

Our Lady of the Annunciation Parish – Queensbury

REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES and PARISHIONERS – STATE OF THE PARISH

January 2024

Once again it is that time of the year to report on the “State of the Parish” from the Pastor’s perspective. What follows are some thoughts on the trends, needs, accomplishments of this past year as well as a direction for the future. I thank you for your support and prayers.



STATE OF THE PARISH

This year we made a **lot of improvements** ... air conditioning units, painted the entire facility, replaced computers to name a few. (More covered in the section on Capital Improvements)

Contracted with a cleaning service. Upgraded internet and improvement the feed into the hall as well as the live streaming equipment.

The **staffing has changed**: a new secretary, and the loss of both maintenance and janitor employees.

The challenge going forward will be getting more **people involved** in the parish, the shrinking **number of clergy**, and a monitoring of the **finances** (cost of food is a major concern for everyone these days)

With the ongoing bankruptcy **strategic planning** will be central in discussions with the pastoral leaders of the churches in this vicariate. The church in Hague closed last year and the church in North Creek will close at the end of this fiscal year.

Bishop Ed has reached retirement age (75) submitted his resignation, but this has not been accepted by the Holy Father.

Fr. Busch has been pastor here since 2005 ... and **will reach retirement** age in November 2024. No decision has been made as to when he will retire. He still serves as the Episcopal Vicar for the Adirondack Vicariate.

People have been **supporting the parish** with the weekly collections, but with mail-ins and on-line giving. This year we plan on changing companies for the on-line contributions. The goal is always to have more participate by on-line giving.

This year will be changing the **parish logo and bulletin** with the help of Liturgical press.

Using **Flock Notes** has improved communication with the parish. We need to promote this with the congregation.

In general the parish is doing very well with the support through contributions, and the upkeep on the buildings and property that has been accomplished.

The future is uncertain with regards to an aging population, lack of volunteers, the shortage of clergy, and economy.

Staffing

Attended an **Institute for Pastoral Leaders**: Sue Wright, Alesia Tarbell, Marie Gargano, Patti Abbott and Fr Joe Busch. We meet once a month for 6 hours from June 2023 to November 2023. Sponsored by Siena College and funded by the Cabrini Organization. Topics included Mission, Empathy, Leader Behavior, Importance of change, Service, and Strategic Thinking.

Most notable staff changes have occurred with Maintenance/Janitorial and PT secretary positions.

- **Mike White** retired at the beginning of December to spend more time with his wife and travel. He was overseeing Maintenance both in OLA and Sacred Heart
- **Joe Yaroshak** – took sick time December and January. He was the janitor for both OLA and Sacred Heart. He plans on returning to work January 18th with his doctor's permission.

We hired **ALLPro** to maintain the cleaning of the Church and parish buildings for both OLA and Sacred Heart. At OLA they have done an excellent job; Sacred Heart – the cleaning has been poor, garbage not removed.

Plan will be to keep ALLPro in Queensbury and have **Joe Yaroshak** work full time in Lake George. His duties and job performance will be evaluated as time goes on.

We have a contracted service for lawn maintenance. They did an excellent job this summer and we will continue to use this.

- Winter lacked snow. We do have a contract with North Country Snow Removal. **Sean Sullivan** has volunteered to clean the walkways with the parish owned equipment – Kubota and Snow blower. **Andy Caruso** who volunteers as overseer of Buildings and Grounds in Lake George has assisted Sean in the hydraulics of the snow equipment.
- Over the summer **Sue Robinson** filled in as secretary taking the place of Sue Wright who had filled in after Filomena left the position due to health

issues. Sue Robinson decided at the end of August to return to working at QUFS.

- We hired **Paul Scott** as the PT secretary. He has formally been a School Superintendent, very knowledgeable in HR issues, and all Computer software.
- **Alesia Tarbell** continues on as the other PT secretary, now serving in her 15th year, hired in 2009.
- **Patti Abbott** continues as Bookkeeper and Business Manager, both at OLA Queensbury and Sacred Heart in Lake George.
- **Sue Wright** continues as Director of Music.
- **Maria Gargano** continues as Faith Formation director.

Trustees

- **Rich Zaccarro** continues as Parish Trustee
- **Roxanne Odom** will continue on as long as her health allows

Finances

- **Tony Farrer** continues to chair the finance committee – which has not met in a significant number of years.

Capital Improvements

[1] Replaced mini-splits in church for Air conditioning

[2] purchased new computers for office and staff

[3] replaced septic system pump for Rectory

[4] purchased a new snow blower

[5] Painted the entire outside of the buildings – church, rectory, parish center. This did not include the barn.

[6] Worked extensively on the Sound System.

- Placed the Live streaming system – camera and computer. Hard wired this.
- Worked on the Sound and feed into the Parish hall.

[7] Internet service for Office and classrooms

- Removed the routers and replaced with hubs for the Internet

[8] Replaced the monitor in the Library area of the church and hard wired to a computer for announcements

[9] Replaced the office copier. The previous contract was finished.

CLERGY SHORTAGE – Aging Catholic population trends

Tom Cronin has replaced Deacon Frank Berning as head of Pastoral or Strategic Planning.

Fr. Ken Swain continues to help with weekend Masses. He is 78 years old. The problem is the Mass times do not allow one priest to cover the 3 parishes. Sacred Heart in Lake George and St. Cecilia's in Warrensburg have a 10 am Mass. OLA has 8 am and 11:30 am.

Fr. Busch may retire at 70 years old – which he will be on November 18, 2024.

This year we had to implement the celebration of Eucharist in the absence of the priest in Lake George. Fr Ebert was to cover and contracted COVID. Deacon Ryan McNulty led the service – no one left, all understood as we have been talking about the shortage for a number of years.

As a Church we are aging out. The average age of the active clergy is 65 years old. There is a possibility that within the next year 1/3rd of the clergy could retire. There are approximately 90 priests (active and retired active) serving the 126 parishes. This could drop to 60.

Not only is there a lack of priests to cover, but there is also a great need for people to be involved in ministries such as lector, eucharistic minister and server (including funerals).

Future is uncertain. Churches will have to close due to a lack of people, clergy, and revenue. We must begin to prepare people now for this and encourage them to travel to the nearest church. Also, we must return to training lay leaders for the Celebration of the Eucharist in the absence of a priest.

Mass times will need to be adjusted if the priest/pastor is to cover multiple churches. Some churches will have to close. Perhaps Eucharist will not be offered in every church every week. Priest will become the circuit rider.

Educating the people continues to be a priority at this time.

Bishop Ed is unwilling to close churches. However, with the bankruptcy – we may not have a choice.

Our Lady of the Annunciation - Queensbury											
RELIGIOUS ED PROGRAM - 10 year comparison											
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-2024	
Gr 1 - 8	258	194	106	88	114	93	87	85	89	82	
HS	178	144	105	104	88	32	42	31	28	15	
TOTAL	436		211	192	202	125	129	116	117	97	
→ BREAKDOWN Switch to Family Program											
First Communion	30	30	27	17	23	11	13	14	15	12	
Confirmations	70	62	44	42	38	29	16	13	9	10	
Pre-School			3	2	2	2				4	
Kindergarten					9	8	6	8	5	7	
Grade 1	19	18	15	7	7	10	9	6	10	8	
Grade 2	29	22	14	17	15	7	12	10	10	14	
Grade 3	26	24	5	13	21	12	8	11	10	8	
Grade 4	31	20	9	6	13	14	10	11	12	5	
Grade 5	26	22	8	6	8	12	14	9	11	13	
Grade 6	40	18	17	10	11	6	9	13	8	8	
Grade 7	44	34	7	13	14	10	6	9	12	6	
Grade 8	43	36	28	14	14	12	13	8	11	9	
TOTAL	258	194	106	88	114	93	87	85	89	82	
9th	49	36	27	29	16	16	11	9	5	11	
10th	61	50	32	40	31	16	15	9	11	4	
	68	58	46	35	41		16	13	12		
TOTAL	178	144	105	104	88	32	42	31	28	15	

We may continue to see a drop due to demographics – reflected in the drop in enrollment in the public schools.

It is always a challenge to recruit Catechists for the program (Jr/Sr High).

We will continue to use a family faith formation program to evangelize the adults in our community.

During Lent of 2023 a program on preparing for death (Eternal Rest: the art of dying well) was offered in Lake George drawing on people for OLA, Sacred Heart and St. Cecilia's. There were a solid 60 in attendance over the 4 weeks.

Our Lady of the Annunciation Queensbury					
MONTHLY AVERAGE		Count	Collection	MONTHLY AVERAGE	Count
				Collection	
January 2021		222	\$ 8,682.65	January 2022	362
February 2021		242	\$ 7,257.67	February 2022	413
March 2021		291	\$ 7,028.00	March 2022	449
April 2021		326	\$ 6,963.54	April 2022	507
May 2021		373	\$ 6,749.00	May 2022	472
June 2021		447	\$ 6,572.98	June 2022	496
July 2021		495	\$ 7,537.73	July 2022	526
August 2021		462	\$ 6,731.60	August 2022	520
September 2021		463	\$ 6,795.25	September 2022	483
October 2021		453	\$ 6,901.30	October 2022	472
November 2021		460	\$ 7,246.50	November 2022	489
December 2021		381	\$ 6,198.50	December 2022	443
OVERALL AVERAGE		384	\$ 7,055.39	OVERALL AVERAGE	469
				Easter 2022	829
Easter 2021		346	\$ 10,891.00	Christmas 2022	1054
Christmas 2021		658	\$ 11,327.00		
PANDEMIC		Count	Collection		
July 2020		181	\$ 6,702.77		
August 2020		229	\$ 6,695.99		
September 2020		245	\$ 6,437.25		
October 2020		234	\$ 6,355.50	July 2020 - December 2020 Average Collection \$6,764.53 Average Attendance 233	
November 2020		249	\$ 6,071.33		
December 2020		258	\$ 8,324.35		
Easter 2020		0	\$ -		
CHRISTMAS 2020		318	\$ 14,064.00		