

Catholics share stories of thankfulness

"This year, particularly, I am grateful that my husband, Ken, survived a very serious heart operation and is able to be with me this year at Thanksgiving. I am also grateful for the love and support of my stepchildren for their father. I am thankful for my daughter and her beautiful family. I am thankful for health, peace where I live, enough to eat, a job and the chance to live my life with a wonderful, supportive husband."

— **Mary Moorhouse, Pastoral Center staff member**

"A year ago, my sister, Mary Cherubim McMullen, passed away and less than a month later my mother, Shirley Layer, passed away. ... My family has always been close and I was devastated. ... Having been in youth ministry for many years, I just took it for granted that it was my job. However, when I most needed it, the Lord proved to me that what I had was not a job, but a ministry which resulted in so many friends and people I had come to know just being there for me. I was overwhelmed by the response from so many teens, parents and colleagues in ministry. ... I am so thankful for all those who reached out their hands and hearts to not only me, but also my family. ... I am thankful to God for showing me his love and also thankful for the outpouring of love that my family and I have received and continue to receive."

— **Robert Layer, youth-ministry coordinator, Our Mother of Sorrows Parish, Greece**

"I am thankful for two families of Somali Bantu refugees and the little town of Bloomfield that resettled

them. God's energetic love is evident in the sacrifices of the team (made up of many faiths) and in the warm hearts of the refugees. We teach — and we learn so much. We give — and we receive so much. Just to hear a Muslim who barely speaks English say, 'God bless you!' — that's thanksgiving!"

— **Sister Diane Dennie, SSJ, pastoral administrator, St. Bridget/St. Joseph Parish, East Bloomfield**

"The recent devastation of Florida, Haiti and other regions brought about by the hurricanes, I am thankful for the simple things in life. A healthy family, a beautiful home, the love of life in general are all things I may have taken for granted previously."

— **Janey Harper, Church of the Good Shepherd, Henrietta**

"I am thankful for the 'good health' that my husband has been blessed with. In 1991 he was diagnosed with a debilitating form of cancer. Although the doctors were not hopeful, he opted to undergo a long, painful and life-altering series of chemotherapy. To the doctors' astonishment my husband survived the treatments and 13 years later he is still doing well."

— **Eileen Messmer, secretary, Holy Family School, Rochester**

"What am I thankful for: The wonderful care that God is giving to our granddaughter who joined him in her new life in March of 2001. Her illness, suffering and subsequent passing were hard to accept and understand. As time passes you notice the effects that having her here for a short time have had on the family. Sydney was and still is a blessing.

The Forum

For this month's viewpoints section, the *Courier* invited diocesan Catholics to share the reasons why they are thankful.

We, as a family, thank God for having let us know our little 'lady bug.'"

— **Rose Niznik, Blessed Trinity/St. Patrick Parishes, Tioga County**

"There have been instances over the past few years when I have become more aware of what I have rather than what I don't have. Personal loss has encouraged me to focus on my family and friends' company, whose worth is priceless."

— **Nicole Oliveri, counselor, Holy Family School, Rochester**

"I am thankful for each day that I am able to visit the sick and homebound in our parish. To accompany our priests as they anoint the sick and the dying. The Holy Spirit guides me and is always with me as I bring the holy Eucharist to those who long for the Body of Christ. I am blessed and give thanks for these opportunities to share my gifts."

— **August Misiurewicz, parish visitor, St. John the Evangelist Parish (Humboldt Street), Rochester**

"I am thankful for the wonderful life of my parents, Walter and Helen, who are now deceased. I learned so much about unfailing love and giving. My parents gave me the greatest gift of all — my faith. I am also so thankful that my mother, who died last November, taught me that what was most important in life was my

relationship with God. In the joys and sorrows of life, she taught me to go to God in gratitude and to find comfort."

— **Ann Marie Lasinski, pastoral minister, Holy Family Parish, Auburn**

"I thank God for guiding me to the doorstep of Catholic Charities of Livingston County this year. I am so fortunate to have found a career where my experience can serve the needs of the poor and needy. This service, along with the dedicated staff here, energizes me daily."

— **Joseph DiMino, executive director, Catholic Charities of Livingston County**

"I am newly grateful for the gift of migraine headaches that render me helpless for a day for two every couple of months. They also heighten my awareness that every moment of time, every sensory experience — everything — is a gift, not 'entitlement,' not 'my right.'"

— **Sister Martha Pavelsky, MSHS, catechetical leader, St. Patrick's, Mount Morris/Holy Angles, Nunda**

"In times of despair like these, with the growing hatred of America around the world for the deadly war in Iraq ... I look for small things to be thankful for ... my new son agonizing over taking his first steps, and the ever-growing love for him in my heart, and in the heart of my family."

— **Becky Olsen, diocesan Office of Communications**

"I am thankful for my husband. The reason I am thankful for my husband is because he loves the Lord more than anything in the world. His love for the Lord allows him to love our five children and I in a way that we all feel secure. He always tells us he loves us, and more importantly he always shows us he loves us. He is a great provider, the best husband, a wonderful father and most importantly he is always seeking to do God's will."

— **Mary Laurey, Abstinence Only director, Schuyler office, Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier**

"On Feb. 29 of this year I had my son, Caleb Frederick. He was born three months early and weighed 2 pounds, 10 ounces. Things were 'touch and go' — his life hung in the balance. First and foremost, I am thankful to God for touching our lives and allowing the miracle of his good health. I am also thankful for my friends and co-workers who have been supportive through my pregnancy and since he was born. The time I needed was demanding — and I wouldn't have been able to take care of things by myself. Lastly, I am exceedingly grateful for Daystar — the place my son spends his time

congratulations!

Catholic Courier Survey Prize Winners

Major prize winners were:

Special thanks to ALL of our readers who completed the 2004 Readership Survey.