

**SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2010
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

PASTOR'S COLUMN

What a weekend it was!!! Youth 2000, the retreat experience for young people was held in our school last weekend. It was a spiritual high point for our parish family. 281 teens and young people came to our parish to spend three days of prayer led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. A team of 30 presenters, musicians, and support people began an experience for the youth of our parish and beyond that will not be forgotten. 50 of the youth were from our parish with the rest coming from all the other boroughs as well as Long Island, Connecticut and even Sleepy Hollow!

The retreat consisted of talks, masses, confession, rosaries and small group sharing which culminated in a candlelight vigil Saturday night at which Jesus Himself in the Holy Eucharist went to each participant so that they could touch in faith the hem of His clothing (the Humeral Veil). Tears were shed by almost all at this powerful expression of the personal love of Jesus for each of the young people.

In addition, we had over 70 adult volunteers who were overnight chaperons, cooks, waiters and you name it! This was a powerful experience for them as well. People from every segment of our parish worked together joyfully and efficiently. I did not hear one complaint from any of the volunteers. What they did was joyful service and they did not want any recognition. But I will embarrass Michael Meloni, our Youth Minister, Kitty Prager, Chief Coordinator, Karen Weinhofer, Volunteer Coordinator and Vinnie Falco, Food Coordinator. They were able to quietly accomplish things for God and the good of God's people. As a Pastor, I was so very proud of Immac! It showed how Christian our community truly is!

We are pleased to announce that Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn and Queens will celebrate our Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, April 3rd at 8:30 p.m. One of the determining reasons for our selection by the Bishop is our large RCIA which is one of the largest in the Diocese. The Bishop will be baptizing 10 adults, welcoming 3 from other Christian Communities and giving First Communion and Confirmation to 18 adults (including the newly baptized). Once again this is a sign of the vitality of our parish community!

SPANISH MISSION

We are pleased to announce that Fr. Fernando LoVerde, Pastor of St. Rita's in East New York, will give the Mission in Spanish this week on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Upper Church.

ITALIAN MISSION

As we did last year, the Italian Mission will take place on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week (March 29, 30 and 31) at 7:00 p.m. in the Upper

Church. The mission will be preached by a Priest of the Scalabrini congregation.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

The Italian film, The Gospel According to St. Matthew, will be shown the Wednesday of Holy Week (March 31st) at 8:00 p.m. in the Lower Church. This film is by the renown Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini and was shot with the local non-actors in the south of Italy. It is considered one of the finest lives of Christ on film. This film is in black and white and is in Italian with English subtitles. It will help us to get into the right frame of mind for the Holy Days that follow.

**THE DIOCESAN STRATEGIC PLANNING
PROCESS**

The Diocese has launched a new website to keep all parishioners up to date on *Christ Jesus, Our Hope-the Diocesan Strategic Planning Process*. The website is www.ChristJesusOurHope.org. This site contains information relevant to the current process, including a text of the Bishop's Pastoral Letter, provides answers to some frequently asked questions that parishioners may have about the process and provides a forum for you to submit your questions and thoughts. As the process continues you are encouraged to check this site for up to the date information regarding the process and the changes happening in our Church.

**THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD
MARCH 25, 2010**

Each year the Sisters of the Holy Union celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation at a special Mass during which we renew our vows publicly. Our Holy Union Associates also renew their commitment at this time. We invite you, our parishioners, to join with us on Thursday, March 25th at the 5:00 p.m. Mass to offer thanks to God for His many blessings in our lives as we continue to serve Him.

EASTER PLANTS & FLOWERS

If you are interested in donating towards our Easter plants, either as a memorial to a deceased loved one or as a gift to the church, please use the envelopes we have placed around the church. Please remember to put your account number on the envelope.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION YOUTH MASS

Every Sunday at 5:00 p.m. - Held in the 'Underground' Church -Ditmars Blvd. and 29th Street---A Catholic Mass for Young People, Staffed by the Youth and Young Adults of Astoria--Beginning Sunday night March 21st

MASS SCHEDULE

MONDAY – March 22nd

7:00 a.m. Sigfredo Gomez
9:00 a.m. Eugene M. Roberts
12 Noon Margaret Haughey (20th Anniv.)

TUESDAY – March 23rd

7:00 a.m. Sylvestre Family
9:00 a.m. Antoinetta Avena
12 Noon Angelo Catano

WEDNESDAY - March 24th

7:00a.m. Edward Babor, Sr.
9:00 a.m. Miguel Paniagua (Anniv.)
12 Noon Samuel Marconi

THURSDAY- March 25th

7:00 a.m. Sigfredo Gomez
9:00 a.m. Anton Hrelja
12 Noon Patrick & Nicholas Vario

FRIDAY - March 26th

7:00 a.m. Sigfredo Gomez
9:00 a.m. Domenica Salvatore
12 Noon Michele & Cesaria Maffei

SATURDAY - March 27th

7:00 a.m. Raymond & Alice Larkin, Patricia Larkin Fernandez
9:00 a.m. Mei Ling Moore
12 Noon Rosaria & Antonio Giammarino
5:00 p.m. **Purgatorial Society**

SUNDAY - March 28th

7:00 a.m. Living & Deceased Parishioners
9:00 a.m. Anna Braut
10:30 a.m. John & Joseph Battaglia (Birth. Remb.)
11:45 a.m. **Spanish-** Senor Crucificado
1:00 p.m. Jose, Donny & Freddy Garcia

Lower Church:

9:00 a.m. **Italian** – Angela & Rocco Tenaglia

THE BREAD AND WINE are donated this week in loving memory of Wendell Kiffmeyer requested by his brother.

THE CANDLES ON THE ALTAR were donated last week and this week in loving memory of Nunziata & Antonio DiMonte requested by their grandchildren.

THE SANCTUARY LAMP is burning this week in loving memory of Rose, Vito & Sgt. Patsy Rocco, requested by Florence McCauley & Family.

THE FLOWERS AT THE TABERNACLE are donated this week in loving memory of Michael Manniello requested by the Manniello Family.

PLEASE KEEP THEM IN YOUR PRAYERS

COLLECTION	
Week of: March 13 & 14:	\$7,469.65
Attendance:	1,372
Per Capita:	\$5.44



Please pray for the recently deceased:

Donato Gasparro

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine on them forever. +

LIFE OF DAMIEN

A dramatic presentation of the life of St. Damien of Molokai will be presented in our Church by the gifted actor Casey Groves. This presentation has toured the globe and has gotten stellar reviews. We scheduled it for March 26th on purpose. It is the night of the Fish Fry. You can come to dinner at 6:00 at the Fish Fry and go to the Theater in the Church at 7:00 p.m. For the play only a free will offering will be asked for. **So come and join us for dinner and the theater right here at Immac!**



Fr. Damien or St. Damien of Molokai (Jan. 3, 1840-April 15, 1889), born Jozef De Veuster, was a Roman Catholic priest from Belgium and member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a missionary religious order. He won recognition for his ministry to people with leprosy (also known as Hansen’s disease), who had been placed under a government-sanctions medical quarantine on the island of Molokai in the Kingdom of Hawaii.

After sixteen years caring for the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of those in the leper colony, he eventually contracted and died of the disease, and is widely considered a “martyr of charity”. He is the ninth person recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church to have lived, worked and died in what is now the United States.

In both the Latin Rite and the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church, Damien is venerated as a Saint, one who is holy and worthy of public veneration and invocation. In the Anglican communion, as well as other denominations of Christianity, Damien is considered the spiritual patron for Hansen’s Disease, HIV and AIDS patients, and outcasts. As the patron saint of the Diocese of Honolulu and of Hawaii, Father Damien Day is celebrated statewide on April 15th. Upon his beatification by Pope John Paul II in Rome on June 4, 1995, Blessed Damien was granted a memorial feast day, which is celebrated on May 10th. Father Damien was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on Rosary Sunday, October 11, 2009. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* calls him “The Apostle of the Lepers”, and elsewhere he is known as the “leper priest”.



The Knights of Columbus
Will Be Sponsoring

A

“FISH FRY”

On Friday, March 26th

From 6 Pm- 9 Pm In The School Hall

Come And Enjoy A Complete Meal Consisting Of Fish,
French Fries, Bun, And
Coleslaw, With A Soda, Beer Or Water

\$6.00

You Can Choose To

“Eat In”

Or

“Take Out”

Come And Enjoy A Lenten Meal With Us!

SQUIRES FUNDRAISER

The Squire Circle of Immaculate Conception Church will be holding a fundraiser on Sunday, March 21st & 28th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the entrance of the Church. They will be selling battery operated candles for \$3.00 (batteries included) which will be used during the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, April 3rd.

The Squires will be collecting Easter candy and toys for St. Margaret Mary Church on Sunday, March 21st & 28th in the school hall from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. They will also be collecting slightly used clothing for toddlers up to age 5 for Bridge to Life.



EASTER BASKET BLESSING

Once again this year we will have the blessing of the Easter Baskets in the school auditorium on Holy Saturday, April 3rd, at 11 a.m. We are happy to incorporate this beautiful and solemn ceremony into our Easter rituals.

We ask that you arrive at 10:45 a.m. so that we can begin promptly at 11:00 a.m.

Among the Slavic community the custom of bring an Easter Basket to Church on Easter Sunday is an age old tradition. It stems from the desire of the Christian community to ask God’s blessing on the foods that will break the Great Fast (Lent) and from which they have abstained from during this period. The religious significance attached to the foods eaten is symbolic of Christ Himself, our true Passover. **ALL** parishioners are invited regardless of your ethnic heritage.

SCHOOL NEWS

Each year seventh grade teacher, Mrs. Barbara Sauli, coordinates a Math a thon project to support St. Jude’s Hospital. This year the students of Immaculate Conception school raised \$1,947.15 for cancer research. We thank all of the students and families who participated in this event.

Immaculate Conception School is participating in the annual “Daffodil Days” Campaign for the American Cancer Society. We donated \$800 for this worthy cause.

Mrs. Gallagher’s Second Grade celebrated the 100th Day of School for this school year on Wednesday, February 24, 2010. Each student made a hat decorated with 100 items! Each child also brought in a snack of 100 foods to share and eat in class. The 100th day marks a milestone in students’ hard work and learning.

For an assignment in English Language Arts, Mr. Torre is teaching his 7th and 8th grade students to write Movie Reviews. Each student will review a movie prior to 2002 which won an Academy Award for Best Picture.

Fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Brutman and her students are building a miniature veterinarian house to be raffled off to the school community. Proceeds of this raffle will be given to Holy Union Sister, Sr. Eileen Davey, for her work with the children in Port au Prince, Haiti. Students of Immaculate Conception School have raised \$1,260 for Haiti Relief.

Immaculate Conception Home School Association hosted a delicious Pasta Lunch for faculty and students during Catholic Schools Weeks. In addition to lunch, students were given inspirational bracelets. Students in grades N-4 also went home with balloons! We appreciate all the work that went into making this event possible.

****Our school is still accepting scholarship applications at the office on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday.****

DIOCESAN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Annual Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Celebration will take place on Saturday, April 24th, at Our Lady of Angels Church, located at 7320 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11209. It will begin at 11:00 a.m. **Couples celebrating their 25th, 30th, 40th and 50th anniversary and above** are invited to attend with their families. Registration is \$35 per couple and is due by March 31st. If interested, please contact the rectory at 718-728-1613.