



THE SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

PARISH NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010



MESSAGE FROM FATHER JOHN

This is an exciting time to be a Catholic! It is a great time to bring the message of Jesus to those who have yet to hear it, or who have let it slip from their consciousness! I am looking forward to bringing those who have lost their way back to the Church. This is one of my major goals over the next few years. We are now living the ancient Chinese proverb, "May you live in interesting times!"

You might be surprised, I think, to hear my positive comments about the Church and the spreading of the Gospel. We are overloaded with criticism about the Pope's statements on this or that issue, our bishops' response and the hundreds of commentators and writers whose opinions we see and hear in the media. We certainly have issues we need to deal with! The sadness of the sex abuse crisis continues to haunt the entire Church. Some priests have failed us, and some bishops as well! In our own Archdiocese, the Same Sex marriage issue has been on the front pages for months. Many Catholics don't want to believe that marriage is between a man and a woman. The way the Church has handled these difficult issues has made our charitable contributions ever more difficult to maintain, which has left many programs and ministries underfunded.

Yes, we have some problems and issues, but hopefully most people believe we are doing our best to make things right. The Church has faced many, many crises since the early days of the Church 2,000 years ago. This may sound simplistic, but I believe we have begun to lose our focus as we face the issues of today, the mistakes we as a Church have made, the comments from our bishops and declarations

from the Pope. We have lost our focus on what Jesus means to you and me and how important it is that He comes alive in our hearts and souls. We need to serve both God and our fellow humans, finding ways to balance the business of everyday life with our inner need for the Lord.

I'm excited about the Archbishop's new pastoral on evangelization. It is not a new program, but a straight forward request that all of us hear the call to live the gospel faithfully, to share our faith with others as best we can, and to invite new members to join our faith community. If we are truly excited about our Church and our faith, we should follow the example of Jesus and invite others to walk with us on our faith journey.

This week, the RCIA program began a new year for the parish. We had nine people come to the church on our first Monday to begin the process of initiation at next year's Easter Vigil. The number will certainly grow over the next weeks and months as people realize the RCIA program is open to them.

What a gift it is to live your faith more fully and to ask others to share their faith with you. As we prepare for the Centennial, I ask all our parishioners to reach out to those you know who have fallen away from the Church, for whatever reason, and ask them to come to Sunday Mass with a new sense of appreciation for all that Jesus did for us as your priests preach the Gospel of His life. Remember what Saint Francis of Assisi said: "Preach a sermon every day. If necessary, use words." May your sermon be loud and clear for those you meet.

Father John

LANDINGS FALL SESSION TO BEGIN OCTOBER 7

By Karen Vittone

A couple of years ago Blessed Sacrament began a new ministry called LANDINGS, a program for returning or inactive Catholics who want to explore a more active return to their Catholic faith. This past spring we successfully completed our third eight-week LANDINGS session, and I am pleased to report that all of the sessions have been successful, not only for returning Catholics, but also for the active parishioners who participated as well.

For those of you unfamiliar with LANDINGS, it is a parish ministry designed to enable small groups of active lay Catholics to meet with returning Catholics to share their spiritual journeys and to explore and update their Catholic faith in 8 weekly sessions. It is primarily a ministry of the heart which seeks to reintroduce the returnee to the love of Christ through the ministry of the Church.

Catholics currently not practicing their religion make up the second largest religious group in the country; they number in the millions. We all know someone who has been away from Catholic religious practices or who only attends Mass occasionally. Take a prayerful moment and think about someone who you might invite to participate in the upcoming fall session. God just asks us to invite, the Holy Spirit will do the rest! What greater way to celebrate our Centennial Year at Blessed Sacrament than to reactivate your own faith or to invite someone back to Church. No pressure, just an invitation to explore the possibilities.

To find out more about LANDINGS or to sign up for our fall session, please contact Karen Vittone at 301.585.0592 or karen@vittone.com.

JUST IN TIME

By John Dluhy, M.D.



*Artwork by Liam Schulz
Grade 7*

The stated aim of prayer and devotion is spiritual healing. But I believe our prayer discipline also promotes physical and mental healing.

In my life-long work both as an internist and a psychiatrist I have helped people to health, as they heal from physical or emotional illness. This process is a continual discovery.

My subspecialty as a psychiatrist is the "Talking Core", group psychiatry, and some of my most healing hours of the week are spent conducting therapeutic talk groups. I try to help each person find his/her authentic voice, and I coach patients to find a way of exposing their inner life in words that others will understand. Inner healing takes place with other sufferers.

I spend a lot of time myself at Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, serving as a lector and being a server at funeral Masses. As I urge others to do in group therapy, I observe the process in myself by being with and talking to God in prayer. I believe this leads to greater health both physically and mentally. We all might not be cured, but we all improve.

Join me during the week attending the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Mass, talking to God, listening to God and becoming well.

TERESE RECINELLA NAMED DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Combine talent, experience and education and you will meet Therese Recinella, newly appointed Blessed Sacrament Director of Religious Education.

Therese grew up in a family of eight children in Detroit. She attended Catholic schools throughout her youth and college in Michigan, spent 14 years as a teacher and served with the Peace Corps in Ukraine. Attending Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, Therese earned an MA in theology and came east to serve for eight years as the Director of Religious Education at Saint Catherine Laboure Parish in Wheaton.

In addition to her work leading parish ministries, Therese has developed courses and written books on prayer. She believes in connecting prayer with the lesson taught, which is different for various age groups.

Sharing the love of Christ with others through the ministry of catechesis brings great joy to Therese. She highly values her experience with the parents, families and individuals she encounters on their journey of faith.

At Blessed Sacrament Therese will direct the School of Religion, RCIA, Adult Formation and confirmation. Also, she will work with the various commissions in carrying out the Blessed Sacrament mission.

Therese noted that parishioners have already been very welcoming. We wish you joy and happiness as you work with parishioners to deepen their spirituality.



*Artwork by Teddy Thomas
Grade 2*

KATHRYN AND SHEP ABELL TO CHAIR OCTOBER 25 SAINT LUKE INSTITUTE BENEFIT

Please Save the Date

Monday, October 25, 2010
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Saint Luke Institute 2010 Annual Benefit
Reception at the
Vatican Embassy in Washington, D.C.
Presentation of the 2010 Saint Luke Award to
Archbishop Pietro Sambi,
Apostolic Nuncio to the United States



*Artwork by Liam Rhodes
Grade 2*

UP-DATE ON HAITI

Father Reginald Jean-Mary, Diocese of Miami Coordinator of Relief Effort for Haiti, will talk at all the Masses at Blessed Sacrament during the weekend of October 9,10 to provide parishioners with first-hand information about the current situation in Haiti. Born in the Dominican Republic, Father Jean-Mary is a US citizen and was educated at several institutions around the world. He also serves as pastor of the largest Haitian community church in Miami.

During the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, Blessed Sacrament parishioners organized in various ways to support the relief effort there—see previous newsletter articles. Also, for several years now Blessed Sacrament parishioners, under the leadership of Anne Devereux, have been active in planning for a women's health clinic in the North East area of Haiti.

Please welcome Father Jean-Mary as we extend our hands across the hemisphere.

COMMUNITY GARDEN . . . A GROWING MINISTRY

By Lisa Greenberg

Imagine a piece of rectory lawn turned into a four box raised bed garden in just three hours on a hot June morning! This was the gift given to the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament parish by prospective Eagle Scout Grant Bodnar and Boy Scout Troop 1094 of Darnestown, Maryland.

In 2009, the JustFaith group initiated a pilot project food bank garden through the Social Concerns Office in order to help residents of our local area who were struggling with the economic downturn. At the same time, WIN was promoting the Grow to Share program in our parish. In 2010 the Community Garden, with the help of the Environmental Ministry, was ready to expand... but who could put in the time and labor to build more raised beds?

A notice in our parish bulletin was passed on to a workplace colleague and Grant Bodnar appeared. After reviewing the plans sent him, he estimated a budget to build bucket container gardens for distribution to group homes and and four raised beds. On June 12 he showed up with his fellow Scouts, cars packed with precut lumber, a work plan, and many willing hands and strong backs from his troop. Blessed Sacrament parish members had already started tomato seedlings and brought in compost and wood chips from Virginia and Maryland recycling centers.

At 12:30 the garden was ready for planting and the Scouts broke for a pizza lunch. This well-run project has been a blessing for



the parish and also for Shepherd's Table, recipient of most of the produce. Along with produce from parishioners' gardens, our parish has contributed pounds of squash, tomatoes, spinach, and peppers, and many bags of fresh herbs and salad materials. Cucumbers and beans are just beginning to come in. Lettuce, collards, winter rape, and spinach have been started for a fall garden. Not bad for a late June start, Maryland's struggle with drought, and intermittent heavy rains and wind storms.

However, Haile Efrem, Shepherd's Table staff member, points out, "We always need more vegetables, more produce. These are so important to health and good nutrition." As the summer winds down, if you have extras in your garden, please drop them in the baskets on the altar or the cooler outside the Social Concerns Office.

This is a win-win project, bringing nutritious food to those who need it most and bringing Grant much closer to his Eagle Scout award. For more information, contact Lisa Greenberg at eogreenberg@gmail.com or Pat Kavanaugh in the Social Concerns Office at 202.449.3987.



GRANT'S STORY

Hi, my name is Grant Bodnar and I am a boy scout from Troop 1094 in Darnestown. I recently completed my Eagle project which was to help your church in its mission to help provide fresh food for the hungry in the community. My project had two parts: 1) constructing 20 water-conserving plant containers out of used 5 gallon buckets; and 2) constructing the four raised garden beds right across the street from the church. In order to do both things, I assembled both scouts and adult leaders from my troop to help me. During the process, I acted as the leader and delegated jobs to the scouts and adult as well as helped them in the construction. Combined we put in about 100 hours of effort. I hope that you find my project beneficial to the church as well as the community. Thank you providing me with this Eagle Project, as now I can now complete the Eagle rank, the highest rank in all of scouting.



BOY SCOUT JOHN HOTKA UNDERTAKES RECTORY IMPROVEMENT

During this very hot summer, John Hotka, 17 year old member of Blessed Sacrament Parish Troop 90, undertook a much needed parish improvement in partial fulfillment of requirements to become an Eagle Scout. The project consisted of widening the driveway in front of the rectory by three feet allowing vehicles of persons visiting the rectory to park while other vehicles, especially in emergencies, could be driven through to Western Avenue.



The project was identified as a possible Eagle Scout Project by Cleo Tavani, Chairman of the Guild of Parish Gardeners. John worked with Cleo to finalize the planning which included identifying and purchasing materials. Completely on his own initiative, John obtained a 20% discount on materials from Home Depot thereby bringing in the project under \$600.



The site had to be leveled to a depth which would accommodate layers of gravel, sand and newspapers (to keep out the weeds) underneath one-foot square concrete pavers. The sod and soil which was removed was placed around the parish as needed. The actual construction took just two days.

To assist in the actual construction, John recruited fellow scouts and parishioners: Patrick Hall, Graeme Hall, Christian Hall, Mark O'Connell, Nick Townsend, Julian Godding, Jacob Crahan, Ryan McCarragher, Henry Meyerson, Will Meyerson and Aidan Eubanks.

Gardeners Guild Co-Chairman Joe Bozik worked with John and John's father Mike Hotka in supervising as well as helping out with the construction. John's mother Cathy provided pizza – the essential ingredient in fueling any effort involving teen age boys.



SCHOOL ENTRANCE GETS PARTIAL FACE LIFT (MAKING 5 TONS OF PAVERS ATTRACTIVE)

By Cleo Tavani

Students returning to Blessed Sacrament School were greeted by a renovation of the area adjacent to the main entrance. Between the school entrance and the old convent entrance, an attractive plaza emerged, paved with natural Belgium blocks in a gray color harmonizing with the stone walls of the school. The wooden bench donated by the Disabilities Ministries in 2005 to honor former pastor Monsignor Thomas Duffy is centered on the plaza between two crape myrtle trees. The smaller tree was donated by the Class of 2009. There is a fence separating the slope from the flat area, and the slope is being planted as a rock garden. The concrete foundation of the fence is deep enough to provide seating for the children. A sign identifying the school entrance may be added at a future date.

In the 2000 major parish renovation which combined the former convent building with the school, this flat area in front of the combined buildings was planted with grass. The grass did not withstand the feet of children at play. The slope down to the lower level windows also lost its plantings and the soil began to erode. Run-off rainwater from the upper flat area drained uncontrollably to the lower storm drain, and a solution to minimize this run-off was needed.

Planning for addressing this problem area was initiated in 2003 by Cleo Tavani, Chairman of the Guild of Parish Gardeners. The first challenge was to find a suitable treatment of the surface. As this search proceeded Cleo, in coordination with the school, developed an overall plan which would make the entrance more inviting as well as

serve the needs of students especially during recess periods. She worked with the Disabilities Ministries and the school when they wanted to make donations for the parish grounds suggesting a bench and a tree which could be elements of the proposed project. With the assistance of Guild Co-Chairman Joe Bozik, a final plan with estimates was prepared and approved by school Principal Chris Kelly and Facilities Manager Marty Lagoy. Funding is being shared by the school and the parish.

Detailed planning for implementation took place during the past winter calling for construction to be carried out by parish volunteers and employees during the summer when school would not be in session. Joe Bozik supervised construction during some of the hottest days of a summer marked by record-setting temperatures. This strenuous work included building a concrete foundation for the fence and preparing the ground for sturdy Belgian blocks. Over 5 tons of pavers, 6 cubic yards of concrete, gravel and blue stone dust were delivered and placed with care not to disturb the area's existing plantings. Drainage weep-holes were incorporated in the foundation wall, and underground piping inserted for allowing a future self-watering irrigation system for the plantings.

Facilities staff member Preston Taylor lent his skills to construction of the concrete foundation for the fence. Other Facilities staff who assisted included Marty Lagoy and Hansel Carneiro. Parishioners Kevin O'Neill and Brendan Kelly earned community service hours, as did Nathan and Aaron Taylor.



FORMER CONVENT DOOR REHABILITATED

By Cleo Tavani

In a separate summer effort complementary to the school plaza project, Cleo Tavani coordinated the rehabilitation of the classic door which was once the entrance to the convent. This building, which once housed the nuns who served the parish, was attached to the school in the major parish construction of the early part of this century.

In the intervening ten years, the door with its decorative design made of many small pieces of wood had become severely deteriorated. The rehabilitation of the door was carried out under contract with parishioner Mike Hotka. In addition to replacing rotted and missing pieces of trim, Mike had to craft by hand the small pieces of molding no longer available.

The selection of a paint color close to the color of the church doors was made in consultation with architect and parishioner Jack McCartney. The finish of the once again elegant door should last for several years with regular inspection in a scheduled maintenance program.

Editor's Note: It Does Take a Village!

It takes a village to create a parish newsletter! Special thanks to those parishioners who wrote articles and took photos for this issue. The art students of Blessed Sacrament School, led by their teacher, Judy Kearns, will again contribute artwork for our newsletter, and Dr. Dluhy's column is back by popular demand. I think our readers will agree that this issue is informative and interesting, reflecting the energy of our parish. Please follow these writers' role-modeling and submit news about your activities for our next edition.

Publication Date (Issue)

November 20
(November/December)

Deadline

November 10

Send all contributions to
newsletter@blessedsacramentdc.org

ANNUAL SODALITY BAZAAR INSPIRES SPIRIT OF GIVING

A hallmark of the holiday season, the Blessed Sacrament Sanctuary Sodality Holiday Bazaar helps enrich the spirit of giving in our community each year. Proceeds raised by the event benefit nearly 20 local charities and enable the Sodality to contribute financial support to important parish projects. Never an event to miss, the Sodality Bazaar gives all of us a great jump start on our holiday shopping. This year's event will feature a delicious lunch, fun activities for the kids and an array of new vendors, along with many others back by popular demand, including:

- Aurora Baths soaps and candles
- Carolyn Wilson's Design in a Day (home furnishings)
- Fine Swine clothes, bags, accessories for men and women
- Liza Byrd Boutique clothing and jewelry
- Magnolia Design Studio (home furnishings)
- Matthew's Whyte Apparel
- Queen Bee jewelry
- Sigrid Jewelry
- Starland by Hand jewelry
- Top It Off (bags, belts and gifts)
- Whyte House Monograms
- Zermatt Outerwear (silk and cashmere scarves and wraps)

If you are interested in being a vendor at the Holiday Bazaar or have a vendor to suggest, please contact Shelly Richards, mrich5775@aol.com or 202.966.1843.

Also, please start collecting your gently used women's and children's clothing as well as any kitchen and home décor items to contribute to

our White Elephant sale. Donations will be accepted at the Duffy Parish Center starting Monday, November 8.

Lastly, make your list, check it twice, but most importantly, don't miss the Annual Sodality Holiday Bazaar, Saturday, November 13, in the Blessed Sacrament School gym from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Artwork by Amiel Lumbre