



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Artist Rich Musso carefully paints the robe of Jesus Feb. 18 at his Pultney studio as he refurbishes Stations of the Cross for Hammondsport's St. Gabriel Parish.

Stations get lift

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

Years of exposure to dust and grime had removed some of the beauty from the Stations of the Cross at St. Gabriel's Church in Hammondsport. In fact, according to Sister of St. Joseph Anne Michelle McGill, flakes of paint had even begun to fall off.

"They were bad," remarked Sister McGill, who serves as St. Gabriel's pastoral administrator.

Parish leaders conducted a national search last year for a refurbisher. But the person who eventually emerged was, as Sister McGill put it, "right in our back yard" all along.

The project fell into the hands of Rich Musso, a St. Gabriel's parishioner who is a self-employed artist. Sister McGill said Musso wasn't previously considered because she hadn't been aware that he's also a sculptor, capable of doing the necessary restoration work on the stations.

Beginning this past November, Musso has brought fresh quality to the plaster images which, according to research conducted by St. Gabriel's parishioners, were apparently manufactured by the prestigious Daprato Rigali Studios in the early 20th century. The eighth through 14th stations are completed, and Musso is currently working on the fourth through seventh stations. He expects to have the entire project done sometime this spring, but probably not by Easter due to the level of detail involved in refurbishing.

Musso explained that the process involves removing particle build-up on each station and its frame; removing loose paint chips; sanding; and completely repainting the im-

ages. Musso is also painting new backgrounds, opting to go with a blue-sky theme.

At some points during the project, Musso said, he has found more damage than originally anticipated. "One station was literally cracked in half and I had to repair the plaster," he said. "And one scene had toes gone and hands missing."

Musso said he's being paid \$600 per station, a much lower price than he would normally charge based on the many hours he is devoting. "It is my parish, and I wanted to donate a lot of my time and effort," he explained.

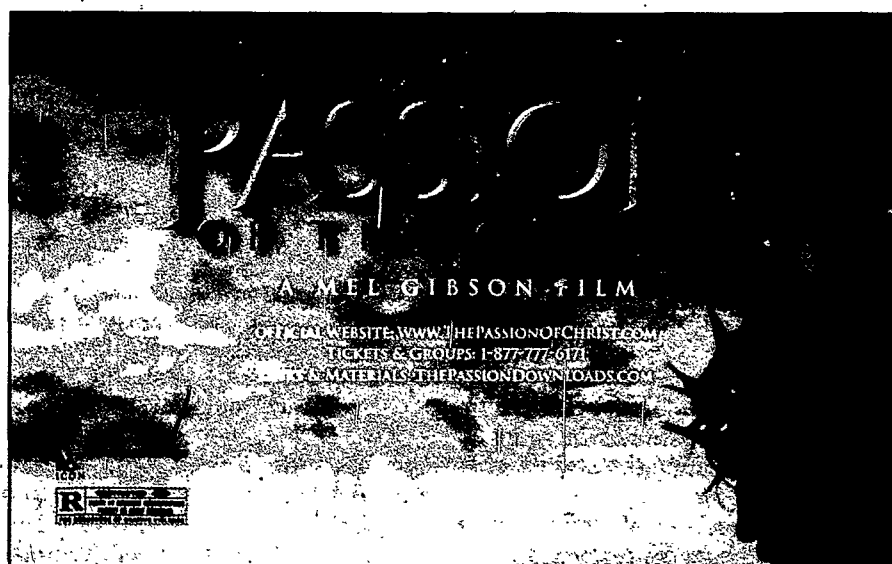
St. Gabriel's parishioners have shown their generosity as well: According to Sister McGill, all the funds to cover the refurbishing cost were raised in just two weeks.

Sister McGill said the project has inspired St. Gabriel's to hold a Stations of the Cross every Sunday morning during Lent, prior to the 11 a.m. Mass. This will include a Living Stations on Palm Sunday by youth-group members from the Central Steuben Planning Group.

Parishioners also seem to be pleased with how the refurbished stations have turned out. "There's been nothing but positive feedback," Musso said.

Even Musso has been impressed — not necessarily by his own work, but by the subject matter. He recalled an intense moment when, while working on a station where Jesus is hanging on the cross, he had to position himself by getting on his knees.

"It was so appropriate. Then I really had to step back and catch my breath, and say 'This isn't just something I do every day.' It was very powerful," Musso said.



An interfaith conversation about this controversial film

Part 1: What to look for

Thursday, February 26
7:30- 9:00 p.m.

Church of the Transfiguration
50 West Bloomfield Road, Pittsford

Topics: Should the Passion accounts in the Gospels be taken literally? Jewish concerns about anti-Semitic images that might be in the film. A checklist of critical motifs in the film. Developing a healthy spirituality of Jesus' death.

Presenters: Father Sebastian Falcone, professor of biblical studies, St. Bernard's; Rabbi Laurence A. Kotok, senior rabbi, Temple B'rith Kodesh; Rabbi Alison B. Kobey, associate rabbi and director of lifelong Jewish learning, Temple B'rith Kodesh; Damian Zynda, professor of Christian spirituality, St. Bernard's.

NOTE:
Location has
changed for
the Feb. 26
presentation!

Part 2: What we have seen

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Burgundy Basin Inn, 1361 Marsh Road, Pittsford

Panelists: Father Joseph Brennan, former adjunct professor of religious studies, University of Rochester; Jack Garner, film critic, *Democrat and Chronicle*; Rabbi Laurence A. Kotok, senior rabbi, Temple B'rith Kodesh; Rabbi Alison B. Kobey, associate rabbi and director of lifelong Jewish learning, Temple B'rith Kodesh; Rev. Richard Myers, pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, and president, Greater Rochester Community of Churches.

**Due to extraordinary demand,
pre-registration is required for both dates.**

To pre-register: tdriscoll@stbernards.edu or 585-271-3657 ext. 292 (24-hour voice mail). Suggested donation: \$5.00 at the door. Donations will be used to support Jewish-Christian lifelong learning through the Rochester Kollel and St. Bernard's.

Sponsored by St. Bernard's,
Temple B'rith Kodesh and the *Catholic Courier*