



Y.E.S. – Parish Middle School Youth Ministry Celebrates A Great Year

Wow! We've had a pretty busy year. Look what we've been doing:

- ☺ Six new middle school students were trained as lectors and proclaimed the Word of God at over ten Sunday Masses.
- ☺ Numerous students were trained as ushers for the Sunday liturgies and now serve regularly.
- ☺ Over thirty students learned about teamwork at the Ropes Course in August.
- ☺ More than forty students learned about building up the Body of Christ at the Body Building Event for middle schoolers in the fall.
- ☺ Almost one hundred youth participated in the World Youth Day celebrations.

- ☺ About forty students demonstrated the spirit of giving at the Work of Human Hands Christmas Bazaar.
- ☺ Over a dozen students hosted a Mardi Gras party for the Children's Catechumenate.
- ☺ Twenty-four students attended the Diocesan Middle School Youth Rally in Jackson.
- ☺ Almost one hundred middle school students and their parents attended the Parent & Youth Workshops on Chastity.

Stay tuned for even more great activities! Questions?

Contact Jill Diroff at 821-2133 or
jdiroff@CatholicWeb.com



St. Francis of Assisi School News

Middle School Students Study The Environment & Their Call To Ecological Stewardship

The goal of the IMEP (Integrated Michigan Environmental Program) is to help our students view themselves as stewards of the Earth with St. Francis of Assisi as a role model. Working both as a member of a team and individually, students will explore an integrated unit on the environment of Michigan and its relationship to its people, past, present and future.

Here is a general overview of the program:

- Students are divided into 4 teams.
- Teams consist of students from all four homerooms.
- Throughout the year students study various topics pertaining to Michigan and our role as stewards.
- Some of the areas of study are ecology, history, language arts and religion.

The acquisition of all of the background knowledge has brought the students to the final phase of this year's program — the building of their own Schoolyard Habitat which will be sanctioned by the National Wildlife Federation. It is the students' desire to recreate Michigan as it used to be. The habitat will feature plants, grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees which are native to southeast Michigan. On April 22, Earth Day, a prayer service was held to bless the habitat. The entire school came outside to participate in the event led by Fr. Jim. The next day seventeen arborvitae were planted, one by each class. A white pine, the state tree, has also been planted by the eighth grade leadership students and the eighth graders from our sister parish, St. Benedict. A grant from the Pfizer Corporation will enable us to add a permanent weather station and many other exciting lessons for the remainder of the school year. The intent is for this program to be ongoing throughout the school, from kindergarten through eighth grade for many years to come.



Reflections on SVDP at St. Francis



St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) at St. Francis has done a lot of growing and re-shaping in the last year. We have identified ourselves as an active conference to both the Council in Lansing and our counterpart in town, SVDP at St. Thomas. We started small with projects like making lunches for Holy Family Ministries. Then grew in our scope and participation and facilitated the parish to volunteer to serve the hungry at a local soup kitchen during Lent. Our biggest accomplishment has been the start-up of a car donation program. This allows us to do home visits and ask the parish to assist us in providing vehicles to members of our community in need. SVDP at St. Francis continues to grow in membership and prayer and most importantly in our ability to serve those in need, person-to-person.

Come Serve the Poor with Us!

Contact: Amy McCall (487-9895) or Chris Kempton (623-9845 or email <chris@kempton.com>) **Visit us on the**

Web at:

stfrancisa2.com/socialministry/stvincentdepaul.htm

St. Vincent de Paul Fund: How is Money Spent?

Here is one example.

Dear Fr. Jim,

My heartfelt thanks to you, Fr. Jim, and to Mr. Scott Wright of your Social Ministry Office for the generous donation of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) from the St. Vincent DePaul Society of St. Francis Church to the "Lithuanian Project" through Hope Medical Clinic International.

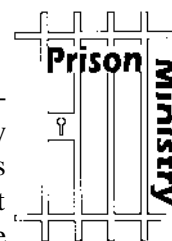
I am the physically-disabled Lithuanian girl you have helped. Thanks to your care and financial assistance, my dream of walking free of pain is actually becoming a reality.

At present, I am successfully recovering from the first "total hip replacement" operation performed February 21st at the University of Michigan Hospital. My second surgery is scheduled during the month of May. I look forward to the wonderful day when I can take my first firm and painless steps.

My most sincere appreciation to you, Fr. Jim and to all at St. Francis for your kind support. Please be assured of my prayers. May God bless and reward you all!

Gratefully, Daiva Sidiskyte

Catholics in Jail



At the Washtenaw County Jail, twenty-one inmates and Sheriff Daniel Minzey joined Bishop Mengeling for the first Mass ever celebrated at the jail. After that first Mass on Saturday morning March 23, the bishop blessed, distributed holy cards of St. Francis of Assisi to the inmates and talked with them.

Now, Catholics from St. Francis & other Catholic parishes, visit the jail every Saturday. Also, 15 priests from the Washtenaw vicariate have signed up to come and say Mass at the jail on a rotating basis.

Some of the inmates are Catholic, and many are not Catholic, but most are very interested in the Church and want to learn more about it.

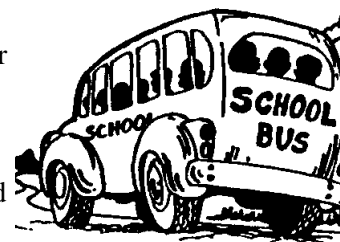
The Catholic Services including: "Liturgy of the Word" and "Faith Sharing" are held every Saturday morning & Catholic Mass is celebrated at least one Saturday every month.

You are welcome to join us in this very healing ministry. Contact: Deacon Edwin Novak (944-1660). He is the

Resident Catholic chaplain at the Washtenaw County Jail, appointed by The Most Reverend Carl Mengeling, Bishop of Lansing. Or, contact: Scott Wright (734-821-2121) <swright@rc.net>

A BUS of Food went to St. Benedict!

On Sunday, June 9 St. Francis Parish provided about 800 grocery bags (of non-perishable food items) for the poor at our twin sister parish, St. Benedict Church in Highland Park, and their ministry called "Wellness House" which, provides food and housing for people with HIV and AIDS.



Parishioners were involved by donating the non-perishable food and by delivering it to St. Benedict Church. A bus and many other vans and mini-vans were in our delivery caravan group. And, we stayed for lunch after the St. Benedict 10:45AM Mass. This was a wonderful way to build our relationship in solidarity with our sisters and brothers, the working poor.

Social Ministries – (continued on p.7)

Social Ministries at St. Francis

St. Francis Hosts Retreat for St. Benedict's Students (Our Sister Parish)

On April 29th, the eighth grade students from our sister parish in Highland Park spent the day at St. Francis. The youth from St. Benedict's school came for a retreat on Building Relationships. Everything about the day, from activities to lunch, revolved around developing relationships with one another and with God.

The day began with ice breakers and hospitality and was followed by an opening prayer service on faith, hope, and love presented by the students from St. Benedict's school. Afterwards they participated in an activity entitled "Our True Colors: Shades of God." During this activity students identified some of the strengths of their particular personality-type and discussed how to recognize and appreciate the gifts that others possess.

Lunchtime itself was a time of learning as students were given various handicaps they needed to overcome. Everyone at a table had to work together to com-

pensate for one another's weaknesses. Their goal was to make sure everyone was able to get enough to eat. The students quickly learned they could not do it alone—they needed one another.

One of the highlights of the retreat involved planting a white pine tree in the St. Francis Habitat. The evergreen tree was planted as a year-round reminder of the relationship developing between the people of St. Francis and the people of St. Benedict's parish.

In the afternoon there was a talk in the church about the San Damiano cross and the retreat ended with a prayer service for unity.



Everyone agreed that the day was a tremendous success. "I had a lot of fun," said Aleisha a student at St. Benedict's school. "You showed us a wonderful time," Re'Chardia wrote.

"I hope this is just the beginning," commented Tom McGuire, the religion teacher from St. Benedict.

Social Ministries – (continued from p.6)

Sustainable Garden Project

We support the hungry at Perry Nursery School with the produce from the vegetable garden located in front of the St. Francis Rectory (on Winchell Street). **Perry Nursery School** provides high quality, affordable childcare, education and support services to single parent families in Washtenaw County. Perry Nursery parents, 97% of whom are low-income, are working and/or going to school, are assisted through this affordable child-education to become and/or remain working, contributing, and self-sufficient members of our community in Washtenaw County. These parents pay Perry Nursery School on a sliding scale in addition to receiving a tuition scholarship.

Perry Nursery receives funding from: Washtenaw County United Way, Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Family Independence Agency, parent tuition, grants and donations.

"Research proves that high quality early childhood

programs for low-income children are a good investment. Taxpayers save \$7.00 for every \$1.00 spent." (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation)

Call Perry Nursery School (677-8130) and learn more about way that you can help with this wonderful program. Or, visit the school at: 3770 Packard, Ann Arbor 48108.



Work on our Sustainable Garden Project, and, support the Perry Nursery School parents! Contact: Grace Potts 276-4182. **Sign-up on the Web!** Visit:

stfrancisa2.com/socialministry/garden.htm

Tax Assistance "Thanks!"

"Thank you to Dick Miller and his associates for the tax help they provided during tax season. As for me, I would never have completed mine this year due to additional health complications. So thanks to you again. I'm an impressed non- member [non-Catholic]." Charlotte King

Since my last report to you in November of 2001, a number of capital projects have been undertaken or completed, although at a reduced pace from prior years in anticipation of the relatively larger Church renovation project. We recently signed a contract for the renovation work, and the contractor is currently awaiting issuance of the appropriate permits from the City of Ann Arbor in order to begin. We expect construction activity to begin in late May, with the bulk of the construction work completed during the summer. Electrical and mechanical work will likely occur in the fall. Please watch *The Forum* weekly for updates on this project.

The West Parking Lot project was finally completed in January, with the installation of protective grates on the inlets to the original detention pond and the securing of grates on both outlet structures. Under our contract, bushes and trees which did not survive one year are to be replaced by the landscape contractor at no cost to us, which will number several, and that is anticipated to take place in May.

In the Church, a motorized overhead lift was installed on one of the roof support beams in order to suspend the Advent wreath over the center aisle of the Church. Those of you who were here during the Advent and Christmas seasons last year remember just how exciting that location proved to be.

You may recall from my last report that the installation of new playground equipment on the K-1 playground last August resulted in damage to our existing drain from that playground. In September, we contracted for the repair work, which was finally done in December, making the playground usable again; at the same time, the contractor addressed a standing water problem along the north side of the School Music Room (the original Church). In April, the roof of the School Music and Art Rooms was replaced, in accordance with a roof repair and maintenance plan that we have been operating under for several years, and new gutters and downspouts were added to match those on the east side of the School. New vertical blinds were also added to the Music and Art Rooms earlier in the year to replace older horizontal blinds which were beginning to fall apart. These will improve the ability to view videotapes or slides in those classrooms during the day or evening before darkness falls.

Finally, new automatic fire doors were installed at the foot of both K-1 stairwells, which will allow those doors to be propped open during the school day for better ventilation, but which will close automatically upon the triggering of the fire alarm (just as we presently have in the Middle School and 4th/5th grade hallways). As a further improvement to those stairwells, new lighting was installed in each.

As to what is on the agenda in the future, some of the things we are currently working on include replacement HVAC systems for the PAC and the Music/Art Rooms in the School; improved

Business Manager's Report To The Parish

lighting in the Middle School; improved windows in several locations throughout the School, including grade 4-8 classrooms and the Gym; repair of the Bell Tower; replacement of the Music Room carpet; and waterproofing of the elevator pit in the School. As we have said in the past, several of our facilities here are nearing 50 years of age, and upkeep was not always done as it should have been.

We continue to attempt, within the constraints of our financial capability, to do what we can to improve the facilities used by all, as rapidly as we can. If we have not upgraded a facility that you think needs upgrading, please give me a call; perhaps it's on our list, which I'll be happy to tell you, but perhaps we're not aware of it, in which case your call would be especially helpful.

Something of which we can all be proud is another "Waste Knot" award, this one for 2002, which was received earlier in May by the Parish and the School from Washtenaw County. That bright green dumpster behind the PAC has accumulated many tons of cardboard and paper products in the three years we have had it, and we appreciate the continuing efforts of those involved in events at the Parish and School to recycle paper products there whenever possible. We have also become more active in recycling compostables, wood pallets, laser printer cartridges, and many other products.

The Parish Financial Report for the fiscal year about to end (June 30, 2002) will be prepared in July and distributed to parishioners in August. At this point in the fiscal year, we are "on budget" on the whole, with the usual positive and negative variances among individual account categories. To summarize briefly, we have sufficient funds to maintain the operations of the Parish and to pay down our debt to the Diocese of Lansing, but we lack the capacity to fund at once the many capital improvements necessary to bring our facilities up to where they should be. As a result, our Finance Council works with me to prioritize our needs so that those which are most critical get addressed first. While this approach is sometimes frustrating, I am confident that you will agree with me that many of our needs have been addressed over the past five years. I have heard from many parishioners over the past year or two, that never have our facilities looked as good as they do now. We intend to continue this in the future.

Again, thank you for your continuing support. With the Church renovation about to commence, thank you in advance for your patience, which I am sure may be sorely taxed before we finish. Suggestions, comments, or questions about any subject are always welcome. I can be reached at dsbarera@catholicWeb.com or 821-2111.

Dave Barera
Parish Business Manager

Is stockpiling wealth good stewardship?

A dilemma that often occurs for me when I take the meaning of stewardship to its deepest level is this: Is stockpiling wealth good stewardship?

Of course it all depends on what we mean by stockpiling. God gives us clear direction about saving and giving gifts. The laws found in the Old Testament describe offerings to God as either a holocaust where meat is given at the altar in thankfulness and praise, or as atonement where one brings God the gift because of an infringement to another human or to God's laws. These infringements include actions that we are all familiar with: lying, cheating, unfaithfulness to God, gossiping, bragging, hoarding, selfishness, etc.

And yet God also created many laws that would assure the wealth of Israel would be shared with all people. There are laws that discuss debt-forgiveness. We are to forgive debts of the poor every seven years and offer universal debt-forgiveness every fifty years. The Bible listed specific rules about harvesting, so the poor could also glean food. (In Ann Arbor, we have food gatherers who are essentially living by this law.)

With this in mind, stockpiling great amounts of anything does not seem to fit into God's plan for healthy and functional communities. However, there is a time when stockpiling wealth does serve a greater good. Certainly, Joseph helped Egypt understand the need to save grain for the

future. He interpreted Pharaoh's dream, so they would understand that seven abundant years would be followed by famine. Knowing this, they built granaries all over the country so all would be fed during the sparse times.

Today, we too try to plan for the future by creating trust funds. Here at St. Francis, our Educational Trust Fund has proven to serve as a great *stewardship-concept*. Fifteen years ago, over \$500,000 was pledged to assure the future of Catholic education. The funds were invested with the Diocese of Lansing, and each year the interest income is distributed. Over \$340,000 has been paid out, while the balance in the fund today is around \$700,000.

This year, we have begun a conscious effort to expand this fund because we see how foresight helps our future. We can make a difference in children's lives through Catholic education. For the families attending St. Francis School in the future, it will be essential to offer affordable tuition for all that choose to attend our school. If you'd like more information about how we plan to expand the Educational Trust Fund, please call Kathy Barrett at 821-2208.



Thank You "Christmas in April" participants!



On behalf of the "Christmas in April" Team Leaders and the Beebe Family I wish to thank all who contributed to our successful one-day home rehabilitation project! Your generosity will be remembered by the receiving family for years to come - well done everyone!

Parish participants: Lisa Broeren, Chris Bunto, Mark & Mike DiCarlo, Margaret Falahee, Chris Hetter, Eduardo Icaza, Mary Keeley, Robert Klingler, Tom Mussio, Dawn Penney, Kevin Schnell, Hendrik & Nathan Schuur, and Victor Wakefield.



Again, thank you all so much - May God bless you abundantly! Sincerely, Marty Rhein

Mothers & Daughters
Honor Mary



***With a Rosary Prayer Service
& Pot Luck Supper***

It's All About the "Yes"

On Monday, May 6th, about fifty mothers and daughters gathered to pray the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, to share a meal and to honor Mary and the part she plays in the story of our salvation. In his reflection after the rosary, Father Jim recalled the first Joyful Mystery, the Annunciation. He talked about Mary's "yes" and its importance. He related that "yes" to the one we each are called to make to lives of fidelity in the day-to-day. Just as with Mary, Christ is our center and source of our strength. In May we especially celebrate Mary's faithfulness and draw upon the willingness she had to respond to all that God asked of her. She is truly the model for all of us.

Mary was the first Christian; the first person who said "yes" to accepting Jesus into her life. When Catholics pray the Rosary, they praise Mary and at the same time recall the main events of Jesus' life. These moments are called "mysteries." Mysteries are the things Jesus did to bring freedom to the world. In this way Catholics recognize Jesus as the center of Mary's life and their own. It is Jesus who is the source of all the greatness Mary has.

To Our Bishop

From St. Francis of Assisi Pastoral Council

After much prayer, thought, discussion, and deliberation, our Pastoral Council sent the following letter concerning clergy sex abuse to our Bishop, Carl Mengeling.

As you can see from the letter, it is not written with recrimination, but to urge our bishops to develop and implement a clear national policy regarding sexual abuse of our children.

We think it is important that all parishioners have an opportunity to read this letter.

Fr. Jim McDougall
Pastor



May 13, 2002

Bishop Carl Mengeling
Diocese of Lansing
300 Ottawa
Lansing, MI 48933



Dear Bishop Mengeling,

It is with a heavy heart, that the Pastoral Council is writing this letter on behalf of the members of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan and the words do not come easily. As a community, we will not tolerate the sexual abuse of our children or the cover up of this behavior by the very people we hold up as moral standards.

We the people of St. Francis will not remain silent on the subject of the terrible sins committed by members of the clergy. We support the need for very clear, national policy from the Church on the subject of sexual behavior and the strict enforcement of this policy in the future.

At the same time, we would like to demonstrate our support for the many good people in the Catholic Community and our recognition that we too are the Body of Christ and the Church. None of us are safe from the force of evil in our lives and we must keep each other strong so that we are able to resist temptation in whatever form it is presented to us. We choose to support each other with unconditional love through the Eucharist and empowered by the Holy Spirit. During these difficult times, we demonstrate our choice for this life through our individual and group behavior and we are what the world knows as The Catholic Church.

Our prayers are with those who must live with the wrongs inflicted on them. Our prayers are with those who must have the courage and strength to do what is right. We pray that our lives will be a reflection of the faith that we profess and our parish namesake instructs to "preach the gospel always and when necessary use words."

Sincerely,

Fr. Jim McDougall, Pastor

*Jeff Lassaline, Pastoral Council
Chairperson*

High School Teens...

Hey, if you haven't checked out our Life Teen Youth Group yet, this is what you're missin'...

Since the beginning of the New Year, we've gone Skating at Buhr Park, had a Super Bowl Party, Fat Tuesday Pizza Night, Open Gym Nights, 14-Hour Food-Fast Lock-In, Sacraments Discussion Nights, Movie Night Out, Youth Seder Meal, Hot Topic Nights, Ask-a-Priest-Night, Earth Day & Christmas in April Service Projects, Frank's Place (every Wednesday night), and a Putt-Putt Golf outing! **And that's just the events up through May! Just wait until you see what we have in store for the rest of the year!** For instance, last summer we went on a great week-long **Summer Work Camp & White-water rafting trip** in Pittsburgh, PA. Well, this summer is going to be just as special – a **Summer Camping & Service Trip** is in the works, so stay tuned or just go ahead and get involved now!

Our Youth Group also has an awesome **LIFE TEEN Rock Band** for our new **LIFE TEEN 5pm Mass** where teens sit together with their friends and/or families and celebrate the Liturgy in a totally awesome way! Oh yeah, we've got some pretty cool **young adult & teen leaders that join us too. All high school youth are WELCOME!**

For more information on getting involved with the **LIFE TEEN High School Youth Group** at St. Francis – either as youth or an adult leader, please contact Marty Rhein at mrhein@rc.net, (734) 821-2126.

Special Tour Presentation Sunday, June 9th after the 10:30am Mass in the PAC!

You're Invited To Travel To

IRELAND
 With St. Francis of Assisi Parish

When: October 21 – 30, 2002

Cost: \$1,499.00 per person (based on double occupancy)

What is included: Roundtrip flight from Detroit to Dublin, return from Shannon to Detroit.

- * 8 nights lodging in convenient and comfortable 3 STAR properties.
- * 7 dinners, 1 lunch, and ALL of your breakfasts are included.
- * Local Irish tour guide accompanies your entire stay on the island.
- * All taxes (except international air taxes) and meal gratuities are covered.
- * Tours every day with additional optional excursions available.
- * Optional Irish Banquet & Show at Taylor's Three Rock (\$48 per person). And optional 1-night accommodations at the 5-STAR Adare (castle-like) Manor (\$170 per person).

For more info contact trip escort: Marty Rhein at (734) 821-2126 or mrhein@rc.net.

Anchors Away!

My brothers and Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been four years now since I joined you here at St. Francis of Assisi. I was ordained in June of 1998, and this has been my first assignment as a new priest. However, it is now time for me to say good-bye and move on to where the Holy Spirit calls me.

After much prayer and prompting by the Holy Spirit, I approached the bishop back in October and he gave me permission to join the US Navy as an active service chaplain. I will be leaving the parish in late June. Wednesday the 26th will be my last day of official service to you.

I have very much enjoyed my time here; I have learned a great deal about what service is, how to do it according to your needs and our Father's will. You are the first parish to act in molding me as a priest and I will be forever grateful to you for your generosity in being such a positive force in my ongoing formation. Thank you!

I will keep you in my prayers and I ask that you pray for me, and our brothers and sisters in the service who labor with their lives on our behalf. God bless you.

– Fr. Jay Kersten, Lt., USN