by date.

If you have questions or comments as we go along, please don't hesitate to talk to Father, Deacon Rick or a member of your Core Team (John

McGowan, Helene Craft, Debi Dole, Nancy Leonard, Glenn Martin, and Dave Kisselburg).

### Called To Be Church News

Reported by John McGowan

Report #2

2/24/07

The second meeting of the Local Planning Group (LPG) for northern Columbia County was held on February 20, 2007 at St. John the Baptist Church in Valatie. Core Teams from Holy Family, Nativity/St. Mary's, St. John's and St. James (Chatham) attended. The title given to the meeting was "Sharing The Good News" and the subject was evangelization. As we did last month, most of the work was done in small groups (each composed of people from all 4 churches).

The first small group session dealt with sharing reactions to the concept of evangelization as we thought of it before reading the background material provided to the team. Most people had a defensive reaction to the word as it implies forcing our beliefs on others. But we learn that Jesus calls all of us to evangelize (Matt 28:19-20) and Popes and Bishops have certainly reinforced this call. We need to evangelize ourselves, inactive Catholics, non-believers, non-Christians and our non-Catholic Christian brothers and sisters. This is certainly a challenge, but we realized we are already doing some of this. Next, the small groups were asked to discuss the three goals of evangelization and how we're doing on them in our parishes. The three goals are as follows:

Goal 1: To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.

Goal 2: To invite all people in the United States, whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so that they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith.

Goal 3: To foster Gospel values in our society, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of family, and the common good of our society, so that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.

After the small groups discussions ended, the whole group reconvened and shared their results. When we receive the official notes from the recorder, we'll post these on our website (at: [www.rcda.org/churches/holyfamilychurch/](http://www.rcda.org/churches/holyfamilychurch/) and when you get to the site, click on the "What's New" link). The results indicated a lot of enthusiasm and good ideas.

So, what does this have to do with pastoral planning for our parishes? Well, remember that the Called To Be Church effort is geared toward identifying the mission and ministry of the Church in the coming years. And every-one seemed to focus on what we as four Catholic parishes could accomplish together.

Next month, the LPG will start a 2 or 3-month discussion of the subject of life-long formation. The first month involves the formation of the very young.

Good News

Reported by Margaret Graziano

Doesn't Christmas seem so long ago? We haven't had a Newsletter out since November, so "better late than never" to thank you all for contributing to the two families that we were able to purchase a dinner and presents for. One family consisted of five people and one with six. Rita Rush, Marion Woodward, and Jeanne Roetina bought and wrapped gifts for them all. Helene, Pat Vertitus and I did the grocery part – hams, vegetables and all the trimmings and extra goodies. We all packed the items and Alana Kusewich and Mary Kraft were kind enough to deliver them. Good job everyone.

The carpet and lights in the choir section looks great thanks to Frank Genovese and anyone that helped him. Tim and the choir are thrilled with it, especially the lighting.

Our kitchen has had some improvements and a thorough cleaning, and is ready for a party! An anonymous donor kindly paid for an exterminator and we will continue to have him come once a month.

We had hoped to have a Valentines covered dish get together, but not enough people signed up so it was cancelled. We've heard people don't want to stay after mass so we might try a Sunday afternoon. Any Suggestions?

Congratulations to Robin and Peter Merante who enjoyed a cruise to celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They are now collecting money to buy some needed articles for the troops in Afghanistan. They will do the purchasing and mailing – please help.

The parents and brothers of Michael Stevens are very proud of him. Michael, who is stationed in Camp Pendleton, had a record breaking rifle shooting score of 242 out of 250. Not too shabby, Michael, and we pray that for your time in service you will be well and safe.

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, Caden Kyle Tiernan was baptized at Holy Family. Born in Dec. of 2006, Caden is the son of Timothy and Kara Tiernan. God bless this family.

Happy Birthday to John McGowan. He celebrated on Monday, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>. John said he and his wife, Ann, make their birthdays special with their favorite dinner. He wasn't sure what his dinner would be, as he has more than one favorite.

Speaking of John, he is the only male in our small faith group. He's very knowledgeable and lends a lot to our class discussions. Kay Day is our leader and does an excellent job. She is an intelligent, soft spoken lady who always finds the good in everyone. She is very kind, considerate and patient, especially when I'm on the wrong page or can't pronounce a word! All the members add something to the class. At the end of the meeting we stay for a few minutes to chit-chat. We that live alone, enjoy this and usually have a good laugh. Maybe some of you would like to form a small group. Kay's always willing to be there, so give it a try.

Ash Wednesday we attended the 8 a.m. services (a sacrifice for me) but I was glad I did. Our deacon, Rick, did an excellent job, especially with his homily and being so humble.

We are going to have a small table with small items in good condition to

sell. The proceeds from these sales will be put in one of our containers for our charities.

We don't have much room to set it up so please look for it at the back of the church for now. We know more people come in from the parking lot, but we don't know about the space there. First "selling" will be handmade dish cloths and a few odds and ends and as the table empties, we ask you to bring any articles (small & good condition) that you no longer want to dust or are tired of looking at. Put a price on them (please keep it small) and not a lot at one time (we don't want to get "junk") and every week it might be fun to check out things! It will add a little money to our projects and you will get something for your donation. Please take a look.

Now I can't end this without a word about my newest great grandson. Mathew William Finch, was born Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> (one day before his dad's birthday) to Trisha & Paul Finch of Red Hook. He has a big brother, three year old Benjamin, who is very good with Mathew. His grandparents are Nancy & Bill Graziano and Joan & John Finch, who came up from Florida to meet him.

We hope all the folks that are sick are on the mend and will be back to church soon. We miss you. God Bless Us All.

## Donated by the Deacon

**Women of the Early Church  
"The Feminine Presence Was in  
No Way Secondary"**

VATICAN CITY - Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI delivered at today's general audience. The Pope dedicated his talk to women who spread the Gospel in the early Church.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We come today to the end of the journey among the witnesses of early Christianity, mentioned in the writings of the New Testament. And we take advantage of the last stage of this first journey to focus our attention on the many feminine figures who played an effective and precious role in spreading the Gospel.

Their testimony cannot be forgotten, in keeping with what Jesus himself said about the woman who anointed his head shortly before his passion: "Truly I say to you, wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" (Matthew 26:13; Mark 14:9).

The Lord wants these witnesses of the Gospel, these figures who have made their contribution so that faith in him would grow, to be known and their memory to remain alive in the Church. Historically we can distinguish the role of women in primitive Christianity, during Jesus' earthly life and during the vicissitudes of the first Christian generation.

Of course, as we know, Jesus chose 12 men among his disciples as fathers of the new Israel "to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (Mark 3:14-15). This fact is obvious but, in addition to the Twelve, pillars of the Church, fathers of the new People of God, many women were also chosen and numbered among the disciples.

I can only mention briefly those who found themselves on the path of Jesus himself, beginning with the prophetess Anna (cf. Luke 2:36-38), coming then to the Samaritan woman (cf. John 4:1-39), the Syrophenician woman (cf. Mark 7:24-30), the woman with the hemorrhage (cf. Matthew 9:20-22) and the forgiven woman

sinner (cf. Luke 7:36-50).

Nor will I consider the protagonists of some of his effective parables, for example, the woman who makes the bread (Matthew 13:33), the woman who loses the silver coin (Luke 15:8-10), or the vexing widow before the judge (Luke 18:1-8).

More significant for our discussion are the women who played an active role in the context of Jesus' mission. Above all, our thoughts go naturally to the Virgin Mary, who with her faith and maternal endeavor collaborated in a unique way in our redemption, to the point that Elizabeth was able to call her "blessed among women" (Luke 1:42), adding: "Blessed is she who believed" (Luke 1:45).

Becoming a disciple of Christ, Mary manifested at Cana her complete trust in him (cf. John 2:5) and followed him to the foot of the cross, where she received a maternal mission from him for all his disciples of all times, represented by John (cf. John 19:25-27).

There are, moreover, several women who in different ways gravitated around the figure of Jesus with functions of responsibility. The women who followed Jesus to serve him with their properties are an eloquent example of this. Luke gives us some names: Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Susanna "and many others" (cf. Luke 8:2-3). Later, the Gospels tell us that the women, unlike the Twelve, did not abandon Jesus in the hour of his passion (cf. Matthew 27:56.61; Mark 15:40).

Outstanding among these women, in particular, is the Magdalene, who not only was present at the Passion, but also became the first witness and herald of the Risen One (cf. John 20:1, 11-18). To Mary of Magdala, in fact, St. Thomas Aquinas dedicates the singular description "apostle of the apostles" ("apostolorum apostola"), dedicating a beautiful commentary to her: "Just as a woman had announced to the first man the words of death, so also a woman was the first to announce to the apostles the words

of life" ("Super Ioannem," CAI publishers, Paragraph 2519).

Moreover, in the ambit of the early Church the feminine presence was in no way secondary. This is the case of the four daughters of "deacon" Philip, whose names are not mentioned, residents in Caesarea, all of them gifted, as St. Luke says, with the "gift of prophecy," that is, of the faculty to speak publicly under the action of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 21:9). The brevity of the news does not allow for more precise deductions.

We owe to St. Paul a more ample documentation on woman's dignity and ecclesial role. He begins with the fundamental principle, according to which, for the baptized "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), that is, all united in the same nature, though each one with specific functions (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:27-30).

The Apostle admits as something normal that woman can "prophesy" in the Christian community (1 Corinthians 11:5), that is, pronounce herself openly under the influence of the Holy Spirit, on the condition that it is for the edification of the community and in a dignified manner. Therefore, the famous exhortation "the women should keep silence in the churches" must be relativized (1 Corinthians 14:34).

The much-discussed problem on the relationship between the first phrase -- women can prophesy in church -- and the other -- they cannot speak -- that is, the relationship between these two indications which are seemingly contradictory, we leave for the exegetes.

It is not something that must be discussed here. Last Wednesday we already met with Prisca, or Priscilla, wife of Aquila, who in two cases is mentioned surprisingly before her husband (cf. Acts 18:18; Romans 16:3): Both are described explicitly by Paul as his "sun-ergous," or collaborators (Romans



16:3).

There are other observations that must not be neglected. It is necessary to state, for example, that the brief Letter to Philemon is addressed by Paul also to a woman called "Apphia" (cf. Philemon 2). Latin and Syrian translations of the Greek text add to the name "Apphia" the description "soror carissima" (ibid.), and it must be said that in the community of Colossae they must have had an important role. In any case, she is the only woman mentioned by Paul among the recipients of one of his letters.

In other passages, the Apostle mentions a certain Phoebe whom he calls "diakonos" of the church of Cenchreae, the small port city east of Corinth (cf. Romans 16:1-2). Although at that time the title still did not have a specific ministerial value of a hierarchical character, it expresses a genuine exercise of responsibility on the part of this woman in favor of that Christian community.

Paul requests that she be received cordially and "help her in whatever she may require," and then adds: "For she has been a benefactor to many and to me as well." In the same epistolary context, the Apostle, with delicate lines recalls other names of women: a certain Mary, and then Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis, "beloved," as well as Julia, of whom he writes openly that they "have worked hard for you" or "have worked hard in the Lord" (Romans 16:6,12a,12b,15), thus underlining their intense ecclesial commitment.

Moreover, two women, called Euodia and Syntyche, are distinguished in the church of Philippi (Philippians 4:2): Paul's appeal to mutual agreement suggests that the two women carried out an important function within that community.

In sum, the history of Christianity would have developed very differently if the generous contribution of many women had not taken place. For this reason, as my venerated and beloved predecessor, John Paul II, wrote in the apostolic letter "Mulieris

Dignitatem": "Therefore, the Church gives thanks for each and every woman. ... The Church gives thanks for all the manifestations of the feminine 'genius' which have appeared in the course of history, in the midst of all peoples and nations; she gives thanks for all the charisms which the Holy Spirit distributes to women in the history of the People of God, for all the victories which she owes to their faith, hope and charity: She gives thanks for all the fruits of feminine holiness" (No. 31).

As we see, the praise refers to women in the course of the history of the Church and is expressed in the name of the whole ecclesial community. We also join ourselves to this appreciation, giving thanks to the Lord because he leads his Church, from generation to generation, making use indistinctly of men and women, who are able to make their faith and baptism fruitful for the good of the whole ecclesial Body for the greater glory of God.

## Christian Service Committee

Reported by Judy Bucci

The Christian Service Committee met on Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. We are proud to announce that \$250 was donated to send supplies to the troops in Afghanistan. \$150 was collected in the baskets and the Rosary Society donated \$100.

It was decided to cancel the covered dish supper due to lack of participation. We anticipate having one in May when the weather improves and some of our more active congregants return from winter vacations.

We are also considering the possibility of joining the Crop Walk on May 6<sup>th</sup>. More information will follow.

We are still sending money monthly to the HIV Hospice in Africa

and  
the church in Louisiana. Collections  
have fallen off recently, so if you  
have any spare change please  
consider putting it in one of the jars.

### Rosary Society

Reported by Helene Craft

The first regular meeting of 2007  
will be held on March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00  
p.m. If any lady thinks she might  
be interested in becoming a  
member, please come to visit at the  
next meeting held in the parish  
house. All are welcomed!

If there something you would like  
to see in the Newsletter or if you  
have some news you would like to  
report, please contact Margaret  
Graziano at 828-6605, Norma  
Kirker at 828-9522 or Helene Craft  
at 828-7139.

## Summary of Parish Profiles – Northern Columbia Planning Group

	HF	NSM	SJ-C	SJB-V	Total
<b>Parish Community</b>					
# Households/Families	165	225	550	1,114	2,054
# At Weekend Liturgy	220	300	800	701	2,021
# At Weekday Liturgy	12	11	35	20	78
Seating Capacity	200	220	420	350	1,190
Median Age	55	58	50	40	51 avg.
<b>Sacramentals For 2006</b>					
# of Baptisms	5	24	40	33	102
# of First Eucharist	5	20	36	42	103
# of Confirmations	10	3	25	39	77
# of Marriages	1	2	8	7	18
# of Funerals	8	14	21	31	74
# in RCIA Program	0	4	4	0	8
# trained to lead Sunday services □□□	2	2	2	12	18
<b>Faith Formation</b>					
# of Catechists	4	10	28	41	83
# with certification	2	7	28	34	71
Enrollment K-8	25	41	230	340	636
Enrollment 9-12	25	64	80	143	312

HF – Holy Family

NSM – Nativity/St. Mary's

SJ-C – St. James, Chatham

SJB-V – St. John the Baptist, Valatie

### Weekend Masses

<b>Saturday</b>	HF	NSM	SJ-C	SJB-V
4	X			
4:30				X
5			X	
5:30		X		
<b>Sunday</b>				
7:30				X
8	X			
8:30			X	
9				X
10		X		
10:30				X
11			X	
12 (Spanish)		X		

2/2/07