



New head of St. Teresa says goals include cutting \$300,000 deficit



*This month, September, is the first anniversary of the merger of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, shown, with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church to form St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish. LINDA MOSS/STAFF*

**By LINDA MOSS**

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The new head of St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish, which was created a year ago through the strife-filled merger of two Montclair churches, on Sunday outlined his 10-point strategic plan for the combined entity, initiatives that include a closer watch on finances and an attempt to reduce a \$300,000 deficit.

The Rev. Amilcar Benito Prado — the priest known as Father Benny who became administrator of St. Teresa on [July 1](#) — in the [parish's bulletin](#) this week unveiled the plans he has formulated after his first 60 days in

Montclair.

A number of Prado's initiatives center around the parish's finances, with a new bookkeeper now reviewing bills and contracts; an assessment of staff and resources under way; and a 2017-2018 budget that will show parishioners that there is a need to "work hard to reduce expenses and increase revenues."

Prado's plans also include increased outreach to those who have stepped away from the Catholic faith, providing spiritual leadership, reaching out to the parish's teens by starting a youth ministry program, making a better effort to communicate, and what he called "having the right attitude."

Prado is now shepherd of a parish that was created by the edict of then-Archbishop of Newark John Myers, who directed that the Church of the Immaculate Conception on North Fullerton Avenue and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Pine Street, both in Montclair, be combined last September, making this month its first anniversary.

The move created an outcry from parishioners of Mount Carmel, who feared that their church would be shuttered and then started a group to fight against its closure, butting heads with the former pastor at Immaculate, the Rev. Joseph Scarangella. Prado appeared to allude to that tension and divisiveness in the bulletin, which has been revamped under his tenure. He talked about starting a healing process at the parish.

# ST TERESA OF CALCUTTA PARISH

SEPTEMBER 10, 2017

23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



*Dear Parishioners of St. Teresa of Calcutta -*

Blessings!

As you know, I was appointed on July 1, 2017 as the Administrator of this great parish, with two worship sites – Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. In this short time, I have become keenly aware of our strengths and weakness, your hurts and sorrows, the fond memories of the past and the great hope you have for the future.

And while I cannot undo any of the past, please know that I am here to work to the best of my ability to build up this community of faith, on both sides of Montclair and beyond to sustain our future. To be successful, however, I will need your help.

After these first 60 days, I have been able to see, reflect, and consult. As a result of many sleepless, but prayerful nights, I share with you my initial 10 point strategic plan for our parish.

- 1. Be Present.** With Fr Sam's assistance, I pledge to be present to you, listening and discerning together realistically where we are as a parish at this point in time.
- 2. Provide Spiritual Leadership.** Again, with Fr Sam and our new weekend assistant, Seton Hall Prep Headmaster, Monsignor Bob Harahan, along with Fr Burla and Fr Thomas Cembor, we promise to lead worship, preside at sacraments, and provide the best spiritual exercises that we can so as to inspire this community in our Catholic faith.
- 3. Increase Outreach.** Using traditional as well as creative and newer social media, we will reach out to those who have fallen or stomped away from the practice of our faith to welcome them back.
- 4. Review Family Faith Formation.** Our children are our future. We will continue to review best practices to present and pass our faith on to our young people, and to be successful we will need to be open to change. Also, I have already hosted a mass and a BBQ with our teens in August in order to connect and listen to their needs too. We are in the process of starting a youth ministry program here in our parish. Our plan is to meet every last Sunday of the month.
- 5. Assess.** In our first six months, we will continue to assess our resources, staff, buildings, finances and the rest, with an eye to seeing how we can best utilize what we have in the most efficient and effect ways. Many of our buildings need serious repair, so preparing a needs list and prioritizing it will soon be completed. At both churches and the cemetery, there is much to do.
- 6. Budget.** Shortly, we will publish our 2017-2018 parish budget, which you will quickly see presents a \$300,000 deficit. This means that each week we begin \$6,000 in the red before one dollar is collected. Clearly, we will need to work hard to reduce expenses and increase revenues.
- 7. Review.** To that end, our new bookkeeper has been methodically reviewing every bill, and every standing contract with all of our vendors in order to eliminate what is not necessary and re-negotiate better terms when possible. As you can imagine, this alone is a big job!
- 8. Communicate.** Communities of faith need to be open, honest and transparent in all communications. As a result, I hope you like our new parish bulletin. Renegotiating the contract, we have been able to upgrade it to color. Note that is doesn't cost us anything as the advertising covers all costs including the professional graphic designer who creates it, freeing up parish staff to focus on new initiatives. Following soon will be the launch of a new web site, Facebook page, Instagram, etc.
- 9. Consult More.** The Archdiocese requires that we have a Finance Council. Our members are listed in the bulletin and I will share with them all our news, good and bad, so that they can offer good guidance to me to make the correct decisions in stewardship. The more avenues of consultation we have, the better.
- 10. Have the right attitude.** In my initial days here, many have already been vocal and critical of the past, even directing it sometimes to me, but very few have volunteered to help. Understand well that I am doing my best and I need every person to help too. It's necessary for all of us to be present each week for mass, register, generously support us and get involved. Time, talent and treasure. Most important is to have respect for one another and for me. We are a community of faith and each of us must act accordingly.

Although the challenges before us may seem great, my faith in God and in you tell me that we will be successful. I look forward to working and praying with and for you. I ask that you please promise the same for me.

*Fr Benny*



"In this short time, I have become keenly aware of our strengths and weakness, your hurts and sorrows, the fond memories of the past and the great hope you have for the future," Prado wrote in the bulletin.

"And while I cannot undo any of the past, please know that I am here to work to the best of my ability to build up this community of faith, on both sides of Montclair and beyond to sustain our future," he wrote. "To be successful, however, I will need your help."

Prado's plan didn't specifically mention Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which remains open.

Raffaele Marzullo, part of the group that has fought to keep the Pine Street church from being shuttered, said that he supported a better representation of the younger community in the parish.

He added that he liked Prado's call for there to be transparency, with young and old members willing to work with the administrator "to make the parish become positive and profitable," and "most importantly to keep the doors of Our Lady of Mount Carmel open."

Prado, who couldn't be reached for comment this week, was blunt in his discussion of finances.

"Shortly, we will publish our 2017-2018 parish budget, which you will quickly see presents a \$300,000 deficit," he wrote. "This means that each week we begin \$6,000 in the red before one dollar is collected. Clearly, we will need to work hard to reduce expenses and increase revenues."

The parish will also undertake an assessment of its needs.

"In our first six months, we will continue to assess our resources, staff, buildings, finances and the rest, with an eye to seeing how we can best utilize what we have in the most efficient and effect ways," Prado wrote. "Many of our buildings need serious repair, so preparing a needs list and prioritizing it will soon be completed. At both churches and the cemetery, there is much to do."

He added, "To that end, our new bookkeeper has been methodically reviewing every bill, and every standing contract with all of our vendors in order to eliminate what is not necessary and re-negotiate better terms when possible."



*The Rev. Amilcar Benito  
Prado has issued his plan for  
St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish.  
COURTESY OF ST. TERESA  
OF CALCUTTA PARISH*

Prado also noted that the archdiocese mandates that the parish have a finance council.

“Our members are listed in the bulletin and I will share with them all our news, good and bad, so that they can offer good guidance to me to make the correct decisions in stewardship,” he wrote. “The more avenues of consultation we have, the better.

Prado’s 10th point in his strategic plan is “have the right attitude,” which he explained.

“In my initial days here, many have already been vocal and critical of the past, even directing it sometimes to me, but very few have volunteered to help,” Prado wrote. “Understand well that I am doing my best and I need every person to help too. It’s necessary for all of us to be present each week for Mass, register, generously support us and get involved. Time, talent and treasure. Most important is to have respect for one another and for me. We are a community of faith and must act accordingly.”

He said that he crafted his plan after “many sleepless, but prayerful, nights.”

Prado was transferred to St. Teresa, and Scarangella was moved out, as part of the Newark archdiocese’s moves under the man who earlier this year replaced Myers, Cardinal Joseph Tobin.

Prado’s plans also include launching a new parish website, Facebook page and Instagram account.



## Pastor at troubled, merged Montclair parish reassigned



*The Rev. Joseph Scarangella, pastor of St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Montclair, has been reassigned to a church in Closter effective July 1. Scarangella is seen here at a Mass last week in Nutley celebrated by Cardinal Joseph Tobin, the archbishop of the Archdiocese of Newark. LINDA MOSS/STAFF*

By LINDA MOSS

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The pastor of St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish, which was formed last year by the rocky merger of two Montclair churches, is being transferred to a parish in Bergen County.

The Rev. Joseph Scarangella effective July 1 will be leaving Montclair to go the Church of St. Mary in Closter, several parishioners were informed on Sunday morning. Scarangella had been pastor of the Church of the Immaculate Conception on North Fullerton Avenue in Montclair before the Archdiocese of Newark merged it last fall with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on Pine Street to create the new parish.

The Rev. A Benny Prado, who is now at the Church of the Presentation in Upper Saddle River, will be coming to St. Teresa, Montclair parishioners were told. His title will be administrator of St. Teresa.

"I'm very excited about serving in my new ministry there for Saint Theresa," Prado said in an email on Sunday. "I'm grateful for the Cardinal's confidence in this new assignment and look forward to getting to know, working with, and serving the good people there."

Following the Montclair merger Scarangella was named head of St. Teresa parish, and during the past year he has clashed with members of Mount Carmel over the combining of the two Montclair houses of worship and whether the Pine Street church will remain open.



*The Rev. A. Benny Prado was at the Mass that Cardinal Joseph Tobin celebrated in Nutley last week. COURTESY  
REV. A. BENNY PRADO*

Scarangella participated in a Mass that was celebrated by the new archbishop of Newark, Cardinal Joseph Tobin, last Tuesday, May 16, at Holy Family Church in Nutley. Tobin held the service for the North Essex deanery, a group of parishes that includes four in Montclair.

At a “town hall” that Tobin held after that Mass one Mount Carmel parishioner pleaded with the cardinal to come to Montclair and meet in efforts to save the Pine Street parish.

“I will get to Montclair eventually, not to save your church — unless, unless this is an instrument for the Church’s mission today,” Tobin told her. “I’m aware of some of the issues in Montclair. That’s why I’ll come and listen.”

Members of the Save Our Lady of Mount Carmel Committee have met with representatives of the archdiocese to discuss the fate of their parish, which ultimately is in Tobin’s hands.

Archdiocese spokesman Jim Goodness on Sunday confirmed that Scarangella was leaving St. Teresa and that Prado was coming there, but didn’t have any more details.

According to the Church of the Presentation’s website, Prado earned his B.A. from St. John’s University in Jamaica, Queens. He was ordained a priest May 29, 2004, earning an M.Div. and M.A. in theology from the Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University.

“His parish assignment was at the Resurrection Parish in Jersey City and then to Sts. Peter and Paul in Hoboken, New Jersey,” the site says. “Father Benny has organized mission trips to Jamaica, in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. He is originally from Nicaragua and moved to the states when he was 15 years old. He grew up in the Bronx. Father Benny enjoys running, hiking, and above all loves to travel the world.”

The chair of the Mount Carmel committee, Frank Cardell, and member Raffaele Marzullo earlier this year claimed that pastor Scarangella has stymied their efforts to make Mount Carmel grow. Those considered “in conflict” with the goals of St. Teresa’s parish are “considered outcasts,” according to Cardell.