

The Ameliorator

St. Amelia Church

November-December 2010

Vol. 15, No. 6

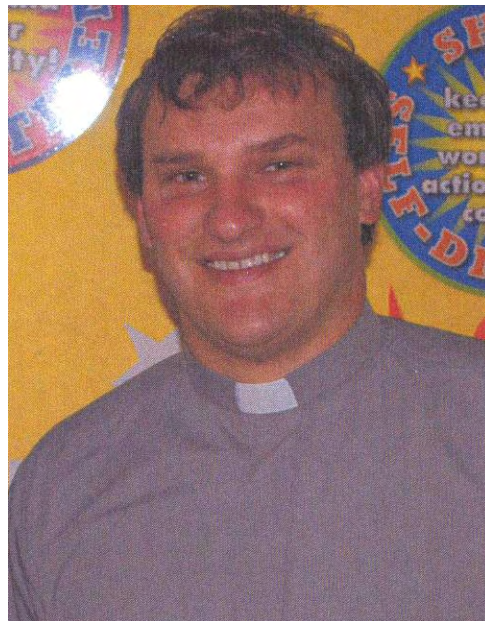
Tonawanda, NY

Father Ryszard Biernat Named Parochial Vicar

Bishop Kmiec has appointed Rev. Ryszard Biernat as our new parochial vicar. Father Biernat is a native of Limanowa, Poland, where he earned a degree in electrical engineering before deciding to become a priest. He studied at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan, and at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, and was ordained to the priesthood on August 8, 2009.

“Maybe you read about me in the Western New York Catholic last month”, Father Richard said in remarks from the pulpit at Masses on September 11 and 12. “I am the priest who keeps bees. But don’t worry – the bees are not coming with me to St. Amelia’s!”

“I am very grateful to the bishop and the diocesan personnel board for making this assignment”, Father Tom said at the October Parish Council meeting. “Their job is not an easy one. A lot of parishes are looking for parochial vicars, and they are in short supply. Father Richard is 29, and has a great rapport with the children and youth. He has a great sense of humor, and an easy-going personality. And I am glad he did not bring those bees.”



(Continued on page 3)

Parishioners Observe Marriage Milestones

Bishop Edward Kmiec presided at a Mass and Reception at St. Joseph’s Cathedral on Sunday, October 17, honoring couples celebrating their 50th, 60th, and 70th wedding anniversaries. Among those honored were these parishioners:



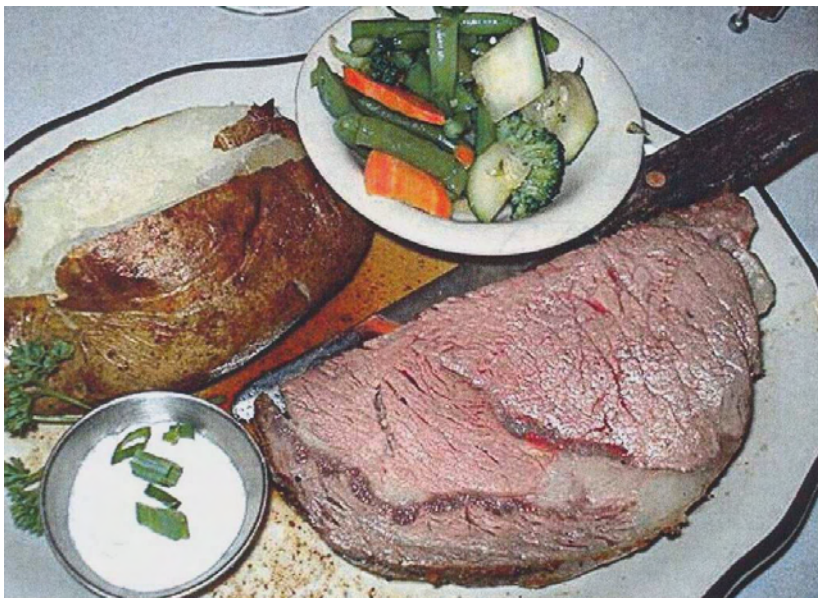
James and Carmela Cavalieri have been married for seventy years.

James and Carmela Cavalieri observed the seventieth anniversary of their marriage, which took place October 12, 1940.

Celebrating 60 years of marriage were Dolores and Francis Adams, Edwin and Patricia Gray, Vera and Robert Hunold, Erwin and Stella Hetzelt, and Thomas and Gloria Matters.

Five couples celebrated their 50th anniversary: John and Antoinette Bellanti, James and Patricia Dean, Daniel and Patricia Mulhern, Karl and Doris Wiegand, and Peter and Marguerite Yuhas.

Prime Rib Dinner to Recognize Exceptional Gifts of Talent



since then.

Tom Lillis, Parish Trustee and Board member, explains, "The Board makes decisions on how the Fund's assets are invested. It is crucial to us to have good data. John provides that information, and wise counsel, at every meeting".

Joe De Marco has been a member of our parish St. Vincent de Paul Society for some 30 years. During much of that time, he has been the "point person" when people need emergency food.

A fall tradition at our parish is the annual Prime Rib Dinner, at which parishioners are honored for outstanding stewardship of talent. The dinner this year takes place on Saturday evening, November 6, at 5:30 p.m. in the Don Miller Hall. It's a full-course dinner, prepared by the chefs at West Seneca's Market in the Square, assisted by members of our Holy Name Society, sponsors of the dinner.

Honorees this year are John Thur, Joe De Marco, Sean and Angel Beiter, and Joe and Angie Tritto.

John Thur was a life-long parishioner prior to his moving to Clarence in 1998 to better accommodate his growing family. He was at that time an advisor to the John Lodge McHugh Endowment Fund Board. He is uniquely qualified to serve in this capacity, since he is an investment manager with Atlantic Capital Management.

When he moved, John said, "I'd like to continue serving as an advisor to the Board. My family owes a lot to this parish, and I would like to share my talents as needed". John has not missed a single Board meeting

"When we get a request for food, I call Joe", Father Tom explains. "I have called him on Sunday afternoon, in the middle of a Bill's game, on Saturday night, in the middle of dinner; on Christmas day, in the middle of family festivities...you get the idea. His response is immediate, but more importantly, compassionate. He gets in touch with people right away, assesses their needs, and arranges for help. If they can't come to pick up the food they need, he goes and delivers it. He is amazing".

For *Sean and Angel Beiter*, sharing their talents is as natural as breathing. Sean is an attorney specializing in labor law, a partner with Goldberg Segalla, LLP. Angel is an accountant, and Vice President for Finance at Air Sep Corp.

They have been active for several years as leaders in our parish Scouting program, and in school activities. Sean currently serves on the school's Finance Committee. Angel served on the School Board and was HSA treasurer. But their generous gifts of talent touch people far beyond the boundaries of our parish.

(Continued)

Joe and Angie Tritto have a very long track record in sharing their talent. Joe has been a religious education teacher for 34 years!

“He is the answer to a Coordinator’s dream”, exclaims Elaine Volker. “Always prepared, always interesting, always ready to step in as a sub at a moment’s notice.” Some years back, Angie was instrumental in beginning the Monday Eucharistic Adoration, and has continued to advance and promote devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

Two outstanding altar servers will also be recognized at the dinner.

Dinner tickets are \$10 per person, and \$35 per family. They can be purchased at the Rectory, and also in the Church narthex after weekend Masses in late October. Singles are especially welcome, and may, if they wish be seated at the “Captain’s Table”, which will be hosted by the effervescent Father Biernat, since Father Tom will be away on a trip to Lourdes. “Don’t worry”, Father Richard says, “I won’t bring the bees.”

Dinner to Celebrate Principal’s 15th Anniversary

School parents, alumni, and parents of alumni will gather on Thursday, November 11 to celebrate Jim Mulé’s fifteenth anniversary as our school principal. The dinner – at Antonio’s at 7708 Niagara Falls Blvd. in Wheatfield – is at 7 p.m., preceded by a cash bar cocktail hour beginning at 6 p.m. A post-prandial program features the inimitable Sean Beiter as master of ceremonies.

Tickets are \$20 each. You can make a reservation by calling the Rectory at 836 0011.



Jim Mulé reviews an assignment with seventh grader Madison Nola.

Father Ryszard Biernat (Continued from page 1)

As part of his seminary training, Father Biernat served at St. Francis Parish in the city of Tonawanda, and at St. Mary of the Angels Church in Olean. He is a second cousin of Father Leon Biernat, who served at our parish from 1995 to 2000. Father says:

“I am very happy and excited about being a part of St. Amelia Parish. I am in love with God and I am looking forward to sharing my faith with you. I come to this parish not only

to serve, but also to learn from Fr. Tom, Fr. Don and all of you how to be a priest.

I enjoy life – eating different foods, snowboarding and skiing in winter, motorcycle rides, working with bees and hiking in the mountains. I keep fit by lifting weights and running. My educational goal for this year is to start learning German and to continue learning Latin. Please know that I keep all of you in my prayers.”

THE QUESTION BOX

How come no outdoor Mass?



Dear Parish Council:

Why was the “Mass in the Grass” not held this past year? I think it was a pleasant time: an outdoor Mass followed by a summer picnic dinner.

- Parishioner

Dear Parishioner:

This item was discussed at the September meeting of the Parish Council. I outlined my reasons for deciding not to continue the annual outdoor Mass. They are: (1) It would cost the parish close to \$2000 each time to rent the tent needed for the outdoor Mass. In a time of tight finances, I consider this an unnecessary expenditure. (2) Each year, people would come for the 4:30 Mass, and when they realized it would be outdoors, would then drive off to seek an indoor Mass at another Church. The number of people at the outdoor Mass was always significantly less than the number who ordinarily attend the 4:30 Mass in the Church. (3) I found it very hard to have a reverent, respectful, engaging liturgy in the makeshift environment of the tent.

I suggested that in the future, we might consider having the 4:30 Mass in the Church, followed by a picnic, or chicken dinner, elsewhere on the grounds.

- Father Tom

A Grandmother’s Gripe

Dear Father Tom:

My pet peeve is the steady stream of children heading for the rest rooms in the narthex during Mass. It’s distracting to people trying to pay attention to the liturgy. We raised six children, and they never used the rest rooms at Church. We simply told them to take care of their needs before we left home for Church, or wait til we got home again.

- Grumpy Gramma

Dear Grump:

Amen! I wish parents today would do what you did. Incidentally, at school liturgies, kids are told to use the lavs in school before Mass, or after Mass. Virtually no one uses the narthex facilities during Mass.

- Father Tom

(Continued)

Wondering about Mary's Statue

Dear Father Tom:

I like the new landscaping outside The Lighthouse, where the Outreach Office is located. I used to enjoy seeing the statue of Mary on my way to Church, and now she is gone. Is she coming back?

- Wondering

Dear Wondering:

The landscape project around The Lighthouse is a work in progress, and won't be finished until late Spring 2011. This is a project of our Facilities Committee. I am glad you like the new look. Placing a new statue is a definite possibility. There are already about a dozen statues of Mary on parish grounds, so we are looking at other saints. Some names have been suggested: St. Amelia, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Kateri Takakwitha, St. André Bressette. I'd like to hear some suggestions from parishioners.

- Father Tom

School Enrollment Reaches Record Height



Mr. Rajzak helps Michael and Morgan Morehouse, who came from St. Paul's School, get settled in their new academic environment.

Our school now enrolls 563 pupils, the highest number since 1968. There are 153 new students: 79 transfer students, and 74 new pupils beginning in kindergarten and pre-school.

"It is a challenge to welcome so many transfer students coming into our school community, because you want to make sure they are welcomed by their classmates, and made to feel at home", observes Jim Mulé, principal. "But our teachers and our kids are really great at this. We got some good experience in 2007, when we welcomed 70 transfer pupils, mainly from Blessed Sacrament School. All told, our pupils come from 18 Catholic parishes, and from five non-Catholic faiths: Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Pentecostal, and Hindu".

"I make it a point to have a chat with most of the new students in the upper grades", Father Tom added, "to see how the transition is going. From what the new kids tell me, I am really thrilled at how open and welcoming our teachers and students are."

To make the transition from summer to school easier, the Home School Association sponsored an Ice Cream Social on the afternoon prior to the first day of class. Kids and their parents were able to walk the corridors, greet old friends, make some new friends, and enjoy some Anderson's ice cream.

LETTERS***Praise for Catholic Charities Campaign***

Dear Editor:

A recent article in the Buffalo News noted that the Catholic Charities Drive for 2010 finished with cash and pledges of \$10.3 million against a goal of \$10.5 million. The article pointed out that this was the third year that Catholic Charities has had to lower its goal, and that it still missed the mark. What the article did not say is that the \$10.3 million achieved was 98% of the goal and was accomplished in what economists are calling the most difficult economic times since the Great Depression of 1929.



Services of Catholic Charities include marriage and family counseling.

Catholic Charities serves 165,000 people a year, with a total budget of \$30 million. In addition to the annual appeal, Catholic Charities contracts with other agencies to expand the reach of the human services it provides. The annual appeal has close to 65,000 donors.

By contrast, United Way raised \$13.3 million in 2010, on a goal of \$14.2 million, or 94%. Observers speculate that much of the attrition in both campaigns is due to the continuing steady decline of the Buffalo area population, and the difficult economic times.

This year, parish members contributed over \$184,000 to Catholic Charities. I believe the parish owes a great debt to Lou Cercone, chair of our annual appeal, and to his dedicated team of volunteers.

- Mike Collins
Parish Trustee

A former pastor says "Thank You!"

Dear St. Amelia Parishioners,

Thank you so much for your thoughts and prayers. I appreciate all that you do for me. It's because of those prayers that I have left the hospital. I now continue with therapy at the Brothers of Mercy.

The flowers you sent are gorgeous. I guess you always remember my love of flowers. I hope you always know that I have fond memories of all of you at St. Amelia's. You are in my prayers.

- Msgr. Rupert Wright
Brothers of Mercy
18570 Bergtold Rd.
Clarence NY 14031-2198



White crosses fashioned by home-schooled children embellish the lawn near the Church, symbolic of human lives lost through abortion.



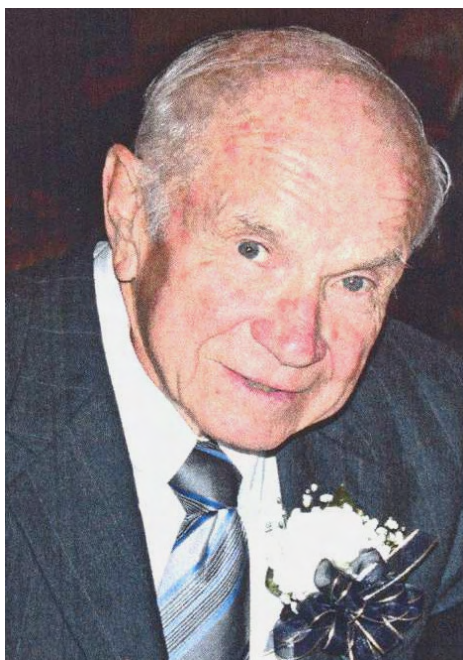
John Wozer, in traditional German garb, was among 200 revelers at the Oktoberfest Dinner on October 2 which featured roast pork, bratwurst, sauerkraut, and all the trimmings.



Thru the Lens



The renowned Bergholz Band provided traditional German music at this year's Oktoberfest celebration.



The Ozonam Medal was presented to Austin (Mickey) Finn by the Diocesan Council of St. Vincent de Paul Society at their annual Top Hat Dinner on September 16, in recognition of his many years of service to the poor.



Persistent rain and 50 degree weather did not deter parishioners from taking part in Lifechain, October 3, along the west side of Niagara Falls Boulevard.

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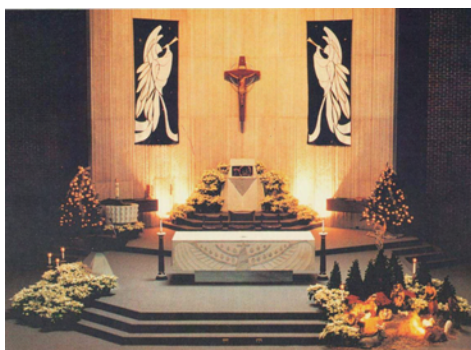
www.stamelia.com

www.stameliaschool.org

www.stameliayouthministry.webs.com

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.

Christmas 2010 at St. Amelia's



- Thurs., Dec. 16 Christmas Presentation in Church
by our school children at 12:45 and 7 p.m.*
- Sat., Dec. 18 Confessions from 12 noon til 4:15 p.m.
with parish priests and visiting confessors*
- Fri., Dec. 24 Vigil Masses at 4:30, 7:00, and 10:00 p.m.*
- Sat., Dec. 25 Christmas Masses at 7, 9, and 11 a.m.
There are no afternoon Masses on this day.*
- Sun., Dec. 26 Masses at 7, 9, and 11 a.m.*

Confessions are heard every Monday night at 6:30 p.m., on Saturdays from 3:30 til 4:15 p.m., on Sunday mornings at 8:30 and 10:30, and at other times by appointment.