

## The Saga of a Visiting Sparrow

Sr. Camille D'Arienzo | Feb. 3, 2014 NCR Today

As St. Pancras Church in Glendale, New York, welcomed a large congregation for the Feb. 2 celebration of Jesus's being Presented in the Temple, the story of his parents' presentation of a pair of turtle doves was in competition with the errant sparrow that had presented itself on Friday to all worshipers and visitors and hadn't a clue how to find its way back out to the world of sky and nourishment. Instead, by Sunday's liturgies, the tiny creature, used to eating twice its weight each day, was very hungry. It soared to the ceiling and then over heads of the congregation until alighting on candles, microphone and crucifix, it was drawn to the artificial Christmas decorations wreathed around the altar candles. It plucked in vain at the phony red berries. Its desperation was the congregation's entertainment. Poor thing!

This true story could serve as a metaphor, I suppose, of the many people who wander into our churches, into our families, into our lives, not quite sure of how or why, but who claim our attention and concern.

Back in our real world, I took it on myself to contact the A.S.P.C.A. which referred me to the Wild Bird Fund, which is closed on Sundays.

I called Msgr. Greg Wielunski a little after one o'clock to let him know I was awaiting a call back from the Wild Bird Fund. No need for that, I learned. He and parishioner, Patrick Fahy, had successfully trapped the bird in the sacristy and with the aid of a broom, coaxed it to and out a window.

I don't know if instruction for freeing birds is in the Pastor's Handbook, but this pastor's persistence served as inspiration for me.

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