

# The Ameliorator

St. Amelia Church

January-February 2012

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Tonawanda, NY

## Career Dinner Links Youth With Professionals

Danielle Munyon, a ninth-grader at Mount St. Mary's, is thinking about becoming a pharmacist. But she never really met, or talked to, a pharmacist, until she came to our annual Career Dinner on October 22. Danielle had dinner with a fellow alumna of our school. Danielle ('11) met up with Charis Gatas ('97), who has a doctorate in pharmacy, and loves to help people who are aspiring to her profession.

"I absolutely loved it!", Danielle exclaimed. "Charis was extremely helpful, with the right knowledge and advice. We plan to keep in touch".

Alex Rusch, a freshmen at Kenmore East, had dinner with Ken Lippert. Ken is an engineer, and Alex is thinking about engineering. "I enjoyed," Alex said, "being able to get more background knowledge directly from someone in the engineering field." Dominic Cavaretta, a home-schooled eleventh grader, agreed. "I really enjoyed talking to Mr.

Lippert about engineering. I was able to ask all the questions I had planned to ask him."

"The Career Dinner is a very simple idea", Youth Minister Kathy Waite explains. "The parish has countless young people looking at careers in various fields. The parish also has countless professionals in various fields, who are very willing to share their expertise. The Career Dinner simply gets them together to have a great meal, and to talk."



*Kenmore East Senior Kyle Patterson, who is considering a career in surgery, enjoys chicken parmesan with Dr. Tom Gruber, a surgeon.*

## Requiem for Father Mark Illig



*Father Mark performs a baptism during his days as parochial vicar here.*

Father Mark Illig, parochial vicar here from February, 1999 until May, 2002, went to his eternal reward on December 21. A Buffalo native, Father Mark grew up in Christ the King Parish, before moving to Chicago as a teenager. While in high school there he became attracted to the Holy Cross Fathers, who served his parish on weekends, and he joined that community, completing college and theology studies at Notre Dame University.

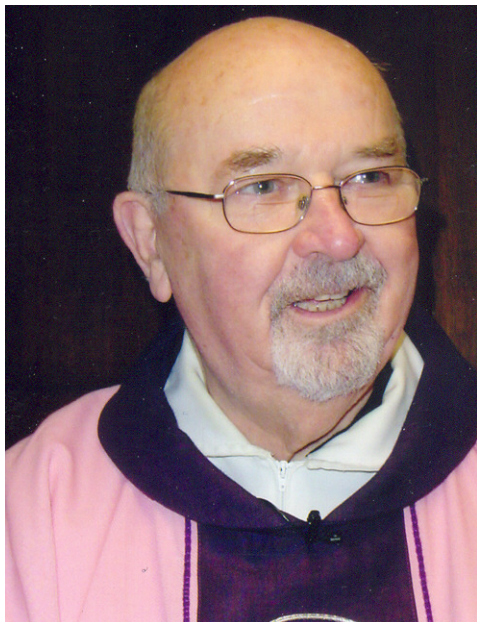
He decided to become a diocesan priest for our diocese and was ordained in 1985. He went on to serve at St. Benedict's Parish, Eggersville and St. Stephen's in Grand Island, and then spent two years in priestly formation ministry before coming to St. Amelia's. In 2002 he became pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Bowmansville,

and served there until declining health forced him to move to the Msgr. Conniff Retirement Home in Lancaster in 2011. Father Mark continued his ministry at WLOF Radio, and frequently celebrated daily Mass here.

He was honored by the diocese in 1997 for his outstanding service to youth, and was active in amateur theatre. Our parishioners remember him for his warm and sensitive concern for the poor and the sick, for his Irish wit and wisdom, for his grace-filled homilies, and for his fanatical support of his favorite sports teams: the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame, and the New York Yankees. Bishop Edward Grosz presided at his funeral Mass in our church on December 27. He will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.

## ***Friends Were Important for Father Bob Mack***

*by Father Tom Maloney*



Msgr. Robert A. Mack – better known as Father Bob – was called to his eternal reward on December 1. Doctors at Kenmore Mercy told him on November 29 that he had pancreatic cancer. He died two days later.

Every so often someone enters your life whom you recognize as a gift from God. Father Bob was that for me. He walked into my life in October of 1971, and changed my life, and my priesthood, for the better.

On that October day, I met Father Bob for the first time, as he was moving in. “I’ve got the entire CYO of the Old Cathedral Parish helping me move in”, he said. I looked around. I could only see two kids. I said, “Are there more outside?: Bob said, “No, Tommy, we are into quality, not quantity!” No one had called me “Tommy” in a long time, but that was OK with me. Soon we were Tommy and Bobby, and Msgr. McHugh was calling us by those names, and we were calling him “Lodgie” (not yet to his face, however!).

### ***“Being thanked by Johnny Cash was the thrill of a lifetime”***

A week or so later, Johnny Cash was appearing at the Aud. “Let’s go see him”, Bob said at dinner. “Great!”, I said, though I had to cancel a 7 p.m. appointment. On the way there, I mentioned to Bob that we did not have tickets. “No problem, Tommy”, he said. At the Aud atrium, we paused, til Bob scoped the scene, and spotted a ticket-taker he knew. We whizzed through, without tickets.

“We’re in, Bobby,” I remember saying, “but we don’t have seats”. “No problem, Tommy”, he said. Soon we met an usher, also known to Bob. “Father Bob!”, he said, “where do you want to sit?” “Close to the stage”, Bob answered.

We ended up so close to the action that we did not sit. We stood, at the front of the stage. When Johnny Cash came on, he spotted two roman collars at the front of the stage. He walked over to us, while the crowd waited in anticipation, knelt down and shook our hands, and said, “Padrés, thank you for all you do.” Being thanked by Johnny Cash was for me the thrill of a lifetime.

When I look back at that special moment, from the vantage point of 40 years, I recognize Father Mack’s unique gift for making and keeping friends. If you met him, you were his friend. He was at ease with people in high places, could preach at a mayor’s funeral, emcee huge banquets, do weddings for daughters of judges and councilmen...but treasured equally his friends making minimum wage: the ticket-takers and the ushers at the Aud, the cleaning women, the waitresses and the bus-boys. I learned a lot from him about friendship, and many other things. And so did many other people.

God gave him unique gifts: a sense of humor, the wisdom to distinguish between the important and the trivial, the ability to make and keep close friends, a sensitivity to the sorrowing and the have-nots, to name a few. I thank God that Bob decided to use those gifts in the service of Christ as his priest.

He served our parish from October of 1971 til December of 1973 as associate pastor, and later, in his retirement years, as the celebrant of the Saturday night 7:00 Vigil Mass. He was a powerful instrument of God’s love, his pardon, his healing, his friendship, his peace. May he rest eternally in that peace.

## *Public School Principals Honor Jim Mulé*

The National Association of Elementary School Principals conducts festivities each year in the nation's capital, at which they honor 50 outstanding public school principals, one from each state. But they also look beyond the public school sector, to see if there are any principals of non-public schools who deserve recognition.

This year they honored three Catholic school principals, in addition to the fifty, among them our own principal, Jim Mulé.

"To be recognized by the National Catholic Education Association, as Jim was last spring, is a significant honor", Father Tom noted at a recent Parish Council meeting. "But when public school principals decide to honor a Catholic school principal – that is really exceptional."

"This is a great honor for me, but also for our school", Mr. Mulé said. "You can't be a leader unless people are willing to be led. I am grateful to our faculty and staff, parents and pupils, priests and parishioners. Without their support and cooperation, this would not have been possible".




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## *Meet Daniel Ogbeifun*



Daniel is a 36-year-old seminarian studying at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, in preparation for ordination as a priest in our diocese. He is a native of Nigeria, and his first language is English. The diocese asked us to offer him hospitality for those times when the seminary is not in session. So he will be spending vacation times with us, and learning about parish life, as he prepares for ordination.

He comes to Buffalo after receiving a diploma in catechetics and pastoral theology from the renowned "Lumen Vitae" institute in Brussels. He speaks some French, and is delighted that he and Father Tom can converse at dinner, without Father Ryszard or Father Don understanding a single word.

"I am really happy to be here," Daniel says. "I am also grateful for the hospitality and caring you have all shown to me. I thank Father Tom for his support and fatherly care, especially for his words of encouragement. I thank also Father Don and Father Ryszard for making me feel at home".

## *Parishioners Thanked for Stewardship of Talent*

On November 5, at the annual Prime Rib Dinner, sponsored by our Holy Name Society, ten parishioners were recognized for their outstanding stewardship of the gifts God has given them. They were lauded, and applauded, by their fellow parish members for having used their gifts to further the work of God on earth. The awards followed a superb dinner, prepared and served by Brian Kusmierski and his colleagues from The Market in the Square in West Seneca, ably assisted by Holy Name members.



*Jane Brown and Hariette Hoebel were thanked for their ministry in the educational and spiritual formation of adults, spanning four decades.*



*Parishioners expressed their gratitude to Jackie and Al Rebman, whose multi-faceted service to the parish began in the fifties and continues to this day.*



*The parish recognized the service of Rita and Karl Reardon, in diverse areas of parish life, which began in the sixties, and endures to the present. Karl went to his eternal reward on December 13.*



*Gail Lawson and Joan Owczarczyk show the plaques given them in recognition for their work in the parish Respect Life Committee.*



*Alex Rusch and Amelia Simpson, ninth graders at Kenmore East and Nardin Academy, were recognized for their outstanding ministry as altar servers.*

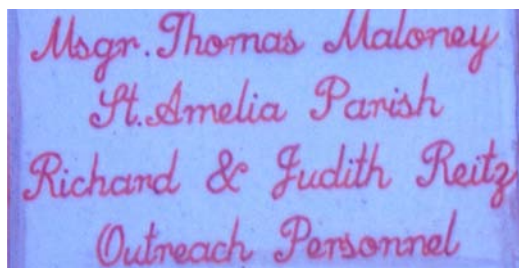
## Report from Nicaragua

Dear parishioners of St. Amelia's,

I had the good fortune to go to Nicaragua at the beginning of November. It was quite an adventure, and we saw many of the projects that you have supported over the years:

- The cattle project: many families now have their own cow for milk.
- The distribution of food and clothing
- The building of clinics and schools
- The construction of wells so villagers can have clean water
- The construction and refurbishing of chapels for worship
- Scholarships for pupils for grade school, high school, and even college.

It was edifying to see what the generosity of your parish, and other parishes in Western New York has accomplished. The most impressive part of the trip was to see the faith of the people. Every Thursday in all the churches of Nicaragua there is Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The churches are full. Small parish groups are being formed in the towns to teach the children and keep the faith alive.



*Remembrance plaque in the courtyard of the Sinai Retreat Center.*

We attended the blessing of the newest project, the Sinai Retreat Center – a place for clergy to meet, for retreats and catechetical programs, and Marriage Encounter weekends, etc. The Center's courtyard has plaques to remember those who helped make it a reality. I took this picture of the plaque remembering the people of your parish. Ann Marie Zon joins me in thanking you for your goodness.

Sincerely,

Rev. Stewart Lindsay, OSFS  
Niagara Falls, NY

## A note from the pastor

Dear parishioners:

I recently registered a new family in our parish. They were new to our area, had attended Mass at several local churches, and then decided to register as parishioners of our church. As they were leaving, I said, "Now, if there is any way we can serve you, please let us know." "Thank you, Father", the woman said, "but the only thing we need now is a reliable baby-sitter."

***"Let us know what you need."***

I said, "Sit back down." Then I said, "I can give you the names of a dozen reliable baby-sitters, who live within walking distance of your home. And I will vouch for their reliability and good character."

I mention this because it illustrates something the parish does well: connecting people with specific needs with people who can help them. I think of our support group for grandparents raising grandchildren, the weekly Alcoholics Anonymous Open Meeting, the thyroid cancer support group, our Book Club, our Career Dinner, our tutoring ministry, our Outreach Office – these are some of the ways we assist people to meet their needs.

Please let us know what you need. Contact me, or a member of our pastoral team, if you have a need. If we can't help, chances are we can find someone who can.

Sincerely,

Father Tom



*It's OK if you don't recognize this parish personage, dressed for Halloween. It's Jim Mulé, our school principal.*



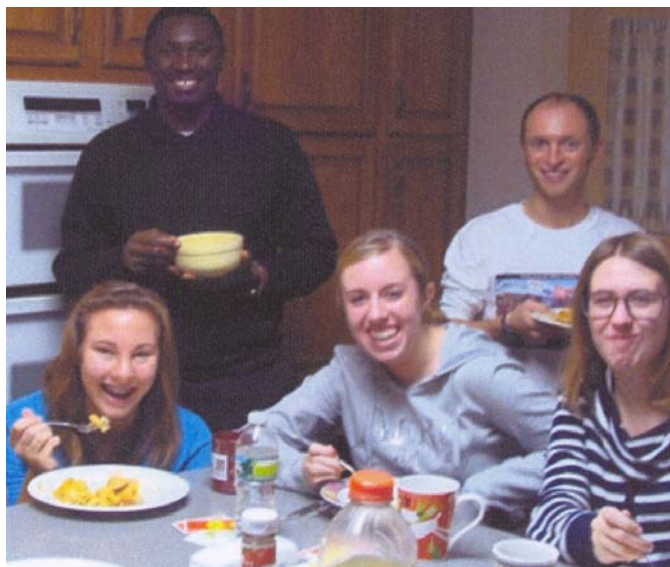
*Father Ryszard explains the articles used at Mass, prior to celebrating the Eucharist for Scouts and parents taking part in the annual December campout at Don Miller Park in North Tonawanda.*



### Thru the Lens



*Father Ryszard blesses the food, and members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, as they prepare to distribute Christmas baskets to over 100 needy families.*



*Parish Youth took part in "Fast and Feast" Thanksgiving Weekend. Anna Turski, Seminarian Daniel Ogbeifun, Kara Zimmerman, Bradley Milette, and Brittany Sedor enjoyed a feast in the Rectory after fasting 24 hours to raise funds for the needy.*



*The TPE Connection gathers junior high youth twice a month to talk, play, and eat, and, once in a while, to pose for a photo.*

*Thru the Lens continued*

*Lukas Mills presents a reading at the school's Thanksgiving Prayer Service, prepared by the fifth grade class.*



*Angels (Joanna Long, Shannon Smith, and Margaret Marigold) adore the newborn Jesus, in the arms of Mary (Marissa Saber) at the school's Christmas pageant December 15.*



*Tom Sheedy, member of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, talks to the Emmaus Men's Spirituality Group, on November 12, on using the liturgy as a pathway to effective personal prayer.*

## LETTERS



### *Support for Wende Prisoners Appreciated*

Dear Msgr. Maloney and parishioners:

On behalf of the Wende Advisory Council of the Kairos Prison Ministry and all the inmates we serve, I want to thank you for paying for 25 subscriptions of the "Prisoner to Prisoner" devotional materials to be used by the inmates at Wende. This material was specifically requested by the inmates, and will be used by them on a daily basis.

When I told them last Sunday that you were doing this for them, they were deeply moved. One inmate had tears in his eyes. Please let your parish families know how much this act of love meant to the men.

Sincerely,

Mark Duguay  
Institutional Liaison - Wende

### *Thanks for a Memorable Funeral Liturgy*

Dear Msgr. Maloney:

From our whole family, our sincerest gratitude for the lovely funeral Mass for our mother, June Murphy. We were all so very pleased with your choice of sentiments to express. It was one of the few funeral Masses I've ever been to when I walked away feeling good, satisfied, and at peace.

How kind of you to offer prayers and Masses in my mother's name throughout the year.

St. Amelia's is the only church she and we have ever known as a family. You have left us with a good and positive memory.

Many thanks,

The Murphy Girls  
Karen, Shawn, Lynn and Amy

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The Ameliorator is the bi-monthly publication of Saint Amelia Church. We mail it to members of our Saint Amelia Family, that is, registered parishioners, adult alumni of our school, and parents of children who attend our school. We also send it to people who live in the geographical area served by our Church, in order to keep them informed about who we are and what we are doing. If you do not wish to receive The Ameliorator, you can have your name deleted from our mailing list by simply calling 716-836-0011.

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## *St. Patrick's Day Comes Early for St. Amelia Parishioners*

Get your Irish up, and join us for the annual Irish Breakfast on Sunday, March 4, from 10 am til 12 noon. In the Emerald Isle, breakfast is often the biggest meal of the day. We think our breakfast could be your biggest meal that day! The repast, crafted by Chef Joseph O'Kroscynski, features Dublin-type oatmeal (served with butter and brown sugar), bangers and rashers (sausage and bacon), Irish cottage-style scrambled eggs, potatoes O'Brian, and (in deference to the European Union), Belgian waffles, crowned with strawberries or chocolate. Beverages include juices, Irish tea, and Irish coffee, prepared with a dollop of Irish Cream liqueur. Irish Dancers will be on hand to provide entertainment.

Tickets are \$10, or \$5 for children under 14. You can make a reservation by phoning the Rectory at 836 0011 during business hours, and pay for and pick up your tickets at the door. Please make reservations prior to February 27.

If you have been giving of your talents to our parish, in any of our ministries, you are invited to this breakfast as guests of the parish, and you will be receiving an invitation by mail.

