

Introducing The Unification Team Members from St. Mary Parish

See the bulletin insert for the biographies of the Unification Team members from St. Nicholas.



Shelley Benson has been a faithful parishioner of Saint Mary Parish, Evanston since 1985. Along with her husband Jon, they have raised their family here with their three children, Joe, Mike, and Jillian. Their children were altar servers, went through confirmation, celebrated a wedding, had grandchildren baptized, and more at Saint Mary's. This has truly been a home parish for the Benson family.

Shelley has served on Parish Council a number of terms, chaired the Building and Renovation committee during the 1999-2004 renovation project, currently serves on the Arts and Environment team, and is the coordinator for the Eucharistic Ministers ministry.



Kathy Benn has been a parishioner with St. Mary' since the early 80's. She has been active in the religious education program as a teacher and has also participated in the parish by lecturing and engagement with the Parish Council. Kathy has worked in Sales and Account Management in the Healthcare industry as her career, and she resides in Evanston with her husband Adrian. They have a son Patrick who is currently an officer with the Marines.



Dominic Hilaire has been a parishioner of St. Mary's practically all of his life; He was part of the last graduating class of St. Mary school. He is involved in several ministries as Usher, Lector, Adoration, Art and Environment, and the Building and Grounds Committee as well as others that he was involved with in the past. St. Mary's is definitely part of his life where he is privileged not only to attend the mass but to be able to see other parishioners on a weekly basis whom he considers family and enjoy the beautiful choir. It's definitely an honor to be a part of wonderful diverse community where it's very welcoming to all and you feel like you are truly part of a family.



Rita and Mike Kendrick have been parishioners at St. Mary for about 8 years. They have two children right now ages 6 and 4. Mike is Principal at St James school in Arlington Heights. Rita has been a Catholic school teacher but now is mostly home with the kids and does some work from home. We live in the community and sometimes walk to St Mary. We are so happy to be more involved in this parish that we love.



Mike Borman and his wife Ruth have been going to St Mary's for about 18 years, first while living in Rogers Park and then while living in Skokie. Our only child Sophia was baptized at St Mary's and is now in her second year of college. I have been active in St Mary ministries about 15 years as Eucharistic Minister, Lector, 3rd Grade Catechist, and as member and currently chair of the Parish Council.



Karen & Chris Miller, originally from the DC area, moved to Chicago in 2011 and then to Evanston in 2015. Soon after, they became members at St. Mary's Parish. They have participated in some Young Adults Group activities, which has been a great way to meet other members of the community. They have a three year old son, Joseph, who has an incredible energetic personality and keeps us busy! We love to garden, go on bike rides and walk along the North Shore when the weather permits!

Paula and Tim Schmitt have been members of St. Mary for a long while, having gotten married there in 2009. They have two boys, Harland and Weston both baptized at St. Mary and



Harland has received his first reconciliation and communion here. Both boys attended Pope John 23 Preschool and are now currently enrolled in the religious education program. Paula is a member of the St. Mary Art and Environment Committee and has taught religious education. Tim and Paula are both active volunteers in the community, serving as Cub Scout leaders and frequent meal packers at Feed My Starving Children. *Tim has been an AYSO soccer coach and board member and Paula is on the PTA board at Orrington Elementary School. Professionally, Tim is the CTO of a family investment office and Paula is an independent graphic design consultant. They enjoy living in Evanston in their landmark 1920 house and doing home improvement projects in their spare time.*



Jay Larmee has been a parishioner of St. Mary Parish since 1988. Along with his wife, Marcia, they have raised three children who have received their sacraments at St. Mary's. Over the years Jay has been active in many of the parish's ministries including Parish Council, Soup Kitchen, Knights of Columbus, and

Religious Education. Perhaps most visibly, he is a regular usher at the 9:30 mass. Jay is looking forward to helping in any way with this important project.



Karie Ferrell has been a member of the staff of Saint Mary Parish since July 2000 and in parish ministry since 1989. She has fulfilled a number of roles in ministry through the years, director of religious education, adult faith formation, evangelization, youth ministry, webmaster, bulletin editor, hospitality. She has worked for the Office for Divine Worship, Archdiocese of Chicago, and has been an author for Liturgy Training Publications. She lives here in Evanston and has two grown sons.



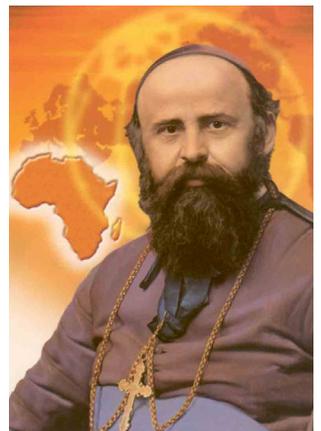
Deacon Ramon Navarro was ordained in 2006. He's been married to his wife, Julia, for 47 years. Together, they have ministered for 14 years at St. Aloysius and came to St. Mary's in 2019. Deacon Ramon celebrates baptisms here at St. Mary's as well as St. Nick's and he collaborates with UCYM to celebrate quinceañeras. He also ministers at the altar and preaches. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus. He and Julia also organize social events and are passionate about social justice issues, especially Domestic Violence Awareness.

Who are the Comboni Missionaries:

Father Lokpo and Father Ortiz are members of the Comboni Missionaries.

The Comboni Missionaries are an international Catholic organization dedicated to ministering to the world's poorest and most abandoned people, often working in unstable political climates, in the midst of extreme poverty. In the North American Province (NAP), we minister to minority communities in various dioceses, while also supporting our overseas missions. Learn more at www.ComboniMissionaries.org.

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Introducing the Unification Team Members from St. Nicholas



We are Leonor Rojas and Jaime Rojas. We immigrated to this country from Mexico more than 30 years ago. Since we arrived in the United States, we have been attending here at St. Nicholas Parish. We have been married for 34 years and have 4 children and 3 grandchildren. I, Leonor Rojas, am part of some of the parish ministries such as marriage preparation, baptism preparation, and I help in the liturgy of the masses. I am also sacristan for the daily masses and the 8:30 am mass on Sundays. I, Jaime Rojas, was ordained as a Deacon 5 years ago. We work 2 days away from home, the other days we dedicate to help in our ministries and the work we do for the St. Nicholas community. We are happy to accompany and assist in this unification group for St. Nicholas and St. Mary's parishes.



Kathleen M. Gruber has been a parishioner at St Nick's (1985) longer than she has been a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (1990) She and her husband, Mark, who went to St. Mary's until he was in 4th grade, married at St Nick's in 1989. Since their marriage, she and Mark have attended St Nick's and have lived in Evanston (or Skokie as some call it). Together, they have offered wine tastings and auctioned off wine from their cellar at St. Nick Winter Festivals and worked at many Rummage Sales in the past.

Kathleen was a member of Evanston Catholic Counseling Services, a group of four psychotherapists gathered by Father Robert Oldershaw to offer a "Catholic spiritual perspective" to the Evanston faith communities. She has spent time volunteering for SCORE, RCIA, Peace and Justice Committee, Sharing Festival Committee, Gardening Committee, and Family Promise. She has served as a pastoral care minister and is now serving as a lector and part time rectory receptionist. She was one of the founding St Nick's members of United Power for Action and Justice and participates in current United Power actions and meetings, working closely with the mental health services team.



Felicia Davis Blakley is a socially conscious executive leader, who leads with radical authenticity, unparalleled passion, and inspirational vision. A proven leader in the government, public policy, higher education, and philanthropic sectors, she is deeply committed to community through inclusive service to others.

Felicia is a self-described girl from the South Side of Chicago and, for more than 30 years, has worked at the intersection of public policy and community equity and inclusion. For her, the

transformational idea of being a social change agent coexists with a deep awareness of the practical realities facing our society. Felicia believes profoundly in the power to transform individual lives, families, and whole communities through collective efforts and that advancing equality and equity in society are causes worth fighting for.

As President and CEO of Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW), she leads the Foundation's strategic efforts to invest in women and girls, transgender, and gender nonbinary people as catalysts, fighting for gender equity, and building stronger communities for all. Since its founding in 1985, CFW has invested more than \$45M in organizations supporting women and girls across the Chicago region. In September 2021, under her leadership, CFW launched the SHEcovery™ initiative. A commitment from CFW to raise over \$11M, identify, uplift, fund, advocate for, and support a more equitable system to ensure women and their families emerge from the pandemic stronger than before.

Prior to joining CFW, Felicia held diverse executive positions in Chicago city government, including Inaugural Executive Director for the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement, Commissioner, and Deputy Mayor for Public Safety.

An advocate and acclaimed public speaker, Felicia has appeared on local and international news outlets and been a presenter at forums and featured in a diverse roster of publications.

Additionally, Felicia gives generously of her personal time, serving on several civic and charitable boards. Previously she served as a member of JB Pritzker's Gubernatorial Inauguration Committee and an appointee

to the Illinois Senate Sexual Discrimination, Harassment Awareness and Prevention Task Force. Presently, she is a member of the Board of Regents at Mercy Home, Trustee with Court Theatre at the University of Chicago, Board Member at Partnership for College Completion, and she serves as a Co-Chair for the National Community Engagement Group and Executive Committee member for RECOVER, a research initiative from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), seeks to understand, prevent, and treat PASC, including Long COVID.



Derrick Blakeley, I am a retired television news reporter, born in Chicago and an Evanston area resident for more than 35 years. I have been a parishioner at St. Nicholas for more than three decades. During that time, I have been uplifted by the diversity of the parish while being consistently and thoughtfully challenged from the pulpit to put my Catholic faith into action. I have served on the Parish Council, as lector at Mass, and enjoyed volunteering at years of rummage sales and Christmas festivals.



Chris Murphy is the Director of Spiritual Formation for Loyola University Chicago. He has served at Loyola for 22 years in campus ministry and mission formation. He also is an ordained deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. His latest diaconate assignment was as the pastoral coordinator at St Ignatius parish in Rogers Park which was closed last year through the Renew My Church process.

Chris earned all his degrees from Loyola. He has a bachelor's degree in communication, a master's in social work and a master's in divinity. Chris has worked in leadership positions in education, churches and non-profits including at St Mary and St Nicholas parishes. He is a recent widow having been married to Dr. Bren Ortega Murphy, who was a professor of Communication and Women Studies/Gender Studies at Loyola. He has two grown children,

Connor who lives in Seattle and Laurie who lives in Philadelphia. Chris and Bren have been parishioners at St Nicholas parish since 2009. Their children were received their first communions at St Mary Parish.



Juan Velasco: As many other immigrants, my family visited many parishes to listen and follow God. During this journey, we visited Saint Nicholas Parish and loved the welcoming and attention we received from the community. My wife Marisol, and I are coming from two Catholic traditional families, but the renovation non traditional rites were well accepted by our parents and grandparents when they visited us some years ago.

This was the sign we were waiting for to adopt Saint Nicholas as our new home. Our daughters Kimberly and Johanna attended their religious education here at Saint Nicholas to receive their First Communion. Both of them are altar servers at 1:00 PM mass. In addition, I was invited to be part of the Lectors Ministry.

Biographies unavailable at time of printing:

Maria Senecal, Mireya Terrazas, Kevin McCaffrey, Nancy Holdsworth