

Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church  
Cedar Knolls NJ

## Parish Update March 26, 2024

### **Young Adult Eric Hasenbein Accepted as Candidate to the Priesthood**

We are excited to share the Good News that Bishop Kevin Sweeney has accepted young adult parishioner Eric Hasenbein as a candidate for the Priesthood in the service of the Diocese of Paterson! We have been blessed by Eric's inspiring faith, service, and witness here at Notre Dame.

*"I was born and raised on the border of Morristown, Hanover, and Cedar Knolls. Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel is where my family attended Church and is what I have called my home parish all my life. I went through CCD and received all of the sacraments at NDMC, with the exception of Baptism."*



*"High school is where I really began to be involved, joining our youth ministry, Antioch retreats, and Operation Appalachia.*



*"After graduating high school in 2020, I decided to go to Virginia Tech to study engineering. While in college, I joined our Catholic Campus Ministry and quickly found my home and community for the next four years. I was surrounded by great friends who took their faith seriously and wanted the best for me.*





*"It is where I fell in love with Jesus in the Sacraments, particularly daily Mass, daily Adoration, and frequent confession. I was elected to serve on the leadership team, where I served as our Liturgy Minister for two years. It was also where I joined a discernment group for men considering the priesthood."*



*"It was within my second year at university that I began to seriously hear the call to consider the priesthood. It became the forefront of my prayer, and day by day, I felt the Lord leading me on this path. When I was home on break, I would attend discernment events sponsored by the Diocese of Paterson. While most of my discernment was at school, I felt most at home here in the Diocese of Paterson."*



*"I will graduate from Virginia Tech this Spring with an Industrial and Systems Engineering degree. In the Fall, I will further discern my vocation with the Diocese of Paterson at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, NY. Please pray for me as I begin my Propaedeutic year of prayer and discernment this Fall!" Eric Hasenbein*

Let us lift Eric in full prayer and support as he begins to respond to this holy and sacred call by Jesus to the Priesthood.

## **God's Healing Grace Present in Our Past and Our Future**

**By Dcn. Eric Kispert**

***"Every Saint has a Past, and Every Sinner has a Future."** This was the theme of a **Matt Talbot** weekend retreat I was privileged to lead earlier this month at Loyola Jesuit Center in Morristown.*



*“Every Saint  
has a Past  
and  
Every Sinner  
has a Future”*

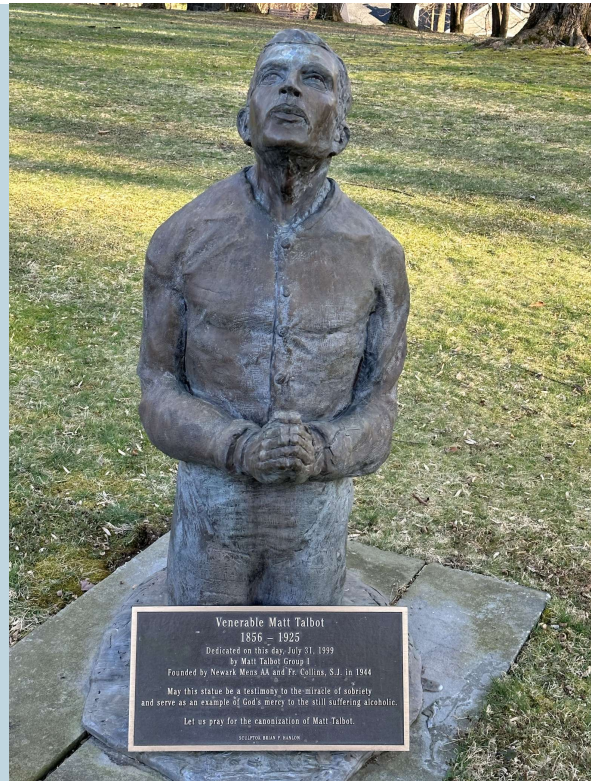


*Ninety recovering alcoholics from Bayonne, Hoboken, and Jersey City participated in this 3-day experience. Our time together included conferences, small group break-out sessions, Mass, and evening AA meetings. In addition, I spent time with numerous men in individual consultation. These private sessions allowed the men to deal with any issue that weighed heavily on their hearts, from fidelity to faith, as well as resentment and relapse.*

*While in diaconal formation, the first true calling I had about ministry was to lead Matt Talbot Retreats. As a clinical social worker who has worked with persons in recovery for nearly 30 years, I have always felt it would be a natural fit. Truly, my time with these men was tender, heartfelt, and an enormous blessing (for all of us!).*

*Matt Talbot (1865-1925) was an Irishman who “took the pledge” and gave up drinking at the age of 28. Through God’s grace and Matt’s determination, he maintained his sobriety until his death. Currently, he is Venerated in the Catholic Church and on the path to sainthood. Interestingly, Loyola Jesuit Center is also the birthplace of the Matt Talbot Retreat movement. It began in 1944 and has grown worldwide. Matt Talbot retreats are a place where recovering men and women can gain strength, fortify their*

*recovery, and deepen their faith in their Higher Power.*



## **Daughters of Grace: Fruits of the Journey!**

One of the main goals in embarking on the **Daughters of Grace Ministry** was to offer opportunities that would invite and welcome younger women with greater intention to engage more actively in the life of the parish and their faith journeys. Through prayer, planning, and mentoring, we have begun to see fruitfulness in this mission.

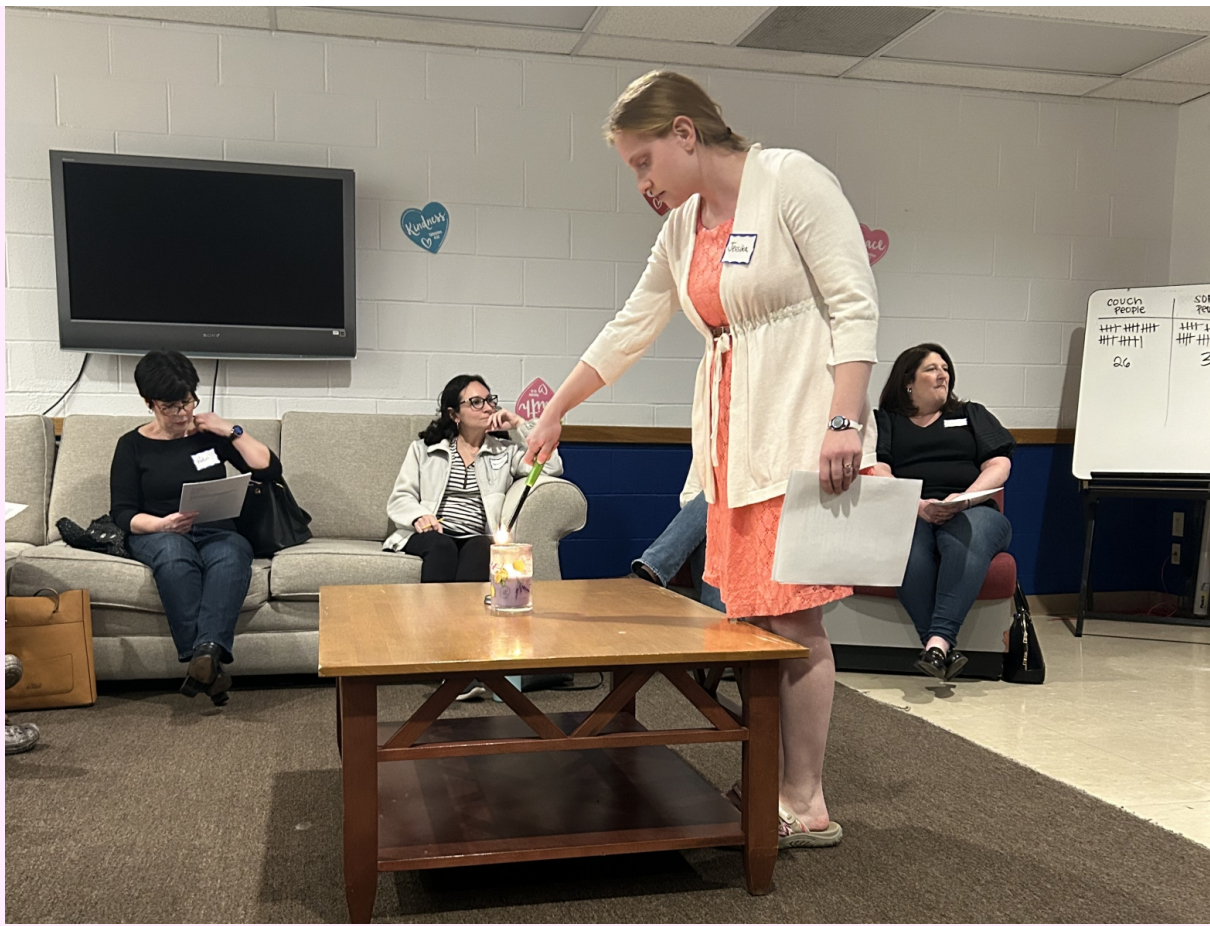
While much ground is yet to be covered, we are grateful for every milestone made possible through the Holy Spirit and the courage, faith, and commitment of our younger sisters - they are witnessing that there is indeed room in our space for their gifts, talents, and leadership. From their hearts have surfaced most recently the ideas of a **Moms & Tots Playgroup** (next one on Saturday, April 27 at 2 pm) and a **Special Collection for Mothers in Need** during the first weekend in May; stay tuned for details!





Jessika Caruso led the most recent Spa for the Soul session. Below, she shares about her experience:

*“At first, I had some doubts about leading a Spa for the Soul meeting. Meditation has never been something that is central to my life. However, the great thing about these sessions on the Beatitudes is that each leader can put her own spin on it. I brought in a blog post and music video about the topic of “mercy” that were fruitful in my own prayer life. To my surprise, through the work of the Holy Spirit, they resonated on a deeply human level with a lot of the women in attendance.*



*I love these sessions because God can work through the facilitator and the participants to bring peace to the soul through the simplest word, phrase, song, or prayer. I would recommend that other women try leading a session because I have confidence that God can use what you want to share to speak to someone else."*  
 Jessika Caruso

## **Discipleship Groups: On the Lenten Journey**

### **The Catholic Parent: Trying Out a New Faith-Sharing Format!**

*"I have offered discipleship groups for young parents over the past few years. Even though these groups were held over Zoom to make it easier for parents to participate, they did not attract more than a few participants. I was reluctant to volunteer when I was invited to consider offering another discipleship group this Lent. A couple of weeks later, I began to receive emails regarding a video series on Formed, a Catholic "Netflix" called **The Catholic Parent**. I watched the videos and thought they would be great to share with parents. However, I knew having a set day and time to meet, even via Zoom, would not work for most parents. So, I reached out to Cristina, and together, we devised a way to offer a discipleship*



group for parents that would allow them to participate when they can via a Facebook closed group and have a couple of set times to meet as a group.



Our first session was via Zoom, and the last was in person at Notre Dame, but in the several weeks between, I would post a question regarding the next video's topic on Facebook, such as "What is your first memory of going to confession?" then post the video and ask for feedback a few days later. We covered the following topics: attending Mass, confession, praying, sacrifice, generosity, and passing on the faith.

The Facebook format was a success. It was conducive to parents' busy schedules since they could watch the videos and comment when they had the time. It also gave parents time to formulate their answers before responding. I was deeply moved and impressed by some of the comments the parents shared, and I believe some may not have been communicated if another discipleship format had been used. It was also a privilege to learn more about the parents in the group - what their lives were like growing up and the struggles and joys they are experiencing today.

The experience also allowed me to reflect and share my memories and thoughts regarding the topics discussed with the group. It also taught me that no matter what the ages of your children are, there is always room to grow and learn as a Catholic parent." Diane Byrne, DG Group Leader

---

### Into His Likeness

"My discipleship group, Into His Likeness, ended this past week. For the first time,

*my group's participants spanned various ages, too. The series was ideal for a discipleship group, with the word disciple in the subtitle, Be Transformed as a Disciple of Christ. I was privileged to facilitate the sessions and learn from my peers.*



*Our discussions yielded practical steps we could take to grow in faith. Everyone was willing to speak, making the others in the room feel comfortable. Attendees shared personal stories, ministry experiences, and previous group insights. Many wished the series could have lasted longer, but the participants and I promised to remain in touch. As we learned, discipleship would be a continuous journey, one that required the support of fellow disciples.” DG Leader, Christa Cottone*

---

### **The Hidden Power of Kindness**

*I was drawn to the title of our discipleship group book, ‘The Hidden Power of Kindness,’ as our world needs kindness more than ever. We all met the first night and concluded we are generally kind people but could improve in ways not only to make others feel important but to be kinder to ourselves, too.*





*‘Kindness is contagious’ says the author Fr. Lovasik - we should catch it and spread it. Our discussions and videos have helped me recognize the good in others. I also recognize the importance of avoiding gossip, harsh judgment of people we hardly know, and letting go of grudges that keep us from having a close relationship with God. ‘In a world where you can be anything, be kind.’*

*Liz Laverty, DG Co-Leader*

## **Family Faith: More Lenten Traditions**

**By Diane Byrne, Elementary Family Faith Coordinator**

*This past Palm Sunday, Daniel and Lizzy Santos spoke about a Holy Week tradition they participated in in Mexico on Sunday. Before Daniel and Lizzy married, they would go with a church group to a remote town that did not have a priest. They would offer Holy Week celebrations in the town and visit people in their homes. Extraordinary Ministers also joined the group so people in town could receive the Eucharist. It was a joy for Daniel and Lizzy to help bring Jesus to the townspeople during this special week.*



### ***On the Lentopoly front...***

In case you missed the news, our Lentopoly initiative made the Beacon! Click below to access the article...



# Lentopoly: super-sized parish game encourages children to perform good deeds

By MICHAEL WOJCIK  
NEWS EDITOR

**It all depends on the roll** — or rather the throw — of a giant inflatable die.

This Lent, a Monopoly-like game, gives elementary students of Family Faith Formation at Notre Dame of Mount Carmel Parish a spiritual head start each Sunday. Before the 9:30 a.m. Family Mass in the church, two of the children, preK-5th grade, roll the giant die, which determines the two “good deeds” — a sacrifice or a blessing — everyone has the choice of performing that week. The game also involves a large board and two game pieces that look like the priests of the parish in the Cedar Knolls neighborhood of Hanover Township.

Welcome to Lentopoly, a voluntary game that Notre Dame started on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. Everyone wins at this game, which urges participating students to incorporate the three aspects of Lent — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving — into at least one day of the week. They are also encouraged to perform these deeds as a family. A first-time activity at Notre Dame, Lentopoly will end on Palm Sunday.

Nick Butler, 9, accepted such challenges as cheerfully giving up sweets and screen time on his digital devices.

“It was a little hard. I gave up things I love: the game Roadblox and my favorite candy, Swedish Fish,” said Nick, who played Barbie Monopoly with his sister, Alexa, 6, for one of the tasks. “Jesus gave up something for us [dying on the cross for the sins of the world], so we are giving up something for him.”

After the students throw the die, the game pieces are advanced to the designated number of spaces to reveal that week’s tasks. The pieces resemble Father Paddy O’Donovan, pastor, and Father Alex Nevitt, parochial vicar. Other tasks include complementing a family member three times a day, reading the bible for 15 minutes, and refraining from whining or complaining for a day. Families often perform both options. Parents email a photo of their children performing the tasks to Notre Dame.

“We love that Lentopoly engages the kids in Lent. It’s fun,” said Cayte Butler, who also participates with her children and husband, Greg.

Catherine Castillo, 7, performed tasks, such as making cookies with her father, Dave, and delivering them to a neighbor as a surprise. She also lit a candle in prayer for her late grandmother.

“I had fun making cookies with my dad. My neighbor was happy to get them. It felt good to give them. It’s nice to do things together,” Catherine Castillo said.

Before the students play the game in church, some families talk about activities they undertake for Lent. Diane Byrne, elementary family faith coordinator, and her Family Mass team developed Lentopoly, inspired by materials Byrne read online. Volunteers created the board and game pieces.

“Lentopoly is a fruitful exercise that encourages kids to live out their faith at home,” Father Nevitt said. “We want parents to take ownership of teaching their kids the faith. At Notre Dame, we are always trying new things.”



Beyond The Beacon episode 47:

## A beautiful faith breakthrough for a teen and his dad

What’s the secret to passing on the faith? A father and teenage son explore the nuances of this question and more with Bishop Kevin J. Sweeney and co-host Jai Agnish for episode 47 of the Beyond The Beacon podcast. Dennis Dalelio and his oldest son, Eli, — close friends of Agnish’s — strive to live a life of faith, hope, and love in Vernon, N.J., where they live and are active in catechesis at Our Lady of Fatima. Eli is a 17-year-old senior at Sussex County Technical School. He was confirmed by Bishop Sweeney two years ago when he took the confirmation name Albertus Magnus. Dennis is a long-time photography teacher at Paramus High School. He also volunteers at his parish, taking photos and teaching the faith as an eighth-grade catechist. Dennis has photographed for The Beacon, and created and hosts the The Stolen Hours podcast. Dennis also designed the artwork for Beyond The Beyond.

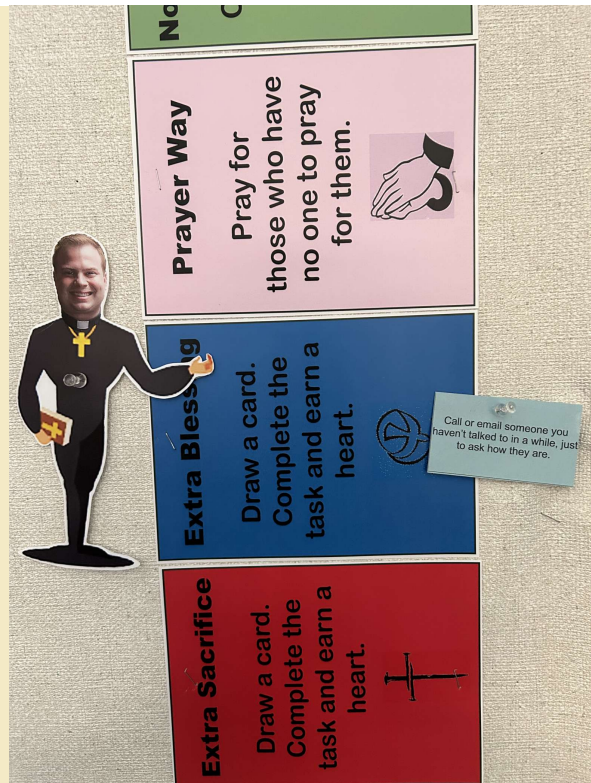
Listen on the major podcast platforms or watch the episode on Bishop Sweeney’s YouTube channel.



**‘ROLL’ WITH IT** Above left: Diane Byrne, elementary family faith coordinator of Notre Dame of Mount Carmel Parish, leads Family Faith Formation students in playing Lentopoly, a game that encourages the young people to incorporate the three aspects of Lent — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving — in their lives. With Byrne are Hudson and Lennon Matarazzo and Father Alex Nevitt, parochial vicar. Above right: Robert Signorello throws a giant die during the game held before the Family Mass on Sunday for Lent. Top right: Nick and Alexa Butler play Barbie Monopoly to perform one of their “good deeds.”

*This past Sunday was the conclusion of our Lentopoly game! We are grateful for all the families who participated in the weekly challenges, and we pray this initiative lifted the Lenten journey of our Domestic churches!*





## Knights of Columbus Celebrate St. Patrick's Day!

By Dennis Fashano



*Over 100 people donned their green outfits and beads when they attended the St. Patrick's Day celebration held at the OLM gym on Saturday, March 16th. The Knights helped set up tables and chairs, decorated the gym with green, white, and orange crepe paper, and cooked for the event.*

*Attendees enjoyed a delicious Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner, drank as much beer as they wanted, sang Irish songs, and danced the night away. Everyone had a ball, and the photos below prove everyone had a great time!*



*Please look for more information on the KoC's local Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Council 6904 and upcoming events in future Updates. If you are interested in joining the Knights or have questions, please contact Vinny LoBello (OLM) at [vinlobello@aol.com](mailto:vinlobello@aol.com) or John Monahan (ND) at [johnmonahano8@gmail.com](mailto:johnmonahano8@gmail.com).*

**This Week's Mass  
& Lamp Intentions**

**Parishioner  
Announcements**

## ***Memories that share our story...***

***Heartfelt thanks to all who support our Communications Ministry here at Notre Dame!** The sharing of moments and experiences of encounter (captured in words, photos, or video) and re-telling of our stories and their impact on our spiritual journeys allows us to bring the "Good News" to those within and beyond the walls of our parish who may need that inspiring "touch" to take the next step in drawing closer to our Lord. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure are invaluable to our mission and are deeply appreciated!*

### ***Easter Egg Hunt***



### ***7:30 am Mass***





*Family Mass*





*6:00 pm Mass*







Sent by Cristina Folan - Communications

[Reply](#)

Direct replies to this email can only be seen by admins. Click the blue Reply button above to leave a public comment. Email me when people reply to this note

To ensure that these emails land in your inbox and do not go into spam, please add [mail@flocknote.com](mailto:mail@flocknote.com) to your email address book or safe senders list.



[my info](#) • [unsubscribe](#)

75 Ridgedale Avenue, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927 • [ndcarmel.com](http://ndcarmel.com)