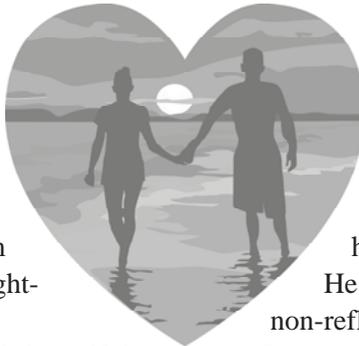


From the Heart

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Do You Know How Much I Love You

Filled with joy, a woman asked her friend this question. They were spending the day at the shore. The sun was dancing on the water, reflecting in her friend's eyes. She focused again on his face, realizing it was taking an exceptionally long time for an answer to the question. Suddenly she emerged from her dreamy state. "You don't know, do you? You don't know how much I love you?" she asked incredulously, the blood draining from her, leaving her a bit light-headed.



The man, seeing their beautiful day slipping away, protested, "I know you love me. It's the 'how much' that overwhelmed me. I didn't know the depth of your love until you asked the question. Something shifted for me."

This question of "how much" is not so much a question of quantity as it is a question that begins a process that leads to a new place, a new way of being in the world. Mike brought this story to a spiritual direction setting. He pondered deeply his lack of response. "Something shifted for me," was the essence of the experience for him. He knew the time had come to make a commitment. He had known for a long time how much he loved her, but never quite embraced the feeling.

This question enabled him to wake up to the truth of his feelings and be present to this new life-giving moment. He realized he had been sleeping through love, through life. It also woke him up to his other relationships and his relationship with God. It grew into many moments of clarity, and he wondered why he never saw it before. He could have chalked it up to timing, but rather than look back with regret, he decided to allow this moment to be the first moment of the rest of his life. Mike could have slept through this encounter. He could have mumbled a sleepy, non-reflected "yes" to Mary's question. But on that day, in that place, that question touched Mike's depths, waking him up to his new way of being in touch with love.

The joy of a spiritual director lies in these moments, when the one directed plumbs the depths and discovers something new, something not known or seen before, something that was always there, waiting to be released. I am in awe of these moments, discovering anew the faithfulness of our most loving God waiting to surprise us with undiscovered love.

And quietly in the night, I discover that I have arrived at a new place, as the questions and ponderings of those I com-

(Continued on page 2)

Vol. 19, No. 3
August 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ANGELS? Well maybe!
Page 2

Dear Fellow Parishioners
Page 3

Spotlight on Youth
Page 4

Mustard Seed Grants
Page 5

Give us This Day...
Page 5

Ministry to Haiti
Page 6

From the Pastor's Desk
Page 7

A Lion Tamer Revisited
Page 8

St. Margaret of Clitherow
Page 9

Sacred Spaces 101
Page 10



Do You Know

(Continued from cover)

panion quietly slip into my consciousness. "Do you know how much I love you?" I hear warmly whispered in my heart. It is the question spoken tenderly to each of us by our God.

As you think back over your life, what have been those mo-



ments when you "woke up" to a new realization about life, love, God, family, work? Where in your life today is God inviting you to realize just how much you are loved?

Sister Patricia Torre, DW
Pastoral Associate



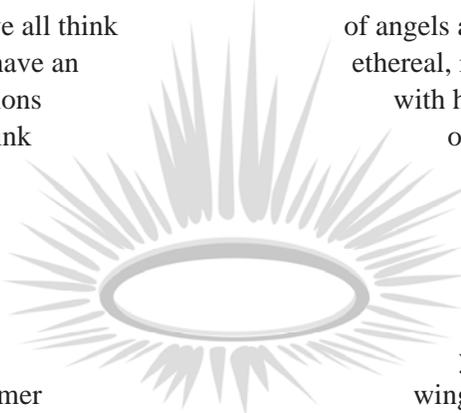
Neighbors Helping Neighbors

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.



ANGELS? Well maybe!

I say maybe, for we all think of angels as those messengers of God that have an ethereal, if not spiritual aspect in their interactions with humans. But still, I must ask that you think on it a bit. You see them at work in our parish in many various ministries and witness those "angels" at work among us you can understand the maybe. No matter how closely you may look, you won't find the gossamer wings or magic wand that might typify one's image of beings working directly on behalf of the Almighty. Rather you will find ordinary people doing extraordinary things for the benefit of others or to fill some need.



These "angels" are not expecting laude and praise for the good they do, but rather feel they are fulfilling their Christian Duty as described in the celebration of the Mass each week. The Holy Eucharist is taken to those homebound or sick, shawls are crocheted or knitted and distributed, sandwiches made, linens cleaned, food collected for those in need, rides to appointments provided, shopping done, coffee made...and you know what I mean; the list goes on and on. If not angels, what?

For many years The Communications Committee has interviewed people in our parish who exemplify the Gospel teachings and could be models for others to follow. The object of writing about them is to give credit to their good works and to show, by example, what ordinary people can do given a chance.

As the interviewer in many instances, I've gotten to know some of these fine people. It is our loss when these angels do not wish to be interviewed. Often when I call to request the interview, the response is, "Why me? I don't do anything. Others (and it is at this point that they will mention specific others) do so much." The aim of this publication in spotlighting a family or an individ-

From the Heart

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

Angels?

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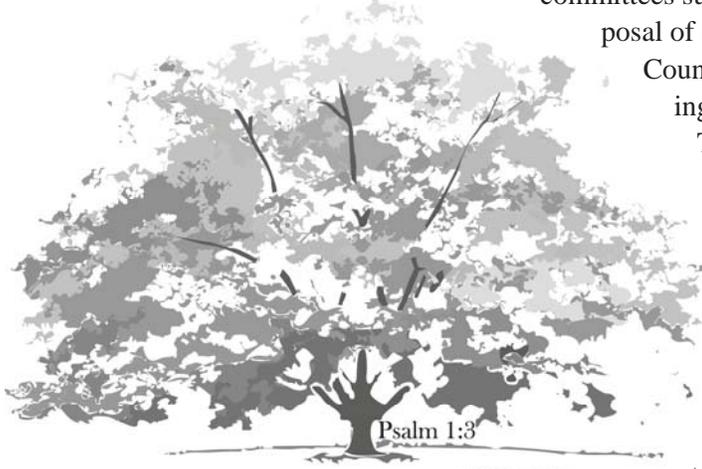
ual is to do just that—to put a spotlight on or to illuminate their good works for all to witness as the light spreads outward to others.

We would like to continue featuring a special “angel” in our future issues. We hope that when you receive a call about such an interview, you will try your best to accommodate our need to show an example to others that the work of Christ is being done by ordinary people of faith who take their faith seriously.

If you know of an angel who would be an inspiration to others and who should be acknowledged for spiritual giving, please call our committee managing editor, Katherine Pavone, 264-6599 so we may continue our tradition.

Thanks to all those who have survived the interview experience; our parish spirituality has grown because of you.

Ernie Swanberg



He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

Dear Fellow Parishioners,



Over the past year we have been noticing that our 25 year-old Allen organ is showing signs of its age and its long and faithful service to our parish community. We have tried our best to correct the little things that have been breaking down, but several months ago we noticed that the speakers were no longer functioning properly. The repair people we consulted have said that such repairs to an organ of this age would not be recommended.

We have been researching new organ options. After listening to several installations around the state by different manufacturers and reviewing their proposals, we believe that we have found the best instrument to accommodate our space and fulfill the liturgical needs of our parish.

We have determined that a new electronic organ from the same company as our present organ is the best option for us. The price for the purchase and installation of this instrument, along with some minor changes to the soffits to accommodate the speakers, is estimated at \$80,000. We believe this is a fair and reasonable cost.

As you are aware, music is a vital component of our prayer and parish liturgy as we strive to encourage the full, conscious, and active participation that nourishes our faith. As St. Augustine has said, “The one who sings, prays twice.”

I have consulted the Pastoral Council and the Finance Council, and both committees support the purchase of this new electronic organ. Since the proposal of the Allen Organ Company is good for only 90 days, the Finance Council has recommended that we pay for the organ from parish savings, then replenish the savings with the donations of parishioners.

The company estimates that it will take three to four months to build and install the new organ, so we hope to have it accompanying our parish in song and prayer by late fall.

Would you be willing to contribute to the purchase of our new parish organ? Make any checks out to Sacred Heart Church Organ Fund, indicate if you would like your donation in memory of a loved one and either send it to the parish office or place it in the regular weekly collection basket at Mass. We intend to place a plaque behind the organ in gratitude and recognition of your support.

I appreciate your kind consideration of this important request.

*In God's peace,
Father Joseph Donnelly, Pastor*

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH

Sacred Heart Work Campers “Love Out Loud”

You can feel the rhythm of the Christian rock music as you walk down the steps to the gym. Despite seven hours on their worksites hammering, painting, and scraping, the young people are filled with energy and high spirits as they greet each other in the darkened gym. Pictures taken at the worksites flash across the screen, and cheers explode whenever a crew or camper is recognized. The bleachers are filled with “happy campers” and it is hard to move on the floor. The temperature in the room? Some call it the oven, while others the steam room. But the room pulsates with love.

Suddenly the MC picks up his mike and says, “I’m starting to get that feeling . . .” Shrieks and whoops arise from the bleachers as the music rises, and before you know it a couple of hundred kids race to the center of the gym. On cue, they all begin to rock to the beat of “Get Down” and dance the simple line dance that pumps up their spirits further. The song is a high in and of itself, with lyrics including, “In my weakness he is stronger, in the dark his love shines through.” But as the chorus erupts into “I get down, he lifts me up,” voices and hands lift praise to the Lord into the humid air. Evening

program has begun.

For many participants, evening program is the highlight of the day; 90 minutes filled with song, prayer, scripture, testimony, visuals, drama and thoughtful discussion. Each evening the program unifies all mem-



bers of the camp—kids and adults into a single “God-praising/people-loving machine.”

Each evening’s program is designed around a scripture text that illustrates the theme for the day. This week’s themes were “Love Out Loud . . . Risks, Serves, Multiplies, Forgives, and Lasts.” Each theme was introduced during morning program, discussed during crew devotions at the work sites and finally given closure at youth group devotions in the evening.

During another part of the program, kids come up to the microphone to share God sightings from the day that can range from the older gentleman who was able to go into his backyard for the first time in

years after his wheelchair ramp was built, to the tears in the eyes of the single parent who is watching her house transformed as her work crew paints it. As the youth leader of the trip, I watched with pride as shy 8th grader Kathleen Mooney (one of several from our group) stood up before nearly 500 people to share her crew’s God sighting.

The music team takes the stage each night and leads the group in singing a wide variety of Christian rock songs as the lyrics flash across the screen. Once again, my heart swelled as I watched Alexandra DeRosa, Allie Sav-

age, and Jackie Hunter perform. Hands clap, feet stomp and sign language reinforces the power of the music.

Each evening the mood sobers up as the crowd slowly and reflectively sings “Alleluia” as pictures taken at various work sites take center stage. This is why we are here—on our worksites; we are God’s hands. We laugh, we cry, we collectively work towards a better world. And when the crowd gets rambunctious, the MC reins us in with the chant: “God is good; (response): ALL THE TIME! All the time: GOD IS GOOD!”

That says it all.

Eileen Strange



2008 Mustard Seed Fund Grants

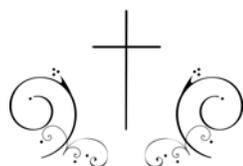
Since 2003 when the Mustard Seed Fund was established through a combined bequest of \$1million from the estates of Irma Ziegler Smith and Mildred Ziegler, two additional grants have been received. In 2007 the fund grew with a \$294,894 legacy from the Estate of Francis F. Brewer designated to be used for work with needy families and their outreach programs. Last year also brought \$98,969 from the Estate of Jo and Gus Berkes to be allocated for scholarships.

Each year one-half of the Mustard Seed Fund earnings are distributed to charities, scholarships, youth activities and the church in general.

Twenty-three organizations shared in the \$23,000 available for charitable grants this year. Among those chosen were local causes including the Southbury Needy Fund, St. Vincent DePaul Mission, Waterbury Youth Services System, and Young Life of Southbury. Grants were also given globally to other charity organizations, such as St. Bonaventure Indian Mission in New Mexico, St. Charles Brazilian Children, and Food for the Poor in Florida.

At the June 7th graduation Mass, sixteen scholarships of \$1,000 each were awarded. (Pictured above, left to right) Danielle Grecco, Carolyn Wlodarczyk, Regina Abdella, Alex Tillinghast, Lauren McCrory, Rebecca Bradshaw, Michael Francke, Amber Tillinghast, Richard Kokinchak (partially hidden), Michelle Meyer, Corrissa Norton, Bernard Kokinchak, Leah Pruzinsky and Melissa Braun with Father Joe Donnelly. Not pictured are Jennifer Langrock and Ryan Nealon.

Congratulations to these and all of the 2008 graduates as they pursue their ultimate goals in life.



“Give us This Day...”

Part 4 Igor Sikorsky’s reflections

When we ask God for our daily bread, it is understood that we include such necessities as a home, clothing, medical assistance, (especially today). However, if a man is idle and refuses to work, these things will not miraculously appear. If, a person is ill and cannot earn a living, such prayer may bring results in another way.



Sikorsky further adds that as we pray for our daily physical needs it is right to consider also our intellectual and spiritual needs. Christ referred to human desires as hunger or thirst—bread, water and wine. Catholic Christians call the Holy Eucharist “the bread of life.” Water is used for baptism which makes us children of God and part of a community. We are both body and spirit as the Creator made us.

“...and forgive those...”

One of the most difficult things a Christian must do is forgive. We should not dare pray the Lord’s Prayer unless we mean as we pray, “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” This does not mean we should not fight the enemies of God (Hitler for example). It is only right to resist evil.

While watching Catholic television one day, I was struck by the testimony of a woman who had been raped as a young girl. She could not forgive or forget the two men who did this to her and held this anger and bitterness for 30 years. One day in desperation she cried out, “God help me to forgive. This burden is too great for me to bear.” Instantly, she felt peace and all the fear and anger was gone; a weight was taken off her. “What a pity I did not do this 30 years ago,” she said.

It would be interesting to hear how families of victims from 9/11 cope with this problem. How difficult this must be, yet the Lord wants us to try to forgive in whatever way we are able.

Christ tells us “to love our enemies.” How do soldiers on battlefields do this? I’m reminded of St. Joan of Arc, a small peasant girl, inspired by God who led her men into

(Continued on page 7)

Ministry to Haiti, the Quest for Discernment



About four years ago, Father Gerry Kirby was invited to preach here at Sacred Heart. Father Gerry was then the Bishop's Representative to Haiti for the Diocese of Norwich. He spoke about Haiti and the plight of the people

there in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. A short time later, he met with a small group of interested parishioners of Sacred Heart and discussed with them the opportunities available through the Haitian Ministries of the Diocese of Norwich for making a difference in the lives of the Haitian people.

This small core group formed the Ministry to Haiti Committee at Sacred Heart. At the time, political unrest in Haiti made it impossible to travel there, but the group was determined to make caring for Haiti a special outreach of this parish. They began by collecting useful things, such as vitamins, oral hygiene supplies, and basic first-aid items to be sent to Haitian Ministries for distribution to the needy in Haiti. Haiti's Back Porch, which sells native Haitian crafts, was invited to Sacred Heart several times.

In 2007, the first six missionaries from Sacred Heart traveled to Haiti at their own expense for a cultural immersion. They visited schools, parishes, orphanages, hospitals and other organizations which are working to make a difference in the lives of the Haitian people. They were very moved by the things they saw and experienced. No doubt many of you were able to see the report on the trip they made, which was shown at all Masses upon their return. That year, our G.I.F.T. program "adopted" six children in Haiti, committing to sponsor their education through the active participation of our own children in faith formation, and to add a child each year until there is a total of ten children sponsored.

This year a group of ten people traveled to Haiti, again at their own expense. Upon their return, this group of travelers also presented a report to the parish. Like the first group, these travelers were struck by the abject poverty they encountered. While in Haiti, they were introduced to two parishes each of which hopes to participate in a "twinning" relationship with a parish here. The parishes are very different, but they share great faith and hope, and a need for support...emotional, spiritual, and physical. This is what a twinning relationship can provide.

The members of Sacred Heart's Ministry to Haiti Committee hope to foster the idea of a twinning relationship between a parish in Haiti and Sacred Heart parish. To this end, we will be providing many educational opportunities for the parish to learn about twinning—what it is, what it means, and what it can do both for a parish in Haiti and also for Sacred Heart parish. Twinning is not an "adoption" of one parish by another. It is a reciprocal, covenantal relationship between two equal parties in which each benefits from the other. It is not charity. The twinning process requires thoughtful discernment, and we hope that each of you will join us in this process. Please watch this publication and the parish bulletin for informational pieces on twinning. We will invite guest speakers to help us understand the real meaning of this covenant commitment.

There will also be opportunities for you to talk with Ministry to Haiti Committee members and to support their efforts to make a difference in Haiti. Sacred Heart hosted a benefit concert in the church on Sunday, August 10, 2008. "Coffee and..." will be hosted by the committee in September, and Haiti's Back Porch will be here in November.

We hope that you will use these events as opportunities to learn more about Haiti and its people. They are our sisters and brothers. They deserve our care and compassion, our love and support.

After several months of educational opportunities for the parish, we plan to use Lent 2009 as a time of prayer and discernment. This part of the process opens us to the Holy Spirit of God. After that period of focused prayer we will offer two or three open parish meetings at which any parishioner might offer insights, ideas, and opinions. Hopefully this will lead to a parish consensus about whether or not Sacred Heart Parish should pursue a twinning relationship with one of the two Haitian parishes that we visited. Please give this important question and process your attention and your prayers over these next months.

*Submitted by The Ministry
to Haiti Committee*



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

America

Faith • Hope • Charity • Compassion

There appears to be a light at the end of the tunnel, signaling the final days of what may have seemed like the longest election cycle of our lifetimes. It has occupied headlines and conversations for the better part of the past two years.

This is an important part of our American enterprise. We value it highly, so we take it very seriously, and our Catholic faith urges us to do so. Our American Bishops in union with the Pope do not tell us for whom to vote. Rather they call upon us to participate seriously in the political process by studying the issues facing our nation and our world and by making good judgments that are based upon a conscience formed in light of our Catholic faith. The bishops state that "In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue and participation in political life is a moral obligation." For that reason Sacred Heart Parish, like most parishes in the United States will follow the lead of our bishops and offer the process called *Faithful Citizenship* over the next months to help all of us in this important dimension of our Catholic faith.

The goals of this process will be to familiarize us with many of the issues facing our nation, to look at them in

light of the teaching of our Church and to encourage the ongoing maturing and development of our personal consciences. We will do this through special programs, bulletin inserts, and homilies. In July we sponsored a voter registration program to encourage those to register who had not yet done so.

The teaching of our Church about the issues of our day is based upon seven key themes:

- Right to Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family and Community and our Participation in Both
- Rights and Corresponding Responsibilities of All People
- Fundamental Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- Solidarity Shared by All People
- Caring for God's Creation

Our Catholic faith continues to call for a renewed political process in our country that focuses on moral principles, the defense of life, the needs of the weak and the pursuit of the common good. This type of political process reflects the best of the traditions of our nation and the best of the tradition of our Catholic faith.

May our *Faithful Citizenship* process not only help us prepare to vote, but also help us to grow in faith together!

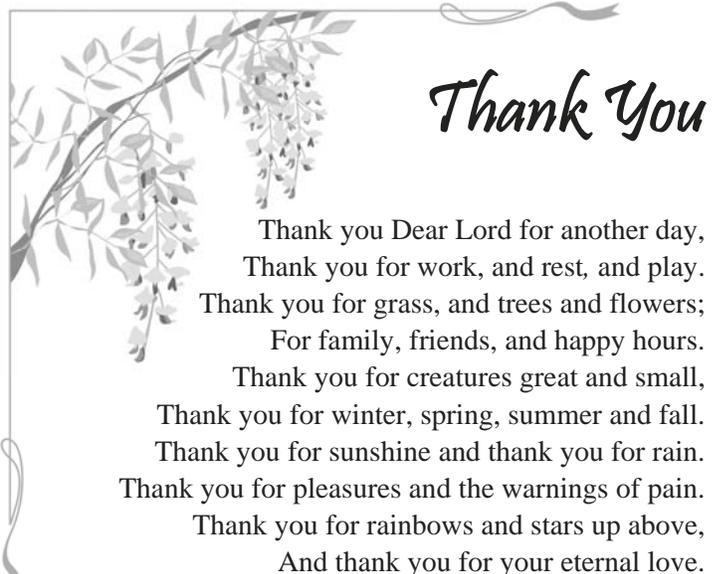
Give us This Day

(Continued from page 5)

battle, and not only consoled her dying men, but the enemy too. I imagine chaplains in the military would do the same.

In conclusion, dear readers, the object of this part of the prayer, according to Sikorsky, is the benefit drawn by the person who prays; personal hatred is dispelled, a positive attitude toward others results, many bad thoughts are cancelled, and the individual experiences peace. This process purifies the spiritual atmosphere and is more important that we realize.

Dina Carella



Irma Rilling

A Lion Tamer Revisited



In my last narration, you may recall that my guardian angel suggested I telephone my son, Tommy, as it has been, and I am ashamed to admit it, some time since we had heard each others voice as a result of a dispute, a situation not unknown in Irish families. My angel's reference to the Lion Tamer episode, which occurred when Tommy was six years old, was a charming and endearing event, one that my angel knew would tug at my heartstrings and nudge me into action.

The event took place at St Joseph's Grammar School, Bronxville New York. There aren't many lion tamers in Bronxville I assure you. Lawyers, yes, but not one tamer of big cats. No difference, some of you are thinking I bet.

Anyway:

I, at that time in my faith journey, was able to volunteer my services to the parish, not only to the Parish Council, but also to the Finance Committee, resulting in my friendly relationship with the Monsignor, the pastor of St. Joseph's.

The law practice was doing well, and my family was benefiting from the fruits of my labor. Having enjoyed a liberal education via the Jesuits, I can inform you that it was my intention that my children enjoy the same refinement in their intellectual process, which thus included my reading Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes* to the two boys, Tommy and Paul. Lest I forget to tell you, Tommy also had several other Tarzan books in his collection.

In short, Tommy was enthralled

with Tarzan, Africa and wild apes.

On occasion, I made page three of the New York Daily News when they reported about me representing some rascal was absolutely irrelevant in his life.

Africa is where Tommy wanted to go. And younger brother Paul was to serve as the trusty gun bearer. It all sounded great to Paul.

"When do we go?" he asked Lauren.

"Ask Dad. Both of you gone just means more food for me," and that ended that.

The fact that Lauren even acknowledged his question as well as his existence was a surprise to me. Lauren was THE daughter in the family. Born forty years old, although then in fifth grade, Lauren had the ability to be most difficult especially involving her brothers, "a stage in her life," I thought.

Then came the day in May. Sister Mary Miriam, based on Tommy's excitement about his father's occupation, invited me to come to her kindergarten class and discuss the thrills of lion taming in Africa.

In my conversation with the pastor, who was aware of my proposed visit with the kindergarten class, he suggested I keep my remarks regarding the law at the most basic level; there was no mention of my travels to darkest Africa.

Thus Paul and I walked to St. Joseph's never aware of the tribulation that was about to beset a lawyer and a four year old gun bearer.

Sister Miriam greeted us warmly and of course introduced me as a lion tamer. Ignoring her (thinking that there was some error in her introduc-

tion) I innocently began my discussion on the law. I noticed the forty happy faces sitting before me change from eager anticipation to good old fashioned astonishment. I could tell that somebody was in big trouble by the look on Sister Miriam's face as she glared at Tommy.

Finally realizing what was happening, I managed to sputter, "Lion tamer! Me?"

"I'm the gun bearer," proudly exclaimed Paul, thus sealing Tommy's doom.

Quickly, I explained to the very unhappy kindergarten class the cause of the confusion and hoped they would understand.

They didn't, but in my discussion of Tarzan and the apes in Africa, I threw in enough frightening adventures with Lord Greystoke (Tarzan) that the class seemed to be delighted.

Then there was Tommy and his relationship with Sister Miriam. "Dad can go only so far in resolving an uncomfortable situation," I told him. "After that, you're on your own."

So Paul and I left Tommy to the application of "justice by Sister," but while walking home, Paul clued me in as to the workings of a four year old mind.

"When I become a teenager, the apes and I will be good friends, right Dad?"

"Not if you are a gun bearer," I answered with some certainty.

And so life continues on without the occupation of lion tamer.

Dennis McLaughlin

St. Margaret of Clitherow

St. Margaret of Clitherow was one of the first martyrs of the Catholic Church during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. She was born in 1556 in the City of York, England after King Henry VIII had separated the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. Margaret was raised Protestant and married John Clitherow, a wealthy business owner who was also Protestant. They had three children, two boys and a girl.

Several years after her marriage, she converted to Catholicism. Early on she openly proclaimed her faith and sought to convert others. Increasingly more laws were enacted against Catholics and she had to become more cautious in her actions. John was fined because Margaret was not attending Protestant services, and eventually she was imprisoned in York Castle. She was sent there and released many times, but in one instance she remained incarcerated for 18 months. The prison cells were damp, dark and rat-infested. In spite of these horrendous living conditions, Margaret looked upon these times as a prayerful retreat.

A law passed in 1585 made it an act of treason to remain in England if you were a priest, and also a crime to give aid to or harbor a priest. This did not deter Margaret. She gave aid and sanctuary to many priests, providing safe houses in other parts of the city and even in her own home, continually risking her life and making sure Mass was celebrated as often as possible. Friends were worried about the great risks she was taking, but Margaret said, “By God’s grace all priests shall be more welcome to me than ever they were, and I will do

what I can to set forward God’s Catholic service.”

When it came to the attention of the authorities that the Clitherows had sent their son away to obtain a Catholic education, and that they were harboring priests, they were questioned, and their house searched. Although no priests were found, several items used to celebrate Mass were, and everyone in the household was arrested. Once again Margaret found herself imprisoned at York Castle; this time would be her last. Her family and servants were released, but charges were brought against Margaret that included harboring priests and hearing Mass. Upon being asked if she was guilty, she responded that she had never harbored enemies of the Queen. The court asked her how she wished to be tried, but instead of giving the usual reply, “By God and Country,” she said, “Having made no offense, I need no trial.” Her answers posed a problem for the court because unless she gave the appropriate response the trial could not proceed. Margaret’s greatest fear was having her children, servants and friends called as witnesses against her in a trial. They would either have to lie for her or tell the truth and bear a terrible guilt in being responsible for her death. She continued to refuse to acknowledge the Anglican Church of Queen Elizabeth and repeatedly rejected a trial. English law stated that the sentence for anyone who did not plead or be tried by a jury be “pressed to death.”

(Continued on page 10)

Inactive Catholics

An invitation to Come Home We’ve missed you.

Have you drifted away from the Church? Do you feel like you don’t belong to the Church community? Have you been hurt by the Church? Are you confused or angry because of your Catholic experience?

Please consider our invitation to speak with us. There is no obligation. There will be no pressure. This is an opportunity to share your stories of why you left and where you are now. We would like to share our stories of faith with you.

A six week series begins:

**Tuesday, September 23rd
7 p.m.
Sacred Heart Church.**

For more information
Call Sister Pat at 264-5071, or
visit www.sacredheartchurch.info



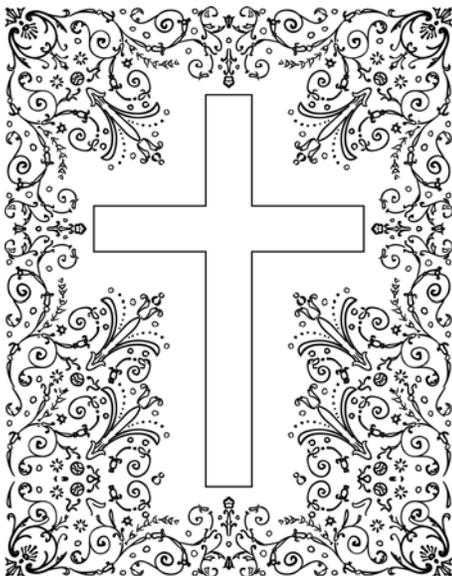
St. Margaret

(Continued from page 9)

Margaret calmly accepted her sentence and replied, “The sheriffs have said that I am going to die this coming Friday, and I feel the weakness of my flesh which is troubled at the news, but my spirit rejoices greatly.” At 8:00 a.m. on Friday, Margaret was led to the place where she would surrender her life. She knelt down and in a loud voice prayed for the pope, cardinals, clergy and especially for Queen Elizabeth that God would return her to the faith and save her soul. She lay on the ground with her arms bound to posts, a large door weighted down with rocks and stones was placed over her body until she was crushed to death. Margaret was 30 years old when she died on Good Friday in 1586. Her two sons became priests, and her daughter became a nun in France.

She was canonized in 1970 by Pope Paul VI into a group of holy men and women known as “The Forty Martyrs of England and Wales.” Her feast day is March 26.

Diane Tomas



Sacred Spaces 101

Part I

Think of it as a short course in architectural history. Actually more fun than that—no homework—no tests!

The goal is simple. Through this series (don't know how many parts yet), I hope to share some history and ideas about the spaces that made up early Christian churches and how those precedents are reflected in Sacred Heart Church. Several years ago I led a group of Sacred Heart CCD students and adults on a tour of St. Patrick's in Waterbury. For many of the kids, it was the first time they were in a church space other than Sacred Heart. I was struck by how interested everyone was in comparing and contrasting the old design features of St. Pat's to those of Sacred Heart. Both young and old enjoyed exploring St. Pat's—the adults especially liked being “backstage” in spaces they never experienced as young churchgoers. With that experience in mind, I offer this material. Perhaps at some point a field trip to an old church will be in order. For now, let's start at the beginning. And pay attention—there just might be a quiz at the end.

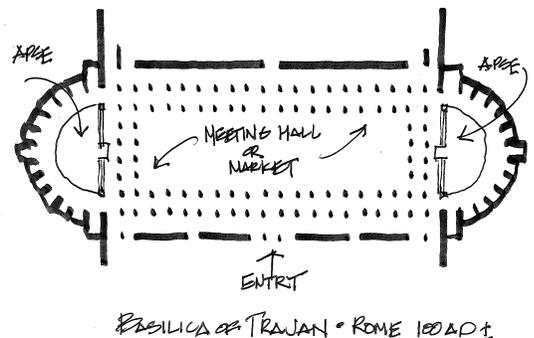
First Spaces, First Churches.

The first Christian worship spaces were actually in houses. That's where the small faith communities secretly gathered. But that didn't last long, only about a couple hundred years. By the 4th century, large Christian churches were being built in Rome. These early churches took their architectural form from Roman basilicas, which were public buildings that were used as meeting halls, markets and courthouses.

Although these first church buildings were drastically different from the “house churches,” they shared one feature in common—an atrium. Ah hah! You're thinking...we have one of those. Actually, these were very different and yet very much the same as ours. Different because the old atria were outside spaces, enclosed courtyards that were often surrounded by a colonnade; the same, because they have a similar purpose—to gather people.

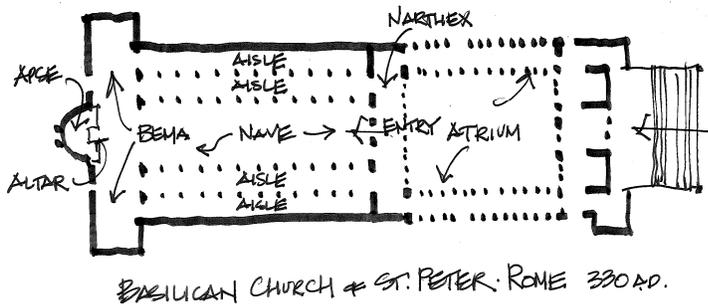
This exterior atrium feature lasted for a millennium, evolving into the piazzas that fronted many of the later Italian churches. Bernini's grand colonnaded piazza in front of St. Peter's, often referred to as the “open arms of the church,” is perhaps the most highly developed descendant of the atrium precedent.

The Roman basilicas (the public buildings, not the churches) had tall, central, vaulted spaces with lower arcades on each side. At the ends were projec-



tions or “apses” which were often roofed with half-domes. Early Christian churches took this design motif almost verbatim, except for two things. Instead of apses at each end, the church builders kept just one, and instead of entering from the side, the churches were entered from the end opposite the apse. This resulted in the single apse becoming the primary focus point in the building, and as such the liturgical table, or altar, was located there.

Besides the altar, the apse accommodated seating for the clergy during ceremonies. As the Christian communities grew, so did the number of clergy, to a point where the typical apse couldn’t hold them all. Today, I’ll bet our church leaders wish they had this problem. Kidding aside, this was a serious problem. The clergy simply could not join the laity in the general worship area. Solution: A raised platform called a bema was built in front of the apse. Eventually, the bema grew laterally causing the building’s plan to take the shape of a capital T. The shape further evolved from a capital T to a lower case t by moving the top part of the T downward, away from the apse.



This form became known as the Latin Cross, the “arms” were called transepts and the long portion, pointing toward the apse was called the “nave.” The “crossing” occurred where the transepts intersected the nave. I always thought of this spot as the “power point” of the plan (not the Microsoft one). Fittingly, the high altar moved to this spot whose theological and architectural sacredness was often marked in later churches by a large dome. Years ago, as a college architecture student, I loved venturing as close as I could to this sacred point in the old churches of Rome. There is an intrinsic geometric purity about a point of intersection, and just such a point was established by the nave/apse axis and the axis of the transepts. Early church builders exploited this symbolism. Okay, I digress—that last part won’t be on the quiz. I hear the bell, we’re almost done.

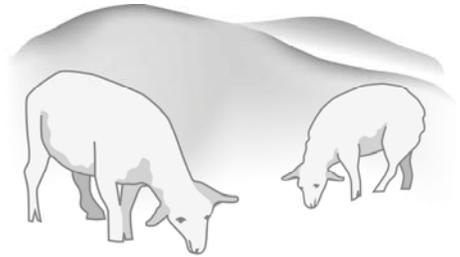
Basilican churches were usually built over the burial place of a saint. The exact burial spot was maintained as a crypt, often down a level from the main floor. The new church was erected such that you could draw a vertical line from the saint’s burial spot, straight up through the crypt, straight through the high altar, right up through its decorative enclosure (called the tabernacle or “baldichino”)—keep going...right on up through the center of the dome above the crossing, piercing its apex. Now that’s some power point!

We made it through Part I. See you next class.



D.A. Narducci III

*The Lord is
my
Shepherd*



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