

BART'S HERALD

Saint Bartholomew Church 45 Ludlow Road, Manchester, CT 06040

October 2008

Feast of St. Bartholomew

By Ed Rowe

For privacy considerations, please note that photos of individuals are not shown on the website edition of *Bart's Herald*.

At the 10:15 Mass on Sunday, August 24, 2008, our parish celebrated the feast of its patron saint with a special Mass. In honor of Saint Bartholomew, apostle and martyr, the church took on a festive air that featured a red cloth and red and white flowers on the altar. Our pastor, Father Tom Sievel, pointed out that the spirit in the church that morning was wonderful! He felt that this was the complete parish celebration since it brought together

former students, religious, employees and parishioners. With over four hundred people attending, the church was full and even included standees.

For Jane Peacock, Director of Music, it has been a really exciting summer with all the planning and rehearsing leading up to the celebration of the Mass. For the thirty-four-person choir, the evenings spent in rehearsal were well worth the effort when they finally sang. Three former choir members who also participated in the singing augmented them. The choir's signature piece of music was a beautiful and stirring performance of the *Hallelujah Chorus* as the recessional hymn. Jane stated that it was a difficult work to practice, but each time the choir rehearsed it, it became easier. The singing of the *Hallelujah Chorus* inspired over ten people from the congregation to come to the altar and join in the singing! Of special note was the singing of Harry Carr, a former cantor and music director, who came from Florida to join in the celebration. For long-time parishioners familiar with his voice, there was a deep spiritual and emotional connection.

A reception in Father Hussey Hall followed the Mass and was very successful with a significant number of returning Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame and many of their former students. This was a time for fond remembrances, stories shared, and catching up on current news. One could say it was in the positive sense of the word - a nostalgic morning.

Pardon our slip...

The article on St. Bartholomew Boy Scout Troop 362 in the June 2008 issue of *Bart's Herald* inadvertently omitted the names of two Eagle Scouts: Gregory and Jeffrey Jones, both sons of former scout leader Jim Jones. Jim did not seem disturbed about the omissions. In fact, he good-humoredly said, "Just write me a check." Nevertheless, *Bart's Herald* apologizes for the omissions. We are happy that the record is now up to date and only wish that we could have included the names of all the scouts in the troop and all those who served on various scout committees.

PASTOR'S CORNER

By Father Tom Sievel

One of the most emotional issues facing public schools in many states of the Union today is the question of evolution. In Florida, for example, a committee of educators and scientists has been working for the past year with the Department of Education to formulate teaching points for statewide science education. There are some groups in Florida and elsewhere who oppose the teaching of evolution in the classroom.

Is the teaching of evolutionary theory not in harmony with Scripture or the church's tradition? We Catholics read the Bible as a totality and interpret it according to the teaching authority of the church. We are not fundamentalists. We also see no separation between faith and science or faith and reason. God is clearly behind the evolutionary movements in creation. The work of faith and science are complementary and not antithetical.

Officially, the Catholic Church does speak to this matter. Pope John Paul II has said in an address to scientists that "evolution is more than a theory." Pope Benedict XVI has recently called the debate over evolution "an absurdity because on one hand there is much scientific proof in favor of evolution which appears as a reality that we must see and which enriches our understanding of life and being as such". In other words, the pope is saying that we do not have to abandon evolution to affirm our belief in God as Creator. The Catholic Church has nothing to fear in curriculums in schools that teach evolution.

Perhaps on to global warming next?

Father Tom

ST. BART'S MISSION TO HAITI - 2008

By Bob Albert

THEN – The price of food is high. The mission team from St. Bart's brought twenty-two suitcases stuffed with food and dental supplies.

NOW - *Conditions are worse!* Crops and shelter have been devastated by hurricanes Gustav, Hanna and Ike.

That's the major difference Father Tom Sievel, pastor of St. Bartholomew parish, surmised when asked about differences in the poor third-world country of Haiti from earlier this year. From May 18th to May 23rd Father Tom and several volunteers from St. Bart's and the local area journeyed to serve the poor and needy of Haiti at the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF) clinic in the city of Jérémie on the west coast of the island of Hispaniola, which Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic. As usual, the volunteers worked hard in spartan conditions but returned with the knowledge that they had served their brothers and sisters. A large portion of their successful service is shared with the people of St. Bart's, who with their donations of money, food, clothing and other needed items, made this and previous missions possible. On Father Tom's mission squad were St. Bartholomew parishioners Al and Margaret Dumas, Tom Hamlin, Aileen Jorgensen, Konrad Krach, Peter Lariviere, Dr. Richard Putnam, DDS, and Andrew Wheeler. The "squad" also included Anthony Calhoun (a student in UConn's physician's assistant program); Sister Maureen Carmody, CSJ, from West Hartford; Dr. Peter Coombs, DDS, from Suffield; and two others from California and Oregon.

As is usual, a great deal of time and effort was spent with the volunteers assisting Doctors Coombs and Putnam in dental work. (We may take for granted that the dental care that we receive is normal and available to everyone, but that's just not so in the poorer countries of our world. For many the first trip to the dentist is to

have an infected tool extracted. But, if it's not pulled, other medical problems can cause even more severe problems.) Poor dental hygiene, the lack of preventative dental care and a diet of sugar cane – growing wild and readily available where proper food is not - are major causes for dental problems. Father Tom affirmed that HHF programs, such as "Save A Family", are bearing fruit. The HHF clinic includes a full-time Haitian dentist, whose family received aid from that HHF program. In fact, many nurses – some of whom are on the staff at the HHF clinic - grew up in families who benefited from the "Save A Family" program. Among the beneficiaries is a young Haitian man who was recently ordained to the priesthood. So, as you can see, your donations are working.

One of the volunteers from St. Bart's, Tom Hamlin, was making his first trip to Haiti, although his daughter, Maggie, now a college sophomore, made the trip while she was a senior at Rockville High School. Tom, a mechanical engineer, had an understandable concern for safety and just how he would interact with the Haitian people. Maggie clued him in on safety issues, and the concerns about interacting were resolved as he began serving the Haitian people. Tom's main duty on this trip was to assist the dentists in their work both at the HHF clinic in Jérémie and in surrounding villages. He shared his experiences with the parish on September 22nd when Tom - an eighth-grade CCD teacher – made a presentation on the mission trip to the combined sixth through eighth grade CCD classes at St. Bart's. In

working with and ministering to the Haitians, two viewpoints struck Tom deeply: first, our culture's approach to a problem is to "fix it". But, in a country such as Haiti, as Sister Maryann of HHF pointed out, that can be an unrealistic expectation. Sister stressed, "It's all about caring". The caring has to come, and then, time can be spent on "fixing". And, secondly, in our culture, we can easily get stressed about the little things (e.g. our TV remote stops working). Tom says, "We can learn from the Haitians (who don't have TVs, never mind remotes) and not let the little things bother us." Staying at the HHF wasn't really too bad, he reveals. "It's not a five-star hotel by any imagination," he comments, "but taking a one-minute shower wasn't too bad when you think of the guy down the street without water."

The unexpected: a time for R&R

Going swimming at one of Haiti's beautiful beaches after a hard day of work sounded good to Father Tom and several volunteers one day. They borrowed one of the HHF jeeps and headed for the beach. Unfortunately, the jeep became stuck in a sinkhole, and they were unable to free the jeep. Adding to their predicament were the lack of a towing service (no AAA) and that the jeep belonged to "the boss" – Sister Maryann. Finally, after one volunteer hitched a ride on a motorcycle to the HHF clinic and returned with a truck with a winch, they were able to retrieve the jeep. Arriving at the clinic much later than expected, the exhausted group recovered from their "planned" ten-minute swim. As Father Tom

points out, "You never know what to expect! You have to be prepared for anything."

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Mission to Haiti - 2008*

It is from a Haitian prayer book, entitled *God is No Stranger*.

*Lord, Help us not connect ourselves to things;
we may have four dresses today,
but maybe there will be a time
when we won't have any.
Help us to connect ourselves to God's Word.*

St. Bart's Supports School...

Since the Haitian government does not fund education, St. Bart's is the sole support for a school of 500 students that provides their main meal of the day and teaches courses in math and science in English, Creole (the language of Haiti) and French. In addition, crafts are taught that can bring an opportunity for careers; for example, sewing is taught so that students can become tailors, a skill that can be used for life.

And with that, here is a simple – yet, inspirational - prayer that Tom Hamlin shared with the CCD students

during his presentation in September.

IS A SMALL CHURCH COMMUNITY RIGHT FOR YOU?

By John Garoppolo

Sharing Scripture and Life Experiences

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Small Church Communities (SCC) are informal groups of people who meet weekly or bi-weekly to discuss the Liturgical readings for the coming Sunday. Using a booklet titled *Quest* that is produced by the Archdiocese of Hartford, each SCC prays together, reads scripture and discusses questions that relate the scripture to today's life experiences. The meetings provide a time for stimulating thought and conversation.

St. Bart's currently has four SCCs, three of which meet at the church and one in a parishioner's home. Wishing to create more groups, attempts have been made to start a Saturday morning group but, so far, not enough interest has been shown. (But, if you are interested in becoming a member of a Saturday morning group or an existing group, let the SCC Core Team know.) Young people are encouraged to share their experiences and values as part of an SCC group and to allow time for God in today's materialistic world.

SCCs not only pray together and study scripture but also put their faith into action. For example, the SCC group that meets each Monday morning has been together for about eight years and in October 2007 began a weekly food collection program in support of the MACC Food Pantry. In that first month over 250 jars of peanut butter were collected! Thanks to the generosity of St. Bart's parishioners the Food Pantry looks forward to receiving the donations of nonperishable food throughout the year. This is only one example of the options that an SCC has in doing God's work.

To assist the formation of SCCs, each parish establishes a core team to promote SCCs within the parish and to offer support for each of the SCCs. St. Bart's Core Team is led by Bob Kostek in conjunction with Father Tom Sievel. Recently, Father Tom and Bob participated in an Archdiocesan retreat for pastors and core team leaders to discuss the future direction of SCCs. Both Father Tom and Bob felt that it was very promising and that future retreats will be held. Bob feels that his participation in SCCs is one of the best things that has happened to him. He first became involved while a member of the Assumption Parish. If you are interested in joining a Small Church Community, please call Bob Kostek or Diane Gluhosky in the parish office.

MOVING ON TO THE NOVITIATE!

By Karen Trespacz

Editor's note: Sister Karen Lynn Trespacz is a former parishioner who joined the Benedictine Sisters. Bart's Herald is fortunate that she has agreed to share her journey with us.

I'm really looking forward to becoming a Novice with the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia (www.osbva.org) on August 30th. My clothes won't change, but I will be "Sister" for the first time – Sister Karen Lynn. I'm adding my middle name because a twenty-three year-old Karen is moving into the Monastery soon, and I was afraid she'd become "Karen the Younger" and I'd become "Karen the Wrinkled"! (The current practice is to use your baptismal name instead of adopting a different religious name.) Although I will be "Sister" by the time you read this, it was written during a pre-Novice retreat: three and a half days of silence, reflection and prayer. A perfect context to think about where I've come from and where I'm going!

Postulant year was wonderful! It was a bit of a shock when Kathy (Kathleen Persson, whose religious name is Sister Kathleen, entered the monastery via the Live-In Program a month and a half before I did; we became Postulants and Novices on the same days) and I were handed our schedules – they were 24/7! But included were two hours every weekday morning for prayer and reading – glorious luxury turned necessity! We were also expected to: go to Community Prayer (Liturgy of the Hours) morning, noon and night; go to meals in the dining room (like the family meal, a vital part of becoming a member of the Community); take piano lessons; and do "charges" (for example, dishes or answering the phone). A charge schedule is published months ahead. Half of one's service to the Community is doing charges as assigned; the other half is covering for each other when scheduling conflicts inevitably arise! Our schedule included classes: one on church history, one on the psalms, and a mini-course on the history of our Community. The story is told that the going was so rough in 1850s rural Pennsylvania that the three original Benedictine Sisters decided to return to their Bavarian motherhouse. They were all packed and waiting for their ride when the bell rang for prayers – at the right time, in the right way, with nobody near it! They looked at each other in shock, then the Superior said, "Sounds like the Lord wants us here. We're staying." So they took off their traveling cloaks and went to prayer. From that act of faith came many different Benedictine houses for women around the country, including ours in Virginia.

The schedule also included twenty hours per week for ministry. As a licensed clinical social worker, Kathy had her work cut out for her at our Benedictine Counseling Services. My ministry was more varied and included doing evening shifts at our transitional housing for homeless mothers and their children, researching organizations that give grants (remember, monasteries have to support

themselves and our ministries take money!), work in our infirmary, and finishing up the requirements to become a licensed Virginia attorney.

The summer brought the field trip! They loaded us into a minivan with the formation team, and we drove out to Minnesota to attend the Monastic Institute, stopping at Benedictine monasteries coming and going – including the one where the unattended bell rang for prayers! The Monastic Institute was held mostly at St. John's Abbey; it was inspiring to go to prayers with the monks there, especially when they all filed in solemnly. It also kept us on our toes; we were used to two books at prayers – a Psalter and a hymnal – and they had seven! We also spent a day at the women's monastery; it was moving to visit the grave of the Superior who made the decision to stay. The theme of the Institute was "Obedience" and although attendance was heavily Catholic, they invited representatives from non-Catholic monastic groups, including an Anglican order, an ecumenical order from Cape Cod, a group associated with the Church of the Sojourners in San Francisco, a group affiliated with the Mennonite Church, and a Buddhist monk. It was amazing to find significant similarities in views across such different groups!

Our Community requires a strict hands-off approach to any assets you may have; starting postulant year, you learn to make do with a small monthly allowance. Five dollars now seems like a very large amount! Although a struggle, it really kick-starts your efforts to redefine who you are. In our consumer culture, we are defined by what we buy. We may even define our relationships to others – like children and grandchildren – by what we buy for them. With the old way no longer possible, we're learning to define ourselves and our relationships based on Christ's love instead of on purchases.

Novice year bumps the whole process up a notch or two as we prepare for First Monastic Profession (temporary vows). Our monastic spiritual life is deepened through more classes, more prayer and more Community time, so the number of weekly hours for external ministry goes down to six. I'm going to be helping the Catholic social justice organization, (www.networklobby.org). And then there's the travel restriction: we can only go outside the Community one day per month. (Sister Vicki calls this year, "Holy Lockdown"! It may sound extreme, but it's based on Canon Law, and is a critical part of making the transition from being your old secular self in a religious living arrangement to truly becoming a religious. As the Rule of St. Benedict says, "Prefer nothing whatever to Christ!"

RCIA SUMMER 2008

By Henry Poirier

When Joe Marcucio and the Right of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) team witnessed Julie Culos and Megan Duffy receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass, it was surely with a sense of accomplishment. But, it wasn't a signal that they could take a break from the task of working with candidates for membership in the Church. Indeed, two other candidates with a later start date were in the ongoing program with an expected completion date sometime in the fall. On July 13th, Teresa Palmer and Shannon Ochoa received the sacraments and became practicing Catholics. At this writing, they are completing the post-sacraments portion of the program and will soon become the latest in a long line of "graduates" of St. Bart's RCIA program.

Teresa Palmer comes from Bloomfield and works at a therapeutic riding center, specializing in working with handicapped children. Although doing "good work" came easily to her, she had no religious affiliation. In a dream on Christmas Eve, she sensed a powerful message from God to do something special for herself and Him. Motivated, but not knowing how or where to start, she told a friend, Dan Roberts, about her dream. Dan, who has lived in Manchester and knows St. Bart's, spoke to Father Tom Sievel about Teresa. Father Tom invited her into the RCIA program, and Dan became her sponsor while she went through the training.

Shannon Ochoa is from Manchester and had no religious affiliation or training. Married to Enrique and blessed with two children, Melody (8) and Christian (7), Shannon's motivation came from her children. Melody, in particular, started asking deep questions about life that Shannon had a hard time answering. She knew Denise Bartlett, DRE, because the children were enrolled in St. Bart's Religious Education program. She received a warm welcome from Denise and some good advice: look into RCIA. She did and with the instruction from the RCIA team and support from her sponsor, Dan Cadaret, received the sacraments on July 13th.

Joe Marcucio reports that there are two more candidates in the class that will receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass in 2009. Joe would like to hear from anyone interested in helping this most important work. Please call him.

...at Vacation Bible Camp...

Jesus Gives Us the Power

By Debi Ashmead

This year over fifty campers and thirty volunteers had the power to make the best vacation bible camp at St. Bart's during the week of August 11th. Children experienced song, prayer, snacks, games, crafts, theatre and bible skits all surrounding the theme that Jesus gives us the miraculous power. This year's science theme was not only fun for the kids, but gave them serious points to take home each day: Jesus gives us the power to be thankful, to help others, to be brave, to live forever and to tell others about God. Through these five bible points for each day, the children learned Luke 17:11-19, where Jesus heals ten lepers. Children had the opportunity to help others by bringing in 260 canned goods for Haiti. They learned through Jesus' power how Peter received the courage to walk on water. Enjoying a snack of Ritz crackers and cheese shaped as a cross, they learned that Jesus died on the Cross and rose to new life for us. They also enjoyed learning new songs as a way to tell others about God.

Beginning at the start of the year with picking a fun theme, many months of planning go into the vacation bible camp. Mary Falotico, this year's director, learned early on there are many different ways to help get the work done. She started advertising early for volunteers and put a list of items needed near the parking lot entrance to help offset the cost of goods needed. She also developed an awesome group of teenagers for a top notch decorating team.

Each year, kids say, "Vacation bible camp was great!" And, every year we get a couple of kids who are only coming for the first day, but they love it so much they come back for the rest of the week. We are also fortunate enough to have kids bring their friends. What a great way to share your faith! It was a miraculous week of learning about Jesus. Thanks to all the volunteers and donators, who made it all possible. We are already looking forward to planning next year's camp.

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2008 in the land down under, mate!

By Harry Robinson

They are back now. They had been away for a short time. They have been renewed. They are the pilgrims from St. Bartholomew who went to Australia in July to celebrate World Youth Day. They are Mary Sopelak and her father, Ed; Dottie Caudullo and her mother, Louise; Matt and Kristen Chepeleff; Steve Trzetzziak and Ashley Williams. The twenty-hour plane ride was long – crossing the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn to enter a new world - but the spiritual journey was uplifting and its effects, long lasting and far-reaching. To acclimate themselves, the group had a three-day pre-tour of Australia: snorkeling the Great Barrier Reef, driving and trekking through the rain forest and visiting Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, where some participated in native dances and all tried their hand at throwing boomerangs and spears.

The center of the World Youth Day pilgrimage to Sydney (July 15th – July 20th) was the spiritual gathering of thousands from around the world to witness the pope's message, to attend celebratory Masses daily, to participate in religious instruction (catechesis) and to share the joy of camaraderie. Mary Chalupsky in *The Catholic Transcript* (August 2008) wrote that the three days of catechesis began with Mass followed by religious instruction consisting of 250 teaching sessions led by bishops. For many, these lessons were high points of World Youth Day. The sessions, formed according to languages spoken and held in various churches in Sydney, were an energizing experience. Our group helped all week planning their sessions. Ed Sopelak explained that the catechesis sessions were especially meaningful. The groups were relatively small, and each bishop had his own message and way of relating the message of the gospel. The lessons, a time of learning and introspection accompanied with music and skits, created a sense of mission in each group. The participants came away "pumped up," more ready for participation in the larger group. Others mentioned the candlelight vigil preceding the final Mass as one of the most touching events of World Youth Day. The *Transcript* said that the vigil (attended by 235, 000 people) focused on Eucharistic adoration, spotlighting "an enormous, six-foot-tall monstrosity." Matt and Kristen Chepeleff in their newlywed blog wrote that this service was beautiful. An Aborigine girl brought a candle for Pope Benedict to light to begin the service. The music was uplifting.

In the morning at the final Mass the pope blessed the crowd, celebrated the Eucharist and distributed communion. The ceremony and the music again were "out of this world." Dottie Caudullo, who spoke enthusiastically about the whole pilgrimage, said that the pope's basic message to her was twofold: that youth should realize that the church is still

alive and that we are the church. Those who attended the Mass were living witnesses to his words.

St. Bart's pilgrims sent messages to Vicky Rispoli (Youth Ministry) in which they noted that the pilgrimage was a life-changing experience. Louise Caudullo wrote: "To say it was an experience of a lifetime would be an understatement. ...Never had I seen such an outward expression of faith. They were so comfortable with their faith that they would pray in lobbies of hotels or sing songs of praise on the streets of Sydney." Ed Sopelak said: "It was rewarding to hear from 'Sydneyiders,' including some media reports, of how the joyful spirit the pilgrims and their pope, their priests and the religious in attendance, uplifted many of the population there, bringing a positive spirit to the city and the many religious." He also related that Kristen Chepeleff remarked that after the vigil she was amused at how so many sleeping pilgrims, wrapped in their metalized mylar survival blankets, reminded her of grilled hot dog'n buns wrapped and ready for serving at a concession stand. Steve Trzetzziak has gone away to college, but by telephone his mother spoke of his excitement about the experience. Ed Sopelak said that his daughter Mary, now in her senior year in high school, also enjoyed the experience. Ashley Williams commented "...the neatest part of the whole experience was seeing the number of Catholic youth all in Australia for the same reason. Sleeping under the stars was an experience of a lifetime in itself when you woke up with people from different countries sleeping at your feet. Watching the pope go by in the pope mobile literally five feet away was amazing."

Louise and Al Caudullo expressed their thanks to St. Bart's for the Youth Ministry programs (mission trips, youth rallies, Christian concerts and seminars) led by Vicky Rispoli, for the CCD program led by Denise Bartlett, and for the recognition of the importance of these ministries by Father Tom.

From these responses one senses the participants' pride in being Catholic. As is said in *Ecclesiastes* "To everything there is a season." The World Youth Day trip across the world begins a new season of expanded awareness, a new season in which to worship and adore.

Friends and St. Bart's pilgrims at WYD 2008:

Front row: Ashley Williams (3rd from left), Louise Caudullo (behind Ashley) and Dottie Caudullo (4th from left).

Back row: Kristen (2nd from left), and Mary & Ed Sopelak (4th & 5th from left) and Steve Trzetzziak (extreme right)

Matt Chepeleff is taking the photo.

MISSION ALABAMA: *St. Bart's youth shine the light of Christ*

By Debi Ashmead

It was a hot summer week in August as several members of St. Bart's Youth Ministry set out for Mobile, Alabama to love and serve Our Lord. Chaperoned by Megan and Patrick Duffy and Linda Hamlin, sixteen members of our parish family became "the carriers of God's love in the world". This is the first year that the youth participated in this mission trip, which is facilitated by the Catholic Heart Workcamp Ministry (CHWC), a successful nationwide ministry program in which over two thousand needy residents were aided by over 10,000 youth in thirty-seven cities. CHWC's mission is twofold: first, to share the love of Jesus and serve the neglected, brokenhearted and marginalized in any way needed by revitalizing communities and beautifying homes for the elderly, disabled and those who cannot afford needed repairs. The goal is to inspire participants to serve in their local communities and to empower participants to live as disciples of Christ through serving others and to foster the spiritual growth of each participant through the sacraments, Catholic faith sharing and prayer. Vicky Rispoli, St. Bart's youth minister, says, "One of the most wonderful things about being a youth minister is watching our young people grow in their faith through mission trips. Through the support of this parish, the ministry team and parents, we're blessed to take our ninth mission trip this summer. Mission work is life changing for those who serve and receive. As Catholics, we are called to live in holiness and build a just society. Thank you to the parish for all your help, support and prayers." The youth participating in the mission were: Audrey Arel, Brendin Beaulieu-Jones, Austin Bernaiche, Dottie and Vicky Caudullo, Kelly Cocco, Jimmy and Megan Donahue, Libby Hamlin, Renata Krach, Becky Mears, Anna and Josh Piggot, John Silhavy, Ian Snyder and Matt Wheeler.

About the mission trip:

Audrey Arel: The mission trip this summer was an awesome experience. Through our work, the man, Roy (we were serving), said that it made him want to go out and serve us. It proved to us that we impacted his life and we could make a difference.

Kelly Cocco: One thing I will take away from the people we helped in Alabama is a strong faith in God, even when times are hard.

Libby Hamlin: I would go back in a heartbeat.

Jimmy Donahue: The best part about this mission trip was getting to visit with the people we were helping.

Megan Donahue: Meeting the residents at each of our work sites and hearing their stories made me realize how good we all have it, and that they deserve so much more than they're getting.

Brendin Beaulieu-Jones: Take the risk; you'll love the experience. I enjoyed building relationships and working to help others.

Renata Krach: What made this mission trip different for me was the "total immersion" in Catholicism - daily Mass, prayers, and discussions on faith. I found it unbelievable that God can be found or applied in so many ways everyday.

Becky Mears: Working on Kathleen's trailer was an eye-opener. She was so grateful, and so open to God's plan, even though she lost everything in a fire.

Anna Piggott: I have a whole new appreciation for what I have; it changed my faith in subtle, unexpected ways.

Josh Piggott: There is so much need. I enjoyed the Mass and reflection together.

Ian Snyder: It was an amazing experience.

Matt Wheeler: Our residents were very grateful for the work that we completed and, after six hours of work, CHWC had fun activities that helped us relax and enjoy the week.

Adult chaperone **Patrick Duffy:** What an awesome trip!!! The young people of St. Bart's are a special group, and everywhere they go they let their fun-loving and faith-filled attitudes show.

Louise and Al Caudullo: As parents of two current members of St. Bart's youth ministry program, we can not say enough about what your program has done. We are grateful for Vicky Rispoli's youth ministry program and all of its adult support at St. Bart's parish and feel fortunate to be a part of it. We are also grateful for the outstanding foundation of faith provided by Denise Bartlett's CCD program. And of course, we are grateful to Father Tom for recognizing the importance of these programs for the growth of the parish. Once again, St. Bart's Youth Ministry has outdone itself. Thank you to all mission trippers; through your hard work, you brought hope and Christ's light to all those who witnessed you in action. May the light within continue to shine.

Many of the young people who went on the mission trip gave their testimony to the new group of ninth graders who are beginning their Confirmation journey. Their experience and commitment spoke loudly through their words. On our 50-year anniversary, we have received the most bountiful blessings through our youth.

(For more information visit the CHWC website at heartworkcamp.com/mission.htm).



Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?

By Serge P. Arel

1+1=2
2+2=4
4+4=8

By now, everyone is probably familiar with the popular television show “Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader” where the grand prize is \$1,000,000. But do we ever ask ourselves this question when it comes to knowledge about our faith? The grand prize for us as Christians is much more valuable than money, it’s priceless!

As a catechist for the sixth grade youth in our parish I sometimes look for methods of stimulating conversation or a break from the routine of weekly lessons. One of the strategies I sometimes use is to play some kind of trivia game with the students to test their basic knowledge, compete and have fun. They usually respond very well and it makes it a learning experience that perhaps reaches that one student that doesn’t learn like the others or just needs a spark to light a fire in a different way. It just so happens that Denise Bartlett, Director of Religious Education, has Catholic trivia booklets available for all grades. So when the time is right, I just take a walk before class and snag the second grade version (we don’t want it to be too tough) and announce to the class that we are going to play a game. I’m an instant hero! And we have fun while still learning basic concepts of our faith and traditions of the church.

As we play, it always amazes me that every single time we do this, I come across a question to which I am not sure of the answer! I am forced to flip the card over and look on

the back to “cheat”. The students tease me and realize that I don’t have all the answers memorized either and that in itself is a great lesson, isn’t it? But I do know where to look to get the answer so we can move on with the game. The question can be asked, how many of us are in a similar situation as we try to live our daily lives as Catholics, trying to obey the commandments, setting the right example, and teaching our children the faith, prayers and the sacraments.

Are you smarter than your fifth-grader? How about your second-grader? Maybe, but if you’re like me, the honest answer is probably “no”. But we do know where to look to find the answers. The Catholic Church has the resou but we do need to make the effort to seek out those ans and that takes hard work.



If we are to be faithful Catholics, effective par committed teachers and ministers to our youth, we don’t need to have all the answers, but we can teach our children where to find them. Just as the story goes: you can give a man a fish today but he’ll still be hungry tomorrow or you can teach him how to fish and he’ll never go hungry. If we can all learn to fish for the truth, the journey will be worth it. Just remember that the final prize is priceless and eternal.

By Debi Ashmead

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