



History of the Catholic Church in Florida

1565	First Parish Mass – Nombre de Dios
1870 - 1876	Diocese of St. Augustine Bishop Augustin Verot
1877-1901	Bishop John Moore (Established St. James in Orlando)
1901-1913	Bishop Kenny
1914-1921	Bishop Michael Joseph Curley
1922-1940	Bishop Patrick Joseph Barry
1940-1967	Bishop Joseph Patrick Hurley
1968	Diocese of Orlando established
1968-1974	Bishop William D Borders
1974-1989	Bishop Thomas Grady
1990-2004	Bishop Norbert Dorsey
2004-present	Bishop Thomas Wenski

History of Catholic Church in Maitland

1881-1887	Church of the Holy Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Records transferred in 1887 – church building left deserted until 1919 then sold.
-----------	--

Fr. Hubert Reason 1959-1966

April 5, 1959	First Mass celebrated
July 23, 1959	Canonically designated as a parish – first church served 95 families
1961	New church built – “Butler” building and 4 new classrooms 1 st County Fair/Harvest Festival/Fall Festival/CommunityFest
1962	5 th grade added – held in church
1963	6 th grade added – held in church
1964	7 th & 8 th grades added – rented house
1965	Five Sisters of Notre Dame arrived, 9 new classrooms

Fr. David Paige 1966-1972

- 1966 9 classrooms built and a school office (no AC until mid 1980's); Religious Education/Faith Formation for children (CCD) formerly organized
- 1967 New convent and addition to Church doubled size (old social hall now school cafeteria)
- 1969 New rectory, 3 more classrooms, a library, science lab, clinic and teacher's lounge, school refaced

Fr. Patrick Caverly 1972-1981

- 1972 School accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference
- 1975 New church (first Mass Christmas Eve 1974)
Old church renovated into a social hall, offices
- 1979 Satellite Church of the Annunciation – for 3 years

Father Paul Henry 1981-1993

- 1983 2 portable classrooms added for Kindergarten & school offices
- 1984 Silver Jubilee, Parish Mission Statement Created
- 1986 New parish offices
- 1987 Adult/Child Centers and new meeting rooms built
Remodeled school office and 3 rooms for Kindergarten
- 1991 Purchased 9 acres (Annex area) renovated buildings and grounds



Father Charlie Mitchell 1994-present

- 1994 Parish Mission Statement renewed
- 1995 ReThreads Thrift Store opens
- 1998 Parish Life Center built; Social Hall renovated into a school cafeteria, computer and science lab, new library and art room
- Built gym; Old convent renovated into a Student Administrative Building; Enclosed Child Center patio, added a teacher break room and relocated the playground
- 1999 Collapse of the walkway
- 1999-2000 40th anniversary time capsule buried – New Millennium
- 2003-2004 Renovated Church – new sanctuary, chapel, Baptismal font, pews
- 2004 Pastoral Council announces ongoing plan to foster Stewardship as away of life; Early Learning Center accredited by the National Associate for the Education of Young Children
- 2005 Order of St. Mary Magdalen was established to recognize parishioners who have given of their time, talent and treasure in extraordinary ways which enable our parish community to better fulfill the mission God has given us.
- 2006 U.S. Department of Education names St. Mary Magdalen School a National Blue-Ribbon School; Paid off debt!
- 2008-2009 ReThreads Thriftstore closes; New parish Mission, Vision and Values discerned and disseminated; St. Mary Magdalen Parish recognized as a Blue-Ribbon Stewardship Parish by the International Catholic Stewardship Council; Golden Jubilee Celebrated.



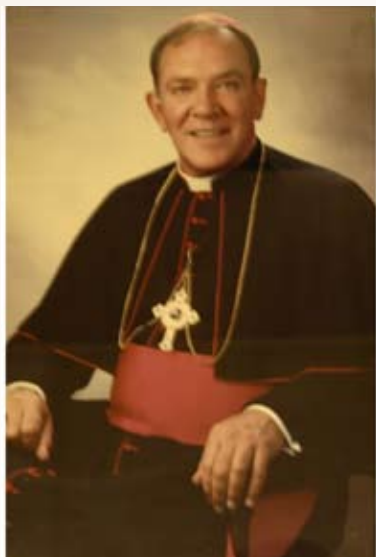


Morning Star School, Orlando, benefits from the Bishop's annual golf tournament. Here, from left, are Bishop Borders, Howard Palmer, Dick Pope and Will Geiger at Boy Hill green, Orlando, in April, 1971.



Bishop Borders' interest in the community involved him with civic leaders such as Orlando Mayor Carl T. Langford.





HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MAITLAND

Early Maitland and the Catholic Church

In 1840-60, Fort Maitland was located in somewhat of a mid-point of a triangle of forts in Central Florida. It was also the halfway point for travelers from the northeast coast to Tampa where another fort had been established. The triangle consisted of Fort Melon (Sanford), Fort Gatlin (Orlando), and Fort Christmas, still known as Christmas. These forts had been constructed for protection against attacks of the warring Seminole Indians.

By 1880, Fort Maitland, now the town of Maitland, was a tourist center for dignitaries from Washington, D.C., and wealthy citizens from the northeast. In that year the South Florida Railroad was completed, running from Jacksonville to Maitland. This brought thousands of northerners to the Park House, a resort hotel located between Lake Park and Lake Catherine. The hotel was built in 1878 by James M. Wilcox, a wealthy Catholic contractor from Philadelphia. The railroad also became the primary means to take citrus to market. Because of overcrowded conditions at the Park

House some people sought the comforts of “watering spas” in other Central Florida locations, and would park their private railroad cars at the southern terminal of the South Florida Railroad here in Maitland.

“Mr. Edward Turner started a general store on the ground floor of the ‘hall’ in 1879 before the railroad made its appearance. At that time, the church services were held in the ‘Hall’, the first churches being the Methodist and the Catholic.”

The Orange County Citizen, July 25, 1911.

The number of Catholic tourists and retired people in Maitland became a concern to then Bishop John Moore. Thus on May 17, 1881, he purchased land on Lake Eulalia (now 700 block Lake Avenue. For those of you who know the Frank Corso family their home is built on this property.) adjoining the Park House property from Mr. James M. Wilcox. Bishop Moore also contracted with Wilcox to build a church with a seating capacity of 100, and a two-story rectory.



The First Church

Fr. Michael McFaul from St. Louis Missouri, became the Pastor of this far-ranging parish which included most of Central Florida and was called the Church of the Holy Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He would visit Catholics in

Enterprise, Daytona, New Smyrna, Oak Hill, Oakland, Sanford and Orlando traveling by foot, horseback, bicycle, boat or any other means available.

Fr. McFaul began a Baptismal Registry and entered the first baptism, dated January 11, 1882. The register later became that of St. James Parish, Orlando, in October 1887.

On April 9 1883, Chester A. Arthur, president of the United States visited Maitland, Florida (New York Daily Tribune, April 10, 1883). Grover Cleveland visited the town in later years.

Bishop Moore enlarged the church property in Maitland on February 13, 1884 by purchasing an adjacent parcel of land from Mr. Wilcox. However by late 1885, the growth of Orlando had surpassed that of Maitland and it became more feasible to locate the church in that town. St. James Parish in downtown Orlando was established in 1887 with Reverend Felix P. Swembaugh as pastor.

The Maitland church and rectory remained standing for many years after being deserted. After some 35 years, on May 12, 1919, Bishop Michael J. Curley sold the property to Margaret B. Harter. That same year, she in turn sold the buildings to one Ana B. Treat, who used the lumber from that first church to build a home for her mother, her sister and herself. Photo taken around 1902 shows the Belfry partly destroyed by lightning.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Father J. H. Reynaert, a retired professor from the National American College Louvain University and a native of Marquette, Michigan came to reside in Maitland where he purchased extensive property stretching from Lake Lily to Lake Maitland.

Father Reynaert said Mass in the old dilapidated wooden

church on Sundays for the four or five worshippers who included Maitland's postmaster, a Mr. Mitchel and his two children, a Mrs. Dew H. Bennet from Maine, who owned the Park House Hotel (1900 to about 1907) and her son Bernard B. Gormley, who used to serve Mass. Mr. Gormley, who later lived in South Daytona, recalled how Father Reynaert used to always say by heart the Requiem Mass because he was nearly blind, while the worshippers had a hard time beating away the wasps which came in through the broken windows.

Father Reynaert, who lived on Lake Lily was loved by young and old alike. He was a councilman for the city of Maitland for many years and was elected mayor in 1908. He died in 1925 and is buried in front of the main altar of the Old St. Margaret Mary's Church in Winter Park. (a stipulation made by his niece, Miss Victorine R. Reynaert, when she made a large cash contribution to the building fund in 1924.)

FATHER HUBERT REASON

1959-1966



From the closing of the historic Holy Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in 1887, 72 years would elapse before Maitland's Catholic

parish would be revived. It was February, 1959 when a young assistant pastor from St. James in Orlando was on what he thought a pleasant Sunday drive with his pastor. Their car stopped on Maitland Avenue alongside a small, white, weather – beaten building surrounded with weeds and woods and showing the wear and tear of neglect and abuse. It was then that Father Hubert J. Reason learned that he was to be the first pastor of the newly established parish of St. Mary Magdalen. The building, the former Seminole nightclub, was to be his first church.

Father Reason, a converted Catholic, was a native Floridian who grew up in Miami. He had three sisters and one brother. During World War II he served in the Navy and saw battle action. He attended St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore before becoming a priest. Father Reason was ordained in 1957 and almost two years to the day on his second anniversary said his first Mass at St. Mary Magdalen. He was also the founding father of San Pedro. His hobbies included photography and he loved to watch wrestling. He particularly enjoyed reading and classical music. Father Reason, as were all former pastors of St. Mary Magdalen, was a gifted speaker.

The parish began on 10 acres at the corner of Maitland Avenue and Spring Lake Road, in Altamonte Springs. On April 5, 1959, the first Mass was celebrated. The building, infamous for its nocturnal activities including gambling, fighting, bloodshed and even murder, turned its back on

all its past and began a new life of adoration, meetings, prayers, and the all important sacrifice of the Mass.

The transition was not an easy one. Father Reason did much of the remodeling work himself. The parishioners sat in red velvet theater chairs which were hooked together five or six in a row and literally sweated through every homily. When the fans were turned on, the noise was so loud, Father Reason could not be heard past the second row. Frequently Mass was interrupted by the jangling of the telephone just off the main altar – a phone which would appear most impatient until an usher would finally make his way only to find that someone either wanted Mass information or to know the whereabouts of an errant spouse supposedly at the bar which no longer existed.

St. Mary Magdalen was canonically designated as a parish **July 23, 1959**, with 95 families within boundaries that included Maitland, Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Fern Park, Eatonville, Oviedo, North Orlando, Lake Brantley, Forest City and part of Longwood.

Excerpts from a parish magazine published later on noted:

One of our founding families, that of Frank and Veronica Malatesta, were delighted that the site was chosen. Frank remembered when the men of the parish went up there and gutted the nightclub. It was the first step in converting it to a sanctuary. Quick to get involved, he was one of those who put in the altar.



Veronica recalls the furnishings of those first days. “There was a crucifix over the altar, a lovely tabernacle (crafted by a parishioner) with a gold curtain, and the only statuary was the Infant of Prague. Sue Ponticelli made all the clothing for the infant and it was beautiful.” A group of women, including Veronica,

made the altar linens and took over the job of keeping them clean along with some of the pastor's vestments. They weren't yet called an Altar Society they were just a group of women who got together and did it.

One of the first fund-raisers was a spaghetti dinner at the Altamonte Civic Center. A parishioner Johnny Haig cooked all the spaghetti and



sauce and carried it there in big vats. When they ran out, some of them just went home and cooked some more.

Ella Galassini recalled that the confessional was in one of the club's converted restrooms.

Chuck Cattaneo joined the parish in 1960 just a few months after the first services were held. He immediately joined the choir and recalled how informally things seemed to happen. Father Reason would call and say "Charlie, I want you to do this or that," and people would simply do it without question.

John and Betty Cassady found Fr. Reason standing in front of "that barroom" that was going to be a church. John rolled up his sleeves alongside other parishioners and raised the funds for a new church building and a school. Betty was a teacher's aide and often monitored the cafeteria. When the land was purchased for San Pedro Fr. Reason asked John to help develop it.

While clearing the waterfront area, building a dock, and buying equipment, John learned that aluminum canoes would cost \$450 apiece. He says that he told Father Reason: "Don't buy them!" Instead, John geared his boat company to design and build fiberglass canoes... the first in the world to market them. In fact, his design for one canoe was catalogued as *The Seminole* by the Boy Scouts of America and sold throughout the world.

Fundraisers



COUNTING THE MONEY. No doubt about your pastor's frame of mind as he counts up the pledge total. He is assisted by some of the ladies who staffed the office at campaign headquarters. From left they are Mrs. George Miller, Martha Arthur, Harold Frey and Nettie Bush.





SCHOOL AND CHURCH, BUILT 1961
 School on left is currently being refaced with brick and gets shingle roof. Both build have been doubled in size by way of extension eastward.



CLASSROOM IN CHURCH. Mute testimony of our need, Fifth graders have classrooms in our temporary parish church.

St. Mary Magdalen

CATHOLIC PARISH

One Christmas father Reason asked Jim Phillips to play Santa Claus. He thought he was doing a great job until one little girl said to him, “Your not Santa, you’re Mr. Phillips – I recognize the pimple on your nose.” It was actually a mole and Jim had it removed and thus ended a promising career!

Growth began in 1960, under Father Reason’s direction, with the first building fund drive. On January 29, 1961 ground was broken for a new church and school buildings. Both structures were dedicated by Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley on October 7, 1961.

The church, an expanded Butler type building, seated worshippers on folding bridge chairs with the altar situated in the center. The priest faced those seated with their backs to Maitland Avenue. Late-comers to Mass occupied those seats behind the priest.

Following his tenure here Fr. Reason was transferred to Tarpon Springs where he served he served the next 11 years. After becoming ill while at Spring Hill, he semi-retired and transferred to St. Mary Our Lady of Grace Church as an assistant pastor.

On the 10th anniversary of the parish, it was noted that:

This huge growth entailed the following heavy building program:

- † *New 9 classroom school (\$128,000) built 1964, opened, 1965.*
- † *Convent (10 cell) groundbreaking March 19, 1967, used as of August 1967, dedication December 17, 1967.*
- † *Parish Hall (extension of church building) opened for Christmas Midnight Mass 1967, dedication previously December 17, 1967.*
- † *Rectory groundbreaking February 2, 1969.*
- † *Four classroom addition and re-facing of old school building, February-July 1969.*





8/20/1965 - Fr. Hubert J. Reason and members of his St. Mary Magdalen Parish in Maitland extended a cordial welcome this month to the sisters of Notre Dame who have come to teach in Florida for the first time. Five of their members from Chardon Ohio are pictured with Fr. Reason at the reception held for them in Maitland. Members of the staff of St. Mary Magdalen school in Maitland are from the left Sister Mary Kenan, Sr. Mary John Michael, Fr. Reason, Sr. Mary Charlita principal, Sr. Mary Daniel and Sr. Mary Veronica.



FATHER DAVID PAGE

1966-1972

Father David Page, executive Editor of *The Florida Catholic*, succeeded Father Reason on January 14, 1966 and the expansion continued. Born and raised in County Galway, Ireland. He was one of eight children. He attended St. Kierans in Kilkenny and later attended Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he obtained a Masters Degree in American History. He enjoyed reading and visiting with good friends. Sometimes likened to professional golfer Gary Player in looks, he could occasionally be seen on the golf course – however, seldom more than once a year.

In 1963 Fr. Page began fundraising to build Epiphany Church in Port Orange. It was also noted that year that again he spoke at the Eucharistic Congress. And later as a member of the Theological Institute Fr. Page was active in the 400th anniversary Mass in St. Augustine. (1965)

An interview by the *Orlando Sentinel* spells out Father Page's approach to the priesthood: "I'm a progressive middle-of-the-roader. By that I mean I have to preserve tradition and yet keep up with new developments of the church and be sensitive to the needs of people. That's what the Gospel is all about...One of the biggest sins is for church members to be complacent and to resist changes." During Father Page's tenure, a rectory on the parish grounds was built. The priests had been living in a home on Lake Faith.

The new Diocese of Orlando was formed in 1969 under Bishop David Borders who gave full support to our parish growth. The convent was constructed in 1967, to house the small religious community as well as a new parish hall for meetings of the newly formed ministries and parish committees. The hall served as an extension of the church when a folding wall was rolled back to form a larger church. During his time as pastor the rectory was also built which contained offices and a large meeting room. The school was expanded to teach to the eighth grade with sufficient classrooms for the 600 enrolled. Father Page was transferred to St. James Parish in April 1972.



From another article in the local newspaper (Sentinel Star Winter Park edition, Sunday May 26, 1968, pg 2) it was noted:

“

Maitland's only Catholic Church serves six Sunday Masses to meet the demand of 900 families. The average attendance on Sunday, 2,500 people, is greater than the entire population of Orange County in 1870. Last Easter and Christmas 3,500 people attended Mass each time – 17 times the population of Orange County when Florida became a state, March 3, 1845.”

The most popular Mass is the guitar folk-Mass, held at high noon. Instituted September 1967 by Father Page and the young seminarian Rev. Robert Trauptman, the guitar folk-Mass draws people from as far away as St. Cloud and Kissimmee, filling the 600 seat church and overflowing into the new 500 seat social hall adjoining the church. Half of those attending are adults.

The guitar folk-Mass is all part of the renewal in the church which has been re-examining itself to find contemporary means of expression ever since Pope John XXIII “threw open the windows to let in a little fresh air.” As modern as the guitar-in-church idea sounds, it is founded on basic principles of theology and liturgy, Father Page explained. The emphasis is on the message in the songs, not the music, both of which are written especially for the Mass. The new music is lively and worshipful, and there is something evocative about the guitar and the youth playing it.

The success of this new trend in liturgical music can be measured by the response. “The first Sunday we tried it,” said Father Brendan Linnane, pastor’s assistant, “four people stood up threw their hands in the air and walked out, saying, ‘If this is what the church is coming to, you can have it back!’ And they haven’t been back since, but it’s been S.R.O.(standing room only) ever since!”

Last week a 22-year old college drop-out, hearing a recording of a guitar folk-Mass (Sebastian Temple’s “Sing! People of God, Sing!”) at a friend’s house, exclaimed, “Man! That’s the grooviest! If this is what church is like now, I’m going back to church Sunday!”

“These are all signs of the times,” commented Father Page, “The songs point to an awakening of a spirit of ecumenism, a growing desire to exchange ideas and improve communications with one’s fellow man. We are seeing it in our other programs too.

“For example, today at 3 p.m., I will participate for the third time in the dedication of a new Protestant sanctuary – the First Baptist Church of Maitland. The other two were the First Presbyterian Church of Maitland and the Church of the Good Shepherd.

“We just completed our ‘grass roots ecumenism’ program where once a month a Protestant minister would come to us and talk about his denomination. We’ve had everything from the Baptists to the Mormons,” said Father Page, executive editor of the “Florida Catholic,” a diocesan weekly with a circulation of 42,000 in North and Central Florida and offices in Orlando.

“Last November we participated in special Thanksgiving services at Maitland’s Civic Center along with other members of the Winter Park’s Ministerial Alliance,” Father Page continued. “And quite recently, we participated in the special ecumenical memorial service for the late Dr. King at Winter Park’s Presbyterian Church.

“This effort to better understand our fellow man includes a bridging of the generation gap, and last Monday we had a youth forum and panel discussion. The panel included two



St. Mary Magdalen

CATHOLIC PARISH

parents, two teenagers, one nun and one priest. It was a lively session. It was followed by a Bible service and then a dance, to the music of the all-girl band 'Our Generation.'

"The three -hour program helped bridge the generation-gap, for today's youth need better communication with parents.

In particular, they need more love and affection. Without this in the home, the teenagers look elsewhere for it, and that's the beginning of "trouble" Father Page emphasized.

Fr. David Page was also on the first committee for the formation of a Priest's Senate appointed by Bishop Borders. Recently appointed as a monsignor by Bishop Wenski Fr. Page is now the Pastor at Holy Name of Jesus in Indialantic Florida.

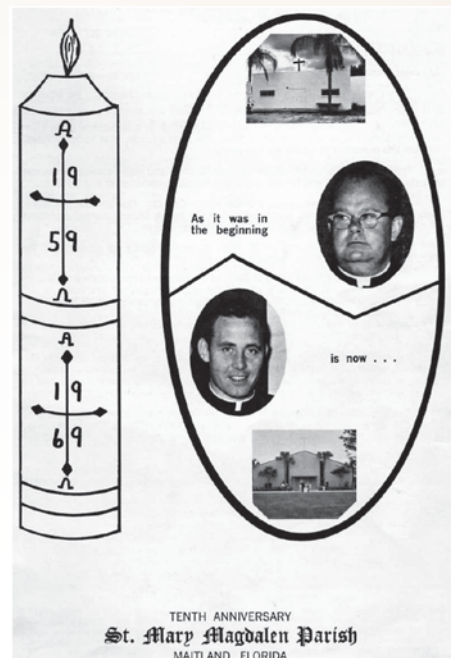
In an excerpt from a parish magazine:

Ray Armstrong recalled, "A phone call came one day from Father David Page, executive editor of The Florida Catholic newspaper. Having heard that Ray and his wife Regina were from Florida, he wondered if Ray would like to work for the newspaper and for his parish where he was assigned as the second pastor: St. Mary Magdalen Church in Altamonte Springs.

'Our home is in your parish, Father,' Ray replied to the pastor's amazement. 'That's when I knew the Holy Spirit was alive and well' beamed Regina. Possibly one of the happiest moments in my life is when we moved back here.'

Upon the celebration of the parish's 10th Anniversary on April 20, 1969, St. Mary Magdalen was a fully fledged parish of approximately 1,100 families, three Priests and seven Sisters. Within a few months the parish plant would be completed, apart from the permanent Church, the total debt stood at approximately \$330,000.

Nobody but God can evaluate the real achievements of the parish. The following recapitulation of St. Mary Magdalen's statistics for the first ten years, however, may be of interest.



Baptisms 841; First Holy Communions 761; Confirmations 558; Marriages 143; and deaths 110.

The following is the list of Priests who have served St. Mary Magdalen Parish during its first ten years:

Father Hubert J. Reason, pastor 1959-January 1966. Assistants: Fathers Peter Reynolds, 1962-63; Robert Farmer, 1963-64; William Stahler, 1965; William Cavanaugh, 1965-66; Everett Apt, 1965-66; Paul Martin, 1965-66; Father David P. Page, pastor January 1966. Assistants: Fathers Daniel Butler, 1966-67; Joseph Feeley, 1967-68; Brendan Linnane, 1967; Joseph A. Nolan, 1968.



Honor Roll of Parish Leaders

<u>HOLY NAME SOCIETY</u>	<u>GUILD</u>	<u>ALTAR SOCIETY</u>
1959-60 J. Meyer t. McNamara	Mrs. A. Ponticelli	
1960-61 Frank Malatesta, Sr.	Mrs. Frank Kacar	
1961-62 Maurice Larue	Mrs. David Hartman	Mrs. E. Coolidge
1962-63 Byron Robinson	Mrs. Robert Oliver	Mrs. E. Coolidge
1963-64 Frank Sliwak	Mrs. Frank Ley	Mrs. William Bach
1964-65 William Phillips	Mrs. John Barhydt	Mrs. Ada Eberhardt
1965-66 William Joyce	Mrs. Robert Bush	Mrs. Ada Eberhardt
1966-67 Charles Cattaneo	Mrs. Norman Lansverk	Mrs. A. Desinsky
1967-68 John Tschieder	Mrs. Ted Korzick	Mrs. Peter Essex
1968-69 Joseph Pullara	Mrs. John Barhydt	Mrs. Peter Essex
1969-70 Kenneth Meagher	Mrs. Maurice Larue	Mrs. E. Coolidge

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was pioneered in the early sixties by Ray Armstrong who was also the lay theologian. The C.C.D. was formally organized in 1966 with Ray Knight as president. From 1967 to 1969 Bernard Lussier was president.

St. Mary Magdalen's highly respected choir was organized in 1959 with Robert Worland as director and Mrs. A. Bassett as organist. David Harman became organist in 1965.

The faithful ushers were organized into a club in 1965 with Robert Oliver as head usher until 1967. From 1967 to 1969 Fred Hennig was head usher and was succeeded by John Guillette.



Other significant events in the first ten years of our parish were:

- † County Fair, May 27, 1961
- † First Fashion show March 17, 1966, chairman Mrs. Gordon Menne.
- † Initiation of Mass Commentators, 1966 with John McManus as chairman.
- † Holiday Auction at Maitland Civic Center November 5, 1966, Mrs. Robert Classen, chairman.
- † First Neighborhood Mass, in home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Woodard, December 7, 1966.
- † Building Fund Drive for Convent and Parish Hall, February 1967, goal \$175,000, pledged \$230,000, Frank Malatesta, Sr., chairman.
- † Weekly folk Mass initiated, August 27, 1967.
- † Harvest Festival, Camp San Pedro October 29, 1967, William Phillips, chairman.
- † Formation of St. Mary Magdalen School Band, 1967
- † First joint Thanksgiving Service between Protestants and Catholics at Maitland Civic Center, November, 1967.
- † Lay theologian, Ray Armstrong, joins parish staff, part time, June, 1968.
- † Major census program, Maurice Larue, chairman, March 2, 1969.

(Many of these programs, such as the hiring of a lay theologian, Thanksgiving ecumenical service, Folk Mass and Neighborhood Mass were firsts for Central Florida.)





PARISH CLERGY, 1969
 L. to R. Father Joseph A. Nolan, assistant,
 Father David Page, pastor and Father
 Brendan Linnane, assistant.



St. Mary Magdalen

CATHOLIC PARISH



FATHER PATRICK CAVERLY 1972-1981

The Satellite Church

1972-1981

*Father Patrick J. Caverly was born in County Cork, Ireland and received his early education at The De La Salle Preparatory Schools. Upon graduation, he entered The School of Business and Journalism at the University of London, and later studied economics and accounting at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

Following this schooling he remained in the business world until 1954. At that time he entered Mount Melleray Abbey to study Philosophy and in 1957 pursued Theology at St. Patrick's College, Carlow, receiving his masters Degree in these disciplines from the University of Ireland. Post graduate education took place at Catholic University, Washington, D.C., where he studied English, Educational Administration and Religious Education.

Ordination to priesthood took place on June 10, 1961. His first assignment was at St. Petersburg Catholic High School as a teacher where he taught Latin-English, History and Theology for four years.

Father was President of Santa Fe High School in Lakeland from 1967 to 1972. During this period extensive building expansion took place. During the same period he was pastor of the Church of the Resurrection in Lakeland. Since coming to Maitland in 1972 he planned and built two new Churches. St. Mary Magdalen was opened for worship on Christmas Eve 1974. Church of the Annunciation on March 25, 1979, i.e. Feast of the Annunciation.

When Bishop Borders was named Bishop of Orlando he appointed an ad hoc committee to organize the Diocese and Fr. Caverly was one of those members. The first chancery functioned out of a rented office space at 5330 Diplomat Circle in Winter Park. (corner of Lee Road and I-4 there used to be a big orange out front) Fr. Caverly was also

part of a program on WFTV Channel 9 in a series called "Moral Issues of Our Times."

Father Caverly has been President of the Priest's Council and a member of the Board of Consulters. He was one of the Priest directors of the Bishop's Annual Appeal. He was Secretary for Christian Life Education, a member of the Bishop's Executive Staff and representative of the clergy on the Finance Committee of the diocese.

Father Caverly was deeply aware that his greatest privilege was to be a priest of God and a pastor to God's people. One of his greatest joys has been to instruct and receive very many men and women, boys and girls into the Church. His constant prayer is for an increase in vocations to priesthood and to the Religious life. Fr. Caverly later became Vicar General for the Diocese of Orlando.

Not long after he arrived to St. Mary Magdalen Parish, Fr. Caverly instituted PROJECT OUTREACH, a drive to raise funds for a new church to support the booming parish. The success of this effort was phenomenal as parishioners gave unhesitatingly of their "time, talent and treasure." The new church was built next to the rectory. Its dedication was concelebrated April 13, 1975.



Under his leadership ten additional acres were developed. A soccer field and a softball field were completed, as well as a track and basketball courts. These additions provided for full sport programs. In 1977 the Sisters of Notre Dame were recalled and Fr. Caverly sought other sisters from several communities to replace them. Sister M. George Francis S.N.J.M. became administrator, three other Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, two Benedictine

St. Mary Magdalen

CATHOLIC PARISH

Sisters, and a sister from each of the following orders: Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet and Sisters of Saint Francis of Stella Niagara.

*PROJECT OUTREACH did not die with the building of the new church, but was continued to provide funding for a satellite church on Montgomery Road on the other side of Altamonte Springs. The old church was later renovated to serve as a social hall, additional offices were added for CCD and the church staff. A new church has since been built on the adjacent property.

Another excerpt from the parish magazine noted :

Bernie and Gloria Schnapp joined the parish in 1976. On a Saturday afternoon he went into the back of the church, knelt, prayed, then sat in the pew. As he began to reflect on the life-size crucifix, the wooden altar and the ceramic tile Resurrection scene that forms a backdrop to the sanctuary, say Bernie, "I had the most beautiful spiritual experience." I said to myself, "I've come home. This is where I was meant to be".

St. Mary Magdalen Church was dedicated on April 13, 1975 by Bishop Thomas J. Grady. Concelebrants included Lawrence Cardinal Sheehan, Rev. Hubert Reason, Rev. David Page, Rev. Bernard Caverly and Rev. Patrick Caverly and several other fellow priests from the area.

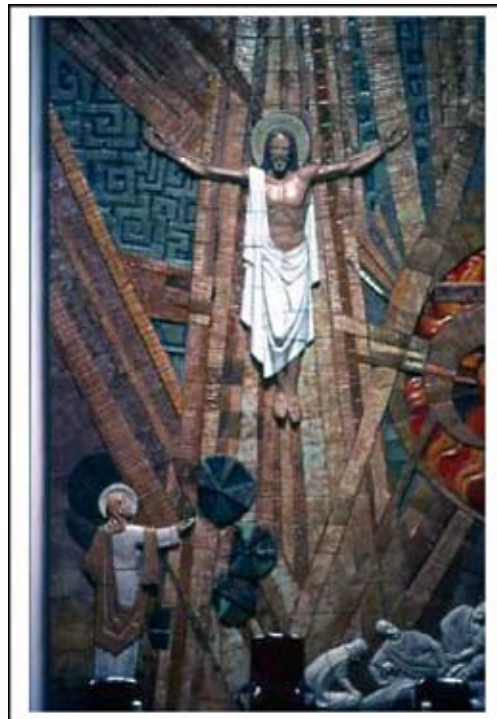
Under the leadership of Father Caverly the membership of the parish increased and spread west into Seminole County. With this growth the Bishop decided to establish a new parish on the other side of Altamonte Springs and thus the Church of the Annunciation was founded in 1979. It functioned as a satellite church of St. Mary Magdalen for the first three years.

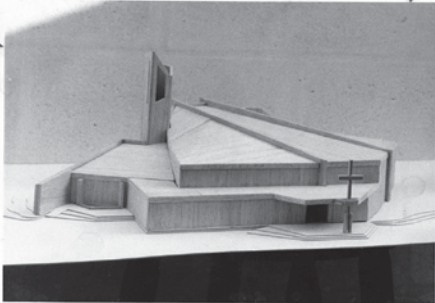


In 1980 the two parishes were divided; Fr. Caverly was assigned as pastor of Annunciation, and in January, 1981 Fr. Paul Henry became the fifth pastor of St. Mary Magdalen parish community. On May 20, 1984, the parish celebrated its Silver Jubilee.

With his departure many of the parishioners living in that sector of the county moved with Father Caverly reducing the size of St. Mary Magdalen Parish as new boundaries were set. This move separated families and friends who had played and prayed together over many years as parishioners.

The re-redo on the back wall of the church had not arrived in time for that first Christmas Mass but the week before the following Easter the church was closed and what a beautiful surprise awaited the parishioners that Sunday Morning. It was a great celebration!





SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR GOD

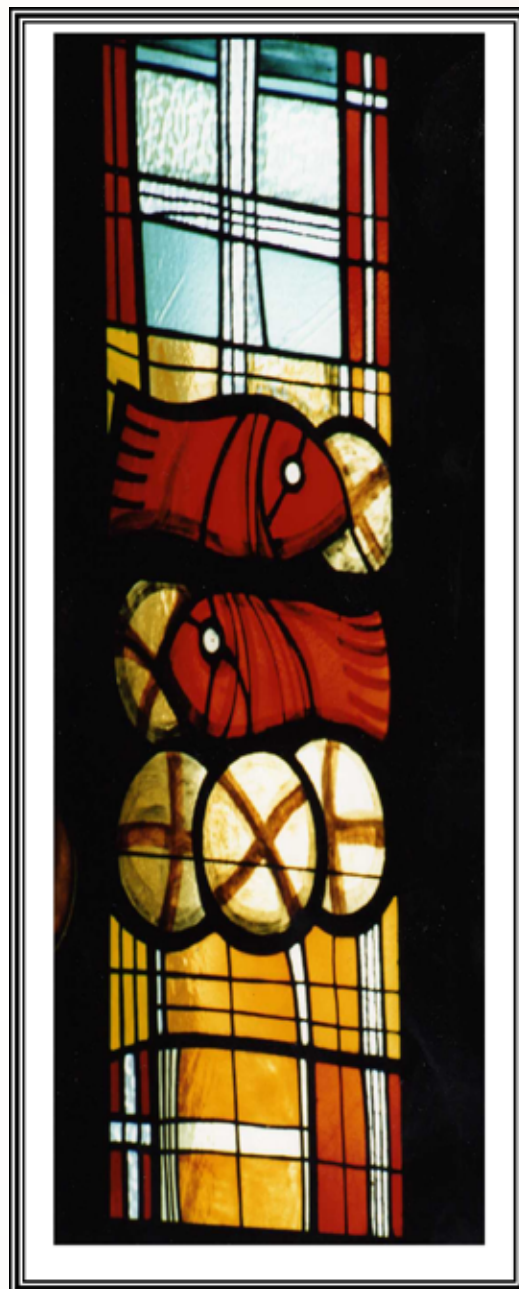
Author unknown

When Malcolm Muggeridge gave a rather handsome check to Mother Teresa of India she went out immediately and bought a beautiful chalice. When asked why all this money was not spent on the poor she replied, "This is something beautiful for God." Of course her dedicated life and that of her sisters is also "something beautiful for God."

The interior of our new Church is designed to elevate the hearts and minds of our people to the adoration of God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ in union with the Holy Spirit.

Three large stained glass windows represent the Blessed Trinity. Seven other windows depict the sacramental life of the Church and our encounter with Christ. On the sanctuary stands an eighteen foot high Crucifix with a life sized carving of Jesus. This represents the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on, of course, human suffering. The Reredos is a ceramic mural of the Risen Christ. This is the focal point of the Church and is very striking. It depicts Christ meeting Mary Magdalen in the garden after the resurrection. Since she is the patroness of our parish, it is most appropriate that this scene should be depicted. Here Christ tells her go and tell my disciples that I am risen – that I am still with you and that I go before you into Galilee. The scene also depicts the soldiers who guarded the tomb falling in confusion.

The Tabernacle is of cast bronze and the sanctuary light is a Menorah. Both represent the Holy of Holies – and the Old and New Testaments. The altar was carved by a member of the parish and is of solid rose wood. A sloping floor arrangement and the fan-shaped design give perfect visibility from all angles. A glassed-off chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary is used for daily worship, small weddings and funerals, experimental liturgies and it takes the overflow crowd on Sundays.



A note from Ludwid Spiessl, Architect

The liturgical requirements of the Catholic Church formed the basis for the development of the building design and strongly influenced the plan. The focal point is the altar, elevated by several steps and highlighted by a large skylight in the roof nearly 40 feet above the sanctuary.

The nave with a slightly sloping floor affords good view and the arrangements of the pews brings the participating congregation in closer proximity than the traditional church design would allow. It also keeps the worshippers within the vision range of the celebrant at the pulpit.

A chapel situated next to the main sanctuary and separated from it by a large glass screen is used for services during the week and serves as additional worship space on Sundays and Holy Days. The chapel, accessible directly from the side vestibule, receives natural light from a skylight along its side which floods the entire wall with rich light.

Architecturally these two areas pivot around the 600 foot tower that in its base houses the tabernacle and a secondary sacristy, accessible to both areas.

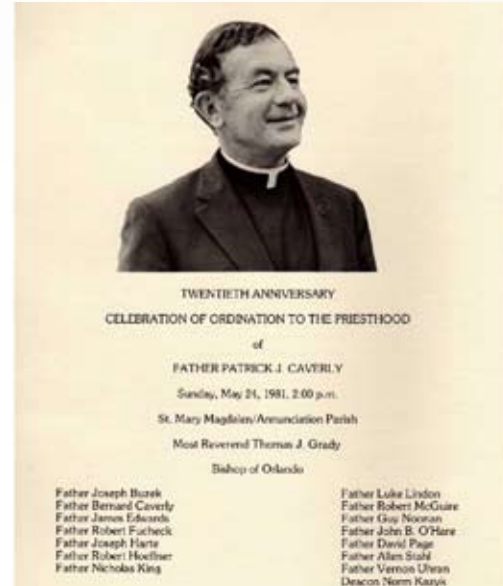
A balcony affords additional seating accommodations in the rear of the church while the choir area at the foot of a beautiful pipe organ provides visual balance to the aesthetics of the sanctuary.

The interior is kept in light neutral colors with all wood stained a rich dark walnut, and forms a quiet enclosure for the worshippers and the colorful appointments.

The windows in the church are of colorful stained glass executed to designs of religious motives by artists in Spain.

The building structure consists of two large concrete beams spanning 100 feet each, restrained by massive columns expressed on the exterior of the building. Together with the load bearing exterior perimeter walls they carry the free spanning roof and create a column free interior.

The building is well insulated and allows the use of the church with the economical use of its heating and cooling system, separated for church and chapel.



St. Mary Magdalen

CATHOLIC PARISH



Official seating capacity, including the chapel and the balcony is around 1,100, the building area, including the secondary areas and toilet facilities is 13,175 sq. ft. and was constructed by Manuel Builders, Inc. of Orlando at approximately \$34.80 per sq. ft.

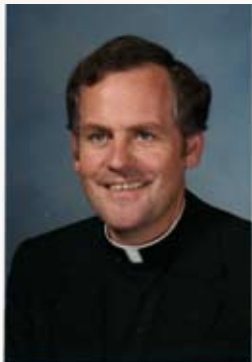
From the Archives, St. Mary Magdalen Parish

Fr. Caverly has always been a great fundraiser. An interesting anecdote that Fr. Caverly shared with us relates how we came about getting the ten acres that later became our soccer field and surrounding area. The property went up for sale and Fr. Caverly envisioned that it would be a great addition to the church property for future building. Its' cost then was \$50,000. He asked the Bishop for permission to buy it and was told yes but there were no funds available to pay for it. He happened to mention it to a friend who owned a few grocery stores and that man made a deal with Fr. Caverly. If the Diocese would sell him a particular piece of land that they owned that he wanted for a new store he would make a donation. So Fr. Caverly arranged it and the following day to his surprise a check arrived for the full amount. The grocery store owner's face can be seen posted in all the Publix stores across Florida.



FATHER PAUL HENRY

1981-1993



Ministry Abounds

1982-1984

With Father Caverly's departure, Father Paul Henry continued the work of his predecessors. Also born in Ireland, he is one of the 11 children born to Bridget and Thomas Peter Henry. His father passed away so he often visits his

mother who still lives in Magherafelt Parish, County Derry. He was ordained along with his twin brother Father Peter Henry and Father Richard Mary Walsh for the St. Augustine Diocese June 16, 1968. Before they arrived, however, the diocese was split and they were assigned to the new Orlando Diocese. With a devilish twinkle in his eye, Father Henry reports that Bishop Borders thought he had a real money maker on his hands when he heard Peter, Paul and Mary were coming. "Until he heard us sing!"

His first assignment was as assistant at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish where he helped pioneer the Easter Mass at the beach band shell for 5,000 spring breakers. He was director of religious studies at the Father Lopez High School in Daytona Beach. The four years from 1972 to 1976 were years of special study as he earned and completed a Masters Degree in Education from Stetson University, and a Doctorate Degree in counseling psychology and educational psychology from the University of Massachusetts. His dissertation was on the human development of priests. In connection with this study, he worked for two years with Father Vincent Dwyer at the Center for Human Development, first at St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota, and then post graduate work at the University of Notre Dame.

"The idea that I kind of focused on," Father said, "was that

the more human we are, especially as priests, the more Christ like we can become. The biggest instrument we have for serving God is our humanity. The more loving we are, the more personally we can relate to people, which is the way Jesus showed us."

Prior to being assigned as pastor at St. Mary Magdalen he was principal of Melbourne Central Catholic High School. "I was the fourth principal in one year," he said, "and I was determined they wouldn't get me. He served for three years. Next he spent two short years as associate pastor at Our Saviour Church in Cocoa Beach just long enough to be immortalized in a stain glass window. He enjoyed a fast game of racquetball and tennis and is an avid reader. Bishop Grady had described Father Henry as a "...priest of exceptional talent and dedication."



Paul Henry (left) and Peter Henry, identical brothers
number of these looks of the Father's interest in the ministerial

Father John Cavanaugh, former President of Notre Dame, used to say leadership was a very simple matter. All you needed was a vision of where you wanted to go and the ability to inspire a lot of people to help you get there. Upon Father Henry's arrival, he gathered about sixty parishioners who were active in the various committees, commissions, clubs, etc. It took about a year, but in the end he had a mission statement and a set of goals to guide. These were the cornerstone of his pastorate. The staff and heads of departments provided input to this effort which produced a statement that was engraved on a bronze plaque and presented at the celebration of the parish's 25th Anniversary in 1984.

Father Henry also directed that a census of the parish be taken. This was the first such endeavor and received great



support from parishioners who volunteered to go door to door in assigned areas to make the count possible. The summary indicated how many families were in allegiance to St. Mary Magdalen Parish and was the basis for planning the expansion of facilities and staff that followed.

Spiritual growth became the focus with the culmination being a Renew Program undertaken in the fall of 1983. Some 1,500 parishioners took part in the spiritual program, which was recognized by the national Renew office in Newark, New Jersey as the largest, not only in the United States but the world as well. The vibrant activity of the parish received national recognition when Father Henry was invited to Los Angeles in May 1983 to receive an award naming St. Mary Magdalen one of the ten model parishes in the nation.

The Silver Anniversary Celebration in 1984 was truly one of achievement. One of which all parish members of St. Mary Magdalen Parish, former and present, clergy, sisters, teachers and staff, could be justly proud. The history of the Church by then spoke for itself.

Parish RENEW Program

The parish began planning for Renew during the spring of 1983 under the direction of Colette Martineau, the parish director of adult education. Ten Renew committees were established along with the CORE committee of Renew to oversee all aspects of the program. The hard work of the many parishioners who worked on these committees bore fruit on October 9, 1983, the first Sunday of Renew for the Diocese and our parish. The 1,500 parishioners signed up to participate in 127 small groups, with additional parishioners studying Renew materials in their homes and/or participating in large group events.

Response from Renew small group leaders and members included reports of support in faith-sharing and respect

The Life of Father Paul Henry



Born September 27, 1944 in Magherfeld, North Ireland of Bridget and Thomas Henry



Ordination - June 16, 1968 - Newly ordained Fathers Peter and Paul Henry with their Uncle Father Michael Devane



Armagh - ages 10 to 17 attended St. Patrick College - a residential high school



August 28, 1968 - Fathers Paul and Peter Henry, and Father Richard Walsh. "Peter, Paul, and Mary" arriving in the USA for an extended run



All Hallows Seminary, Dublin



First assignment - Our Lady of Lourdes, Daytona Beach the Ireland reference - Father's cousin, Mons. Dr. Brackbill



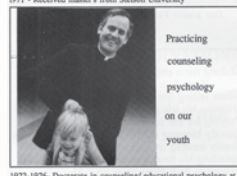
as seen through the camera's eye



1967-72 - Pastor of Father Lopez High School 1971 - Received master's from Stansford University



1979-1981 - Our Savior, Cocoa Beach - He was the model for Jesus in one of the stained glass windows



1972-1976 - Doctorate in counseling/educational psychology at Massachusetts U. worked with Father Vincent Dwyer-Center for Human Development for two years



1981-On - Retreat in Holy Land before coming to SMM Focused on Sea of Galilee - following in the footsteps of Jesus he walked on the water



1976-1977 - Ascension Parish, Melbourne



1982 - Pastor of St. Mary Magdalen



for expression of common struggles and successes in the journey of faith.

**(Taken verbatim from booklet "Silver Anniversary, St. Mary Magdalen Church," 1984 , pg. 15-16)*

Father Henry didn't waste anytime addressing the physical needs of the school and parish. In 1983 portable classrooms were purchased and the asbestos problems corrected. By 1986, after taking a parish wide survey and many months of planning, construction of the parishes offices began. The property seemed to be turned upside down with heavy equipment.



St. Mary Magdalen

CATHOLIC PARISH





Blessed with a fine team of parishioners, the facility took on a new look. When everyone was settled into their new offices, the focus went on the Adult/Child Centers. The Child Center opened March 23, 1987 with 90 children enrolled. By June, the center was full and a long waiting list was started that never ended to this day. The Adult Center opened in May of that year so needless to say things were pretty busy around here.

An excerpt from a parish magazine noted:

**On Sunday April 5, 1987 Bishop Thomas J. Grady, who had succeeded Bishop Borders, officially opened the Adult/Child Centers with a festive Liturgy of Dedication. While hundreds of parishioners released colored balloons into a clear, blue sky, the adult choir sang, "Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices."*

The dedication was held outside the north entrance of the \$1,000,000, two-building complex, which included the care centers, a new parish office building and parish meeting rooms. The old offices were renovated to serve as kindergarten classrooms and school offices that had been housed in older portable buildings.

At the close of the noon Mass celebrated by Bishop Grady, Father Henry thanked parishioners for their support of the fund raising and paid special tribute to Dr. and Mrs. Wilbur Schefstad, who first proposed the care centers more than five years beforehand and worked tirelessly to bring the ideas to fruition: to Marshall Gibbs, chairman of the expansion fund committee; and to Cliff Wright, chairman of the building committee.





When the 9 acre piece of property adjacent to our boundary, the Northside Christian Church, became available for sale, Father Paul requested and received authorization of the Diocese and purchased it. The residence was remodeled and the Annex cleaned up to accommodate meetings. The CommunityFest was able to spread out bringing in midway rides and better organized booths and entertainment. On September 15, 1991, the blessing of the property by the Bishop took place and serves today as our parish Annex.

Even with all the building and meetings and social events, Fr. Henry in his pastoral way was very attentive to the needs of each individual, He had a wonderful gift of calling each person by name and making them feel at home in whatever setting he found himself in. He seemed to always find time to join a youth group adventure, celebrate a home Mass or just meet you for lunch!



ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

A Ministry of St. John Vianney Parish - Orlando, Florida - Volume 3 No. 2 - 2007



SJVS Students and Teachers Dream Big

When do you want to do more for your school? This year we had a positive response to our changing world!

At St. John Vianney Catholic School, we are proud to be a great teacher in this wonderful world. We are a school community that encourages students to be a better person in the world. We are a school that encourages the next generation to be a better person in the world.

When do you want to do more for your school? This year we had a positive response to our changing world!

At St. John Vianney Catholic School, we are proud to be a great teacher in this wonderful world. We are a school community that encourages students to be a better person in the world. We are a school that encourages the next generation to be a better person in the world.

Father Henry was very involved with each of the liturgies and worked well with his very talented team of liturgists, musicians, staff and a large variety of volunteers. When the U.S. bishops invited ten pastors to a meeting to discuss the excellence of their parish ministry, *Bert Ghezzi wrote, "I was not surprised that he was included....He's the ingredient in the mix that sparks fire and life in everyone else." Deacon Henry Libersat once joked, "Heaven's got to be like St. Mary Magdalen, or I'm coming back" Past Parish Council President Bill Bourne felt that Father Henry was someone special. He admired and respected him, and most of all, he loved him, as priest, pastor and friend.

A nearby resident remembers late one night someone came to the door looking for the "Father". He seemed to have some urgent needs so a call was made to the rectory. Fr. Henry invited him over and listened to the young man's woes. He then picked up the phone and called the boy's mother and got a different version of why her son was down and out. He gave the person some money enough for dinner and kindly encouraged him to make amends with his family.

Another parishioner remembers coming out after a late meeting only to find that she had a flat tire. She started to call her husband but instead Fr. Paul got down right there in the parking lot and changed it for her. And the stories

like this go on and on. When he announced at Mass one weekend that he was leaving people were crying in church and it was a very hard time for both him and the folks who had gotten to know him so well. He often returns to celebrate a wedding, baptism or funeral with some of the families who have kept in touch with him. He is now pastor at St. John Vianney parish in South Orlando and the Vicar for Clergy.







Remembering Bishop Grady

Succeeding Bishop Borders was Bishop Thomas J. Grady, a native of Chicago and the second Bishop of Orlando, installed on December 16, 1974. Earlier in his career, he was named director of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. which is one of the largest Catholic shrines in the United States. Bishop Grady was shepherd of the diocese during a period of dramatic growth. He established eighteen new parishes, a tourism ministry, San Pedro Center – a centrally-located spiritual life center, a sister diocese in the Dominican Republic; and he encouraged the greater participation of women in the work of the Church. He was also a much admired speaker, columnist, and a nationally renowned poet. At the end of his tenure in 1990, the Catholic population of the diocese had grown over 76% and the number of parishes had increased by more than a third.

Seeing Pope John Paul II in the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. was an historic moment for everyone...but especially for Bishop Thomas J. Grady of Orlando.

Bishop Grady was director of the national shrine during the years of its construction. In his words he had seen in the shrine “endless crowds of tourists, people from all over the United States, from all over the world.” In the magnificence of a shrine built to last and inspire for centuries, the bishop had seen people who “came and went, heedless or deeply moved, gawking or praying.”

Then he sat a few feet from the Pope who had taken the world...including the U.S...by storm.

Bishop Grady said his thoughts during the Pope’s talk to the Sisters centered on his presence in the shrine. And at the end of that historic moment Bishop Grady knew that he had been part of “an hour, a moment in history, a significant and thrilling moment.”

But the important thing, he said would be the effect of the visit on the U.S. and on the Pope. “Would the Pope have new insights into the people of the U.S.? Would the people of the U.S. be more loving and caring, more dedicated to justice, service and peace?”

Bishop Grady says that Americans should not ask themselves, “Did I see the Pope?” or “Did I touch the Pope?” “The questions is, ‘Did I encounter the Lord Jesus?’ during the Pope’s visit, and ‘Was I touched by him? Was there any change in the shrine of my heart?’”

Testimonies from the Florida Catholic Bishop Anniversary issue April 1998

He had the “greatest personal knowledge of the shrine and its history of any man alive,” Msgr. Michael J. Bransfield, executive director of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, said of Bishop Thomas J. Grady.

† In December 1988, in recognition for all that he had done to foster devotion to Mary, Bishop Grady received the annual Patronal Medal of the Catholic University of America and the national shrine. Other recipients have been Mother Teresa, Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia and Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

† While most Catholics in Florida think of Bishop Thomas J. Grady as priest and bishop, Eileen Barry and George Grady simple view him as their devoted older brother, Tom.

But even from their earliest recollections of growing up in Chicago, Eileen, the middle child, and George, the youngest by several years, can recall Bishop Grady’s desire to be a priest. Mrs. Barry could recall instances as a small child when neighbors would ask Bishop Grady if he planned to follow in his father Michael’s footsteps. Michael Grady was a captain with the Chicago Police Department.

“He always said ‘no’, he was going to be a priest,” she said. “Because his birthday was in October, he got to start school a year earlier and was an altar boy at 6 or 7



years old. He took his role very seriously. I never saw my brother angry in my life.”

For both his siblings, Bishop Grady has also been a model of courage and determination, particularly in the face of illness. Only a year after he retired in 1990 Bishop Grady contracted vasculitis an inflammation of blood or lymph vessels which hinders motor function.

Throughout his illness and recuperation, Mrs. Barry stood by his side. “He’s been an inspiration to the rest of us,” she said. “His faith has been absolutely unreal, almost beyond belief. “Even in pain, he grins and bears it.” She recalled when her youngest daughter Christine contracted pancreatic cancer in 1993. “After she was diagnosed and it looked like she wasn’t going to make it she came down to see him, basically to say goodbye,” Mrs. Barry said.

“She told me privately that she dreamed of Bishop Grady saying her funeral Mass. When she died he came to Chicago and said her Mass while he was still in his wheelchair. It was difficult for him, but it was a beautiful testament of his love for her and his devotion to duty.” Mr. Grady, too, has been inspired by his brother’s will to persevere. “He kept his sense of humor,” he said. “He never let his illness get him down.

Bishop Thomas J. Grady has always represented the priesthood with the highest integrity which earned him the utmost respect among clergy in the Diocese of Orlando. “He was my mentor, my image what it was to be an excellent priest,” said Father Paul Henry, who in 1968 was among the first group of priests ordained for the diocese before he arrived in 1974. Father Henry currently serves as pastor of St. John Vianney Parish in Orlando.

It was when Bishop Grady was stricken with a rare blood disease, however, that their personal relationship strengthened, Father Henry said. “I was privileged to be one of those who would bring him Communion when he was in the hospital,” Father Henry said. “I think his spirituality was very much tested during that time.” One day after bringing the bishop Communion Father Henry talked with Bishop Grady’s sister, Eileen Barry, about celebrating Mass for him in the hospital room. She thought it was a great idea. “So I brought a Mass kit expecting to

say Mass for him,” Father Henry said, “and he ended up saying the Mass from his bed and I assisted him. “It was like pure oxygen for him to be able to celebrate Mass. I thought it was very Christ-like.

Bishop Thomas J. Grady was the “No. 1 parishioner” at St. Mary Magdalen Parish in Altamonte Springs. He lived within the parish. After his retirement, Bishop Grady began celebrating Mass every weekend at the church.

Ask any active parishioner about Bishop Grady. You’ll see eyes light up, faces break into smiles and you’ll hear comments of appreciation, love and respect. Bishop Grady, in a word, was an inspiration to the people of this parish. They adopted him; and him, them. He was so loved that the new parish grotto, honoring Our Lady of Lourdes, was dedicated to him. Small marble markers bear quotations from some of his poems, grace the sides of the bricked walkway and rest before the grotto itself.

“Because of his love for the Blessed Mother and his love for the parish, we wanted to honor him,” said Father Charlie Mitchell, pastor. “It was the parish that made the grotto what it is. “Our parish in a very close way, had seen the bishop go through his struggles with his illness and come through on the other side. He showed this parish a side of determination and strength, a side of humility and also took the opportunity to offer teaching through it. We were the recipients of a rare gift.”

Jo Ann Kuhn, parish secretary, said Bishop Grady always listened. Mrs. Kuhn cooks Sunday breakfast for the parish clergy and liturgy staff. “Bishop Grady used to come early into the kitchen to visit with me and he would always listen to what I had to say. He did not dominate conversations but showed interest in what you were thinking and experiencing.”

Paul Lehnerer, who coordinated music at the parish, said: “History tells us that Bishop Grady was the key instrument used by God to set forth and implement the evolution of the liturgy as prescribed by the Second Vatican Council. “This was no easy task,” he continued. “He ensured that the faithful of our diocese would be provided with trained liturgical, musical and catechetical leaders in each parish through the Office of Liturgy and Music and the Office

of Religious Education.”

Throughout his life, priesthood and episcopacy, Bishop Thomas J. Grady, recognized the special role of women in the Church and society. He has written and spoken widely about his profound love of the Blessed Mother, including his book, “The First Disciple, Reflections on Mary of Nazareth.” He even placed the diocese under her protection soon after he was named bishop in 1974.

In the late 1960s, the Archdiocese of Chicago announced the beginning of a training program, motivated by the Second Vatican Council, intended to prepare married and single men for a new role in the Catholic Church. Ultimately, a lifetime commitment would be required of those men, who would celebrate the sacrament of holy orders and be ordained as deacons.

The responsibility for this program in Chicago was given to Bishop Thomas Grady by Cardinal Cody. It was quite a challenge. Most of the men who came forward were married and there had been virtually no precedent for a married ministry in the Latin Catholic Church in modern times, and of course, it had been substantially longer since there had been a permanent diaconate.

In Deacon Norm Kazyk’s reflection on those days he realize that the early candidates had very little understanding of what the role of deacon would entail. “We were all in uncharted waters. In truth, we were going to have to live the role, develop its relevance and demonstrate its viability. To the eternal credit and genius of Bishop Grady, his vision and direction gave us the foundation to do that.”

When the Kazyk family moved to Orlando in 1978, Deacon Norm found the same Bishop Grady once again providing the foundation for another new diaconate program. Under his leadership, the order of the deacon grew and matured in the Orlando diocese. He gave us a wonderful legacy.

“Bishop Grady inherited an ideal situation as far as property was concerned,” said Bill Kramer, building coordinator for the Diocese of Orlando. “You could say he had a ‘land bank’ and he used that quite a bit when he first started building new churches in the diocese.”

Bishop Grady, according to Mr. Kramer, continued a tradition of good land purchases, remaining aware of what had value, and studying area growth patterns. One of the purchases Bishop Grady fell heir to was a 500 acre parcel of land in northeastern Orlando. The pristine wooded acreage sloped down ward to Lake Howell and had been developed by Archbishop Hurley as San Pedro Camp in 1959. Real estate agents began calling the diocese in the late 70’s when growth was booming in the San Pedro neighborhood, suggesting they abandon the camp and sell the acreage for residential waterfront development. Instead, Bishop Grady concluded the diocese needed a permanent spiritual center and set his mind on preserving the natural resources, and building San Pedro Spiritual Center (established in 1982).

There was no university or seminary or library in the diocese, and no shrine at the time, and Bishop Grady felt it was important to have someplace with permanence,” Mr. Kramer said. “There was definitely a temptation to sell because the diocese could have made a lot of money, but he was very conscious of the need to preserve this land.”

Father Patrick Caverly, vicar general and pastor of Church of the Annunciation in Altamonte Springs, worked with Bishop Grady to institute a new way to fund diocesan programs with an annual Bishop’s Appeal for Service Enrichment, or BASE. “We struggled for a long time to change the system then in vogue for the support of the diocese and diocesan programs,” Father Caverly said. “We went around along with Father Brendan O’Hare (recently retired from Holy Cross Parish in Vero Beach) to make presentations to small regional groups of priests in the diocese.”

John Wettach, director of finance for the Orlando Diocese, said while other dioceses operated two or three different fund-raisers during the year, Bishop Grady instituted BASE. The annual appeal still serves as the major event to help fund diocesan programs and chancery operations. Individual parishes are assessed a mandatory amount that they raise through parishioner donations.

Father Caverly said all the ingredients of BASE are still in operation. “The priests thought BASE was fairer



and when parishes exceed their assessments we made it possible for them to keep the extra money to assist their own parish programs,” he said, adding that BASE is considered a model for dioceses across the country. As head of the Administration Secretariat, which oversees BASE, Father Caverly said Bishop Grady was a good friend who understood finances. “He had major experience with fund-raising at the National Shrine. He is able to read blueprints and financial documents. Add to that his gentleness and you get a wonderful leader.”

Still very active in the diocese after his retirement, Bishop Grady worked at the chancery three days a week.

FATHER CHARLIE MITCHELL 1994-PRESENT



In January 1994, Father Charles Mitchell was named pastor of St. Mary Magdalen parish. An excerpt from “A Toast to Father Charlie on his Fifteenth Anniversary as a Priest” written by parishioner Bert Ghezzi, “To hear him tell it, you would think Father Charlie stumbled on his vocation. He says he coasted through

high school and postponed college to join the navy. In a recent sermon, he told us about his life as a radio man on his amphibious mine sweeper during the Viet Nam war. In a very depressing and fearsome environment, he made friends with a good man who was steeped in Benedictine spirituality. Father Charlie and he talked about spiritual themes like peace and holiness. At age 21 he left the Navy thinking about becoming a monk. I’m glad he didn’t, aren’t you?”

Father Charlie attended West Virginia University where he studied fine arts and education. In 1978, when he was traveling all over West Virginia doing his student teaching, he decided to consider becoming a priest. His diocese accepted him as a candidate and sent him to study at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland. There he became a good friend of Father Paige Blakely, who influenced him to transfer to the Orlando Diocese. In May, 1984 he was ordained a priest at St. James Cathedral.

Father Charlie first spent three years as an associate pastor at Epiphany, Port Orange. Then after a three year assignment as an associate at Our Lady of Lourdes, Daytona, he

returned to Epiphany as pastor in 1990.”

Norm Fesenmyer once said of Father Charlie, “He is a prince of a man. He takes his time and shows the shut-ins what a great pleasure it is to be with them. He is truly an asset to the parish.” Under his leadership the maturing of the parish would continue. The construction of the Parish Life Center permitted the former social hall to be converted to use as the school cafeteria. Renovations to the school included state of the art computer and science rooms, a new library, art room and a modern gymnasium and athletic complex. The old convent was renovated into the new Student Administration Building.

The patio on the back of the Child Center was enclosed for a lunch room and the lobby was expanded to include a break room and planning area for the staff. The playground was relocated and up-dated with new equipment, resurfaced and a state of the art security system put in place. Much of this was due to the diligent fundraising on the part of the newly formed Parent’s Association.

On Friday evening, October 30, 1998, Bishop Norbert Dorsey, C.P., dedicated our new Parish Life Center and Gymnasium in colorful ceremonies. Noting that All Saints Day wasn’t until Sunday, Bishop Dorsey told the large gathering in the spacious new Life Center, “The real saints are here tonight – all of you are saints in the making. I thank all of you, and ask God to reward you for this beautiful place where we can come to know one another and give thanks.”

On July 15, 1995, The Parish Thrift Store opened under the management of Sue Dilsner. It offered donated items for sale and the proceeds were intended to help fund other





parish outreach projects. The store was later relocated and dozens of volunteers have helped out over the years.

Perhaps it is the renovation of the church for which Father Charlie will be most remembered. In late 1995, it became apparent that the facilities were insufficient for the existing ministries. A parish “Town Meeting” was held in early 1996. Twice weekly couples hosted meetings with Father Charlie at the rectory. These meetings, held from June through October, explained the Vision of Faith 2000 capital improvements campaign. Frank and Veronica Malatesta, once again involved, hosted about 70% of these. “I think the meetings have brought the parish closer together,” Frank said afterwards.



A number of priorities were established inclusive to all ministries relative to our parish facilities. Subsequent meetings were held that included representatives from all ministries and their needs were developed into a master plan. Jeff Collins noted, Father Charlie sure knows how to delegate his spiritual leadership.”

As Part 2 of Vision 2000, the program became a true reality. During the period of renovation all Masses were



celebrated in the Parish Life Center. The capacity of the church was increased, a new sanctuary, chapel, baptismal font and comfortable pews were but some of the new changes that greeted parishioners at the first Mass. Later that summer a new altar and ambo were put in the more spacious sanctuary. Bishop Norbert M. Dorsey, C.P. who had replaced Bishop Grady officiated at the dedication of the new church.



A New Millennium!

Father Charlie Mitchell “buried” our time capsule Sunday, July 23, 2000 in the floor of the lobby of the Parish Life Center. The capsule commemorated our Parish’ 40th anniversary and the year 2000, Jubilee year of the



Church. After the noon Mass a solemn procession proceeded to the Family Life Center where a short prayer service was held, followed by the actual placing of the capsule in the awaiting “tomb”. When asked what his goals were for the parish he said he had three aspirations. “First, I want to see a deepening of personal prayer and liturgical worship in the parish. Second, I want the parish to grow closer to Christians from other churches, both individually and corporately as a community. Third, I want to see each of us and all our ministries to become champions of social justice.”



A young girl Laura St. Pierre, upon completing the RCIA classes was quoted as follows:

“The Easter Vigil was overwhelming. The day had started with a retreat beginning with Morning Prayer. The laying on of hands by everyone present left me in awe. I really felt supported and loved by the whole community. That evening when Father Charlie lit the fire outside the Church I couldn’t believe it was happening to me. I paid special attention to the readings. When the water came on in the baptismal it was just too much. I clutched Peggy’s hand as I approached the baptismal. I had become friends with Father Charlie and he smiled and told me to get into the water.”

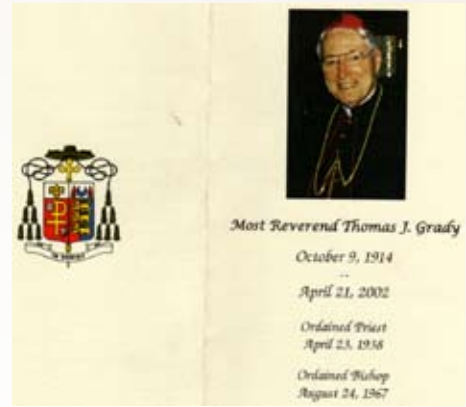


I was glad he (Fr. Charlie) was the one there, his homily was so touching and inspiring – I’ve always like his homilies. Then he was bending over me saying, “I Baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. I was crying and could barely move. It felt like the water was rushing through my body. Then Father Charlie grabbed my hand and helped me out of the water. I stood up and received a lighted candle, Father said my name and put sweet smelling oil on my head. I walked over to the bishop and he congratulated me and said ‘God Bless you.’”



I walked down the aisle, candle in hand, and was so amazed. I kept thinking this is for the Lord, for Mom and for me. After I got dressed I came back to Church.

Peggy (Dicaprio, her sponsor) gave me a cross which was a gift from Father Charlie. He had gotten them for everyone when he was in Rome and had the pope bless them. This made me feel even closer to God and the community.”



EDUCARD DE JULIARDO



In all who are good from heaven, there is no last name (1992).
 With the approval of the Parish Council, the Women's Parish Council,
 the Women's Parish Committee, the Women's Office of Liturgy, and
 the Ministry of the Sacraments, and completion of construction,
 we solemnly dedicated and consecrated for sacred worship
 and the altar, having been assembled, and consecrated for sacred wor-
 ship, on the second day of the month of April, of the year of our Lord one thousand 25,
 the 15th day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand 25.

Thomas J. Grady Bishop of Orlando
John J. ... Parish Priest
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...



"May he live, in that living stone, revealed by
 me, but in God's light, whose presence and love
 were present in previous times, into a spiritual
 house, to be a holy dwelling, to offer spiritual
 sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ,
 for its service in accordance
 with the law of love and charity,
 a sanctification, glorification and glorification,
 and to the glory of God who is the Father, the Son,
 and the Holy Spirit, Amen." (Canon 1217)



HISPANIC COMMUNITY

Under the new bishop the diocese continued to grow, as did our community, with the influx of refugees seeking a new life in our country. The Spanish speaking Catholic population that made its way to our church was warmly welcomed. They now join weekly in a spirited Saturday evening Mass in their own language. This has brought a rich international culture which enhances our parish life and gives strength to our ministries.



COMING TOGETHER IN FAITH

As we recall the blessings which we have all enjoyed we must take note of the sad misfortune that brought distress to the parish during this period of maturing. Shortly after the 10 o'clock Mass on Sunday, November 7, 1999 as parishioners were moving to their cars the structure covering the walkway between the church and the office building collapsed burying dozens of people beneath the timbers and roofing.*

*Orlando Sentinel November 8, 1999

Those in the vicinity capable of providing assistance rendered it unselfishly uncovering victims and providing all that they could until and well after emergency services arrived. In the days that followed the parish tried to provide comfort and solace to the injured many of whom still bear the scars of that misfortune even today.

There had been no outward signs that the support beams had rotted away before the ceiling crashed down. No stains or discoloration gave any hint that water seeping down into the ceiling had weakened the wood and nails that held the stucco finish to the beams. The school and Adult Center were able to remain open but the Child Center was closed the following

MEN'S CLUB



The parish once again responded to tragedy after Hurricane Katrina struck our southern coast. Not only was emergency financial aid provided but the parish gave assistance to families moving into our area and welcomed

children into our school so that their education could be continued. More recently, members of our Men's Club have journeyed to Louisiana to assist in the repair and restoration of church property damaged. The response of the parish to these disasters has shown that our church is united and a dedicated neighbor to those in need.



As part of the Outreach Program, men of the parish are participating in the construction of housing in the Dominican Republic at the Diocesan sister parish of San Juan de La Maguana while at home

housing has been provided to deserving families through our Habitat for Humanity Program. Over a dozen homes have been constructed and dedicated by our parish. Both of these projects have been made possible only through the strong financial support of our parishioners.



From May 29th to June 1, 2001 the Pastoral Summit was held in New Orleans. It was the first gathering of its kind. It was designed to focus on the excellencies of theological Churches.

St. Mary Magdalen was one of three central Florida parishes named for excellent practices. We were cited for: excellent Spanish and English Liturgies; child and adult day care centers; school; religious and adult Education; Catholics Coming Home and our participation in Habitat for Humanity.



The parish can be truly proud of all that has been accomplished since its founding. Where once we stood alone today there are now seven parishes in Seminole county counted among the 76 parishes in the Diocese of Orlando, now led by its fourth pastor, Bishop Thomas G. Wenski. We at St. Mary Magdalen have been blessed with strong pastoral leadership. But there were also the associate priests, whose names cannot all be remembered, who served our parish in the years of our birth and maturity.



PARISH FESTIVALS



The Harvest Festival in 1967 was later referred to as the Fall Festival and presently is called the CommunityFest. For the better part of two decades, the celebration was held over the Halloween weekend. Food booths were hastily fashioned from whatever plywood volunteers could gather, and were literally built the night before the festival. Games of chance were always a staple, as was the craft bazaar and a last-minute auction. In the early years, space was limited to the original church property, and there were quite a few years where there were no midway rides at all. Entertainment, however, has always been a staple, with plenty of music and dancing. Throughout



the years, many of our parish priests hailed from Ireland and traditional Irish songs and folk dances were early favorites.

In 1985 parishioner Pat Markusic suggested that the Fall Festival be renamed to reflect its growing popularity throughout the Central Florida community, and CommunityFest was born, with the tradition of promoting it with an annual theme. A large parade kicks off the event and tens of thousands enjoy rides, an auction, bingo, a super raffle, crafts and great international foods and beverages. The festival is the largest and most celebrated church festival not only in the Diocese of Orlando, but in all of Central Florida.

A three day event, its success is rooted in the hearts and souls of the volunteers. A full nine months prior to each year's festival, meetings are held to determine theme, entertainment,



St. Mary Magdalen

CATHOLIC PARISH

operations and marketing strategies. Hundreds of man hours are put in before the month of October even rolls around, and by the time it's over thousands of man hours have been logged. No sooner does it end than the planning begins all over again.





HISTORY OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN SCHOOL

On the 35th anniversary of the school, Sister Kathleen Ann, SNJM compiled a history of the school. Taken verbatim, She wrote:

In September 1961 St. Mary Magdalen School opened in four new classrooms with four teachers, one hundred sixty-five students, and the pastor, Father Hubert Reason as the principal. Since the parish extended as far north as Sanford, a school bus operated in those early days. The first bus driver was Mrs. Darwin. At this time St. Mary Magdalen was in Maitland so the children were from Fern Park, Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Oviedo, Eatonville, and parts of Longwood. Uniforms in 1961 were a royal blue dress with white collar and cuffs for girls and for boys gray pants and a white no-iron shirt. Among the courses pursued was President Kennedy's physical fitness program which has been adapted for use today.

Grade 5 was added in 1962 and grade 6 in 1963. These two classes were taught in the Church. During these years, grades 5 and 6 attended all funerals that took place during the week. On Friday afternoons the maintenance men removed the children's desks and put them back in the church on Monday mornings.

By 1964, in order to have grades 7 and 8, it was necessary to rent a house on Roy Avenue just off Maitland Avenue: grade 8 used a bedroom, grade 7, the living room and grade 6, the garage.

A school choir was organized in 1964. It was directed by Theresa Wicklin, a fourth grader with her teacher as the accompanist. Mrs. Nancy Hartman formed a Girls Glee Club a few years later. On June 5, 1965, the School graduated these nine students: Deborah Axton, Denise Bunch, Virginia Cassady, Jerry Jeeb, Philip Ley, Veronica Ann Malatesta, Richard Meyer, Paul Mioducki and Robert

St. Lawrence. Their teacher was Mrs. Ida Cook.

In January 1966, a new building with nine classrooms and a school office was completed and dedicated by Archbishop Joseph Hurley of St. Augustine. A modern feature of the new building was the P.A. system so that the principal could contact all the classrooms. There was no air conditioning by the early Seventies, a few air conditioners arrived. The entire school did not have a full AC system until the mid 1980's. Enrollment quickly increased with the opening of the new building.

As the result of an intensive nationwide search by Father Reason, five Sisters of Notre Dame arrived from Chardon, Ohio on August 9, 1965, to take charge of School with Sister Mary Charlita as principal. That first staff included Sister Mary Kenan, Sister May John Michael, Sister May Daniel and Sister Mary Veronica. With more students came more activities and contests. From the very beginning there has been a strong emphasis on Faith development, and academic excellence. The first Science Fair was in 1966 with entries by seventh and eighth graders.

As soon as there were enough players basketball, swim and track teams were formed and competition with other Catholic schools began. Mr. Charles Cattaneo wrote vividly of the hardships encountered those first years. The church parking lot was used for a basketball court by the voluntary coaches for the Varsity and Jr. Varsity teams. Practices took place at night and each night, using extension cords, temporary light towers were installed in post holes, taken down, and put away until the next practice. Girl cheerleading squads also began in the spring of 1966. The girls practiced their cheers at noon and recess. Dorothea Wicklin wrote the schools fight song that the cheerleaders and student body used. It was on an afternoon bus trip that a cheerleader noticed a Ford Mustang and called out "There goes our mascot, a 'Mustang.'" Our mascot in the beginning was a car, not a horse!

In 1967, a convent was built for the Sisters and the Church was doubled in size to include the social hall. The social hall was a help to the school. Now students could have plays and other programs. There was no lunch room in those early days and students ate at tables outside. Mr.

Jim Cassady, a member of the first grade in 1964, told us that milk from T.G.Lee sold for 5 cents and when hot dogs were introduced in 1968 the price was 25 cents. On April 4, 1969 Martha Weeg, an 8th grader, won the Florida State spelling competition.

Musicians from Willie Thomas' Bandwagon Music Center taught St. Mary Magdalen boys and girls to play different band instruments and by 1968, a school marching band was part of the Sanford and Winter Park Christmas parades. Every child in grades 3-8 learned to play a flutophone.

The school population continued to increase and it became necessary to add to the first building of 1961, so in September, 1969 three more classrooms, a school library, a science laboratory, a clinic, and a teachers' lounge were finished.



This addition enabled the school to have two classes for each grade, one through eight. Mrs. Rosemary Peterman, Librarian from 1965 to 1970 and her assistant Claire Faulkingham were happy to have a large library after working out of a tiny room in the social hall. In 1971 courtesy of St. Mary Magdalen School, Jean Doyle was enrolled in evening Library Science classes at Florida Technological University and served as the school librarian for six years. Sister Celine Marie, SNJM, whose love for children and enthusiasm for reading, endeared here to students and faculty, serves as the media specialist from 1977 until her death in 1990.

The 1970's saw changes and additions, some of which have been revised and still exist. Brownie Troop 250 was organized in 1970 by Nancy Larkin and the Brownies

specialized in camping skills. From 1973 to 1979 Monica Byrne and Kate Vinci led the Girl Scouts. Scouting for boys was also part of the school and parish programs and these troops were led by the fathers of students and other men of the parish. Sister Theresa Betz, SND was principal of the school 1970-1973 and she was followed by Sister Robert Taylor for one year, 1973-1974. Sister Mary Campion, SND was principal 1974-1977.

Father David Page established a parish Board of Education in 1970 and a School Board in 1971. Mr. George Perreault was the first president of St. Mary Magdalen School Board. The Home and School Association began about this time, with the first officers being Mr. A. D. O'Brien, June Pullara, and Peter Reser. Under Vi Reser, a volunteer program of mothers to assist faculty in the lunch room, the library, school office, classrooms, and on the playground was started in 1971.

The Florida Catholic Conference first evaluated our school in October, 1972. After a three day evaluation the evaluators recommended that St. Mary Magdalen School be accredited. The four member team commended the faculty for their knowledgeable background and enthusiastic presentation of spiritual values. Bothe students and faculty were complimented for their enthusiasm and creativity in the fine arts.

A new church was built in 1975, enabling the students to participate more frequently in liturgies as lectors, servers, cantors, instrumentalists, dancers, and dramatists. The boys and girls composed intercessory prayers, meditations for the Stations of the Cross, prayer services, and Gospel skits. The school band played appropriate music for school liturgies. All of these liturgical actions have been continued by our students, who are assisted by their teachers and parish liturgists. Mrs. Kathleen James directed the school band and instructed students in music theory and singing for nineteen years.

Gerard Wicklin Jr., an alumnus, wrote "There may not be a greater contribution a school can make than to educate its students in the active body of the church, as fully participating mature members. For this reason alone, St. Mary Magdalen can be proud of its school members."

Enrichment classes for grades 6,7,8 were held on Friday afternoons. Students could select from among twenty courses which were taught by adults in homes or on school premises. One of the favorite courses was Etiquette. In that course the young adults were how to conduct themselves at a formal dinner. The class terminated with teachers and students attending a dinner theater. Student newspapers from the 1970's show that every month each class had its king and queen of courtesy. Respect is still emphasized in the school.

An important ceremony every morning was the flag raising with Joe Pullara, Jr. as the first drum major. Students sang a patriotic song and recited a prayer. Beginning in 1975, the Knights of Columbus have given achievement awards to a graduating boy and girl. Larry Scotchie and Cheryl McKechnie were the first alumni to receive the K of C award. On February 20, 1976 the school celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States with fourteen different activities. Grad 7 put on the musical "1776".

When Sister George Francis Riseling, arrived as principal, one of the first concerns was to enliven the school spirit and pride in our school, so in 1979, on each day of Catholic School Week, students, faculty, and parents participated in special activities. This week, termed "Spirit Week", was chaired by Patricia Markusic for four years.

Phyllis Mann, the school secretary for many years, recalls the appreciation luncheon that a committee of mothers from the Home and School Association gave the principals, teachers, and staff at the conclusion of each Spirit Week.

St. Mary Magdalen teachers remember their performances during Spirit Week. Some plays in which teachers acted were Alice in Wonderland, Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, Double Dare, The Simpsons and most memorable, the Wizard of Oz starring Pat MacMillian as Dorothy, Sister George Francis as the Wizard, Bea Koch, DeDe Large, and Edda Casaccio as the witches, and Kathy James as the Scarecrow. The parish liturgists, Bill Brislin and Jerry Galipeau, played the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion.

In 1982-83 a computer program began with Monica Byrne as the instructor and with three computers which were

wheeled into seventh and eighth grade classrooms. This program is still in place in a larger technology classroom, available to all students K-8 and with many computers equipped with DC-ROM, Encarta Encyclopedia, and Internet features.

A second evaluation by the Florida Catholic Conference took place in February, 1983. In the final report on February 23, 1983, the visiting committee stated that they were impressed with "the living sense of Catholicity visible throughout the school as well as the atmosphere of warmth, loving concern, and respect."

In the summer of 1983, two portable classrooms were purchased. One portable was to be used for two kindergarten classes with Mrs. Maureen Parks and Mrs. Cindy Scevola as the teachers of our youngest school members. The other portable was for school offices, as the previous office space was converted for computer instruction for all the student body. The office and kindergarten portables were placed between the social hall and the 300 building.

Everyone was looking forward to the new school year, 1983-84 when Father Henry and Sister George Francis were informed that the school buildings contained asbestos which had to be removed before the school year could begin. What an ordeal! All furniture, books, paper, plants, etc. had to be removed. Temporary classes were set up in the social hall, the new kindergarten portable and the eastern part of the 300 building. Now the company was ready to take over the asbestos removal. Betsy Carpenter, the assistant principal at the time, remembered that in spite of the inconvenience, camaraderie and community prevailed throughout the whole experience.

Since 1984, St. Mary Magdalen has had students each year honored by Walt Disney World for their curiosity, confidence, courage, and constancy. Amy Sheber was our first recipient of the "Doer and Dreamer Award". The U.S. Department of Education, in 1985-86 and 1987-88, recognized our school with Certificates of Merit.

Father Paul Henry, the parishioners, parents, and school personnel identified needs for further expansion so by 1986 construction was underway for new buildings. The construction was challenging for faculty, parents,

students, and administration. Because of the builder's heavy equipment, the children could not use the playground. At lunch and recess, time students played on the lawn outside of classrooms or in parts of the parking lot where there was no equipment. Parking, arrival, and dismissal took on interesting aspects. Many days, teachers did not know where students would be dismissed. Frequently, Sister George Francis, the principal, would be in the middle of Maitland Avenue or Spring Lake Avenue directing traffic. One teacher remarked that the parking lot sometimes resembled the Grand Canyon. All were very happy when construction was completed.

Since we now had new parish offices and meeting rooms, the former parish offices were remodeled to create the existing school office and three rooms for the kindergarten. In 1988 Mrs. Gail Murray joined the K-Team. We now have three kindergarten classes.

On the invitation of Barbara Hawkins, an 8th grader, Vice-President George Bush visited the school in November 1987. A retinue of security officers carefully examined the social hall and its surroundings, prior to Mr. Bush's address to our 7th and 8th graders. Following his brief talk, the young adults asked questions and stated their concerns and interests for our country. Vice President Bush answered questions and commented on their concerns.

In 1990, we had our third evaluation by the Florida Catholic Conference and again were accredited. The accreditation committee thanked Father Henry and the other parish priests for their support and involvement, noted Sister George Francis as an N.C.E.A. distinguished principal, and applauded the faculty and staff for their Christian attitudes and pride in their school.

In 1991, Sister Georg Francis Riseling SNJM, was asked to assume a position in the Orlando Diocesan School Office. Since 1977, she had led our school and had endeared herself to many teachers, parents, and students. In the school year 1991-1992 Mrs. Betsy Carpenter, who had been the assistant principal for many years, was the acting principal while a search committee studied resumes and interviewed applicants for a principal. After a year of intensive search Ms Mary McKiernan of New York was

selected and appointed by Father Henry to lead our school into the 21st century.

In June 1992, Rev. Stephen Baumann, a long time teacher at St. Mary Magdalen School and a Boy Scout leader was ordained a priest for the Orlando Diocese. Father Baumann attributes a big factor in his priestly vocation to his students, co-workers, and the people of St. Mary Magdalen Parish in calling him forth to the service of the Church.

Recent years have seen changes to improve our school facilities and to assist teacher and students. Among these are: a covered walkway from the classroom buildings to the social hall where the students eat lunch everyday and a larger computer lab for the entire student body. Teachers' assistants help in instruction and routine clerical work in Kindergarten and in grades 1,2,3, and 4. In addition to Enrichment classes for gifted students, there is a secondary Enrichment class to help students improve their academic performance. The library collection of more than 8,000 books, videos, and filmstrips has been entered into the



database of our Compaq computer. Using the MOLLI program, teachers and students may search for materials by any word.

Spanish language instruction by volunteer mother has been introduced into the primary grades. A School Board, which had been dormant for a few years, was revised in 1994 and spent time writing their constitution, setting their goals and duties. In 1995, Linda Dracopoulos, leader of the Junior Scout Troop and the girls of the troop visited the National Girl Scout Headquarters in Savannah, Georgia. The Cadet Girl Scout Troop and their leader,

Cynthia Dowd, anticipate a trip in 1997 to the World Headquarters in Mexico City. The Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, as well as Brownies and Daisies, keep involved in many activities. One special activity is to work for the Catholic Religion Recognition award for Boy and Girl Scouts and Eagle Scout award for Boy Scouts.

In 1995-96, it was our good fortune to be one of four schools in Seminole County to have a police officer on the school grounds for an entire day each week of the school year. Officer Mark Anderson taught the DARE program to our 5th grade classes and was available for speaking to classes and to faculty on various topics. As an undercover officer on the vice squad for controlled substances his specialty was drugs and their abuse.

Continued participation in sports have brought many championships for our Varsity, JV and JVV teams in soccer, basketball, volleyball, and track. Our hard-working, excellent cheerleaders have placed first in regional competitions. Too numerous to mention by name are the volunteer coaches over the thirty-five years who have given their afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays to our athletes in K-8. St. Mary Magdalen's administration and faculty are grateful to these men and women who are so necessary to our athletic programs.

Throughout the past thirty-five years, devoted parents and parishioners have contributed their time, talent and treasure to better St. Mary Magdalen School. In 1984 at the time of the parish's Silver Jubilee, Father David Page said, "I don't believe there is a parish anywhere in the country with so many outstanding Catholic families." Some of the accomplishments of the many fund raisers of the Home and School Association are air conditioning, carpeting, AV materials, library books, vertical blinds, athletic and playground equipment, computers, TV's and VCR's in classrooms, a renovated teacher's lounge, partial payment on buses for field trips as well as parties, treats, and prizes for students. The words of Father Paul Henry, used to describe the parish, also ring true of our student body and faculty. "It is the spirit of working together for the Lord with joy and faith which characterizes our parish. The priests, sisters, parish and school staff work well together to accomplish the Lord's mission."

Our St. Mary Magdalen students have been noted for their concern for the poor and disadvantaged. It was Sister George Francis who encouraged them to give a toy each Christmas to the Mexican migrant children in Okeechobee, a tradition which continues today. The Junior-high classes prepared 70 Christmas boxes for children in Bosnia during Advent, 1995. Our pupils have responded generously to parish and diocesan appeals for the migrants in Apopka, for needs in our Sister Diocese in the Dominican Republic, and for the homes for unwed mothers. The student body under the leadership of Betsy Graves in 1996 adopted eight-year old Michael Fernandez Sapilan of the Philippines and contributed to his support. Nails for the Habitat houses built by parishioners have been supplied by our primary students. Our Service Club, Brownies, Cubs, and Scouts have served and caroled in hospitals and nursing homes. Students concerned with the environment have beautified the school grounds by planting trees and flowers and shrubs. Under the guidance of Mrs. Catherine Paoloni, the students made a butterfly garden during Spirit Week 1996.

Former and present teachers have contributed many positive memories of their years at St. Mary Magdalen School remembering especially the cooperation and support of one another, the administration, the clergy, and parents. DeDe Large, a present teacher, sums it up best when she says, "We are a group bound together in love and memory and community."

Over thirty-five years, St. Mary Magdalen School has grown and progressed. As the Second Millennium approaches, we shall see our church of 1961 converted into a media center, technology enrichment room, and a school cafeteria. The 1969 school addition will house a 4th grade classroom, the art room, and the guidance department. The second floor of the 200 building will have a science lab.

The words of an alumnus, Mr. Jim Cassidy provide a fitting conclusion to this history. He said "During the formative school years, talented and dedicated teachers at St. Mary Magdalen have endeavored to instill long-lasting characteristics: Love of God and a love for God, pride in oneself, willingness to work hard and good study habits.



THE FUTURE

In 2009 our parish celebrates its Golden Anniversary. It is for each parishioner to prepare for this historic event by dedicating themselves to personal prayer, liturgical worship and a commitment to build a closer relationship with the community at large. This is the prayer of our Pastor. It is also a time to live as brothers and sisters in Christ in our personal relationships as well as through dedicated participation in our ministries.

Today, there are more than 140 parish ministries functioning to reach every facet of private, personal, family and community life. Our parish is dedicated in purpose with the love of God, to come together in prayer to provide for the spiritual growth of each member, to make ourselves neighbors in ministering to the needs of others, to renew ourselves in faith.

This as our Parish Mission statement proclaims, will be accomplished through liturgy, education, service, justice and by our personal example. Today, as we look about us to see the distance we have traveled we must express our gratitude to early parishioners who headed the call of St. Mary Magdalen and provided the foundation on which our beloved pastors, Fathers Reason, Page, Caverly, Henry and Mitchell built not only buildings of mortar and brick but gave Christian life to an eager community through their dedication, service and love. We are today what we are because of them and the devotion of the parishioners who followed and those with whom we worship today. For all of this we express our gratitude to God as we ask for strength and guidance to serve His divine will each day we are granted existence on this earth.

Submitted by Ed Danowitz

Our Stories

The Saints at St. Mary Magdalen

Years ago, frustrated with life because it wasn't happening the way I wanted it to, I found answers in an unexpected stop into a Good Friday ceremony at St. Mary Magdalen.

Although it had been years since I'd attended Lenten services, I was tempted to go to church on Good Friday. Each time the idea surfaced, however, I dismissed it. After all, we planned to take the kids out for pizza and I wasn't going to be the one to disrupt our agenda.

But that night, as we motored along Maitland Avenue toward Amici's Pizzeria, I noticed the packed parking lot at St. Mary Magdalen, and it beckoned me.

It was late. The kids were hungry. The service was well underway. But I insisted we stop.

We found space on the grass and parked the car. I slung the baby onto my hip while Joe grabbed Jenna and Lynn. Amid mild protests, we rushed across the darkened parking lot and slipped into the back door of the church.

A few empty seats remained, and we slid into them, blanketed by the reverence of the congregation. The church lights were dimmed, and radiance surrounded the life-sized crucifix on the altar, now draped in red cloth. I bowed my head in penitential prayer.

I remember nothing more than gliding into the worship of the assembly, but the song we sang moments later still resonates today: *Abba, Father, I put my life in your hands.*

Sitting in the back of that church, repeating that refrain, I was able to release my fears, doubts, anger, resentments and judgments. I realized, perhaps for the first time, that it wasn't my life, but His life within me, that mattered.

I'll never forget that day.

Maybe you were in that congregation. You showed me that we're not alone in the journey. Perhaps you didn't know what it meant to me, to be able to join you in worship, but it was life-changing. Over the years, St. Mary Magdalen became our second home.

My prayer is that we will continue to give this gift to others. Perhaps we, too, will participate in a service that lifts another soul from the tarmac into the heavenly realms. Only God knows. **Submitted by Debra Tomaselli**

I never dreamed at the age of 17, getting ready to start my senior year of high school, that moving from New Jersey to Florida with my family would make such a positive change in my life. That was 1972, when at the advice of



my father's doctor we moved to the warmer climate of Central Florida to help with his ailing health. Not only did I find my husband here, but I found the welcoming parish of St. Mary Magdalen as well.

This parish quickly became an important part of our family and the center of much of our lives. My mother joined the adult choir and remained a member until she passed away in 2000. My younger brother played the drums and sang with a group called Life Unlimited along with many other young people in our parish. It seemed only natural that when I planned my marriage on June 8, 1974 that St. Mary Magdalen would be the perfect place for us to exchange our vows and start our life together.



We have remained here as members ever since and have been blessed with two daughters, Heather and Ashley. They grew in their faith by attending Religious Education classes as well as receiving all of their sacraments at St. Mary Magdalen. So, here we are almost 35 years later, and this parish continues to be a part of my family.

One Sunday, Deacon Marshall Gibbs talked about “mountaintop experiences” in our lives. This parish has seen me through a lot of them, including the death of my mother. Her funeral was a beautiful tribute to her commitment to the church and to the choir where she sang for so many years. During the funeral the adult choir sang many of her favorite songs and my brother played the tympanis. It was a moving experience and my family was very grateful to have such a show of love and support from our parish during such a difficult time.

We look forward to spending many more years as active members of this parish and to participating in the many events that go on here. We thank God every day for the many blessings we have, and for finding such a welcoming home at St. Mary Magdalen. *Submitted by Maureen Wabnitz*

Miracle of Prayer

I finally got my very first pair of expensive, prescription sunglasses. I was so happy that I could see the names on the street signs without the glare of the sun blocking it. I wore them faithfully, everyday. They were comfortable and stylish.

A month later, I lost them. I looked everywhere, especially inside the car, under and on the sides of the seats, front and back. I looked in my purse, home and office, then looked three more times in each location. Every time I got in the car for a month, I would look again and again. I finally came to the conclusion that they must have fallen from my purse while out and about and were gone forever. I was upset that I could not find them as they helped me so much during my drive to and from work on sunny days. I now had to rely on my regular glasses which had no sun protection and generic non-prescription sunglasses.

One day a good friend, Sue Lewis asked me how I was enjoying my new sunglasses. I sadly told her how much I liked them, but that I had lost them. She said that she would pray to St. Anthony for me for their return. I said, “It’s too late,” it has been two months since I lost them.

The next day, my family and I were leaving our home to attend a Christmas Party. My son, Winston, was driving my car. It was five o’clock in the afternoon and the sun was still very bright that day. He said, “Oh! I forgot my sunglasses.”

I had a few old generic sunglasses in the glove compartment, so I handed him a pair. He said, “They won’t fit,” so I handed him the other pair. Again, he said, “They won’t fit,” as he handed them back to me. At that moment I felt compelled to tell him of my story of how I had lost my prescription sunglasses and that Sue Lewis was going to pray to St. Anthony for their return.

Just then, Winston still needing sunglasses, reached down next to himself and asked, “How about this pair?” As he handed me the glasses, I asked, “What are you doing with my sunglasses and where did you get them?” I was kind of upset with him, thinking he had them all along, but he said, “Nothing, I didn’t have them. They were right here on the side of the driver’s seat. How come you never found them?” I was bewildered and elated. I hardly believed it.

The next day, I called Sue Lewis to thank her for praying to St. Anthony for me. I believe in God and the power of prayer to effect miracles, big or small in our lives. We all must believe God. *Submitted by Helen Tsai*

In June, 1971 Sharon and I and four of our six children attended our first Mass at St. Mary Magdalen. We were greeted by two ushers who said “Welcome to St. Mary Magdalen, can we help you find a seat?” Wow! We are not even dues-paying members yet and we are welcomed this warm way! Fr. David Page was the pastor at that time.

When we left the church we said to each other, “We are HOME!!”

We jumped into ministry right away and have been in some ministry or other all these 37 years. The blessings we

have received by being active members of this parish are numerous. We are very grateful to be a part of this vibrant parish, which is an integral part of our lives.

We have been blessed with our priests, deacons, religious, teachers and staff over the years. We have made loyal friends who were there for us during some tough times in the early years.



We belong to an “AWESOME” parish to say the least!!!

Our children have received reconciliation, communion and confirmation at this parish and three of our children were married here along with two who were baptized here. All attended St. Mary Magdalen. Sharon was on the Liturgy Commission for 15 years, on the Parish Council, involved with Bereavement Ministry, a minister to the sick and Minister of Holy Communion. Both of us have been involved with the choir and Christ Renews Our Community. *Submitted by Frank Corso Sr.*

As a member of St. Mary Magdalen, I have had the opportunity of working in several ministries. One of my favorite ones was preparing children for First Eucharist and Reconciliation. It is such a joy to take these youngsters, who know very little of the faith, and bring them fully ready to receive the sacraments. They have also taught me much in all my years of ministry. It is so lovely to meet many of these children as they grow up and continue in their journey.

It is also wonderful to work as a minister to the sick in private homes, the hospital and nursing facilities. I

remember one year in particular, 2005, when my teenagers, Ian and MaryBeth, put together a summer program to entertain the elderly at the Savannah Court nursing home. The joy on the faces of the residents is something we will always cherish.



I must mention one person in particular, Mr. Jim Gillespie, an admirable, intelligent, wise man. I always look forward to my visits with him. He is truly an inspiration to me. The first time I ever gave him ashes on Ash Wednesday, I put them on so thick, that they stayed on for days...

Truly these ministries have blessed me so much as the people I have served. *Submitted by Charo McGuigan*

In 2003, I made a significant life changing decision. I decided to return to the Catholic Church after being absent for 33 years. I was a product of the rebellious baby boom generation. When I was twenty one years old I was seduced by the promises of an Eastern Religion's neatly packaged social principles. In 2003, I was celebrating Christmas at my sister's home. Although I felt the need to return to my Catholic roots, K knew tht I would have to explain to my wife and two daughters who are members of the Eastern Religion. A few days after Christmas I was jogging in the early morning darkness and I called out to the Lord for guidance. At the very moment I called out aloud, “Lord please guide me” a Holy Catholic Medal of St. Christopher twinkled up from the darkness of the pavement. At that moment I knew all obstacles would be removed because the Holy Spirit was guiding my soul back to Jesus.

My story is a long journey however, the abbreviated

version is that my spiritual journey truly began when I stopped listening to my mind and began to listen to my heart. There was no doubt that I needed to return to the Catholic Church. I went to Catholics Coming Home led by Sister Miriam. In this program, a new topic was presented by a speaker on a weekly rotation. This is where I first met Father Ed Thompson. He is now not only my priest but has become my personal friend. When he was speaking about his own spiritual journey he showed such honesty that he inspired those in attendance and created an atmosphere of trust. Father Charlie provided me with the guidance I needed in order to return to the church in full communion. His sensitivity, support, and compassion made my transition almost seamless. After I completed all the requirements to be in full communion in the Church, I was able to wipe away the tears of separation and finally sit at the table with my Lord. I will always remember St. Mary Magdalen as the Holy Church which brought me back to the promise of my Baptism. Alleluia. *Submitted by Robert Speirs*

In 1972, my husband Norm, was ordained one of the first Catholic Deacons from the Diocese of Chicago, Ill. In 1978, Norm and I decided to begin a new life, working for the Catholic Church. We contacted Bishop Grady, who had been very instrumental starting the Diaconate in Chicago and was now the Bishop of Orlando, Florida,



to see if there was any possibility of employment in the Church here. Bishop Grady, immediately put us in touch with Fr. Caverly, then Pastor of St. Mary Magdalen.

Fr. Caverly discussed the possibility with the Parish council and after an interview with members of the parish, Norm



was hired as Director of Adult Education. Norm was the director from 1978-1979. Thus began our life here. Upon our arrival everyone went out of their way to welcome us and involve us in the parish life. Many invited us to their homes to help us get to know the parish. The parish has



always poured out love and prayers for us through the many changes in life situations. I cannot express completely the love and prayers Norm and I felt in his last illness, because words would be very inadequate.

Norm was employed by the Diocese of Orlando for nine years. He preached, had scripture classes, did annulments, baptisms etc. Norm and I began the Seder Meal, which continues to this day. We also began the Habitat Dinner show back around 1995. I have been active as a lector, Minister of Holy Communion, CCW, St. Mary Magdalen bowling team and am now Steward for the Ministry to the Sick and Bereavement.

As I continue to work and live here at St. Mary Magdalen, I strive to imitate the Spirit and love the community of

St. Mary Magdalen has taught me. Congratulations on 50 years of live and service to the Community. Peace.

Submitted by Rosemary Kazyk

Our history at St. Mary Magdalen began in August 1976 when we were moving to Maitland from Pittsburgh. Ray was scheduled to become the civilian representative at the Navy Nuclear Power School at NTC. We stopped here fro Sunday evening Mass before we even closed or moved into our home. That Sunday evening



St. Mary Magdalen was looking for new cantors, and since Judy had been a cantor in Pittsburgh, she signed up immediately. The adult choir was full at the time, so it was several months before she became a member of the choir.

Ray had been a reader (then called lector) in Pittsburgh, and relatively soon became a reader at St. Mary Magdalen.



At that time the lector stayed in the sanctuary, and at one Mass Fr. Caverly told Ray he needed a Eucharistic minister, to which Ray responded he was not one. Fr. Caverly appointed him on the spot. Later he got the formal training, and has been a minister of Holy Communion ever since.

One memorable liturgical faux pas occurred when Judy was cantoring. At the beginning of Mass she announced “Welcome to St. Thomas ahh oops I mean St. Mary



Magdalen.” Fr. Caverly was celebrant. After processing in, he said “Welcome to St. Mary Magdalen.” Then looking at Judy he said, “By the way Judy, if we are going to change the name of the parish it will be to St. Patrick, not St. Thomas.”

In 1978, Ray was scheduled to be transferred back to Pittsburgh. At least one of the reasons we chose to try to remain here is that we did not want to leave St. Mary Magdalen. Providentially everything worked on the job front, and we were able to remain here. Over the years, our two youngest children were confirmed here, three of them were married here and 8 of our 12 grandchildren were baptized here.

Either as a couple or separately, we have been involved in many activities, including; adult choir, cantor, reader, minister of Communion, CCD teacher, RCIA sponsor and Catechist, collection counter, Habitat for Humanity, Fall Festival, Bible Blitz technician, wedding coordinator, sacristan, CCW, bible studies, bowling leagues, bridge group, trips with Fr. Ed, cruises with Deacon Henry. We sped so much time at St. Mary Magdalen, that when we leave the house, the car automatically heads for the St. Mary Magdalen. We have to fight it if we are going somewhere else. *Submitted by Judy and Ray Hosler*

My most memorable moments at St. Mary Magdalen include my experience in the RCIA. I joined the RCIA in 1998, a few months after my daughter was born.

I was part of an awesome group, they kept me on my feet. There were mornings when I thought I couldn't make it at 10 am, I was a new mom of a very premature baby and on some Sundays, the only way I made it to Mass was through my strong faith and my willingness to become a better person. I don't know how I made it all the way to the Easter Vigil, but when I did, the only people I could thank was my family, my RCIA group and of course Sr. Miriam.

Here I am 10 years later, my premature baby is 10 and the tallest in her class. I had moved away for a few years and when I moved back last year, I couldn't wait to come home to my parish and return to all the wonderful memories. Fr. Charlie baptized both my daughters when they were 6 months old, and now they are new students at St. Mary Magdalen School. Time flies, and Fr. Charlie doesn't age a bit! *Submitted by Elyse Carey*

We moved to Longwood in 1983 and knowing that our youngest daughter would be in Kindergarten, we joined St. Mary Magdalen Parish. Life brought us some "Ups and Downs" but "Coming Home and At Peace" was our St. Mary Magdalen parish and it will always be a special part of our Family!

One of our happiest memories is the double wedding of our oldest daughters, Mary and Paula, with Fr. Charlie as the Celebrant. This was his first and only double wedding and it was truly amazing when he sang the Wedding Prayer from "Fiddler on the Roof" on June 21, 2003.

Deacon Norm baptized our grandchildren Elaina Michele Steadman on February 22, 2004. Fr. Charlie baptized Keith Cavanaugh on May 21, 2006. Our newest Kate Vivian Knapp will be baptized on April 6, 2008. *Submitted by Paul and Sylvia Cavanaugh*

I have been at St. Mary Magdalen since July 1993. I had been told about this parish and how great it was when I was attending St. Francis Parish in Apopka. I am always glad and happy to volunteer. I created my own parish



ministry making chain rosaries, angels, nite-lites, and angel birthstone ornaments. I donate them to the church store as a way to help give money to the church from me. Every weekend I check the store out and see what is missing and then I jot down what sold and make the replacements for the next weekend. I also help in the church office and make sure the ministry cart is put out before the Saturday evening Masses.

Submitted by Verne Nestved



When we arrived in Altamonte Springs in 1968 we were fortunate in being able to enroll our school age children, Mary and Steve in Bishop Moore and Jean, Julie, Theresa and Tony in St. Mary Magdalen. Our youngest child at that time, Linda, was only three and we were blessed three years later with Mike both of whom graduated from St. Mary Magdalen School and Bishop Moore. We have had seven grandchildren attend school here as well as three great grandchildren in the Child Center.

Our lives revolve around our Church, schools and the children's activities such as swimming, soccer, baseball,



football, science projects, field trips as chaperones, concession stand work for the games, fundraisers and so on. The boys were



faithful altar servers for several years.

In 1981 we presented a letter to the parish council stating that we felt the parish should offer day care for the children and the frail adults of our parish. We offered suggestions as to how this could be accomplished as there were no guidelines to refer to at that time.

After several years of attending the parish council meetings, and with the encouragement of Father Luke Lindon, Father McGuire and Father Paul Henry, our dear friend Sister Joyce Rohlik who was the Minister to the Sick and Homebound, joined with us to convince the parish the need of an Adult and Child Center. After months of research, traveling throughout the state investigating other types of adult care and doing surveys, and showing in church a video from NBC about Aging in America we finally received permission for the project. The results being the Adult and Child Centers, the first of its kind in the states.

We truly were led by the Holy Spirit to take on such a venture as we had no experience in such an undertaking but with His guidance the dream became a reality for our Parish. *Submitted by Dr. and Mrs. W.J. Schefstad*



The Heffernan Family started coming to St. Mary Magdalen in 1963. Peter started ushering at noon Mass and soon got involved with the early festival. Using a bullhorn borrowed from the Maitland police department, he would roam the grounds making an assortment of announcements about bingo, the social hall dinners etc. He

and former chairman Buddy Anderson went on Channel 9's Dialing for Dollars with Russ Wheeler to promote and that was the first year the festival had record crowds.

Submitted by Peter Heffernan

This is a love story between a family and St. Mary Magdalen Church. It started in 1978 when two individuals became members of the parish. He was a member who enjoyed playing church league softball. She came when her family relocated from New York. Many parishioners knew both of them and yet the man and the woman did not meet for quite sometime. Finally in the fall of 1985 they met through the Young Married and Singles (YMS) ministry. It was not love at first sight. May folks that this would be a match made in heaven and eventually it was.



The story goes that they married on a weekend in October, went on a honeymoon and came back to work at CommunityFest the next weekend. Even though they lived across town they drove up I-4 to Mass each week. In 1992 they welcomed identical twins to their family, Catherine and Julia. The girls were baptized full submersion at the 5 pm Mass and the congregation rejoiced in celebrating the sacrament with the family.

Our lives have been centered on giving back and when the girls were only 7 months old we became active on the church Habitat for Humanity core committee. We

wondered how we would ever balance 2 infants and still do a good job on this committee. Well we did and have proudly helped build houses ever since. The girls have helped each year since they were 2 years old. The experience had a profound impact on their lives. It has demonstrated to them how truly blessed their lives are. Volunteering is a family affair and allows us to spend time together while enriching the life of someone else.

As a family we have volunteered on the grotto design and installation team, the construction team for the new life center and gym, the church renovation committee, as well as Eucharistic ministers. Other passions of service to the church include various activities and FOCCUS, helping young couples prepare for marriage. We find helping them prepare for the sacrament only helps remind us about the commitment of marriage and all that it entails.

Our family has had its ups and downs like any family does. The community of St. Mary Magdalen has always been there to provide support either through prayer or services, as we struggled through times of unemployment, family illnesses and death. The people we have met and the experiences we have shared have only enriched our lives and have given us the opportunity to use talents that God has given us. As we travel around the country and attend Mass in many communities there just isn't another St. Mary Magdalen. We are truly grateful to be a part of a dynamic faith-based parish and pray that the next 50 years will allow the church to touch others as it has touched our family. *Submitted by Liz and John Felter*

MINISTRIES

SMM Hilltopper Ministry – Nine Years Old and Going Strong

We Hilltoppers are a ministry serving men and women



55 and beyond, formed to provide older parishioners with opportunities for spiritual and social enrichment.

We were formed in 1999 to fill a void identified by the Christian Action Commission, who discovered that many older parishioners believed our parish didn't sponsor activities appropriate to their age group. So a planning Core Committee of about 12 senior parishioners was inspired by Father Charlie to address this issue. After much planning, we had a glorious launch that July.

We had spirited discussions over naming our ministry. *Golden Oldies*, *Over the Hill Gang*, etc, all seemed trite, so we chose *Hilltoppers*. Our slogan "Been There, Done That and Eager to Share our Life Experiences" kept us focused on service.

We are proud of our efforts over the past nine years, sponsoring a variety of social, cultural, spiritual and service activities. We have traveled to many interesting locations (both religious and secular) throughout Florida, enjoyed dinner and theater evenings on the town and on the water, and held Bunko nights regularly. Quarterly we sponsor popular AARP 55-Alive Mature Driving Programs, and lead and coordinate the parish Dial-a-Smile program which ensures a friendly call to home-bound parishioners. We often refer seniors to other appropriate ministries if they

have special needs, and encourage all Hilltoppers to get involved in social issues of the day.

Since everyone 55 and over is considered a Hilltopper, we have over 1600 Hilltoppers in our parish. To keep everyone informed, periodically we publish a newsletter and always advertise our events in the Sunday Bulletins.

It is hard to believe but 9 years later, Paul and Muriel

Dacey are still chairing our ministry, and many charter members are still serving on the core committee. With about twelve faithful volunteers, and a minimum of meetings, we schedule, advertise, take reservations and guide a wide variety of activities, often rotating responsibilities to avoid burn out.

RCIA

(Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) ministry for the Spanish speaking community of St. Mary Magdalen was developed in 2006 with a team of six members: Fior Contreras, Juan Cruz, Soledad de la Torre, Miguel Garcia, Leandro Pichardo and Gloria M Garcia, Coordinator. The efforts and enthusiasm of our team along with the resources and materials helped us in the process of this project. We promoted the program in the parish and the Inquiry sessions started during the summer with two catechumens and four candidates.

Our catechumens, after the Rite of Acceptance, followed through a wonderful journey of faith through catechesis and Breaking Open the Word to become the Elect on February 25, 2007. The three Scrutinies were celebrated, and after a glorious Holy Saturday morning which started by our grotto with Morning Prayer and retreat, I am extremely proud and happy to have accompanied – along with our team and the parish community – our two Elect, Daniel and Ernesto, to receive their Sacraments of Initiation in the Easter Vigil Mass.

One of the most beautiful results was that, even though the whole preparation process was conducted in Spanish, our two Elect were joined with the four Elect from the Anglo

group in the final phase before receiving the Sacraments in the bilingual Morning Prayer, retreat, and Easter Vigil Mass. The first part of the Mass (Liturgy of the Word) which was celebrated totally in Spanish in our Parish Life Center, and then we joined everybody else at the church for the rites of initiation and the Eucharistic celebration which was bilingual. I will never forget when Fr. Charlie asked us to recite our Creed and the Holy Father in our own languages, and then baptized our Elect in Spanish. We were all ONE in Christ!



On May 20, 2007, we experienced another wonderful day with Wilmaris Gutierrez and Tamara Cortez as they received the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation in the Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full

Communion of the Catholic Church at the Shrine, Mary Queen of the Universe. What a great beginning – what a blessed year!!! *Submitted by Gloria Garcia*

Kids for Jesus Club

What do virtues, holy heroes, food and 5 year olds have in common? At St. Mary Magdalen, they all are part of the new Kids for Jesus Club. The Kids for Jesus Club began in January 2007 by Mary Gulde and Dianne couch, both parishioners of St. Mary Magdalen. After seeing the club in action in other parts of Orlando, the two parishioners thought it was time to bring it home to the St. Mary Magdalen community.

Each month, children ages 3-10, get together for fun games, skits about saints, and of course, lots of snacks and yummy treats. The kids have learned about saints such as St. Joseph, St. Thomas the Apostle, and St. Francis of Assisi, to name a few. Virtues such as loyalty, responsibility, vigilance and generosity come alive as the kids act out skits and fun games led by adult volunteers.

The best part of the Kids for Jesus Club is what happens



after the club. Each child receives a monthly Mission pack, which contains a booklet highlighting the virtue of the month, a holy hero card of the Saint of the Month, and their Mission for that Month. The mission enables the child to live out the virtue in a concrete way at home. Whether it is cleaning their room, helping mom and dad take out the trash, saying I'm sorry when they have done something hurtful, or learning to calm down when the emotions are too high. Kids for Jesus begin practicing virtue at home with their siblings, parents and friends. This is a great way for children to understand what virtue is and more importantly for children to make virtuous behavior a regular part of their lives.

After only one year at St. Mary Magdalen, Kids for Jesus has 30 children, 7 volunteers and 2 coordinators. At the December Club Day in 2007, each child received a Kids for



Jesus t-shirt as a Christmas present. The shirt has the St. Mary Magdalen's parish name and the Kids for Jesus logo on it. The kids are encouraged to wear their t-shirts on the Club Day. The club is truly a great way to motivate children to practice virtue, make good choices and love Christ through their Catholic faith!

Christ Renews Our Community

In 2004, the Adult Religious Director of Annunciation, Sr. Theresa Byrne, invited members of St. Mary Magdalen to attend a Christ Renew His Community Weekend and formation at Annunciation Parish in Altamonte Springs.

After the initial and spiritually moving Weekend experience, Christ Renewals provides a formation process that goes on for a year. During this time, the team bonds into sisters/brothers in Christ, through its study of Scripture and



Catholic Beliefs, its personal sharing of friendship and faith, as well as through times of sharing fun, rituals and food. When the group completes the formation period, they present the next Christ Renewals Weekend for the parish.

In 2004, Sr. Miriam Lavelle and Sharon Corso attended and came back very excited about the process. In 2005, Anne Eichner and Mary Jo Nocero attended and felt the same way. At the same time, Bill O'Brien and Frank Corso attended the men's weekend and follow up group.



All of us who took part in this religious experience found it a phenomenal way to renew a parish. As it affected us so deeply, this Core Team committed ourselves to get it started at St. Mary Magdalen and invited Annunciation to put on our First CROC Weekend Experience at St. Mary Magdalen in August and September of 2005.

Today after a short 4 years, St. Mary Magdalen has had

a total of 170 women and 80 men attend the Weekend and 100 women and 40 men have gone through the year long formation process. The core team can honestly



say that this new spiritual experience has already affected our Parish deeply. Those parishioners who have attended are more deeply committed to growing as disciples of the Lord and many have felt called to move into leadership roles in different ministries in St. Mary Magdalen. It is our belief that St. Mary Magdalen will benefit tremendously in the years ahead as more men and women attend. We all extend our heart

felt appreciation to Sr. Theresa Byrne for introducing us to this experience.

Family Life

Mike (Nocero) and I (Mary Jo Nocero) are not strangers to St. Mary Magdalen. When Mike was drafted into the Navy during the Vietnam War in 1968, we moved to Orlando with our three month old daughter Mary for a stay of two years. Our second daughter Meg was born right here in Central Florida. It was during this time that we first came to know and participate at St. Mary Magdalen. We had sought out a dynamic parish to experience Community and to raise our young family in our Catholic faith. We chose St. Mary Magdalen, then under the pastor Fr. David Page, and have never looked back.

It was here at this time that we had our first significant challenge to an understanding of our Catholic Faith. We attended a Parish Retreat given by Fr. Larry Hein, SJ. And we were transformed.



Fr. Hein returned many times after that to help us learn the implications of Vatican II on our lives. And our lives have never been the same. From 1970-73, we returned to New York so Mike could finish his medical training. We attended a Marriage Encounter Weekend during



this time, recognized God calling us to be a Sacrament in our Catholic Church, and committed ourselves to becoming a part of this movement.

In 1973, we eagerly came back with our three daughters (Aimee was born in 1971 in New York) to Central Florida and St. Mary Magdalen. For the next 20 years, while raising our family we ministered in the Diocese of Orlando with Marriage Encounter Experience and deepened our relationship to each other, our children, and to the Lord in a personal way. We befriended Fr. Bob Fuchek, a pastoral assistant at St. Mary Magdalen, and he ministered in this movement too.

During this time, many from our parish joined us in forming an Image or Small Christian Community of married couples supporting each other in marriage. These couples with their families are still close to us today. After Fr. Paul Henry came to St. Mary Magdalen in 1982, we got his permission to put on Two Marriage Encounter Weekends just for our parish. One took place in January 1985 with Fr. Eamon Tobin teaming the weekend with us. It had 30 couples including Fr. Paul Henry. We teamed the next one with Fr. Lawrence McEachen and another 30 couples in February 1986. It was one of the most memorable



experiences of our lives. To this day, we still feel a bond of closeness to these couples. Another special moment for us was when the renowned Fr. John Powell came to St. Mary Magdalen to

give a Pro Life Talk. We picked him up at the airport and brought him to St. Mary Magdalen to give his talk. We all were deeply moved.

During those early years (1981-83) when our children

were in grammar school, John Collins, then the DRE, drafted me to teach CCD (Scripture) to the 5th Graders here in the Parish. I was scared to death but I tried it and loved every movement. When our girls became teens, Mike and I became Adult Leaders in the Youth Group 1984-88 under Fr. Art Bendixen, John Joyce and then Steve and Lisa Walker. These were wonderful times for us as a family. The youth and the Adult Team with whom we worked (Annette and Jerry Kelly, Anne and George Eichner, Paul Bouchard) during those years are still a special part of our lives today.

Another precious time for me was working with Fr. Rich Conway as a team leader in the RCIA 1991-2. I came to love the process and promote it to everyone I meet. When our children went off to college, I earned my Masters Degree in Religious Education from Loyola University. When I graduated in 1992, I was hired by Fr. Paul Henry as Family Life Minister here at St. Mary Magdalen. It was during the years which followed that I promoted the establishment of the Family Life Core Team and then Family Life Commission at St. Mary Magdalen. The Family Life Commission was a consortium of leaders from all different kinds of Families in our parish: Young Adults, Engaged and Married couples, parents, single parents, Hispanic families and families with special needs (Divorced, Separated, Children of Single Parents)

From 1993 on, we on the Family Life Team supported family life ministries which had already been established for many years: The Mother's Group, Marriage encounter, The Family Camping Retreat (started by Mary Deans in the 1980's) the Chili Cook off, the Easter Egg Hunt, The Divorced and Separated Group, Women in the Marketplace 1990. We also started new and innovative programs for our parish: MOMS 1990, Rainbows, Free the Horses, Active Parenting programs from toddlers to Teens, Ministry to Single parents, the MGM Group. We started under the auspices of Kim Peters, a Web page on Family Life. This exists today on the St. Mary Magdalen Web Page and is still a marvelous resource for articles, web sites, and programs for families.

But the two efforts of the Family Life Commission of which I am most proud was our Parish Listening Survey

done in 1995 and the founding of the Parish Event childcare program. In May of 2001, Fr. Charlie was looking for someone to volunteer as coordinator of Family Life Ministries once again. I felt God calling me back. You know, our Family Life Commission was more than just a committee of this Church. We were family! We prayed together, studied together, and share our journey of life and faith together. We especially felt called to listen to our families and to try to serve as best as we could! Though many of the Family Life Ministries still exist in St. Mary Magdalen, the Commission itself was absorbed into the Faith Formation Commission in 2006.

Since 2006, I have ministered at St. Mary Magdalen as Steward for Sacramental Prep (Marriage and Baptism). I prepare couples for marriage and parents for baptizing their little ones into the Church. For me though, it is an opportunity to show hospitality to couples, to preach the sacred in the ordinary moments of family life, and to challenge them to make the Lord Jesus the center of their married lives.

With my husband, I continue to initiate and promote Marriage Enrichment Programs such as Great Date Nights, Marriage Spa Day, Marriage Retreats, and my favorite; Celebrate Marriage Sunday. Working with Fr. Ed Thompson and a marvelous team of individuals and couples, especially Dawn and Sal Rivas and Cindy and Steve Nolder, we have honored numerous couples since the early 1990's. We have passionately tried to lift up the gift of our married couples in our Community and in our Catholic Church. Just to see the smiles on the faces of these couples on Celebrate Marriage Sunday makes all our efforts worthwhile.

There is much still left to be done... so many married and family lives to reach out to. together as a parish, Mike and I believe that we can change the world, in the name of the Lord Jesus, one family at a time.

I was 11 when the parish was founded. We had been parishioners at St. Margaret Mary and I remember how happy our family was to have a parish so close. We helped clean the old night club building that became our little church. My sister was in the first graduating class a few

years later. *Submitted by Patty (Bunch) Mark*

My name is Denise (Bunch) Patrick and along with my parents, Dottie and Clare Bunch, my older sister, Patty and younger brother, Clare Jr., was one of the first parishioners of St. Mary Magdalen in 1959. We lived on Maitland Ave., where Oak Harbour is presently located.

I remember Mass being held the first few years in the old Seminole Bar. The "pews" were wooden folding chairs and the "confessional" was a bathroom. I remember at that young age of nine years old, being fascinated with the beautiful Seminole Indian head design that was part of the terrazzo floor. Father Reason used to keep our attention during the service by reminding us of the bullet holes still in the walls and the many bloody fights that had taken place in the former bar. Our Masses and sermons were never ordinary!

In 1965 I was one of nine in the FIRST graduating 8th grade class.. Let's see if I can remember my classmates' names. Of course, there was Virginia (Cassady) Bolton. She and I have remained life-long friends and I was always close to her family. Then there was Mary Ann Radigan, Veronica Malatesta, Fonda Fortier. The guys were Jerry Jaeb, Phil Ley, Paul Miaducki, Rick Meyer, and Bob.....

Because the school wasn't yet completed, we spent half the school year going to class in a house owned by the Fortier family (I think), on a street just across from the school/church property. I remember that the 7th grade "classroom" was the living room and we, the eighth graders, were crammed into a bedroom. Our desk was one big plywood table on sawhorses. I used to ride my bike to school, which was only a short distance from home. Some days I would even ride home for lunch!

Even back then, I knew that we were making history and going to church and school at St. Mary Magdalen had something of a "frontier" feel to it. To this day I still think that the greatest gifts my parents gave me were my Catholic education and allowing me to grow up in the country. Yes, in those days Altamonte Springs WAS in the country!



Thanks for allowing me to take a fond walk down memory lane. *Submitted by Denis (Bunch) Patrick, class of '65*

My family and I have been involved at St. Mary Magdalen for over 30 years and it is hard to begin to say what is in my heart about this parish. It draws a person in like nothing else I have ever experienced. Each time we were involved in one ministry or another we grew as individuals and as a family. The first ministry I was involved in was Fall Festival and I couldn't believe how hard and long everyone worked. It set the pace for me as I felt that must be the way one gets to heaven! But it wasn't until years later that I understood that it was the sense of community that draws us here. We celebrate when someone is baptized and mourn when someone passes away even if we only knew them by name it always touches us.

My passion has of course been the Child Center and the care of our most vulnerable group of children from age 0-5 yrs. They can't speak for themselves so we as caregivers, whether it be as staff, parents or grandparents, we, in the Catholic tradition, give them everything we have. I have watched from the sidelines my 'babies' grow to be strong adults and now the circle is complete as they bring their own children back to us.

I have been influenced by so many it is hard to name them all. Fr. Caverly, Fr. Paul Henry, Fr. Charlie, all so gifted in their own special ways. Bob Laube, my special friend Janece and Bob Bevans-Kerr, Fr. Tobin and Fr. Lawrence McEachen, Fr. Rick Conway. My children's favorites were Fr. Paige Blakely and Maria Elena. Bishop Grady asked me my name once and never forgot it. He was an extraordinary person to witness. Bill Brislin and Jerry Galipeau made my heart dance. JoAnn Kuhn seems to know everyone in the parish and always seems able to stop and listen to their 'story'. I wish I could have gotten to know all of them better.

I have been so fortunate to work with some incredible people including Elisa Steiner, Lois Locey, Mary Ann Salazar and all the Castilles. One Christmas when I was helping Juniors with the Altar tree lights Francis asked me if I would be a Sacristan. My eyes teared up and I found it hard to answer so I just gave him a hug and thanked

him. He and his wife Margaret were so good to me and I think of them often as I try to emulate their faith and dedication.

On a visit to my brother in Augusta Georgia, I picked up a book at his church and it related the most wonderful history going back over a hundred years. I thought how nice it would be to do that for our parish. I never dreamed how much I would discover and how inspired I would be from the events as they unfolded. Problems today seem so small compared with the obstacles bishops, pastors and parishioners faced as the State of Florida opened its doors to Catholics. We have so much to learn from their perseverance and love for the Church. Their faith was unyielding. We all have the responsibility to carry on for the future generations of St. Mary Magdalen and to leave behind a legacy they can be proud of. I believe that God's presence fills the heart of each person that crosses through that front door of our church and witnesses that huge smiling face of Jesus with His warm welcoming arms extended out to greet and embrace us. I know He is well pleased with St. Mary Magdalen for building up his Kingdom. *Submitted by Marcey Meehan*

