

March
2017



Our Fatima Family

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100th anniversary of The Miracle of Fatima

100 years ago, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared six times to three shepherd children—Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta. This occurred between May 13 and October 13, 1917 in the village of Fatima in Portugal.

The final apparition transpired before 70,000 witnesses. On that day, the sun was described as dancing. All could stare perfectly at the sun without any damage to their eyes. While watching the sun, the people saw it rotate, get larger and smaller and move closer to the people and then move away. It is said that every single person who was there saw the same phenomenon and that even non-believers dropped to their knees. The final miracle was reported in *O Seculo*, a public newspaper, which had previously written articles trying to humiliate the children about the prior apparitions.

Ted Homa '59 writes, "We as members of a Catholic school dedicated to the miracle of Fatima should feel special. Never in recorded human history has a supernatural phenomenon been predicted, recorded and witnessed by unbelievers and reported in a secular newspaper. The editor of the newspaper, *O Seculo*, was the target of huge backlash from the general populace and the communist government after his first report of the miracle and yet, a week later, he published another account of what he had witnessed, along with photos."

It is also said that three secrets were revealed to the children. The first secret was a vision of hell. The second secret

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The relief on the front of Our Lady of Fatima Church over the front entrance.

100th anniversary of Fatima

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was that WWI would end and that another war would begin during the papacy of Pope Pius XI if men continued to sin and Russia did not convert.

The third secret was only revealed to the public in the year 2000 after the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1981. The vision, as Lucia wrote about it in 1943, showed the martyrdom of the Pope and Bishops and religious men and women. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI) said in his theological commentary, "The purpose of the vision is not to show a film of an irrevocably fixed future. Its meaning is exactly the opposite: it is meant to mobilize the forces of change in the right direction. Therefore we must totally discount fatalistic explanations of the 'secret,' such as, for example, the claim that the would-be assassin of 13 May 1981 was merely an instrument of the divine plan guided by Providence and could not therefore have acted freely, or other similar ideas in circulation. Rather, the vision speaks of dangers and how we might be saved from them."



The Shrine to Our Lady of Fatima was built into the hillside, along Scarsdale Road, below the Our Lady of School in 1960.

Annunciation School has a shrine to Our Lady of Fatima. The shrine is located on St. Eleanoras Lane.



During this 100th anniversary year, if you visit a shrine to Our Lady of Fatima, please take a photo and we will print it in an upcoming newsletter. Send your photos to mtmc525@aol.com and put "OLF 100th Anniversary" in the subject line. Be sure to include your name and year of graduation.

Memories: My Path to Our Lady of Fatima School

By Walter Johanson '60

I was not a happy camper when I started at Our Lady of Fatima in January 1955. I was forced to go there. I must have been somewhat nervous because I had to bid farewell to schoolmates at P.S. 29 in Yonkers and adapt to new schoolmates and to much more rigorous academics.

The fact that I was at Our Lady of Fatima was nobody's fault but my own. Simply stated, I had been a bad boy—very bad boy.

We had been living in the Bronx, in a neighborhood where all my mom's aunts and cousins lived in the area between Park Avenue and the Concourse, Tremont Avenue on the south and Fordham Road on the north. Our neighborhood was being ruined by the building of the Cross Bronx Expressway.

About that time one of my mom's friends, who had been a co-worker at the phone company during the war, told her about her new home on Croydon Road in the Hearststone development in Yonkers. This was one of those cookie-cutter, quick-build housing developments, put up by crews who had done military construction during the war, the houses to be sold to other veterans who had returned from the war.

Well, there was one remaining unsold house, the last one on the street, which had been a model home. It was maybe 200 yards from that house to the one just occupied by my mom's friend. I vaguely remember it being a very quick purchasing decision, and we moved in on the last day of January 1953.

The nearest school, P.S. 29, was about half a mile away. Because the region immediately to the west of the school had not yet been developed, I literally had to walk the dirt roads through rain or snow in order to get to my first grade class taught by Ms. Joan Friedman.



Walter Johanson

The following September, an arrangement began by which the Catholic kids left the public school early on Tuesday afternoons and boarded buses to take them to St. Eugene's School on Tuckahoe Road for religious instruction. I liked the idea of released time, but not the religious instruction. There were only two of us who were released from Ms. Cooper's second grade class, yours truly and a friend who I shall only identify as Nick.

It must have been my bright idea, maybe two or three weeks into this program, that we could leave the classroom when the announcement was made to board the buses, but hide out in the boy's bathroom until after the buses left for St. Eugene's. When the coast was clear, we would leave the building, walk to Nick's place, and hang out in his playroom. About the time that we figured the buses would be returning from St. Eugene's, I would leave his house and walk home, proud that my weekly religious instruction was finished.

I got away with it. I got away with it, at least, for a couple of months, until maybe January or February 1954. As I was in the second grade, one day my mom asked me what date had been set for our class to receive First Communion. I was puzzled. "What's that?"

It was quickly beaten out of me that I had been playing hooky from religious instruction. Not only did my mom send me into orbit on that day—eight years before John Glenn—but she was most severely angry at School 29 for being responsible for my apostasy. In truth, her anger at the school personnel was most displaced.

My mom's conclusion was that my salvation required being removed from the clutches of the atheists running the public schools and being brought to the sanctuary of a Catholic school. The problem was which one?

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We had been attending Mass at St. Eugene's, but the parochial school had no spaces available for me or for my sister, then in Kindergarten, nor were there any openings anticipated. The same applied in Annunciation Parish, where we started attending in the hope that spaces were, or might become, open to us. No such luck.

The third and final selection in my mom's parish-shopping quest was Our Lady of Fatima. To her immense relief, it would appear that one of the executive families in the parish was planning to relocate, opening up a space for me in January 1955.

The rest is history. I remember that late on the Friday afternoon of my first week at Fatima, the door to our third-grade classroom (Ms. Gwendolyn Kriss) somehow got locked, and we could not get it opened. Nor could the custodian, Vincent. The assistant Pastor, Fr. John Kennedy, made a try also.

As a last resort, we evacuated the room through the windows, walking along the outside ledge and crawled through the window into the boy's bathroom, which was next to our classroom. I was so uptight that I deposited

the contents of my stomach on the floor when going to get my coat. In retrospect, though, a rancid tuna sandwich might have had something to do with my upset stomach.

Somehow, I eventually began to fit in, to get accustomed to the more rigorous academics and discipline. Math was a problem for a while. High school algebra was a cinch, but trig, not so, and it wasn't until I was in my mid-30s that I was able to ace a required Iona College MBA course in business calculus. The social studies were easier: I got 100% in the geography diocesan exam in 4th grade. That knowledge paid off last year, when I was able, in a radio contest, to answer a trivia question about the geography of Italy, and won a case of tomato sauce from Michael's in Brooklyn.

I have since been saying that the discipline at OLF was perhaps the greatest gift to me. The old Lenten regimen taught us both impulse control and the fact that we kids weren't the center of the universe. It also made discipline in high school at Mount St. Michael a piece of cake, and the Mount, in turn, made it not too difficult for me to adjust to the U.S. Marines.

Thank you, Our Lady of Fatima.

Milestones

Births

Andrew John Richardson was born at White Plains Hospital on August 12, 2016. His parents are John and **Nicole Ricci Richardson '90**. He was welcomed by his sister, Emily Rose, who is 4 years old, and his brother, Jack James, who is 2 years old. The Richardson family lives in Crestwood. Andrew was baptized at Annunciation Church on October 16, 2016, and his godparents are Karin Messina and Mark Zallo.



In Memoriam

Please pray for the souls of the following family of alumni:

Anna Tedone, mother of Rosanna '77

Judith Chimenti, mother of Joseph '66

Vito Simone, father of Maria '82 and Michael '85

May they Rest in Peace.

Reunion 2017 News—Two Upcoming Reunions!

Classes of 1957 to 1966

Please mark your calendars now for a reunion luncheon
on May 13, 2017.

Reunion invitations will be mailed out in early April!

Classes of 1967, 1977, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2007

Please mark your calendars now for the
evening of April 29, 2017.

Reunion invitations should be in your mailbox by the end of March!

Class notes

1959

Jim Groark and his wife, Kathy, have been married since 1961. They have been blessed with three children and two grandchildren. Living in San Diego since 1974, Jim has worked as a real estate broker/realtor, where he specializes in beach homes and residential income property. For the 15 years, he has raced Hawaiian outrigger canoes, both one-man and six-man. His favorite charity is familyradio.org, which is a network of 60 stations and can be heard on 1560 AM or 106.3 FM in the Westchester County area.

1960

Robert O'Donnell went off to Fordham Prep with OLF classmate **Gregory Arcaro**, where they graduated in 1964. Bob remembers taking **Michelle Gallery**, also an OLF Class of 1960 member, to his freshman prom. Bob continued on to Fordham Business School (1968) and then to Fordham Law School (1971). He spent the first five years of his legal career in the Westchester County District Attorney's office and the next forty years in private practice in Westchester. He is now semi-retired.

Bob has lived in Yorktown Heights for forty years. He and his wife, Heather, have raised five wonderful children. They also now have three beautiful grandchildren. Bob's hobbies are golf and travel. He says, "I have never forgotten my years at Fatima and the solid education I received. Nor have I forgotten all the fun we had, including sleigh riding with the nuns. The Dominican Sisters of Hope is a favorite charity of mine."

1961

Rick Bianchini, who shared photos of his family in the [November issue](#) of *Our Fatima Family*, writes in to give a further update. After OLF, he graduated from Roosevelt High School and then attended Westchester Com-

munity College until he was drafted during the Vietnam conflict. Rick served in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1969. After discharge, he worked as a sales manager for Curry Chevrolet for five years before being hired by AT&T.

In 1978, AT&T transferred Rick to Los Angeles, CA, where he went back to college and earned a B.A. in business management. He was a divorced father with custody of his two children, when he met Catherine. They fell very much in love and married a few years later. Rick says, "Catherine raised my kids as if they were her natural children."

In 1987, they transferred further south to the town of Mission Viejo, which Rick says was a dream come true. "Back then, Mission Viejo was California dreaming!" he recalls. "I retired from AT&T in 1993 because it looked like I was going to die from a very serious illness, but I fooled them and recovered. Today, I am 69, Catherine is 67, our daughter Lisa is 42, and our son Richard is 38. We have one granddaughter, Bella, who is 9."

In 1999, they moved up to the central coast of California. Rick says, "This is wine country. It is a bit colder up here, but there is no traffic, no crowds, and very mild, coastal weather. It's a very pleasant place to live at this stage of life. Catherine and I do a fair amount of volunteer work both at our church, St. Patrick's, and at the community food bank."

1964

Thomas Michael Rosato went to Iona Prep after graduation from Our Lady of Fatima. He went to Hofstra University on a football scholarship and received his B.S. in economics from there. Tom is managing director of O.C. Tanner Co., a company, that provides motivation and incentive programs for corporations.

Tom and his wife, Carol, have four children and three grandchildren. He is a member of Westchester County Club, where he was club president for three years. Tom loves to play golf and travel.

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1967

After graduation, **John Lucking** went on to Iona Prep and then to Boston College for both undergraduate and graduate school. He retired in 2008, after practicing law for thirty years in the New York and Chicago areas, most recently as general counsel to a Chicago-area company. John, who has lived in New Fairfield, CT and Hinsdale, IL, currently lives in Falmouth, MA on Cape Cod. He has one daughter, who is a Ph.D candidate at UCLA.

John enjoys hiking, fishing, sitting on the beach and traveling in his spare time. He says, "I still have the same Flexible Flyer used on those rock-strewn hills across from Fatima—although I'm not as flexible! I can be reached at JTLucking@gmail.com"

Kim Papa remembers that she was the first child to crown Our Lady because the statue first arrived when she as a student there, and Msgr. Madden was the Pastor. Kim currently lives in Brewster, NY. She has a 19-year-old daughter, Anna, who is at the University of Delaware studying nursing. Kim is a self-employed musician, teaching guitar, piano, bass, ukelele and banjo. She also tunes pianos. You may find Kim performing with local bands and doing some orchestra pit work. She is also



a 20-year volunteer EMT/firefighter in the Brewster Fire Department.

Andre L. Quetel moved to Vermont in 1978, where he has been a carpenter for 38 years. He lives in Lincoln, a small town with less than 1,000 residents and no traffic lights—just a general store. He is divorced and has 2 children; Travis is 31, and Audrey is 28. Andre says, "I live on 3.5 acres in a small cabin in the woods that I built. No cats, no dogs, no girlfriend, I try to keep it simple. I have a small camper that I tow with my truck and spend three or four months down south in the winter, mostly in Florida. I like to fish, especially fly fishing for trout out west. I also love cars and racing, and I raced in the Sports Car Club of America from 1975 to 1994. Now I just spectate."

Louis J. Roberti, Jr., a resident of Somers, NY, is a divorced father of two children—Louis III (15) and Sierra (13). Louis owns auto dealerships in northern Westchester County. The dealerships are all named Arroway and include Chevrolet, Cadillac, Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram and a newly acquired Ford dealership. Louis' hobbies include an extensive classic car collection, flying and boating. He tries to spend some time in Florida in the winter and sends his boat there from November to May.

In 2014, Louis was appointed by Governor Cuomo as a commissioner of the New York State insurance fund, a position he continues to hold. He is a past Chairman of the NYS Automobile Dealers Association and continues as Vice Chair of their legislative committee.

1968

Joan McGowan Zambetti graduated from Our Lady of Victory Academy in Dobbs Ferry, attended UCLA and graduated from Union Institute University. She moved to Los Angeles in 1977 and to Malibu in 1993. Her hus-

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band, John, a graduate of Georgetown and New York Medical College, is an emergency room doctor, and they have run The Emergency Group, Inc. for 35 years. Joan says, "Currently, we staff and manage seven urgent care facilities in the Los Angeles area." John is also a musician, who still plays and records with his band, The Malibooz, for over 50 years.

Joan and John have two children—Kathryn, who lives in San Francisco and works in commercial real estate, and Johnny, a musician with the group "The Palms" who lives in Malibu. The Palms have had their songs played in over 50 films, TV shows and commercials. Both Kathryn and Johnny graduated from Georgetown University. Joan says, "OLF inspired us to send our kids to Our Lady of Malibu, still my daughter's favorite school."

Joan recalls her grammar school days. "My siblings and I all enjoyed our days at OLF. My father, Robert McGowan, coached basketball and attended Mass daily until his passing last year. Six of the eight McGowan kids attended OLF. We all walked to school and home for lunch every day down Old Army Road from our house on Beech Hill Road. I have very fond memories of the many nuns and Mrs. Jeffery and the many good friends—all walking distance—a rarity in Los Angeles."

The Zambetti's hobbies include skiing, tennis, music, traveling and vintage car rallies around the U.S. and Europe. Joan closes by saying, "Our Lady of Fatima was a wonderful place to fuel our love of learning."

1970

Michele Cousin and her four siblings—three brothers and one sister—all attended OLF. She notes that she just turned 60 in December and says, "It's a wonderful life!" Michele is married and retired from a 35+ year career in retirement compliance. She has no children but has two wonderful rescue dogs.

Michele recalls, "In the early '80s, I was on a business trip to Fort Lauderdale, FL and stayed at a hotel overlooking the ocean. At that time, I looked out my window and thought 'this

is where I belong.' Thirty years later, I moved two blocks from that same hotel with my husband. Now we spend much of our time volunteering for various children's organizations, traveling and relaxing at the pool."

1973

Hans Flagg married **Eileen Sweeney** '75 in May 1987. They have three children. Courtney is 26, Elizabeth is 24 and Hans Jr. is 21. Hans is self-employed, running FlaggStaff Technology Group, Inc., a small information technology consulting and placement firm since 2002. He is an avid golfer and belongs to Scarsdale Golf Club. Eileen and Hans are



parishioners of Immaculate Heart of Mary, where they live in Scarsdale, NY. Together, they support several charities that are primarily focused in the pediatric cancer care space.

1976

Lori Canzone Lofaro went to Maria Regina High School and Iona College. She lives in Pleasantville, NY. She and her husband, Frank, have three children—Philip is 28, Nicole is 26 and Frankie is 21. Lori is a Pre-K teacher as well as a health coach, having studied at the Institute for Integrated Nutrition.

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1977

Karen Olivieri Nordone works in the insurance industry as a customer service representative. A widow with no children, she is happily in a relationship now and has a new puppy, named Princess, that is keeping her very busy. Karen lives in Tuckahoe, NY, and is looking forward to the Class reunion in April.



1988

Melissa Milevoj Spero entered OLF in the 2nd grade. After OLF, she went to Maria Regina High School. From there she attended Fordham University and Fordham University School of Law. She was a prosecutor for the New York City Law Department for over ten years, with her most recent position being the Bronx Borough Chief of the Family Court Division.

She has been married to her husband, Peter, for fifteen years. They have three daughters who attend Annunciation School in grades 7, 4 and Kindergarten. Melissa has found something special about being a part of the Annunciation-Our Lady of Fatima Crestwood community. Melissa says, "I am currently on hiatus from the practice of law, and enjoying every moment of raising my girls. I love having the opportunity to be able to volunteer at their school and am currently Annunciation's Home School Association President."

1991

Danielle DiCamillo Burgio is a 4th-grade teacher at Sacred Heart School in Hartsdale, NY. She is married to, Anthony, who is a lieutenant in the New York Police Department. They are parents to 2-year-old Sofia and live in Hartsdale.

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If you did not receive this issue of *Our Fatima Family* directly by email, or know someone who would like to receive the newsletter, you can click [**HERE**](#) to be added to our email database.

Didn't see a Class Note from your year?

You can help make Class Notes even better next time.

Send your class note today to [**mtmccombe@annunciationcrestwood.com**](mailto:mtmccombe@annunciationcrestwood.com) for inclusion in our next newsletter. Please encourage all your friends and siblings to do the same!

Do You Enjoy Writing?

If you enjoy writing and have some great memories about your time at Our Lady of Fatima School, I welcome you to submit your essays for future publication.

Please email your story to Mary Theresa McCombe at [**mtmccombe@annunciationcrestwood.com**](mailto:mtmccombe@annunciationcrestwood.com)

Not sure if your idea is right for the newsletter? Get in touch with me prior to writing to discuss it!