

MEET THE STAFF

Ann Marie Benzinger

Pastoral Associate



Born into a devote Catholic family in N.Y.C., her formation was enriched through Catholic Elementary and high school, and a Jesuit university. A move to N.J. brought her contact with people of many cultures and faiths motivating a three year course of study at Caldwell College's Institute of Biblical and Theological Studies and a Master of Divinity at Immaculate Conception Seminary. A relocation to Florida and ministry as a D.R.E. and Youth Minister resulted in an M.A. from St. Thomas University and graduation from the Audire spiritual direction process.

Since a very definite call to ministry was experienced and a choice for a single lay lifestyle was made, for over fifty years, she has been privileged to serve parishes, schools, and dioceses in numerous capacities in the areas of education, ecumenism, social justice, liturgy, etc. The beauty of God's people, saint or atheist, and daily Mass enrich her love and zeal for the Church.

Presently, she is Pastoral Associate for marriage preparation and annulments (trained in Orlando & Seattle), facilitator of Bible sessions, and directs R.C.I.A. (trained by North American Forum) and baptism preparation. She is grateful for the gift of faith and shall spread the gift of Christ for however long or where ever our Lord wishes her to be His instrument.

Lilly Cruz

Business Manager

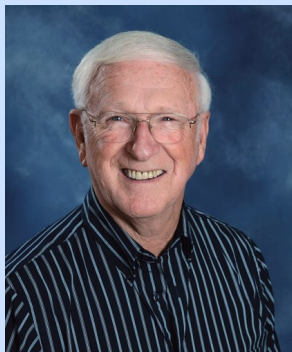


Lilly was born in Aguada, Puerto Rico. She has lived in the states since she was two years old. She grew up in Connecticut. There she attended Middlesex Community College where she received her Associates Degree as a Legal Secretary. While studying there she was the Office Assistant to the President of the college. She also worked for the State of Connecticut as the Secretary for the Parole Division for 3 years. She has two children and four grand-children.

She moved with her family to Florida in 1987 where she started attending St. John the Baptist. She attended College of Central Florida and has received a Certificate in Business Management and Law. In 1988 she worked for the Deltona Corporation as a Sponsored Trip Coordinator. She was there for 3 years. In 1991 she was hired at St. John the Baptist as the Secretary/Bookkeeper and worked her way up to Business Manager. She has received her certificate for the *Tending the Talents* two year course. Lilly enjoys working for St. John's and plans to stay until its time to retire.

Leo Daigle

Maintenance Supervisor



Leo was born and raised to the age of 13 in St. Ignace New Brunswick, Canada. His family moved to Maine and at the age of 18 he joined the US Air Force where he served for 4 years.

For 38 years his work was primarily in the printing industry. He managed a plant in Maine for 15 years and one in Dallas, Texas for 11 years as Vice President of Manufacturing. Then, in 1999 he and his family moved to Florida.

Priscilla and Leo married in Maine in 1970. They have been parishioners since 2002.

MEET THE STAFF



Yadira Delgado

Janitorial Coordinator

Yadira was born in Puerto Rico and moved to the United States when she was just a few months old. She graduated from Orville H. Platt High School. She has two wonderful boys and a set of twin grand-daughters.

Yadira, who goes by Yady, moved to Dunnellon in 1987. She worked at Too Your Health for many years before she came to St. John the Baptist. She enjoys working here in this parish and enjoys the people. She lives with her pet dachshund, Bronson, who makes her smile and brings her joy.



MaryAlice Hogan

Children's Faith Formation Coordinator

MaryAlice was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania. After 12 years of Catholic education, she continued her studies at Gwynedd-Mercy College, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education with Certification in Early Childhood. She moved to Florida with her parents in 2002, where she taught in the Citrus County School District and worked as a Youth Education Specialist for the Southwest Florida Water Management District. During that time, MaryAlice acquired additional certification in Middle Grades Integrated Curriculum. Not long after, she met her husband, Dan. Together they have two children, Joseph and Julianne. She and her family started attending St. Johns in 2015.

MaryAlice's life has always revolved around ministry. From the age of 9, she was a reader, choir member, and events volunteer. At age 13, she supported her father in his decision to apply to the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, even being interviewed by the selection committee to give her consent for her father to be a deacon. By age 18, MaryAlice was a catechist, assisting her mother who was the Director for Religious Education at their local parish.

Since joining St. John's, MaryAlice has been a part of the Art & Environment Committee to help decorate the Church. She also serves as a reader, PowerPoint presenter, and most recently, Children's Faith Formation Coordinator (as of May, 2022). MaryAlice loves being a part of the Catholic Community of St. John the Baptist and she looks forward to continuing to serve the parents and children of her parish family.



Marie LaRock

Housekeeper

Marie was born in Niagara Falls, New York and went to school in Merico, New York. She was married and raised 4 children and she has 5 grand-children.

Marie moved to Dunnellon in 1982 and in the year 2000, she was hired as the housekeeper at St. John the Baptist's Rectory during the transition from Father Emilio Garcia to Father Donald Mainardi. She also does care giving work.

MEET THE STAFF

Faith O'Brien

Music Director/Organist



Born in El Paso, TX, Faith grew up in IL. SJB is the 4th church she has served as Music Director, and she brings a broad, deep musical background to the position.

Raised Protestant, she learned many fine hymns and gospel songs. At age 10, she started accompanying church services and playing for civic events. Wheaton College in IL (the "Protestant Notre Dame") noted for its church music is where Faith received her Bachelor's degrees in Music and English.

After graduation, she sought the true church and discovered it was the Catholic Church! She converted and has been growing in her knowledge of the faith and her love of it while learning Catholic music. She taught High School and College English before becoming an Educational Publisher's Rep., all the while continuing her musical activities.

Her first Church Music Director position was at St. Agnes CC in Chicago Heights, IL. The church created a "Music Minister" post and hired Faith for the job. In FL she has played at many churches including St. Tim's in the Villages and St. Vincent de Paul in Wildwood.

In addition, she gives concerts, was recently Music Director of several musicals, and teaches piano to a growing number of students. Faith and her husband Bob have 2 children—a boy and a girl—and 5 grandchildren—all in the Chicago area.

Faith LOVES working with Choirs and helping congregations sing. She thanks God for bringing her to SJB and prays to continue serving Him and the wonderful people of SJB for many years. After all, at 93 her childhood piano teacher was still organist at St. John CC in Glenwood, IL.

Maureen Orkwis

Secretary



Born in Flushing NY, Maureen moved with her family to St. Petersburg, Florida in 1971. She then moved to Dunnellon in February of 1988, which turned out to be one of the coldest winters EVER in Florida. In the early 90s she and her friend Robin Liss began working with the high school youth of SJB parish by establishing the Teens in Christ Youth Group (T.I.C.). Among other activities, three separate mission trips took about 15 teens along with adult volunteers to Mexico, Jamaica and Belize where vacation bible school was taught along with building projects for the very poor. All funds were raised by the team. Maureen became a paid employee of St John the Baptist in August of 2004.

Maureen has a Master's Degree in Pastoral Theology. Pastoral theology equips ministers to aid the clergy in their work. Maureen also holds a Bachelor's degree in Church Leadership, which specializes in parish and financial growth as well as administration of large "mega" churches. She studied liturgy through Catholic University.

Maureen is certified as a Director of Youth Ministry through the Diocese of Orlando and has a National Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies from The Center for Youth Ministry Development, a two-year program.