



# THE GRRAPEVINE

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5)

Number 59

4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

February 3, 2008

## THEO-TIDBITS



Our new season of Theo-Tidbits is starting this week!

Our first session is this Tuesday, February 5 and will include a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper at 6:30 pm in the Gym and then a discussion of the Sacrament of Reconciliation at 7:15 pm in the Conference Room

Our next series takes place on Monday February 18 and Monday February 25 (7 pm both evenings), when Bishop Gerry will lead us through the latest encyclical from Pope Benedict entitled Hope. These sessions will be in the Parish Office Meeting Room at 1088 Gillett Street.

## TABLE FOR YOU...

On Friday, January 25, we hosted a Table for You... and your Friends dinner for post-secondary students. About 40 students came out to enjoy another delicious meal by Mike Labonte and Fr. Richard. A good time was had by all!! Many thanks to our crew of servers and kitchen volunteers who once again helped to make the event a reality!

Our next Table for Two/You event will take place on Friday March 14 and will be a Senior's Supper!!! Mark your calendars now... we need diners and we need helpers!

## BLESSED ARE...

All the readings this weekend invite and challenge us to reflect on our blessings. Usually, when we think of blessings, we think of something good that has been given to us or done to us, in a very concrete and direct way. Blessings, however, come in many shapes and guises and at the oddest moments in life. Part of our task is to have hearts and minds that are open and seeking to recognize blessings when they are given and to welcome and use them as God would intend they be used.



Zephaniah calls blessed those who are humble and do God's commands. We don't normally think of humility as a channel for blessing, often because we have a false notion of humility. Humility, as Zephaniah speaks of it, refers to the recognition that by ourselves, and with our own resources, we do not have any special place in the world. We are dependent on God's love and gifts for our life and well-being. Commandments, and the need to follow them, are not often seen as blessings, and yet Zephaniah tells us that following God's commandments brings the blessing of security, peace and well-being.

St. Paul echoes Zephaniah's call, when he reminds the Corinthians that they are not very high up the ladder by human standards, but with God as the source of their life, then they have everything that they need, and their lives have taken on a new meaning, importance and dignity.

In the Gospel, we hear Jesus teaching the Beatitudes. As we listen and hear "Blessed are the poor...those who mourn...the merciful...the pure in heart...those who are persecuted", we might question what kind of blessings Jesus is talking about. Being poor, mourning, persecuted are not exactly conditions to which we would look forward, or things that we would want for ourselves. However, as we reflect on our lives, we can begin to recognize some of the ways in which God can bless us when we least expect it. Spending time with someone in a family who is dying is not something that any of us would look forward to, and yet there can be rich blessings in that time and effort. We begin to understand the blessing of the support of family members, sometimes there is reconciliation and healing between family members, the prayer of others for us and with us can be a blessing. Attending someone's funeral can be a time of blessing as well, as we perhaps reconnect with people from whom we have drifted over the years. Sometimes we meet new friends and meet family members for the first time and these bonds grow and become life-giving and a source of strength and joy. Working for peace or to provide for others can sometimes be a disheartening experience as we labour and see few results; however the satisfaction of seeing some result is a blessing indeed.

One thing that we do well to remember is that Jesus chooses to work through the members of his Body. We are his presence, his hands and voice in our world. We are called to be a blessing to others through our living out of the Good News. That being so, we are called by the Word of God today to recognize the ways God blesses us through the other members of Christ's Body. How have you been blessed today, in the past week, in the past months?

## PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: The trip to Fort Ware happened. There was some question on Tuesday morning as to whether we would be able to fly or not, but we left a half hour late. It turned out I was the only one on the plane, so we only had one stop in Mackenzie to pick up mail and freight, then it was on to Fort Ware. It was bone-snapping cold and the snow is deep! However, about 25 brave folks showed up for Eucharist on Tuesday evening, and about 55 on Wednesday evening. Visiting the elders, splitting wood, hearing confessions, anointing the sick filled the time on the two days - there is never enough time to do it all. Now it is back to the normal routine of life in the city.

Giselle: As many of you know, I was away for a couple of weeks, attending a Returning to Spirit training workshop near Canmore Alberta. It was extremely demanding, exhausting, exhilarating, and rejuvenating. If that makes any sense!!! I'll be away attending workshops a couple of times in March.

The last couple of weeks has been spent trying to keep up with the usual stuff that accumulated in my absence.

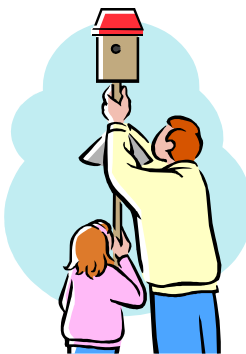
This next month is going to prove interesting—TheoTidbits is off the ground again, along with the Bible Study on Eucharist, various meetings, the Art Show, Northern Catholic News deadline, etc. Should be very interesting!!!

And winter is half over!!! And it's getting lighter out, which means spring is not far away.

## KIDS BUILD THINGS

In the surveys that we have done over the past while, family activities are always mentioned as being important, desired and needed. At Parish Pastoral Council, we put our heads together and came up with an idea that could provide some family fun on Saturday morning, April 19. Knowing that children like to putter and build and discover new things, we are planning a morning of bird feeder building.

We will have pre-fabricated bird feeders available - the kids just need to choose which feeder they want to build (parents can build too!), pick up the kit which will include all the parts needed and instructions, then get to work putting it all together. We will also have paint and other finishes available, and so the finished project can be painted or decorated before leaving. We figure on closing the morning with a hot dog lunch or some other simple meal. There will be a small cost for the hardware that is needed for each project. We will have a large poster with the various designs and you can pre-order your feeder. This would be preferable, as it will assist the planning and pre-fabricating crew. Keep an eye out for the posters.



## DEVELOPMENT & PEACE LIFESTYLE AWARENESS CALENDARS

This week's bulletin includes a Lifestyle Awareness Calendar from Development and Peace. The first day on this calendar is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Each day there is a reflection, sometimes asking for alms giving, sometimes asking for prayer. The reflections provide a great focus for Lent and are suitable for the whole family to do together. We recommend placing the Calendar somewhere visible, possibly on the fridge or on a bulletin board. You may have noticed something different this year. Each calendar has a small brown bag stapled to it. This is to provide a container in which to place your contributions from the calendar. We ask that you bring your bags up to the front of the church during the offertory on the Easter weekend.



## EUCHARIST BIBLE STUDY

Our bible study on Eucharistic themes begins Wednesday February 6 and continues on each Wednesday until March 12. We are offering two times: 10 am and 7:30 pm (after Vespers). Please phone the parish office to register and reserve your copy of the study guide (\$10).

## GRR DIGEST VOL. 2

Our second volume of the Grrapevine Digest is now available at the back of the church. This one includes key articles from Grrapevines 21 to 28.

## ST. MARY'S FIRST ANNUAL ART SHOW

You may have heard rumours floating around the parish of what we have planned for the weekend of Feb 22-24—St. Mary's First Annual Art Show!!! We do have artistic talent in the parish and we thought we could provide a venue where these people could display their creations. It's also a great way to build community. So, this is what we have planned:

Fri Feb 22—6:30 to 8:30 pm  
Art Show Wine & Cheese

Sat Feb 23—8:00 to 9:30 pm  
Art Show & Marriage Anniversary Reception

Sun Feb 24—9:00 to 1:00 pm  
Art Show & Parish Brunch

Make sure you mark these dates on your calendars. It's going to be one of the highlights of our year!

# SEASON OF LENT

## ASH WEDNESDAY ASHES



This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. The ashes are a sign of repentance on our part and remind us that we are not perfect, but are always in need of conversion.

We have several celebrations on Wednesday to offer you! The distribution of Ashes will take place at each celebration.

- 7:20 a.m. Mass
- 9:00 a.m. School Mass
- 7:00 p.m. Vespers

## LENTEN VESPERS

During the season of Lent we will be celebrating Vespers on every Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m.

Vespers is a Latin word and refers to Evening Prayer. Once considered to be the exclusive preserve of monks and religious, Vatican II offered the Liturgy of the Hours (including Evening Prayer) to the entire Church.

Vespers is a wonderful way to close out your day, to come and sit in the silence, to pray with the community, and to offer praise and thanks to God. This Lent, why not come and give it a try.



## A HISTORY OF LENT (COLES NOTES VERSION)

From the very beginning, the early Christian community celebrated the Resurrection of the Lord. By the second century, this celebration extended 50 days, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. Over time, the early Christians began to prepare for this 50-day festival with fasting and penance, showing solidarity with the catechumens who were being prepared for baptism. This period of fasting and penance was only a few days at first, but was then extended to a week and by the 6th century, had become the traditional 40 days. It was still primarily a period in which the entire Christian community fasted, prayed and performed penance in solidarity with the catechumens who were preparing for baptism. With time, and the loss of the adult catechuminate, many of the baptismal overtones of Lent were lost. With Vatican II, the essential focus of Lent as a period of purification for the catechumens and candidates has been recovered.

## LENTEN PRAYER

Lent is traditionally a time to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

We have a variety of different prayer forms to offer you on our Lenten menu:

### Morning Prayer

Weekday mornings 7:00 a.m.

### Eucharist

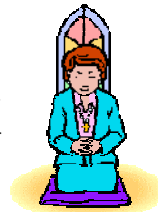
Weekday mornings 7:20 a.m.

### Vespers

Wednesday evenings	7:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 17	4:30 p.m.
Sunday March 16	4:30 p.m.

### Reconciliation Services

February 19 (STM)	7:00 p.m.
March 12 (IC)	7:00 p.m.
March 13 (COS)	7:00 p.m.
March 18 (SHC)	7:00 p.m.



## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Lent is a traditionally a time to pray the Stations of the Cross, which have a long history in the Church (back to the early days!). Parishioners are encouraged to pray the stations individually during Lent.

If you would like to take part in a communal celebration of Stations of the Cross, Sacred Heart Cathedral will be praying them on the following Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

- Feb 8
- Feb 15
- Feb 22
- Feb 29
- Mar 7 (5:30 pm)
- Mar 14
- Mar 21



## RITE OF ELECTION

There is no Rite of Election this year. None of the city parishes have catechumens who are ready to move forward.

It is the mission of all the baptized (that means you) to proclaim the Good News to everyone that we meet, bringing light into the darkness.

Maybe you know someone who has been considering becoming Catholic? Have you talked to them? You never know when people will hear and respond to the call of Christ which comes under so many different forms.

## A GOOD APPETITE

Fasting is not an isolated discipline, but one of a trinity of holy practices: Prayer. Fasting. Almsgiving. Each of these gives support and meaning to the others. Prayer befriends the soul. It re-fixes our sacred purpose and turns us toward the tasks at hand. Fasting befriends the body — which is to say that the body is good, very good, and worthy of whatever form our fasting must take. Almsgiving befriends our neighbor with whom we share what we might otherwise have hoarded.

To fast, accompanied by prayer and almsgiving, is to be healed. Fasting is good for the body, the “body politic,” and the “mystical body.” Fasting helps to make the body whole.

Fasting is necessary now if we are ever to enjoy feasting. A good appetite allows us to enjoy the earthly gifts that we have been given. So fasting is not so much a deprecation of the flesh, but a sharpening of earthly joys. The Talmud says: “One will have to give an account on the judgment day of every good thing which one might have enjoyed — and did not.” Fasting helps us savor God’s goodness.

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## FASTING DURING LENT

We all know that Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. If we are over the age of 30 or 40, we probably remember the “old days” and what fasting during Lent meant. Catholics were required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent. Funny, but I never found that eating salmon on a Friday was a hardship! That wasn’t fasting... that was a treat!

Today, Catholics are still encouraged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Abstinence on the Fridays during Lent is optional, with a caveat. Rather than abstaining from meat, we are encouraged to abstain from other things, such as gossip.

Fasting and abstinence is not about us denying ourselves something that is good, in order to pig out once Easter rolls around. Rather, we are encouraged to fast and abstain from those things that draw us away from God. At the same time we are encouraged to add things that draw us closer to God. What are you doing for Lent?

## AN INTRODUCTION TO LENT AND EASTERTIME

Lent begins this week and this season is integrally linked with the season of Easter (which ends on Pentecost Sunday—May 11 this year). Both Lent and the Easter season find their centre and their focus in the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil).

We have included a little booklet in this bulletin/GRRapevine package to help you unpack the meaning of Lent and Easter.

In addition, we have some reflection booklets which are available on the table at the back of the Church.

We had some *What am I doing for Lent this Year?* left over from last year, and there are also some new ones.

We invite you to make use of whatever resources help you to enter into this season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving more deeply!

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## THE LECTIONARY DURING LENT

The Sundays of Lent follow an established pattern. The first Sunday is always the temptation of Jesus in the desert. The version proclaimed depends upon the Lectionary cycle. The same is true for the Second Sunday of Lent, on which we always hear the Transfiguration. From the Third to the Fifth Sunday, the readings are some of the most well-known and well-loved in the scriptures, and they serve as a fine context for the Lenten journey of repentance and renewal that we all undertake. They include the story of Moses and the burning bush, the parables of the fig tree and the prodigal son, and the story of the woman caught in adultery. Three Psalms are given as the seasonal response. Of these three, Psalm 51 reigns supreme as a penitential psalm. It is the psalm that the Church sings at Morning Prayer every Friday, which is, traditionally, the weekly day of penance. Psalm 130 is also rich with language of repentance. Psalm 91 speaks of trust and faith in God during times of trial. During the weekdays of Lent, the scriptures focus on the traditional themes of the season: repentance; conversion and renewal.

During the second half of the season, the weekday scriptures include a semi-continuous reading of the Gospel of John. This begins on the second day of the fourth week with the story of the cure of the man at the pool of Bethesda. That day the Gospel begins, “There was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” Thus begins the journey of Jesus in the Gospels of the next two weeks – up to Tuesday of Holy Week. His journey to Jerusalem is ours as well. As disciples, we are called to follow Christ, even to the cross, which was the destination of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. We, too, are called to face the cross in its many forms as we experience it in our own lives. The first readings for these weeks were chosen to reflect that aspect of the Gospels. *From ‘Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons, 2007’, LTP Publications*

## LENTEN DECOR

During Lent, the church decorations are generally kept to a sombre minimum. Flowers are generally not displayed, in order that the exuberance of the Easter decorations may stand out. There are of course exceptions, one being the 4th Sunday of Lent, also called Laetere Sunday.

## LENTEN MUSIC

During Lent, the music should be limited to just enough to accompany the singing. In general, instrumental pieces are discouraged. Again, to promote that more sombre atmosphere during Lent. We don't sing Allleuia during Lent, saving it up for a joyous display at Easter. Similarly, we don't sing the Gloria, except on major feasts such as St. Joseph and the Annunciation.

Largely through the partnership of DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE we were able to support 20 community radio stations to carry out civic education programs prior to the 2006 general election. Many more of our people took part in the election.

Jean-Pierre, *Society of Social Communities, Haiti*



## LENTEN RICE & BEAN SUPPER

The Social Justice committee of Immaculate Conception would like to invite you to a special Lenten Rice and Bean Supper on Friday, February 15, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

The evening will include supper, a guest speaker, a short video on how D&P donations were used to support the Tsunami Reconstruction, and an opportunity for discussion and reflection. This event is by donation and there is no need to RSVP.

We would also like to invite you to join the IC Social Justice Committee in celebrating the Social Justice Way of the Cross at 7:30 pm in the Church. We hope to see you there!



## FED RIGHTLY

We have a basic, unspoken fear of being deprived of food. So we try to outfox the caprices of nature and its seasons, hoping that we never have to go hungry. But something has run amok when fear of being deprived of food drives us to manipulating, bullying, controlling, overproducing, depleting, hoarding and consuming — not just food, but fuel and forests, water and whatever resource we cannot live without. Ravenous for something, we try to still our anxiety with whatever brings comfort most quickly. With a voracious need, we bully our way into the world's stores and consume everything in sight.

Frederick Buechner's definition of a glutton is true — of individuals and of communities: A glutton is one who raids the icebox for a cure for spiritual malnutrition! The habit of "raiding" spoils our appetite, even as it leaves us ever unsatisfied. The late M. F. K. Fisher wrote: "I cannot count the good people I know who would be better if they bent their spirits to the study of their own hungers."

So take a moment to reexamine cravings, hungers, yearnings, compulsions and impulses as natural and right — *but in need of being fed at the right level*. Fast from instant gratifications.

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## FASTING IDEAS

### To Abstain:

- Coffee
- Caffeine
- Computer or Cell Phone Use
- Alcohol
- Cigarettes
- Driving
- Shopping
- Eating Out
- Energy Use (gas, hydro, etc)
- Gossiping
- Meat / Red Meat
- Swearing
- Sweets
- Television

### To Add:

- More Prayer Time
- Sharing More Money & Time
- Reading More Scripture
- Visiting the Sick

CHRISM MASS  
MARCH 10

The Chrism Mass will take place on Monday, March 10 at Sacred Heart Cathedral at 7:00 p.m.

This year, the Chrism Mass is particularly special because we are celebrating 100 years of our diocese. Several bishops, as well as the Apostolic Nuncio assigned to Canada will be in attendance. This is going to be a BIG event!!!!

All parishioners are invited to attend this wonderful celebration of the diocesan church!

This is also when the Holy Oils are blessed and consecrated!

Please join us!!!

A BRIEF HISTORY...

On March 8, 1908, Pope Pius X designated the northern part of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory as a separate ecclesiastical entity – the Prefecture Apostolic of the Yukon and Prince Rupert. Fr. Emile Buno, OMI, was given responsibility to direct the pastoral life of this new entity. On October 17, 1917, the Prefecture was raised to the status of a Vicariate Apostolic, and Fr. Buno was ordained bishop to govern the Vicariate. The headquarters of the Prefecture and Vicariate were at Annunciation Church in Prince Rupert. Annunciation celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year as a parish community, as it was established when the Prefecture was established.

During the late 30's and early 40's, it became apparent that the territory was too large to administer from Prince Rupert, especially as settlement grew and new areas opened up. On January 14, 1944, the Vicariate was divided into the Vicariate of Whitehorse (Yukon and the most northern part of B.C.) and the Vicariate of Prince Rupert. Bishop Buno remained as Vicar of Prince Rupert and Bishop Coudert, formerly co-adjutor bishop of the old Vicariate, was transferred to Whitehorse.

In 1967, Pope Paul VI raised the Vicariate of Prince Rupert to the status of a diocese. In the meantime, Bishop O'Grady had moved his headquarters from Prince Rupert to Prince George, as it was easier to travel to the various parts of the diocese and to the outside world from Prince George. On June 5, 1968, the name was formally changed to the Diocese of Prince George, and Bishop O'Grady was installed as the first bishop of the Diocese of Prince George.

For a more in-depth history of our diocese, visit the diocesan website: [www.pgdiocese.bc.ca](http://www.pgdiocese.bc.ca)

SPIRITUAL BOUQUET FOR 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the inception of our northern vicariate/diocese. An invitation is extended to all parishioners in the Diocese to participate in a Spiritual Bouquet of prayers asking for God's blessings upon our Diocese. Parishioners are invited to offer an Our Father, a Hail Mary, the Rosary or another form of prayer, sacrifice or devotion along with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Prayer. As each prayer is offered our Spiritual Bouquet grows. Please record your participation on the sheet provided by your parish. We have provided pink log sheets on the bulletin boards for you to record your prayers. Please place in the collection basket and we tally them and sent them on to the 100th Anniversary Committee. Prayers will be gathered between now and Thursday, March 6 and our efforts will be shared during 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations at the Chrism Mass (March 10) Just think how wonderful it would be if we could have 100 people, one for each of our 100 years, praying each day for our diocese in each parish and/or school.



**Diocese of Prince George  
Celebrating 100 Years  
1908–2008**

**100th Anniversary Prayer**

We rejoice, O God that you  
have called us to be your Church  
in the Diocese of Prince George.  
We thank you for the abundant blessings  
you have bestowed upon us  
during the past one hundred years.  
We remember those who have gone before us in faith  
whose talents and sacrifices have sustained  
our diocesan family.  
Empower us by your Spirit to meet  
the challenges of our day.  
Continue to sustain us on our journey,  
with the Body and Blood of your Son,  
until we come at last to our eternal home  
in the company of Mary, and all the saints.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## STEWARDSHIP MOMENTS

Blessed are they... Do we recognize the blessings that we receive in our life? The people who cross our paths? The events of our ordinary, everyday lives?

Do we give thanks for the blessings, recognizing that ultimately all blessings originate with God?

Do we share those blessings with others? Do we recognize that blessings are meant to be shared, to be distributed? For in the sharing, the blessings magnify, grow and expand, becoming so much more than we could ever hope or dream. Don't just count your blessings... share them!!

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## SPRING PLANT SALE

It is still early to start the tomatoes, but not too early to start thinking about our Spring Plant Sale for St. Vincent de Paul. The sales over the past two years have been wonderfully successful and have made a significant contribution to the work of the Society in the late spring and early summer. So, if you have a green thumb, it may be time to start warming-up exercises! You can contribute in other ways as well—last year we had coffee and goodies, so the morning became a time for relaxation and visiting as well as getting some plant material for the garden or house. So, we are looking for bakers, servers, cashiers and helpers of all sorts. The sale will be held on the Saturday of the May long weekend. Put it on your calendars and start planning your planting schedule.

## HOW DO YOU PRAY?? INTRA-PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE—SELF SMART

In a previous issue of the Grrapevine (#52), we introduced the idea that different prayer forms may be more comfortable for us based on our giftedness in the areas of multiple intelligence. We were also invited to take a Multiple Intelligence Survey (link on our website) to discover where our intelligence strengths lie (verbal, numeric, images, music, movement, nature, etc). Over the next few issues of the Grrapevine, we'll take a look at the different multiple intelligences and draw connections with different prayer styles.

Those who have a strong intra-personal intelligence (self smart) have an ability to self-reflect and to be aware of one's inner state of being. They tend to like to work alone and may shy away from others. They tend to be in tune with their inner feelings, values, beliefs and thinking processes. They are often highly intuitive and inwardly motivated, rarely needing external rewards to keep going. They display a sense of independence or strong self-will and are self-directed. They have a deep sense of self-confidence and march to the beat of a different drummer in style of dress, behaviour or general attitude.

Those who have a strong intra-personal intelligence, might enjoy more individualized forms of prayer, such as contemplative or meditative prayer.

Those of us who are not strong in the intra-personal intelligence, might find such prayer forms tedious and difficult. It's all a matter of finding out what works best for us. We just need to try some of them!

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## SYMBOLS OF BAPTISM: LAYING ON OF HANDS

Sometimes there simply are no words. Before deep sorrow, ecstatic joy, profound awe or intense love, ordinary words give way to poetry and song, and sometimes even these must give way to music, to dance, to silence. We sit with a loved one near death, or grieve with a friend in her loss, and all we can do is silently touch a hand. A mother gazes quietly into the eyes of the contented baby she holds in her arms, and it is enough. Lovers linger in a silent embrace, listening only to each other's heartbeats, and time stops.

In our sacred rituals, there are times when words cannot convey the deep mystery being celebrated. At those moments, the ritual often prescribes the laying on of hands, a slow, deliberate placing of the presider's hands on the top of the head of the person on whom our prayers are focused. The touch that humans naturally use to soothe and forgive becomes a symbol of God's of healing and forgiveness in our sacramental rites. The welcoming embrace and fond touch of the face become the touch of the hand prescribed at baptism and confirmation, and at the same time it is the touch of God's Holy Spirit, transforming and empowering all that is touched.

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## NEW TO THE PARISH??

Are you new to the parish? Have you filled out a parish registration form yet? They're available on the bulletin boards at the entrances of the Church. Better yet, introduce yourself to Fr. Richard or Giselle after Mass. We'd love to meet you and get the chance to know you.



## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Are you planning to get married in 2008? See the poster on the bulletin board for different marriage preparation options. There are some Engaged Encounter weekends coming up. Phone Fr. Richard for more info.

## WEBSITE

Check out our website! We have photos of past events! There's also news and schedules of upcoming events. And back issues of the GRRapevine & Sunday Bulletin.

[www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg](http://www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg)

## RECONCILIATION - REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION

As we move into Lent...

The focus during the season of Lent is on repentance and conversion. As we enter into the season, we prepare to celebrate the Lord's resurrection at Easter, to renew our baptismal commitment and to welcome new members into the Church through the sacraments of initiation. We accomplish this preparation through prayer, self-discipline, fasting, reflection and generosity (almsgiving).

Repentance and conversion...

Celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation is a privileged means of entering into this journey of repentance and conversion. Repentance refers to our acknowledgment of our sinfulness and asking forgiveness; conversion refers to the ongoing process of changing those attitudes, motives, roots of sin in our lives that lead to particular sinful behaviour. As we celebrate the sacrament, we acknowledge our sins, asking God's forgiveness. As we experience the gift of God's forgiveness and compassion, we commit ourselves to the process of conversion - to change our lives and our behaviour. One element in the Act of Contrition is the commitment to change, to sin no more. So often in the Gospels, as Jesus forgave people, he sent them forth with the admonition to "go and try not to sin anymore". When we celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation, we enter into an intimate encounter with our compassionate, forgiving God; we also encounter the forgiving community. Our relationships with God and the community are restored through this sacrament.

Celebrating Reconciliation as a community...

In coming together to celebrate Reconciliation as a community of believers, we do what we are called to do as community. We support each other in our journey of faith. We acknowledge the effect our sin has on the rest of the community. We bring ourselves and our needs before God together, recognizing that we share life together, that we are called to journey together, that we help one another along the journey, that we are not called to bear our burdens alone. God, our compassionate Father, bears our burdens, relieves us of the burdens, forgives our sins; we also bear one another's burdens and forgive one another. This is who we are as community. This call is lived out concretely in the life of our community as we celebrate Reconciliation together. Like the younger son, we journey back to the Father and are welcomed by the Father with open arms and rejoicing. Like the elder son, we are called to welcome one another, to forgive and to rejoice. God's compassion compels us to respond in like manner.

## MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Below is the synopsis of the January financial statement.

Bank Balance	2543.50
DDF Balance	158891.99
<u>Accts Receivable</u>	<u>2288.96</u>
Total Assets	163724.45

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Donations	19278.57	Admin	21333.17
Fees	375.00	Programs	298.50
Programs	10.00	Operation/Maint.	6792.11
Other	1172.38		
<u>Rentals</u>	<u>3225.00</u>	<u>Rental Operation</u>	<u>4567.29</u>
Total Income	24060.95	Total Expense	32991.07
Net Income			-8930.12

Our Administration expenses were higher this month, because we paid three pay periods rather than two in January. We spent over \$2000 on painting and repairs to one of the apartments in preparation for renting, as well as almost \$3000 to replace windows in a couple of apartments. The cushion that we had at the end of December was able to absorb these extra maintenance costs and leave us with a fairly healthy bank balance at the end of the month. There will be a bit more maintenance expense as we prepare the vacant apartment for rental, but it will be the last of our major expenses until spring, when we will have to replace the roof over the Conference Room.

Thank you to all for your continued generous support of the work and mission of the parish.