



# The Visitation Visitor

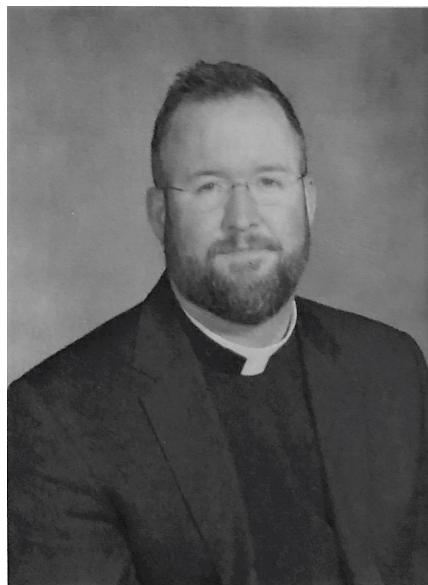
VISITATION OF THE BLESSED  
VIRGIN MARY CHURCH

Volume 20 Issue I

February 2022

## Fifth Pastor Installed at Visitation BVM

by Patricia Drewicz



Reverend Robert M. Gross was canonically installed as the fifth pastor of Visitation Blessed Virgin Mary parish in Trooper on Sunday, September 19, 2021, during the 11:00AM Mass with Bishop Edward M. Deliman as main celebrant, Fr. Bob's long-time friend and mentor. Mass was concelebrated by over 20 of Fr. Bob's priest friends. Fr. Bob served as a deacon at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Buckingham and was ordained to the Priesthood by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput on May 17, 2014, at Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. Fr. Bob was assigned for four years to Our Lady of Grace Parish in Penndel, PA, and then for two years as parochial vicar of Saint Helena before coming to Visitation in 2020 as Parochial Administrator.

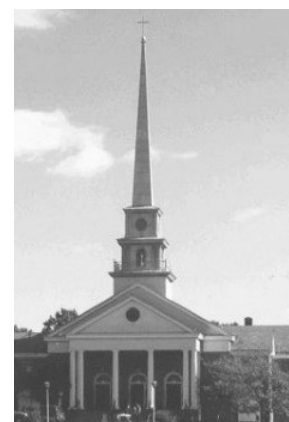
Fr. Bob loves his family. He grew up in Long Island, NY, with loving parents, Bob and Mary Gross, a

younger brother who is a NYC police officer and an older sister who is a teacher. His soccer and basketball coaches, Margie and Gerry Shepherd, attended the installation and shared their memories of Fr. Bob. *"I remember young Bobby on the altar- not as a priest of course, or even a deacon. Not even as an altar boy. But as a cow, or maybe even Joseph – not an angel surely. Bobby was one of the numerous children volunteered by their mothers to act out Bible stories during family Masses. From such humble beginnings..."*



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## Parish Profile — Father Francis Mulranen

*by Joe Gavanus*



There's an old adage, "The more things change, the more they remain the same". This might apply to having Father Francis Mulranen in residence as a Senior Priest at Visitation Parish. For those old enough to remember, Father was stationed here before as a Parochial Vicar. And now, he has returned to share his priestly ministry with us again.

Father is a Delaware County native and attended St. James High School. After graduation, he entered St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. His priestly vocation began with his ordination into the priesthood in 1982. He was one of twenty six men ordained that year from St. Charles. Later this year, he will celebrate his fortieth year in the priesthood.

Father Mulranen's first assignment as a newly ordained priest was at St. Louis parish in Yeadon. From there he moved to St. Cecilia's Parish in Coatesville where he spent eight years ministering to their community. From there, he was transferred to St. Titus Parish in East Norriton. After a brief two-year tenure there, he was assigned to come to Visitation Parish. He joined our parish community in 1992 and stayed with us eight years until 2000. Then he was again transferred to a parish in his native Delaware County, St. Lawrence in Upper Darby.

In the middle of his four years of priestly ministry at St. Lawrence, in 2002, his life changed dramatically. It was then that Father was diagnosed with stage three cancer. He spent two more years at St. Lawrence before being

reassigned as Chaplain at St. Martha Center for Rehabilitation and Healthcare while his cancer treatments continued.

Father remarked that his cancer came back twice during the years of his treatment but it was God's will that he was kept alive to continue his ministry. He credits his "miraculous recovery" to his devotion to the Blessed Mother and a gift of blessed water from Lourdes, France. He was declared cancer free in January of 2021!

Wasting no time, he heard of an opening for a senior priest here at Visitation and he jumped at the chance to come back again. In June of 2021, he began his residency here to be "home again". At a recent Mass, he commented in his homily that he "gained ten pounds thanks to eating all the cookies and candy that parishioners lavished on him during the Christmas holiday season!" "Which", he went on to say, "I thoroughly enjoyed and was grateful to receive".

When not looking out for the spiritual well-being of our community, Father likes to spend his spare time reading, watching Philly sports on TV, golfing, and taking walks on the beach in Sea Isle City where a priest friend has a condo. Being of Irish / German descent, he calls himself a "meat and potatoes guy" in terms of food, with meatloaf being his favorite.

When asked what one word would describe him the best, he thoughtfully responded, "Prayerful – as a positive trait; but, patient to a fault, as a negative one". Let's hope that Father remains with us for many years to come. We are truly blessed to have him here at Visitation Parish. Welcome Home!





# The Visitation Visitor

## Youth Ministry at Visitation



By Laura Baldassari

The Ministry with Youth at Visitation comprises of junior high and high school teens. They can be parishioners or non-parishioners, practicing Catholics or newbies! #AllAreWelcome!

Our events are organized in a cyclical manner. The first week, we do something geared toward service. In February, we had the #VisiFam donate toiletry items at all of the Masses, the teens collected them, then when we met, we sorted everything, packaged up individual bags, and delivered everything to the Patrician Society in Norristown.

The second week is geared toward prayer and worship. On #SuperbowlSunday we had one of our cantors perform praise and worship music in the Upper Church while there was Adoration. It was so moving and it's so important for our teens to be able to have time with the Blessed Sacrament!

The third week is catechetical. We try and organize something more focused on theology and learning more about our faith. Last week, we had an #AskUsAnything session with our pastor, Father Bob and the pastor from St. Stan's, Father Sean. It was so great for the teens to hear from the priests in this way!

The fourth week is the FUN WEEK! This coming week, we are having Board Game Night! Last month, we had a movie night!

We also have sessions where we will go through programs like *The Search*, *Youth Alpha*, or our summer-long Bible Studies!

If you are interested in signing up your child for some #YouthMinistryAwesomeness, go to [VisiBVM.flocknote.com](http://VisiBVM.flocknote.com) and sign up for Youth Ministry!

If you have any questions, send an email to Laura Baldassari, the Coordinator of Ministry with Youth & Young Adults at [Youth@VisitationBVM.Org](mailto:Youth@VisitationBVM.Org)



### The Visitation **VISITOR**™

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# The Visitation Visitor

## Fifth Pastor Installed at Visitation BVM (continued)

(continued from Page 1)

His mother, Mary, shared her joy the day of installation expressing how blessed we are to have Bishop Deliman here today considering the special bond that was formed between he and their son 14 years ago. In 2007, Fr. Bob, then Bobby Gross, moved from NY with his college buddies to Manayunk, PA, but without a job. Bobby responded to an on-line ad for Youth Minister at St. Agnes Parish in West Chester, PA, where then Msgr. Deliman was pastor. It was working there that God called him to be a priest. Initially denying the vocation, Bobby said the rosary asking for the calling to go away. The rest is history.



Congratulation to our son,  
Fr. Bob, upon being installed as  
the 5<sup>th</sup> pastor of Visitation of  
BVM Parish. We are so happy  
for him! He is blessed to be a  
part of this outstanding parish.  
May God continue to guide Fr. Bob  
on his journey. How proud we are  
of our son for his commitment and  
dedication to his vocation!  
Thank you Visitation parish for  
so warmly welcoming all of Fr. Bob's  
family. We are truly grateful to  
the amazing people of the Parish.  
God Bless,  
Bob & Mary Gross

Knowing how important family is to Fr. Bob, Bishop Deliman acknowledged Fr. Bob's family, parents, Bob and Mary Gross, his brother, sister, and grandmother and assuring parishioners that Fr. Bob will love his parishioners as family in much the same way. "It feels good to belong and to be part of something bigger than yourself like Visitation parish." When Fr. Bob was assigned as Parochial Administrator, he said, "I look forward to being welcomed into the family of Visitation B.V.M. As I said, I love my family. Thank you for welcoming me into this family and I look forward to walking with you in faith together." Bishop Deliman's advice to Fr. Bob was, "Have fun being a pastor!", the same advice Cardinal Bevilacqua gave Bishop Deliman when assigned as a pastor in 1991. Bishop Deliman expounded his advice saying, "What the Cardinal meant was love and you will be loved in return." and "Mother Theresa said spread the love wherever you go and let no one leave without leaving happier." and "A pastor is someone bigger than himself."




## Fifth Pastor Installed at Visitation BVM (continued)

(continued from Page 4)

It is important to note that pastoral installation is not a Sacrament or even a sacramental but celebrated during Liturgy with the main purpose of reading the appointment and proclaiming of profession of faith by the pastor. Monsignor Nicolo, Pastor of St. Helena Church, read the Decree of Father Robert Gross being named Pastor of Visitation B.V.M. from Archbishop Nelson J. Perez and Bishop Deliman questioned Fr. Bob with Renewal of Promises. Canon Law says, "For the office of pastor to be conferred on someone, *his suitability must be clearly evident by some means determined by the diocesan bishop...*" During his homily, Bishop Deliman said to everyone present, "And now I ask you, as he's been here a year now, you're going to have to show me by some sign that we move forward." The congregation of 600+ responded with a resounding and lengthy standing ovation to which the bishop addressed Fr. Bob, "I guess you're staying."





**MOST REVEREND NELSON J. PEREZ**  
BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE FAVOR OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE  
ARCHBISHOP OF PHILADELPHIA

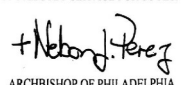
**DECREE**

FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD, I HEREBY APPOINT YOU  
REVEREND ROBERT M. GROSS  
AS PASTOR OF  
VISITATION B.V.M. PARISH  
NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
EFFECTIVE ON JUNE 21, 2021

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FROM THIS DATE ONWARD  
YOU SHALL TAKE CANONICAL POSSESSION OF THE PARISH  
WHEN MY DELEGATE  
SHALL PRESIDE AT THE CEREMONY OF YOUR INSTALLATION.

FROM THE MOMENT OF YOUR INSTALLATION AS PASTOR  
YOU SHALL OBTAIN THE FULL PASTORAL CARE OF SOULS IN THIS PARISH  
AND ARE BOUND TO EXERCISE IT FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO YOU  
WITH ALL THE JURISDICTION, FACULTIES, DUTIES,  
RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES ATTACHED THERETO,  
IN ACCORD WITH THE SACRED CANONS OF THE CHURCH  
AS WELL AS THE PROPER LAW OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA.

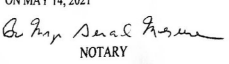
MAY GOD GRANT YOU THE GRACE AND HEALTH TO CARRY OUT YOUR DUTIES  
IN THIS NEW MINISTRY OF PRIESTLY SERVICE FOR SOULS.

  
ARCHBISHOP OF PHILADELPHIA

**SEAL**

GIVEN AT PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

ON MAY 14, 2021

  
NOTARY







# The Visitation Visitor

## It's Time to *REVIVE, RENEW, REJOICE* at Visitation

by Clare Hughes

In a time of a worldwide pandemic, the words *Revive, Renew Rejoice* conjure up a feeling of celebration, rejuvenation, and gladness. And that's just what the movement is all about.

In March 2020, the world as we knew it had changed. Personal interactions transitioned from in-person gatherings to more social media and digital connections, restaurants served only take-out meals, many businesses shifted to virtual workplaces and schools moved to a remote learning environment. Our spiritual places of worship closed their doors, too, and services, meetings and Masses were held via livestream.

At Visitation BVM, just as quickly as the parish adapted to the virtual environment, members of the Pastoral Council began preparing for the day the doors would reopen. A committee, led by Dom Zampogna, came together, and began making plans to welcome parishioners back to Mass and other ministries and programs at Visitation BVM. Their mission went beyond simply encouraging people to come back to Mass in person, but to also bring people back to participate in all aspects of parish life --- in ways bigger and better than before.

As the team brainstormed on what to name this initiative, the individual words "*revive*," "*renew*" and "*rejoice*" were mentioned. The words flowed so easily, and the committee realized they found a name that beautifully captured the mission. **Revive** reflects the sentiment of finding new and exciting ways to serve the needs of our parish family. **Renew** represents the opportunity for us to rekindle our relationship with God and our commitment to Visitation through our understanding and commitment. **Rejoice** is about showing gratitude and being happy for all that we have in His goodness.

Thus, *Revive, Renew, Rejoice* – a "movement" -- as Dom Zampogna refers to it, was set in motion. With the support from Father Bob, planning was underway. To get started, the committee collected feedback from parishioners by placing surveys in the pews at church. Next, the committee met with 60 Parish Ministry

Leaders for their insights and ideas. The data gathered helped the team find various ways to motivate the people of Visitation to come back to Mass in person, get involved in activities and reignite the spark in our parish following the darkness of the pandemic.

**Revive, Renew, Rejoice** has been a true light for our parish. The movement has inspired a host of different events bringing together our parish family in fun, social faith-filled ways, which have included the inaugural "Yogifest" event honoring God's creatures; the celebration of Fr. Bob's installation as Pastor at Visitation, the introduction of *Fellowship Sunday* providing a chance for parishioners to meet one another over coffee and donuts after Mass – with a special raffle for participants; and the return of our famous Christmas Bazaar in a safe and festive way. There are more activities to come, each of which focuses on getting out the message that Visitation is open and all are invited – and encouraged – to come back, participate, and enjoy time with our parish family.

Mary Pat Reuther, a member of the Pastoral Council and a participant on the Revive, Renew, Rejoice committee (who also serves as our Parish Manager) shared a simple, yet impactful, message stating "We miss you." Dom Zampogna added "Remember, Visitation is here for you and that Visitation IS you!" Each and every parish member is welcome to be an active part of the Visitation community.

Be sure to read the Parish Bulletin to learn about upcoming *Revive, Renew, Rejoice* events. If you would like to get involved, please join us at an upcoming meeting or contact the committee at [reviverenewrejoice@visitationbvm.org](mailto:reviverenewrejoice@visitationbvm.org).

Welcome back to Visitation!





# The Visitation Visitor

## C.A.R.E.S.

*by Patricia Gavanus & Colleen Henderson*

One crisp autumn morning, we sat on my back porch with the person who Visitation School parents have always found to be synonymous with the C.A.R.E.S. program and that person is Ellen Giammarco.

Ellen told us an uplifting story of how C.A.R.E.S. came about at Visitation School thirty-five years ago. It seems she was sitting at the old Markley Swim Club with a number of Visitation parents. They were discussing students coming home from school to their empty houses, especially during the first Fridays of the month when teachers had their monthly staff meetings. The students had a half day on those days but the parents did not have the afternoons off from work! What to do was a growing problem and Ellen took this concern to the principal at that time, Sister Chrisanne. That September, Ellen got a call from Sister about starting an afterschool program. And so C.A.R.E.S. began in 1986 with 15 students and at its peak in 2006 had grown to 135 students.

C.A.R.E.S. stands for "Children Are Receiving Extended Services". Students may enroll as young as pre-k and usually go up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Of course older children may also participate. Under the direction of Sister Diane, the kindergarten program was included in C.A.R.E.S. The program starts immediately after school and goes to 5:30 pm each day. A day in the program consists of: Roll call, a snack, unwind time either outside or in the gym, sports, and a half-hour of homework. Students may attend after school activities (choir, scouts, etc.) during C.A.R.E.S.

Fun is also on the agenda along with:

**C**Community  
**A**Activities  
**R**Recreation  
**E**Education  
**S**Safety



As we are nearing a new phase in the Covid pandemic, parents may need to return to work and C.A.R.E.S. is here to assist them. Ellen will be happy to take any new registrations if any family for any reason needs this program. For further information on the program, visit the Visitation School website at [www.school.visitationbvm.org](http://www.school.visitationbvm.org) if you are interested in registering, you may also contact Ellen Giammarco at 610-539-1796.

We sincerely thank the C.A.R.E.S. school staff, principal, and all those involved for this program's success. A sincere thank you goes out to Ellen Giammarco for initiating the program and following it through for 35 years.



# VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY CHURCH

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## The Visitation Visitor

**Do You Know?... Some interesting facts about our five pastors of Visitation BVM parish**

By Bob Hehn

### Do You Know?

- + Monsignor Larkin (1954 to 1980), Visi's founding pastor, was ordained in 1937 and entered the U.S. Navy as a chaplain in 1941. He served in the Pacific Theater for three years during World War II.
- + Monsignor Larkin's first priesthood assignment was at Holy Rosary Church in Reading before the formation of the Allentown Diocese in 1961.
- + Monsignor Clemins (1980 to 1999) initiated the present day Finance Committee in 1984, selecting 12 men whom he called his 12 apostles.
- + Monsignor Murray has 2 brothers (Joseph and Ignatius) who served as "brother" priests in the archdiocese and who were also designated Monsignors.
- + Fr. Terry (2016 to 2020) initially served 8 years as a Philadelphia archdiocesan priest and then served 25 years as a Marianist religious before rejoining the Archdiocese.
- + As a seminarian during his (year) apostolate, Fr. Bob (2020 to Present) ministered to inmates at Montgomery County Correctional Facility in Eagleville.