

The Canticle of St. Francis

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Parish Newsletter: Volume 8, Issue 1

Spring 2003

Families Working Together

*Results in a book to pray the
Family Stations of the Cross
March 21 & April 11*

The St. Francis Family Religious Education program takes place about two Sundays per month. Families gather after the 8:45 mass ~ coffee, juice, doughnuts and bagels in hand ~ to pray, learn and work on projects related to the topic of the day. On February 9th, about 45 families were involved in the process of looking at the world and seeing where Christ is still walking the way to Calvary - through the suffering that is being experienced by people in today's circumstances. Each family took one station and wrote a reflection and a related prayer to Jesus.



The final copy of the prayer book combines the work of two or three families for a particular station. The parish staff will put the finishing touches on the booklet which will be used this Lent to pray the

**Stations of the Cross for Families
Fridays, March 21 and April 11**

at 7 p.m. in the church. Students from St. Francis School will design Stations that will be used by the people gathered, to "walk with Christ" as they pray. Children of the parish will be involved in reading the reflections at each station.

Do you know someone who may want to return to the Church?

*Have you drifted away?
Do you yearn to reconnect?*

We often hear that, "You never can go home again," because it is bound to be a disappointment. That is not so with the Catholic Church. No matter how long a person has been away, they can always come home. The longing that people feel is God trying to draw them back to himself. But God never forces. God only invites. Whether or not a person returns to the Faith is a decision only that person can make.

St. Francis Parish wants to invite those who have felt that yearning to a special gathering. At our gathering, one of our priests and a staff member will welcome people. Plus, a couple of our parishioners who have returned to the church will share their story. Then we'll listen to questions and concerns. The priests and pastoral staff of St. Francis will invite those present to meet with one of them at a later date...to talk about their individual situation, and try to find a way to set things right. No obligation, no commitments are required, but let's talk.



If you or someone you know feels separated from the church, please know that you/they are invited to a

**"We Miss You Evening"
Thursday, April 3rd**

to be held in the school library.

Friends or family are invited to come along as a companion. There won't be any finger pointing or guilt trips. Just open ears, open minds and open doors to come home.

For more information, please don't hesitate to contact Charline List, Director of Adult Education & Formation at 734-821-2125.

Remember: Catholics Can Always Come Home!

Mark Your Calendar!

March 10 - 16: **Shelter for Homeless** at St. Francis Gym

March 11 **Seniors @ St. Francis**
"Funeral Planning Has Grown Up" begins 10AM in the PAC, followed by lunch (\$5 donation).

Sunday, March 16—Sun, March 23:
Lenten Clothing Drive for Children. Drop off outside Religious Education Office. No boots/shoes

March 16/17: **First Communion Parent/child meeting.** Sunday, March 16 at 2:30 p.m.; or Monday, March 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the PAC.

March 21, April 18: **Serve Supper to the Hungry** - Third Fridays of each month all year long.

Monday, March 24 **Family Reconciliation Service** at 5 p.m. in Church, supper following in PAC. Saturday, March 29 **Family Reconciliation Service** at 10 a.m. in Church

Tuesday April 1: Young Adults Ya2acht Club "**First Tuesday Mass & Lenten Reflection**" from 7pm Mass in chapel to rectory meeting room.

April 8: **A LENTEN Pilgrimage:** "The Dead Sea Scrolls" at the Van Andel Museum in Grand Rapids. Paid reservations only. Call St. Francis Adult Ed. office (734-821-2125).

Sat, April 12: All-Parish **Christian Passover Meal** ~ 6 PM in PAC ~ a Christian variation on a Jewish Seder Meal.
Sun, April 13: **High School Youth Christian Passover Meal** at 6 PM in PAC.

April 2 - 4: **Spring Rummage Sale.** St. Francis Altar Society

Holy Week & Easter 2003

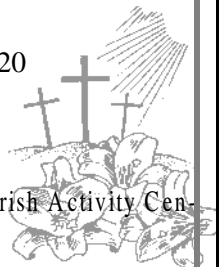
Holy Thursday, April 17
7:30 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday, April 18
12 noon Live Stations of the Cross
1:15 pm Liturgy of Lord's Passion
6:30 pm Night Prayer

Holy Saturday, April 19
12 noon Blessing of Easter foods
8:00 pm Easter Vigil Mass & reception

Easter Sunday, April 20

7:00 am Mass
8:45 am Mass
10:30 am Mass
10:45 am Mass in Parish Activity Center
12:15 pm Mass
No 5 pm Sunday Mass on Easter



HIGH SCHOOL TEENS!

“who needs faith & reason anyway?”



we all do!

The Youth Group's January "Frank's Place" at the Dufek's home.

Top Ten Reasons to check out "Frank's Place" at St. Francis

10. A great way to have some fun every Wednesday
9. Broadens your understanding of Catholicism
8. You learn more about the Bible
7. You get to know yourself better
6. You clarify/strengthen your Christian faith beliefs
5. You have the opportunity to make new friends
4. You can speak your mind on current "hot" topics
3. It challenges you to grow mentally & spiritually
2. "Hanging out" with friends in a safe environment
1. It enriches your relationship with Jesus

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



Middle School Says "Y.E.S." to RENEW

In the fall, St. Francis Parish began a time of spiritual renewal and growth known as the RENEW program. Renew calls all people in the parish to a deeper relationship with God through small faith-sharing groups. The Y.E.S. Middle School Youth Ministry program decided to join in the spiritual growth by offering a Renew group designed specifically for middle school students. The Y.E.S. Renew group meets on the second Sunday of the month immediately following the 5 p.m. Mass hosted by the middle school liturgical ministers.

Studying sacred scripture is anything but boring for those attending this Renew program designed especially for middle school students. We don't just sit around and talk about the truths of the Gospel. We *experience* them through music, games, and activities. In addition to the community-building games, scavenger hunts, scripture studies and reflection, there is also pizza and free time in the gym with your friends.

Sound like fun? Why don't you bring a friend

and check us out during the Spring session of Renew. In addition to the meeting on March 9th, there will be a special program offered on Palm Sunday.

Come learn about Holy Week at the Y.E.S. RENEW Program April 13 - Palm Sunday 6 to 8 p.m. in the gym.

For more details please contact Jill Diroff at 821-2133 or <jdiroff@CatholicWeb.com>



RENEW Mission Touches Hearts

For three of the four evenings of the RENEW Mission that was held in early February, parishioners told the stories of the struggles and successes they have ex-

perienced on their journeys of faith. The openness and vulnerability they expressed offered hope to those who attended. It supported the understanding that we are all *saints in progress*. They spoke of the value of small group relationships to *staying the course* in our faith and of the sustenance that that provides in the valleys and the connectedness, affirmation and acceptance that it continually offers.

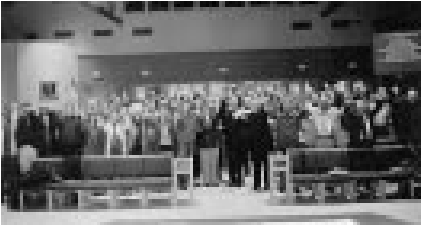
Each service of the first three days was presided over by parishioners who introduced the focus for the evening and who lead the assembly in prayer. The three sessions

Rituals of water, light and incense capped each of those celebrations.

On the last evening, Father James Conlon presided at the concluding liturgy with Father Finian Zaucha concelebrating. Father James' homily encouraged those present to align their personal dreams with the vision of what it means to be a Christian. He also spoke of the value of participation in a small faith sharing group and invited those present to sign up for the RENEW faith sharing groups that are to meet during Lent.

All four evenings ended with food and fun in the Parish Activities Center. Representatives of various ministries within the parish provided the goodies and hospitality.





Oh LORD, Stop Abortion!

to Bob and Therese Rhein and their wonderful family for organizing candle distribution at

all the masses. Unfortunately, this January marked the 30 year anniversary of the Roe vs Wade decision legalizing abortion on demand throughout our country. To commemorate this event St. Francis parishioners joined with other Christians throughout Washtenaw County to attend various pro-life events. Our young people were invited to Lifeboat, an ecumenical pro-life youth rally held this year at St. Luke's Lutheran Church on Jan 5th. The following Wednesday we joined the U of M Students for Life for a very cold candlelight vigil to mourn all the children who have died through abortion.

I was impressed by the courage of these young people to stand up publicly on behalf of the unborn. Many people met at the Michigan Union Thursday to hear Professor Richard Meyers from Ave Maria Law School discuss "Abortion: 30 years later". At one point he said that until the American people care enough to speak out against abortion, he felt nothing much would happen in the courts to stop it.

Over the weekend many St. Francis parishioners took home a pro-life candle to display on their porch the night of January 21 to commemorate all the lives lost through abortion. Many thanks

all the masses.

Probably the highlight of the pro-life activities was the ecumenical prayer service held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church on January 21. People from many different churches came together to pray for an end to abortion as well as for racial unity, Christian unity, and a real turning to God throughout our county. Our own Fr. Roger Prokop from St. Thomas led us in prayer to stop abortion. He also gave a great talk comparing abortion to destroying something beautiful a person has made to give a friend.

The final event that week was a time of prayer outside of Planned Parenthood. Again I was impressed by the courage and faithfulness of the "regulars" who gather to pray every Thursday morning from 8 to 9am.

Another Roe vs Wade anniversary has come and gone and abortion is still legal. It gets pretty discouraging. But we can't give up!! So please continue to pray seriously for an end to this injustice against the unborn. Educate yourself and share with your friends what abortion truly is. Ask God what He'd like you to do about it. God bless you!

~ St. Francis Stop Abortion Task Force



Area Youth Rally for Life

On January 5th St. Francis teens had the opportunity to join with other area Christian youth at Lifeboat, an ecumenical pro-life youth rally. We had a great turn out this year with youth attending from various local churches including Evangelical Friends, St. Andrew's in Saline, St. Luke Lutheran, and Christ the King. After the rally (and a delicious pizza dinner),

many of the Catholic youth went to Christ the King for an all county LifeTeen mass. The youth had a great time and heard a very important message.

Catholic youth evangelist, Jim Murphy, was the speaker at this year's rally. His talk was quite inspiring and filled with practical suggestions that we could actually do!! Murphy pointed out that there were steps along the way that led to abortion. Obviously abortion is the result of sexual activity. People often engage in sexual activity because they're looking for love and acceptance. Here, Murphy urged, is where we can get involved. He



urged us to reach out to other young people in our community and our schools who might need a friend. He encouraged us to share God's love with them and invite them into our faith community thus helping them to find love through healthy relationships and ultimately, helping them to find Jesus. He also encouraged us to speak the truth to people. We need to know what

the Bible says about sex outside of marriage and share God's truth with our friends (even though it can be really hard).

Many thanks to Jill Diroff for alerting our youth to this wonderful opportunity. Jill said, "It was great to see so many young people come together from all over the county. Very inspiring. The speaker was great!" Plans are already underway for next year's Lifeboat. You won't want to miss it!

See INSIDE the JAIL

At the Washtenaw County Jail (one year since the official beginning of Catholic Worship Services, March 23, 2002), inmates are participating in a variety of Catholic services.

Pictured here you can see the assembly of over 30 inmates, 8 volunteers and Fr. Antonio Feghali (the Sacramental Minister at the Jail) celebrating Mass & the sacraments of initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and First Holy Communion - with those inmates whom have been studying our Catholic Faith & praying with our community.



What's it like in the Jail?

It's much like a very strict boarding school for adults. Catholics & other persons, in jail, that are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith are invited to attend services in a class room. We have the weekly Saturday morning Catholic Mass/Liturgy. There are two inquiry group/catechism classes that meet for (12 weeks) on Wednesday evenings. And, the second catechism class is for persons that are already Catholic and have finished the first class.



Growing closer to Jesus, & learning more about the Catholic Faith we encourage spending time with the Lord Jesus in a variety of ways including: One-on-one visits, inquiry group/catechism classes, Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, & Liturgy of the Word.

In the Fall of 2000, St. Francis Pastor, Fr. Jim asked that St. Francis Parish *Social Ministry Office* step forward to start a Catholic ministry at the jail which would offer healing and support to persons (and families of persons) in the jail. Now we are truly blessed to have over 20 active lay volunteers, and about 14 priests, that visit the jail and spread the good news about Jesus and encourage others to live & celebrate the faith.

A group of at least four Catholic volunteers from our parish & other Catholic parishes, visit the jail together. Some volunteers serve on an as needed basis, and, others serve once each month every other week.

Some volunteers never enter the jail facility, but, they support the ministry by helping with projects such as: Making holiday gift cards; Writing letters as a Pen Pal; Donating \$5 for a Bible or Catechism; Praying for peace & justice in the lives of those whom have been found guilty of awful crimes; Praying for & encouraging the families of those in jail through special programs; And, welcoming those released to Sunday Mass & other groups to meet supportive new friends.

Join a ministry team! "*Be Not Afraid!*" Jesus was incarcerated during his life, and he can still be found in the jail. Come and see for yourself. Contact: Scott Wright (821-2121) "Go Directly to Jail!" on the Web: stfrancisa2.com/socialministry/

Elementary Religious Education: *Teaching a Living Faith*

"Whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me (Matt 25:40)"

The elementary religious education grades have been busy in a variety of Faith activities this year, including projects of help to others. Two of these projects are described here.

For I was hungry and you gave me food...

Catechist, Jackie Ziemba and her fifth grade class write of their service project:

On Friday, January 17, 2003, Mr. Marshall's and Mrs. Ziemba's fifth grade religious education class served supper to the hungry at Memorial Christian Church. It was a very successful community service project. Listen to what the kids had to say.

"I felt good that I was helping someone who needed it. Some of the people that were there I've seen down town before. It was fun for me. A

lot of the people there were very nice. Mr. Smith was very funny. He was always laughing. I like to do stuff to help my community."—*Maddie*

"I felt good to be helping the people. The people were very friendly and I felt good serving them. I also felt happy because the people looked like they were having a good time."—*Claire*

"I met two very nice people. One of the guys was very funny. Most of the time I was serving drinks, it was fun. It was cool to meet people I don't know. I felt good because of helping different people. I felt good serving food to others."—*Chris*

"I felt like I was going the extra mile for someone who needed me to help them. You know when you feel really good. That is how I felt. The sun was shining down on me. I felt like God was reaching down and helping me not to be afraid of them. I want to do this more, but how? We served noodles, cheese, pineapple, cranberries and salad. It looked kind of good to me. I had lots of fun with Mr. Smith. He helped me understand how much I have and what it is worth to me. He went to school at Huron --Go Riverrats---. That is where I am going to go. He told me all about foods that are good for you and not good. He was really funny. He told me all about his ways of life. He was really kind. He brought cupcakes to his warming shelter and gave them to his friends. The cupcakes were not for him. I thought that was really nice of him. I also thought that I would always do this again because all the people were really nice. I saw a woman with a purple fuzzy coat. That was

cool. She said to me she had a blue one too. My favorite color is blue. I thought that guy who stood up and said "Let's give a round of applause to these friendly people." I saw this woman who looked just fine and she did not have any money. I saw the comic drawer. He was cool. I would do this again. I would drop my stuff and do it again. Thanks for giving me the chance."—*Megan*

"Feeding the hungry was an awesome experience. Everyone was so nice. I'm very excited we got the chance to help and I'd love to do it again."—*Caroline*

The gentlemen that stood up and asked for the round of applause also stated that is was the children doing the work and not their parents. At that moment, the children's face's had a radiance of pride. They knew then that they had done something to benefit another.

"You know when you feel really good. That is how I felt. The sun was shining down on me. I felt like God was reaching down and helping me not to be afraid of them."

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you...

Diane Reynolds engaged her fourth grade religious education class in making bookmarks as a Christmas gift for the inmates in the Washtenaw County Jail. The bookmarks designed with religious messages were given to the St. Francis Catholic Jail Ministry, a group that regularly visits the prisoners to bring the Word of God to them. Bill Mammoser, a member of the Ministry group writes of the prisoners response, "*They were delighted! It made their day! Probably their week!!*"



Left: Children read the scripture readings and the petitions during the special **Family Masses** that were celebrated during Religious Education sessions the week of February 3.

Below: Families enjoy the treats and social after the Mass in the Parish Activity Center.

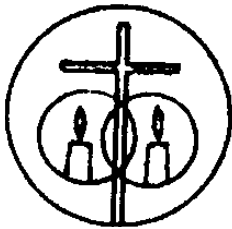


Fathers Take Their Role Seriously



[Above: John Ream captures the participant's attention as he relates the story of the earlier years of his marriage and of his blunders as a high power businessman and occasional father.]

Thirty men from our parish recently spent a day and a half in a seminar to help them boost their fathering skills. John Ream, author of the book, Velvet & Steel received much positive feedback for his valuable workshop that tied together practical suggestions, stories and faith as he emphasized the importance of the role of the father to a family. The event closed with an evening for husbands and wives in an open forum of story telling and questions and answers.



Celebrating Love & THE COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

On February 8, about on hundred couples from the parish attended a special mass celebrating Christian marriage. Father Finian Zaucha was the presider and couples from St. Francis participated in the liturgy as readers, greeters, eucharistic ministers, by lighting the unity candle, and in the exchange of the renewal of vows. The liturgy focused on the love of husband and wife – being a visible sign to the community of the love of God.

After the mass, many of the couples headed over to Weber's Inn for a dinner and dance. The buffet was delicious and couples danced to the music presented by Sue from Swing City. Couples were honored for the years they had been married, with Wally and Ann Neimann receiving special applause for their 50+ years of marriage. Several door prizes were awarded, topped off by a complementary night's stay at Weber's Inn that was awarded to Deb and Tom Leonard.



Above: Father James Conlon is surrounded by dance chair-couple Cathy and Dan Miling, and Ed and Alice Lirette who were celebrating their first wedding anniversary.

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St. Francis of Assisi School

This year, the students at St. Francis of Assisi School are practicing the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching. Each month the students focus on a theme, and classes incorporate that theme into their studies. Service projects are an important part of this focus:

- November: Our school children worked with Samaritan's Purse and their project called "Operation Christmas Child". Over 525 shoeboxes filled with toys and personal hygiene items were sent to needy children all over the world.
- March / April: During Lent, older students will partner together with younger students to complete a number of projects for local organizations such as Mott Children's Hospital and Hope Clinic.
- May: Students will continue to care for and develop the St. Francis *Schoolyard Habitat*. Please check out the garden on Winchell Drive.

THE SEVEN THEMES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

August/Solidarity
September	
October.....	Rights and Responsibilities
November/Option for the poor
December	and vulnerable
January.....	Life & Dignity of the Human Person
February/Call to Family, Community, and Participation
March	
April.....	The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
May/June.....	Care for God's Creation

"God does not call us to do great things, but to do small things with great love." Mother Teresa

Announcing the Gene Butman Ford **7th Car Raffle**



Win this Ford T-Bird

Gene Butman Car Raffle Benefits St. Francis Catholic School

**\$20 for a book
of 8 tickets
\$3 for individual
ticket**

Look for the car around town
or call 734-821-2208
to purchase tickets
Drawing is June 5, 2003 at 8 PM

*Here's your chance to have your name
go down in
St. Francis history!*



**Honor 50 years
of Catholic education
at St. Francis School**

- Place a business card ad for \$50 in the keepsake program of the 50th year celebration Educational Trust Fund Dinner
- Attend the “*Celebration of Our Angels*” dinner. Tickets are \$125 per person
- Purchase a 50/50 Raffle ticket for \$50. Winner to split the proceeds 50/50 with the Educational Trust Fund. (The 50/50 drawing will be held at the dinner. Winner need not be present to win.)

For details or to place an ad, purchase dinner or raffle tickets please call Kathy Barrett at 821-2208



“A Celebration of Our Angels 50 years”

Thursday May 8, 2003 ~ 6 PM

St. John's Golf and Conference Center

Plymouth, MI



It's Fun To Be In ESP!

One of the best services offered to our parents at St. Francis School is the

Extended School Program (ESP).

We provide before, after and no-school-day programs for our families. The **Extended School Program** is designed to complement the school curriculum by providing a supportive and Christian environment for constructive and creative extra-curricular activities. Students look forward to spending time with their classmates in a relaxed atmosphere, where they participate in structured and non-structured recreational and learning activities.

Our *before and after-kindergarten* program enriches the academic skills taught during the regular kindergarten day - thus making “full day” kindergarten a possibility.

All Young Adults and Singles!



“Open Gym is Jumpin’!”

Young adults (21-35 married or single) & Singles (divorced, widowed, or never-married 35-up) if you haven't checked out our **“First & Third Friday Open Gym Nights”** you're missing meeting a lot of active and fun people! Grab a friend or come alone to the **St. Francis Elementary School gym for basketball and volleyball from 7-9pm on the first and third Fridays of the month!**

For more information on getting involved with the “Ya²acht Club Young Adult Group” or “St. Francis' Singles Group” – please contact Marty Rhein at mrhein@rc.net, (734) 821-2126.