



THE SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

PARISH NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010



MESSAGE FROM FATHER JOHN

Dear Friends,

This month is dominated by two major themes in our parish and among all Americans.

During this month, Catholics pray for the All Souls. It is a month of remembrance of all of those who have died and gone before us, people who touched our hearts and lives by their example, love and commitment to us. We had a beautiful celebration for the All Souls on November 2, when many of the family members of those buried in the last year at Blessed Sacrament returned for our Mass of Remembrance. Each family came forward to light a candle when their loved one's name was called. The music and instrumentation provided by the Blessed Sacrament Choir added to the special moment in honor of our deceased loved ones. We continue to honor our beloved deceased throughout the month of November. The Book of Life is placed in front of the Paschal candle in the church. There is always time to add new names to the book so they are remembered at our Masses each day of the month. The priests are offering 100 Masses for all those mentioned in the Book of Life and all the poor souls so our loved ones are remembered in a special way during those Eucharistic celebrations.

The second theme is one of Thanksgiving. On November 25, we gather as a nation; we gather in our homes with our families, oftentimes with a big turkey dinner with all of the trimmings, perhaps watching a little football, to thank God for the gift of our great country and the freedoms we enjoy. Thanksgiving is always a

special day at the parish, as many people come to the 8 a.m. or 10 a.m. Mass to offer their prayer of thanks to God. They begin their day with a special time of prayer in appreciation for all of the blessings received throughout the year. This letter is an invitation to you to join us. It has been one of my favorite family traditions ever since I was a little boy . . . to go to the Mass on Thanksgiving Day and to offer prayers of thanks, asking for nothing new, but just thanking God through prayer for His many gifts to us.

Hopefully you will enjoy your Thanksgiving, whether you are at home or traveling to visit family and friends. Please make it a point to start your day with a prayer of thanksgiving, and if possible, join the parish community for our Mass of Thanksgiving. We are so lucky to live in this country and to be so free to express our faith with our family and friends. Stop and say thanks. It seems most appropriate for the coming holiday season. I will be praying for your deceased loved ones, and for you as well, this Thanksgiving and throughout this wonderful month of November.

Sincerely and Gratefully,

Father John

AFGHANS FOR INFANTS, A VISIBLE SIGN OF LOVE AND COMMUNITY

By Lisa Greenberg

During Lent almost two years ago, a small group of Bread, Book, and Brethren members decided to meet after the Wednesday Bible Study to knit or crochet afghans for the Christ Child Society layette program. This special ministry welcomes new children into the world. Recently, at the instigation of contemporary choir director Ginny Curtin, the group exercised its creativity and expanded its repertoire by making hats for sale at the November Sodality Bazaar, which contributes to the financial support of the parish and many local charities.



However, the creation of unique afghans for unborn infants remains the first goal. Each handmade afghan is a special sign of love and community to a mother often unsupported by family and struggling with poverty. The Christ Child Society Layette Program's social service partners encourage each pregnant woman to attend preventive prenatal appointments, thus ameliorating the threat to the unborn baby of poor maternal nutrition and medical care. At each prenatal visit, the mother will receive a small piece of the layette ... a baby bottle, a dozen diapers, an undershirt...so that the mother can experience the excitement of preparing for her baby's needs. The crowning piece is the handcrafted afghan, a tangible symbol of warmth and welcome for the new infant. The mother looks forward to receiving these special afghans when she has attended all prenatal appointments or, sometimes, when she is in hospital after delivery.



The layette program in its support of prenatal care for the mother and infant is particularly important in the light of the UN millennial goals for women and children. While maternal mortality has dropped 34 percent in the last decade, the maternal mortality rate in Washington, D.C., is the highest in the nation, 34.9 per 100,000 (National Report Card on Women's Health, National Women's Law Center). The Christ Child Society layette program positively encourages all pregnant women involved to receive timely prenatal care, protecting mothers as they deliver healthier infants.

As does the Bible Study, the Afghans for Infants program, draws members from several different parishes. Currently knitters and crocheters from St. Bartholomew's and Little Flower Parishes join their colleagues from Blessed Sacrament in the parish library, courtesy of librarian Ellen Roth, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. There they create beautiful and warm tapestries of color for babies, whom they remember in prayer and delight as they create something beautiful. And, of course, talk about anything and everything! However, the almost 200 afghans knitted over the course of 18 months is only a drop in the bucket. Christ Child Society distributes almost 4000 a year.

Join us in this special ministry (which you can take with you on car and plane trips and pursue as you watch television!) on Wednesdays in the library, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, contact eogreenberg@gmail.com.

JUST IN TIME

By John Dluhy, M.D.

Thomas Merton wrote, "Time is the field of encounter with the Divine Presence." It follows that the most important moments of our life here on earth are when we are encountering God.

I know this from personal experience that this is true. I feel better after a period when I have felt truly engaged in prayer or after I have had what I feel is a numenous experience. Getting to this encounter is difficult. Sometimes I don't give myself enough time, or I am distracted by my problems, or I am too lazy to pray. I always feel better when I make encountering God in "now-time" a priority.

I feel grateful that I am a Catholic. We have the most user-friendly religion. There are so many devotional aids and opportunities to enhance our religious knowledge, and new aids and programs are being developed all the time. We Catholics are a blessed group of people!



Artwork by Max Gleason
Age 6

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING DEAGAN CHIMES ROLL-TOP WOODEN CABINET

On November 3 at 8:35 a.m., a change-ringing marked the opening of a year of celebration for the 75th anniversary of the Blessed Sacrament tower chimes. The Blessed Sacrament Sunday bulletin will contain regular information about the chimes, their history and function. The chimes, in



Photo by Joe Bozik

addition to their regular musical call to prayer, have the ability to play songs, using a keyboard option that is powered by perforated paper rolls similar to those found in a player piano.

For years the rolls were stored in a cabinet similar to the one shown here and kept in the church sacristy. However, in an effort to better organize the church sacristy, someone moved the small roll-top wooden cabinet that housed the paper rolls. No one has seen this cabinet since. The paper rolls are now housed in a plain cardboard box.

The attics of historic Chevy Chase contain many historically interesting and sometimes mysterious objects. Have you ever wondered what that roll-top cabinet that's been around for decades could have been designed to hold? Perhaps it was in your grandmother's house; maybe you picked it up at a yard sale and painted over the scarred wood. It may just be the missing Blessed Sacrament Deagan chimes roll-top wooden cabinet.

Please join in our search and find mission and help us solve this Blessed Sacrament mystery. If you locate it, please return it. There will be no questions asked . . . unless you want to divulge the story of its interesting journey. The cabinet will return to its original use in a place of honor at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Contact the Chimes Committee (anonymously) with any leads and all clues. Contact: Joe Bozik @ 202.244.4833.

PLAN AHEAD FOR THE MEN'S RETREAT!

By Dr. Jim Richeson

Our Blessed Sacrament's Men's Retreat Weekend is now just four months away on March 4-6, 2011. The theme this year is "By His Wounds We are Healed – Jesus Transforms our Human Condition and Heals Us from Within."

We are sharing the retreat with seven other parishes, all quite active over the years, so the sooner our men register, the easier it will be to negotiate more space as we get closer to the retreat. So please register now and spread the word to a friend/family member about your experience at Loyola and invite them to join you. I'll again be keeping everyone updated on the retreat house's list of those registered, so that you'll have confirmation of your registration or a reminder that you still need to register.

Please note that the suggested offering is \$225 for the weekend; a \$110 deposit reserves your room, and the \$115 balance is due at arrival. Please complete the form and send it in as soon as you can with your deposit to reserve your spot.

Thanks to your generosity, Loyola has always had the policy that no one will be turned away from Loyola, if their circumstances do not permit them to make the suggested offering. In fact the suggested offerings have generally only covered 2/3 of the actual costs, so they depend on those to contribute more who can. If you know someone, who would like to attend, but has no resources, kindly tell them that they are welcome. If they only need a little help with the cost, please let me know and I'll provide them with a \$60 discount coupon from Loyola.

Our retreat information is now on the Blessed Sacrament website under "Adult Faith Formation" at <http://www.blessedsacramentdc.org/faith-formation/adult-faith-formation/groups-for-women-men-moms-etc/men-mens-retreat/>.

Kindly remember that for all registration communications, you do need to contact Loyola directly. Contact Dr. Jim Richeson, Captain, Blessed Sacrament Men's Retreat at 301.657.2695 if you need or can offer someone else a ride, or if you know someone who would need a \$60 discount coupon in order to attend the upcoming retreat.

See you there!

FAITH IN THE MARKETPLACE

By Dean Packard

Faith in the Marketplace meets the first Friday of each month (unless that happens to be before Labor Day, like this year, or during Christmas or Easter, in which case we meet the second Monday) from September through June to coincide with the school year.

Attendees gather at 6:30 a.m. Mass and after Mass adjourn to the Duffy Parish Center's main conference room for networking over Spring Mill Bread Company (thanks, Katherine) muffins and coffee. The discussion begins at 7:10 and ends at 7:45 a.m. sharp. Folks typically continue with the visiting till around 8 a.m., but many leave after the discussion concludes.

At the November 5 meeting, Dr. Charles Infosino shared his personal life journey as a distinguished scientist, late blooming father, battling pancreatic cancer survivor and often tested, but never broken, Catholic. Having lost his father as a teenager, Charles endured other family tragedy but went on to receive a Bachelor of Science, Master of Science and PhD in Physics. Charles' distinguished professional career was with the Department of Defense where he was responsible for advances in technology related to surveillance, missile defense and laser systems. Since his retirement from federal service in 2005, Charles has pursued his personal interests in the integration of philosophy, cosmology, biology and theology. However, unlike Stephen Hawking, Charles' own quests for the "Theory of Everything" have often had to take a backseat to marriage, fatherhood and carpool logistics. Charles' wife Iara, an Operations Research Mathematician, has returned to the workforce. Their daughter Melissa graduated from Blessed Sacrament School in 2008 and is now a sophomore at Georgetown Visitation.

In the fall of 2009, Charles was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He underwent surgery to remove his pancreas and continues to inspire his friends and family with his courageous battle. Every month Catholic professionals, usually members of Blessed Sacrament parish, provide inspirational ideas about incorporating their religion and the marketplace. Consider joining them for this brief but powerful experience.

OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS RETIRING

By Pat Kavanaugh, Director of Social Concerns

Christ loved the poor and told us that what we do for those in need, we do for Him. Beall Comstock, Mary Daly Gorman and Richard Hage exemplify a lifestyle one lives when answering the call of Christ.

Beall Comstock completed an Education Parish Service (EPS) course offered by Trinity University, Washington to parishioners seeking to be more involved in parish life. She asked our former pastor, Monsignor Duffy, what were some of the parish needs at Blessed Sacrament. He suggested she support the Blessed Sacrament Soup Kitchen, and for over twenty five years, Beall prepared and served a warm meal each Monday morning to the poor and homeless in the District. Beall's children comment that she is unable to "just say no" but according to Beall, "not knowing how to say no is just fine with her."

Mary Gorman recently stepped down from serving approximately 18 years as a Board Member to the Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place. Years ago, an active Blessed Sacrament parishioner invited Mary to a brainstorming, grassroots meeting to discuss the homeless population in NW D.C. and the lack of services for them. As plans began, Mary particularly remembers canvassing the nearby neighborhood to find a building and being turned away. Landlords were not interested in renting to a group providing services to a homeless population. After much work by a very devoted ecumenical group, a small house was purchased

and renovated which is now Friendship Place. Mary praised the people who created and support this facility. She described the volunteers as "People who get involved and stay involved; so many caring people."

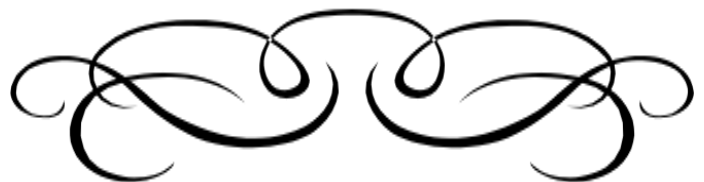
Richard Hage has been Co-Coordinator of the Blessed Sacrament WIN (Washington Interfaith Network) since retiring from the government in 1995. Agreeing with both Beall and Mary, Richard says one of the most fulfilling aspects of his volunteer work is the great people in which he had the opportunity to interact (dynamic pastors, influential community organizers, dedicated volunteers) and the positive changes his work has made in the lives of citizens in the District. One of Richard's proudest accomplishments was the creation of a Ward 3 Caucus, which was created and executed by the Blessed Sacrament WIN Ministry. Ward 3 City Council Candidates discussed their political agenda with WIN and WIN outlined their demands for the next elected Ward 3 City Council Member. Another very meaningful accomplishment for Richard was WIN's success in negotiating improved and/or athletic fields for Wilson and other District high schools.

Thank you Beall, Mary, and Richard for your work to improve the quality of life for poor and needy individuals in our community. Your work totals more than a half-century! May many more parishioners follow your example.

BLESSED SACRAMENT VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPH



Can you help us identify the persons in this 1954 Blessed Sacrament School kindergarden photo?



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**Send all contributions to
newsletter@blessedsacramentdc.org**



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