

# OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CHURCH

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Dear Parish Family,

A Blessed Labor Day Weekend to all of you. We take a moment from our summer's end to thank God for a beautiful summer and for employers, employees, those who are out of work and seeking gainful employment that the Lord will bless you abundantly at this time. For all newly retired and long-time retired we thank you for all the hard work and dedication to your work you gave over the years. Labor Day weekend signals the beginning of another school year and as we prepare to welcome back our students and children in religious education, we are blessed here at Our Lady Star of the Sea to have such a cadre of enthusiastic and dedicated teachers and catechists.

When I began school in 1957 I attended Saint Luke's School in the south Bronx. At that time there were 16 Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt, New York who staffed the parochial school, along with 4 Brothers of the Sacred Heart, we had a population of over 1100 students. My first grade teacher was Sister Eucharica, OP. She had over 50 of us in her classroom and in the first grade she single handedly prepared us for our 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation, and 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion, she taught us the alphabet, phonics, reading, religion and penmanship. Although there is not much I recall from that time, I do recall that once we were able to print our names, we had name cards on our desk. On one side it was a name card and the other was the printed words "Jesus is Lord". The name Eucharica, stood for Eucharist or "Thanksgiving". She later became a lifelong friend. Years later when I was a newly ordained deacon I was assigned to Saint Catharine of Alexandria Church in Blauvelt, New York she taught the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and exclaimed to the class, "I am the Alpha and Omega, I saw your beginning and I see your end". The motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters that taught me was just down the street. As my family moved from Saint Luke's, to Saint Nicholas of Tolentine in the Bronx, and then to Saint Charles Parish on Staten Island, they were all staffed by this community. When I arrived at West Point, we had two Blauvelt Dominican Sisters, Theresa Lardner, OP as our Director of Religious Coordinator and Sister Gail Haggerty, OP as campus minister. It seemed that with every assignment I had there were Dominican Sisters there.

At Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Church from 1984-1988, there was Sister Vincent Cirelli, OP, and then when I became a member of the Parish Mission Team, Sister Mary Reddy, OP was a former team member and two women joined the order, now Sister Terry Rickard, OP, the director of Renew International and Sister Kathleen Mc Manus, OP, theologian teaching at the University of Portland.

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Well God has a sense of humor, I joined the Associates of the Blauvelt Dominicans by way of thanks for the wonderful way these women of faith and deep compassion have journeyed with me throughout my life. It seems there's a Blauvelt Dominican connection here at Our Lady Star of the Sea, Pat O'Neill's sister is Sister Mary Doris, OP. She ministers to the people of Sacred Heart Parish in the Bronx at the Highbridge Community Center. These sisters are still committed and serving about 130 strong, once they numbered over 600. I have offered multiple Masses for Jubilees, Renewal of Vows, Funerals, and 1<sup>st</sup> professions. Next weekend they will be selling chance books for their Fall Festival in Blauvelt on the motherhouse grounds. Please help support these fine women. I want to honor by name Sister Eucharis White, OP, Sister Petrina Pascuzzi, OP, Sister Maria Goretti Biggins, OP, Sister Jordan Marie Dillon, Sister Marie Terence O'Mara, OP, Sister Mary Enda Cotter, OP, Sister Theresa Lardner, OP, Sister Josephine Gilhooly, OP, Sister Mary Paul Enright, OP, Sister Joanna Glover, OP, Sister Agnes Carmel Mc Kernon, OP, Sister Ann Connolly, OP, Sister Judith Campbell, OP. Jesus said, "The greatest among you is one who serves the rest" – These brave women laid the foundation for me to understand the Eucharist, and "Jesus is Lord".

It's thanks to them, I'm with you today. May the Holy Spirit inspire our youngsters this year.

Fr. Tom Devery