



SENT TO SERVE

Notes from Deacon Ray Defendorf

LENT

A TIME FOR MID COURSE CORRECTIONS

Some of you know that each weekend I send an email to about 500 friends and acquaintances that includes this column and selected articles from our parish bulletin. In turn, several other pastors and pastoral administrators share their bulletin columns with me.

Last weekend, I received the following column from my friend **Charlotte Bruney** who is the pastoral administrator of St. Vincent De Paul Parish in Churchville, NY. I believe that her thoughts are both challenging and insightful - well worth sharing. Charlotte writes:

"A week more than four years ago we awoke to the news that the U.S. had gone to war with Iraq, against the counsel of Pope John Paul II, the American bishops and much of the international community. It was a stressful time, and continues to be as still more than three and a half years after "victory" was declared following the fall of Saddam Hussein, fatalities mount up each week. Over three thousand of our military servicemen and women have given their lives to this cause to date. We cannot allow ourselves to become jaded to the daily dose of such tragic reports. We must continue to actively pray for the return of our troops and the rebuilding of Iraq under a stable government. We must do our best to urge our political representatives to help bring an end to the horrors of this war and all wars.

Lent is a season where we focus on all the things that distract us from the purpose for which we were created. It is a time to admit our sinfulness, individually and corporately, and acknowledge our need for forgiveness. It is a time for a "mid-course correction", abandoning paths that lead us away from God and heading toward "home". It is also a time when we declare our belief in the resurrection, acknowledging that even in the most bitter darkness, there is reason to hope. The Light of Christ is a powerful force in the world. It is our mission to reflect that light so that others may also have reason to hope.

In the Old Testament book of the prophet Malachi, there is a verse describing God that reads: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver". A story has circulated the Internet about a woman who wanted to better understand this particular verse of scripture, and so made an appointment to watch a silversmith at work. She watched the process and noticed how the craftsman held the piece of silver he was working on in the middle of the fire in order to burn away its impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot and then recalled the verse about the refiner "sitting" and asked the craftsman if he had to remain there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The silversmith acknowledged that he not only had to sit

there holding the silver during this process but he had to keep his eyes on it all the while for if the silver was left a moment too long in the fire, it would be destroyed.

The woman thought about this for a bit and then asked him, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy. It's when I see my image in it."

With only a week or so of Lent remaining, let us remember that we have been created in the image of God and no matter what trials we may be going through personally, God has his eyes on us and will not leave us in the flame one moment longer than it takes to see his image in us. Then we will be who we've been created to be."

Stewardship Celebrations and Commitment Weekend Planned

Our **Stewardship Committee** has met since last Summer to promote and encourage us to use well God's gifts of **Time, Talent and Treasure**. Our Stewardship speakers have done an inspiring job of sharing their diverse ministries. Their talks will lead us to a parish Celebration of Stewardship and Ministry on the weekend of April 21/22 when representatives of each parish ministry will carry banners in procession to celebrate their ministry. Following Mass these same representatives will be available to answer your questions and recruit new members.

The weekend of May 5/6 will be our Stewardship Commitment Weekend. Following the homily, Commitment cards will be distributed and you will be invited to pledge to God gifts of Time and Talent at home, in our parish or in our community.

The Stewardship Committee also invites your participation in the annual Diocesan Stewardship Day, which will take place on Saturday, May 5 at St. Patrick's Church in Victor, NY. Stewardship teams from throughout the Diocese will attend and a video on Stewardship will be premiered. Portions of the video were shot right here at St. Mary's.

Reconciliation

During Lent, God calls us to reconciliation. In many families, peace and harmony is often more the ideal than the reality. A parish family is no exception, which is why we must pray for peace and become peacemakers at all times. Will you join me in seeking reconciliation and healing within our parish family?

Have a good Lenten Week. Serve one another well!



Stewardship and Liturgy

By Bill Grimmer - Music and Liturgy Coordinator

THE TRIDUUM: A LOOK AT EACH DAY

As you read last week, the Triduum is a three day celebration of one Liturgy. It is not three different liturgies. Together they make up one.

On Holy Thursday, April 5th, our parish will gather for our annual Soup Supper in O'Malley Hall starting at 6:00. We ask you to bring a loaf of bread, (maybe even home made!). We will provide a variety of home made soups and desserts. At 7:30, The Mass of the Lord's Supper begins and Lent is now officially ended and the Paschal Triduum has begun. At the beginning of this Mass, the holy Oils that were blessed by Bishop Clark at the Chrism Mass a few days earlier are now presented. Representatives of both St. Gabriel's and St. Mary's will bring these oils up in procession and present them to our pastoral Administrators.

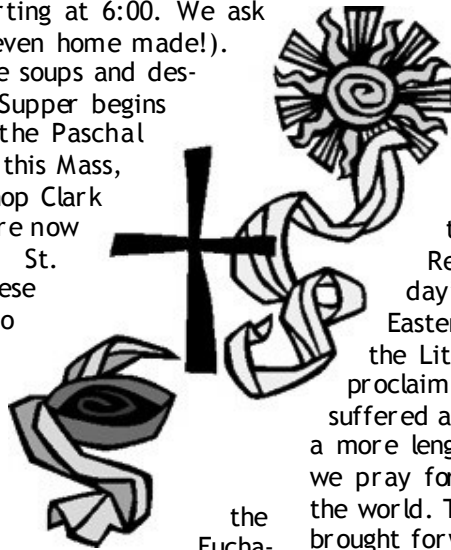
The Sacred Scripture which we hear this night reminds us of the first Passover meal of the Israelites as they prepare for the journey out of slavery in Egypt. In the second reading we hear words of Jesus as he instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper and tells us, "Do this in memory of me".

And then we have the beautiful Gospel reading of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, an act of service and love and an example of what we are to do. The act of washing one's feet and the action of allowing someone to wash our feet is very humbling and yet very powerful. I encourage you to participate in this ancient rite. The Mass continues, we receive the Eucharist and then comes the procession of the Eucharist to the Repository. These hosts will be used for Communion at the service on Good Friday because Church law forbids the cele-

bration of the Eucharist until the Easter Vigil Saturday night. As the lights are lowered in church, all furniture and even the altar are removed, representing Jesus being stripped of his garments before his crucifixion. The haunting psalm, My God My God, Why Have You Abandoned Me is sung at this point. The liturgical ministers depart in silence and the celebration of the Triduum continues the next day.

The Good Friday service continues our liturgy at 6:00 at St. Gabriel's. We begin the service in silence and no procession. Remember, it is a continuation of Holy Thursday's liturgy and will be connected to the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday as well. During the Liturgy of the Word, the passion of Christ is proclaimed. We listen and remember how Jesus suffered and died for our sins. On Good Friday we use a more lengthy form of the General Intercessions, as we pray for the needs of the Church, the Elect, and the world. Then a cross, the symbol of our salvation, is brought forward for us to venerate. We are invited up to venerate the cross and this can be done in a few different ways: we can genuflect before the cross, kiss it, kneel before it, bow, or simply touch it. The method we use to venerate the cross is our own choice. After veneration we participate in a simple reception of the Eucharist using the bread that was consecrated the night before. After this, all depart in silence as we enter a period of intense sorrow as we wait for the news of the Resurrection proclaimed at the Easter Vigil Mass Saturday night.

Next week, we will discuss the Easter Vigil Mass and how it fits into the Triduum. Again I encourage you to come to these services and participate in some of the most beautiful liturgies the Roman Catholic Church has and please continue praying for our Elect, those who will be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil.



the Eucharist

"The Spirit of Jesus Dwells Within Us"

Women's Cursillo #76 at St. Anne's Hornell

Thursday, April 12 through Sunday, April 15, 2007

You may recall that in November 2006,

Saint Mary's hosted a Men's Cursillo #81.

Now, in less than a month, St. Anne's

Church in Hornell will be the site of Women's Cursillo #76. Because a Women's

Cursillo is currently held only once each year in the Rochester Diocese, women from our parish are encouraged to register now for this wonderful spiritual experience. The weekend's close proximity to Bath, makes Women's Cursillo #76 especially convenient. If you would like to experience this "Short Course in Christian Living" please speak to one of the many men and women from St. Mary's who have attended a Cursillo weekend and ask them to "sponsor" you for the April 12-15 Cursillo weekend in Hornell. Applications are due this week,



Around Our Community



The Bath Chapter of the Ivan and Sam Kickball Tournament will be offering coffee and baked goods at the Rest Stop by the Campbell Exit of Interstate 86 on Saturday, March 31.

Donations collected will be used toward the Billy Apenowich Scholarship at Haverling High School. Money collected will also be sent to the Ivan and Sam Foundation which was established to provide educational materials to families with children newly diagnosed with cancer.