

## WHY I LOVE ST. ROSE OF LIMA

**By: Kelly Robertazzi**

At our former parish, before we moved to East Hanover I believe we were typical parishioners. We attended weekly mass and supported the fundraisers. On Saturday we found ourselves saying "Oh right, tomorrow is Sunday. We have to go to mass."

Once we joined St. Rose though things changed. When our daughter entered the CCD program it was evident that we were in a whole new parish. The teachers and assistants clearly demonstrated their devotion to our Lord and their enthusiasm for the program.

Father Owen's love for his parishioners was evident as he spoke with everyone at the door. He asked about their trips, their relatives, illnesses etc. We noticed that parishioners followed him from St. Patrick's. that was the first sign about how amazing he has been.

When I lost my mom in 2006 I had a hard time dealing with my grief. Fortunately St. Rose had a Bereavement program the following year. There I met volunteers who welcomed me with open, caring arms. I found solace and comfort in this group. They suggested that I might like to join the choir as a way to help me move on. Heaven only knows how Diego accepted me, I cannot carry a tune. But that is what is great about Saint Rose. The members of the choir welcomed me and appreciated my efforts no matter how poorly I sang.

A few years later I volunteered a few times for Parents Night Out and some other Youth Ministry activities. Somehow that led to me helping with the Confirmation program doing some light paperwork. It was so refreshing being around faith filled, Christ centered people. After spending an afternoon of volunteering I found myself smiling on the way home. I really looked forward to the opportunities to serve Saint Rose.

A few years after that, I became involved with the Bereavement group, starting a book club. I've made some lasting friendships through those groups.

I've been fortunate enough to have gone on three pilgrimages with Father Owen and his team. I could write pages and pages about those trips.

There are so many ways to volunteer and participate here at Saint Rose, to find like-minded people, and form friendships both near and far.

Ultimately though, being active at Saint Rose has strengthened my love and devotion to our Lord. This deeper relationship with our God has helped me appreciate every day, kept me strong at weak moments, and given me comfort during dark times.

So now instead of saying "Oh it's Sunday we have to go to mass."

It's the first thing we put on our calendar and plan our weekend around it. We can't wait to hear the "words of wisdom" that Father Owen, Father Matthew and Deacon Michael have for us. Somehow each week something they say speaks directly to us.

I hope through volunteering I have helped to open the eyes of others to this amazing gift we have been given. Our Lord's grace lives in us. How fortunate we are to be able to adore and praise our Lord who gives us so much.