

2014

TOGETHER SHARING CHRIST SUMMER

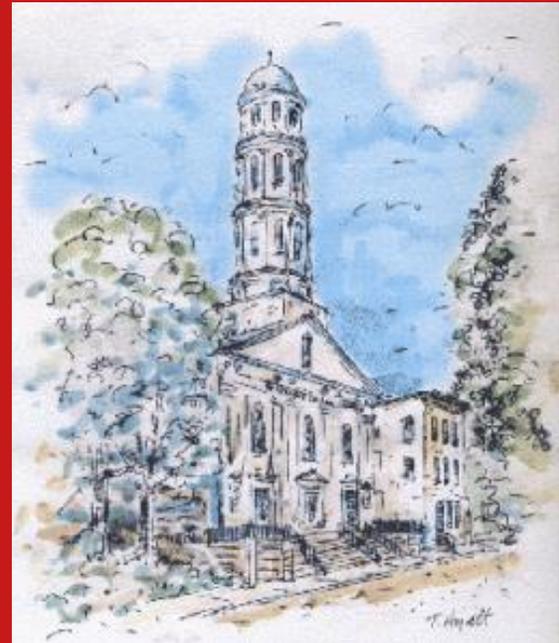
IN THIS ISSUE:

We continue to reflect on the “now what?” of our faith life in the articles on the role of service and charity and a with a look at the end of time. In this issue you will find articles on:

- A Tribute to Larry Fenaroli
- Tracing the Biblical and Early Church notions of “justice”
- Our Dragon Boat Team Competition
- The Liturgical Year and the “End Times”
- VBS 2014 Happenings
- Parish news, including our strategic planning process, end of the fiscal year report/annual budget

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Letter from the Pastor

August 20, 2014

Shalom!

This letter may seem a little strange, in that it is essentially a medical report, on me. I wouldn't be doing it, except that it has been getting back to me that some of you are increasingly concerned about my health. Questions are being asked ranging from "Why doesn't he give out Communion at 9:30 anymore?" to "How much longer will he be around?" So I thought I would write to set your mind at ease.

Granted, I do have a decent-sized list of somewhat fatal conditions. I have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and atrial fibrillation. I have had my gall bladder removed, and both of my knees reconstructed. I take nine medications a day, including one originally designed as a rat poison. And I have always been a little crazy and more than a little forgetful.

But I have a couple of very good doctors, an internist and a cardiologist, whom I see every few months, and who run tests on everything. They assure me that my blood pressure, cholesterol level, A1C level, INR, and ejection fraction numbers are all well within the normal range. In other words, all the medicines they are giving me are working just fine. In fact, when I asked my cardiologist whether it would be reasonable for me to plan on living another five years, he responded "Don't sell yourself short, you should be good for ten years at least!" Now that was last year, so I guess we're down to nine years now, but then there is always the "at least" factor.

So why do I have trouble standing in one place for an extended period, or why have I stopped giving out Communion at the 9:30? It's called static balance. It's actually a lot harder, physiologically, to stand in one place without support and without moving than it is to walk along at a normal pace. The problem for me is basically neurological: because of some diabetes-induced peripheral neuropathy in my legs, they are not sending enough signals fast enough to my brain for me to react swiftly enough with a little muscle adjustment here or there to maintain balance. This is especially true when I cannot use my hands and arms for balance, such as when I'm giving out Communion. So after a while, I find it harder and harder to keep my balance, and I become anxious about falling and dropping the Holy Eucharist on the floor. With a shorter line, such as at 7:15 or 11:45, I do fine. But the long line at 9:30 has gotten to be too much for me, so I've turned that ministry over to the Eucharistic Ministers.

Aside from that, and from the "crazy" and "forgetful" parts, which are not likely to improve, I'm in good shape, and hope to be with you for a long time.

Peace and Love,

Dick

Pastor

LETTER FROM THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PARISH COUNCIL

AUGUST 2014

Dear Parishioners,

Summertime is in its full glory and we hope that each of you has managed to take some time to recharge in its warmth and long days. The Parish Council has continued to meet throughout the summer striving to implement the Strategic Plan and to bring the budget in line with its promise. There will be a full status report on its work to date to be distributed in September.

This letter, however, will not look back but *ahead*. As a community involved in strategic planning, we did some serious soul-searching. It gave us time to take stock of the many profound gifts we have at St V and to breathe gratitude for the depth of God's grace in our midst. We realized that we have a community that is worth preserving and that we have a vision and mission that is worth transmitting to the next generation. And indeed, you responded with increased financial support to support that vision.

Soul-searching also brought us face-to-face with some human failings. We had to question how we are living our mission to be welcoming. We have some focus groups planned for late August to identify these issues and explore solutions. Before we actively engage in inviting newcomers, we need to be sure that we not only welcome them at our door (which we do well thanks to the Hospitality Ministry) but that we have the means in place to engage them fully, warmly, and enthusiastically in the life of our community.

When I was studying at St. Mary's, I came across Kierkegaard's idea that Christian worship was a drama. He concluded that for many churches God was the director, the liturgical leaders were the actors, and the congregation was the audience. Kierkegaard thought this totally wrong. The liturgical leaders are the directors, all of us- the congregation and the liturgical leaders- are the actors, and God alone is the audience. Pope Francis is echoing the same thing. He asks: "How do I live in Church? When I go to church, is it as though I were at the stadium? ... the cinema? No, it is something else. How do I go to church? How do I receive the gifts that the Church offers me to grow and mature as a Christian? Do I participate in the life of the community or do I go to church and withdraw into my own problems, isolating myself from others?"

These are indeed the questions we will be asking ourselves this Fall: How do I go to Church? How do I receive the gifts? How do I use them?

The beauty of the Church, according to Pope Francis, is that everyone brings their own gifts which God has given for the sake of enriching others. Let's pray that we stay and become more beautiful!

Keep us in your prayers.

Peace and blessings,

Audrey Rogers for the Parish Council



LARRY FENAROLI: **KEEPER OF THE BELLS**

BY PAT FRASCATI

Lorenzo “Larry” Fenaroli was born in Baltimore and lived at 209 N. Front Street, in the shadow of St. Vincent’s. His parents bought the house in 1915. Before they bought it, it was used as a rooming house for the Old Front Street Theater and housed actors that used to play there, including Johns Wilkes Booth and his brother.

Larry grew up in St. Vincent’s Parish where his grandparents and parents were married. He was an altar boy at 8. He and his twin brother started ringing the Angelus bells when they were 14. They used to swing up and down on the ropes as the Angelus was played. Larry’s brother died in an accident years later.

Larry went on to play the carillon bells. These were played by crouching over a bank of 14 handles and pushing them down, the handles being attached to thin steel cables which were attached to the clappers that rang the bells. This was not an easy thing to do. Larry called the carillon an amazing instrument and enjoyed playing it for over 40 years.

Few people knew that Larry had a beautiful tenor voice, or that he was trained by Dr. John Anderson, a widely known organist and voice teacher. I had the pleasure of hearing Larry sing the Ave Maria several times at St. Vincent’s. He also sang with the Baltimore Opera Company and with the American Light Opera Company in Washington.

Larry also was a great chef and worked at some of Baltimore’s best restaurants, including Marconi’s and the Chambord among others. He also oversaw the food that was served at the St. Vincent’s Fun Festivals that used to be held years ago.

Larry had many loves in his life. He loved his family, especially his sisters, Marie, Rita and Gloria. He loved St. Vincent’s, he loved his pets and he loved cooking. He was also active in the neighborhood of Little Italy, where he lived. Larry, most of all, loved gardening, as anyone who had been to “Casa Lorenzo” in Little Italy can tell you. His back yard was a beautiful mixture



of flowers, fruit trees and koi ponds. Larry transformed the area around the parking lot at St. Vincent's into an urban garden.

Larry took care of St. Vincent's from the bell tower to the undercroft. He kept the undercroft clean, took care of the wooden floors in the church. He made sure the front steps were cleaned up before Masses on Sunday. He painted, cleaned and always helped to set up the undercroft for the many functions that were held there. He helped set up and clean up for the Friday night feeding program and the AA meetings that met at St. Vincent's, and also mentored many people in those programs.

To many who did not know Larry well, he could seem gruff, but to those of us who knew him, he had a very large heart and never refused to help any of us with anything we asked him to do. I especially remember how he would set up for our Craft Fair weekends and how he loved to decorate the undercroft for Christmas. Larry also was asked by different parishioners to work for them on different projects at their homes.

Larry Fenaroli wore many hats at St. Vincent's: handyman, chef, bell ringer, gardener, mentor, singer and friend among them. We miss you Larry, you left us much too soon.



Larry in the Bell Tower at the age of 29.

MORE THAN CHARITY

CATHOLICISM'S CENTURIES-OLD BASIS FOR ITS SOCIAL TEACHING

PART I OF THREE: EARLY CHRISTIANITY THROUGH THE EARLY MIDDLE-AGES

ANNE MAURA ENGLISH

The past one hundred and twenty-three years have seen an explosion of Catholic thought and practice concerning social justice. A number of those social justice activities (some of them major innovations into Western culture) are noted in what follows. This is not to deny that “works of charity” and concern for the dignity of others have been a part of Catholic Christianity from its earliest roots. However, the current emphasis has been different.

Several factors have contributed to this difference. Foremost among these is a change in understanding the individual's relationship to society and government. In a feudal or monarchical system, major social action was dependent on the good will of the rulers. One could pray for their change of heart, church leaders who saw the needs of the poor could exhort the leaders by preaching and example, but the system itself was seen as divinely ordained. Ordinary individuals and communities did not see the social structure as something for which they bore responsibility. With the advent of “government by the people” came the advent of a different sense of responsibility and an authorization to work for change.

Within the Church, the expanded use of the *encyclical* (used here in the meaning of a letter from the bishop of Rome to the entire Church) started to impact this change. Before the mid-19th century, papal communications were used principally to settle some dispute which had been brought to the Vatican, to institute changes in church law or liturgical or administrative practice. Very few popes saw their role as presenting well-developed, comprehensive teaching on Church doctrine—much less opening new ground on an issue. Many papacies generated no encyclicals whatsoever. That has changed and perhaps nowhere more dramatically than in the field of social justice. (The third article in this series will list and present a brief summary of these.)

What is not new, however, is an emphasis on “justice.” That can seem surprising to us in contemporary times. When we present the sufferings of others as a basis for assisting them or for changing culture or legislation that affects them, we usually appeal to our feelings: pity, empathy, concern for others. It can come as a surprise, then, to realize that Catholic social teaching bypasses a mention of charity and has, from biblical times, grounded its arguments in “justice.” That can seem cold and impersonal to us; as our idea of justice is often fairly utilitarian: a matter of balancing the scales. Justice as used here, however, goes far beyond that.

THE BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF JUSTICE

In the Old Testament, justice is grounded in the goodness, the holiness of God. Justice is righteousness; bestowed by God. It is a sharing in God's own life. Justice is about relationships. One's relations with God and humans are aligned with God's purpose in creating. The “just” woman or man is in sync with Who God is, by actualizing the graced potential of humanity envisioned by the Creator. One of the distinctive traits of *Catholic* Christianity is its reliance on the lens of creation as religious revelation. It is understandable, then, that for Catholicism the attempt to understand this divine purpose for creation is fundamental for discerning how to relate to others.

For Catholics then to be “justified” in the New Testament sense means much more than to have the penalty for one's sins “paid.” To be justified is to be sanctified—to have the image of God, the life of God restored in one's life. This usage is uniquely captured in the English language, in which both *holiness* and *wholeness* are derived from the same root. *Holiness* is not some ethereal aura over-and-beyond one's basic humanity. Rather it is being

truly *whole*, truly human, being “all one can be.” It enfleshes the early Christian theologian, Ireneus’ definition: “The glory of God is the human person fully alive.” It echoes Jesus’ statement in John’s gospel: “I have come that you may have life and have it in full abundance.” In contemporary metaphor, it is the human equivalent of the laptop or cell phone which comes to life and fulfills its purpose only when it is attuned to a clear, strong signal from the source which alone can activate it. It is in this sense that Catholics proclaim in the Eucharistic preface prayer: “It is right and just” to acknowledge the wonders of Who God is and what God has done and is doing for us. Remembering this restores our perspective, allows us to see God, the world, and ourselves as we truly are.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Christianity deepened and lived this understanding by emphasizing the equal humanity of all persons: rich and poor, male and female, slave and free. This belief was captured in the image of the community as “Body of Christ” and celebrated weekly at the table of the Eucharist. Participation in Eucharist, not encyclicals or articulated theology, was *the* social teaching of the Church in the earliest centuries. It provides one powerful example of what came to be articulated as *lex orandi, lex credendi*, that is, the rule of prayer is the rule of belief.

Early Christianity was marked by its strong commitment to the poor and to the widows and orphans on the fringes of society. During times of persecution, acting on this commitment and the commitment to equality was an act of courage; it made Christians easier to identify. At the same time it was a powerful evangelizing element. “See how these Christians love one another,” their persecutors admitted. Their awe was not for love itself. Pagans understood and valued love for family, love for one’s friends and comrades and could provide their own multiple heroic examples of that. What amazed them was that Christians extended that to everyone.

That Christian transformation of “others” into “brothers and sisters” accounts for a truly unique historical event reported in Acts. A collection was taken up in Antioch in Syria to alleviate famine in Jerusalem (Acts 11:35 ff). In addition from CE 52 to 57, Paul seems to have spent a fair amount of effort organizing collections among pagan converts to help in this same cause. (Romans 15: 26) We should not let our understanding of this be minimized by our contemporary experience in which collections for disasters in neighboring states or far off places are commonplace. This is the first recorded occurrence of such an event happening.

In the practice of justice, as in all elements of early Christianity, there was no centralized teaching or system. Various communities found their own ways to live out the ethic of justice that was core to their embracing of Christ. Concern for the poor and marginalized was the norm, of course. Some communities went beyond that. In some, Christians were forbidden to join the army. In some, Christians could not become judges because in that role they might be required to pronounce a death penalty.

There is no doubt that many of these actions were inspired by a desire to live the love Jesus modeled so vividly. However, the ultimate underpinning was a commitment to justice. One embraced an ethic of concern for others, not simply out of the “goodness of one’s heart” and not only when one could *feel* something for the ones served. One considered the needs of others because it was something *owed* to them, by virtue of their humanity and the consequent vision of their well-being held by the Creator. This was not to ignore charity.

When the relationship between justice and charity was spoken or written about it was seen as mutually nourishing. Basic love was what led to justice and, in turn, justice was seen as preserving and developing the human capacity to love. The ultimate ideal envisioned was that justice would gradually transform the social order and that order, in turn, would enable and foster deeper love. In other words, in a social order in which each person was respected as a human being and their basic needs met, people would have the opportunity to come to know and interact with each other and thus deepen their capacity to appreciate and value each other.

The Middle Ages, as we will see in the next segment, brought some new flourishing of justice activity and a major theoretical proponent in the person of Thomas Aquinas. The re-emphasis on his theology in the 19th Century paved the way for Catholic social teaching of the 20th.

POETRY

BY BARBARA BOWLES

ESTUARY

Land gives way to sea
Fresh water mingles with salt
Transitional life

Protective water
Productive ecosystem
Procreative life

Diverse habitats
Filter harmful pollutants
Shelter eager life

Interdependent
People, plants, animals thrive
Appreciate life

Complexity breathes
Within heart, mind, body, soul
Estuary life

TO CERTAIN

Say to history
With the angel's first noel
A God mystery
In fields to certain shepherds
Proclaim tidings of great joy

Reassure swiftly
With a powerful message
A gladsome calm voice
For comfort with kindly words
Gain release from frantic fear

Give encouragement
With pure persistent presence
A steadfast patience
In strained experiences
Bring warm caring attention

Steady quietly
With blessings when times are rough
A hopeful future
For the first of steppingstones
Create a special moment

Impart confidence
With firm faith while doubts threaten
A granite resolve
In trying circumstances
Retain singularity

Venture forth today
With expansive compassion
A life come what may
For grace to certain others
Amaze with peaceful action

A SLICE OF LIFE

East of night's darkness
Light easing into being
Exposes colors

Sun-kissed fog rises
Earth clouds merging into sky
Bestow dew sparkles

Awakened creatures
Stir and stretch while giving voice
Announce day's return

Routine work, pleasure
Bringing forth prized traditions
Anchor families

Spiced with joys, sorrows
Catalyzing essences
Share a slice of life



CITY PARISHES USE DRAGON BOAT RACES TO FORGE BONDS, HELP CHARITIES

JULY 30, 2014

BY MARIA WIERING

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Members of the Downtown Catholic Cluster Dragon Boat team share a boat with members of the Air Force team for Saturday morning paddling practice at the Baltimore Marina July 26. (Tom McCarthy Jr. | CR Staff)

On Saturdays at 9 a.m., a group of Baltimore City Catholics climbs into a Chinese-style Dragon Boat that eases into the harbor. They're among 34 teams practicing weekly for Catholic Charities' Dragon Boat Races, a biennial event which will take place Sept. 6 at Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

This particular group, the Downtown Catholic Cluster team, is the first parish-based team to compete since the races' 1998 inception.

The Dragon Boat races support a good cause ([in 2012, the races yielded \\$700,000 for Catholic Charities](#)), but for Baltimore parish leaders, the races are also an opportunity to draw more Catholics into parish life and gain visibility, said Chris McCullough, pastoral associate of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Baltimore City.

As team captain, McCullough, 49, is coordinating a group of Catholics from a cluster of five Baltimore City parishes: St. Vincent, St. Alphonsus, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Corpus Christi and St. Ignatius of Loyola.

"It's a way to be present to the greater Baltimore community and express our presence in the city, and maybe be able to say ... 'If you're looking for a place to go to Mass, here's our Mass times,'" McCullough said.

To see the full article, go to www.bitly.com/cr-cityparishes

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UNTIL YOU COME AGAIN

ANNE MAURA ENGLISH

By now we've almost forgotten about the "Liturgical Year." In the months since Pentecost our Sunday readings have given us a chance to reflect on—digest—what our commitment to the gospel is. But with the late fall readings that changes. We turn our attention to the "end time."

In our age, such grim forecasts may seem quaint, scientifically anachronistic, or overdone rather than inspirational. What we have in these gospels is the apocalyptic literary genre. It grew out of prophetic denunciations of Israel's enemies. In the centuries closest to Jesus' birth, it took on new dimensions in response to centuries of repeated domination, culminating in Roman occupation. In addition to the fact of control by others this exposed the population to constant humiliations and indignities by a military force which saw Palestine as the worst possible assignment. Soldiers took their frustration out any way they could: shoving an old man aside into the donkey droppings in the street, subjecting young girls or matrons to lewd comments or casual fondling, helping themselves to vendors' goods without payment. The idea that God was going to turn divine vengeance on the oppressors—and, perhaps more pointedly on Palestinian collaborators like the tax collectors—was understandably "comforting."

However, there is a larger picture here and to miss that is to miss a central article of our faith.

Belief that Jesus' work is not finished is an ancient and fundamental one. The Apostles Creed affirms that "*He (i.e., Christ) will come to judge the living and the dead*" and in "*the resurrection of the body*" (i.e., *the resurrection of our bodies*). Nicea's tweaking of that Creed retained a conviction that "*He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end*" and *I (we) look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.*" Each Sunday we reaffirm our belief in the death, resurrection "until you come again."

Today instead many scientific circles and popular spin-offs accept as a general principle that the universe is in a perpetual cycle. Eventually the movement outward of planets and suns will reverse; they will collapse into a center, and a new "big bang" will result. That is directly counter to Judeo-Christian tradition. They are marked by a sense of moving toward a future. (One historian has posited that change in the name of progress whether scientific or political organization took place in Western civilization rather than elsewhere precisely because of this underlying motif in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

From the early story of Abraham the idea of journey takes hold. "Leave your country, your family and your father's house for a land I will show you." (Gn. 12:1) Exodus from Egypt is a divine rejection of the status quo, carrying with it the promise of a future in a land of "milk and honey." The Babylonian Exile gives rise to prophetic utterance that God will one day lead the people back. And coloring all of Israel's expectation is the Messianic promise. The majority of this writing does not envision a disastrous end time. Threats of woe and destruction are aimed at Israel's enemies and oppressors rather than the faithful themselves who can look forward to a time when "lion and lamb will lie down together." (Echoing Is. 11:6-7 and Is. 65:25)

The New Testament takes up the future orientation. Gospel glimpses and Pauline expositions proclaim a belief in a future initiated by Christ's return. The end time is the entire focus of the Book of Revelation. The apocalyptic genre is more prevalent in the NT but not exclusively so. Paul speaks of the *parousia*, literally "personal presence," seen as a fulfillment (and—interestingly evidently the feminine form of the present participle of the verb). Revelation contains also a vision of the New Jerusalem and of God's "wiping away every tear." (21:4)

Underlying all of this is a concept of God that we largely miss. In Exodus 3, God answers Moses' question, "If they ask me 'what is this God's name,' what am I to tell them?" This is a monumental question. In the Hebrew mentality, someone's name gives access to the essence of the person or thing. Christians, influenced perhaps by our adoption of Greek philosophy, usually translate God's answer as "I am" or "I am who am" – "the God who is." But the actual form of the word in Hebrew is more likely the *future* form of the verb.

Rabbi Michael Lerner has this to say about this revelation:

. . . Judaism's essential concept of God is revolutionary. God described her/himself to Moses as *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, which means "*I shall be whom I shall be*"—that is, *the God of the universe is the Force of what can be. The primary force that rules the universe is the principle of possibility and freedom. . . . The force of possibility for healing and transformation . . . rules the universe . . . and ensures the possibility that everything can be changed including the entire social order of oppression. (Healing Israel/Palestine)*

In the words of psychologist Leonard Felder, PhD:

But if you study the Hebrew grammar carefully regarding this sentence, which is spoken in the first person singular imperative form of *hayah* (to be), a better translation would be "*I will be what I will be,*" or "*I am becoming what I am becoming.*" According to numerous scholars . . . "*I am forever changing, evolving, growing, interacting, transforming. . . . I am becoming what I am becoming.*" In other words . . . each moment is unique and unlike any previous moment. The possibilities are endless, and the Source is also endless." (*Here I Am: Using Jewish Spiritual Wisdom to Become More Present, Centered, and Available for Life*, 56.)

Or, more simply put in words written in the 1970's: "*I will be Who I will be. Live we me gently and the dynamic of our relationship will teach you who I am.*"

Out of reverence for this name, the Jews substituted *Adonai* (in liturgy) or *Hashem* ("the name" in private prayer) for the divine name whenever it appeared in the Scriptures. Christians took over *Adonai*, translating it as *Lord* whenever the original divine name appeared in the Scriptures. This means that every time we see or use the word *Lord* in Old Testament readings, the original used the divine name with the meanings described above. Consider how often we use or hear *Lord* in these readings and it will be obvious how central the idea of *future* is in our Bible.

There is also a future twist in the prayer most central to Christians, the Our Father. The Greek word we translate as *daily* does not have an exact translation. It could just as easily be rendered as “Give us this day *our bread of the future.*”

Perhaps it is important that there is this double dimension. In celebrating the future end time in this part of the Liturgical Year, we need to be mindful of what that means for the present as well. We do not know what that future will be in actual history. There are times when we as a human community seem to be making genuine progress. Perhaps the end will come when we have restored all we can to God’s original vision of creation. Other times we seem destined to destroy ourselves and our planet. Perhaps the Jesus event itself is our model of the end. Perhaps final salvation will come through the fidelity of those who continue to hold fast to their belief—accepting as Jesus did the cross with firm trust in God.

Whatever the final event holds this time of year keeps us firmly fixed on what matters. It is culturally commonplace to point out that no one is indispensable. Christian faith maintains that in the Christian journey that is heresy. The actions of each one of us actions matter, the spiritual growth of each one of us matters. Both make an *indispensable* contribution to Christ’s work of leading all to salvation. Our liturgical celebration calls us to embrace that with firm faith and hope that God is leading all creation to its victorious culmination.



VBS SUMMARY 2014

ANNE GIBSON

After Mass yesterday, I heard some of our young parishioners in the undercroft singing the “Parable Song,” the unofficial theme song from our week at Vacation Bible School. It was 2 weeks after VBS, but they still seemed to be enjoying the moment. I think that said volumes about our week at VBS. We had a wonderful time exploring the parables of Jesus.

Each morning, students spent time in their classes reading and discussing the stories from the Bible. Thanks to our dedicated teachers, Debbie Potts, Michael Susko and Rita McMullan, for making the stories come alive through drama, song, art and yes sowing seeds. Especially beautiful were the treasure boxes that Chris Fitzpatrick helped the children make.

On Wednesday, Bethany Gregg did a Godly Play lesson with each of the elementary classes. It was one of the parables that we were studying and was well-received by all age groups.

In the afternoon students worked on Sunday's liturgy. Thanks to Joe Organ, who helped them with the singing and Janice Bonner who worked with our lectors, the Mass was beautiful.

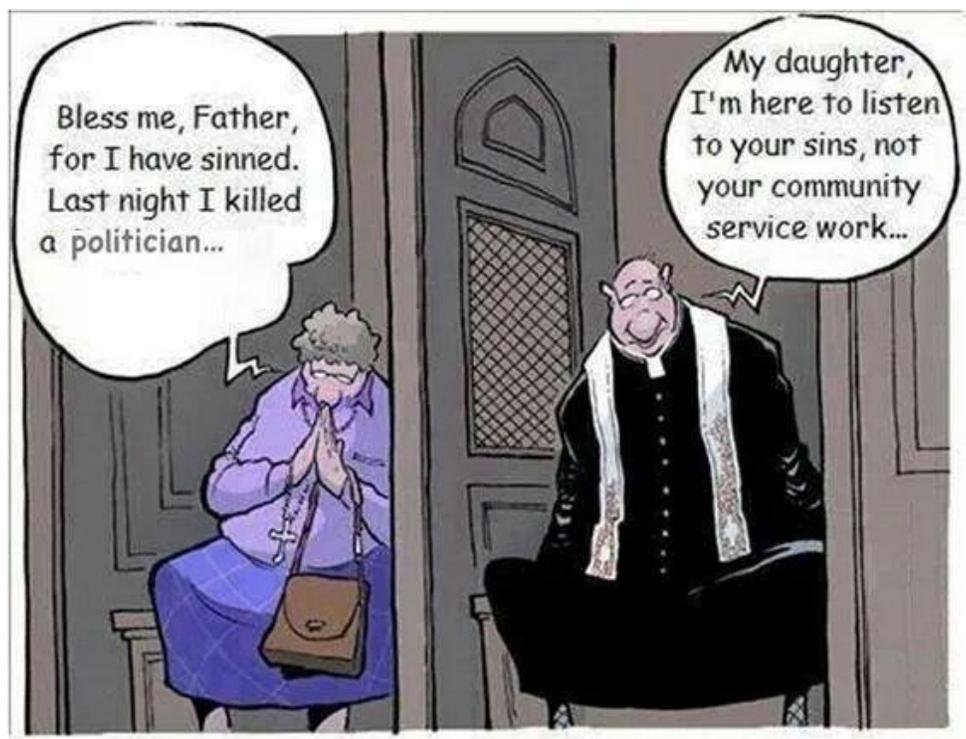
We expanded the parable of The Good Samaritan by visiting 2 of our neighbors, Our Daily Bread and the Lloyd Street Synagogue. Both trips were very meaningful. I was very proud of the children! Another afternoon activity was our sharing. Each class took a turn to do a presentation for the other classes based on that day's parable.

I am grateful to all of the chaperones who went on the trips with us and all of the snack providers. I am also grateful to my Middle Schoolers/junior counselors who did most of the "leg work" for me delivering materials to classrooms for me and helping with the little ones.

On Friday we began our day with Mass. We all wore the tie-dyed shirts that Mary Kate Fries and Kristin Hamilton helped to make. We then headed for the Carrie Murray Nature Center for a picnic lunch and a tour. At the center they care for animals who for various reasons would not survive in the wild. It was a great afternoon.

On Sunday at the 9:30 Mass, the Gospel was proclaimed in the Godly Play style. Students were invited up to sit in a circle and listen to the story of one of the Kingdom parables. It was wonderful to see how engaged and attentive they were.

Next year, VBS will be the week of July 20-24, 2015. Mark your calendars now so that you don't miss out on this fantastic week!



CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH

AUGUST 12, 2014

To see the full minutes, go to our web page www.stvchurch.org

OLD BUSINESS

Status of Archdiocesan Audit: Father Lawrence states that St. Vincent's has sent a letter to the Archdiocese with the changes that we have made and has asked for a closure letter. No letter of response has been received at this time from the Archdiocese. Chris McCullough is recruiting "counters" (volunteers who will count the Sunday collection using a new method stipulated by the Archdiocese) who will be trained by Lauren Brunelli in September.

Proposed Policy on Parish Administration: This draft policy was presented at the July meeting for discussion and a month's discernment. Its purpose is to translate into established policy the recommendations of the 2010 Ad Hoc Committee on Organization and Growth to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the major structural parish constituencies. The Council agreed to approve the policy. It will be posted on the Parish Council webpage.

Strategic Planning Report: Audrey Rogers submitted a timeline for the plan's implementation that delineates activities for the first and second quarters of this fiscal year. She explained that the focus for these two quarters is an internal one: establishing and tightening our organizational procedures (budget and personnel), evaluating our children's program, self-examining our welcoming and engagement practices, reinvigorating our committees, and encouraging a parish-wide rejuvenation. As this unfolds, specific strategies for outreach and evangelization in the 3rd and 4th quarters should develop. Activities include:

- There will be a focus group regarding improving welcoming at St. Vincent's. Brenda Smith and Lee Krempel have recruited members for this focus group.
- Audrey noted that we are creating a memo for the committees asking them to be open to change and new ideas. This is intended to alert committees to be more open to changes before the Fall Stewardship Campaign. Then, we will be working on creating geographic clusters with the help of Rita McMullin and Jack Schmidt. 165 households are currently registered.
- Pam Sanders is evaluating the Children's Program. She will interact with some families and observe some classrooms in the Fall. Ms. Sanders has not yet received all the information that she requested.
- The Family Life Subcommittee has continued to meet regularly. Two new members attended this past Sunday's meeting.
- In the Spring the Strategic Plan hopes to use new media for evangelization and programs. Vanessa Johnson is looking at online programs and how some evangelical churches are using their websites and technology to reach parishioners.

Audrey noted that the Strategic Planning Committee referred the status of our church park back to the Parish Council, recommending that an Ad Hoc Committee be established to identify and evaluate options for its management that are consistent with our mission. The plan has been to name this committee in the Fall. Audrey asked the Council to offer the names of parishioners who might be considered to serve on this committee. Fr. Lawrence noted that Catholic News Service was here to do filming regarding our various service projects with the homeless, including the park. Peggy Meyer brought to our attention that a sculpture of a homeless Jesus was created. Several churches did not want it, but the Pope loved the sculpture. It was suggested to have a similar

sculpture placed at our park (by soliciting private donations of \$35,000 plus \$2,000 shipping) to call people's attention to the needs and dignity of the homeless. Audrey suggested that the issue could be referred to the Park Ad Hoc Committee to explore.

NEW BUSINESS

FY15

Budget Father Lawrence guided the Council in a detailed look at the FY 15 proposed budget and projected income. He presented the annual budget by reviewing the new formatting and then discussing the allocation of funds in each line item. There has been considerable work on the part of staff to change the reporting format in order to present a more transparent picture of our financial status to the Council and the parish. In FY 14, the increased and sustained level of offertory donations following the October Town Meeting produced an end-of-year surplus. With the expectation that the observed level of giving will be continued into FY 15, much effort was expended to align the budget with the provisions of the Strategic Plan. Specifics include increasing the position of superintendent from part-time to a fulltime, increased funding to address a number of long-deferred maintenance projects, increased funding for staff development, new funding for the *Godly Play* Children's program, evangelization efforts, the support of the JVC volunteer, and the upgrading of computer technology. In addition, there is a strategic reserve to support the strategies for program, outreach and evangelization initiatives expected to grow out of the Strategic Plan. Finally, the *Endowment for Operations* is now fully established. This endowment is earmarked for smaller maintenance projects.

After Father Lawrence presentation, some questions/concerns by Council were presented and discussed: It was noted that the "Religious Ed Fee" income and the "Family Ministry" income need to be checked again for duplication. Peggy Meyer expressed concern that St. Vincent's donation to Habitat for Humanity and BRIDGE may not be included in the FY 14 actual expenses, leading to a decrease in the FY 15 Peace & Justice budget. Audrey indicated that the budget is simply an estimate and that the money could likely be made available for both Habitat for Humanity and BRIDGE if the requests for those donations are presented. Peggy will look into the donations to those two organizations at this point and bring it to Council next month.

Consensus (with some reservations regarding the decrease in the Peace and Justice Committee's FY15 budgeted amount) was achieved by the Council and the budget was approved. Fr. Lawrence will provide a summary version of the annual budget for posting on the Council webpage.

Committee Reports:

Social Action Committee Report submitted by Peggy Meyer

The Resource Exchange: We supplied 8 individuals, whom Healthcare for the Homeless placed in apartments, with furniture and starter kits in July. We received the \$7800 grant from Johns Hopkins. Costs for our storage units continue to go up. It costs us \$324 per month so if anyone has a warehouse handy, please let us know!

Jonestown Planning Council: The JPC met at the Jewish synagogue to hear feedback from a consultant giving us a bid on reinvigorating Jonestown.

Peace & Justice Committee: We joined other faith communities and walked through the city streets for the PRIDE parade. We participated at the Beyond the Boundaries meeting at the Catholic Center to continue to work for affordable housing. Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake and Sandtown Habitat for Humanity merged into the former. We will advise the Council on procedures for our United Churches' builds when they reply to our requests. Maureen Daly was named treasurer of BRIDGE. A \$30,000 grant was received for BRIDGE from the National Office for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Emergency Services: The food program gave groceries to families in July and didn't spend anything. We paid Maryland Food Bank over \$1000 in June for food for the Christmas meal. The men's program doesn't give clothing in July and August.

Friday Dinner: We had 316 guests on the last Friday of July and continue to range between 150 - 320 each week. We also distributed clothing and luggage.

Helping Up Mission: HUM are cleaning the park the first and third Saturdays of each Peggy also noted that Our Daily Bread has not received the amount of vegetables as previous years so there is less of a need for volunteers to chop veggies.

Facilities Committee Report submitted by Pat Ball

The committee last met on July 14, 2014.

The following issues were discussed as part of old business:

- Chris reported that a contract had been signed with Gutter Helmet and a deposit of \$800 paid. They reported that they could not do the work as planned because of the height and the fact that we would have to remove the old gutters. Chris will pursue a refund of our deposit.
- With Larry's passing, we have not gotten estimates on the tree trimming from his contacts. Denny and Rita also agreed to provide some possible contacts, making sure they are bonded and insured
- Bob Betta submitted a diagram of the possible reconfiguration of the parking spaces, which he developed with Bob Reuter. The committee had some suggestions for the handicapped spaces.
- It was decided that the issues of weather stripping and replacement of the door stop holders for the front doors of the church would be tabled until the hiring of a new superintendent
- Chris reported that we have recovered all of Larry's keys except the master key and there have been some break ins to the food pantry. It was recommended that we have Roberts' Lock Service re-key all the locks.

The following issues were discussed as part of new business:

- Chris submitted the proposed FY15 budget analysis. Several changes were suggested and questions raised. It was reported that service contracts and security represent recurring fixed costs totaling \$9300 and would be charged to their own category and will not impact the maintenance budget.
- The accessibility project in the rectory is scheduled to start in August and will cost \$40,000
- The West Church façade restoration should cost \$50,000
- The other capital project, the repair of the structural beam in the uppercroft should cost \$20,000
- The primary discussion as part of new business was a review of the proposed job description for the new building superintendent. Below is a summary of the discussion:

In general we agreed with the scope of duties although we thought that it was not reasonable to expect anyone to be here until 9pm to close up after meetings, especially if their job is primarily during daylight. The big problem was the proposal that this superintendent position be a 20 hour-per-week job at \$15.00 per hour. We strongly disagreed with this proposal. The proposed hourly rate would not allow the recruitment of someone with the necessary skills to accomplish many of the responsibilities that are in the job description. This would mean continuing to bring in multiple small contractors that would have to be overseen by Chris (who in our opinion is spending too much of his time on the facility). This will not allow him to spend the necessary time on more pastoral duties, including the growing of the parish. We recommend an hourly rate between \$22-24 per hour. Further, we felt that this is a full-time position. Some of the other suggestions were:

- *Not necessary to have the super attend or close up after the Friday night dinners.
- * The park clean up people on Saturdays and Sundays could also clean up the church steps.
- * Keeping a file of all contracts, etc. should be done by office personnel, not maintenance, but the maintenance person will provide and track those documents.

- * There should be NO days that an employee is required to come in for only 1.5 hours. This was convenient for Larry, as he lived so close, but is unlikely to be convenient or desirable for anyone else.
- * The new volunteer gardeners could also trim the hedges and cut the little grass we have.

The committee members agreed to advocate for these revisions in the job description with the Finance Committee, Parish Council, and Father Lawrence.

Liturgy Committee Report submitted by Matt Hill

The Liturgy Committee met last on August 9, 2014 for its annual retreat.

At the retreat the Committee focused on the Easter Vigil. The committee reviewed significant, diverse comments from parishioners, clergy, vigil participants, vigil planners, and Committee members. The Committee explored various alternatives to the current Saturday, all-night model both in terms of liturgical meaning and increasing meaningful participation in the vigil. The Committee also explored various means of revamping the current all-night practice in order to increase meaningful participation. The Committee is asking for further input from the Family Life Subcommittee and will issue a report for Council's review at the September or October Council meeting.

The next committee meeting is set for September 27 from 10 am to 12pm. The meeting will focus on planning for All Souls/Saints and Advent, with some initial planning for Lent, Easter, and the Summer Series.

Education and Enrichment Report submitted by Peggy Shouse

The Education & Enrichment Committee has not met since the last Parish Council. The only new item to report is that there are currently 13 adults booked for the weekend at Cape May.

Communications and Outreach Report submitted by Laureen Brunelli

The C&O Committee has not met since the last Parish Council meeting. We plan to meet in early September.

Letters to Parents of Potential Faith Fun Fellowship Enrollees

This initiative, proposed by the C&O Committee, has been completed by staff. Two different letters were sent to the parents of children, either baptized in or registered in the parish. One was aimed at those eligible to enroll in FFF for Pre-K-1st grade, which will feature the Montessori-base curriculum Godly Play, and one to potential First Communicants.

Also an ad for our *Godly Play* program ran in Baltimore child magazine in August.

Finance Committee has announced that Mark Palmer is the new chair. Maureen Fitzsimmons will continue as part of the committee as the secretary. The Council thanked Maureen for her long years of service on the Finance Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 with a prayer.

Submitted by Bethany Gregg, Vice President for Peter La Count, Secretary

To see our annual budget report, go to: <http://www.stvchurch.org/council-minutes-reports/> and scroll down to "reports" and click on the link to the FY14-15 budget.