

## *Julio and Mary Valbuena—A St. Pat's Founding Family*

A week after Mary and Julio arrived in Mt. Dora, in July of 1971, a group of priests from Spain arrived to serve the developing Orlando Area. The priests, who humorously referred to themselves as “The Spanish Mafia” established mission churches in Clermont, Avon Park, Orlando (St. John Vianney) Lake Wales and Mt. Dora.

Every month, the newly arrived group of priests would gather at a home in one of the new mission areas to enjoy a day of fun and fellowship with the Catholic population. The Valbuenas hosted many such gatherings with families that would form the foundation of our parish with Fr. Felix Baños, Pastor.

The few dozen parishioners in the newly established mission of Mt. Dora initially celebrated Sunday mass in the VFW Hall where Saturday night Bingo gatherings ran late. The Valbuenas and other families would arrive early Sunday, clean the Hall and set up for Mass. Julio stated that the odor of beer and cigarette smoke mingled with mass in spite of their best cleaning efforts.

Fortunately, Fr. Peterson, pastor of St. Edward's Episcopal Church in Mt. Dora, offered the growing St. Patrick's community periodic use of their church. Other times the Mt. Dora Community Center was available for services. Within a short time, fund-raising to build a church began. Herb and Betty Hawthorne set up fund-raising events at their home in Sorrento. Herb, a Baptist, became Treasurer for the new Catholic Community. Early in 1973, there were funds enough to begin construction of a church on the land acquired by the Orlando Diocese. The new mission church was completed by November of 1973. Now named Shepherd's Gate, today it provides space for parish-related meetings.

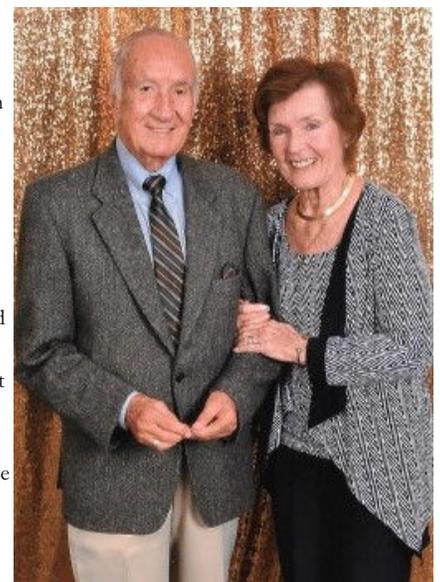
Julio and Mary say, “We are thankful to St. Patrick's Community for nourishing our souls and for the education provided by our five Bishops and nine Pastors during our 47 years as parishioners. We are equally thankful for the formation of St. Luke's Clinic, which has allowed us to serve. We encourage you to use our faith-sharing programs, which have been helpful in increasing our faith and help us reach our goals in Christ.” *Mary and Julio*



Martin, Michael, Pamela, Keith. Fr. Felix Baños baptized the Valbuena's fifth child, Sandra, the first girl to be baptized (1973) and the last to be married (2004) in our first church.

### ABOUT THE VALBUENA'S

- ◆ Relocated to Mt. Dora, in July of 1971, from West Mystic, Connecticut.
- ◆ Mary was born in New Jersey of parents who emigrated from Counties Galway and Kerry, Ireland.
- ◆ Julio was born and raised in Bogota, Columbia.
- ◆ Julio rented space in Eustis and opened the first orthopedic office in the area. Later he built an office on Bay Road.
- ◆ The Valbuenas still reside in the home they purchased when they moved to Mt. Dora in 1971.



# THE JOY OF AGING—REFLECTION SHARING RESOURCE

Sharon Nelsen, Editor

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## PRE-LENTEN FAITH-SHARING GROUPS

### The Gift of Years

Session II: Tuesdays,  
Jan. 22- Feb.26  
After 9:00 a.m. Mass  
Contact: Sharon Nelsen

Tuesdays  
Feb. 5th-26th, 1:00-2:15  
Contact: Margaret Timpe

Wednesdays,  
Jan. 23-Feb. 27  
11:30 to 12:45  
Contact Kathy Crocco

### The Wild Goose

(Holy Spirit DVD Series)  
Session II: Tuesdays  
Jan.22—Feb. 26  
After 9:00 a.m. mass  
Contact: Sheila Karlson  
Sheila.karlson@me.com

View the complete series from  
your home computer: go to  
[www.thewildgooseisloose.com](http://www.thewildgooseisloose.com)

*Joy of Aging was launched at the St. Patrick's in October of 2018 by a small group of parishioners who were interested in sharing with other parishioners the burdens and blessings of aging. Three groups were formed at various days and times to accommodate preferences. The groups of six to ten people met weekly for six weeks from early October to mid-November. The book used was The Gift of Years by Sister Joan Chittister, OSB. The six weeks before Lent, we will offer a continuation using additional topics from The Gift of Years. Our next book will be God Isn't Finished With Me Yet, a basic introduction to the practice of Ignatian Spirituality, written by Barbara Lee, and after that we will share thoughts from Falling Upward, by Franciscan Father Richard Rohr.*

### Faith-sharing groups format

**Reflection:** Read segment multiple times, reflect; at small group, share what spoke to you.

**Sharing:** Groups of 8 to 10, Meet with a facilitator for one hour, 15 minutes in six week segments.

**Resource:** Develop ways to share insights received with others.

### Sign-up—Gift of Years

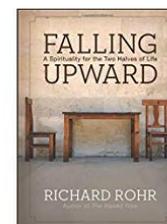
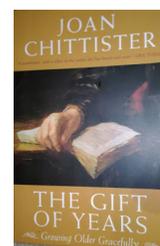
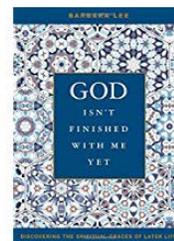
Kathy Crocco:  
kathycrocco@gmail.com

Sharon Nelsen  
fsnelsen@gmail.com

Margaret Timpe:  
mftimpe@centurylink.net

**Sign-up—The Wild Goose**  
Sheila Karlson  
sheila.karlson@me.com

**Additional Information:**  
Trudy Johnson  
gatortrudyj@hotmail.com



### Books/DVD's we are using

The Gift of Years, Growing Older Gracefully, by Joan Chittister, (Benedictine), ©2008, BlueBridge

God Isn't Finished With Me Yet, Discovering the Spiritual Graces of Later Life, by Barbara Lee (Ignatian) ©2018, Loyola Press

Franciscan Series on the Holy Spirit: The Wild Goose (DVD)  
[www.thewildgooseisloose.com](http://www.thewildgooseisloose.com)