

BART'S HERALD

Saint Bartholomew Church 45 Ludlow Road, Manchester, CT 06040

March 2008

With a grateful heart....

*"We are gathered at table as one in the Lord.
We are gathered as people who are living the Word.
Our hearts and our spirits are nurtured by grace.
It is Jesus who fills us. He is here in this place."
"In This Place" by Trevor Thomson*

For privacy considerations, please note that photos of individuals are not shown on the website edition of *Bart's Herald*.

*... a thank you...
from Lisa Irish*

For the past 16+ 1/2 years, my family and I have made St. Bart's our parish. It has been our home, where we have journeyed together. We have benefited from consistently wonderful liturgies, relying on a music ministry that offers many moments that touch the heart and draw one into prayer. We have counted on the religious education and youth ministry programs to help us share Christ's message and love with our children. We participated in outreach experiences that reminded and taught us about being Christ's hands and feet in this hurting world. We have counted on the hands of many who keep things organized, fun, clean, lovely, inspired and working. The staff, volunteers and parishioners at St. Bart's have truly come together to create a home for all of us – a place where we gather and know Jesus is "here in this place."

St. Bart's parish family offers the space to discover, experience, express and share our faith. In doing so, we share a love with one another that transcends the contemporary world. As a parish family, we share Christ – the light in the darkness. As I look at your faces during morning Mass, I know I am in the presence of that light, through each of you. And I wish to say, "thank you." I am so grateful to have made my "home" here for so many years. I know that the light of Christ is with each of us and we carry "home" inside our hearts, wherever we may go. "It is Jesus who fills us; He is here in this place."

(Lisa Irish serves as a chaplain and bereavement counselor for the Hospital of St. Raphael in New Haven. She and her husband, Jim, are moving to Middlefield this winter. Their sons, Jared and Paul, share in thanking St. Bart's for creating a home to grow in faith.)

PASTOR'S CORNER

By Father Tom Sievel

With the new year of 2008, our golden anniversary year as a parish comes the task of presenting a plan for the linking of our four parishes in Manchester. I write briefly of the process to date and what linking is *not*, and what it is intended to be.

We all know about the shortage of available priests to staff all of our parishes and special ministries. This will only become worse with the passing years. The Archdiocese's Office for Restructuring has asked the four pastors in Manchester to present a preliminary plan for linkage of parishes by March of this year (we will be late with this preliminary vision) and the final plan to be submitted by December of 2008. Please note: we will originate the plan. It will not be imposed on us from the Chancery or the Office for Restructuring. The Archbishop will make the final determination of the plan and will decide when it will be implemented.

Our Catholic Community of Manchester (CCM) has activated the committee that deals with this question of linkage. Each parish has two representatives on this committee, which includes the four pastors of the parishes. Our two representatives are Bob Mumford and Joseph Sweeney. We have begun a series of preparatory meetings. The coordinator of the linkage process in West Hartford came to a recent meeting to guide and support us in our process. We plan to meet individually with our own parish councils, and then meeting town-wide with all the parish councils. We'll keep you informed as more information becomes available.

Linkage of parishes does *not* mean closure or absorption of one or more churches. All four of our parish communities are strong and stable. Each church will maintain its identity (parish council, finance council, budget, ministries, etc.) but will share the resources of a priest. It would be well for the linked parishes to see where and how they might cooperate more fully in the future.

Father Tom



50 Years
1958 -2008

Celebrate!

As I entered the comfortable living room of Father Martin Scholsky's home, it seemed impossible that it's been over seventeen years since Father completed his pastoral duties at St. Bart's. Why, it seems just yesterday that Father Scholsky arrived in April 1978 to become the second pastor of St. Bart's. As part of St. Bart's fifty-year anniversary, let's learn a little about the man who led our parish for twelve and a half years.

THE EARLY YEARS

Born in 1930 in Stafford Springs, Connecticut, Father Scholsky moved to Waterbury at a young age. His family relocated to Manchester when he was thirteen where he continued his schooling at St. James School. As a new parishioner of St. James Parish, he applied to be an altar boy, but was rejected. Undaunted from this early setback, he reapplied and was accepted (perhaps, this could be a lesson to all of us not to give up if we don't get our wish the first time, but try again!). Father had three siblings: Sister Anthony Mary Scholsky, who celebrates her sixty year anniversary with the Sisters of Mercy this year, Walter, who taught English for many years at Bennett Middle School before his own retirement, and Rita Jaworski, who passed away fourteen years ago.

CALL TO THE PRIESTHOOD

While in the seventh grade at Saints Peter and Paul School in Waterbury, his teacher, Sister Silveria of the Sisters of Mercy, asked if any one of the boys might be interested in becoming a priest. Father said he might be. The next year, as he was preparing to enter Manchester High School, his eighth grade teacher at Saint James, Sister Marie Anita of the Sisters of Mercy, mentioned the possibility of attending high school at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield. Father had never heard of the seminary high school. Initially, he met some resistance from his father, but Sister Marie Anita quickly put an end to that by asking his father, "*You wouldn't say no to God, would you?*" And, twelve years later – after four years of high school, two years of junior college at St. Thomas Seminary and six years at the major seminary of St. John's in Boston - Martin Scholsky, along with Peter J. Pinto, an eighth grade classmate from St. James School, were ordained into the priesthood.

BEFORE ST. BART'S

On the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6, 1956) Martin J. Scholsky became the Reverend Martin J. Scholsky when he was ordained in Manchester at his home parish of St. James. The newly ordained Father Scholsky was assigned to be an assistant at St. Peter's Church in Hartford. Even though St. Peter's had a pastor and three assistants, life was busy. In addition to covering a large section of the south end of Hartford, the priests also ministered to the sick and the staff at Hartford Hospital. In 1962 Father received an

"invitation" from Archbishop Henry O'Brien to teach Greek at St. Thomas Seminary, a required subject for all of its junior college students. Father's background was having studied two years of Greek at the seminary himself. But, this was not his only qualification. At that time, newly ordained priests were given a test each fall on the teachings of the Catholic Church. The test that prior fall was on the Eucharist, which, as you probably know, has many Greek references. So, Father quoted Greek in some of his answers, which must have prompted the Archbishop to think, "This is my man for Greek!" Father found himself at Fordham University in New York City that summer immersed in the Greek language. As Father relates: "That first year, teaching the first-year Greek students was great, but teaching the second-year students was very demanding. They knew some Greek, but I had no idea what they already knew, and they knew I didn't know what they did or didn't know!" Over the next five years Father spent his summers at Catholic University in Washington, DC where he earned a masters degree in Greek with a minor in Latin. When Greek was no longer a requirement for future priests, Father became the vocation director for the Archdiocese of Hartford, still working out of the seminary. In all, Father spent seventeen years at the seminary, ten years as the vocation director. During that time, he also served as Catholic Chaplain at the Newington Children's Hospital.

THE ST. BART'S YEARS

Father was appointed the second pastor of St. Bart's in April 1978 and spent the next twelve and a half years ministering to our parish family. Drawing on the talents of parishioners, he ushered in a new era of lay involvement and responsibility in the management of our parish community. It was a time characterized with many "firsts" as the parish grew and reached out to its parishioners:

- Paying off the last remnants of the parish debt.
- Creating the first parish council with long-time parishioner Joseph Sweeney as its president.
- Selecting laywomen – Meg Lynam and Claire Sullivan – to lead the CCD program.
- Relocating the rectory to its present location in the former convent, which had been vacated by the nuns who had taught at St. Bart's school.

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- Replacing the roofs of the church and of the school wing.
- Reaching agreement with the Town of Manchester to share in the cost of replacing collapsed sidewalks along church property.
- Continuing a strong Legion of Mary, which had been started by Father Hussey, St. Bart’s first pastor.
- Placing a statue of our patron saint, St. Bartholomew, above the doors at the Ludlow Road entrance of the church and installing an outdoor statute of Mary.
- Working closely with the Manchester Area Conference of Churches, whose main office was located in the school wing of St. Bartholomew Church during his pastonte.

Father still thinks highly of St. Bart’s youth programs – CCD and Youth Ministry – as being among the best in the area.

AFTER ST. BART’S

After completing twelve and a half years at St. Bart’s, Father taught at St. Thomas Aquinas High School in New Britain, where he also was the school chaplain. Appointed as pastor at St. Mary’s Church in East Hartford, he spent twelve years there until 2005 when he reached the retirement age of 75 for Hartford Archdiocesan priests. Now retired, Father lives with his sister at the family home in Manchester.

REFLECTIONS ON ST. BART’S

Enjoying his time at St. Bart’s, Father says, “The people were great!” He was sorry to leave but says that the rule for twelve-year pastontes has its good points. With over fifty-two years of service to the church, he doesn’t know where the time went, but every year was a joy and every assignment a time of special grace for him.

programs and Fran Giard, who graciously has “babysat” the Culos’ girls during RCIA meetings. They love the parish and thank all of us for being companions on their journey.

Julie and Megan will become members of the Catholic Church at the Easter vigil Mass, March 22. All are welcome.

New RCIA Catechumens

Welcome to St. Bart’s

Joe Marcucio, RCIA director, has announced that Shannon Ochoa and Teresa Palmer have recently become catechumens in the RCIA program. They will complete their initiation requirements in the fall of 2008.

St. Bart’s Youth Ministry Basketball Team

Our **St. Bart’s basketball team** is in its 11th year coached by Jim Rispoli and the last two assisted by Coach Steve Chenard (an alumnus of the team). Our team has had a great season. They made the play-offs which are Sat., Feb. 23. If they win, they will go on to the championship game. The team roster is made up of: seniors Nate Stark, Joe Rispoli, John Carlson, Joe Stutts, Jake Stokes, Chris Zielinski, Ben Henry and Peter Lariviere; junior, Corey Feshler; and eighth grader Max Dougan. **We’d like to say a special thank you to Coach Rispoli.** He will be retiring this year. Thank you for giving up your Sat. nights plus practice nights, from Dec.-March for the past 11 years. It has been a good ministry.

Reprinted from St. Bart’s Sunday bulletin, February 24, 2008

Editor’s not: Congratulations to the basketball team for winning their semi-final game by over 30 points. Bart’s Herald went to press before the championship game was played.

Thank you, Loretta Pazdan

Bart’s Herald wishes to acknowledge Loretta Pazdan for all of her contributions to our parish newsletter. Loretta joined *Bart’s Herald* in 2001 and immediately became an integral part of the staff. Although she wrote many feature articles on various subjects, her specialty was reporting on one of our favorite local charities, the Manchester Conference of Churches (MACC). In each issue of *Bart’s Herald*, Loretta highlighted a different MACC endeavor, keeping us informed of their needs and accomplishments. Although Loretta will no longer be reporting for *Bart’s Herald*, she will continue to be involved with St. Bart’s in many ways. Loretta, thanks for all your work.



JULIE CULOS and MEGAN DUFFY
COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY RCIA 2008
By Harry Robinson



Almost everyone knows that the letters RCIA designate *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The archdiocesan RCIA guidelines note that RCIA and the special Masses for candidates provide parishioners with the opportunity “to offer their support to the catechumens and candidates.” This year at St. Bart’s, Megan Duffy and Julie Culos have taken the journey to become Catholics. The familiar words “We are companions on the journey” hint at the women’s life journeys. Megan and Julie have exemplary family lives.

Megan has been married to Patrick Duffy, her sponsor and a member of St. Bartholomew parish since 1994, for two years. Patrick works for Fidelity Investments in payroll software sales, while Megan is an elementary school teacher who does one-on-one instruction in special education and is now studying for her master’s degree in speech and language pathology. She describes herself as an outdoor person, who loves swimming, basketball (a one-time player), hiking and cross-country skiing. Lovers of animals, Megan and Patrick carry with them a photo of their fifty-five pound English Pointer.

Married to Joe Culos, Julie and Joe have two children – Caroline, age six, and Lauren, age four. Julie is a part-time teacher of math and reading in Vernon. Prior to working part-time, Julie was a full-time classroom teacher for eleven years. She loves reading and has an expert’s interest in scrap booking. She loves to organize and is proud of her scrapbooks. She has a scrapbook for each year in each daughter’s life; not one photograph is out of place chronologically. The girls are lively and fun; our interview, held in St. Bart’s nursery, revealed that the girls are on intimate terms with all the play and learning items there. The children have been engaged in children’s activities in the parish: CCD and bible camp. Joe who works in banking as a Senior Vice President, Regional Sales Manager, at TD Banknorth in Glastonbury and has been a member of the parish for eight years.

Besides having loving families, Megan and Julie have rich religious backgrounds and experiences. Megan’s mother is Catholic, and her father is a non-denominational Christian. Megan enjoys studying religions. As a child she participated in Bible studies and attended Sunday school. Later, in Edinburgh, Scotland, she studied Christian ethics. Julie’s mother is Episcopalian and her father, Catholic. Her grandmother and her great-aunt are active Catholics who work at the House of Bread in Hartford. Julie, who attends Mass regularly with her husband, compares her Episcopalian upbringing to Catholicism and concludes that in spite of some differences “we are all children of God.”

These backgrounds ultimately led to the candidates’ initiation into Catholicism. They are already a part of St. Bart’s. Megan, with her husband, has been involved in youth programs, having taught Confirmation classes and chaperoned the youth mission to Albuquerque. Attendance at Mass with Patrick keeps her well versed in many aspects of the liturgy. She feels drawn to RCIA and sees this step as a culmination of a journey. She has enjoyed every step in this learning experience, especially the welcoming by the parish with each of its Masses that have included the candidates. Julie, too, is positive about her experiences and expresses her views philosophically. She sees becoming a Catholic not as a rejection of the past but as an evolutionary step toward bringing her family even closer together. She and Joe and the children can have a common religious experience. Julie has helped with children’s parties and has encouraged her daughters to participate in the summer bible camp. Their daughters have made friends with many children in the parish.

Megan and Julie also have ideas about how to grow in their future parish life. Each would like to be more involved with youth programs and activities for children. They hope to attend parish picnics and help develop and look forward to more dinner occasions for parishioners. Megan and Patrick have even thought that they might one day write for *Bart’s Herald*! Julie and Joe put a pitch in for everyone to support the parish by using the envelope system and expressed concern about the future of the parish and the possibility that parishes in Manchester would be combined.

These are grateful persons. They give thanks to Father Tom Sievel, Joe Marcucio, Bob Kostek, Aileen Jorgensen (Julie’s sponsor), Dan Cadaret, the entire RCIA committee, the parishioners who have led some of their RCIA discussions, Vicky Rispoli for involving them in youth

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LINDA AND BOB KOSTEK

They met at State Police Headquarters!!

By Henry Poirier

Not many people can say that they met their life-mates at the Connecticut State Police Headquarters during fingerprinting. No, Linda Manseau was not escorted by an armed guard; she simply needed to be fingerprinted for a job she was seeking with the State Police. The fingerprint technician was Bob Kostek. It was the first time he ever held her hand - all in the line of duty, of course! A friendship developed. One day when Linda revealed that she needed a ride home, Bob, ever helpful to this day, obliged. That was the start. The quick update is that they will be celebrating their fortieth wedding anniversary in September.

Linda was born in Manchester, New Hampshire and has a brother and three sisters. The young family was dealt a blow when her father died at an early age. Hard times followed but eventually, her mother remarried and because of a job opportunity at Pratt & Whitney, moved to Connecticut, finally establishing a permanent home in Manchester. Linda graduated from Manchester High School. Bob, an only child, was born and raised in East Hartford and graduated from East Hartford High School. He joined the Connecticut State Police as a civilian employee in 1964.

Linda and Bob were married in 1968, later moved to Manchester and joined Assumption Church. When daughters Christine and Allison arrived, Linda became a stay at home mom until the girls were in school full time. Then, she started work with the Manchester School Department at Keeney Street School. She has continued in this career and is now assigned to Illing Middle School in the Special Education Department. The work is challenging, but Linda is sustained by a bright and upbeat attitude.

In 1995, the Kosteks moved across town and joined St. Bartholomew parish. At St Bart's, Linda heads up the Elizabeth Ministry, a ministry that doesn't receive much publicity since its work is usually focused on a few people at a time. An essential ministry at St. Bart's, it typically responds to the needs of a family in crisis. Often, the mother or father of a family may be seriously ill and requires the attention of the spouse; there may be children who also need attention. Elizabeth Ministry volunteers respond with cooked meals, taking care of the children, doing the washing and cleaning and running errands - whatever it takes to hold the family together. Linda assesses the needs and coordinates a group of volunteers. She has very high praise for the volunteers who do so much so willingly.

Bob retired from the State Police in 1997, where he rose to become supervisor of ID technicians in the Bureau of Identification. During his tenure, he was instrumental in developing the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), which is still in use today in Connecticut and Rhode Island. In 2000 the Manchester Police Department offered him a position as a property and evidence technician, which he held for five years. At the same time St Bart's had need for a custodian/general handyman, so Bob did that for eight years, retiring for good in January. While at St Bart's, his reputation as a "Mr. Fixit" became well established. For example, his longtime interest in woodworking paid off when some of the kneelers in church broke down and Bob fixed them, saving us the cost of new kneelers. One of Bob's biggest contributions to St. Bart's lies in his leadership role in developing the Small Church Community Ministry. Involved from its beginning, he

remains a participant and a "go to" member of this movement. In addition, over the years he has been active with the RCIA ministry, serving as a sponsor and instructor.

Linda and Bob share a deep interest and commitment to the Haitian Health Foundation. Bob has made three trips to Haiti with Father Tom Sievel, and Linda and Bob have adopted a family that he met on one of his visits. Linda enjoys buying clothing and other necessities for their family and sends a box of goods to Haiti several times a year. They share another interest; both are Eucharistic ministers.

Now officially retired from his custodial duties, Bob is looking forward to spending more time improving his golf game. He enjoys traveling to and playing new courses, which offer a challenge appropriate to his skills. But, his involvement with his ministries will continue. The "Mr. Fixit" reputation will no doubt continue to attract requests for help - which he has a hard time declining. Linda plans on continuing her career at Illing, at least for a while, but her commitment to her work at St. Bart's will continue. Meanwhile, while Linda is looking forward to retirement and Bob is already there, both are enjoying the opportunity to enjoy grandchildren, Allison's Tyler, and Christine's Megan, Ashleigh and Thomas.

When asked what they like about St Bart's, Bob and Linda state that they like the community of friendly, active people contributing to the common good from which they draw support. It can clearly be said that they are contributing to the common good in more than equal measure.

World Youth Day - 2008

By Debi Ashmead

World Youth Day (WYD) is the largest youth event in the world and is being held this year in Sydney, Australia from July 15-20. Through this experience, young people throughout the entire world make a pilgrimage to meet and experience together the love of God. Colorado, France, Canada and Germany are places St. Bart's youth have participated in WYD in the past. According to Vicky Rispoli, St. Bart's Youth Ministry Director, "World Youth Day is a life changing experience". One of her countless responsibilities is to prepare the youth for this trip. The age requirement of the WYD committee is the only condition that St. Bart's requires for a youth to participate in this pilgrimage. Vicky takes the time with the youth who are going to make sure they know what to expect both emotionally and physically. She recalls many powerful experiences from past WYD pilgrimages where our youth received a great understanding of the universal church. One such experience happened when visiting churches and participating in an adoration taking place in the catacombs of a church.

Imagine walking for at least ten miles with three quarters of a million people to pray and witness with other people practicing their faith. People praying in all different languages, catechesis workshops, living stations of the cross, re-enactment of our Lord's passion and death and Mass with our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, are just a few of the experiences that St. Bart's youth will be witnessing. Vicky comments, "Our youth bring back so much to our parish family and community that as a parish we try to do everything possible to make this trip a reality for those that want to go. This takes their faith journey to a whole new level."

High school senior Steve Treziak is very excited about going and says he is open to whatever the Holy Spirit tells

him. He says he may never get another chance in his life to celebrate Mass with the pope and almost a million people. Ashley Williams, a junior, says God is telling her to go. This is a "dream" to her and she can't wait for this faith experience and the chance to bring her faith to another level. Kristen Laurence and Matt Chepeleff both attended WYD in Cologne, Germany three years ago. They were very good friends and had the opportunity to be prayer partners in many different ways. This year both will be attending WYD as adult chaperones on their honeymoon! Yes, somewhere along their faith journey their prayers collided.

Ed and Mary Sopelak, father and daughter, are also attending this year. They've traveled on family pilgrimages in the past and see this as yet another opportunity for a faith experience together. Mary can't wait for this "true universal" experience. She's been communicating with youth from around the world on "FaithBook", an internet experience on WYD. Ed remarks that he enjoys celebrating with young people and this will be a "new experience" and one they are both looking forward to.

Louise and Dottie Caudullo, mother and daughter, are attending as well. Dottie invited her mother to go in the hope that it would bring them closer together. Dottie is so excited to go and has heard great feedback on this chance of a lifetime. But, she is still a bit nervous about her faith and what's going to happen on the trip. Imagine walking with hundreds of thousands of people reciting the Lord's Prayer in all different languages. Louise is thrilled to be going and said this is really a "mother's dream". She was surprised and excited when her daughter invited her to attend. "Aren't you coming, too? Wouldn't it be a great bonding experience for us?" Louise said it all happened so fast. Dottie asked her

mother on the Sunday before the final absolute cutoff date for a down payment on the following Tuesday. Many things went through Louise's mind - monetary issues, logistics with her other two girls, her work and her husband's work. Her husband fully supported her telling her she should go. She prayed about this journey knowing that it is Dottie's spiritual journey, who is learning to go on her own way. But, how could a mother of a seventeen-year old say "no" to this great mother and daughter experience? When Louise called to ask for her mother's opinion, she immediately replied, "You have to go!" Her mother said that the trip is priceless and that, "You can't think about the money; you'll still be talking about this experience in twenty years". Louise listened to her mother, who assured her she'd help her husband with their two girls and help make it work for the family.

The Youth Ministry office is very grateful to the members of the parish family for supporting all the youth ministry's programs, such as pancake breakfasts, can and bottle drives, entertainment books and all the many levels of support given to Youth Ministry. To learn more about WYD please visit their website at www.wyd2008.org.

"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses..."

Acts 1:8

Editor's note: we ask for your support of our youth in their WYD pilgrimage with your prayers and your participation in their fund-raising activities.



MEET THE DOUGANS

A Family of Many Talents

By Debi Ashmead

Meet Kevin and Ellen Dougan. When I first met them, they appeared quiet and shy, reluctant and modest to share their family story. But soon after a few minutes, their love and admiration for each other and their three kids came through. They had me giggling for a great hour of fun. I promised Kevin not to tell all of St. Bart's parish family through *Bart's Herald* how they met, but I assure you I'm still snickering about it. Perhaps, you can meet Kevin and Ellen over coffee and donuts and they will share their story with you!

Married in Torrington, CT, Kevin and Ellen soon after moved to Manchester where Kevin grew up. They moved up the street from St. Bart's in the late eighties and enrolled their oldest daughter, Maureen, at St. James School in 1991. They have been members of St. Bart's parish family ever since. Kevin's mother attended St. Bart's as early as 1960, and Kevin remembers receiving First Communion at St. Bart's. He also recalls attending third and fourth grade at St. Bart's school. They are blessed with three children who have kept them extremely active over the last twenty years of their marriage. Both have sung in the choir off and on for several years. It is inspiring to hear that they both were catechists for several years, yet none of their children were part of St. Bart's religious education program because they attended St. James School. They recall many cute stories regarding their years as catechists. Kevin remembers his first year as a sixth grade catechist. At the beginning of the year, there was a meeting for teachers, and Mrs. Joan Hamilton, who was *his* catechist, was still teaching.

Their daughter, Maureen, is twenty and is attending Fordham University in New York, where she is majoring in

international economics and seriously thinking about studying abroad for a semester. Maureen's beautiful voice has been part of the children's choir and youth choir, and she has served as a cantor as well. She has led the vacation bible camp's sing and pray session in the past. Maureen was also involved with youth ministry. Paul, seventeen, is their oldest son and is also involved in youth ministry. Paul loves sports and plays baseball and basketball. Maxwell, the youngest at fourteen, is involved in sports, too. Both Kevin and Ellen remark that their life today is following the boys to all their different sporting events.

The mainstay of their household is sharing their meals together where Ellen claims all the great conversations happen. She laughs humbly at what a great cook Kevin is, and that ultimately he is responsible for their family meals together. It sounds like he could take on the "Iron Chef". Kevin fondly remembers picking up this duty when he was a teenager and his mother went back to work. His father and three brothers helped her pick up the slack in the household, and he's carried it through as his contribution to this Dougan family.

One contribution from the Dougans that needs mentioning is Ellen's beautiful artistic work on the Easter Candle every year. Ellen, a creative painter, owns an art gallery at 264 Main Street in Manchester. When Father Tom Sievel learned that Ellen was a painter, he asked her if she would produce the theme on the Easter Candle. She accepted immediately and has been painting them ever since. Father Tom said the church used to buy "pre-ornamented Easter candles", but he thought it would be better to buy a plain one and have a touch of Ellen's talent on the candle. She won't claim it was easy as she learned the nuances of

combining acrylic paint with candle wax. The Easter Candle, unveiled each year at the Easter Vigil Mass, is lit for the fifty days of Easter and is also used for baptisms and funerals. Please stop after Mass and admire the beautiful quality of the Easter Candle.



*2007 Easter
Candle decorated
by Ellen Dougan.*

Haiti - continued from last page

But, the people who are going do so at their own expense, which is substantial - about a thousand dollars per person. As readers and concerned people, it would be good if we could make a contribution to defray this cost. (To learn more about HHF visit their website at www.haitianhealthfoundation.org)

PILGRIMAGE TO HAITI

HHF Mission Statement: "...break the bonds of poverty..."

By Ed Rowe

For this article I had the opportunity to sit down with Father Tom and discuss St. Bart's connection with the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF). About six years ago, parishioner Daryl Bonadies returned from a visit to Haiti. She had gone with Dr. Jeremiah Lowney, Director of HHF. What she saw at the HHF clinic in Jérémie - located in the western end of Haiti - inspired her to set up a meeting between Dr. Lowney and Father Tom Sievel, which resulted in an invitation to Dr. Lowney to speak at all Masses on a weekend in November 2002. After hearing of the conditions in Haiti, several parishioners from St. Bart's went to Haiti in February 2003 and reported on their experiences and observations to the parish. This led to an annual pilgrimage by parishioners from St. Bart's and others that began in October 2003. Father Tom wanted this specific word - *pilgrimage* - used here. This is not a parish mission, nor a St. Bart's program. When Father Tom goes with a group, they are not free to take whatever they want, nor do whatever they please. This pilgrimage sponsors and represents the guiding principals of HHF - service to the poorest of the poor.

To give you an idea of the level of poverty in Haiti, here is a quote from the HHF website: "...people depend on subsistence farming, charcoal production and other menial jobs for their living (average yearly income \$90 - \$300). The area is very isolated and even under the most favorable conditions, all means of communication with and supply from urban areas is difficult and services scant. Living conditions are scandalous...It is common to see children rooting with animals through the garbage for scraps of food...Our (HHF) mission is to improve the health and well being of the poor, the sick and the infirm of Jérémie and break the bonds of poverty which tie so many Haitians to a life of great deprivation."

Unless we are dentists, there is not much hands-on work a St. Bart's parishioner can do. Volunteers can't do day-to-

day work at the clinic; there are Haitians who do these jobs to contribute to the local economy. During the six-day stay, a volunteer's job is to notice, observe, experience and reflect; then do something when he or she returns back home. That "something" could be loading a container truck in Norwich, spreading the word at college, work or community gatherings, or collecting food or donations.

What is a typical day on the pilgrimage? Father Tom wanted to emphasize there is *no such thing* as a typical day! The sisters running the clinic are so overwhelmed with daily activities that they ask Father Tom to contact participants to see if any have specialized skills. For example, one member on this upcoming pilgrimage (May 11-17) is a retired nurse from Portland, Oregon, who may work at the Center of Hope, a home for at-risk pregnant women. If the weather is good, St. Bart's parishioners may drive to one of the villages for public health fieldwork. This trip of twenty miles - in the best of conditions - may take up to three hours! A volunteer may do something as simple as clipping children's nails which is essential to prevent the spread of infections in the 103 villages that HHF serves. Or, one might be asked to work as an assistant in the dental clinic in Jérémie, sterilizing dental equipment and filling needles for injections. And, then there are times when things just happen. During the last visit to Jérémie, St. Bart's members met with the warden of the regional jail. He was a decent man with an overwhelming job. His guards are not armed, have to watch sixty inmates and there is no money to feed, clothe or shelter the prisoners. He said, "We do the best we can with no resources."

Which leads to the conclusion for this article. Often the difference between poverty and comfort is the allocation of available resources that we would consider a given - water, food, clothing and basic medical care. For many reasons, a lot of people cannot go on a pilgrimage to Haiti.

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Saint Bartholomew Church
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