



# La Rotariana

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## We are called to serve

**In Luke 22: 27, Jesus said, "I am among you as one who serves."**

**Father Tracy says: "He showed us how to do this and expects us to follow his example. I want to thank the groups named in these plaques and many individuals who have given me the privilege to partner with them in serving those in need as Jesus did."**

## Fr. Lawrence Tracy honored by the RLRC

November 3, 2012 was a big day in the life of the Rochester Latino Rotary Club. Not only it celebrated its third anniversary, but honor was paid to a priest who has served the Latino community for over 40 years. Fr. Lawrence Tracy, known to all as Fr. Tracy, started his service at Mt. Carmel Church. Fluent in the Spanish Language, he seamlessly offers bilingual services. Whether it is a Mass, a funeral service, baptism, wedding, or prayer service, Fr. Tracy can use both the Spanish and English languages without any difficulty. This, has certainly delighted the many non-English-speaking Latinos who attend those services. Fr. Tracy is a very generous, dedicated, and humble man. He has received numerous awards from the many organizations where he has served as board member, advisor, advocate, and friend.

Fr. Tracy has over the years advocated for issues affecting Latinos, such as education, health care, justice, and many social issues. He has no fear when it comes to confronting the powers that be in order to bring solutions to the many problems that keep Latinos from enjoying the benefits and privileges that the larger community take for granted.

## Biography of Fr. Tracy

Laurence Tracy was born in Rochester on March 14, 1940. He was the oldest of the six children (3 boys and 3 girls) of Norman Patrick Tracy and Marguerite Fuehrer Tracy. His father was from Irish descent and his mother's grandfather came from Germany. They lived on 127 Clifford Avenue, only two blocks from St. Michael's church. They did not have much money. His father was a factory worker, while his mother stayed at home to take care of her six children.

His Irish father had to endure frequently ethnic slurs from his German mother in law. According to his daughter, "as a result, it was always very clear to all of us kids that deciding to hate or despise someone because of their ethnicity was pretty darn stupid." A lesson that father Tracy never has forgotten.

The children learned also Christian values from their parents' response to having a son with Down syndrome. When people advised them to let the boy die, to not get attached, the parents were the kind of people who were not about to send back one of God's gifts just because he faced mental challenges. This boy lived a long life and died a few years ago at the Monroe Developmental Center. Again, we see that Father Tracy learned from his parents how to respect every human being.

Another very strong trait that he certainly learned from his mother is his social feelings. One of his sisters stated that his mother was quite a socialist in her thinking. She was always talking against wealthy people who did not help the poor.

Laurence's sisters call him Laurie, but everybody in Rochester knows him as Larry Tracy. He attended the parochial St. Michael's School, that no longer exists, where he stayed until he finished the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He entered St. Andrew Seminary where he finished high school and took 2 years of college. Then followed another 2 years of college at St. Bernard's Seminary on Lake Avenue and 4 years of theology.

Larry was ordained priest by Bishop James E. Kearney at St Michael's Church in June 1960. Practically, he has worked his whole life as a priest in the Hispanic neighborhood. Reportedly, he studied Spanish at a special institute at the Catholic University in Ponce, P.R. for people who were going to work among Hispanics in Latin America. Living and working among Hispanics, he perfected his Spanish language skills day after day.

His first assignment was at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church where he worked for 16 years. Already at that time, he fought from the pulpit for civil rights. Back then, when few Latinos were employed in some local companies, he told his parishioners: "Don't buy their products. They don't help you. Don't help them." After being without a church assignment for six months, he went to St. Francis Xavier Church, followed by our Lady of Perpetual Help Church and St. Michael's Church, all parishes with a large Hispanic population.

He helped create a program in 1989 to train lay Hispanics for ministry, el Instituto de Pastoral Hispano which is now run by St. Bernard Institute. He said: "While people like me can learn a lot about language and culture, it's never the same. Hispanics really need people of their own culture, heritage and tradition in ministry."



**Fr. Lawrence Tracy was ordained priest in 1966 (left) and recognized for his services by Mt. Carmel Church parishioners (below)**







Rotarians (top left) rest after planting garden at St. Michael Church (top right)



Mayor Thomas S. Richards. Deputy County Executive Dan DeLaus and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (from top counterclockwise) address parishioners during the ceremony held at St. Michael Church for the dedication of the garden



## Third Anniversary Celebration

At the Diplomat Banquet Center over 275 people gathered to celebrate the Rochester Latino Rotary Club as well as to share in the festivities honoring Fr. Larry Tracy for his dedicated work in pro of the less fortunate among us. The Fund Raising committee worked over the period of several months to organize the event. A great deal of the success is owed to the labor of Abraham Hernández, chair, Antonia Scott, Charol Ríos, Joe Cipolla, Wim Baars, Myrna Ortiz, Mildred Vázquez, and Luisa Baars. There were great speeches, non better than the one offered by Fr. Tracy. His many funny stories dealing with some parish-ioners very set on their ways had everyone in stitches. The entertainment provided by Trio Los Arpegios, Manami (piano), Mexican dancers, Felix Ortiz, and Bobby Hernández (DJ) was superb. All attendees had a good time and the night ended with dancing.



**President Diana Hernández and Assistant Governor Luisa Baars present Fr. Tracy with a trophy (left) and Mexican dancers delight the audience (bottom)**



**Norma Holland was the MC, doing an excellent job in her inimitable style**





**Los Arpeggios accompanied Felix Ortiz who sang songs he composed for Fr. Tracy**



**Many attendees danced away the night to their heart content**

## Eastern Cities Dinner

On November 5th, the Rochester Club celebrated its traditional Eastern Cities Dinner. Several members of the RLRC attended the same accompanied by Mexican Rotarians from the Tuxtepec-Cuenca Rotary Club.

They represented the club that jointly obtained a matching grant to equip a school for indigenous children in Tuxtepec-Cuenca. They were very excited for the opportunity to meet the President of Rotary International **Sakuji Tanaka**. He was very gracious and signed a document brought by Flor Reyna Hernández and Maritza Romero recognizing the joint efforts by the two clubs and the districts 7120 and 4190.



**From left, Maritza Romero, Flor Reyna Hernández, Sakuji Tanaka, and Diana Hernández**



## Thanksgiving Baskets

In honor of Fr. Tracy, the RLRC undertook as its service project for the month the donation of food baskets including turkey, rice, beans, dessert, and seasonings to 24 deserving families from St. Michael church and Our Lady of Las Americas. The families were carefully selected with the assistance of Belén Colón and Priscila de Jesús. At the presentation of the baskets, Diana Hernández, Diana Irizarry, Luisa Baars, Elisa DeJesús, Wim Baars, and Charol Ríos, chair of the Service Projects Committee, were present. This project is very much in keeping with the RLRC goals of meeting the needs of the Latino community. Part of the proceeds from the Anniversary celebration were used to fund the project. Several parishioners from St. Michael Church helped prepare the food baskets during a regular evening meeting of the Club at the Holiday Inn.



**Parishioners assisted Rotarians by filling the food bags with all the trimmings necessary for a great Thanksgiving dinner.**



**Turkeys were added to the food baskets the Sunday before Thanksgiving at the Rectory of St. Michael Church**

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## FUTURE EVENTS

1. December 5 at 7:30 am at Path-Stone —Sonia Rodriguez from the Hope Christian Fellowship. .
2. December 12 at 6:30 pm at the Holiday Inn—Panamanian Dance Group
3. December 19 at 7:30 am at Path-Stone—Elizabeth Cinquino, Assistant Director, American Red Cross Youth Leadership Development
4. Last two weeks in December—gather toys for the Three Kings Day celebration at Ibero's Daycare Center

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## Board of Directors

*Luisa Baars, Founder*

*Diana Hernández, President*

*Abraham Hernández, President-Elect*

*Roberto Burgos, Club Administration Chair*

*Elisa DeJesús, Past-President/Foundation Chair*

*Wim Baars, Treasurer*

*José Santana and*

*Diana Irizarry, Secretaries*

*Abraham Hernandez, Fundraising Committee Chair*

*Miriam Vázquez, Literacy Chair*

*Charol Ríos, Service Projects Chair*

*Diana Irizarry, Oratorical Contest Chair*

*Luisa Baars, Editor La Rotariana*

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