

IN THE PARISH SPOTLIGHT

By Bernie Beglane



Deacon Bob Mongillo was joined at his ordination by his wife, Barbara, and members of his family. Amanda and Robert join their parents, while in the front row are Julianne, Alyssa, James and Jaclyn.

A change in careers!
Not uncommon these days,
right?

Bob Mongillo would readily agree. That's why he is the Pastoral Associate and Business Manager of St. Rosalie's Parish today.

"I was the controller for Villeroy and Boch," explained Bob, originally from St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Woodhaven.

"My wife, Barbara, who is a nurse, and I wanted to work together, so we opened a day care center in East Meadow where we were living at the time.

"We took care of the children in our own home and in another one nearby."

All of this while raising their own six children who now range from 14 to 23 years of age.

While residing in East Meadow, Bob also added to his career change and became the Director of Parish Social Ministry at St. Raphael's.

"As we raised our natural-born family, Barbara and I always wanted to adopt children," continued Bob, "and we were always open about this to our own children.

"They were very receptive to our plans."

So in 2001, the Mongillos visited Spence-Chapin Services and began adopting special needs children. Five of them to be exact and they range in age from one to five years.

"So now we have 11 children...and counting," smiled Bob, who now resides in Patchogue.

"We are talking about adopting more. Very few people adopt special needs children, so that's why we are able to do so as frequently as we do."

One of the adopted children is Nicole, who is 30 months old and has to be fed through a tube into her stomach.

"We told our own children about this," stated Bob, "and also told them that she was only given six months to live, especially since she had no use of her arms or legs.

"Julianne, who was 11½ at the time, said, 'We'll love her as much as possible.'"

As you can imagine, the Mongillo parents were kept busy...quite busy...with the 11 children. Still, something kept tugging at Bob.

Was another career change in the works?

"I had given serious thought to becoming a permanent deacon about 10 years ago," he explained, "but because our family was so young, passed on it.

"However, the idea kept tugging and tugging at me and I talked it over with Barbara, who encouraged me to pursue it.

"So I did and I was ordained from St. Raphael's Parish in December 2001. It would not have been possible, however, without my wife's support."

In his role as Pastoral Associate at St. Rosalie's, Deacon Bob hopes to embrace people to become part of the parish.

"Personal contacts is one way," he said. "There are other ideas I have in mind.

"Get younger families involved...give fathers of small children thoughts on rearing their children.

"People have been responsive thus far and we will continue in every way possible to keep the spark going."

