

Our Lady of Mercy Parish News

Anointing of the Sick

Our Lady of Mercy will provide an Anointing of the Sick on Saturday October 8, at the 5:00 PM Mass and on Sunday October 9 at the 12:30 PM Mass. Anointing is offered to those who experience grave or chronic illness or are seriously ill or infirm. The Sacrament strengthens the bonds of love and faith that are stronger than disease and more powerful even than death. During the ceremony, the priest will anoint the head and hands of the sick.

Adoration and Reconciliation

Weekly Adoration and Reconciliation has resumed at Our Lady of Mercy. They will be celebrated on Tuesdays from 1:45 PM to 2:45 PM and on Wednesdays from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

Mercy Health Clinic

The Mercy Health Clinic which provides medical care to the poor and uninsured in Montgomery County is seeking physician volunteers. Their need is acute for specialists in Orthopedics,

Endocrinology, and Primary Care. The clinic is located in Gaithersburg and was founded by a group of Mercy parishioners 16 years ago. If you are a physician who would like to help them, please phone Lauren Cosgrove, MD at 240-773-1158 or email her at Lauren.Cosgrove@MercyHealthClinic.org.

Father Don

We all have a brief message on our phone inviting callers to leave a message when we can't get to the phone. Usually they are short and

pretty generic. Father Don Worch took the time to record a message that was positive and uplifting. He wanted us to know "You are important to the Lord and therefore important to me. God Bless and have a great day."

At Father Don's vigil and funeral Mass, Our Lady of Mercy church was filled to overflowing with just a portion of the faithful from parishes that he had served. His life tribute was such that everyone seemed to have a memory of his kindness, loyalty and faith. Every community

Our Lady of Mercy Parish

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has need of someone who can be relied upon for these virtues. Rest in Peace Father Don. We will not forget you.

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Gracing Lourdes Annual Back-to-School Family Picnic September 1 are Rev. Monsignor Filardi and former students who now join other high school students in OLOL's Youth Ministry which meets on Friday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Photo by Angelyn Tugado-Marzan

KICK-OFFS

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petite Mother Teresa during her visit to Washington, D.C. in the mid 1990s. Mother Teresa was just canonized this September 4.

The Catholic Church defines relics as the physical remains of a saint or some items that a saint owned or frequently used like a crucifix or a rosary. According to the Catholic Education Resources Center, "relics summon us to appreciate more profoundly not only the heroic men and women, boys and girls who have served the Master so selflessly and generously, but especially the love and mercy of the Almighty who called these His followers to the bliss of unending life in His eternal kingdom."

Relics can also refer to any object that is touched to a saint or to items owned or used by a saint. Monsignor Filardi, who celebrates his birthday this October 4, is alive and well and does not fall under the Catholic definition of a "relic" although he touched said saints – that is, when they were still alive and witnessing to the world God's love, mercy, and glory. In fact, he told this writer that he feels "pathetic in comparison" when he recalls those awestruck moments when he held the hands of said then would-be saints. Their "appeal of holiness" is what drew Monsignor Filardi to urgently go near them and touch them.

How relevant would these modern day saints be? "They're much needed by all citizens of the world," Monsignor Filardi emphatically

said. "We are all called to be holy," said the OLOL pastor. The Bible says in 1 Peter "... as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I [am] holy." Such inspiration from the said saints inspires Monsignor Filardi to kick-off his energy and muster needed strength to tend to his diocesan flock and to go about his duties for his current parish (where he has been for more than seven years now), including overseeing the renovation of the OLOL vestibule.

September kept him busy alright, what with his fervent prayers and daily masses plus joining the principal Mrs. Patricia McGann and assistant principal Mr. David Long of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School (a National Blue Ribbon Awardee of the US Dept. of Education) in gracing the school's Annual Back-to-School Family Picnic on September 1 and welcoming parish and school families during the 3rd Annual Italian Dinner September 17.

To have physically touched the hands of saints while they still walked the earth is an experience Monsignor Filardi cannot and will not forget. He knows that after they were declared saints by the Vatican, Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa are now in Heaven and can see God directly. Aware, indeed, that they are in the direct presence of God, Monsignor Filardi knows that he and the faithful can pray to these saints (and all saints, as well) and request them to ask God to help them with whatever they need.

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PICNIC

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mation related to serving in various Parish Ministries, as well as joining Scouting troops.

Principal Lisa Kane expressed her gratitude for all of the volunteers who made it a success. "We are blessed to have so many talented and hardworking school families and parishioners here at Holy Cross. It was a pleasure to see our entire community enjoying the evening together."

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Several Holy Cross faculty members, in green, share a moment with three of the outstanding and hardworking Home & School Association officers who organized the Back-to-School Picnic event.

BOOKS

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study on Kevin Henkes, writer and illustrator of several kids' books (*Kitten's First Full Moon* and *Olive's Ocean* to name two) while

Grade Three participated in an author study on Allen Say, an Asian American writer and illustrator best known for *Grandfather's Journey*, a children's picture book detailing his grandfather's voyage from Japan to the United States and back.

SJE Literary Day helps students develop life-long reading skills

while having fun. It also builds critical thinking and writing skills, and exposes the students to various types of literary voices and themes. The students took time out from their discussions to celebrate Mass as a school community for the first time after the long summer break.

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ADORATION

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take a rosary, borrow a devotional book, or take one of our guides to Eucharistic Adoration. The Blessed Sacrament is displayed in a special tabernacle with doors which can be closed if no one is in the chapel to adore before the Blessed Sacrament.

While reserving part of the host and keeping it on the altar is a practice that began with the earliest Christians, St. Francis of Assisi is credited with introducing Eucharistic Adoration to Italy in the 12th century. St. Francis believed that adoring Christ in the Eucharist was actually seeing Christ himself, encountering Jesus in a real, immediate, and personal way. From these beginnings, the practice of Eucharistic Adoration was adopted by laypeople throughout Europe. In fact, the Bishop of Avignon, in France, began the practice of perpetual (or continual) adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on September 11, 1226 which continued without interruption until the French Revolution, 550 years later.

Saints such as St. Louis de Montfort, St. Bonaventure, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and St. John Paul II, among many others, had a great devotion to the practice of Eucharistic Adoration and enjoined the faithful to

deepen their relationship with Jesus through it. St. John Paul II said, "The Church and the world have a great need of Eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith," (Dominicae Cenae). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a document called "The Saints and Eucharistic Adoration," recounts the story of St. Teresa of Avila who, when hearing someone wish that he had been able to see and talk to Jesus, replied, "But do we not have in the Eucharist the living, true and real Jesus present before us? Why look for more?"

SJE has been inviting parishioners to meet Jesus in this beautiful way of worship for a number of years. Additionally, St. John the Evangelist School students have been taking advantage of the opportunity to participate in Eucharistic Adoration. Students of all ages come to the chapel to pray with their classes on a regular basis. A fourth grader at the school says, "I think that it's good to spend time with Jesus. Everybody needs it because it just helps to calm you down and sometimes you just need to share your thoughts with Jesus. During the day in school, it can be hard to talk with Jesus with all the noise and running around. In Adoration, it's calm and you can

spend time with Jesus before you end the day." Religious Education students also go to the chapel at various times throughout the school year. Finally, to further underline the central importance of the Eucharist in Catholic sacramental life, the parish has instituted Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction after the 9:30 morning mass in the Main Church on the First Friday of every month.

In every week, there are 168 hour-long opportunities to encounter Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament – 168 chances to still the chatter that surrounds us every day, to bring our worries and cares, our joys and our sorrows, our triumphs and our failures, before the Lord. SJE is currently seeking new adorers who will commit to Eucharistic Adoration for one hour per week. Those who cannot make a weekly commitment are encouraged to find creative ways to ensure that Jesus is accompanied 24 hours per day. For example, a group of friends or members of a parish ministry might assume responsibility for a particular hour, and then rotate from week to week. Those who simply want to stop by when they can are also welcome. SJE invites you to encounter Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament – without fear about "what to say" or worries that you won't know what to do. There is no formula for Adoration.

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