

BART'S HERALD

Saint Bartholomew Church

45 Ludlow Road, Manchester, CT 06040

December 2011

PASTOR'S CORNER

By Father Stephen Sledesky, Pastor

In my past several articles, I have been focusing on the changes in the Mass and the meaning behind them. This month I'd like to share a little more about our increased giving campaign and some changes we'll be making in how the collection is handled at Mass. First, I'd like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to all who have participated in our increased giving campaign. Although I don't have all the final numbers yet, I do know that our collection has already been increasing and will help in meeting our expected increases in expenses as we move into the new calendar year 2012. If you haven't yet had the opportunity to return the envelope with your giving intentions for the new year, there is still time to do so. Your generosity will enable St. Bartholomew parish to remain fiscally and pastorally strong well into the future!

Earlier this year, after much discussion with both the Liturgy Committee and Finance Committee, we also broached with the parish the possibility of changing the way we handle the collection during the Mass. We asked you through a bulletin survey how you would feel if we stopped passing the basket and instead used drop boxes for your envelopes at the entrances to the church. Of the responses we received, you overwhelmingly were in favor of this move, with many agreeing that it will make our worship experience so much better.

There are many positive advantages to this way of receiving the offerings. The most noticeable will be, of course, the smoother transition from the Liturgy of the Word to the Eucharist. No longer will there be the sometimes lengthy delay during this part of the Mass while we wait for the collection to happen (especially when there are two), but instead we will have the bread and wine presented for the Eucharist, prepare the altar with these gifts and move right into our celebration of Eucharist.

Other benefits will be that it will encourage us to give more intentionally to our parish. Instead of eliciting "guilt" donations that often are whatever we have left in the wallet or pocket book, we will come prepared to make our intentional gift to the parish. It is more private as no one will be watching what we put in the basket. For those who give on a monthly basis or online, we will no longer feel uncomfortable as we did

when the basket was passed on those weeks of the month other than the one on which we made our monthly gift. It is more secure as the collection boxes are locked and will be opened and emptied only when two people are present, then secured in our offertory bags and placed into the safe until they are counted.

A couple of people in our survey expressed concerns about the process, fearing that it might hurt the collection. However, in parishes that have enacted this process as part of an overall stewardship effort, it was found not to be the case. By far the most substantial portion of our income comes from parishioners who have intentionally made the commitment to support the parish through the use of envelopes or online giving. A mere fraction of our income comes from more spontaneous donations. The vast majority of parishioners who give using envelopes and online giving will continue to support the parish whether collected through the passing of baskets or by dropping their offerings into a collection box. Additionally, our counters note that of the loose cash received through the passing of the basket, most are bills of small denominations. Our feeling is that the benefits of this system of collection will far exceed the risks of possibly losing a very small amount of income.

We expect to begin this process after the first of the year to coincide with our new fiscal year. As it approaches, we will be providing more education and instruction around the process through the parish bulletin and pulpit announcements. Although we may still pass the baskets on the major gatherings at Christmas and Easter, the rest of the year we will reap the many benefits this system will provide. I'd like to especially thank our ushers who have taken up the collection faithfully each Sunday for many years, and who will still be here to welcome us as we enter, provide assistance during the Mass as needed, and hand us our bulletins as we leave church. I also thank you in advance for your support of this change, as well as your continued support of all our parish ministries. May God continue to bless you and your loved ones, especially during this holy season.

Fr. Stephen

ELIZABETH MINISTRY: Thanks to “Wonderful Cooks”

By Henry Poirier

Just five years ago, in the December 2006 issue of *Bart's Herald*, Loretta Pazdan wrote an article introducing the Elizabeth Ministry to our readers. Today, still under the leadership of Linda Kostek, the Ministry continues its charitable work on behalf of all of us, quietly and unheralded. Today, the Ministry could use some help in keeping this service viable – and the help cannot be answered by simply writing a check! But first, let's revisit just what the Ministry does.

From an organization standpoint, it is very simple. Linda Kostek heads it up and everyone else, about twenty-five people, make up the staff. They never have meetings so there are no minutes, no dues, or any other trappings one would expect of an organization. But what they do goes right to the heart of Christian charity; they bring a wholesome, ready-to-eat, often home-cooked meal directly to the homes of people in need, often in a crisis situation. And it is all done with respect for the privacy of the recipient. Even the staff members, whom Linda refers to as her “wonderful cooks,” do their work anonymously, except to the families being served. They are given the meal donor's name and telephone number.

Here is how it all comes about. Linda is notified by a person on St. Bartholomew Church staff or from a parishioner about a family in need. She calls the person to offer the service the Elizabeth Ministry provides. If the offer is accepted (not always the case), she asks some basic questions about



*Linda Kostek
Elizabeth Ministry*

the family. The questions usually include: how many adults and children will be served and does anyone have food allergies or any dietary restrictions? How often will the service be needed in a week? Then she scans the list of “wonderful cooks”, selects an appropriate number of people, being careful not to burden anyone, and sets up a schedule. The “wonderful cook” calls the family, names are exchanged, directions to the home and time of delivery determined.

So what kind of help does Linda need? Of course, she needs to continue to receive referrals. But right now she needs more “wonderful cooks.” Although many have been doing this for years, time passes and people retire, move away or go on to other charitable groups. Linda does not want this truly charitable act to be a burden. More “wonderful cooks” would lighten the load for all without becoming a burden on anyone. If you think you might be interested and have some questions or concerns, Linda can be reached through the church office at 860- 646-1613, or on the website: www.stbartparish.org. She would really like to hear from you!

Dear *Bart's Herald* Reader,

Beginning with this issue, *Bart's Herald* will be distributed with the church bulletin after Mass. It will no longer be mailed to your home. We reluctantly made this decision since the cost of mailing is just too high. However, we want to make sure that everyone in the St. Bartholomew community receives a copy of *Bart's Herald*. Thus, we are providing several alternate ways if you are unable to receive *Bart's Herald* at Mass:

- ✠ ***Bart's Herald* – current and back issues – are available on the St. Bartholomew Parish website (www.stbartparish.org);**
- ✠ **Printed copies of the current issue of *Bart's Herald* are available in the magazine rack on the wall at the parking lot entrance to the church;**
- ✠ **We will gladly add you to our email list so that each issue of *Bart's Herald* will be emailed directly to you (*please contact the parish office at parishoffice@stbartparish.org*);**
- ✠ **If you desire, we will mail a printed copy directly to your home (*please contact the parish office at 860-646-1613 or parishoffice@stbartparish.org*);**
- ✠ **Copies of *Bart's Herald* are also available in the parish office.**

We wish to thank you for your interest in *Bart's Herald* and appreciate any suggestions that you may have (*please contact the editor at 860-649-1535*).

Bob Albert, Editor

“REJOICE! and BE GLAD”

The David Haas and Lori True Concert

By Harry Robinson

David Haas and Lori True recently visited Manchester to give a two-day program – a concert at St. Bartholomew Church and a workshop at St. Bridget Church. Haas, Director of the Emmaus Center for Music, Prayer, and Ministry, and Campus Minister/Artist-in-Residence at Benilde-St. Margaret’s High School in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, has been called “one of the preeminent liturgical music composers of the English-speaking world.” Lori True is Campus Minister and Director of Liturgy and Music at St. Catherine University in St. Paul.

Thanks to Mary DeSesa, Music Minister at St. Bridget; Jane Peacock, Music Minister at St. Bartholomew; and Father Stephen Sledesky for their expertise and their interest in liturgical music, which led them to invite Haas and True to present this concert and workshop. This article will report on the concert, but it should be noted that the workshop the next day was equally successful – large attendance, varied and meaningful activities, new insights, practical training in “getting it right.”

For the concert the church was nearly full, with parishioners from both churches and from parishes near and far. Excitement was building even before we entered the church. Father Stephen introduced the guests. We were asked to introduce ourselves to one another. We did – and enjoyed meeting parishioners who before had only been faces. A unity theme was working its way into the program. Haas, seated at the piano, spoke to the congregation, telling us that what was happening was not exactly a concert; it was a program of spiritual, liturgical music, but he added that we could applaud if we so desired. He then directed us to “The Name of God,” a psalm-like hymn (based on Psalm 116) in their booklet, *David Haas & Lori True in Concert*. We sang these words: “I will take the cup of life. I will call God’s name all my days” (words by David Haas). He and True began singing, and before we knew it, the whole congregation was singing and praying as one voice. When we finished, True said, “You sing so well. Are you sure you’re Catholics?” – a compliment that all Catholics understand.

Haas and True emphasized that at Mass all attending (presider, cantor, congregation and others) should be singing and praying as one voice. In that unity is variety and recognition that we are individuals as well. The psalms are important in the liturgy because their music and words speak to the human condition: love, hate, praise, fear, rage. Both Haas and True stressed the importance of tone in music; the tone of what is said should be reflected in the singing. For example, if the message in the psalm expresses rage, then the music should also express rage.



They demonstrated how their techniques developed their theme of unity and harmony. In a hymn called “The God of Second Chances” Haas sang the first verse; all sang the second verse; the men sang the third verse; the women sang the fourth verse; then all sang the fifth and sixth verses. Thus variety was achieved at the same time the whole church sang and prayed. Another time each side of the center aisle was asked to face the congregation on the opposite side of the aisle. That was a sterling moment of companionship when we faced and literally sang to one another.

True introduced a variety of ways to enhance the liturgy. She suggested that we sing the refrain from “Quietly, Peacefully,” a selection adapted from *Symphony 9* by Antonin Dvorak. She sang the verses and all sang the refrain:

“Quietly, peacefully may *she/he* rest in you.

Quietly, peacefully bring *her/him* home to you.”

The singing was quiet and peaceful to echo the message. At a funeral one could substitute a loved one’s name for the italicized words. True at this point welcomed the congregation to say the name of a loved one who had died. This technique brought several to tears.

She also commented on social issues, threw up her hands, and said “God, are we ever going to get it right?” and led us into a song called “Let This Be the Time.” She sang lines such as “When the care for each nation brings peace to creation ...” and we responded, “let this be the time.” This rhythmic pattern, continuing for twelve lines, crescendoed to a rousing conclusion.

In a way everything done in the concert was serious, but sometimes with a touch of humor. The leaders had anecdotes, not jokes. Haas spoke of his open-heart surgery and how he had to spend an extra day at the hospital because of some complications. He thought he was dying, and while his thoughts were in that direction, the television was blasting with the words “So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye!” from *The Sound of Music*. Later a woman said to him, “Oh, David, I can hardly wait to see what music comes out of you.” He gently replied, “Shut up!” Later, he did in fact write a selection adapted from Psalm 51, “You Welcome in Me.”

“You welcome in me a new heart, a clean heart,
a changed heart.”

On the double meaning of “a changed heart” he made no comment, but the congregation understood. The concert ended on a high note with “REJOICE! AND BE GLAD.”

Those who would be attending the workshop the next day were looking forward to another imaginative presentation. All this and so much more.

A Letter from Sister Karen Lynn

By Sister Karen Lynn Trespacz

Editor's note: Sister Karen Lynn was an active parishioner at St. Bart's before joining the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia.

Dear Bob,

Funny you should ask what I'm up to now! You'd think living as a sister in a monastery would mean that nothing ever changes, but I'm amazed at the twists and turns that life continues to take!

Now that I'm a Scholastic (our term for sisters who have made first profession but who haven't yet made final profession), the next step is to go into full-time ministry. Those who can work should work, so that everybody can eat! But it's not just a matter of earning an income for the monastery; it's also a matter of ministry. For instance, last time we talked, I was working as a case manager for the local Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) that was part of President Obama's stimulus program. The idea was to help people who were impacted by the economic downturn and couldn't keep up with their rent. The good news is that HPRP really did reduce the number of homeless in our county – the bad news is we ran out of grant money!

Now, thanks to Sister Denise, I'm working in immigration law. Sister Denise, you might remember, is the sister who was killed in the auto accident a year ago August. We were so horrified that the accident was used to make things harder for immigrants! The accident had nothing to do with anyone's immigration status! It was bad enough that a wonderful person was killed; it was truly awful that the accident was used as a reason to hate people. So when I was praying about how to use my law degree, it seemed to make sense to look into immigration law. Everyone told me – even people who weren't Catholic! – that the people who REALLY knew how to do immigration law worked at Hogar Immigrant Services, an agency of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington. (Also discovered that one of the leading national immigration law agencies is CLINIC – Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. I didn't realize that the Church played such a significant role in immigration!) But what were the chances of getting them to hire me? They didn't have any openings. A couple of our sisters said I should call the husband of the ministry coordinator that they work for at All Saints parish. When I called, he said he had just told the Board of Catholic Charities that they should hire another immigration lawyer and station them at All Saints in order to reach immigrants in our part of the county! Father Bob, the pastor of All Saints, got behind the idea, too and contributed funds to Catholic Charities to pay for part of my stipend. So, thanks to the grace of God and significant parish support, I am now working part-time at Hogar in Sister Denise's memory.

Wanted to mention one other thing, too. This summer Sister Kathy and I went to a special three-week program for Scholastics who are within a year or so of making final profession. We're not supposed to call it "Vow Camp" – its official title is Benedictine Spirituality Workshop and Retreat (BSWR). It was such a great experience! It was held at the Benedictine monastery in Cullman, Alabama, which had seen such awful tornadoes a couple of months earlier. The devastation in the area was breathtaking, although the monastery buildings were mostly untouched. Indeed, the local Lutheran church was holding its services in the monastery chapel because the Lutheran building didn't exist anymore. We participated in the BSWR program with women Scholastics from Benedictine monasteries all around the country. One woman was in the first female class at a military academy and went on after she graduated to become a paratrooper. She is now at a monastery in Missouri that makes low-gluten hosts for people who are allergic to gluten. Another woman grew up Jewish in New York City and is now a Catholic sister at a monastery in North Dakota. It was wonderful to hear how God was calling people *(continued on page 5)*



Sister Denise Mosier

Sister Denise Mosier was sleeping in the back seat of a car when an oncoming drunk driver crossed the midline and sent her "from the back seat straight into the arms of God." It was the resulting furor over immigration (totally unrelated to her death) that encouraged Sister Karen Lynn to go to work for Catholic Charities as an immigration lawyer.

(continued from page 4)

to religious life and how God was leading them! The first two weeks of BSWR were an intensive review of Benedictine spirituality. The second part was a weeklong silent retreat. As an extrovert, I wasn't sure I was going to survive not talking for a whole week (I generally start to twitch after only a couple of days!), but it turned out to be a deep, spiritual experience. I'm more convinced than ever that God is calling me to be a sister – and that I'm called to be a sister at the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia!

I hope everything is going well there at St. Bart's. I miss everybody and think of you all often! Love,

Sister Karen Lynn



Hogar Immigrant Services legal team, including two summer interns and the Team Director who moved to Catholic Legal Immigration Network in September. Sister Karen Lynn is the second from the right in the front row. The file open on the table in front of the staff just happened to be there, but it shows you how complicated some of these cases can get!

To learn more about the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia please visit their website at osbva.org.

A Review of the book:

Through My Eyes

By Tim Tebow and Nathan Whitaker

I picked up the book and immediately thought, “What could this young man possibly have learned in his short twenty-four years on this planet?” What I found out was that he had learned plenty!

Many of you do not know who Tim Tebow is or what he has accomplished, but there are a great number of college and professional football fans that do. Tebow, son of Christian missionaries, is a celebrated quarterback, a two-time college football national champion at the University of Florida (Go Gators), a Heisman Trophy winner (the equivalent of the Most Valuable Player award in any of the professional sports leagues), a motivational speaker and a philanthropist. His successes continue today as starting quarterback for the Denver Broncos of the National Football League. In his best-selling book, *Through My Eyes*, Tebow tells his compelling life story in twenty-one chapters filled with perspectives on God, family and University of Florida football.

Tebow's faith formation came from missionary work in the Philippines, on the family farm and in the home schooling provided by his loving mother. What impressed me about Tebow's story is the faith he embraced at an early age, his recollection of the intense rivalry between himself and his brothers, and uncovering a drive to succeed based upon his God-given talents. At one point, the family describes themselves as “farmer strong” and Tim realizes following a crowd would not allow for his individual special talents and gifts to shine. At the beginning of each chapter and throughout the book, verse after verse of the Bible is presented. The Bible passages lend to the experiences he explores, a lesson learned or overcoming a stressful time in his life. Tim looks upon his position in life as a platform to do the work of the Lord here on earth. Even the “eye black” worn by him on game day has a Bible message, like John 3:16, Philippians 4:13 or Luke 12:48. With great stories of games played, awards won, preaching and outreach, Tebow does not shy away from being an inspirational role model to young and old alike. His story makes you want to be “farmer strong” too! (review by Dan Dionne)

Bart's Herald wishes to give a heart-felt “thank you” to the many parishioners who worked so hard to prepare the previous issues of *Bart's Herald* for mailing. Each quarter they would generously give their time and skill to fold, tape and attach mailing labels so that everyone on the St. Bartholomew mailing list would receive a copy of *Bart's Herald*. Under the new distribution method of inserting *Bart's Herald* into the church bulletin, this preparation work is not necessary. However, they worked hard and often joked that they wanted a raise every year. And, receive one they did of 10% (of course, this was applied against the base salary of \$0). There are too many names to list individually here, but know that the work they did was much appreciated.

St. Bartholomew Church has participated with *40 Days for Life* (40DFL) for the past two years. The Hartford Archdiocese has participated for four years and currently has eighty-five parishes joining the efforts of the campaign. This is a national and international campaign that began in 2004. It is a focused pro-life effort consisting of:

- 40 days of **prayer and fasting**
- 40 days of **peaceful vigil**
- 40 days of **community outreach**

Each parish within the Archdiocese is asked to participate by holding twenty-four hours of Adoration. We pray within our Church for the protection of the unborn and for the end of all legislation that keeps abortions legal. Each parish is also asked to keep a peaceful prayer vigil for one day outside of the Hartford abortion clinic, the Hartford GYN Center, at 1 Main Street. This particular abortion facility is one of the most frequented in our country because Connecticut is one of the few states not requiring parental consent for underage abortions. Therefore, girls from the surrounding states of New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont travel to Hartford seeking to end their pregnancies. Keep in mind that these same girls cannot even get Tylenol from the school nurse without a parent's permission but can have a life-altering procedure performed, sometimes across state borders, without their parents' knowledge.

I can gratefully report that this year St. Bartholomew Parish held a very successful twenty-four hours of Adoration on October 7th. We were overwhelmed with the number of people who signed up, even in the wee hours of the night. Many people took multiple "shifts." The number of participants in this effort doubled since last year, and we are very grateful. **THANK YOU!**

The most visible component of the 40DFL effort is the peaceful prayer vigil outside the Hartford abortion clinic. Our parishioners were present in Hartford on October 8th this year. We had a number of people join us but we can always use more, so we encourage many more parishioners to join us in the upcoming years. We have selected Saturdays these past two years since most people do not work on the weekends, and the parking in Hartford is a bit easier. The Full-Circle Life Ministry team is happy to set up carpooling efforts. You can sign up for an hour or more. Truly, it's a remarkable experience. We have had women stop by those keeping vigil to show us their babies that were saved because of our presence outside of the clinic. They are so thankful.

For the 2011 campaign, we can share that there were eight precious babies saved in Hartford due to our prayers and presence. Since our Archdiocese got involved in this campaign four years ago, there have been fifty-two babies saved. There have been 721 babies saved nationally. Praise God!

Of course, you can join others and pray outside of this abortion clinic all year long. You don't need to wait for the 40DFL campaign. Seminarians from Holy Apostle College come and pray at 9:00 a.m. the second Saturday of every month. Father Tony DeMarco, who works with a group called "Helpers of God's Precious Infants", is also very active in both the Hartford and Norwich Pro-Life diocesan efforts. Aside from people praying, there are trained sidewalk counselors present who try to gently persuade the girls/women to consider going to the St. Gerard facility, across the way, to have an ultrasound performed. Once these mothers see that this is not just a blob of cells but indeed a baby, they are far more likely to choose life for their child.

However, our parish as a group only participates with the annual 40DFL each fall. If you haven't joined us in the past, I encourage you to pray about it for 2012. Perhaps you're afraid to go into the city. Please note that there is plenty of safe parking. You can bring a chair if you like. We are allowed to use St. Gerard's restrooms located right across the way from where we stand. There are drivers who will drive parishioners in and out of the city. If, however, the hesitation to join us is due to a past decision to have an abortion and you therefore feel unworthy to participate in these pro-life efforts, know that you are not alone. Please realize that we have ALL done things in our pasts that we later realize were very wrong. Lack of knowledge, poor judgment, fear, stress and coercion have gotten the best of us all. The past is the past. True healing comes when we are able to acknowledge our past sins, seek forgiveness with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and move forward with a renewed spirit and change-of-heart. Many brave people stand at these peaceful prayer vigils with signs stating that they regret their abortions. These people are the most powerful witnesses for this cause. However, most people would never feel comfortable doing this and should never feel that they have to do it. Just know that each of us is doing our part by simply praying and helping others reconsider their position on this modern-day human rights injustice.

*(for additional information visit the website
40daysforlife.com)*

MEET THE MUMFORDS

By Ed Rowe

Bob Mumford, Maureen Shaw and their four children have been key members of St. Bartholomew's parish for a number of years. Bob and Maureen have an active personal, professional and family life, yet they have also met the responsibility of stewardship.

Maureen, a life-long Manchester resident and an East Catholic High School graduate, received a BA in art education from Central Connecticut State University. Bob was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. His family moved to Manchester during his junior high school years. He graduated from Manchester High School (MHS) and received a BS in Marine Engineering from the US Merchant Marine Academy. After graduation he spent a couple of years in the merchant marine as a shipboard engineer.

Maureen and Bob met in 1979, their senior year in college, when they both worked at Highland Park market in Coventry. Married in 1982, they will be celebrating their thirtieth anniversary next year. Initially, they lived at the Connecticut shore, while Bob worked at Electric Boat. Maureen has worked at Mystic Aquarium, Crystal Mall, and with the Travelers. After six years, they relocated to Manchester and started their family. Bob has worked twenty-three years at Hamilton Standard. Maureen has taken care of the children. She has helped mold the development of their two boys and two girls as mature and independent people. And the kids, in turn, have benefited from this type of parental experience. An example: for a fundraiser activity, Maureen started making Irish bread with an order of fifty loaves; currently, it has grown to two hundred and ten!

Recently the family had a tri-graduation ceremony. The eldest son, Evan Shaw Mumford, graduated from Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) with a degree in communications and currently works as a morning show producer and traffic reporter on the local Christian radio station, WSDK 1550AM. He also does production work for several area Clear Channel radio stations, such as 105.9FM, The River. Finally, he is an in-demand DJ (from personal experience this reporter can let the reading public know he does an outstanding job!). Second son, Trevor Shaw Mumford, graduated from ECSU with a BA in graphic design and works part time at Mary Cheney Library. Additionally, he works for Hartford Distributors, where he creates posters for restaurants

and package stores. Fiona Shaw Mumford just graduated from MHS and is a freshman at UCONN, where she is studying Technical Theatre and Costume Design. She has taught her mother and younger sister to

use the newer sewing machines. Fiona competes as an Irish step dancer and has performed in Ireland. Kate Shaw Mumford was adopted from South Korea. Bob and Maureen picked Kate up in New York City on their twentieth wedding anniversary. Kate will be ten in December and is currently attending Buckley School.

The Mumfords have a strong St. Bartholomew connection. Evan is involved with the youth group and sings in the choir. Bob was a CCD teacher for several years and is a current volunteer with the children's liturgy. Several years ago Father Tom Sievel asked Bob to participate in the Catholic Community of Manchester. (This group, with representatives from the four Catholic communities in Manchester, was charged with the merger into the current sister parishes.) Bob was asked to perform this service because of the management skills he developed at work. His skills in prioritizing, working toward group objectives and discussing quantifiable goals were needed by the group. Bob's participation led him to the belief that, ultimately, the laity is the church, and all of us have an obligation to make this community work.

This family has had experiences of "bumping into God". This means if you had a tough day, there is a dear wife and four wonderful kids to come home to. They have stuck together through all of life's variables. And, when you have this kind of good life, you want to give it back to others.

Stewardship is the ability to share one's gifts of life, time, talents, and resources with others.



*The Mumfords
(back row, left to right) with hats -
Fiona, Trevor and Evan; (front, left
to right) Maureen, Kate and Bob.*

VIGNETTES FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(or out of the mouths of babes)

By John Garoppolo

When I asked Denise Bartlett, Director of Religious Education, for some highlights about religious education, she thought that the students could express it as well as anyone else, so we compiled a few responses straight from the students and teachers themselves.

Fifth grade students were asked what they learned in Religious Ed this past year. One said that once you said something, it could not be taken back. Another said that you may receive the anointing of the sick more than once, and that the Ten Commandments are special rules. Another said that, "God judges you once you die and that you can go to Purgatory and 'fix up' so that you can then go to heaven. (How about that.) A person can talk to God about anything at any time." Yet another said that Jesus is with you all the time. This student was very pleased that they were taught how to pray the Rosary, which was an objective for the Religious Ed department. Another student learned that there were many saints and that this was an important part of learning about God.

Denise spoke of a fourth grade class that was working on the Rosary. A lesson on praying the Rosary took place in the church. A few months later a student asked the teacher if they were going to do the Rosary again. Another student heard and asked the same thing. They said it was fun sitting around the altar praying the Rosary. Needless to say, a feeling of great accomplishment prevailed. Mind you, this was a fourth grade class and the fact that they WANTED to be in the church around the altar, reciting the Rosary, is nothing short of amazing.

A third grade teacher told Denise that her class discussed the Rosary and its mysteries quite thoroughly. The students enjoyed learning and praying the Rosary, and they even made their own Rosary beads, which made it even more special. This grade also built up their rice bowls (a rice bowl is a container that a student adds money to by not spending the money on something that he or she desires) throughout the year and at the end of the year accumulated a nice little sum that was donated to a worthwhile program. This really increased their social awareness.

An eighth grade teacher was introducing different types of prayer and it was a bit of a struggle, so he decided to try Guided Meditation. The teacher was amazed at the positive response that the class showed as was evidenced in the discussion that followed. Students have books and cds available covering Guided Meditation. It has been used with different classes and has worked well. It usually takes about ten minutes.

Religious Ed at St. Bart's is top drawer and we, as a parish, are very grateful.

PASTA AND A SMILE

By Anthony Asmar

More than eighty of our beloved St. Bartholomew's Parish seniors were treated to five-star service by the Junior Youth Group (JYG) on Saturday, November 12. After the 4:30 Mass, a number of seniors and sixth through eighth graders retreated into Father Hussey Hall where JYG leaders and CCD students had prepared over a dozen pounds of pasta, marking the start of many awesome, inter-generational events held each year.

This was the second time the JYG hosted the pasta dinner and game-night combo after its wonderful reception last year. The young members of the church served the attendees dinner, refilled their juice and water pitchers, sat with them, ate with them, and prayed with them. Following dinner, the youth and seniors had the opportunity to play a variety of games with each other, such as Scrabble, Clue, chess and checkers! There were also many homemade desserts, such as cupcakes and cookies, made by generous volunteers from the parish. The eagerness to serve from our young people, the happy response from our seniors, and the tremendous help from many adults and high school Youth Group members made this year's pasta dinner a success. In the words of JYG leader Debi Ashmead: "To stand back and watch the smiles and the laughter was simply watching the Holy Spirit working." Debi and Serge Arel are the JYG's adult leaders.

Even though we do not always hear about the JYG, it is constantly active, filling the hearts of our parish's young with the knowledge of faith and love. The JYG's theme this year is "Rooted in God," inspired by the 2011 World Youth Day (please see the October 2011 issue of *Bart's Herald* for more information on WYD 2011). Through that theme, one of the JYG's many goals is to remind us that our true identity is in Christ.

Some of the JYG's upcoming events include Christmas caroling their way to Green Manor Lodge and giving its members personal care items and cookies. There is also a family roller-skating night at Ron-a-Roll in January. New members are always welcome, and if you're in sixth through eighth grade, don't be afraid to come out and give these fun and memorable experiences a try!