

From the Heart

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From the Pastor's Desk

Spectacular weather this summer and fall seem to have made these two distinct seasons blend into one. When fall weather feels like summer we can miss the transition. However, here at Sacred Heart, much as it does in your family no doubt, the changeover is more noticeable as fall activities start and the more mellow tones of summer fade.

Right after Labor Day we began our fourth year of G.I.F.T. focusing on the Creed of our Catholic faith. By the time you read this we will have completed the first half of the year as we head toward the holiday season. We continue to reflect upon and evaluate our faith formation program and adjust it as needed. We are flattered that archdiocesan and national groups are referring parishes who are interested in taking this intergenerational approach to faith formation to us because of what they view as the caliber of our program. But more importantly we are excited when we hear about the growth that many are experiencing in their faith (especially adults) as a result of their



participation in G.I.F.T. Many of you speak of the clarity you are finding about areas of our faith that seemed vague in the past. You express greater confidence in responding to and supporting your own children in their early faith journeys. And more than a few have expressed surprise at learning something that they had completely misunderstood about our faith in the past. One of you told me, "My faith feels more real now!" That is the best part of it all.

Our Pastoral Council, the primary consultative body in our parish, has a full agenda this year as we consider a five year strategic plan for the parish and also whether or not we should twin with a parish in Haiti. We post our monthly topic for discussion and brainstorming in the bulletin in anticipation of each meeting so that any parishioner who wishes may offer insight and/or comment to individual council members. You can also do this via e-mail at pastoralcouncil@sacredheartchurch.info.

Our discernment on the question of twinning with a parish in Haiti is going

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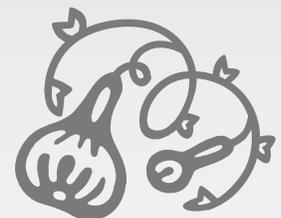
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From the Pastor's Desk

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now with information in the bulletin and input from guest speakers about. We will take all this input and information to prayer during the upcoming Lent and will conduct some open parish meetings after Easter before directing it to the Pastoral Council for consensus. Their recommendation will then be forwarded to me and the pastoral staff. It is an exciting and important possibility, and I ask that you become aware and involved during the process so that you can fully participate in this parish discernment.

We have two new people serving our parish community. Deb McGrath has joined the parish staff as coordinator of design for the G.I.F.T. program. Deb and her husband Rick and son Tim have been parish members for many years and Deb had served as coordinator of the home packet for the past three years. She brings that experience and expertise

to her new position. Monsignor John Hossan will be joining Fr. Thuer and I as presiders at our weekend Masses. Monsignor is a retired priest of the Diocese of Bridgeport who recently moved into Heritage Village. He served in both parish and diocesan ministry and many of our parishioners know him in one of those capacities. I am happy to welcome him, and I appreciate his help at our parish liturgy.

We continue to have concern about our young people and their unique needs as they grow in faith. We attempted to hire a youth minister this fall but were unable to find a suitable candidate. We decided to postpone the search until next spring. In the meantime we have asked several people to take over the different parts of the Youth Ministry job. Fran Walsh, the catechist for 9th and 10th grade in G.I.F.T., has taken over as Coordinator of Confirmation. Selena

Carella will be coordinator of the Mission Trip. Annie Ackerman coordinated our participation in the archdiocesan Youth Spectacular last month. Lynn Tidgewell and Katie and Annie Ackerman are new coordinators of the J-Walking program, which begins in January.

All of this in addition to the normal day-to-day activities and ministries of our parish indicate that the pace of life and depth of faith at Sacred Heart continues into this new season. May God continue to bless our efforts in his name!

Father Joe



On October 26, several participants from the 2009 Mission Trip group gathered at Sacred Heart to carve pumpkins and then deliver them to the residents at River Glen, where they were very well received and appreciated.

From the Heart

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New members, ideas, and Ask Father questions are welcome throughout the year. Please contact the parish office, 264-5071, or Katherine Pavone at 264-6599.

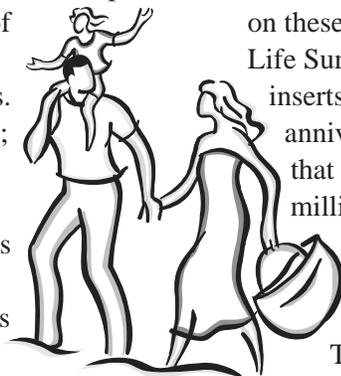
Respect Life Committee

The Respect Life Committee of Sacred Heart faith community has as its goal to proclaim and promote the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death and the inherent dignity of the human person in keeping with the principles of our Catholic social teachings.

We believe that every person is precious; that people are more important than things; that the measure of every institution and country is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of each person.

Because of these beliefs, our mission is to educate the parish on issues including: value of family and marriage; sexuality; sex education; pornography; teen pregnancy; abortion; partial birth abortion; infant euthanasia; end of life decisions; health care disparities; euthanasia; stem cell research; the evil of war; and the dignity of individuals including prisoners, the disabled, the elderly, the homeless, the poor, the illegal immigrant, and the refugee.

Each of these issues needs to be understood from the Catholic Church's belief in the inherent dignity of the human person. As Christians we all need to be aware of



these political and controversial topics, and we need to study them.

The Respect Life Committee provides timely information on these issues. The first Sunday in October is Respect Life Sunday. During the month of October educational inserts are placed in the bulletins. January 22 is the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion in 1973. Since then, over 40 million children have lost their lives in the United States. Prayer services are offered on that day for those who are unable to attend the annual March for Life in Washington, DC.

There are many other programs and events which could be held during the year. Your help is needed to do this. If you believe as we do in the dignity of the human person and that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution or country is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person, then you should join the Respect Life Committee!

Those interested may call Lori DePalma @ 262-1887 or Deacon Chuck Dietsch @ 265-5071.

Catholics Coming Home

One Person's Story of Coming Home—Why and How

Many times people leave the practice of the Church because of other people—someone has been unreasonable or unkind or has not been inclusive. Sometimes a conscious decision to leave is made; other times an individual just begins to drift away. But why and how do they come back? Here is the story of one person I met this summer who returned to the faith because of other people.

"I am a Catholic. For a long time I did not go to church, nor did I asso-

ciate with other Catholics. In fact, I didn't particularly think about being Catholic unless someone asked. I had been baptized as an infant. I attended Catholic school. I made my first Communion and when I was confirmed, I was finished and grateful not to have any more classes to attend. I went off to college and then to work. Being Catholic was the last thing on my mind. I had a life to establish and live.

My father always went to church—from the earliest I can remember. It

seemed like something very old fashioned. I never really understood this ritual of going to Mass every Sunday and sometimes during the week. It seemed like an appendage to his life, something to do to keep busy now that he was alone.

When my father got sick, I couldn't always be there with him. I lived some miles away and was really busy with all that was going on in my life. I knew I should get there

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Catholics Coming Home

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more often. Dad was kind. He said he understood. And people from his parish were helping him. I thought how nice, but that was all I thought at the time.

I was with my dad when he died. I was grateful for that moment of grace. As I was sitting quietly in the house reflecting on his life, the doorbell rang. It was a woman from his church who had just heard about my dad and knowing I was there alone, brought me food. I was so stunned I could barely speak. When I found my voice, I invited her in. Her name was Emily, and she was one of the many people from the church who knew dad for many years. They attended the same Mass on Sunday, and sometimes during the week. They were part of the helping hands committee that brought food to those who could no longer get out to shop, and even helped people to cook. I didn't know my dad could cook, and that he did so for others! Now this woman was here for me. She introduced me to people in the parish who would help me prepare the funeral liturgy, answer any questions I had about the funeral, and she introduced me to others who would serve a luncheon after the service.

When I returned home, I couldn't stop thinking about the friends that dad had, and I began to take another look at the Catholic Church. Suddenly it didn't seem so old fashioned to be a member. In fact, I was grateful for

all that the members of this church had done for me. And maybe for the first time in my life I understood what it meant to be Catholic. It was time to update that membership and begin to see how I could be more connected to my local Catholic church.

I am now a parish staff member, working in the faith formation program, and I continue to share with others the joy of being Catholic—even if I have been away for quite awhile. I see now that membership in the church is life-long and personal. I hope to do for others what my dad and Emily did for me.”

How are we doing as a Catholic Faith Community? Are we

living our mission statement to be a “faith-filled family and vibrant community of believers in Jesus Christ?” Are we “the visible presence of Jesus Christ” through our word and action? Would others want to return to the practice of the faith or join our community because of what they see in us? I certainly believe so!

If you are a Catholic who has drifted away, and are thinking about returning to the practice of the faith, how about giving us another look? We would be happy to hear from you, to listen to your stories of faith and share ours with you. Together let us see where and how your faith can “feel at home” within the Catholic Community at Sacred Heart. Call Sr. Pat or Fr. Joe at 264-5071. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sister Pat



We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ...

The Nicene Creed is the focus of this year's faith formation sessions.



An Invitation

We know of many parishioners here at Sacred Heart, who have had spiritually uplifting experiences while in service to others. An example is the faith building that happens when our young people go on their yearly mission trip. They always come back with a renewed sense of God in their lives.

We at *From the Heart* would love to be able to share some of these experiences with our faith community. If you have had one of these faith-renewing experiences and would be willing to share it with the parish, please contact Katherine Pavone at 264-6599. You can write the article yourself, or we will interview you if you prefer.

Perhaps sharing your experience can help someone else along his or her faith journey.

Time to Free the Slaves—Again?

If you took the same sort of history courses I did in high school, you would have been lead to believe that slavery ended in the United States on New Year's Day in 1863, when President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. But, as with so many other things we were taught in school, it "ain't necessarily so."

Not only does slavery still exist in the United States, but in some parts of our country the taking and keeping of slaves has the same characteristics that it had in the Old South: it is regarded as an important part of the local economy, protected and perpetuated by powerful vested interests.

You wouldn't be surprised to hear slavery still exists in the Sudan, Chad or another of those so-called "backward" countries where human freedom and dignity are not highly regarded. But, you say, the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of our republic, states: "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." Surely that is a fine starting point from which to end the oppression of all people!

But then, as now, the necessities of commerce, and the need to make a "reasonable profit" overrode noble words and virtuous intentions. Many of the signers of the Declaration owned slaves. Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the document, owned slaves, and like most of his colleagues, would continue to own them for the rest of his days on earth.

It took nearly a century before the Emancipation Proclamation gave the noble words some semblance of meaning. But the Proclamation was more a weapon of war than a humanitarian act, because it did not free *all* of the slaves. Only slaves living in states under the control of the Confederates were officially "emancipated." Left bound were the slaves (a very large number) living in states where slavery was "legal," and which had remained loyal to the Union. Because a slave in a Confederate state knew that he was more likely to be hanged than to have his claim to freedom being listened to, it is unlikely that the

Emancipation Proclamation "emancipated" many slaves. Universal emancipation was not announced until 1865, when the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution declared that slavery would no longer "exist within the



United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." But the long tragicomedy of Reconstruction increased the bitter feelings on both sides and helped to create a social atmosphere in which, even to this day, there are certain classes of persons in this country whose entitlement to the "unalienable rights" named in the Declaration is considered to be tenuous.

Due in large part to the strain of economic competition, we often dehumanize visitors to this country, legal or illegal, here of their own volition or here under duress. We often ignore our duty to protect them from exploitation and harm while they are our guests.

It is in this atmosphere that modern day slavers find it possible to defy the laws of the land and of human decency in order to carry on their activities.

I will leave it to others to try to deal with the fact that an estimated 27 million people around the world now live as slaves, and that trafficking in slaves is considered by law enforcement officials to be the fastest growing criminal activity worldwide and, after illegal drug sales and arms trafficking, is today the world's third most profitable criminal activity, generating \$31 billion annually.

This article will deal only with slavery in the United States. Sometimes it is more effective to concentrate on cleaning up your own backyard rather than worrying about all the other backyards in town.

So just how dirty is our backyard?

We can find basic statistics in the most recent issue (June 2008) of the U.S. State Department's *Annual Trafficking in Persons Report*. Production of this report has been the responsibility of the Department's *Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons* since 2000, when the group was founded in 2000 by the passage of the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act*.

Roughly 50,000 slaves pass through the United States,

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ASK FATHER

I am concerned that my husband/wife/child/friend has drifted away from participation in the life of the Church. What can I do about it?

That is a question about which I also have a lot of concern. After being pastor here for a little over 5 years I too have noticed people who have “drifted away.” Most have no obvious reason for it, and they are very friendly when I see them elsewhere. Many even mention that they feel bad about not participating any longer. What can we do?

We can keep the topic in our conversation respectful. This is not a time for judgmental attitudes or words, but the point should not be ignored. Many people do not bring it up even to their own children. I always suggest that it be a live topic for conversation perhaps through an invitation to join you for Mass, providing an opportunity to reflect about something you got from Mass or from participation in a ministry here, or what your Catholic faith means to you, etc. No nagging, but don't let the conversation or question die!

Suggest that they speak with someone about their faith. Both Sr. Pat and I are available for such conversations and we really enjoy them. Sometimes a person might feel more comfortable talking with one of us in a confidential pastoral way.

Suggest the “Catholics Coming Home” program which Sr. Pat and her team run each fall and spring. This is an opportunity with others to come, listen, share a story of their anger or hurt or just be there. There



is an open invitation to all inactive Catholics to come and see without any obligation.

I am surprised that parents sometimes allow their grammar and high school age children to disconnect from the Church and participation in Mass even when the parents participate. It surprises me to hear parents say that they cannot get their children to go to Mass or that their children need to sleep or that they have a game (or three!) scheduled for Sunday and

cannot be expected to make it. Such excuses allow children to drift away when they need to be building habits of faith practice for later life. Such choices always say something to impressionable young people: religious faith and practice is not that important. When a young person gets that message early in life it is very difficult to change. Parents need to be free to speak about what faith and practice does for them, what they value about it and to articulate their expectations for how they wish their children to grow up. As they become more independent the choice is theirs, but while they live with you and depend on your guidance, they need you to be parents.

Realize how important your own example of lived, healthy and life-giving faith can be. Being who you are is sometimes the best advertisement for our faith. As St. Francis told his monks, “Preach the Gospel always....and if necessary use words.”

As always we keep one another in prayer especially when we pray together at Mass. As we each discover there is great power in prayer.

Father Joe

Blessings

Free the Slaves

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each year, on their way to their final destinations. These people are primarily from East Asia, Mexico and Central America. The U.S. is used by slavers as a transfer point and a temporary “warehouse” for their “product.” Each year about 15,000 of these people remain in the U.S., having been bought and paid for by ‘domestic customers.’ In a typical year, about one third of them are underage girls.

A report, titled *Hidden Slaves: Forced Labor in the United States*, released in 2007 by the University of California, Berkeley’s Human Rights Center, presents the findings of a five year research project, and provides another layer of statistical illumination.

According to the report, forced labor occurs in at least 90 cities across the United States, located mainly in states with large immigrant communities, including California, Florida, New York and Texas. At any given time, 10,000 or more people are forced to toil in sweat shops, clean homes, labor on farms, or work as prostitutes or strippers.

Victims of forced labor are brought into the United States from at least 38 countries, with China, Mexico and Vietnam topping the list. Some are born in the United States.

Traffickers convince parents that their children will be taught a useful skill or trade once they are “recruited.” In other cases, victims are forcefully kidnapped or abducted.

Forced labor is supported by poorly regulated industries with a high need for cheap labor. A lack of government monitoring allows unscrupulous employers and criminal networks to maintain complete control over workers. New federal laws have been passed to combat these crimes, but the researchers found that much more needs to be done, especially at the local level. Police officers, rather than federal agents are most likely to encounter forced labor but often mistake it for illegal immigration and treat victims as criminals rather than crime victims.

So how does today’s version of slavery differ from its nineteenth century ancestor?

In addition to the fact that the skin color of today’s slave is as likely to be yellow, brown, or even white, as it is to be black, today’s slavery differs mainly in the recruiting techniques and in the vehicles that are used to transport the “product” to the “customer.” Gone are the slave ships, crossing the churning ocean with its miserable and seasick “cargo” stacked in between narrow decks like so much cordwood. Replacing the slave ships are speedboats, rusty vans, and ancient school buses with the windows painted over.

Recruiting techniques have been updated. The old-

time slavers had it easy. All they had to do was storm into a village in Africa someplace, round up every healthy-looking man, woman and child, chain them together, and march them off toward the waiting slave ship. Today’s slavers have to be more inventive—and persuasive.

Modern-day slavers do what their ancestors never did. They advertise. They tempt prospective victims by advertising good jobs for high pay in exciting cities or by setting up bogus employment, travel, modeling and matchmaking agencies to lure unsuspecting young men and women.

Slavery can occur anywhere. Its dark shadow falls across the entire country, touching every state. Here are just two of the stories:



In spring of 2004, Katya, like thousands of other foreign exchange university students, was looking forward to the summer job placement that she and a friend, Letna, had received via email. The two girls were delighted to find that their airfare had been paid, as promised. Now they could spend their extra money on the American clothes they would need in their new jobs.

When Katya and Letna arrived at Dulles Airport after a long flight from the Ukraine, the two girls were relieved to find that the people who were there to greet them spoke Russian.

“When we got to the hotel in Detroit, everything changed,” says Katya. “They closed the door and sat us down on the couch, took our passports and papers and said, ‘You owe us big money for bringing you here.’ They told us that we were going to be working at a strip club called Cheetahs.”



Two couples in Washington, D.C. brought Cameroonian teenagers into the United States with the promise of a fully funded education and then forced them to work 14 hours a day as domestic servants, without pay and under the constant threat of deportation.

John Bowe, examines in his book *Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor and the Dark Side of the New Global Economy*, a case which is so typical of the exploitation of the powerless by the powerful that it bears summarization here.

The U.S. commonwealth of Saipan is a tiny island in the Pacific. It has been described by some as a miracle of economic development. The truth is that it is an economically vulnerable society where the only significant sources

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A Conversation at My Desk

“It’s Matthew 25 verse 36,” said my angel.

I was sitting at my desk in my Heritage Village condominium eating a roll chocked full of goodies, reminding myself to take human bites.

“You startled me.”

“You asked me a question, and I answered it. Don’t forget, I’m here (to serve and obey) except when it comes to you; I’m careful about the obey part,” replied Dennis.

I know I have an ego to give my angel a name, especially my own name, but Dennis doesn’t mind, at least he has never complained. As a matter of fact, he really has never complained about anything. I wonder if that’s an angel union rule.

I felt a sigh from him (yes, my angel is a male and I mean no disrespect) realizing I may be pushing the envelope a bit.

“I was with Christ when he outlined the various conditions he wanted his Christians to follow and one of them, and I can’t tell you how proud of you I am, is, ‘*in prison and you visited me,*’ which words are found in Matthew 25, verse 36.”

Whenever my angel mentions his relationship with Christ, his whole demeanor changes. It isn’t anything I can see, of course, therefore I am unable to describe it except that I feel the tremendous love from him to Christ. On this earth, this deep manifestation of affection is called agape.

To educate some of you, agape love is the giving of love and expecting nothing in return. It is a deeper perception of affection much like “shalom” that means far more than merely peace.

“Why were you so worried that

you may fail the prisoners in response to their spiritual needs? Don’t you think I will give you the right words, that all you have to do is let me work through you? It is called the power of prayer. The prisoners sit and listen to you and through the process of listening, they begin to sense that you care for them. Another reason why I think you’re a success in connecting with them is you don’t preach. You’re not judgmental. You obviously have forgotten that our Savior sat with sinners and listened. As a reminder to you, he didn’t preach either.”

“I would never compare myself with him...”

“You’re not, I am,” interrupted Dennis. “And when you joined the Kairos Ministry, you pledged to offer yourself to the prisoners through ‘God’s special time.’”

Kairos means a special time for them, yet what you fail to realize, it’s also a special time for you.”

“You haven’t spoken to me like that in a long time.” I felt like a ten year old being chastised by the school principal.

“You’re probably right about the chastisement and you should feel that way. I like to take advantage of you when you’re eating since I can trust you won’t miss a mouthful to argue with me.”

“You unnerve me when you read my mind, you know,” I said somewhat petulantly.

“On the bright side of our conversation,” continued the angel, “I do take full credit for the ‘laugh and cry’ theme that you initiated at the Kairos retreat for the inmates last weekend. It resulted in a great suc-



cess with the men.”

“Enough is enough.” I said. “Granted I prayed for your help at the retreat’s inception but it does take two of us, you know.” I don’t get annoyed with my angel often, but this was one of those times that I did.

“Yes, your annoyance is duly recorded, but in any event, Dennis, I say this most sincerely, you made me look good in front of my fellow angels. You actually listened to me. I know you always have the option to ignore me as you have on many occasions, but this time, you let me help. You were so worried and you actually let me share your burden. It is you who stood in front of eighty men and told them that they are undertaking a journey in which we are here to guide. ‘There will be tears as you open your heart and accept Christ, and there will be laughter when you feel his amazing grace overcome you.’ When you finished, there was silence among the prisoners. They would wait and see since trust is not a word that is contained in their vocabulary. My dear, dear Dennis, did you ever think for one second I would lead you astray?”

“Not for a moment,” I truthfully answered.

“Finish your meal. I can see how you are looking at lunch with loving

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Free the Slaves

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of employment are the garment industry, dwindling tourism, and “public service” in a corrupt and nepotistic government. Poverty rates here are as high as 35%.

The prominence of the garment industry is based upon artificial advantages which could be removed by the U.S. Congress practically overnight; U.S. minimum wage laws do not apply on Saipan; there are no U.S. import tariffs for goods manufactured there, and items can be marked, “Made in the USA.”

Most of the major American clothing retailers (The Gap, Polo, Abercrombie & Fitch, Target, JC Penney, etc.) have contracts with the 30 garment factories on Saipan, which constituted a \$1 billion industry, employing over 10,000 workers. Their American clients were able to sell garments purchased from a Saipan factory for ten times what they paid for them.

The garment factories imported workers, most of them young women, some as young as 18, from China, Thailand, the Philippines and other poor Asian countries and paid them \$3.05 an hour. Even at \$3.05, the workers earned considerably more than they could in their home countries. The problem was that they didn't get to keep much of what they earned. Each of them owed the company exorbitant “recruiting” and transportation fees, typically thousands of dollars, and the costs of their food and lodging came out of their pay, too. Then there was always the insidious “company store.”

They had to keep their heads down, too, and needed to abide by strict company policy, which punished them for displaying the slightest hint of individuality or for laying claim to any rights that would be taken for granted by workers in other regions of the U.S.

Many worked seven days a week and sent home what was left after the company took its share. The majority of the garment workers lived in factory-owned housing facilities where it was common for them to be housed eight to a room. They were not permitted to leave their barracks after work hours, being essentially held captive on the factory grounds. They also were forced to sign contracts by which they agreed to give up certain freedoms, including the right to quit their jobs, to join a union, to attend religious services, and to marry.

You have probably noted the use of the past tense in

the preceding description. I am happy to report to you that, in this case, the powerless have forced some measure of justice out of the powerful. In 1999, a small group of very courageous members of Saipan's garment workers filed a series of lawsuits against the manufacturers. They cited the poor conditions under which they were forced to work and live, and declared that the freedom forfeiture contracts they had been forced to sign placed them in a condition of “indentured servitude.” They also sued a large group of the American clothing retailers for false advertising by, among other things, using the “Made in the U.S.A” label and promoting their goods as sweatshop-free.

The lawsuits resulted in a significant victory for the workers. The \$20 million settlement was the largest award ever made in an international human rights case.

Each of the eligible 30,000 workers received as much as \$4,000 in back wages.

The code of conduct agreed to by the settling companies ends some of the worst abuses. Recruitment fees of up to \$7,000 have now been limited to only the cost of transportation to Saipan. Contracts which prohibit workers from practicing their religions, dating, joining unions, etc. are no longer allowed. Factory owners are prohibited from confiscating workers' passports, preventing the workers from leaving their living quarters, and physically or sexually abusing them. Workers cannot be forced to work unpaid overtime. They must be paid the minimum wage and time and a half for work beyond 40 hours. Workers can file complaints without fear of retaliation. A repatriation fund has been established so that workers who want to return to their home countries are eligible for up to \$3,000 in relocation grants.



What can you do to combat the kind of abuses outlined in this article?

First, you can refuse to do business with any company that you have good reason to believe is profiting from the use of unpaid workers.

Second, you can report any suspected cases of human trafficking that you run across. There are several ways you can do this. A toll-free number (888-373-7888) run by the Covenant House, sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services in collaboration with the Department of Justice, is available to allow possible cases of slavery to be reported and victims to be instantly referred to an aid organization which will, if necessary,

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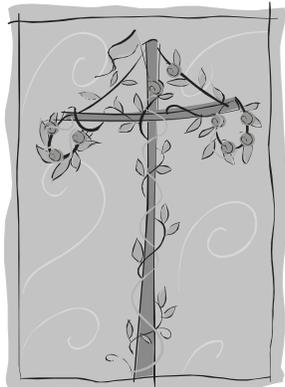
Early Martyrs and the Persecuted Church

The word martyr comes from the Greek meaning “witness.” Early Christians who were martyred suffered in a variety of horrible ways. There was a new faith with very little history of an established church or

earlier saints from which to draw strength. Yet, because of their unswerving belief in Jesus Christ, they were able to stay the course, and when necessary, give up their lives. They met untimely and gruesome deaths but many were canonized and are still remembered today.

Followers of this new Christian faith faced the greatest persecution between the years 33-313. A martyr’s day of death is celebrated because that is when they entered into eternal life. It is believed that all Twelve Apostles, except John, were martyred.

For the ten years he was bishop, St. Clement, the fourth bishop of Rome, sent advice to the Corinthians. One impassioned letter was read aloud in churches for many years. St. Clement wrote, “The strong must make sure they care for the weak. The rich must be certain they give enough to supply all the needs of the poor. The poor must thank God for supplying their needs. We all need each other: the great need the small; the small need the great. In our body, the head is useless without the feet and the feet without the head. The tiniest limbs of our body are useful and necessary to the whole.” St. Clement died



around the year 101. Legend tells us that he was enslaved and later put to death by drowning, an anchor tied around his neck and thrown into the sea.

St. Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna. In the year 155, riots broke out as people accused the Christians of bringing bad fortune to their city by not worshipping the old gods. At

age 86, Polycarp was arrested and asked to denounce his faith, but he would not. He was threatened with being thrown to the lions, but still Polycarp would not deny Jesus. Then he was threatened with death by fire, but he replied, “You threaten me with fire which will burn for only a short time, but I know the everlasting joy of heaven that is to come.” Polycarp was tied to a stake, wood placed around him and lit, but the flames did not touch him. The crowds began to jeer and a soldier was ordered to stab him to death.

Legend has it that there was so much blood it quenched the flames. His followers documented his story of faith and fight against evil so others might “remember those who have fought before.”

It was against Roman law to be a Christian but for the most part they were left alone, meeting in secret to pray and share the bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus. Every so often groups of Christians were arrested and thrown to the lions as hundreds of Roman citizens in the arena cheered. Some emperors were more notorious than most. Decius was emperor in 249, and Christians were tortured and executed if they

didn’t worship the old gods. Valerian was equally cruel. In 257 he ordered, “There shall be no meetings of Christians in any place. If anyone disobeys he shall be beheaded.”

The emperor Diocletian made a series of edicts against Christians throughout the empire in the year 303. The first stated that all churches were to be closed and all Bibles destroyed. Then he ordered the imprisonment of all clergy and priests. Later he ordered them to be executed. In his 4th edict, he ordered everyone, on pain of death, to make sacrifices to the Roman gods. Many Christians refused and were put to death. Eusebius, a famous Christian historian wrote, “So many suffered that...the executioners grew weary.”

Diane Tomas

A Conversation

(Continued from page 8)

eyes. Even I know I can’t compete with your favorite, liverwurst club on a hard roll. Incidentally, that’s extremely fattening you know.”

“Thank you for reminding me,” I said disconsolately, putting the roll down on my desk.

“As I said before, I am here only to serve and obey.”

“I just bet you are,” I said, and I know I heard him chuckle.

And so my life goes on, thankfully with my angel at my side.



Dennis McLaughlin

Free the Slaves

(Continued from page 9)

arrange for assistance by local law enforcement.

Anyone in the United States identified by law enforcement as a victim of a severe form of trafficking has certain rights and may be eligible for benefits, including immigration relief, social services, and access to refugee benefit programs.

Trafficking victims, who are not U.S. citizens and may be in the country illegally may be granted permission, by the Attorney General of the United States, to stay in the country temporarily during an investigation or prosecution. They can also apply for a “T-visa,” a special three-year visa for victims of trafficking which also allows them to apply for legal permanent residence status at the end of the three-year period. To qualify, the victims must be willing to assist in every reasonable way in the investigation and prosecution of the trafficking case. If the victim is under the age of 18, special rules apply.

A person who is granted temporary permission to remain in the United States or applies for the T-visa, and is willing to assist in the investigation and prosecution, may also be “certified” as a victim of trafficking. Once certified, the person is eligible for benefits and services to the same extent as a refugee. Therefore, certification allows the person to have access to refugee resettlement services, and public benefits such as food stamps and Refugee Medical Assistance.

Victims under the age of 18 do not have to be certified, but if determined eligible, they can be placed in the network of Unaccompanied Refugee Minor programs, which include state sponsored foster care programs.

Someone identified as a possible trafficking victim, but is not yet certified, may also be eligible for assistance through Catholic Charities programs.

W.J. Calabrese

With
LIBERTY
and **JUSTICE**
for All ★

The Final Part of the Lord's Prayer Reflections of Igor Sikorsky

“And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil”



To many modern people this part of the prayer instructs us to ask not for courage and determination to win a certain battle, but for help to avoid that battle, Sikorsky states. “The origin and source of the greatest tragedies in the life of the world and of individuals can be traced to the mysterious factors discussed in this eleven-word sentence.”

“Simply stated, Christ who taught us this prayer warns of the danger and that our personal forces are inadequate to resist the enemy and we are instructed to call for help.”

Sikorsky writes a lot about physical evil like disease or illness. He explains that people think excess gambling, drinking, vice and crime are the worst evils. However, he goes on, the greatest evil ever done that resulted in Calvary was probably not committed by drunkards, criminals, or gamblers. It was done by the power behind the tragedy, a form of idealism and patriotism misled by a “sinister, evil, ideological influence.”

Sikorsky, a Russian, understood the evil Communism caused, many times by people who would lie, cheat and kill, not for selfish reasons but for misguided idealistic causes. “Look,” he says, “what happened in Russia.” The moral and spiritual atmosphere became “excessively befogged by godlessness.” Men deprived themselves of divine guidance.

In the Gospel we find the warning, “He, the devil, was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is not truth in him. He is a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:44)

Evil, he stresses, could seem to assume a variety of aspects and may even appear under the guise of service to idealistic or humanitarian principles. That is why the writer believes that we so badly need divine guidance and we should pray, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Dina Carella



Sacred Spaces 101

Part II

OK! Everybody take a seat. Let's get started. You'll recall that at the last class I introduced the course and explained my goals. Simply put, you've signed up for a short course in architectural history. We'll be discussing the design ideas behind early Christian church spaces and how those precedents are reflected in our Sacred Heart.

Review of Part I

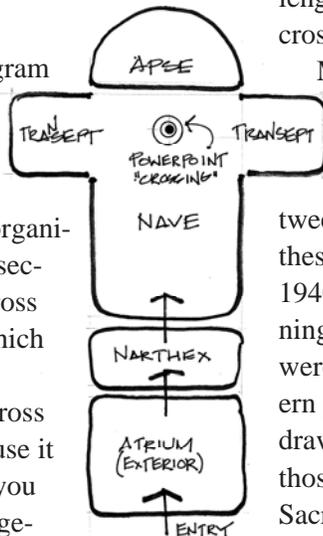
We covered these points last class:

- The first worship spaces were in houses.
- The first Christian churches started showing up about the 4th Century and were patterned after the Roman basilicas, which were public buildings.
- An outside courtyard or gathering space, called an atrium, was often part of early church planning.
- From the atrium you entered the narthex and then into a tall central space, called the nave, which focused attention toward the apse, at the opposite end from the narthex.

If I've lost you, here's a simple diagram that shows an early church layout.

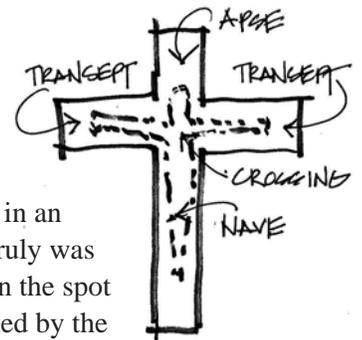
Crosses. Is yours Latin or Greek?

Let's pick up right here. This plan organization is called a Latin cross. The intersection of the transepts or "arms" of the cross with the nave created the "crossing" which was (is) sort of a magical, mysterious "power-point" in the plan. This Latin cross organization is easy to remember because it resembles the geometry you get when you lay a crucifix on a flat surface. Simple geometry elevates to powerful symbol-



EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
DIAGRAM

ism when you imagine Christ's body on the cross. The transepts recall his arms: the nave, his body; the apse, his head and the crossing, his heart. And so, in an early church, the crossing truly was the power-point, founded on the spot of saintly martyrdom, marked by the placement of the altar and crowned by a dome, arguably man's highest architectural accomplishment.



THE "LATIN CROSS"

A slightly different plan is known as the Greek cross. In this layout, the "arms" occur at the center of the nave resulting in a symmetrical plan. This form predates the Latin cross and, some believe, initially was intended to represent the four directions of the compass. In a Greek cross, the horizontal parts (the arms) occur at the mid-point of the vertical part—and each part is the same length. Many early Byzantine churches were Greek crosses.

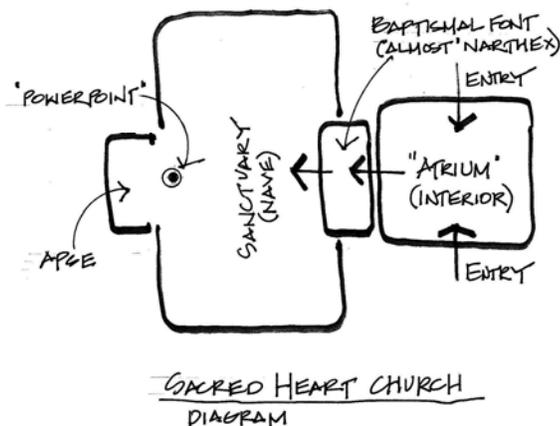
Many revival type churches built in America in the late 1800's and early 1900's were Latin crosses. Although construction materials and techniques didn't exactly replicate the Christian churches between the 4th and 9th centuries, the plan organization of these American churches remained the same. By the 1940's and 1950's the old plan organization was beginning to evolve, and by the 1970's "modern" church plans were being built. Our Sacred Heart church plan is a modern plan, yet the internal placement of its components draws on early Christian church layouts. Understanding those early precedents and seeing how they're reflected in Sacred Heart is the point of this course.



Let's Take a Walk!

Next class we're going to take an "academic" walk. During this imaginary walk, we'll make direct correlations between the internal spaces of an ancient church and those of Sacred Heart.

In anticipation of that, take a look at this diagram of Sacred Heart. Study it a bit and see if you can see how it's organization derives from the early Christian church plan.



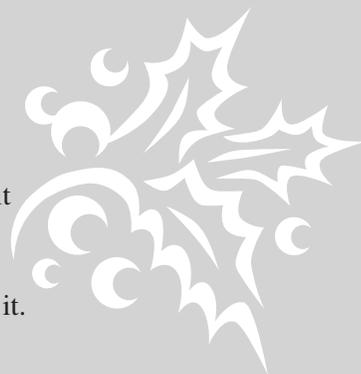
OK. We're almost done. Here's your homework. The tabernacle area next to the altar in Sacred Heart is a space that is surrounded by stained glass. What imagery is seen in the glass? Email answers to dnarducci@earthlink.net. NO! there is no cash prize. Good Luck.

D.A. Narducci III



On September 20 (a top-ten weather day) the riders and volunteers of Tour de Tribury XVI gathered to raise funds in support of the Southbury Fuel Bank. More photos and details on this year's event can be found on our parish web page under Features; Photo Scrapbook.

A Tale of Christmas Shopping



We've searched for it
 prodded for it,
 Pushed, poked,
 "Please God!"ed for it.
 Been jostled for it
 pummeled for it,
 Elbowed, pinched and
 tussled for it.

We were snapped at, hissed at,
 Been shouter and shoutee,
 Been hustled, bustled, rustled,
 With, alas!
 No Dignity!

We've phoned and queried,
 Were told, "No, Deary,"
 "We'll call you when
 It's in stock again."

But as the time grows short,
 We have good news to report
 To this tale there is a happy ending.
 For I'm most glad to say
 That on Christmas day,
 The gift, Jesus, our God will be sending.

So I hope you will see,
 That this shopping frenzy,
 Is but sham with no reward unending.
 For when all's said and done,
 He is the only one,
 With the power our souls to be mending!



Dolores Matzen



Deck the Halls

Joy
to the
World

GO!



Tell it on the
mountain!

oh come
All Ye FAITHFUL



Oh Holy Night



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a ministry at Sacred Heart which reaches out to those among us who need help in many ways such as shopping, doing yard work getting to church or appointments, etc. If you are in need, know someone who is, or if you would like to help, please call: Marilee Adams at 267-5775 or Sue Houlihan at 267-5516.



From the Heart

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