



A Publication of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
www.ihmparish.com

Winter 2023

RCIA CANDIDATES

by Stephanie Iwan, Pastoral Associate

On Sunday, December 4th at 11:00 Mass, we welcomed three of our four RCIA participants into the Order of Catechumens: **Mabel Heitmeier, Lynn McBroom** and **David Peshia**. Unfortunately, **Gordon Petersen** was unable to attend due to illness.

RCIA, which stands for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, is a process through which men and women enter the Catholic Church. It includes several stages marked by study, prayer and rites at Mass. Candidates undergo a process of conversion as they study the Gospel, profess faith in Jesus and the Catholic Church, and receive the sacraments of baptism—if not already baptized—reconciliation, confirmation and Holy Eucharist. The RCIA process follows the ancient practice of the church and was restored by the Second Vatican Council as the normal way adults prepare for baptism.

No one is born Catholic. Many are baptized as infants and raised in the faith. An *unbaptized* person may wish to explore becoming a Catholic. Every fall, a group of adults gather to begin that process. They meet regularly with lay facilitators, catechists, guest presenters and their sponsor. The group, known as the Catechumenate, receive instruction, guidance, and support in the faith culminating in Baptism at the Easter Vigil. Someone *baptized in a Christian church* may wish to become Catholic.

Prior to beginning the RCIA process, an individual comes to some knowledge of Jesus Christ, considers his or her relationship with Jesus Christ and is usually attracted in some way to the Catholic Church. This period is known as the **Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate** although here at IHM we use the term **Inquiry**. For some, this process involves a long period of searching; for others, a shorter time.

To greatly summarize a thoughtful and spiritual process, this is followed by the “inquirer” to seek acceptance into the **Order of Catechumens**. When the person is ready to make a faith commitment to Jesus in the Catholic Church, the next step is the request for baptism and the celebration of the **Rite of Election**. The days of Lent are the final period of **Purification and Enlightenment** leading up to the **Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation** at the Easter Vigil. After the person is initiated, formation and education continue in the period of the **Postbaptismal Catechesis**, which is called “mystagogy.” During this period the newly baptized members reflect on their experiences at the Easter Vigil and continue to learn more about the scriptures, sacraments, and teachings of the Catholic Church and reflect on how they will serve Christ and help in the church’s mission and outreach activities.

You will learn more about our four Catechumens’ stories and why they are choosing to enter fully into communion in the Catholic Church from personal stories in the bulletin in the coming months. In the meantime, please pray for our Catechumens and in, our most welcoming Immaculate Heart of Mary style, please say hello and introduce yourself when you see them at Mass.

New Catholics after Easter Vigil 2022



PARISHIONER PROFILE: JOYCE & KARL RINKE

by Terry Moore

To the superstitious, 13 is an unlucky number. But for longtime IHM parishioners Joyce and Carl Rinke, the number has special significance. In January 1981, Carl accepted a position with Foremost Insurance Co. and stayed at a Grand Rapids hotel for a time as the family made plans to move from Ohio. "Every Sunday, I went to a different church for Mass and made a point to speak to the pastor afterwards about the parish and its school for our children," recalled Carl. "I spoke to 12 pastors and they all informed me their school was at capacity. And there were no guarantees given about enrolling the next year." Carl then attended IHM and spoke to pastor Fr. Gerry Flater.



Joyce and Carl celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2021.

After explaining his situation, Carl received a completely different response from Fr. Flater. "He told me to come back tomorrow and said if there were no desks available at the school, he would go out and buy them." Within two weeks, the Rinkes' children were attending IHM School.

To Joyce and Carl, who will be married 52 years in August and are blessed with two sons, a daughter, a daughter-in-law and two grandchildren, the story epitomizes the hospitable nature of IHM. "Right from the start, IHM was always friendly and welcoming," said Joyce. She immediately got involved with the school, helping out in the library and later as a room mother.

For more than 40 years, the Rinkes have been active in parish life. In addition to her time volunteering at school, Joyce has been a stalwart with Funeral Buffet, Women's Guild and Heavenly Dusters, a group that helps with cleaning the church.

Carl has been equally involved as seen in his time on the Pastoral Council, RICA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) and Men's Ministry. "It's part of the culture at IHM to be open and welcoming as well as taking part in parish life," said Carl. "It's what makes IHM so special and why we feel so at home here."

The Rinkes describe themselves as "cradle" Catholics, growing up in close Catholic families. Joyce grew up in South Bend, one of five communities where Carl's family also lived. "My father was in the Navy so we moved frequently," said Carl. Joyce said she attended Catholic schools since first grade after playing "hooky" for five days from the nearby public school. "A nun gave me a readiness test on a Saturday and after passing it I was enrolled on Monday. I was the 50th student in her class."

Carl said after high school he drifted away from the faith for several years. Eventually, he came back and with a renewed sense of commitment. "I guess that's partly why I enjoy RICA so much. I can identify with people studying their faith and coming to grips with it."

Reflecting on their fulfilling time in the parish, Joyce and Carl believe it wasn't blind luck, on the 13th attempt, to find IHM. Said Carl: "We're here for a reason—to help people on their faith journey while letting others do the same for us."



WINTER SOCIAL

COMING JANUARY 28

by Mark and Maureen Norton

The Killgoar Foundation exists to support Catholic education for IHM students. Established in 1987, the foundation was named for Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish's founding pastor, Father Charles Killgoar, OMI. It is the goal of the Foundation to ensure quality Catholic education is available to all parish children. By providing direct tuition assistance and helping teachers continue their professional development, the Foundation helps keep tuition costs affordable for all families.

The future of Catholic education in the United States rests heavily on endowment funding. The Foundation fund balance is structured, generally, to allow for the principle to remain intact to allow for continued impact long into the future. The Killgoar Foundation has provided IHM School with more than \$3 million since 1999. In the 2022-'23 school year, 89 students, which is nearly one-third of the entire student body, received tuition assistance from the foundation. In total the foundation's allocation to the school is \$240,500 this school year. Recipients of tuition assistance sign a contract and are expected to be active members of the Parish, including involvement in a church ministry, tithe and go to church regularly. The Foundation is completely autonomous from the diocese and the parish; it operates as its own separate non-profit organization.

Your continued support of the Killgoar Foundation helps make possible IHM's wonderful legacy of excellence in Christ-based, rigorous academic education. At IHM School students don't just learn about their faith, they live it daily in the classroom, during reception of the sacraments at weekly Mass, in the Adoration Chapel, on the playground, in athletic and extracurricular activities and through service projects. You have given our students an immeasurable gift!

KF's next event is the Winter Social on **Saturday, January 28th, 2023, 6:30 to 11:00 p.m** in the Parish Center. This annual event celebrates Catholic Schools Week and also honors our Dutch VanderVeen Service Award winners. The award is named after the first recipient for his tireless efforts to help raise money for myriad local nonprofit organizations. According to legend, Dutch slept with raffle tickets in his pocket! Sponsorship opportunities are available. Admission is \$45 per person and includes dinner, desserts, drinks and—best of all—socializing with your IHM community. Please RSVP in the back of church after weekend Masses in January or return the response card you received in the mail in December with your check payable to "The Killgoar Foundation" via the offertory collection, by mail, or online at <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/wintersocial2023> by Sunday, January 22.

This year's Winter Social will honor long time IHMers Michael and Patricia Jennings with the Dutch VanderVeen Service Award. Mike and Pat both graduated from IHM school in the first years of its existence. All four of their children graduated from IHM and Catholic Central. Over many years Mike and Pat have been extremely active, including altar serving, ushering, driving the bus, Women's Guild, RCIA, Stephen Ministry, giving communion and visiting the sick, and more. Please join us for a great community event to honor the Jennings.

Please contact your Killgoar Development Directors, Mark or Maureen Norton, at 616-322-8448 or monorton2247@gmail.com to discuss how you can make a difference at the best grade school in the area.

SPOTLIGHTon

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS TO THE HOMEBOUND

By Sue Jakubowski

The Eucharist is the lifeblood of our parish and of our faith, but illness, disability, or other obstacles prevent some parishioners from receiving it regularly at IHM. To make sure that no one who would like to receive the Eucharist falls through the cracks, a network of loyal volunteers at our parish work as a team to bring Holy Communion to the homebound.

This group effort is coordinated by **Pastoral Associate Stef Iwan**, and **Joan Bellamy** trains the ministers who distribute. If a friend or family member alerts the parish of a need, Stef will match a volunteer with the homebound person and see to it that Communion is brought to them where they are. At present, IHM has approximately forty members who volunteer in this capacity, all of whom have worked with Joan to learn how to reverently distribute offsite.

Joe Tierney is a longtime volunteer who has been to many facilities over the years. “I go where the Lord needs me,” he says. Joe has enjoyed building relationships with those he serves, and they are always happy to see him because they know he brings Christ in the Eucharist to them, along with his trademark Irish wit!

Other volunteers work as a group and rotate responsibility. Beacon Hill on Boston Street SE is one of the larger sites that IHM covers, with three teams of ministers who distribute there regularly. One team—**Karen Weber, Linda Eadie** and **Debbie Marosi**—brings Eucharist to those in the independent living area. Team two is **Dan Heintz, Tom Mier, Barb Gengle** and **Paul Berkemeier**, who cover some of those living in the assisted care and memory unit. Team three is **Tom Kartes**, who visits a number of residents each week and brings Communion on Thursday mornings.

While bringing Communion to the homebound is priceless for the one receiving it, Linda Eadie says it is also extremely rewarding to the minister as well. She loves the opportunity to share Jesus with those unable to make it to IHM. This sentiment was common for the other ministers as well. Dan Heintz remarks that it was a blessing to be with these folks, and that he generally finds that the 90 minutes he spends with them fills him with gratitude. Tom Mier, who has been a Eucharistic Minister in this capacity for approximately forty years, says that this type of volunteering “feeds his soul.” He says that while all the people he has met have been wonderful, he has been able to develop special relationships with some, finding the people he serves to be very reverent, thankful, and happy to see him. Barb Gengle has dubbed four of her residents as the “Golden Girls” because they have awesome attitudes and are absolute sweethearts, making the experience extremely rewarding.

If you are unable to attend Mass and would like to receive Communion or know of someone who might, please contact Stef Iwan at 616-241-4477 or via email at pa@ihmparish.com. Or, if you would be interested in learning more about volunteering in this capacity and the training it entails, please contact Joan Bellamy at 616-822-5733 or via email at david.l.bellamy@comcast.net.



Left to right: Beacon Hill team members Debbie Marosi, Karen Weber, Dan Heintz, Tom Kartes, Barb Gengle and Paul Berkemeier. Missing from photo: Linda Eadie and Tom Mier.

Joe Tierney takes Communion wherever he is needed.



MILLIONS OF MONICAS

by Colleen Lowe



TRUST ME

Do you believe that I am the Son of God?
And do you believe that I died for all men
and women and that I rose from the dead?
Then why do you continue to be distracted
and anxious about your loved ones?

Do they not also belong to Me?
Would I refuse to work in their lives
just as I work in yours?

I have not put you in charge of
redeeming them.

I have already done that.

Nor do you have the power to
change their hearts;

only My Holy Spirit searches
and knows the deepest
hearts of men and women,

and only He can heal their deepest wounds.

Your task is to love, to forgive, to pray for
them and to turn them over to Me.

Come closer to Me yourself,
and I will do the rest.

TRUST ME!

(Author Unknown; revised)

A Catholic life contains many promises; one of fidelity, fruitfulness and faithfulness in a Catholic marriage; in baptism, to raise our kids in the Faith; as Godparent, promises of prayer and support; as Confirmation sponsor, the same. A program to more *intentionally* adhere to our promises of prayer originated at Immaculate Heart of Mary called **Millions of Monicas**, (**M.O.Ms**). It is an hour of specific prayer for “our children who have wandered from the Faith or are still practicing but struggling against the forces of the world.”

Inspired by St. Monica and the years she spent in prayer for her son Augustine to return to the Faith, a group of women with “Augustines of their own” created a regular time and place for other women to unite the prayers they promised for their own and other children. **Millions of Monicas** recognizes the countless mothers, biological or spiritual, who, rather than fret for the souls of their children, want to join forces to protect and/or gently lead their kids back to our beautiful Catholic faith.

“I came to my first Monicas with the goal of changing my child’s heart and found God wanted to work on my heart instead,” remarked a participant on her way out one evening. “I leave with a peace knowing the other participants are carrying my child in their prayers this week.”

There is a deliberate structure to each “Monicas” evening. Central are the themes of surrender and encouragement. Surrender as exhibited by the *Trust Me* prayer, believing we can plant the seeds of faith but must rely on grace to make them grow; encouragement of *others’* children as God often uses the influence of a relative, teacher or coach to lead them deeper in their faith.

Each “Monicas” evening contains contemplative music, collective prayer, a reflection of the day’s gospel, *Lectio Divina* prayer, small group prayer and the rosary. The only time participants are asked to speak is to share the first and middle name of each child in order to pray for them specifically. The evening also enables participants to recount, in writing, the ways their prayers have been answered (Signs) and the ways they have encouraged *other* children to remain in and/or grow in their faith (Sowings).

When asked what she takes away each week, a friend responded, “Filling out the signs and sowings card each week, I am more in tune to look for the small ways God is answering my prayers. I also hold myself more accountable to bring Jesus into my daily conversations as a means of encouragement.”

Since its inception at IHM Church in June of 2021, new Millions of Monica groups have formed from Delaware to Hawaii, from St Bernard’s in Benton Harbor to Our Lady of Consolation in Rockford. IHM’s group meets most Mondays at 7:00 p.m. in the church. For the Millions of Monicas meeting calendar go to MillionsofMonicas.com.

COMPARISON OF GEN Z WITH PAST GENERATIONS

By Mitchell Dunlap



For their fall English midterm exam, Mrs. Joey Savillo's 8th grade students chose a topic to research. They were required to follow MLA format and cite evidence in their essays. Mitchell Dunlap wanted to know more about Generation Z versus other generations. Here is his essay in abridged form. To read Mitchell's full text, go to <https://bit.ly/3uXFSU0>.

If you were born about three to four generations ago, you would be born a Baby Boomer. Boomers are people born between 1946-1964 (parents.com). When I think of a Boomer, I think of the nuclear family. I think of a father who provides for the family, I think of the mother who takes care of and teaches her children about life, and I think about Ralphie from *A Christmas Story*. When I picture someone born in Generation Z, people born between 1997-2010 (parents.com), I think of a blue-haired, nose pierced, fat, 23-year-old, living in their mother's basement, scrolling on Tiktok, and complaining about having to work 30 hours a week on Twitter. What happened? What happened to the war heroes fighting in Korea and Vietnam? What happened to marriage being a sacred vow between a man and a woman? What happened to the American Dream? Now, I'm not saying that the previous generations were perfect, but even I can tell that Gen Z has more problems than our elders. So why? Why is Generation Z so sensitive?

If Gen Z is sensitive, that means they are soft. They cannot stand up to challenges or problems. That means that they grew up in an easy environment. The fact that they live in America plays an important role in that, but the main root of this is technology. Technology is not a bad thing. In fact, it has benefited our lives in more ways than I can count. However, technology is a double-edged sword. Generation Z grew up when technology was starting to become more and more advanced, and making our lives easier and easier.

Technology is also an extremely addictive tool. A study made by *Insider Intelligence* said that by 2026, Snapchat will have about 50,000,000 Gen Z users (insider intelligence.com). That is over $\frac{2}{3}$ of Gen Z in America. An article by *Exploding Topics* said that nearly 64% of Gen Z check Instagram at least once a day (Exploding Topics.com). One more study by *Exploding Topics* showed that $\frac{1}{3}$ of social media influencers are Gen Z (Exploding Topics.com). So obviously, Gen Z is addicted to social media.

So, why is Generation Z so sensitive? Well, it has been made pretty obvious that they have problems that the past generations don't. They have grown up with technology that has made their lives easier, which leaves them always wanting more. Technology has also become an addiction for many Gen Zers, which for them is as hard to get off of as any drug. Finally, they have grown up in a society where they are protected all the way up until college, leaving them with no real-world experience when they get there. However, all hope isn't lost. Humanity is far from being over, there are several generations ahead of us, and not all of Gen Z is bad. As long as we spread good morals, evangelize and spread the faith, have Jesus at the center of our lives, and try not to become addicted to social media, there is always a chance for the next generation.

Parish Bulletin Board



PLAN TO JOIN US FOR Kepha Women's Night March 17, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

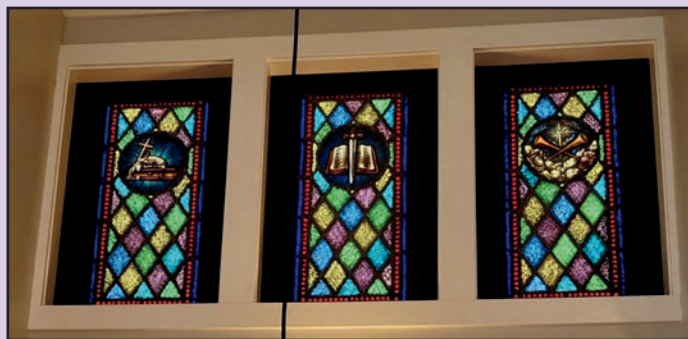
Our featured speaker is Sr. Miriam Heidland, a former Division 1 athlete who had a radical conversion and joined the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity. Sr. Miriam is the cohost of the *Abiding Together* podcast and author of the bestselling book *Loved as I Am*. She speaks extensively on the topics of conversion, authentic love, forgiveness and healing, is affiliated with the John Paul II Healing Center, and leads retreats across the nation. For more information, go to www.buildingalegacy.org.

NEW RECTORY UPDATE

Fr. Troy moved into the new rectory in mid-December and should be unpacked by now. Landscaping will be done in the spring along with some other finishing touches. An Open House will be held in late spring when parishioners can safely walk over from the parking lot as there is little parking at the rectory.



While Fr. Troy was in Israel in September, IHM School students wrote house blessings on paper which were then stapled inside the walls of the house.



These windows from IHM's original, 1949 rectory (later convent, now pre-school), were incorporated into the new rectory.

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On December 1, Fr. Troy blessed the statue of Blessed Solonus Casey given to Sandy Lowery by the Women's Guild for her service as Guild President from 2016 - '22. Thank you, Sandy!

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

28 Killgoar Winter Social
30-Feb 3 Catholic Schools Week

FEBRUARY

3 Cherish Marriage
11 Guys & Dolls Dance
20/21 IHM School Mid-Winter Break
22 Ash Wednesday; Masses @9am &6pm
24/25 Pre-Can

MARCH

11 School Winter Carnival
17 Women's Kepha Event
18 St. Vincent dePaul Pasta Dinner

APRIL

3-8 Holy Week
3-8 IHM School Spring Break
9 Easter
21/22 Second Best Sale