



THE SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

PARISH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011



MESSAGE FROM FATHER JOHN

Dear Friends,

You would think that Lent is not a popular season in most of our lives! You would think that people find it dreary, long and difficult as they try to give alms, do penance and pray more often! You would think it is not a popular season when compared to Advent, or particularly compared to the Christmas and Easter seasons. You would think that, but in the lives of many of our parishioners that is not the case. So many parishioners tell me they love the season of Lent. They love that they can spend more time than usual in private prayer, reflection and potentially life-changing spiritual activities. So many have told me they began to form habits during Lent which continue the rest of their lives. They might have started by praying a decade of the rosary after the family meal; this became a daily event not just during the Lenten season. Some say they first began going to Mass everyday during Lent, and then they never stopped. In some cases, people have been doing it for 5, 10, 15 or 20 years. It might be because they felt a greater sense of being with the Lord during this 40-day season, and now they have new spiritual habits as a regular part of their lives.

Lent is a time of change, a time of reflection, a time of new life for many people. So many of us need that change and the opportunity to put things back in perspective. Let's be honest, we're all too busy. Life is too hectic. We can't complete all our tasks and sometimes our priorities are skewed by the busyness of our lives. Work comes before family, family comes before God, and God comes after television, the Internet, sports, vacations, leisurely reading and all the distractions that fill our days. No matter

how busy we are, most of us have time for going out, for sports, for television or the occasional movie.

May this Lent be different as we really make an effort to enjoy our Parish Mission, to share in "The Light is On for You," to attend the Friday night Stations of the Cross, to make the Triduum, a mini-retreat to enjoy the gift of our fellow parishioners, and join together as pilgrims journeying closer to the Lord.

May Lent be special for you, and may it be special for me as we seek the Lord together and place Him in His proper place in our lives once again. May Lent touch our hearts with a sense of profound joy for all that God means to us.

Father John

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ASHES TO EASTER

"Ash Wednesday is a great way to start your Lenten season by spending a few moments thinking about your relationship with the Lord and about how you want to change during these 40 days of renewal in preparation for Easter." —Father John

This year's Ash Wednesday, and Easter Sunday, will be celebrated extremely late in the seasonal calendar. Lent will occur after daylight saving time begins, so all the daily Masses, including the 6:30 a.m. and the 5:30 p.m. Masses, will begin and end during daylight hours. (No reason to be daunted by the dark!)

Ashes will be distributed at all Masses on Ash Wednesday and confessions will be heard all day. (See article below, *The Light is on for YOU!*)

Throughout Lent a varied and involving program of activities will offer many different activities to appeal to diverse interests. This newsletter highlights some of those activities; become aware of other activities by reading the weekly Bulletin and by consulting the Blessed Sacrament website: www.blessedsacramentdc.org.

Forty days is less than six weeks; it's a short time to commit to the enhancement of your spiritual journey. Think of it as a time for spiritual coaching, and be the best you can be. This can be the latest – and best – Easter for you.



Recollections of your teen-age years surely include the memory of a light left on for your return. (Parents are just like that.) Surely you remember the dazzling brilliance of Blessed Sacrament's Christmas lights, enjoyed by the entire community of parishioners and neighbors alike.

Now Blessed Sacrament lights will be burning again, every Wednesday evening during Lent, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., welcoming everyone to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Repeating the success of this activity, which for the last three years has brought many penitents to realize the grace of the sacrament, there will always be at least one priest, sometimes more, hearing confessions during this hour and a half.

At the same time in church, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will attract people to come and pray for others who may be away from the Church, asking God to help them find their way back to Him. This will be the special intention offered during all the evening holy hours during Lent.

In addition, priests will hear confessions all day long on Ash Wednesday:

7 to 8 a.m.
10 to 11 a.m.
11:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
6:30 to 7 p.m.
8 to 9 p.m.

Remember that light is on for YOU!

ACTIVATE YOUR FAITH THIS LENTEN SEASON

By Karen Vittone

Have you, or someone you know, been away from the Catholic Church? Has it been awhile since you joined us for Mass or any parish activities?

If so, you may be hearing God's loving call to return to the active practice of your Catholic faith. The full participation of every Catholic is a precious gift to our faith community because as long as any Catholic is inactive or alienated from the Church, the Church remains incomplete. We want all our inactive brothers and sisters to return to the Church; we can support each other on our faith journeys.

The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament wants you to know that we are thinking of you, that we have missed you. No matter how long you have been away for whatever reason, we invite you to consider returning to the Church or reactivating your relationship with the Catholic Church through a program called LANDINGS.



LANDINGS 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 their Catholic faith in eight, two-hour, sessions. The "sharing" gives the returnees the opportunity to reflect on their stories in the context of God's action throughout their lives and to hear the inspirational stories of others on their faith journeys. The weekly reflection topics, such as "Why follow Jesus?", "The Eucharist" and "Baptism/Confirmation," re-introduce the returnees to Catholic beliefs while placing their individual stories into the larger story of God's love for us and the world.

While LANDINGS is a process of faith formation which re-introduces returning Catholics to the faith, LANDINGS is primarily a ministry of the

heart which seeks to re-activate the returnees' love of Christ through the ministry of the Church. LANDINGS leaves judgments, pressuring and insensitivity at the door. More than just words, LANDINGS offers the example of lived faith.

We all know someone who has been away or who only attends Mass occasionally. What greater act of love this Lenten season than to help someone return home to the Church? Let's help them "come home" for Easter!

For more information or to register for the spring LANDINGS session, which begins March 3, please contact Karen Vittone at 301.585.0592 or karen@vittone.com.

MEN'S RETREAT

By Dr. Jim Richeson

On the weekend of March 4-6 consider joining Father John and more than a dozen men already signed up for the Blessed Sacrament Men's Retreat held at the Loyola Retreat House, Faulker, Maryland. The theme this year, "By His Wounds We are Healed – Jesus Transforms our Human Condition and Heals Us from Within," promises to move participants along their spiritual journey while they enjoy the unusual beauty of the Potomac River location.

The retreat begins with Mass at 6 p.m. and a crab dinner on Friday evening and continues through lunch on Sunday, providing times for individual reflection and prayer and private and group spiritual direction.

Past participants describe the retreat as a life-changing experience, one that provides time away from the world's demands and cares, and time to think and to plan ahead.

Make your reservation today. Contact Lisa White at Loyola at 301.392.0819 or lisa.white@loyolaretreat.org. The deposit to reserve your room is \$110, and the suggested total offering is \$225 for the weekend, with the \$115 balance due at arrival. Nowhere can one get a better deal for a weekend's food and lodging!

See you there!

Parish Mission With:
 Father Jim Greenfield, OSFS and
 Father Kevin Nadolski, OSFS

Each of us knows the experience of living with a broken heart. Sometimes, we can feel overwhelmed by the losses we suffer through illness and death or separation and divorce. Our hearts can feel incredibly lonely in the midst of fear, transition and struggle. On the other hand, our hearts can also feel intense joy and delight, and the peaceful awareness of God’s presence and abiding love.

Through this mission, Fathers Jim and Kevin will share stories from Scripture and life to lead us on a journey to Christ, to show the healing power of the Holy Spirit and the world of light and hope that lives in our restless hearts. The Mission is guaranteed to strike chords of recognition in every listening heart as Fathers Jim and Kevin offer a fresh new look – both funny and poignant – at living with fear and anxiety, at grief and starting over, at the lives of the saints, and the wondrous love of the Sacred Heart.

Father Jim Greenfield, OSFS is an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales and is currently the provincial of the eastern province. He has taught spirituality and human development at The Catholic University of America and The Washington Theological Union and has advanced degrees in both fields. In addition to teaching, he was involved in formation for his community and is a spiritual director for others. He currently lives in Wilmington, DE.

Father Kevin Nadolski, OSFS is an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales and is currently the Director of Communications and Development for the eastern province. He was the principal of Bishop Ireton High School in Alexandria, VA and the Director of formation for his community before assuming his present position. He is a graduate of Temple University with a degree in journalism and has a masters degree in education from The Catholic University of America.



Artwork by
 Kristina Colevas, Grade 7

About The Parish Mission

Father Jim and Father Kevin will begin the mission by preaching at all the weekend Masses on March 12 and 13. So if you attend a weekend Mass, you will have already begun the retreat!

Each evening begins at 7 p.m. in the church and usually runs about 70 minutes. (You’re sure to be out by 8:15 p.m.) On Monday evening, March 14, “Journey To Our Own Hearts” focuses on the brokenness of the heart in grief and its journey back to healing and freedom. On Tuesday evening, “Journey With Saints And Sinners,” Father Jim and Father Kevin will present stories and images of Mary and the saints as our soul companions. All are invited to bring pictures of deceased loved ones to be placed in the church that evening. On Wednesday evening, “Journey To The Heart Of Christ” will develop the theme of hope as the key virtue for our life with Christ and as Christians in the 21st Century

JUST IN TIME

By John Dluhy, M.D.

I am a psychiatrist who specializes in individual and group psychotherapy. When I work with a person in long-term therapy, we meet for one or more face-to-face sessions a week for a time period that can last from two to twenty years. It's long and sometimes arduous work which succeeds more than it fails.

I sit and listen to an individual or six-member group and occasionally make descriptive statements, suggestions, or even interpretations. An extreme example was a person with whom I met for over twenty years. During that long period this patient overcame depression and suicide wishes, and at the completion of therapy led a happy and productive Christian life.

Over the last eight years, meditation and prayer have helped me to work out my own rational theology. My references were Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas Merton's writings, and the teachings of the Loyola Retreat House (2002-10.) (Editor's note: See article on this year's Blessed Sacrament Men's Loyola Retreat.) Through all my work, I have come to believe the following explanation.

Our loving and merciful God sent us his Son, Jesus Christ, to be a universal therapist. Possessing complete understanding of the human condition, Jesus lived a 33-year life as a human person with all the experiences a human has, including betrayal, torture, and a painful death. He arose in glory, and Jesus continues to reign as head of an ever-increasing body called the Church.

To facilitate our following Jesus, in God's wisdom we have a Church with designated leaders and an elaborate business plan. Among the rules of our faith as they have evolved, is the requirement that we share a meal at least once a week with our therapist/leader. At that meal, Jesus Christ



Artwork by Olivia Jacobs
Grade 2

reminds us that we are loved as individuals and gives us guidelines to a productive and healthy life. We partake in real food and are educated, healed, and sometimes entertained.

Our role is to show up, as we might to a family dinner or special occasion and participate. We need to pray, to talk meaningfully about ourselves and then listen for a response from the Lord. The response may come from a person, a member of the clergy, a natural sign or symbol, but come it will – all our sincere prayers are answered in God's time. Christ listens and responds to our expressed needs, with His all-knowing clarity and infinite understanding, but sometimes petitioners are impatient when they pray just as patients are impatient during therapy.

We need to show up where God officially lives or seek Him where we live (a solitary venue). We must talk to Him about ourselves honestly the way my patients are supposed to talk to me about themselves in therapy. We must take time away from our ordinary work life to do this (remember the requirement to keep the Sabbath holy) and cultivate our expression as best we can. After doing all this repetitively, we must really listen for a reply.

In the next newsletter - "The Reply"

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

Now that Valentine's Day is behind us, it's time to think about your MQ—your marriage quotient. Consider enriching your sacrament of matrimony by learning to communicate more effectively and efficiently. Attend the sequential program beginning on Tuesday evening March 15 and continuing each Tuesday evening through April 5, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the Duffy Parish Center. Understand each other better, make decisions as a couple, help resolve differences and solve problems together.

Register by March 8 by sending a \$25 check made out to Blessed Sacrament to Ann & Jim Hoffman, 6421 31st Place, NW, Washington, DC 20015 along with your names, address, phone number and e-mail address.

FRIDAY NIGHT STATIONS & PIZZA – A BLESSED SACRAMENT TRADITION

*Stations of the Cross with a prayer,
Pizza with flair,
Mom's night away from the sink,
The parish family joined in a spiritual link.*

An established tradition at Blessed Sacrament, Friday evening Stations of the Cross, followed by pizza in the Duffy Parish Center is a must-do for Lent. Entire families have made this a regular Friday night activity; kids – and Moms alike – love the concept!

Actually, come for 5:30 p.m. Mass, stay for the Stations that begin about 6:10 p.m. and last for 20 minutes. Stay longer for pizza; your evening is planned! If you come alone, you'll find a warm sense of community and camaraderie. The evening is free, although a small pizza donation is welcome. See you there!

BTW - The Stations of the Cross are not the same ones some of you may remember from childhood. The prayers, written by Father John's father are real-time prayers embodying real-life, practical concepts tuned in to today's lives.



*Artwork by Christopher Delaney
Grade 5*



*Artwork by Jack Leary
Grade 7*

SOCIAL JUSTICE, SOCIAL ACTION

Consider this program if you are looking for something active to do for Lent. As part of the Centennial year celebration, Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) at Blessed Sacrament will present a discussion about social justice and social action, "100 Years of Catholic Social Teaching: The Experience of Lay People," on Sunday, March 27, at noon in the Blessed Sacrament School Auditorium.

Presenters will be E.J. Dionne, Washington Post columnist and political commentator, professor at Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Senior Fellow at Brookings Institution, and Martin Trimble, Staff, Industrial Areas Foundation, Lead Organizer at WIN - Washington Interfaith Network and VOICE - Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement.

The Principle of Association: "[O]ur tradition proclaims that the person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community." *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions – Reflections of the U.S. Catholic Bishops. 1998.*

LIVE, LAUGH AND PRAY

On March 10, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Sister Anne Elizabeth Fiore, V.H.M. will conduct the open and relaxed Faith on Tap session, "Why and How to Pray." Known as the nun of laughter, Sister Anne Elizabeth Fiore is a nun with the Monastery of the Visitation in Georgetown, which she joined in 2000 after obtaining a BA in classic languages and an MA in theology from Georgetown University. Sister has coached her school's softball team, teaches Latin and is into blogging. Come to the school auditorium for a great evening; enjoy beer, wine, and appetizers; and if your children are over three years of age, bring them ... childcare will be available. Contact Mary Shimp, 703.201.9803; mshimp@alumni.cmu.edu.

UPCOMING EXHIBIT AT THE DAYSTAR GALLERY

A Prayer Well Made: A Meditation on the Saints



St. Catherine of Siena's symbols are a crown of thorns and the lily, indicating her many penances and her role as peacemaker.

Watercolors by Vicki Malone

March 8 to April 29, 2011

Reception March 13, 2 to 4 p.m.

Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament
Duffy Parish Center
3630 Quesada Street, NW
Washington, DC

"In a prayer well made, troubles vanish like snow under the rays of the sun." St. John Vianney

BLESSED SACRAMENT SCHOOL ARTISTS

Thank you to our Blessed Sacrament School artists in residence and their art teacher, Ms. Judy Kearns, for providing the wonderful artwork for our newsletter. According to Ms. Kearns, Blessed Sacrament alums now at St. Johns volunteer in the after school art classes; "They provide inspiration and joy to our students."



Back Row: Blessed Sacrament After School Art Alumni Tommy and Mollie Shedlick (twins); Front Row: Aspiring Artists Bella Marku, Abby Wiemer and Maddie Grist



*Artwork by Brian Egan
Grade 7*



*Artwork by Mary Kate Hogan
Grade 2*



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