

The Canticle of St. Francis

Published quarterly by St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
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Parish Newsletter: Volume 11, Issue 3

Fall 2006

IMMIGRATION: Pilgrims on a Journey

(Enjoy the photos of our August 8 Immigration Potluck & Discussion.)

The immigration stories told by 45 first, second, third and fourth generation immigrants, from more than a dozen countries, demonstrated the real need for a safe community to talk about our experiences, thoughts and feelings in order to find understanding and healing.

Our neighbors, the strangers, the aliens, and we are moved by our one Divine Origin to expect and to express graceful hospitality in this awesome environment where we find life. But, too often fear and rejection perpetuates our human brokenness. Do we protect our homeland from terrorists by treating all visitors as enemies? Do we offer hospitality to human beings that are traveling away from a homeland seeking a better life?

We enjoyed some of the most delicious homemade foods from a variety of ethnic heritages. We learned from the shared stories, and reflections on the book, [ENRIQUE'S JOURNEY](#), that life in the United States of America, because of the natural wonders and the relatively prosperous economy, is a wonderful opportunity for all people to live, learn, play and work. (Call 821-2121 if you want a copy of the book.)

Our next potluck discussion will be November 7, "Immigrant Pilgrims Give Thanks" for God's blessings of diversity and share more immigration stories at **6PM** in the St. Francis Parish Activities Center. We will *focus on border issues between Mexico and the U.S.A.*

Join us in our parish efforts to respond to the "The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform", organized by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops ... see: www.justiceforimmigrants.org . This thorny and contentious issue of immigration will not easily be solved, but we need educated and experienced voices within the debate. **Please call with any questions:** parishioners Susan Jacobson (332-9985) or Mary Wakefield (973-6113).



Mid-Summer Break with God: Vacation Bible School 2006

Eyes widened and hands popped up at Vacation Bible School, as Naly Odum told how she had stolen barefoot through the Cambodian jungle as a teenager in the late 70s, finally reaching freedom in Thailand.

One child broke the silence. "What was the most unusual thing that happened to you in the jungle?"

Odum wrinkled her nose and laughed. "You cannot imagine - we ate crickets - crunchy crickets."

In the Indonesian booth, children swayed to ear-catching music, as NuNu Lysloff and Oetari Kurniawati mesmerized listeners and gave them images from Javanese Shadow Puppet Theatre.

"Ten Countries in Five Days" was the theme of this year's VBS July 17-21, the week of art fairs in Ann Arbor. At St. Francis the week offered 228 kids a wealth of color, music, art, and internationalism, and as one parent described it, "A chance to take a mid-summer break with God."

Among the fifth-graders, one of my favorite moments was when (*helper*) Andrew played with the kids and tried to answer questions about what was starting to happen between Israel and Hezbollah.

"What can we do?" one child asked. I said, "Pray for world peace," but that didn't seem to cut it with this child. Several days later, a friend came up with a better answer: "Pray! Think how much worse it could be! Not enough people are praying! Pray harder!"



VBS Stats: This summer, 228 children aged preschool through 5th, along with 93 middle school and high school youth and 43 adult volunteers, visited centers organized and presented by volunteers from Germany, Russia, Colombia, Poland, Indonesia, Fiji, the Philippines, Mexico, Cambodia, and India.

Through bible stories and cultural experiences, the children were introduced to the one language of Love taught by Jesus Christ and inclusive of all people. Vacation Bible School for next summer is scheduled for July 16-20, 2007.

For more information on Religious Education programs for children, for sacramental preparation (First Eucharist and Confirmation), or for the Children's Liturgy of the Word, please contact the Religious Education Office at 734-821-2130, or Ellen Ward, DRE (at 734-821-2132 or ward@rc.net).



(The writer, Anne Martino, led the fifth graders and helped in the Mexican center during VBS. Her full article on the VBS week can be found on-line at www.stfrancisa2.com. Click on Vacation Bible School, located on the right under Formation).

The EDGE is about service, fun & the Spirit!



On June 4th, we had a bake sale in the PAC to raise money for the American Cancer Society. Thanks to the generosity of the parishioners, we were able to raise almost \$90.00!! A thank you as well to the youth who helped bake the delicious goodies as well as work at the bake sale. Then, on June 24th, we had 7 youth as well as Kate Zajak, one of the Edge volunteer helpers, come and walk during the Relay for Life at Riverside Park in Ypsilanti to show their support for cancer awareness and the hope for a cure.

On July 26th, 25 youth decided to add some thrills to the summer by going to Cedar Point. It was a wonderful day with lots of great sunny weather. A thank you to the chaperones who came to help out for the day. If not for the giving of their time, we would not have been able to go on our trip!!

The Edge Middle School Group has many great activities planned for the Fall including:

- ⇒ **The EDGE Mondays** 3:30-5PM (Sept. 18 & 25, Oct. 2, 9 ... watch the Forum for dates)
- ⇒ **Movie and Pizza Night** (Sept. 16th)
- ⇒ **Fun Night** (Oct. 21st)
- ⇒ **Fall Chore Day** in November



CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY

Please read the Forum for more information on these and other great events and activities planned! **The EDGE** events are open to **all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders!!**

For more information on **The Edge**, please contact Victoria Emch (at 821-2133 or emch@stfrancisa2.org).



All Young Adults – *single or married had* Summer News:

St. Francis ya²acht club Young Adult Catholics in their 20s-30s



Camping Adventure:

Over the summer the Ya²acht Club was busy roughing it in the woods, braving a day canoeing on the Au Sable river, and enjoying the breakfast of champions—s'mores.

In July, a group of young adults journeyed north for a weekend of mild adventure, hot weather, canoeing and some quality camp fire time. The weekend was a hit and plans are in the works for a comparable trip next summer.

“Theology on Tap”

When we weren't braving the woods, the Ya²acht Club was hosting the summer series of Theology on Tap. We had four successful weeks on topics ranging from creation and evolution, to the end times and the apocalypse. In between we managed to also cover immigration and our personal faith stories.



Thank You!



Dear St. Francis Church Members,

“Our children & staff were delighted to enjoy the visit from the, more than a dozen, **St. Francis Parish Senior Citizens** this summer. And, words can not adequately express our gratitude to the members of St. Francis of Assisi Parish for the \$2,667.00 gift from the special collection. Your support will help our pastoral ministry program so our youth can continue to receive spiritual counseling. Also, your assistance will bring us closer to the Kresge Foundation Challenge Grant by December.”

Brother Francis
Holy Cross Children's Services (Boysville),
Clinton, Michigan



Thanks for the FOOD DRIVE!!!

On the afternoon of June 25th, a diverse and spirited group of about 20 St. Francis parishioners traveled to Flint to deliver the groceries and personal care items donated by the generous people of St. Francis. The donations were delivered to an operation called the North End Soup Kitchen (NESK).

The NESK, also known as The Fr. John Blasko Center, is one of the programs run by Catholic Charities of Shiawassee and Genesee Counties (see <http://www.catholiccharitiessg.org> for further details). Every day of the year, this facility serves one hot meal (lunch) free of charge to the homeless, hungry, and/or poor people of the community in which it is located. Jon Manse (see photo above), the coordinator of the facility, stated that the meal served at the NESK is typically the only meal a lot of them eat on any given day. The meals served at the NESK are prepared by a staff of volunteers. The NESK has been in operation since 1940.

As a parish family, we donated almost \$4000 worth of food and personal care items: 1005 personal care items valued at \$2134 and 1610 food items valued at \$1850. The food items will be used to prepare meals, and the personal care items are handed-out on an as-needed, case-by-case basis. This donation meant a lot to the operation at the NESK. It really helped

to replenish the NESK pantry. On behalf of the NESK Jon Manse thanks the people of St. Francis for this generous donation! Thanks also to the 7th graders and the Confirmation candidates who helped with stapling lists to the grocery bags and passing out the bags at the masses.

The NESK was gracious enough to serve us lunch. The meal consisted of baked chicken, steamed carrots, mashed potatoes and gravy, and a donut. While it was probably not the tastiest meal most of us have ever had, it was certainly quite good.



To obtain a lot of the food supplies needed to run the NESK, Jon runs his own small version of Food Gatherers. He has one van that runs around Flint gathering food from restaurants and grocery stores that would otherwise be thrown away. It was good to hear how some food delivery truck drivers would go out of their way to save food instead of taking the easier option of simply throwing it away. On the other hand, Jon commented how some stores and delivery truck drivers flatly refused to donate their unwanted food; they rather just throw it way!

Again, thanks to everyone who helped make this a very successful food drive! The generous donation of your money and/or time is greatly appreciated! We plan to support the NESK again next summer.

Thanks to these grocery stores for donating the empty bags: Busch's Valu Land, Green Rd. - 400 bags; Whole Foods Market, Washtenaw Ave. - 400 bags; Hiller's Market, Washtenaw Ave. - 200 bags. **Thanks to** all of you that went shopping, and special thanks to our volunteer coordinators of this drive.



MIGRANT Ministry

This summer has taken the Migrant Ministry into a new direction. In addition to the blankets, sheets, towels and laundry donations, we've added a children's lending library/story hour, thanks to the Vacation Bible School children's donations. The migrant kids benefit from hearing and reading the stories they enjoy to encourage literacy. The stories also develop an information and experience base that middle class children from St. Francis have in classic children's stories.

We take for granted the privileges our children have from our bedtime stories of "Little Bear", or "The Very Hungry Caterpillar", or even well-known fairy tales. These stories make up a very important deposit of knowledge that contributes to success in school. The migrant children normally would not have such a knowledge base and would not necessarily know references to basic fairy tales or classics that our children often know well.

The donations are blessing the migrant children by helping to level their "playing field" in the academic arena. Meanwhile, the migrant kids are enjoying the process of

sharing stories, playing games, practicing their reading skills, and having fun.



Our Parish volunteers, lead by the good work of parishioner, Hilary Givens, have enjoyed showing hospitality to and learning about life as migrant workers, from the migrant families who come to work late May through late October at the DuRussel Potato Farm in Manchester, Michigan. This past July, we collected lots & lots of laundry, and bedding items, and

children's books (nearly 1000 books) from parishioners at St. Francis weekend masses, and from students at Vacation Bible School. We are organizing a lending library at the camp and we continue to have a book reading time with the children



Lending Library trailer

every Saturday afternoon. Thanks for the donations, the migrant families really appreciate your generosity. To volunteer or for more details contact: Hilary (734-474-5188 or hilarygivens@yahoo.com).

Visit: www.stfrancisa2.com/socialministry/migrant.htm



Business Manager's Report to the Parish

Summertime is a time of relaxation and travel for many people, but here at St. Francis it is the two months of the year when larger projects can be undertaken in addition to regular cleaning, painting, and waxing of floors. Such projects are driven both by necessity and by financial resources, and this year we were unable to do everything that we would have liked, due to somewhat limited funds. However, we were able to accomplish a number of things. Most significant would be the replacement of the old, stained, and torn carpet in the School Library with a new cork tile floor, which should last us for many, many years (the cork floor in the U-M Law Library is 75 years old now, and still looks good). At the same time, our School Athletic Department contracted for the refinishing of the floor in the School Gym, so students and others who use that facility will be able to enjoy a nice, new surface this fall.

A significant project which occurred “behind the scenes” was the replacement of a program for the controls on one of the Church’s two air conditioning systems. For almost three weeks in July, one of the units was not able to respond to the time clock’s directions to turn on or turn off, and the unit had to be operated manually. Thankfully, the new program solved that problem. Also in the Church, a new Power-Flush toilet was installed in the restroom off the Gathering Space to eliminate clogging problems.

The scrawny hedges along the fence lines on East Stadium Boulevard and St. Francis Drive were removed in July, primarily to address safety concerns of the School, and following their removal, the fence was completely repainted in those areas. Concrete parking blocks in the Rectory Parking Lot, which had

deteriorated over the years due to salt and water, were also replaced, and the parking lots re-lined where needed. We also expect shortly to complete an upgrade of the heating and air conditioning system in the Church Nursery, and to replace the Rectory garage doors which have also been extensively damaged over the years by salt and water. Replacement of windows and doors in the “Fishbowl” area of the School (the area outside the Religious Education Office), and some cosmetic improvements in the School are also on the agenda for this fall and winter.

During the past fiscal year, we began setting aside funds to be used for some large-ticket items, including the replacement of our back-up hot water boiler (servicing the Church and the Gr. 4-8 school building) and the eventual replacement of our largest non-Church roofs (the PAC, the Middle School, and the Gym, likely in that order). We expect to continue to do that in fiscal year 2006-07, and perhaps begin some of the roof work next summer. In the near future we will also have to deal with remedial work on our parking lots and the Bell Tower. School Development efforts will assist in funding the planned replacement of remaining non-insulated windows and doors in various entrance areas to the School, and it is hoped that grant funding will be obtained which would enable us to proceed with restroom upgrades in the School.

We appreciate your continuing support of the Parish, and, as always, please feel free to call or e-mail me should you have any questions or comments.

Dave Barera, Parish Business Manager
dsbarera@catholicWeb.com or call 734.821.2111

Dream Car Raised Funds for School Children

The annual St. Francis School car raffle ended successfully on Wednesday, June 7th with \$81,305 raised! **Ken Butman** of **Gene Butman Ford** donated a 2006 black Mustang convertible valued at more than \$30,000 to the cause. Over 27,000 tickets were purchased by enthusiastic people in the community to help provide students in kindergarten through eighth grade with important school necessities. This year's proceeds will assist in the purchase of new language arts materials, a tarp for the gym floor, and insulated windows and doors in the school's main entrance. They will also facilitate a teacher conference in the fall.

Since the first car raffle, the renewed commitment of Ken Butman of Gene Butman Ford has helped St. Francis School raise over \$600,000 in total. As recently retired Principal **Mrs. Linda Miller**, said, *"Mr. Butman's generosity has had a profound impact on the fabric of St. Francis School. His commitment to Catholic education is exemplary. Through his outstanding example, he encourages others in the Catholic community to assume philanthropic leadership roles."*

Four lucky winners celebrated their good fortune following the announcement of car raffle prizes during the St. Francis School **Ice Cream Social**. They included **Karen McDermott** of Garden City (2006 Ford Mustang); **David Mente** of Ypsilanti (\$1,000); **Kathleen McDonald** of Ypsilanti (\$500); and **Michael Gibson** of Ann Arbor (\$250.) **Julia Peck**, a first grade student at St. Francis School, sold the Mustang winning ticket.

Patrice Deutschmann (pictured above), car raffle chairperson, led the event to a successful victory. Mrs. Deutschmann is a St. Francis School parent with children in third and fifth grades. As she said, *"Tuition does not completely cover the costs to educate each child at St. Francis School, so the car raffle helps generate resources*



for essential needs. I'm grateful to the school, parish and local community for supporting this fun activity whole heartedly."

Over the years, the learning environment at St. Francis School has improved significantly as a result of car raffle proceeds. They have provided resources for student desks and chairs, media center and classroom computers, air conditioning units, lighting upgrades, windows and flooring, as well as outdoor educational programs (5th grade Storer Camp and 7th grade School Ship Trip) and teacher salaries, which St. Francis Parish is proud to report are the best in the Diocese for a K-8 school. With ongoing support from the community, St. Francis School is able to provide students with a thriving educational experience.

Katrina Solidarity Group *Continuing our New Orleans Connection*

St. Paul the Apostle Church Rededication Service

July 22, 2006 was attended by St. Francis parishioners, Debbie Melican and Ann Moln.



The church was packed. Parishioners had come from near and far to attend the re-dedication of

St. Paul the Apostle Church this past July 22nd. After the service, a plentiful buffet was served and this provided a social time for folks to mingle and to talk...and for me to listen to their stories.



One woman, a foster mother of several teen-agers, said that she was baptized and married in this church...she remains an active member as she struggles to rebuild her life in the Upper Ninth Ward. Another member lives in an apartment while her home is being rebuilt but shakes her head as she questions if its worth it...at each step of progress in the rebuilding, looters come to steal & destroy. A teacher with 25 years of experience working with special ed. kids may go back to work. She, and 7,000+ teachers lost their jobs after Katrina, but now must re-apply, be interviewed and maybe get a job. Meanwhile, she & her husband live in a FEMA trailer on their son's property. Several nuns tell me that they are also living in FEMA trailers and their lives are on hold; their mother house near St. Paul's was destroyed and the elderly they cared for in an adjacent facility are gone. One couple was away during the hurricane and their home sustained little damage...they feel guilty.

Lots of people are waiting to see what the next hurricane season brings before they spend their time and money to rebuild. It's hard to know. But it is easy to see that while Katrina may have done damage to the physical St. Paul's, it did not dampen the strength and faith of the soul(s) of St. Paul's.

Photos below were taken at St. Paul's rededication.

The ladies and gents in black robes with colorful sashes are choir members; the children in white with colorful sashes took part in the service with dancing.



Our next meeting will be **Friday, September 22** at 7PM in the School Library. Questions, contact: Debbie Melican (734-222-6322) dmelican@umich.edu or Scott Wright (821-2121) swright@rc.net . Visit: www.stfrancisa2.com/goingsouth/

Tile Drive Total Contributions were: \$33,521.33 .
Thank you St. Francis of Assisi, Ann Arbor
for rebuilding the faith in New Orleans
at St. Paul the Apostle Parish with a new tile floor.

Creation, Passover, Exile: And the Modern Christian???



Fr. James Conlon, back by overwhelming demand presented a three-part evening Scripture Study on August 9, 16 and 23 in the PAC. His topics, focusing on the Hebrew Scriptures, were titled "Three Topics from the Old Testament: Creation, Passover and Exile, and what they mean to the modern Christian."

Over 40 people attended this Adult Education program each evening. If you are interested in reading the notes and hand-outs for these three nights, as well as many other previous Scripture presentations, they are available in the Parish Library.

Our next Adult Formation program will be on "Catholic Social Teaching in Daily Life". It will be in October, please watch the weekly Forum for dates and times.

Exploring the Catholic way of life . . .



During the past three summer months, a group of 12-15 adults have been meeting to explore our faith, ask questions and share their personal stories with each other. These individuals are interested in becoming Catholics and would appreciate the prayers of the entire St. Francis of Assisi faith community. We will all celebrate with them, their reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil 2007.

**Are you interested in becoming a Catholic?
It's never too late!**

The formal RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) program begins in September with unique programs for Adults, Teens, and for Children.

We ask the entire parish to pray and invite those you know who have expressed an interest in learning about our faith. For dates and times of all these RCIA programs, please contact Deacon Michael Sullivan at 821-2122 or <msullivan@stfrancisa2.org>.



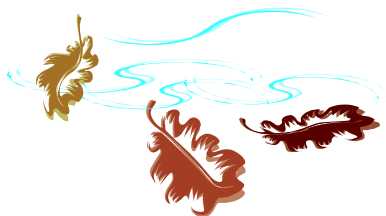
High School YOUTH

Summer sun and relaxation are usually the order of business for teens. However, this summer the teens from St. Francis managed to find quite a few things to keep busy. In June, we made our annual trip to **Cedar Point** where everyone enjoyed all the roller coasters and junk food. Even a summer shower early in the evening could not dampen our fun.



Throughout June and July the teens continued to meet for **Frank's Place** - our Wednesday night Bible studies. Some reflection and some fun were the focus of each night. August was a bit more peaceful, but it was also a time to start getting ready for the new school year and planning the Fall Retreat for the weekend of October 20-22.

Come & check out **Sunday Night Youth Group** @ 7-9 PM in the PAC (almost every week). For more info or to get on our mailing list please contact Jennifer Delvaux (821-2126 or jen@stfrancisA2.org) .



**Preach the Gospel always,
and when necessary use words.**

St Francis of Assisi