

RCIA 2024

by Paul and Carol Heckman



Left to right: Rachel, Pam, Christopher, Herb

What a joyous Easter Vigil we experienced this year when we witnessed the entrance into the Church of our five Catechumen and Elect. The eight months of preparation and formation were fruitful, and grace filled as the Holy Spirit led us to that great night. We ask that you keep our “neophytes” (new Catholics) in your prayers as they engage in our Tri- Parish Community and live out their new lives in Christ. As coordinators of the RCIA program, Paul and I can honestly say that we are so grateful for the honor of walking with them and witnessing the work of the Holy Spirit take root in these five special people.

Each wants to share their own thoughts and feelings now and tell you about their experiences in their own words.

Herb White, a Catechumen, was Baptized, Confirmed and received first Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. He and his wife, Louise, a lifelong Catholic, have two daughters, Rosalie, 8 and Katelyn, 5 who are in faith formation at IC. Herb is a Business Development Officer, Dealer Relationship Manager for Community Bank and Louise is Deputy Director of IT Services for the NYS Assembly. Herb states that he is “thankful for the guidance of the entire RCIA team who shared their experience in the faith as he accepted the Sacraments and deepened his faith in the teachings of the Church.” Herb is most grateful to his wife, Louise, and his daughters who lead him. Herb says that he “is blessed.”

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Rachel states:

“RCIA has been a literal Godsend for me. At every meeting I was met by kind and caring people who are walking the walk, gladly giving of their time, energy, knowledge, and support to all of us. When I started RCIA I had faith in God, but I had many questions. With great patience, Carol, Paul and the team answered them. Our discussions were educational and entertaining, and the varied perspectives brought much needed enlightenment.”

She adds, “I need context and history to comprehend the readings and traditions. The faithful, educated presenters brought all the topics into perspective and that truly made sense. I feel so privileged to have benefitted from this education and I think many people would benefit from these lessons. If they were to offer a discussion group after Mass, I would sign right up!

We were blessed to be there for the relics of Bl. Carlo Acutis and St. Manuel Gonzalez Gomez. Sean Caron’s talk on Relics and Eucharistic Miracles were among his memorable talks. Presentations by Doug Bisnette, Lauren Patterson, Andy and Mary Cook, Holly and Phil Shulte, Deacon Craig, Fr. Russ, Fran Szpylczyzn, Gerry and Jerry Havasy, and Paul and Carol have all impacted my journey of faith. I felt welcomed, and as if I am part of a community that I failed to realize I needed so much. For anyone interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, or converting to Catholicism, I highly recommend this program.”

Rachel is mom to Nicholas, 7, who is about to be baptized and attends faith formation at IC. They reside in Scotia with Rachel’s mother, Martha Bruce, who is her sponsor.

Chris Makahon lives in Clifton Park with his wife, Charleen of 25 years and two sons, Dylan, 22 and Nick, 17. He works as a Supervisor for Janitronics Facility Services@ Momentive Performance Materials in Waterford. Chris states, “My experience in RCIA was phenomenal! A big thanks to all the people who guided me through it all to bring me to my Confirmation, which not only joins my list of life’s highlights, but stands first.”

Pam Robinson lives in Schenectady, NY and is retired from the hospitality industry. She has one adult daughter, Amy, who is an engineer at Knolls Atomic Power Lab. Pam states that her daughter, Amy and son-in-law, Gary, are the “joy and support in her life.” Pam shares, “What I have learned from the teaching of the RCIA, under the leadership of Paul and Carol Heckman and the guest speakers, has been a wonderful foundation for spiritual

growth in the Catholic church”.

Gianna Genter, 21, is a student at Cobleskill College and lives in Schenectady with her family. Her mother is Paula Genter, our Youth Ministry head. Gianna states, “I’m very grateful to the entire RCIA team. I’ve learned so much. It’s a great program with such beautiful information about our faith. It’s opened my eyes and helped me in so many ways to grow in faith.”

We thank our great RCIA team for their commitment:

Sean Caron, Doug Bisnette, Andy and Mary Cook, Jerry and Gerry Havasy, Lauren Patterson, Fran Szpylczyzn, Phil and Holly Schulte, Deacon Craig, Fr. Tom.

I know I can speak for the RCIA team when I say that we are equally impacted by walking alongside people who are genuinely seeking to know the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ in His Catholic Church. Their zeal and enthusiasm are a strong witness for us. We ask that you continue to pray for our new Catholics as they engage in our community and begin to practice the faith. We hope that their sharing shines a light on RCIA so that you may be moved to invite someone in your life to seek the Sacraments that they may still need, or simply to inquire about the Catholic faith, with no commitment necessary.

We Catholics must remember that the Apostles were not the only ones entrusted with the mission of Christ. By virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation, all the faithful, that is, the entire Body of Christ, is entrusted with His mission. Jesus said, in John 20:21,

...” Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you”



TRIP TO TANZANIA, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023

by Gina Schneider, President of the Friends of Musoma Society

In October 2023, I took a very successful trip to Tanzania for the purpose of attending two memorial services for Father Laurenti Magesa. During this time, I was able to meet with six of our ten students who are all doing well. Thank you to all of our sponsors from the bottom of my heart for your support for the Friends of Musoma Society and our students.

I was invited to the memorials by Evaristi Magoti, Father Laurenti Magesa's younger brother. Father Laurenti Magesa, who was once the assistant pastor at Immaculate, passed away on August 11, 2022. He was involved from the very beginning with the formation and support of the Friends of Musoma Society, along with his dear friend, Monsignor Alexander Choka, who passed away on June 10, 2021.

I left for Tanzania on Friday 13th, just five days after the war in the Middle East started, causing me some anxiety. The 12-hour Emirates Airway flight from JFK was delayed, and so I missed my connection to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, forcing me to spend the night in Dubai, UAE and catch another 6-hour flight the next day to Dar. When I arrived, Evaristi, his wife Davidika and Sister Suzana Ndoti were there to meet me. (The three of them were the caregivers of Father Magesa during his battle with pancreatic cancer.) We drove to Evaristi's home and I stayed a few days with his family, including his five year old son, Robert.

On the 18th, I flew to Mwanza where I was met by Father Jeremiah and Sister Subira (both close friends of Father Choka and Magesa). From there we traveled to Isenye Parish near the Serengeti where Father Jeremiah is serving. This rural area featured many animals, goats, pigs, chickens, ducks and large cornfields. I attended daily Mass and rosary at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the new church with the locals. Also, I cooked an Italian dish, gnocchi, in a very rustic kitchen for the people there!

It was at this point in my journey that Evaristi asked me to prepare a 10-minute tribute for the memorial service in Musoma for Father Magesa, and Father Marcel Uwineza, the principal of Hekima University College in Nairobi, Kenya where Father taught, requested a 15-minute tribute for the Nairobi memorial. So I started preparing the talks without Internet or WiFi. It would have been much easier if I had known this before my trip!

Amos & Gina



On the 20th we traveled to Musoma to meet Evaristi and visit the gravesites of Father Magesa and Father Choka at Mikoko Seminary. Many of their family and friends were there. It was a sad time.



Father Jeremiah then drove me to Nyegina Secondary School where his nephew, Amos Ryoba, one of our sponsored students, studies. He had just come out of a science exam. Amos is a thin, tall, shy young man with an amiable personality who is doing well. I noticed that day that his toe was infected. Father said it was no big deal, but I took out my trusty first aid kit to wash and dress the wound. After our visit Father's old truck would not start, so the headmaster and Jeremiah had to put it in neutral and push it down the hill to start it! We drove back to Isenye where Sister Subira joined us, visited beehives on the farm, and watched Father Jeremiah eat the whole head of a fish at dinner (common for men to eat).

On Sunday the 22nd, we drove to one of 12 outstations in Father's parish to celebrate Mass. Each station hears Mass once a month. It was a long, bumpy ride, and the Church was rustic with a dirt floor and rocks for seats. The people were friendly. Father let me introduce myself. He translated into Swahili. Some of the children climbed into the back of the truck for a ride home. One little boy cried because he was afraid (never been in a car before).

The next day we took another very long and bumpy ride (dirt roads) to Masonga to visit Milienia Ya Tatu Primary School and meet some of our sponsored students. On the way we stopped for visits with Father Jeremiah's mother, Father Monyoni (who used to be in Masonga) at Nyamwaga Parish, and Sr. Subira's father at Tarime. We had a nice lunch there of duck, fish and ugali (a staple food made from millet).

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We arrived in Masonga in the evening. Sister Irene Loina, principal of Milenia Ya Tatu Primary School and a good friend of Father Choka's, greeted us. The nuns made us a lovely dinner and a drink with papaya, avocado and lemon. After morning Mass we visited with our student James Zakaria who was working at St. Mary's Health Center in Masonga while on his college break. He was a very nice young man and spoke good English. He expressed his extreme gratitude for all that the Friends of Musoma Society has done for him. He attends University in Dodoma and is in his last year. He will be receiving a degree in Project Planning and Management and Community Development. He said he wants to give back to others in need once he starts earning a wage.



James at the health center



We also visited with Vincent Hamasi, Nancy Edwards and Pendo Zablon, pictured at the left. Vincent struggled in the past, but now he is doing well in Form 3. Pendo is in Form 2 and is still a bit shy but has really matured. They both attend Masonga Secondary School. Nancy was also on her college break. She has grown into a lovely

young woman who is in her second year of studies to become a teacher. She said that she would like to travel overseas to teach Kiswahili. It was so rewarding visiting with our students, who have grown up into such fine people.

After Masonga, we drove back to Isenye because Father Jeremiah had to give Mass at a memorial service for a family at their house. It was to honor their father who passed away in the 1980's. Every five years or so, they have a celebration in his honor. The house was on a piece of land where all of the relatives over many generations were buried. It was like having a graveyard in your backyard. This is a custom of the particular tribe of which that family was a member. The celebration was full of music and lots of food.

On the 26th we traveled back to Musoma for the memorial service for Magesa. I stayed with Sr. Subira at the convent. I visited Agripina (one of our sponsored students from the past who became a teacher) and her new baby. She is doing very well as a teacher who is married with four children. The memorial service was the next day at Mikoko Seminary where Magesa and Choka are buried. It was a Mass in a large church with talks afterwards. As I spoke my tribute, Agripina translated one paragraph at a time into Kiswahili. It was a large crowd. After Mass family and friends went to the gravesite to

put wreaths of flowers on the graves. Juliana Petro, a student who came from extreme poverty and whom we have helped since she was age three, attended the service. It was wonderful to see how she has grown. Friends of Musoma Society sponsored her through her education. She graduated in December 2023 from secretarial school and is now independent.

On the 28th, we traveled with Father Jeremiah and Sister Subira to Burere, Father Alexander Choka Wataye's home and birthplace. We visited with the Wataye family including Father Choka's nephews and half brother, Thomas, a carpenter, his daughter and wife. We ate a meal in Father Choka's house and then hiked up a small mountain, which looks over the valley. It was a beautiful view of two mountains (the burial places of Father Choka's grandpa and great-grandpa) and Lake Victoria. Some of the rock formations shot up as high as a large building in NYC.

We drove back to Musoma and I stayed with Sr. Agnes, the mother superior of The Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa (Sr. Subira's congregation). We visited Father Biseko who is the Mother Teresa of the area. The next day Sr. Subira took me to St. Justin's Home for the disabled children (one of the charities we supported in the past). There was a volunteer from Tacoma, Washington helping out with the children. They have new buildings under construction. Someone from the States gave a large sum of money, so they are doing much better now. We then took a trip to Baraki Farms and visited Sr. Annunciata Cha Cha, who ran Jipe Moyo (home for runaway children, which was another charity we previously supported) but has now been sent to Baraki. There was a young man who was volunteering from Germany to help on the farm. We took a tour of the Operating Theatre that Sr. Subira has been trying to finish. Friends of Musoma had donated money to build the roof. The building needs windows, floors and all the equipment and finishing on the inside. Sr. Subira said it would take another \$30,000 US dollars to finish. Her dream is to have it done in five years so she can operate and do C-sections on pregnant women. Friends of Musoma Society helped her obtain her MD at a medical school in Uganda. She just graduated with another degree in Master of Public Health at Bugando Medical Center in Mwanza.



Left: Amos & Fr. Jeremiah; Right: Sr. Irene, Nancy & Gina

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New York State Assisted Suicide Bills – Respect Life Ministry Update by Larry Smith

Respect for life from conception to natural death is a tenet of our Catholic faith. Your parish Respect Life Ministry strives to help parishioners educate themselves on respect life issues.

NYS Catholic Conference Statement: Physician-Assisted Suicide Is Bad Medicine for NYS

“Physician-assisted suicide bills in New York, like similar bills that have passed in several other states, lack important safeguards, making coercion or misapplication of the law a serious threat. Furthermore, they send a dangerous message to society that when someone is considered a “burden” to someone else, his or her life is no longer worth living.

“While New York rightly spends millions of dollars a year to combat suicide, it is considering undermining these efforts significantly by declaring that oftentimes, suicide is “death with dignity.” The not-so-subtle implication is that those who choose to fight for their lives or to simply allow themselves to die a natural death are somehow undignified.

“The New York State Catholic Conference has joined other opponents as part of the New York Alliance Against Assisted Suicide, made up of patients-rights, disabilities-rights advocates, health care, civil rights and faith-based advocacy organizations. Together we support increased access to palliative care (comfort care) and a rejection of the dangerous national movement toward physician assisted suicide.

Resources

Below are some resources with which you can help us in our advocacy.

Action Alert – Contact Your Elected Officials: <https://www.voterve.net/NYSCATHOLIC/campaigns/110455/respond>

NYS CC Memo of Opposition: <https://www.nyscatholic.org/assisted-suicide-memo/>

NYS CC Flyer/Bulletin Insert: <https://www.nyscatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/assisted-suicide-flyer.pdf>

Fatal Flaws in Assisted Suicide Legislation Fact Sheet: https://www.nyscatholic.org/fatal_flaws_assisted-suicide2024/ ”

Reference: <https://www.nyscatholic.org/stop-assisted-suicide/>

Spotlight on the Nallys—Johanna, Mike and Patty by Annette Botsford

In this *Pipeline* series, we hope to familiarize parishioners with those among us whom we see often but know little about. Readers are invited to contact Annette Botsford at annettemarie829@gmail.com with suggestions of future subjects for this feature.

Spotlight on Johanna Nally

Johanna Nally was born and raised in Scotia, where her life was centered around extended family, church and school. Growing up seemed gentle and simple in a family of parents and two siblings. All were involved with church activities and school participation. Johanna’s grandmother played the organ and taught the First Communion class for years at St. Joseph’s. Her grandfather helped with the initial landscaping when the church was first built. Aunts and uncles, and her parents were married there along with her cousins.

She attended the local schools and graduated from high school with secretarial skills and started work at the Knolls Atomic Power Lab. She worked there for 3 years until she married her husband John Nally in 1955. They had their first child a year later. Over the course of time, they expanded to a family of 6 sons and 4 daughters. All of their children went to St. Joseph’s School (where the couple was active in school life). John plowed snow for many years to keep the parking lot and convent clear. Eventually he also did the lot on First Street. Those days, we had snowy winters. While the children were growing up, she spent time as a “mom,” sewing for home and family, cooking lots of meals, laundry, canning and freezing vegetables and harvesting from their huge garden. Then there was always volunteering at school.



All of the boys were altar boys for years. From St. Joseph’s School, they all went on to Notre-Dame-Bishop Gibbons. After graduation it was college and all graduated with degrees. Meanwhile, John and Johanna kept the home fires burning and step-by-step one and all found their life partners, married and started raising their own families. God blessed them with 41 (22 granddaughters and 19 grandsons). They in turn repeated their pattern and are raising their little ones. Johanna is a

great grandmother to 18 little girls and 18 little boys at present. She said, “Now I have ample time to appreciate the miracle of life.”

After their children left home, John and Johanna traveled to Germany to see her father’s birthplace in Munich and to Ireland to see her husband’s grandparents’ country. They also traveled to England while her husband had a boat built and sailed it across the Atlantic with one of their sons. Johanna joined them in Charleston, SC to sail to Lake Champlain via the Intercoastal Waterway with some of their children. After that, they sailed for years on the lake. Now her visits are limited to traveling to see her children, mostly Vermont and Virginia.



Four Generations

While her physical abilities are now limited, her time is occupied by reading, knitting, counted cross stitch and prayer. She no longer belongs to any of the church groups, but spent years with the funeral receptions, mainly because of the gracious and kind response when her husband died in 2009. Then COVID put a stop to the receptions. Over the course of 14 years, Johanna made over 3,000 rosaries with the “Chain Gang.”

After Johanna’s sister moved to Burnt Hills as well as two of her children, Our Lady of Grace began to include the family for attendance. When Father Chamberlain became the first pastor of Immaculate Conception, they had access to a new location. Johanna knew Father personally as he was an assistant pastor at St. Joseph’s when she was a teenager. Mass was celebrated in the school, which is now the parish hall. Whatever church they attended always felt like “home.”



Nana and daughter
Patty

always felt like “home.”

Spotlight on Mike and Patty Nally

Mike and Patty both grew up on Route 50 in Glenville.

Mike is the second child of Johanna and John Nally. With his parents and siblings, he was the 3rd generation living in the house on Rt. 50. The family was very involved in St. Joseph's parish and Mike attended school there, received all his sacraments including marriage at that church. He went on to Notre Dame Bishop Gibbons in Schenectady, then to Hudson Valley Community College for Math-Science. After that, he received a degree in Thermal Environmental Engineering from Southern Illinois University.



He has worked in a variety of fields—no pun intended. Mike has worked on the Buhmaster Family Farm doing farm work. As an engineer he was employed at Mohasco

Company Corporation and Ingersoll Rand and Dresser Industries. For over 30 years, he has been a school bus driver and a self-employed farmer. He also works at the Glenville Funeral Home. In his “spare” time, Mike enjoys his landscape business, bee keeping and beef farming.

Mike is active in some ministry groups. He teaches the 10th grade mini course, “Wonder and Awe.” He participates in Residents Encounter Christ: a prison ministry for the Albany Diocese at Great Meadow in Comstock, NY. Mike is President of the Schenectady County Farm Bureau and is a member of the REC Council for the Albany Diocese.

Patricia (Buhmaster) Nally is the second child of Donald and Louise (Mastroianni) Buhmaster. Her siblings are brother Keith and sister Susan. Her family lived across the street from their family farm—Buhmaster Family Farms. They were parishioners of Saint Joseph's in Scotia and she attended faith formation classes in the old hall and basement of the old rectory.

Her elementary education was at Glen Worden School and then on to Scotia Glenville High School. After that, she attended SUNY Cobleskill for a while and left to marry Mike Nally in 1979. They moved to Illinois for Mike to finish his engineering degree. Before moving

back here, they lived in Addison, NY and attended St. Catherine's Church where they spent many hours volunteering.

After returning to Glenville, they bought a home within two miles of Immaculate Conception and have been there ever since. All three churches feel like home and they enjoy that they have come together as one parish family.

Mike stated, “I just love our 9:00 masses that include my mom, my sister Patty, several of my children, and numerous grandchildren. I also see nieces and nephews.” It is like a family reunion. He was once asked in church how he got his children to attend mass. He replied, “bacon.” After repeating himself three times, he explained that if they went to mass, they got bacon and eggs at their home. “Jesus always feeds those that gathered, so I figure we should as well,” Mike stated.

Patty's work history includes a number of interesting places. She has worked on her family farm, Mayfair Pizza, Place for Steaks in Clifton Park, K-Mart and Immaculate Conception. She started volunteering at ICC in 1992, first riding the bus from schools. That was when kids were picked up from school and bussed to Faith Formation classes. Next, she babysat in the nursery and went on to teach 4th grade for about 15 years. In that time period she was asked three times to work for the church in Youth Ministries. Eventually, in 2007, when her youngest son Samuel was in 2nd grade, she became the Youth Ministry Assistant. She retired in 2020, due to her growing family and the need to be available for her children and grandchildren. Patty stated, “My time working at the church was truly fulfilling, working with the youth of our parish and watching them grow in their faith and me being able to offer my faith of our Lord to them thru our Youth Ministry classes, confirmation, retreats, youth activities that Christine and I offered.” She added that it was an especially rewarding experience at the National Catholic Youth Conferences with many wonderful memories.



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Spotlight on Mike and Patty Nally,
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In her spare time, she helps Mike with the bee work, especially extracting and bottling honey. She watches the grandchildren, which she loves, when needed (which can be often). She enjoys making things like soap from their beeswax and tallow, cooking, walking, hiking, camping and snowshoeing.

Mike and Patty enjoy traveling around New York State, staying at bed and breakfasts and seeing historic sites. They enjoy camping in their tent at state parks for a couple of nights.

Patty and Mike have a beautiful family of 6 children: Luke, Caroline, David, Grace, Joseph and Samuel. The family has grown to include 16 grandchildren so far.

This family truly shares and lives their faith. Mike stated, "There is a reward in sharing your faith that is hard to describe. Sharing actually strengthens your own faith and joy for life."



6 children and their families at a First Communion gathering



Some of the 16 grandkids

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I stayed at the convent with Sr. Agnes and many nuns before waking up very early to meet Evaristi and Davidika to start our trip to Nairobi, Kenya. On the way we visited Sirai where Father Magesa's and Father Choka's homes are. It was sad to see their houses knowing they were gone. I stayed overnight with Mama Cha Cha, Father Choka's housekeeper who lives at Father Choka's house. She is raising many chickens and growing a field of corn on the property. The next morning we had to drag my 50 lb luggage to the border, which was about 1 mile away. A young man helped us. Evaristi and his wife met us at the border where we hired a car to drive us to Nairobi. We arrived around 6pm and met Father Marcel, who grew up in Rwanda. He shared his autobiography, "Rising from the Ashes," that Father Magesa encouraged him to write about his experience living through the Rwandan Genocide.

On November 2nd, All Souls Day, we had the memorial service for Father Magesa at Hekima University College where he was a professor of theology for many years. There were four speakers at the event, each asked to speak on a different topic: Evaristi (a testimony from the family), Father Marcel (the theological legacy of Magesa), Dominic Tumuseni (the future of African Theology), and lastly myself, Mrs. Gina Schneider, (testimony of a friend). It was a wonderful memorial of Father and Professor Laurenti Magesa. About 40 people were in the audience and another 40 followed online. If you go on YouTube and search for Prof. Laurenti Magesa Memorial Conference, you can view the whole two-hour memorial. My talk was towards the end. (The sound coming from the audience was shut off during the talks, so you will hear no audience reaction.)

Afterwards Father Marcel took us out to eat at a Brazilian restaurant where we had time to enjoy each other's company. We all stayed at a hotel near the University, and early the next morning started our trip back to Dar es Salaam. We took a 10-hour bus ride to Arusha where we stayed overnight. The next day we finished the trip on another 12-hour bus ride to Dar, taking a small rickshaw to Evaristi's home from the bus stop. I stayed the night at Evaristi's family home. The next day Evaristi and Davidika drove me to the Dar airport. It was raining very hard. There was heavy traffic, flooded roads, a large truck blocking the road, a rickshaw turned over and the police stopped us twice, once for speeding and once for going through a red light. (The police were young men and because Evaristi was an elder and friendly they let him go). I thought we would never make it. Four hours later we arrived at the airport, which should have taken one hour! I am glad we left early. The rest of the trip through Dubai went smoothly and I was happy to meet Trevor in JFK on November 7th.

Overall the trip was a success and I now realize how many friends we have in Tanzania! Everyone was very welcoming and happy to see me and grateful to the people who are a part of the Friends of Musoma Society. Thank you all very much.



Left: Vincent
Right: Juliana at her graduation