

Malachi Matters

The ministries at St. Malachi that matter
to the faithful and our neighbors

Summer 2020



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Holy Week – What Really Happened

Charlene McElwee

Not even a virus as sinister as COVID-19 can stop the trees from budding, or the hyacinth bulbs from bursting forth with their heavenly fragrance, or the joy of the Resurrection!

Here at St. Malachi a team of minds and hearts went to work finding creative ways to celebrate the Paschal Mystery in these most unusual circumstances. Our guiding principle: observe the government safety directives while bringing the church outside and into our homes.

On Palm Sunday we enjoyed drive-up palm distribution with blessings of the day.

Many parishioners came to receive blessed palms and there were plenty left over to take to loved ones and neighbors.

The Passion according to St. Matthew was proclaimed in our decades-long St. Malachi tradition with a media presentation of sacred art, posted online for the first time in our history.

The Triduum brought into our homes separate video-grams for each special day:

On Holy Thursday we heard a proclamation of the Gospel against a backdrop of the symbols of ser-

vice and Eucharist.

That evening, St. Malachi parishioners joined our neighbors at St. Patrick rectory's upstairs window for solemn eucharistic adoration in the courtyard.

On Good Friday, the Stations of the Cross, our Pieta, and our nail cross were highlighted in a reflective "church tour" video. For many, this was the first experience of being "in church" for more than a month. Several parishioners came to our church yard on Good Friday afternoon to reverence the cross and pray the Stations.

On Holy Saturday evening many parishioners went to St. Patrick's rectory again to pray and reflect with the Easter fire. And in our homes we were treated to the singing of the Exsultet, The Paschal Proclamation against the gentle flicker of candlelight.

Our Good Shepherd window has been lit from within since the sheltering in place order was issued and shines nightly, watching over the city. Our Paschal Candle for 2020 stands at the front of the church, bearing those same symbols of Christ, the Good Shepherd, who leads the flock through every trial and will continue to lead us forward in the coming weeks.



Social Distancing Can Bring God Closer

Carolyn Sekerak

For many Catholics, the COVID-19 pandemic and “social distancing” have made God feel anything but close. Not being able to worship together and receive the Eucharist has caused anxiety, sadness, and even anger. I experienced all these emotions when our churches, schools, offices, and daily routines halted unexpectedly in mid-March. But through technology, time, and treasure, I have found greater joy, peace, and a connection with God.

Even introverted people need human connection from time to time. Technologies are available to help you be social and connect with others. From Zoom calls with family to online Mass each week from churches across the country, we can bring our Catholic faith into our daily lives even when “social distancing” from our churches and loved ones. For daily prayer, I find the daily readings or daily Mass using MyParish App. I also watch “Coffee and Conversation,” a daily inspirational message shared via Facebook Live by local Catholic speaker and author Greg Wasinski. Our Parish website has links to many other resources as well that can help you focus more on God during this time.

Acknowledging that our time is really God's time offers us a new perspective. With my home office just steps away, the “extra” time I have in the morning has allowed me to develop a new routine that includes prayer, daily devotionals, and exercise. In the evenings I enjoy the simple joys of walking my dog, birdwatching, and photography. Starting and ending the day with God's Word and appreciating God's creation all help you see with God's eyes as you cope with new and unexpected challenges each day.

In Luke 12:34 we learn “For where your treasure is, your heart will be also.” Are you sharing the God-given talents and treasures with which you have been blessed? Each day there are more people and organizations facing hard times or financial strain due to COVID-19, so donating your time, talent, or treasure to those in need is a great way to bring heaven down to earth. St. Malachi provides a number of services to the homeless people of our community and others in need. Consider how giving a little may help out someone else a lot. It may take the focus off of the things you are “missing” and put it on what you can be “giving” instead!

Volunteer Recognition

Lou Keim

Annually, there is a celebration in honor of the 300+ volunteers who faithfully share their God-given gifts within and outside St. Malachi Parish. Sadly, recently we had to cancel our event because of the coronavirus that has very much changed our way of life. A new date is scheduled for September 26 at the Music Box Supper Club. Save the date, mark your calendars, and pray that, following safety rules, we will say **THANKS** to all who continue the needed services that have made St. Malachi a meaningful connection with service to all!!

THANK YOU!



Carolyn Sekerak

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Circuit-riding Pastor Updates His Ride

Fr. Michael Gurnick — Parish Administrator

I wondered how we might celebrate Easter in the neighborhoods of St. Malachi and St. Patrick parishes during this challenging time. I wanted to do something that would be joyful and creative. With that in mind, I contacted Jen Heitman of The Rocket Car Company, home of the famous rocket ride from Euclid Beach days, a local amusement park on Cleveland's east side.

Begging Jen not to hang up on me, I explained my idea for Easter Sunday morning: to ride the pastor around in the rocket car to offer Easter blessings to all the neighbors. Without hesitation, Jen immediately jumped at the idea! Some planning was needed as both of their rocket cars were being serviced during the COVID-19 shutdown. Jen would get back to me. The very next day, Jen informed me that the mechanics would have one up and running – but that we needed to pray that it wouldn't storm on Easter morning.

Finally, Easter Sunday arrived and at 9:30 AM the Rocket Car pulled up in front of St. Patrick. With Deacons Bill Merriman and Bill Staab and other parishioners gathered, Jen whisked me off through the streets and over to St. Malachi, where Deacon Leo and Charlene McElwee were greeting folks that morning. Some pedestrians did a triple take and some shouted back, "Happy Easter!" Others made u-turns to capture the event on video as they drove by. And then there were those who joined in the Easter blessing with a greeting, a prayer, and a cho-

rus of alleluias. How I wish I had my camera out to capture their joyful spirit!

Three hours later, pulling up to the rectory, Jen and I completed our pastoral tour of duty. Mission accomplished. No pandemic would stop the Good News. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures!

With sincere gratitude to our parishioners who assisted in the planning of this day and a special word of thanks to our own Charlene McElwee who made a CD full of Easter music for the rocket tour, this was indeed the day the Lord had made and we rejoiced!

As providence would have it, Jen's father and the founder of her family's company, Ron Heitman, passed away a week later from a long illness. Having only met Jen through her generous willingness to help this pastor in my need, I was very honored to preside at Mr. Heitman's cemetery service. This time I rode in my little Honda Accord, followed by the classic hearse and then – you guessed it – the Rocket Car that now carried a grieving family as they honored their beloved father and grandfather who brought so much joy to others.

So, next time you see the Rocket Car, remember the joy of Our Lord's Resurrection and how proclaiming the message requires the help of so many good people. And please don't forget a prayer for Jen, her family, and the entire Heitman family. Alleluia!



Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

Interview with Stephanie Pritts, Director of Religious Education/Certified Pastoral Minister

Pat Takacs

The concept of initiation into the Catholic Church has been around for centuries, ever since the time of the Apostles. "The Catholic Church, including St. Malachi Parish, has always had a way of bringing people into the Church." (S.Pritts, DRE).

Stephanie has been involved in leading this process for ten years. She states that the specific goal is "to prepare people to enter the Catholic Church through the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion. It is also for those who have been baptized in another Christian church – and desire Confirmation and Communion – or, are baptized in the Catholic Church, but never received either Communion and/or Confirmation."

Other participants are those who have been fully initiated into the Church but who have been away for a while or who want to understand more fully what

the Church believes and teaches. These participants want to continue to grow in their Faith and act as companions for those entering the Church. "This Rite teaches us how to get to the heart of our relationship with God and how intensely loved we are by Him" (S.Pritts, DRE).

Participants meet weekly and celebrate, over a year's time, a number of Liturgical Rites within the context of Mass. The climax of all this preparation, and the highlight of the liturgical year, is the Easter Vigil. The Catholic faithful welcome these candidates into full communion through reception of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. These new members are introduced to the various parish ministries, where Welcoming and Evangelization by parish members brings the "neophytes" into the full realization of God and his Church.

Virtual Run Provides Real-World Support

Sharon Lowe-Chapman

On March 14, 2020, the 40th St. Malachi Church Run went off like none of the previous 39 Runs, as a virtual run. With a virtual run you can run your race anywhere and at any time. A lot of folks showed up and ran their virtual race from the Parish campus the morning the Run was scheduled. There were run clubs that organized and ran together all throughout Cleveland. The participants from the City of Port Clinton were led through their town by a bagpiper and had an unofficial after party! There were neon green shirts running/walking everywhere!

Malachi runners, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for getting your miles in virtually and sharing your Malachi spirit through your posts and pictures. We are eternally grateful for all who participated in the 40th Annual St. Malachi Church Run, which yielded much-needed funds for our ministries!

Using the hashtag #RunStMalachi we had:

- 300 pictures posted
- 360 runners/walkers
- 2 international participants from Ireland
- 2 participants from other states: Tennessee and Texas
- 23 doggies
- 3 baby bumps, so I guess you could say that there were 363 participants!



Please mark your calendars for the 41st St. Malachi Church Run, March 13, 2021 – where we look forward to being together!

Ray's Story – Turning His Life Around

Jeanette Shemo

This is a follow up on a story from the Malachi Matters, Summer 2019 issue, regarding one of our guests, Ray, whom we helped numerous times. The Parish can usually only help individuals once or twice during a year, but Ray was different. He was sincere and down on his luck. He tugged at our heart strings. In his former life he was a "Repo Man", but suddenly things changed and he was on the streets.

He lived with a friend who charged him \$50 every two weeks to sleep on his couch. He was devoted to the rosary and prayed every day for help. We gave him \$50 a few times but when he came back a third time, we began to loan him the money, which he promised to pay back as soon as he could. After helping him for five months, we lost touch with him.

I thought about Ray often and wondered how he

was. One day in February, Ray called and said he needed to see me and was on the way to the Rectory. My first thought was that he needed money. When I opened the door, I was amazed how good he looked. But he shared how sick he had been this past year and was in the hospital in an induced coma. He shared that he needed a hip and knee replacement. I was expecting him to ask for money when he mentioned that he had turned his life around.

He stopped drinking and rented a room at Y-Haven. He had applied for and received Social Security and was now able to repay all those who helped him. He repaid the Parish all his loans. He thanked us for helping him and let us know how appreciative he was. He gave me a big hug and announced that he was on his way to repay others who had helped him. God Bless You, Ray!!



Save the Date!

Jeanette Shemo

St. Malachi Parish Picnic is scheduled for Sunday, September 20, 2020 beginning at 11 AM with Mass. The picnic will be held at the Keystone Shelter at the Metroparks West Creek Reservation in Parma. Keystone Shelter is one of the newest picnic shelters and features an oversized fireplace. Hiking and all-purpose trails are easily accessible from the shelter. The entrance to the park is off W. Ridgewood near Broadview, but a map will follow later.



Back Door Ministry Adjusts to Coronavirus

Jeanette Shemo

The Coronavirus forced the Back Door Ministry to close its doors in late March due to the closeness of the quarters and to protect our volunteers, staff, and guests. We were all aware of the limited places open for the homeless and low-income individuals to receive a meal, so Fr. Gurnick and the parish staff realized that the Back Door Ministry needed to reopen as soon as possible. With some creative thinking and using only the Back Door Ministry staff, on April 3rd we relocated to the parish hall and began distributing bagged lunches on Fridays from 10:30 AM - 1 PM. At the Washington entrance, we made sure that no one entered the hall and that a safe distance was maintained between guests and staff and between guest and guest. After a few weeks, we added Wednesdays to our days of distribution. As word got out to the neighborhood and our homeless guests, more and more individuals began taking advantage of our lunches. By the end of April, hot lunches were added to the menu and passed out in clamshells. The Parish continues to reassess the situation and hopes that in time, more days will be added to our ministry.



Yes, I want to help the Ministries at St. Malachi Parish!

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St. Malachi Parish is a 501(c)(3) - your contribution is fully tax deductible.

Thank you for your generous support!

If you have questions or would like further information, please contact the Rectory at 216-861-5343 or Rectory@StMalachi.org.

Visit our website at www.StMalachi.org