

Grace and Peace to you and your family;

Working for the Diocese of Albany these past three years has been so eye-opening in understanding the relationship between parishes and the Diocese. Previously, I'd never thought about how the church actually operates...I just knew it was open when I went to Mass, someone notified me when I needed to register my children for faith formation classes, and someone answered the phone on the rare occasion I would call the parish office. When the Appeal was mentioned, I thought,



Diocesan Appeal

"I support my parish offertory – why do I need to support the Diocese as well?"

What I learned surprised me. *Did you know that 82 employees of the Diocese administer 30 specialty programs on behalf of 126 parishes?* This approach streamlines personnel costs for each parish, while enriching the important work and experience for each parish. For most of my colleagues, this work is a calling, not a job. A true dedication to advancing our shared faith for the benefit of others. Here are just four examples of these critical programs and the dedicated people who make it all happen:

Meet Mary Fay, coordinator of Pastoral Care Ministry, who while new to this role, is excited that she has efforts underway to reinstitute training for Bereavement Group Facilitators and Pastoral Care Ministers post-COVID and is gearing up tools for parishes to revitalize parish visitation ministry. It was no surprise that Mary accepted this additional assignment since her other work is focused on marriage & family ministries:

"My passion for my work is fueled by the continued joy I see in the couples and families I work with as well as the healing and comfort I see in the pastoral care work I support in parishes."

Any interaction with **Renee Morgiewicz, coordinator of the Diocesan Respect Life Office**, and you know not only is she a human dynamo – which she needs to be to juggle this very active ministry as its sole staff person – but she is incredibly committed to its mission:

"When a parish leader is looking to help walk with a woman in need, I am honored they ask me for resources to help so we can accompany women to choose life."

Human Resources isn't just forms and regulations under the direction of **Joyce Tarantino**. It's compassionate counseling for parish staff who are struggling with questions relating to health emergencies or guiding pastors and parish life coordinators on how to tackle complicated staffing situations...all done with Joyce's usual kind finesse. What's the inspiration behind her approach?

"I feel a deep sense of responsibility to our parish staff and leadership, to shepherd them through the often complicated maze of employer/employee rights and responsibilities, and I'm energized by how much they appreciate our help!"

Tom Cronin spearheads Evangelization Initiatives for the Diocese focused on, "sharing our joy and love of knowing Jesus with others." Well-traveled among the 126 Diocesan parishes, Tom has been the energy & creativity behind a range of well-attended young-adult events which prioritize building community and re-engaging this important age group with the Church...no doubt we all know how vital that is as we see the aging population within our parish communities. How is he motivated to take on this challenge? By staying centered on our mission:

"We are commanded by Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations. That is why we exist and there is nothing more urgent or critical than that mission we have been given - it is an awesome responsibility."

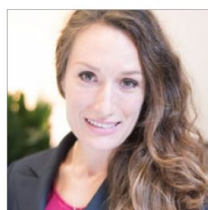
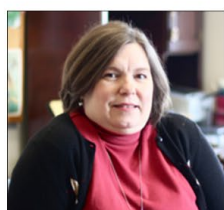
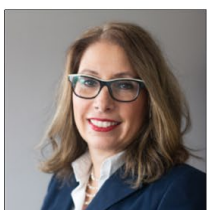
This is just a glimpse into a few of my talented colleagues who I am humbled to serve alongside, on behalf of your parish. **We are so grateful for your investment in the annual Diocesan Appeal to ensure our services continue for each of our 126 parishes which strengthens our regional Catholic community for all!**

Prayers for a blessed Advent and Christmas Season!



Nancy Spadaro Bielawa
Executive Director, Office of Stewardship & Development

PS – If your budget is not quite ready to afford a gift right now, consider making a pledge! It notifies your parish leader that you plan to make a gift with payment in full by June 30, 2023 - plus you avoid additional solicitations. We will send periodic pledge reminders along the way!



*Left to Right:
Nancy
Mary
Renee
Joyce
Tom*