

### Dates of Interest

#### Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation

*Saturday Confessions*

9:00 AM on February 25 - March 31

*Communal Service with Individual Confessions*

7:00 PM on Wednesday, March 28

*Wednesday Confessions*

6:30 PM on February 29, March 14 and April 4

#### Stations of the Cross & Benediction

Fridays, 7:00 PM

February 24 - March 23

*Living Stations of the Cross*

Friday, March 30, 1:30 & 7:00 PM

#### Holy Week Services

*Palm Sunday, March 31-April 1*

Mass at 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM

*Holy Thursday, April 5*

Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:30 PM

*Good Friday, April 6*

Solemn Passion Service at 3:00 PM

*Holy Saturday, April 7*

Blessing of Easter Foods at 11:00 AM  
Easter Vigil Liturgy at 8:00 PM

*Easter Sunday, April 8*

Mass at 8:00, 9:30 & 11:30 AM

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## Deacon Tom Higman's Journey into the Priesthood

Deacon Tom Higman entered Saint Charles Seminary (Philadelphia) in 2004, fresh out of high school and just barely 18 years old. This May, he will be ordained in his hometown church and become the youngest parish priest in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, NY. His will be the first ordination for that diocese in five years! For Deacon Tom, it has been a gratifying journey from boyhood to priesthood. And a remarkable journey, too, especially today, when the



*Bishop LaValley lays hands on Deacon Tom's head during the Mass of Ordination on May 28, 2011 at St. James Church, Tom's home parish, Carthage, New York.*

median age of Roman Catholic priests is 56 and the average number of ordinations of priests in the U.S. is only 383 per year.<sup>1</sup>

It's unsettling, at the very least, that one-third of all active diocesan priests are 65 years of age or older. New, young priests like Deacon Tom – who has been serving part-time with Msgr. Mullin at Saint Elizabeth since last September – are so rare they might almost be put on the Endangered Species list. We are grateful for Deacon Tom, and all those young men who have chosen a sacrificial life in the priesthood.

At Saint Elizabeth, Deacon Tom celebrates Baptism, takes a turn at the monthly Pre-Jordan Program, assists at the altar and preaches at weekend Masses. Deacon Tom is also working with parish youth.

"I can remember my first time seeing Saint Elizabeth. My eyes went wide when I saw the beauty and magnitude of the church, but even more impressive to me was the presence of the Holy Spirit," said Deacon Tom. "You can feel the vibrancy of so many young families combined with the deep love of the older folks who help those

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## Five Years of Giving: The Good Works Ministry

It wasn't too frigid this December workday – the temperature hovering near freezing. The Saint Elizabeth Good Works Ministry team had worked outside before, even when the temperature was below zero. It was the week before Christmas and, surprisingly, a large group of volunteers arrived, all ready to work. Surely, these folks had plenty to do in preparation for the holidays. Yet, somehow they all 'got it'...the meaning of the season... that preparing for the birth of Christ is not about shopping and wrapping gifts; it's really about helping others, giving of themselves to benefit those in need.

The members of Saint Elizabeth's Good Works team have been living out this simple truth for a while now. Team members have been repairing homes and restoring hope for low-income families in Chester County since 2007. In fact, they celebrated five years of Good Works service this past January. Led by parishioners such as work crew leaders John Irwin and John Case; technical foremen Ken Franck and Glenn Mariani; volunteer coordinator Mary Damian; lunch coordinator Linda Hammill and ambassadors Al Brady and Kathy Reitz – the team has now completed 15 homes, with two more homes

currently under repair. The volunteers make home repairs of all kinds, from fixing foundations to repairing roofs and everything in between including plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and more.

But on this chilly December day, the Good Works team had a



*The Good Works Ministry team hard at work above and at right. So far, the team of volunteers has completed 15 homes with two more homes under repair.*

particularly large undertaking: build a 50 foot handicap ramp with a 180-degree turnaround from the street to the front lawn; build another ramp from the lawn to the front door; dig out a pathway 50 feet, 42 inches wide, 8 inches deep on the lawn, and then back fill and level the area in preparation for laying pavers next month. The homeowners had recently developed significant physical limitations and couldn't afford to make reasonable accommodations for their deteriorating health. These repairs would allow them to enjoy easier and safer mobility.

Saint Elizabeth volunteers quickly warmed up as they plowed through their work. Lunch volunteers provided a delicious meal to keep the crew going, with leftovers for the host family to enjoy later, too!

Despite the weather, the entire crew stayed until the job was complete – over three more hours. "I told the family that



the work today was our Christmas gift to them," said crew leader John Irwin. "They were so thankful, saying that they considered it a Christmas, New Year's and Easter gift, all wrapped up in one! They even said they would pray for us."

"Pray for us? I thought we were supposed to pray for them," said John. "Participating in the Good Works ministry has been the most rewarding experience I have ever undertaken. Through these projects, we give ourselves

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## Cultivating a Sisterhood

As the Sister Parish Planning Team at Saint Elizabeth actively works toward strengthening and expanding the relationship with Visitation BVM in the Kensington section of Philadelphia, a few wonderful events have facilitated the sharing of personal and spiritual gifts.

Members of our parish community were in awe of the beautiful music provided by the celestial choir of VBVM at a Saturday evening Mass in November. "You could see it in the faces of our parishioners, they were just amazed at the strength of their voices and their uplifting music, which was sung in both Spanish and English," notes Trisha Burke, co-chair of the Sister Parish Planning Team. "When our Joyful Voices choir visited their parish, their parishioners joined in with the same intensity. They are such a warm and welcoming community; it was truly a wonderful experience."

Saint Elizabeth also hosted a food sharing event, where members of VBVM brought dishes and shared recipes from their Mexican, Puerto Rican and Latino backgrounds. And as part of *Operation Santa Claus*, an archdiocesan teen service project, Saint Elizabeth's youth group worked with teens from VBVM to wrap Christmas gifts for needy children.



*VBVM parishioners brought dishes from their backgrounds to a food sharing event.*

"There are so many things their parish community has to offer us," says Mary Ellen Rzucidlo, also a co-chair of the Sister Parish Planning Team. "Their community is so important to them and their faith is inspiring. It's important to get together more often."

This Christmas, over 200 gifts from Saint Elizabeth's Advent Giving Tree project were donated to families of VBVM. "They were so appreciative of our gifts and feel so blessed to have such a great sister parish," adds Mary Ellen. "It was great for us here at Saint Elizabeth to be able to put faces behind these gifts. The giving tree had so much more meaning this year because we now have this connection."

The planning team is working with a parallel team at VBVM to develop new joint projects, such as youth activities, stewardship service projects, and a sacramental prayer partner exchange program for school-age children. Look for more shared activities with our sister parish in the months ahead!

~ Julie Krumenacker

### Dates of Interest

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#### Other Special Events

*Adult Faith Formation Lenten Presentations on Forgiveness*  
7:00 PM on Wednesdays, March 7 & March 21

*First Penance/Reconciliation*  
7:00 PM on Monday, March 12 & Thursday, March 22

*Stewardship Day of Service*  
8:30 AM on Saturday, April 14

*Confirmation Ceremonies*  
10:00 AM and 2:00 PM on Saturday, April 28

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# Saint Elizabeth Stewardship Day of Service Project Grows!

## Mark Your Calendars – 2nd Annual SDOS on April 14, 2012

The Saint Elizabeth Stewardship Day of Service (SDOS) Committee is working diligently to improve and expand the annual event. Last year, more than 300 parishioners volunteered their time and talent to serve various causes around our area. Many volunteered as family groups and also enjoyed some quality together-time while helping local agencies.

This year, the committee expects even greater participation on Saturday, April 14, so they have made a number of important enhancements to the program. For example, registration may now be completed online, which will help streamline the process significantly. A special “thank you” goes out to parishioners Steve Golus, Tim Murphy and Kevin Miller who developed the registration format for the parish website. Online registration will eliminate the hours of manually coordinating the hundreds of volunteers with the many work sites. Another change to this year’s follow-up program on Sunday, April 15, includes Mass at 9:30 AM, followed by a light breakfast, fellowship and sharing in the parish social hall.

While there are a number of new worksites this year, many will remain the same as in 2011. For example, last year, SDOS volunteers helped the Chester County Food Bank by doing

outdoor clean-up work and helping with various projects in the warehouse. This year, volunteers will also be stuffing backpacks with staple foods such as cereal, peanut butter, pasta and fruit, together with snacks and shelf-stable milk for area kindergarten children. These



backpacks will be distributed to needy children in the Oxford, Coatesville and Octorara areas of Chester County. Last year at Springton Manor Farm, Saint Elizabeth SDOS volunteers cleared debris and planted flowers in raised planting beds. This year, our stewardship volunteers will again work on the raised beds, and also plant vegetable seeds for corn, peas, beans, peppers, tomatoes, and spinach.

### Expanding Our Stewardship

Along with planning this year’s day of service, the SDOS committee is also investigating a joint project for Catholic Relief Services. Team member and

parishioner, Tom Ciarlone, is working with Saint Elizabeth’s Pastoral Outreach Committee to explore the feasibility of conducting a second service project in June. The project entails gathering a team of volunteers to package a tractor-trailer full of food for

the people of Burkina Faso, an impoverished and unstable nation in West Africa.

Many people believe changing the world is someone else’s responsibility. While no one person may have

the power to change the world single-handedly, each of us has the power to make a difference. As Mother Theresa said, “If you can’t feed 100 people, then feed just one.” Volunteering for Saint Elizabeth’s SDOS could be the start of something you could have never imagined. Get started by going to the parish website: [stelizabethparish.org](http://stelizabethparish.org) and click on the SDOS link for more information and online registration.

**See you on April 14!**

~ Georgann Cindrich

# Deacon Tom's Journey

*(continued from cover)*

younger families continue to grow and flourish in their faith. At Saint Elizabeth, you can see that the Church is very much alive and not an archaic, dying institution. It's not just a building here, but a community of people who seek to proclaim Jesus by their very lives."

Deacon Tom has always felt a close connection with the Catholic Church, serving as an altar server at Saint James Church in Carthage, NY from a young age all the way through to his senior year in high school. Tom's younger brother, Michael, recently graduated with a degree in criminal justice and plans to become a police officer. Proud parents, Jim and Mary Higman, now say with a laugh, "with a priest and a cop for sons, we really need to stay on the straight and narrow!"

*What motivated Deacon Tom to choose a life of service in the priesthood? "It's pretty simple," he says. "I didn't have any incredible experience like Saint Augustine,"* smiled Deacon Tom. "I just heard the call, and responded. What cemented it for me, though, was growing up witnessing the true joy lived by our parish priests. Seeing genuinely happy priests encouraged me to respond to the Lord's call.

"Plus, as I considered other options, it was unnerving trying to disregard this feeling inside. When I finally made the decision, I felt a great deal of peace. And, nine years later, I feel even better about the decision to become a priest," he added.

During his time in the seminary, Deacon Tom lived through some



*Deacon Tom with his family at his Diaconate Ordination. From left: Dad, Jim; Mom, Mary; and brother, Mike.*

amazing events – many of which have given him great hope despite the more recent tragic scandals. "I remember getting up very early to watch Pope John Paul's funeral in Rome while praying with the Universal Church for him. I have traveled to Rome with my classmates and served as a chaplain on a diocesan trip to Madrid. And I have already met many amazing individuals. It has really been a journey, that is – God willing – just beginning."

When Deacon Tom is not busy with seminary and parish responsibilities, he enjoys the great outdoors where he camps, hikes and kayaks. He prefers the peaceful, quiet to wild, white-water adventures but does enjoy an action-packed movie on occasion (most recently, he saw *Mission Impossible*). Deacon Tom is also an avid reader, and despite being from New York, he has become a loyal Phillies fan!

Overall, Philadelphia has grown on Deacon Tom – especially a certain Chester County church. "The parishioners of Saint Elizabeth are very open to my style of preaching and ministry, and are extremely welcoming. It's a wonderful place where you can live out and grow your faith," he concluded.

The parishioners of Saint Elizabeth thank Deacon Tom for his attentive support and wish him the very best in the years to come. Let us also pray for more young men to follow in his footsteps and answer God's call to the priesthood.

*~ Lisa Barbadora*

<sup>1</sup>*Our Sunday Visitor*, "Facing a Future with Fewer Catholic Priests," by Mark Gray, June 27 2010. Accessible online at: <http://www.osv.com/tabid/7621/itemid/6532/In-Focus-Facing-a-future-with-fewer-Catholic-prie.aspx>

## Parishioners' Responses to the Prayers of the New Roman Missal

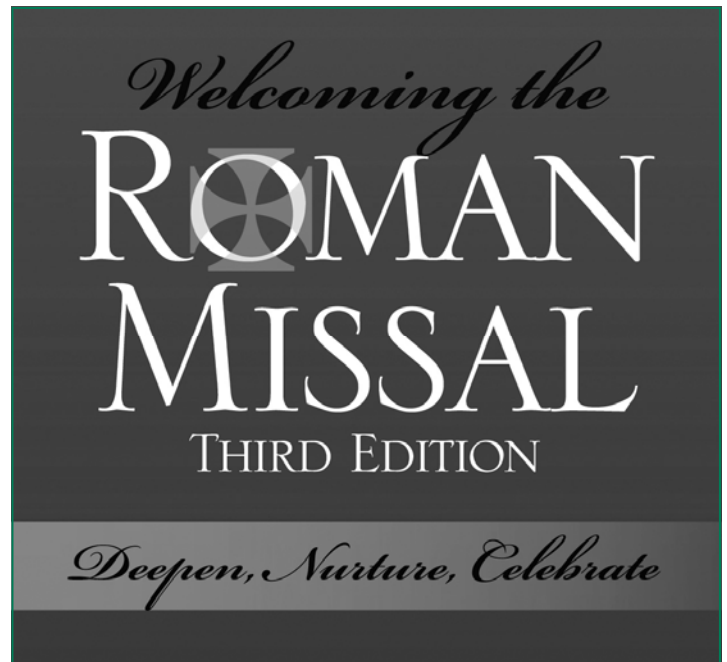
Since Saint Elizabeth Church, together with Catholic believers in most English-speaking countries around the world, began using the new translation of the Roman Missal this past November, the responses of our parishioners have been varied. Naturally, when something as familiar as the way we pray at Mass for more than 40 years changes, it is bound to cause both positive and negative reactions.

When invited to share their personal experiences with the new Mass prayers, a number of parishioners who attend Mass regularly, many of whom are also involved in stewardship service at the parish, readily offered their feedback and comments. All gave their opinions in a spirit of cooperation and respect, and to some extent at least, the respondents represent a fair sampling of the parish at large.

Several of those interviewed affirmed the primary purposes for the changes: providing a more authentic translation of the original Latin text, expressing more explicit references to biblical texts, and drawing both the congregation and the priest-celebrant more deeply into the true mystery of the Sacrifice of the Mass. According to one parishioner, "The new responses deepen the meaning of the ritual action and words of the Eucharistic liturgy for me."

Others cited the benefit of paying closer attention to the real meaning of the words and fostering a more respectful attitude during Mass. "It speaks to the heart as well as the Spirit, and is true to the Gospel," said one. "I like the changes because they make me stop and think about what I am saying and doing. It isn't so routine anymore," added another.

Others have commented that the more formal language of the Roman Missal has caused them to feel pushed away from God. Reported one: "We need to know that God is with us, next to us, for us, helping us. The words of the new translation do not help me feel that way." Some say that the new translation fosters an image of a forbidding God rather than the loving Father that Jesus taught about, and an emphasis upon the individual rather than the community. The revised Penitential Act, for example, is seen by some to accent personal unworthiness ("...through my most grievous fault,") which tends to undermine the Mass as a celebration of the great and redeeming sacrifice of Jesus. "It takes us back to pre-Vatican II



times of separation rather than communion," lamented one regular daily Mass participant. Still others consider the changes rather minor and are comfortable just "going with the flow."

Overall, the congregation and music ministers have responded favorably to *The Mass of Renewal*, the musical setting for the Mass acclamations (Amen; Holy. Holy; Lamb of God, etc.) chosen by the liturgical music planners for use at all weekend Masses during the transition period. "It is easy to learn and melodic, and, hopefully, will be sung with enthusiasm by the congregation on Easter Sunday," said one liturgical musician. Another suggested that some regular musical instruction for the congregation needs to be provided in order to help make that happen.

(continued on back page)

## Blessed Are the Caregivers

**D**id you know that Saint Elizabeth has a Home and Hospital Pastoral Care Team?

Members of this ministry team provide loving emotional and spiritual support during difficult times to the hospitalized, homebound and those in nursing homes. Home and Hospital is open to all parishioners – anyone is welcome to join the team, and services are available to all.

Whenever a request for a visit is received at the parish ministry center, one of the parish staff forwards the request to the team coordinator, Maureen Bonito. Particular requests might entail a single visit or multiple visits over an extended period of time. Some requests are specifically for the reception of Holy Communion, while other requests may be more general in nature, allowing for team members to come up with unique ways to provide help. For example, some team members read the Psalms during their visits, give the homebound a beautiful rosary and pray the rosary with them. The team provides company to those living alone or who just need someone to listen. At other times, team members visit a parishioner in the hospital, or help a mom with a new set of twins at home. No visit is really ever the same, but the opportunities to give care are boundless.

Expect to make friends in this

ministry. It's about sharing God's love, praying together, listening and laughing together. Relationships that start with regular Holy Communion visits or a one-time hospital call have grown into lasting friendships. And exciting discoveries can occur. One Home & Hospital team member discovered in conversation that she was from the same town in Ohio as the mother and daughter she was visiting.

Saint Elizabeth's Home and Hospital Pastoral Care Team is about sharing one's talents, whatever they might be. On one occasion, a team member arrived as "Nurse Nancy" in a clown costume to pamper a 98-year-old lady with the a foot massage while another member gave her a beautiful manicure. It was a time to remember and cherish for everyone.

"I really believe that our team members receive much more than they give out of this ministry," said Maureen Bonito. "The spiritual and emotional support that members provide is returned many times over."

In the Home & Hospital ministry, one truly appreciates what it means to be part of the Body of Christ: to think of oneself as a tabernacle and bring Jesus to the people one visits, and to see Jesus looking back at you through their eyes.

If you are interested in knowing

more about this very special ministry, please contact the parish ministry center (610-321-1200).

~ Kathy Link

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## Good Works Ministry

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these projects, we give ourselves the gift of achievement, friendship, joy, happiness, personal satisfaction, and contentment especially today – in helping two new friends with disabilities experience the fulfillment of Baby Jesus' Christmas promise of love."

All Saint Elizabeth Good Works volunteers live out the *Parish Stewardship Prayer* by actively bringing God's love and compassion to our neighbors in need. Well over 200 parishioners have participated in this ministry to date, ranging in age from 3 years old (making PB&J sandwiches) to volunteers in their 80's. Saint Elizabeth youth groups routinely participate, as well. Anyone is welcome to join, from skilled craftsmen to those unskilled but willing to learn.

For more information, go to the Good Works link on the parish website: [stelizabethparish.org](http://stelizabethparish.org).

~John Irwin and Monsignor Mullin



# Parishioners' Responses to the New Roman Missal Prayers

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In addition, the priest-celebrant needs to read the prayers more attentively, since the most significant changes in the Roman Missal affect the prayers proclaimed by the priest on behalf of the congregation (such as the Eucharistic Prayer and the three prayers proper to each Sunday and feast day). "It is good for me to listen more closely as I speak the prayers," said Msgr. Mullin. "While some of the expressions are a little awkward for me, their very unfamiliarity offers an invitation

to deeper reflection on the mystery we celebrate together."

In time, the revised prayer texts will feel as familiar as the previous translation of the Roman Missal, making us more comfortable and less self-conscious about participating fully at Mass. Regardless of one's particular disposition toward the new translation of the Roman Missal, its introduction does give all of us an opportunity for discussion and prayerful reflection on the Liturgy of the

Mass and the congregation's critical role in making the central act of worship in our Catholic Faith a fitting one for our loving God and Father.

***Peace be with you...and with your Spirit!***

~Lisa Sheronas

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