

July 27, 2005

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This past week Sr. Rose Marie Lipke, CPD had lunch with our parish staff and signed an agreement to come on board as a Pastoral Associate at Holy Family Parish. I wrote about Sr. Rose Marie a few weeks ago but since some of you may have been away at that time, let me reprise a bit of that.

The title "pastoral associate" is used to describe a lay person or a member of a religious community who is a paid, professional member of a parish staff, sharing responsibility for daily pastoral care of the people of the parish. Persons who serve the parish community as pastoral associates, and who by formation and education are qualified for this role, bring to the parish their competence and compassion which finds expression in a wide range of pastoral services. I'm grateful to our search committee members (Pat Waggett, Sheila Spooner, Gary Lorenz, Bill Reed, Paul Lovecchio, Susan Bierwagen, Sandra Mueller and Helen Cushman) who received and reviewed resumes from 16 candidates and interviewed the most promising of the applicants. We met several top-notch candidates in this process but unfortunately our parish budget allows for only one to be hired this year. Rose Marie belongs to the Sisters of Divine Providence. She is returning to the Boston area after working for several years in her religious community in Pennsylvania, before which she served as a pastoral associate for 14 years at St. Eulalia Parish in Winchester, MA

As the above "definition" notes, a pastoral associate shares in the day-to-day pastoral care of the people of the parish. In particular, Sr. Rose Marie will take on some particular responsibilities including: ministry to bereaved families at time of death; helping families to prepare the funeral liturgy; leading prayer at wakes and graveside services; coordination of RCIA (the process by which adults become Catholic); lector training; eucharistic minister training; working with the Sunday children's dismissal at 9:30 Mass; and working with the Spiritual Development Commission on coordination of half-day retreats and days of recollection. These and other responsibilities will belong to Sr. Rose Marie as she begins to make herself at home in our parish community.

Rose Marie will arrive around August 15 and will have an office in the Parish Center in West Concord. While we have a place for her to stay upon arriving, we are still looking for a long-term residence and a notice to that effect with more info is in the main bulletin.

I know you will welcome Sr. Rose Marie warmly. It strikes me that for some in the parish, especially our younger members, Rose Marie may be the first "nun" they are meeting. A little vocabulary lesson: though many of us grew up calling sisters "nuns," that term nun more accurately refers to women who live a monastic or cloistered life. Thus, not all women in religious communities are actually nuns. The term used today for a sister is "woman religious." A woman religious is one who joins a religious community and its work, making vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Rose Marie belongs to the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence who were founded in Germany in 1851 by Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz, Germany and a French noblewoman Baroness Stephanie Amelia Starkenfels de la Roche, who became the first superior of the new community. The Industrial Revolution of the 19th century brought hardships to the German people, especially unskilled workers. The purpose of this religious community was to educate young women in rural areas and to nurse the sick poor. In 1876 five Sisters from Germany traveled to the United States. Here they taught German immigrants who had settled in the areas around Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Today the Congregation ministers with and among people in Germany, the United States, Korea, Puerto Rico, Peru and the Dominican Republic. These sisters have accepted the mission to further the Providence of God throughout the world answering the needs of the people. They continue the charism of the Congregation in this 21st century as they strive to be the face of God's Providence to the world. (divineprovidence-cdp.org) I'm pleased that Providence has brought Sr. Rose Marie to Holy Family Parish!

I leave this weekend for three week's vacation. I'll be on the Cape, and in Maine, New Hampshire, New York state and Vermont. Fr. Ron Coyne, a seminary classmate, will be here in my absence. Please give him a warm welcome!

By Labor Day our new Bose sound system should be installed! I am grateful to a family in the parish whose generosity has covered the cost of this important addition to our worship.

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming