

St. Mary's Alumni Action News

Spring 2007

Volume 8, Issue 2

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dear Alumni & Friends of St. Mary Star of the Sea School,

As many of you know, this year Saint Mary Star of the Sea Parish is celebrating 150 years of service to the Church. It was so wonderful in February for me to welcome many of you home for the Opening Mass of our 150th Year with Bishop DiMarzio, Bishop Daily, Bishop Cisneros and Bishop Caggiano. It was a cold night but the church was filled with so many friends, parishioners and former parishioners. As the year continues I invite you to join us for some of the other events that will be taking place during our anniversary year. On Saturday, September 8, 2007, at 5:30 P.M., Bishop Frank Caggiano, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Brooklyn, will be with us for our Annual Feast Day Mass on the Beach at Beach 14th Street. Each year it is a wonderful celebration as we gather at the ocean and celebrate the birthday of Our Blessed Mother, The Star of the Sea. In October we will have our 150th Anniversary Dinner Dance at the Sands in Atlantic Beach. All are welcome to join us for this celebration on Friday, October 26th at 7:00 P.M. Tickets are \$100 per person. For reservations and more information please contact Joanne Murray at St. Mary's Rectory: 718-327-1133, Ext. 10.

In addition to these special events we will also have a special Pilgrimage to Italy in early November. If you would like to receive a brochure please contact me at St. Mary's.

I am happy to inform all of our alumni that recently it was announced that our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has named our former pastor, Father Sean Ogle, as a Chaplain to His Holiness with the title Reverend Monsignor. This Papal Blessing was bestowed upon Msgr. Ogle on May 20, 2007, at St. James Cathedral-Basilica in downtown Brooklyn by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio. All of our alumni and friends are invited to our special parish celebration in honor of Msgr. Ogle on Sunday, July 29, 2007. The celebration will begin with Evening Prayer at 5:00 P.M. followed by a parish barbecue in the rectory garden. Please join us as we celebrate this great honor for Msgr. Ogle, his family and our parish.

Each year our school is blessed to have so many generous alumni who help the current parishioners of St. Mary Star of the Sea to receive the gift of a Catholic Education. Our parish has many Catholic children who come from immigrant families and cannot afford Catholic school tuition. I know that our school could be full if we were able to find more donors to assist families in need from Far Rockaway. Perhaps you can help send a Catholic member of St. Mary's Parish to our school by sponsoring a child's tuition for one month? (\$400) If you would like to help in this way please feel free to contact me at any time.

As our newsletter goes to print we have just received the sad news that U.S. Army Sgt. Alfonso Montenegro, Class of 1999, was killed in Iraq. Please remember him and his family in your prayers. May God grant him eternal rest for the dedicated service he has given our country.

With Love in Christ,
Father Jim Cunningham, Pastor
FRJIMSTMARY@aol.com

2nd Annual

*St. Mary Star of the Sea School
of Far Rockaway, New York*

Big Raffle Ticket

Grand Prize of \$ 10,000!!!

Total Prize Money = \$ 15,000

Drawing: Sunday, September 9, 2007

Sun & Surf Beach Club

Atlantic Beach, NY

Lounge and Patio Area, 3:30 - 6:30 PM

Only 400 Tickets Will be Sold - Donation \$ 100

Ticket Admits Two to the Drawing.

Yes...the SMSOS **Big Raffle** is back!

This is a hot ticket, and sales will be brisk. You won't want to miss out on all the fun and excitement...order your ticket **NOW**.

Then make plans to join us at the drawing...you'll have a blast!

For more info and to order, please see the insert

in this issue of the *Action News*.

Tickets Are NOW On Sale

for the

St. Mary Star of the Sea Church

150th Anniversary Dinner Dance

**on Friday, October 26, 2007, from 7 PM to Midnight
at the beautiful Sands of Atlantic Beach**

Tickets Are \$ 100 each

We are also publishing a

150th Anniversary Souvenir Journal!

(see Reservation Form on page 5)

For more information, please call the Rectory at:

-327-1133, ext. 10.

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The Principal's Report

Dear Friends,

It's that time of the year once again! It's time to wrap up the last minute details of one school year and begin thinking about the next. The 2006-2007 school year seemed to have flown by. It was a good year for the students and faculty. Although, as you know, our school building has been here for a very long time, we work hard to keep our educational programs and our resources as up-to-date as possible.

This past year saw the fruits of the first annual Alumni Raffle. The proceeds were certainly put to good use. The new cement work in front of the school looks wonderful. We were able to get a statue of the Blessed Mother to replace the one that broke several years ago and new landscaping work is being done. All of this makes the entrance to the school look more inviting. The classroom doors are also being replaced as a result of the raffle proceeds. This project will be completed during the summer. It will really improve the appearance of the school while, at the same time, provide safety and security for the classrooms. The generosity of our alumni allows us to do so much that would otherwise be impossible.

We are now working on registering new students for September. We always have a large turnover of students due to the fact that many of our families relocate to places outside of the area, usually outside the state. This is an on-going process and we hope we are able to replace all the students who leave in order to keep our enrollment at the same level each year.

Please keep us in your prayers. You are always in ours. Thanks again for all your support and kindnesses throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Angela Brucia

Have you ever wondered how rewarding (and fun!) it must be to volunteer your time and talent to the SMSOS Alumni Association? Now's the time to do something about it! Drop a note to Fr. Jim to let him know you're interested...FRJIMSTMARY@aol.com

Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendars NOW!

[Sunday, July 29, 2007](#) - Solemn Evening Prayer and Parish Celebration honoring Rev. Msgr. Sean G. Ogle; 5:00 PM in the Church followed by a reception in the Rectory Garden. All Welcome!

[Saturday, November 17, 2007](#) - Mass for our Deceased Alumni; 12:10 PM in the Church followed by coffee and cake in the Rectory. All Welcome!

NYC Native Killed in Iraq

Special to Newsday
June 26, 2007, 12:17 AM EDT

Sgt. Alfonso Montenegro's mother had a premonition Thursday that "something was wrong" with her 22-year-old son, a soldier who was fighting in Iraq.

Sandra Montenegro, 38, learned the following day that her intuition was correct.

U.S. military officials visited her home in Wilson, N.C., Friday afternoon with the worst of news: Her son, a Far Rockaway native, was among five soldiers who died from injuries suffered when a roadside bomb exploded near their vehicle in Baghdad.

"She had a dream Thursday night that something bad happened to him," Jennifer Montenegro, 18, Alphonso's sister, said Monday. "She tried calling him and he wouldn't pick up. She had a feeling something was wrong."

Montenegro was a member of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Infantry Division in Schweinfurt, Germany.

He had enlisted in the Army less than four years ago after graduating from Far Rockaway High School.

"We were always competing to see who could do the most with their lives," said brother Christian Montenegro, 20, who also is a soldier, based in Fort Hood, Texas.

His family said Alphonso was generous to his siblings, who looked forward to his gifts and phone calls.

"He was caring," Jennifer Montenegro said. "He looked out for everybody. He was like a dad for us."

He had dreams of becoming a music producer once he left the Army. He signed up for three years, but his tour was extended another year, his brother said, adding that he was due to come home in September.

"He was really upset because he was supposed to be back and they stop-lossed him," Christian said, using a military term for tour extension.

His brother also said that Alphonso, too, had a bad feeling about his extended tour. "He was waiting for it because he knew [his death] was going to happen, Christian said, quoting his brother in a conversation they had on June 16. "He told me this time he wasn't going to come back."



Alfonso Montenegro
Class of 1999

Our Reader's Corner

Dear Father,

Sincere thanks for the kind invitation to the 150th Anniversary Mass for the Church. It arrived weeks ago and regrettably was placed on top of a pile of Christmas, New Year's, D.O.B. and Valentine's cards at which I still glance with a guilty conscience.

So although not present as I longed to have been, I am praying and will ever continue that Our Loving God, through the intercession of His Beloved Mother, will continue to bless the parish, all who serve it in pastoral office and parishioners.

Surely today there can be no parish escaping the challenges of our difficult times...challenges to the pastor and the entire parochial administration. So know that the heart of a graduate of 1925 or '26 carries your magnificent work in daily prayer to Our Loving God.

Thank you again for inviting a 93 year old retiree to attend. I would have loved to meet you and the parish folks of today's generation.



Sincerely,
Faine McMullen
Faine McMullen, RSCJ

St. Mary's Alumni Action News:

My two sisters who attended SMSOS School passed away in 2006. Would you please list them in your next issue?

They are Helen Grimes ('46) and Maureen Grimes Balletti ('49). I'm guessing at the class years since I'm Class of '47. Maybe you could check? Thanks.

I enjoy reading your Action News and the only one I knew in [the last issue] was Bobby Murello - I went to school with his brother, the late Eddie Murello, and Bob was always tagging along with us.

Thanks for including my sisters in your Memoriam column.

Love,
Tom Grimes, Class of '47

Dear St. Mary's Alumni Association:

It is with great sadness that I am writing to inform you that St. Mary's has lost yet another one of its alumni. My husband John ("Jack") Carroll O'Donnell, Class of '41, passed away in May of 2003. He would often reminisce of his early day at St. Mary's. Jack had a deep affection for St. Mary's where he was baptized and later served as an altar boy.

His mother, Mary "Grace" Carroll O'Donnell, was very close friends with May and Dick Mahon, May and Florence Dolan, Katherine Reilly, and Helen Gorman - mother of Joe Gorman, St. Mary's Father Leo. He would often recall all the gatherings and good times they all spent at her home on Beach Channel Drive, that she shared with his aunt Elizabeth Nolan. His family has a long history in the Rockaways. His aunt Josephine Carroll Young was the historian at the Queensborough Public Library. His uncle A. Earl Beegle operated the Beegle publishing company as well as the Nassau Herald.

During his senior year at Far Rockaway H.S. he enlisted in the Navy during WWII, a service of which he was most proud. After his discharge in 1946, he returned to Far Rockaway H.S. to complete his studies and graduated Class of '47. After moving to Woodmere in the 50's, Jack became a member of the Fire Dept., where he later served as Chief in '64. After marrying and raising two daughters, we retired to Pennsylvania in 1985. He was disappointed he was unable to attend the St. Mary's reunion in 1996, but did receive a copy of the video, which was interesting.

I regret that I had not contacted you earlier, but I hope you could include him in this year's memorial service for St. Mary's deceased Alumni. I know he would be honored to be remembered with past alumni and faculty. I would greatly appreciate your help in making this possible. Best of luck to the past, present and future alumni of St. Mary's. God Bless...

Sincerely,
Mrs. John C. O'Donnell

IN MEMORIAM

In the brief time that has passed since our last newsletter was published, we have suffered the painful loss of the following alumni and faculty:

Frederick Atkin
Class of '36

Maureen Grimes Balletti
Class of '49

Helen Grimes
Class of '46

Maureen Monahan Meany
Class of '46

Alfonso Montenegro
Class of '99

John O'Brien
Class of '42

Elizabeth O'Connell
Class of '52

Patrick Riley
Class of '68

John J. Waldron
Class of '42

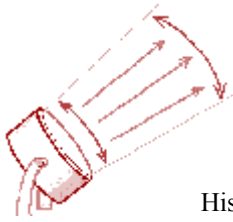
***"May They Rest in Peace!
Amen."***

**Please remember SMSOS when
planning your estate.**

Alumni Spotlight

An Illustrious Graduate

William Hartigan, a graduate of St. Mary's School, Class of 1935, went on to have an outstanding career.



His two younger sisters, Virginia and Patricia also attended St. Mary's. The family originally came from Hudson, New York and returned upstate before Virginia was to graduate in 1938.

Angela Rivara, a lifelong parishioner of St. Mary's, class of 1938, has kept up her friendship with Virginia all these years. When William died February 1, 2000, Virginia sent Angela a copy of his biography.

In his travels, Hartigan had gone around the world more than 30 times and had visited every country in existence. Hartigan spent his career filming tough assignments. Holder of distinguished photography awards and a five time Emmy nominee, he was one of the first photojournalist to film a war with sound (Korean War), and the first to work under extreme cold conditions (the first three Deep Freeze operations to the South Pole).

His distinguished television career began when he contracted with NBC-TV in New York to film the US Navy's Operation Deep Freeze in 1955, 1956 and 1957, at the South Pole. His four documentaries on Antarctica were screened under the titles: "The Third World", "Race Against the Night", "Eleven Against the Ice", and "Assault on Antarctica." During the filming of "The Third World," Hartigan, who because of a series of incidents, was left alone in a never before explored area of the continent for days. The cameraman joined two scientists to explore a new ice shelf in the Antarctic, miles from their "mother" ship. One of the men injured himself and turned back, and the other left their temporary camp on ice and promptly became lost.

Hartigan, suffering a severely sprained ankle, stuck with the camp. To tell the story of what it was like to be in such a vast wasteland, he turned his movie camera on himself. For days in temperatures below zero and in a biting and stinging wind, he recorded by voice and film what it was like. The chances of being found in an atmosphere similar to the moon or returning to the ship were a million to one. Each day the grinding camera recorded the story and the obvious physical changes in Hartigan – swollen eyes, cracked and parched lips, sallow cheeks and hunger. Upon rescue, the film became one of the best documentaries to hit the TV screen.

He filmed the first Israeli War, the Civil War in Greece, the Partition of India, the French Indo-China War and the American engagement in Vietnam. During the Second World War, he received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart during action in Tunisia.

Most of his career was spent with ABC News and Special Projects – Bell and Howell Close-Up Series and The Saga of Western Man. His first documentary, "Walk in My Shoes," about the meaning of being a Black man in the north. Hartigan was also a member of the first Western film crew permitted to work freely in the former Soviet Union. His film "Meet Comrade Student." Both television documentaries were nominated for Emmy Awards. Four others of his works also received nominations. In addition, he received the National Cowboy Hall of Fame Award in 1965 and two Overseas Press Club Awards in 1961 and 1962.

His first significant filming assignment in Washington came in 1965, when he spent six months photographing Lady Bird Johnson's film entitled, "A Visit To Washington With Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson on Behalf of a More Beautiful America." This film won the George Foster Peabody Award.

Hartigan was part of the historical White House visit to China and Russia with President Richard M. Nixon. In Washington, Hartigan received terse instructions from the White House. What President Nixon wanted was a historical record of what would be the most extraordinary foreign relation coup of the century – the Presidential trips to China and Russia. No President in US history up to that point in time had ever documented on film an entire mission abroad from arrival to departure. What Nixon desired was a quality film record of every facet of the Presidential trip to become the property of the American people.

Hartigan completed several television documentaries for Wolper Productions Hollywood. His credits include the made for TV specials, Appointment With Destiny, and the TV series, *In Search of...* and Ripley's Believe It or Not. In addition, Hartigan filmed segments for ABC Wide World of Sports.

Upon retiring, Hartigan worked consulting at setting up a film school for the University of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia and also consulted for Parsons' Corporation documenting the multibillion-dollar construction of the new city Yanbu-al-Sinyah in the Western Province.

The funeral Mass for William was celebrated at St. John the Evangelist Church in Schenectady. He left his wife of 49 years, three children, three granddaughters, his sisters Virginia and Patricia as well as many nieces and nephews.

We should all be proud of William's accomplishments and even prouder that we can claim him as one of our alumni.



*St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Far Rockaway, NY*

SESQUICENTENNIAL (150TH) ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

Souvenir Journal

Reservation form

Please select your ad from the list below by placing a check () on the line to the left of your request. If you are submitting your 'camera-ready' ad, also place a check () on "Camera- Ready ad attached" line below. If you want us to layout your ad, please use the space below to write out your message. **Deadline for submitting ad is September 15, 2007.**

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> Star of the Sea gold page \$5,000.00 <i>includes silver page, 4 tickets to Banquet</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Will Attend</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> St. Mary 'Circle' silver Page \$3,500.00 <i>includes silver page, 2 tickets to Banquet</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Will Attend</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gold on white Page \$ 500.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Silver on white Page \$ 350.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Back cover \$1,500.00</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Front/Back Inside Cover \$1,000.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full White Page \$ 250.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Half White Page \$ 125.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quarter White Page \$ 75.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eighth White Page \$ 50.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Booster \$ 15.00</p> |
|---|--|

Camera-Ready ad attached

Children's Signature Page

Special rate - \$2.00 per signature. Sign-up at Parish Office
Please use the space below to write your message and we will create your ad.

Make checks or money orders payable to: **St. Mary Star of the Sea Church** and submit with your completed Reservation Form, along with the information below, by mail or bring it into the Rectory: **1920 New Haven Avenue, Far Rockaway, NY 11691**

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ email _____



Your Big Raffle Dollars at Work!



In our last issue you saw the beautiful concrete work we performed on the front courtyard of the school.

In this issue, we offer a “sneak peek” of the classroom door replacement project with this unfinished raw sample!

Look for a full photo documented report on the door project in our next issue...



Memory Lane



Grade 1-B, November 1915...recognize anyone?

Attention Alumni

50th Reunion

The Class of '57 invites ALL attendees and graduates of

St. Mary Star of the Sea School

to join us as we celebrate our 50th anniversary!

The party will be at Rocco's Restaurant, East Rockaway, on August 18th

For details please contact: Peggy Meere Mecca ('57) at 631-473-5429 (caycay@optonline.net)

Please visit with us online at: stmarysalumni@yahogroups.com

St. Mary's Alumni Association

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St. Mary's Alumni Action News

Editor/Publisher: Rev. James K. Cunningham (*Pastor*); Alumni Committee: Linda Carlucci Borland, Angela Brucia (*Principal*), Regina Hooghkirk Healy, Lillian Matlock Higgins, Judith Jones Lindner, Marilyn Jones McMahon, Suzanne Zatto Mills, Robert Murello, George Nammack, Bob Stippell, Julia Waldron; Managing Editor: Joseph G. Barden; Layout, graphics & printing courtesy of [Margert Community Corporation](#).

Parish Pilgrimage

Fr. Jim Cunningham is leading parishioners and friends of St. Mary Star of the Sea on a very special 14-day Pilgrimage to holy places in Italy:

- The Date: November 3 - 13, 2007
The Price: \$2279.00 (based on double occupancy) and up.
Includes round trip air fare (from JFK), hotels, most meals, sightseeing, professional tour escort, all service charges and hotel taxes
Visiting: Rome, Assisi, Florence, Pisa, Padua, Venice and Vatican City!
Deposit: Initial deposit of \$300 per person is due *immediately*

Highlights include: an audience with His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, if available, and Mass at the North American College

If you would like more information or a brochure, please contact the Rectory at 718-327-1133.