



From the Heart

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A Precious Gift

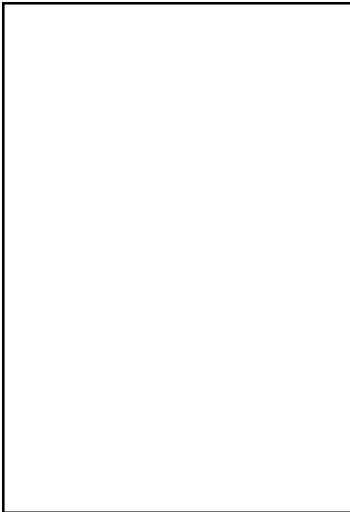
Gifts don't always come wrapped in exquisite coverings and may not be attached to a particular occasion. Often the best gift is the one wrapped in human form, a person who comes into our lives and touches us in such a profound way that our lives are better, more complete, happier and certainly more purposeful.

I have received many such gifts in my lifetime. They are the ones that God has dropped in my lap as an expression of his love for me and as an opportunity for me to grow and flourish. These are

flesh and blood "people" gifts—real signs of God's presence among us.

For eighteen years I have been blessed, like so many others, by knowing one of God's uniquely fashioned gifts—her given name was Alfonsina, but most of us knew her as Fran (Roswell). She was a dynamo of energy possessing an incredible and contagious spirit. Her zest for life and her ability to find joy in everything all stemmed from her tenacious faith in God, a faith so real and unshakable that it lived through circumstances that would shake the foundations of most. "Fonzie" also possessed the ability to completely trust in God when there

were no obvious answers or available solutions to the mysteries of life. She was always ready to give a little more of her time, energy and faith to anyone in need.



On September 4th God said, "Well done, Alfonsina!" You have been a precious instrument of witness to others—come home and enter into the joy you have longed for all your life." It's hard to believe Fran is gone from us, or that she's not going to pop through the door with that incredible smile that always made the day a little brighter. She is gone; but the lessons she taught so many of us will

always be with us, and in a powerful way, challenging us to trust God and turn everything over to him.

Fr. Flynn

(Editor's note: The following article was written in August before Fran Roswell's death)

When I first met Fran Roswell, shortly after moving to Southbury, it was love at first mirth! Her delicious sense of humor, coupled with a deep spiritual core, surfaces naturally. She personifies the term mother

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Fran Roswell

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confessor—with a sidecar of jokes. An exchange with Fran leaves you knowing all is well and in God's hands, so you don't take life's cares and worries too seriously; laughter, she knows, is the great liberator of self-absorption.

Fran arrived in Southbury some 53 years ago as Bud's bride (everyone called him Bud). "I was just a Sunday Catholic," she admitted, but then mentioned starting the C.C.D. program (called C.Y.O. in those days) when Sacred Heart was just a one-room chapel with a room downstairs. It was then a mission church located on Route 6, where the cemetery is now.

Most parishioners recognize Fran as a reader at daily and Sunday Masses. Her thoughtful and dynamic proclamation of the word, especially at Easter season Masses, epitomizes her profound spirituality. Closest to her heart is the joy and privilege of being a minister of the Eucharistic.

There probably isn't a ministry at Sacred Heart that her life hasn't touched. Fran became involved with Extend-A-Hand after Bud's funeral. (Bud was a Methodist and came into the Church two years before his death.) Fran was touched by the caring and grace extended by this ministry to grieving families, and she chaired this committee for many years.

When I asked Fran who most influenced her faith, she responded with that well-known chuckle that is hers alone. "My parents saw to it that I never missed Mass on Sunday. There would be no roller-skating for me on Sunday afternoon (a special event) if I didn't go to Mass. As so often happens, the seed was planted and faith grew." Referring to her devotion to daily Mass, she told me, "One day I woke up and said, 'Oh what a beautiful day to be alive,' and something in my heart said, 'why don't you go to Church and thank God.'" That was the beginning of a lifetime of an ever-deepening faith.

Knowing that Fran is a member of the Third Order of Franciscans, a secular religious order sanctioned by the Pope, I asked for enlightenment. Fran explained the basic principle. You strive to live as close to the Gospel mes-

sage as you can—"life to Gospel—Gospel to life." In a soft reverent voice, Fran told me it was her understanding that St. Francis saw every Franciscan-to-be before he died, and that St. Francis will greet each one in heaven.

Myriad thoughts and quotes ran through my mind as I drove home. How enriched I felt knowing her—Mother Theresa's quote, "We are not called to be successful, just faithful," and one about Maurice Baring from the book Literary Converts by Joseph Pearce, "Life was never a

habit with him, it was always a miracle—the inevitable was accepted by

his unfailing qualities of gentleness and strength. He maintained (until the hour of his death) the

mind of a child who walked through life's joys and sorrows with a deep conviction that he was always holding God's hand."

Fran is such a faithful child of God. Oh, that we too could be such faithful children.

Meg Walsh

"We are not called to be successful, just faithful."



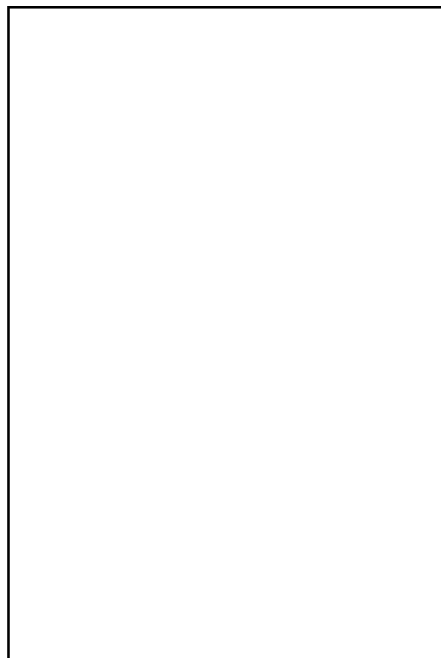
Faith and Ministry...A Celebration of Life

An anniversary of Service

At a time when the roles, responsibilities and expectations of Catholics had been clearly defined and were adhered to without dissent, the Church that many of us knew and accepted, suddenly changed. Under the leadership of a visionary and charismatic Pontiff, Pope John XXIII, an Ecumenical Council was convened in the early 1960's—a Council which would ultimately change the dimension of the faith and the role of the laity.

Centered on a return to early Church principles, one of the sweeping changes was the reestablishment of the diaconate. Many Catholics were reluctant to accept or become a part of something that had once been perceived as “throwing the baby out with the bath water.” Yet, even in the uncertainty of these changes, many faithful people recognized, accepted and responded to the call to live and share their faith in an entirely new dimension. One of these individuals was Vincent Cassidy, a lifetime Catholic and native son of Southbury who quietly, yet demonstrably lived his faith, loved his parish and did whatever he could to assist his pastor, Father John B. Shea, in keeping things on an even keel at Sacred Heart.

What a shock it must have been on that day when Fr. Shea made another of his requests of Vin. This was a very different and life-altering request—to enter a course of training for three years, to submit to a grueling schedule of study in the areas of theology, scripture, Christology, canon law, rubrics, ecclesiology and



homiletics and ultimately to enter the ranks of the first men of the Archdiocese of Hartford to become a permanent deacon. Although we cannot possibly begin to comprehend the questions, apprehensions and fears Vinnie had about what this would actually entail, he said “yes”.

On November 11th, we paused to celebrate with Vinnie and his family his 25th anniversary of ordination to the permanent diaconate. As a parish we celebrate a life of faith and a commitment to ministry. Like so many faithful men and women spoken of in the scriptures, Vin said, “Yes, Lord, use me!” He has not looked back; he has not faltered in his conviction or commitment. He simply does God’s work in the quiet demeanor that is so typical of Vin Cassidy.

Thank you, Vin for your faith and your ministry and for all of the countless ways you challenge us to live our faith to the fullest.

Happy 25th Anniversary from a grateful parish!

Father Flynn



Suggestion Box

P

lease take note of the suggestion box in the church atrium. Any suggestions, comments or questions regarding faith, the Church or our parish will be answered individually by the appropriate committee or by Father Flynn. Each entry must include name,

Crosswinds

“...And when you have done everything that is expected of you, say: I am simply a useless servant having only done what I have been commanded to do!”

The image of servanthood expressed in St. Luke's Gospel is difficult for us to swallow. In one sense, we have no concept of what it means to be anyone's servant other than working for someone we might consider a slave driver. When it comes to our everyday work, we know what our job requires. We are expected to be responsible, fulfill our tasks, present an attitude of competent dedication, and we take for granted that in the end there will be remuneration for our services—our weekly paycheck. Enthusiastic dedication, loyalty and creativity serve as incentives to achieve recognition and promotional rewards, but Jesus says our reward is all-inclusive in our servanthood. Our efforts, labors and responsiveness are expectations for which we are held accountable. We should seek no further “pat on the back” for simply doing what is expected of us—living our faith on a daily basis.

In our contemporary society, we all too readily dismiss the fact that faith entails a full time commitment. Today's Catholic could easily be called the “eclectic believer.” In other words, for many, faith be-

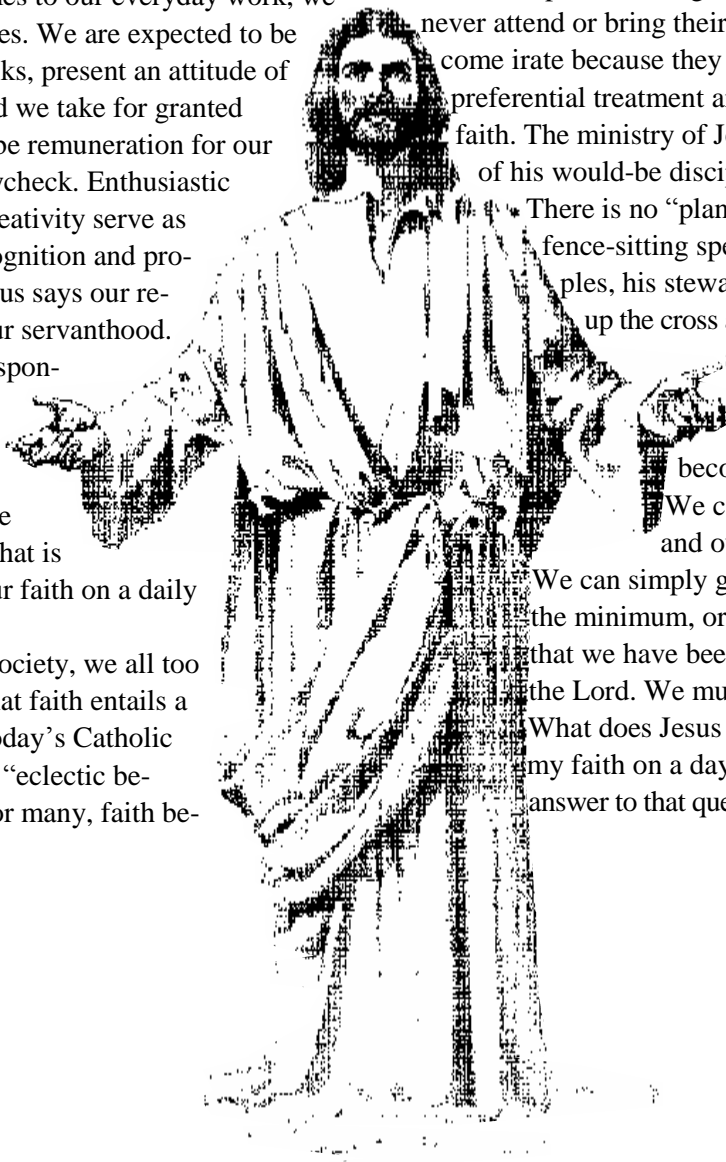
comes a pick and choose smorgasbord for convenience and palatability. If the demands of the Church suit our schedule or particular need at the time, we will participate. If the demands are cumbersome or considered unnecessary we simply ignore them. Such an attitude cannot be recognized or accepted by anyone who considers himself a Christian and a Catholic. We cannot pick or choose what we like of the Lord's commands and discard the rest.

There are times when one can only wonder what people think faith and discipleship are. Some parents feel it's necessary for their children to receive the sacraments and become exposed to religious education classes, yet they never attend or bring their children to church. Others become irate because they somehow feel they deserve preferential treatment and are exempt from living their faith. The ministry of Jesus and the demands he makes of his would-be disciples are very straightforward.

There is no “plan b,” no rationalizing and no fence-sitting spectator possibility. His disciples, his stewards of the kingdom are to take up the cross and follow him. We are to consciously renew and commit ourselves daily, and say “yes” to the Gospel so that his way becomes our way.

We can play games with our faith and our decision to become stewards.

We can simply go through the motions and do the minimum, or we can begin today to be all that we have been chosen to be as disciples of the Lord. We must begin with the question: What does Jesus mean to me? Then, how does my faith on a day-to-day basis give witness to the answer to that question?



Fr. Mark Flynn

Weekend at Steubenville

I am a parishioner at Sacred Heart Church, a recent graduate of St. Joseph High School in Trumbull and am now attending Wingate University in North Carolina. My mother June encouraged me to attend the retreat at Steubenville, Massachusetts. I am the first of her children to go away to college, and it was important to her that I have a spiritual experience before going off to school. She was right. This wonderful event provided that experience in a very powerful way!

On the weekend of July 13-15, 2001, two other teens and I, chaperoned by Denelle LaVorgno and her husband, participated in the retreat along with youth from around the country. The motto this year was, *God, There is No Other*. How true!

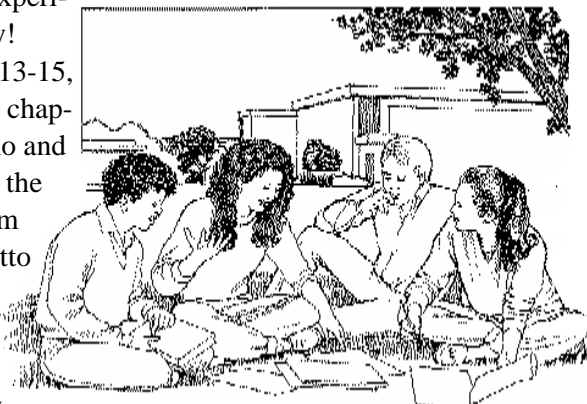
Before I went to Steubenville my faith was shaky.

I wasn't as close to God as I wanted to be, and I wasn't exactly sure what to do. My experience at this retreat was the recharge I so desperately needed. The lessons learned have to be experienced. They cannot be lectured.

Now I know there is no reason to question God's love for us. He is with us, at our sides and in our hearts every second of every day. All we need to do is allow the Lord into our lives and set aside time for him every day. The Holy Spirit can be your best friend if you let him!

The Steubenville retreat also made me realize, with the help of the Holy Spirit, that you can be a very

spiritual young adult. You can practice your faith daily, attend Mass every week, be a part of ministries and still be considered "cool and popular." I had a problem putting all these things together before the retreat. Now I disclose my love for God, and I encourage my friends to find their faith. I plan to join a campus ministry at Wingate, and as part of my internship, I am going to be involved in mentoring younger



kids with aggression. I will be helping them channel that energy through sports and through their reliance on God.

Steubenville had only positive effects on me and really brought my faith and I together again. I am thankful that at this important time in my life I was able to have this powerful experience, and I highly recommend it to every teenager. Although I am now out of high school, I would like to attend next summer's retreat as a chaperone. The Steubenville weekend can change a person's life forever.

Jay DeMonte



The Perfect Church

*I think that I shall never see
A church that's all it ought to be:
A church whose members never stray
Beyond the straight and narrow way.*

*A church that has no empty pews;
Whose pastor never has the blues;
A church whose deacons always deak,
And none are proud, and always meek.*

*Where gossips never peddle lies
Or make complaints or criticize,
Where all are always sweet and kind
And all to other's faults are blind.*

*Such perfect churches there may be,
But none of them is known to me;
But still I'll work and pray and plan
To make our church the best I can.*

Author Unknown

Thanksgiving Football and So Much More

I remember a time, before my four children went their own ways to fulfill God's plan/destiny...before the horrific events that transpired on September 11, 2001 resulting in my frantic telephone call to Lauren, my oldest child, to find out whether my Irish American Princess had gone to the World Trade Center for a midmorning breakfast with an old roommate (canceled because of her roommate's illness)...before our society appeared to become jaded and cynical...a time when we said the words "God Bless America," with emotion and meant them from our hearts.

But these brief words are not about my children, but about a small happening at a football game whose final score I have long since forgotten.

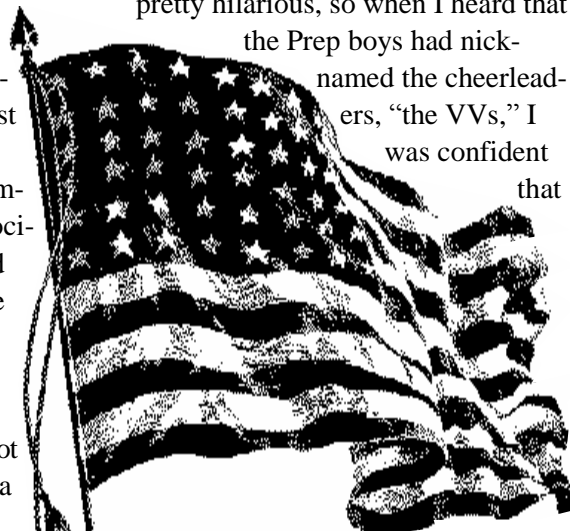
Let me begin.

Twenty-three years ago (maybe a year one way or the other), I attended the annual Thanksgiving high school football game between Fordham Prep and Xavier as I did with regularity then. My sons, Tommy and Paul were with me especially since they were attending "the Prep," and Lauren, a senior at Mount Saint Ursula was on the sister school's cheerleading team. Of course the young ladies cheered for Fordham. Xavier had no girls leading their cheers, unless you count the mothers of the football players, and that just wasn't the same, if you get my drift.

I always said that the Mount's cheerleaders represented the Jesuits'

answer to the Roman Vestal Virgins. This was always presented with a proper comedic intent or so I thought, until Lauren heard me one day, and after she chastised me for my irreverence, I never said it again. However, as I recall, Tommy thought it was pretty hilarious, so when I heard that

the Prep boys had nicknamed the cheerleaders, "the VVs," I was confident that



I knew its original source. Please don't tell anyone, although Lauren had her suspicions.

In those days, Xavier was a military school consisting of one thousand male students (known as the cadets). We perceived ourselves as "manly men" which resulted in our bragging about our Jesuit school's tough discipline. Can you believe we argued with our Fordham Prep counterparts about who received the most beatings from the scholastics (Jesuits-in-training)? The victim-student naturally never discussed whether the punishment was justifiable or even appropriate. We were certainly crazy in those days, and as I stated, we were manly men.

And so, there we were, Tommy, Paul and I sitting in the grandstands, located on one side of the Fordham

University football field, directly overlooking the fifty-yard line. I had refused to sit on the Prep's side of the fifty-yard stripe (rightly so), and nothing short of a direct command from the Pope would cause the boys to sit on Xavier's side.

We watched the thousand cadets march onto the field and pass-in-review in front of a highly appreciative crowd, not counting two teenage boys.

"Impressive, huh?" I said to my two charges. Silence was their answer.

"Ah, the color guard." I pointed out to no one in particular.

"There's the American Flag," announced Tommy. We stood, and with a silence bordering on reverence, we watched the color guard present its colors to us.

"And God Bless America," yelled a woman standing behind me (a football player's mother, no doubt).

"Yes indeed"; "Absolutely"; "Right on, lady," were some of the responses from those around me.

On that Thanksgiving Day, a verbal act of patriotism, minor and seemingly inconsequential in the scheme of things, meant so much to us, but somehow over the years, I wonder whether the words seemed to have lost their significance.

The Jesuits taught their students to serve God and our country. I never forgot that, and frankly those words mean as much now as when they were ingrained in us through the Jesuits' infallible methods.

Indeed, God Bless America!

Dennis J. McLaughlin

From the Library of Deacon Mike

“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me, I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing... And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.”

Thomas Merton from *Thoughts in Solitude*

A book of exquisite imagery with a mystic’s vision and wisdom of life, a book that has been my favorite since I was barely a teenager, and has a special place in my library is one which, even after a half century since its first publication, still captivates young and old alike. It is the classic fable, *The Little Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupery. Although one may not think of it as theological, it is a tiny novel that has the power to draw the reader Godward.

“Six years ago,” writes Antoine de Saint-Exupery, “I made a forced landing in the Sahara, alone, a thousand miles from help, and faced the necessity of repairing my motor by myself within the number of days my supply of drinking

water would last. The first morning, I was awakened by a gentle but determined voice which said, ‘If you please, draw me a sheep.’” Thus it was that he met the Little Prince, whose strange history he learned bit by bit in the days that followed.

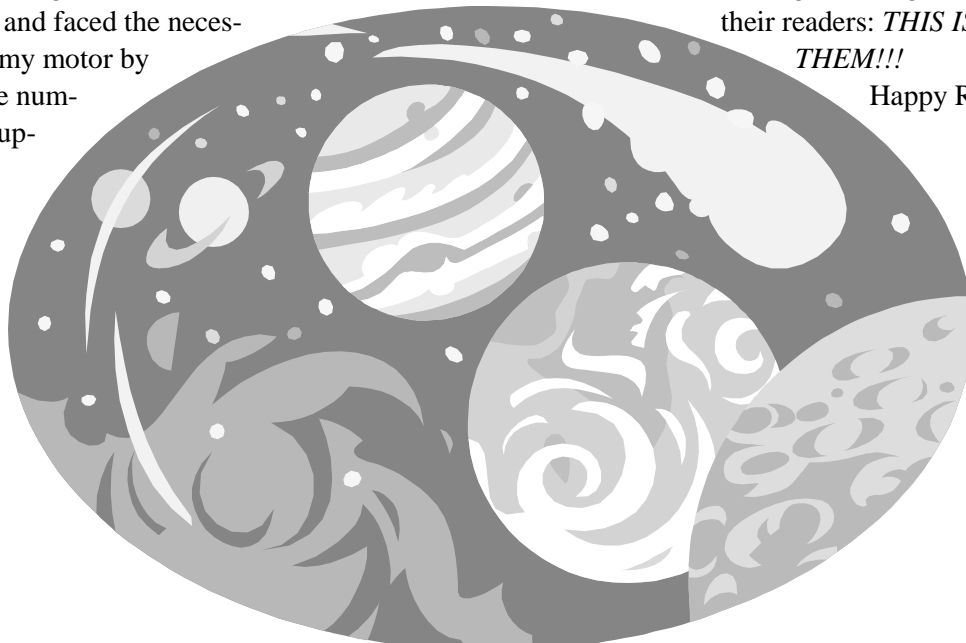
The Little Prince lived alone on a tiny planet no larger than a house. He possessed three volcanoes, two active and one extinct, although one never knows about volcanoes. He also owned a flower, unlike any flower in the entire galaxy, of great beauty and of inordinate pride. It was this pride that ruined the serenity of the Little Prince’s world and started him on the interplanetary travels that brought him at last to the Earth where he learned finally, from a fox, the secret of what is really important in life.

This truly is a naively sophisticated, heartwarming tale which covers a poetic, yearning philosophy—not the sort of novel that can be neatly described in a few brief paragraphs and then put aside, but rather a fable with enduring reflections on what are real matters of consequence in life.

PLEASE do not think that this is a book just for children—it is meant for everyone from eight to eighty—people who are young at heart with spiritual vision—a short tale, not even a hundred pages (including illustrations) that contains a very adult message. There are few stories that, in some degree change the world forever for

their readers: *THIS IS ONE OF THEM!!!*

Happy Reading!!!



Jesus, Martha, Mary and Christmas 2001

Women in the Bible

Luke 10: 38-42

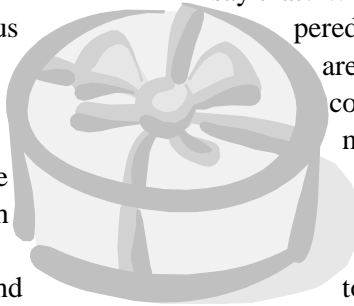
As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things. Only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Christmas is the time of year when most of us are like Martha. We start before Thanksgiving getting anxious about what to buy our loved ones and friends. We look for sales, bargains, and sometimes we travel distances to buy the perfect gift. Then there is the problem of how much to spend on each gift. Oh, yes and Christmas cards—get them out in time, and be sure to wrap and

label each gift, and don't forget out of town gifts must be sent early.

Adding to our anxiety is who is coming to dinner, and how many overnight guests will there be? Do we have enough blankets? What will we serve? How much should we buy? How will we rearrange the furniture to make room for the tree, and who will decorate it? If young children will be visiting, we must relocate the crystal decorations so they won't get broken.

If you are blessed with a large family like I am, you may catch yourself hoping some of the kids will go to the in-laws so it won't be overwhelming. Oh my—did I just say that? Worry, worry, distractions, short temperedness. Your kids call and tell you they are looking forward to those special cookies, the ones you make at Christmas, the ones they have been dreaming about all year. Lord, it is too much. In our hearts, most of us want to be like Mary. We long to go to concerts to hear Christmas music, pray more,



Ask Father Flynn

Q: *Has a parish parochial school ever been considered at Sacred Heart?*

A: There was a time when the Church strongly encouraged parents to enroll their children in a Catholic school to insure that the children's developmental and educational growth would be centered on Gospel values and moral principles. Because of this expectation almost every parish sacrificed in order to build and maintain its own parochial school, which was staffed by dedicated religious sisters and brothers.

Over the years, with the escalation of financial costs, the decrease in the availability of qualified religious personnel and the inability of the schools to maintain enrollment quotas, many parishes have been forced to close their schools.

I'm sure there have been times when a parish school might have been a desire or even a dream here at Sacred Heart, but it was considered impossible because of the size of the parish and the caliber of the Southbury school system. A Catholic education is always advantageous and preferred, but today, the Archdiocese maintains very stringent policies regarding the building of a parish school because so many are being closed. There is, however, an alternative. Parents desiring to enroll their children in a parochial school may register and transport their children to neighboring parish schools. For many, however, local tuition-free education is the more acceptable option.



attend Mass more often, help the needy or volunteer at a nursing home. Unfortunately, these things are put aside. No matter what preparations we make there are always new things popping up to distract us. How can we tie in this simple Gospel story with Christmas 2001?

As a woman, I can understand how Martha felt. She issued the invitation and it became her responsibility to prepare and serve the meal and get the house ready. Many times important men came to hear Jesus. That pressure alone probably cluttered her mind with worries. Someone may say the food is terrible or the house is a mess. Martha was so anxious that she approached, not her sister but the Lord, and probably in a whiny voice told him to tell Mary to help. Jesus was not rude in his answer to her. He knew what was worrying her and rebuked her gently by saying her name, not once but twice, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things. Only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha wanted to be kind in her own way by preparing a feast for the Lord, but Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem and death. Perhaps he wanted a simple meal in peace and quiet after his preaching and traveling. Mary understood, and so she sat at his feet. That was very unusual in those days, as women remained in the background, rarely attending religious or other public functions. Mary wanted to hear every word Jesus spoke—she wouldn't always have this opportunity.

Martha and Mary had different temperaments. Martha was active

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Stewardship

Years ago, the Christmas pageant, under the direction of Janet Bashar, was an enormous event for all children. Eventually, the typical players and actors grew up, and with the demise of our children's choir, Janet no longer wanted to direct the program. It felt like a dark time the year we didn't have the pageant. I missed sacrificing my Saturdays at church rehearsing and preparing scenes, or journeying up to the church attic for props.

At one of our monthly youth meetings, we discussed the possibility of bringing back the pageant. No one had the experience or the time available to do such a large project. With the new youth director Denelle still getting used to her new position and unsure of how to conduct the pageant, I decided to step in. Even though I'm a typical teenager with other things to do, I felt that we really needed the Christmas pageant!

Since the group of kids who always did it were grown up, I decided to employ some of the new kids coming of age who had never experienced the enjoyment of the pageant. Of course, the youth group was always behind me providing small financial aid as well as devoting weekends to planning and helping to put things together. From the first week of December until the end, we all pitched in, and everything went smoothly. Many young children wanted to be a part of this wonderful



celebration. They memorized their parts, costumes were all set, but there was still one problem. Where would I find a baby Jesus? To get the realistic feel of the event, we normally used a real child to represent our Lord.

Friends of ours, the Geary family, had recently adopted a girl born a few months before and had just received this wonderful gift. "How perfect," I thought, and asked the Gearys if their new baby girl could be the representation of our Lord. They of course accepted with great honor and couldn't wait for the date of the pageant. We nicknamed her "Jesette", our female version of the baby Jesus.

Then the day came; we had an enormous crowd looking for their little angels, shepherds, travelers, etc. It was a wonderful feeling that so many people came to see what we had worked so hard for all this time. The program was short, only 45 minutes, but in that time we represented the whole story of Christmas, and the entire presentation was done by the youth. It was a beautiful thing. That is until the end when our youth group leader, Bill Hammond went to the podium to say a few words about how the group's involvement was key to the creation of this pageant and concluded by calling on me to speak. I have a fear of speaking in public, but with so many people anx-

(Continued on page 11)

Religious Education in Good Hands

Religious education, always a part of the Catholic faith, is mainly aimed at the children of a parish to prepare them for full participation in the liturgy of the Church. For most, Catholic education ends with those C.C.D. classes and subsequent Confirmation. A few continue their spiritual enrichment by attending one of the fine Catholic colleges or universities. For those who are willing to make the effort, a varied course of study is offered at the diocesan level.

Recognizing a need at Sacred Heart for a coordinated religious education program that continues into adulthood, Father Flynn with the help of the Parish Council formed the Parish Education Core Committee (Core Ed.) in the fall of 1987. This ministry has been responsible for shaping the educational programs of the parish to ensure that the development of our faith is ongoing.

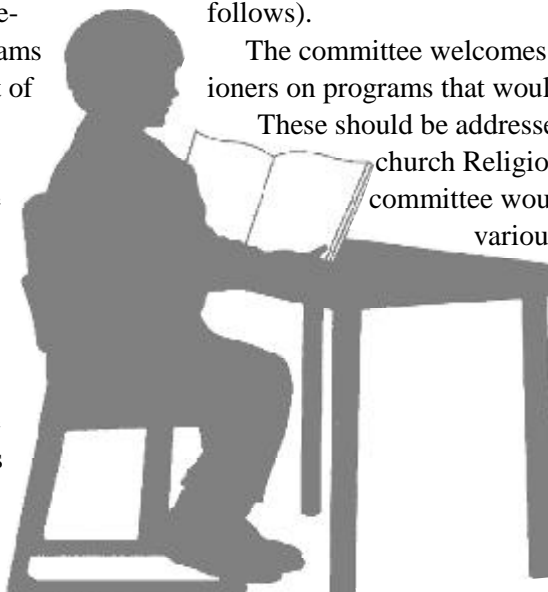
Under the able direction of Maureen McDermott, the committee was able to take part in the selection of the current Director of Religious Education, Eileen Dignazio. Eileen's leadership has provided a unique curriculum, established for the overall religious education of the children of Sacred Heart. One only has to read the cover of the September 23rd bulletin to see the enormous scope of this program.

With the children in such good hands, Core Ed. has turned its attention to assisting other committees in planning and on providing educational programs to meet the needs and interests of adult parishioners. Several surveys have been conducted regarding these educational needs. The exciting results of the committees efforts have been a variety of enriching programs, some of which are: thought-provoking films with facilitators, great lectures and workshops on scripture, the compilation of Fr. Flynn's Gospel commentaries, and the yearly Lenten booklet with its scriptural reflections written by members of the Sacred Heart faith community. (Speaking of the Lenten booklet, be sure to pay attention to the article that follows).

The committee welcomes suggestions from all parishioners on programs that would benefit Sacred Heart.

These should be addressed to Maureen and left at the church Religious Education office. The committee would also like to hear from our various ministries if assistance is needed in any way.

Ernie Swanberg



Jesus, Martha, Mary

(Continued from page 9)

and Mary was quiet. It is hard for the active person to understand a person who is devoted to meditation and quiet times, and the quiet person is apt to misinterpret the actions of an active person. God did not make everyone the same. Both are needed and serve the Lord.

During this holy season, we active souls need to find that balance of faith and activity. We must focus on Jesus; for no one else could ever love us like he does. Love me and serve me, listen to my words, and I will give you everlasting life where you won't ever have to worry

about what you will eat, drink, wear, or serve. You will never have to wash pots and pans or Christmas shop. I look forward to that.

Lord, help us to imitate your Holy Mother who loved her God first and yet never neglected her duties as a spouse of St. Joseph or the mother of Jesus.

Let us simplify our celebrations this year and come closer to the Lord. During these troubled times we especially need to pray, pray, pray.

Dina Carella

Ready for Lent, 2002?

Has there ever been a year when we needed the Lenten season more than we do this year? You are reading that correctly. It says, "Lenten." If you've had time to check the 2002 calendar, you are already aware that the observance of Lent begins on February 13. That may be difficult to absorb in the midst of turkey and gifts and Christmas trees. But your Parish Core Education Committee wants you to Think Lent now, so that you will be

Youth Stewardship

(Continued from page 9)

ious to hear from me, I couldn't refuse! I summoned my courage and gave a brief speech on the creation of this pageant, and then invited everyone to a short reception.

In conclusion, I was quite proud of everyone including myself for organizing and producing this event, and I would be glad to do it again. We proved that kids can do anything despite their age or the size of the project. I also overcame my fear of speaking in public.

Joe Zukoski



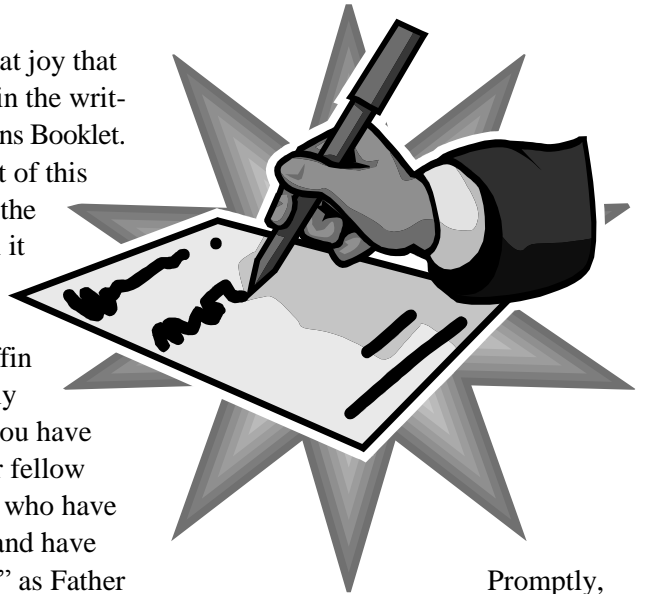
Happy Holidays

able to experience the great joy that comes with participating in the writing of the Lenten Reflections Booklet.

If you have been a part of this soul-enriching activity in the past, you know why I call it joyful. Whether you have chosen to reflect on your own, as Neil Griffin did last year, or as a family unit, like the Tidgwells, you have "joined the journey of our fellow pilgrims and parishioners who have reflected on God's word and have responded to its message," as Father Mark wrote in the introduction to the 2001 booklet.

How do we join this journey? On the weekend of December 29 and 30, this year's Lenten scripture readings will be available to you on the boards in the atrium. Take one of the readings home with you. Then you and a friend or your classmates, like Mrs. Albertario's 5th grade class, can spend time, during your New Year's celebration, reflecting on the selected passage. I can't think of a time in history when our reflection on God's words to us can be more helpful.

When your reflection is ready to be written down for others to share, sit as Mark and Lori DePalma did, and just let what is in your heart flow out onto paper. It doesn't take any particular talent as a writer. Just say what your soul feels. Some parishioners choose to write their translation of what is in the scripture passage. Others, like Susan and Paul Westbrook, write their reaction to the reading. Which way will your reflection take you?



Promptly, when your reflection is ready, return it to the Core Ed. folder near the sacristy. From there, the Committee will have the honor of editing and proofing your thoughts. That way, you can concentrate on the words, instead of those bugaboos, spelling and punctuating.

The Lenten Reflections of the Faith Community booklet will be distributed at Sacred Heart in time for the first reading on Ash Wednesday. Then you and your family and friends can join together with the writer of that day's message in shared preparation for the coming of Easter Sunday. As Fr. Mark wrote, "Their hope is our hope—that through these forty days we may encounter the Lord along the way and then be with him continuously and faithfully following... 'in his footsteps.'" What a pertinent thought for any season of the year!



Barb Cushnie

ONE

As the soot and dirt and ash rained down,
We became one color.
As we carried each other down the stairs of the
Burning building,
We became one class.
As we lit candles of waiting and hope,
We became one generation.
As the firefighters and police officers fought their way
into the inferno,
We became one gender.
As we whispered or shouted words of encouragement,
We spoke one language.
As we gave our blood in lines a mile long,
We became one family.
As we cried tears of grief and loss,

We became one soul.
As we retell with pride of the sacrifice of heroes,
We become one people.

We are
One color
One class
One generation
One gender
One faith
One language
One body
One family
One Soul



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From the Heart

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