

Foundation offers scholarships in name of Msgr. Yennock

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Late monsignor always talked about importance of Catholic schools

By Tom Maguire

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Nancy Iannolo uses a scale to make sure the plate contains at least 1½ pounds of cookies.

Weeks before he died, Msgr. Eugene M. Yennock took a candy from a box and gave away the rest at Francis House in Syracuse.

“He loved sweets,” said Nancy Iannolo, RN, who finished a sweet project in Msgr. Yennock’s honor before Christmas: She spent many nights baking 5,000 cookies — nine varieties — to raise money for the Monsignor Yennock Foundation for Catholic school scholarships in the seven-county Diocese of Syracuse. She and her helpers piled a pound and a half of cookies onto plates and sold them for \$30 each — all gone but “we still have the baker,” said Nancy’s daughter, Dr. Maria Iannolo.

Nurse Nancy was Msgr. Yennock’s caretaker for 3½ years before he died at the age of 97 on June 6, 2023, after 73 years as a priest. He had been the pastor of St. Daniel Church in Syracuse from June 1981 to June 2021.

“We lost a wonderful priest and mentor and guide, but he is still up in heaven and guiding us to do this,” Dr. Maria said of the scholarship foundation, which has already supported 12 St. Rose of Lima School and Bishop Grimes Jr./Sr. High School students.

“On the evening of Msgr. Yennock’s funeral,” Dr. Iannolo explained, “we were discussing the Catholic schools. And we came up with the idea to start the Monsignor Yennock [Foundation].” She is on the Foundation board with Nancy and Msgr. Yennock’s niece Maria Scaravillo.

20 years of practice

Dr. Iannolo, who had attended the former St. Daniel School when Msgr. Yennock was the pastor, said: “Monsignor would always talk to me about how important the Catholic schools were. ... The thing that I’ve come to realize is that giving takes practice. So because of Monsignor I’ve had about 20 years of practice in giving to the Catholic schools. I’m very grateful to him for leading me down the right path.”

“Maria’s a giver,” her mother said. “I could never tell you how much because she’d get mad at me. She just keeps going.”

“She’s great,” said Dr. Maria’s first-grade teacher at St. Daniel’s, Sister Nicolette Vennaro, of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities. Sister Nicolette and St. Daniel’s parishioner Mary Margaret Aversa helped Nancy on the massive cookie project.

“We just want people to know about the Monsignor Yennock [Foundation] because there might be some children out there that are deciding, and some families that are deciding whether they’re able to



Nancy Iannolo holds a plate of cookies she made to raise funds for the new Monsignor Yennock Foundation for Catholic school scholarships. (Sun photo | Tom Maguire)

send their children to Catholic school; we want them to know this is a resource for them,” Dr. Maria said.

Go to monsignoryennock.org where there is an application tab and also a donation tab — “it might be that we also inspire people to join us in educating the next generation in the love of Jesus,” Dr. Maria said. Children who are attending or wish to attend Catholic school can apply. “He loved the Catholic schools,” she said of Msgr. Yennock, “and he loved the children, and he was dedicated to educating these children so that they would be disciples of Jesus.”

‘Made with love’

Donors include baker Nancy, who donated the ingredients for the 5,000 cookies, such as almond paste rolled nuts in chocolate, almond paste petits fours, shortbread cookie variations, a Jack Daniel’s chocolate whiskey bar, fudge-filled cookies and sugar cookies filled with raspberry and topped with chocolate. “Made with love,” she said, and she doesn’t even eat them herself. She has made cookies in the past for Francis House and the CNY Marian Center.

“So this is a resurgence of time gone by where she is making 5,000 cookies,” Dr. Maria said. Did she get any of her mom’s cookies in the old days?

“Oh, the mistakes were so delicious,” she said.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Sister Margaret Thérèse Yennock, 91, MFIC, a member of the Missionary Franciscan Sister of the Immaculate Conception, died

Dec. 16, 2023, in Dedham, Mass. Sr. Margaret Thérèse was a sibling of Msgr. Eugene M. Yennock. Her obituary will appear in the January 18 print edition of The Catholic Sun.