

CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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My dear parishioners:

There are a number of events, issues, etc. that I would like to bring to your attention.

First, as I look back to Lent, I want to thank all who participated in our Parish Lenten Mission by your attendance and/or help with the liturgies, socials, etc. As I have mentioned earlier, I think most who did attend felt it was an enriching experience. We are already making plans for the next mission in Lent 2010. Start watching your bulletin for details!!!

Secondly, as school and many parish programs are quickly winding down toward summer vacation, I want to share some observations about this past year. I, personally, think it has been a good year. Allow me to offer some examples:

- This past fall, our Morning of Recollection, conducted by Fr. Kastl and Fr. Gerlach, was deeply appreciated by those who were able to attend.
- A month or so ago, Hilary Elias shared with us the work that has been done by our Justice and Peace Ministry. It included completing our second Habitat House. Hilary also networks with others in the community who work with assistance programs in the attempt to better serve the people who come to us with needs.
- At the Easter Vigil, eight adults and two children were received into the Church.
- Sixty-two children recently celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time and their First Communion.
- On Sunday, April 13th, Bishop Slattery confirmed 43 of our high school youth.

On behalf of the entire parish, I would like to offer our congratulations to all who have received these sacraments. It is important that we, also, offer a word of “thanks” to the parents and all who were involved in the sacramental programs and the RCIA team. Your presence and cooperation make it all possible.

We have a growing number of older parishioners who are confined to their homes or are in some sort of institutional living or health care facility. In addition to our own parishioners, we are responsible for the pastoral care of all Catholics who are residents of facilities located within our parish. There are quite a few people who are engaged in bringing Communion to these folks. Thanks to all of you. If anyone would be interested in assisting with this ministry, please contact Ginny Lane in the Parish Office.

Many of you have commented to me that we seem to have a larger than usual number of deaths this year. While that is true, it is also true that the number of baptisms and weddings seem to be up as well.

- Attendance at scripture classes has been consistent.
- Planning for this summer’s Vacation Bible School is underway!
- The financial picture of the parish remains strong and our participation in the annual Charities Drive and the DDF was good. If more parishioners would make a contribution, we could do even more.
- I have the date on my calendar for decorating the rectory for Christmas!

On to other news—

We are in the process of having tile repair work done, especially in the vestibule of the Church. A number of tiles were broken during the time of the new carpet installation and a whole section of tile in the middle of the vestibule is beginning to come loose. We are not sure why. This has to be taken care of before they become loose enough to be a hazard.

As announced in the bulletin several weeks ago, Beverly Zardus, our secretary for more than 10 years, is retiring. All of us in the office will miss her presence. She is not only a good worker, but a fine person who is delightful to work with. I am sure we will be getting lots of postcards as she and Vince really enjoy traveling. Thanks, Bev, for all you have done and do enjoy retirement. We have interviewed a number of people and Maxine Coats was invited to take the job and has accepted the offer. She is already here working with Beverly.

We continue to search for more effective ways to communicate. We send out a great deal of information and as many of you know, some of the more traditional ways of communicating are no longer effective, especially with the younger generation. The challenge for us is to effectively reach all the “audiences” the parish ministers to. Bear with us and feel free to offer any suggestions that you might have. We are also studying the job descriptions of our office personnel to see how we can better use the time and talents of those who work here. My office is at the end of the hall, so I should be safe . . . at least for a while!

For over two years, we have been counting the attendance at all Saturday evening and Sunday Masses on the first weekend of each month. Some specific and general observations:

- The Saturday 5:00 p.m. Mass is usually the second largest congregation. It is larger in the winter than in the summer and there are various kinds of “activities” which effect attendance.
- More often than not, the 7:45 a.m. Mass has the smallest congregation, but attendance is the most consistent and we never have to worry about servers, lectors, etc.
- The 10:15 a.m. Mass has the largest congregation, but the attendance fluctuates between summer and winter and within the winter months depending on the religious education programs for children.
- Attendance at the 12:15 p.m. Mass varies a great deal, but it is usually our second smallest congregation.
- The 6:00 p.m. Mass attendance fluctuates a great deal, too, but is usually the third largest congregation. It is the last Sunday parish Mass in the city and approximately 50% of the congregation are people from other parishes.

The total attendance for the weekend Masses averages around 1,700 to 2,000 people. The church itself accommodates around 800 people. The obvious conclusion is that we don’t really “need” five Sunday Masses. At some point, an adjustment will need to be made and the beginning of summer would seem to be a logical time. For a number of reasons, the schedule will remain the same, at least for now.

There is so much more that could be mentioned, but you will probably agree that this is enough for now! Let us pray for each other and for the gift of peace for all peoples.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,



Rev. Msgr. Dennis C. Dorney
Pastor