

AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2011

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS CHURCH AND SCHOOL

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and peace.

Summer time is winding down and I hope it has been a good time for you and all those who make up the community of St. John Berchmans Church and School. We all go through stressful moments in our lives and we need vacation time to give ourselves the rest and rejuvenation our body, mind, and spirit needs. As this summer comes to an end I hope you had a chance to take a break from your busy schedules. With the renovation activities we had during the summer, the parish has been busy and now with the up-coming academic year about to start, the pace of everything around here will pick up.

Monday, August 15th, is our first day of school, a day of sadness for most of our students but a joyful day for their parents and me. I have run into some of the students at mass and while they are happy to see their friends again, they are not so keen on the idea of getting up early and having lots of homework to do. Last year we had an enrollment of three hundred and seventy-eight students. It was a great year in terms of the activities of our students. Hopefully this coming year we will have just as many accomplishments or more. Please help us keep our enrollment high by telling everyone you know about our fine school. We are currently taking applications for the 2011-2012 school year. These registration forms may be picked up at the school office or one can call 433-0411 to arrange for an interview and tour. Having a school has been a blessing to me. I thoroughly enjoy the time I get to spend with the kids, their parents, and staff. It is not easy keeping up with the requirements of having a school; it takes a lot of sacrifice, money, and hard work to keep it open but it is well worth it. Some see a school as a big burden and something to avoid at all cost but I do not. I love all our kids and am grateful for the opportunity to instill in them Catholic values. I will do everything in my power to help our school and I respectfully ask everyone in the parish to stand with me in support of it. I would hate to think of how things would be if we did not have our school.

Another new start we will be having this month is our Religious Education Program. Please keep an eye on the bulletin inserts so you will know when the classes will start. We take the religious education of our children very seriously. While we try our best to provide an environment in which these children can learn and grow in our faith there is only so much we can do. We NEED the help of the parents if we are to be successful. Please aid us by attending mass with your children and asking them what they learned in class. Showing an interest in what they covered in class and keeping in touch with their teacher tells the kids we are serious about their education and encourages them to do their best. We are also in dire need of catechist to help teach our faith and also teacher aids. Our D.R.E., Mrs. Rodriguez, is in charge of our program and has been putting in many long hours during the summer in preparation for the new religious education year. As always we are in need of many volunteers to make this program a success. You do not have to be a teacher to help with our religious education program. There are many other things that need to be done and Mrs. Rosalinda Rodriguez will be happy to discuss these things with you. We are also getting ready for our adult religious education classes. All adults who for one reason or another have not been baptized, made their first Holy Communion, and/or confirmation are encouraged to register for the classes we will soon be offering so that they can make these sacraments. The classes are called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.). Please do not let anything keep you from signing up. Classes will begin soon and will end during this coming Easter season. Please keep an eye on the bulletin for important registration dates and related information or contact Rosalinda Rodriguez at 433-2121 or send her an email at rosydre@yahoo.com. Those who have gone through this process finish with a greater appreciation of their faith and have commented on what a worthwhile experience it was.

We will soon be having our annual dance at La Villita Assembly Hall. It will take place on Friday, September 9th with music by entertainer Ruben Ramos and his band. Mr. Ramos put on a terrific show last year and this coming dance promises to be just as good if not better. More information on this will be given out as it becomes available. For now please put this date on your calendar and invite everyone you know to come. Due to a substantial increase to rent La Villita, this will probably be our last dance there. In the mean time we will be working hard to make this dance as profitable as possible and start looking for another place to host our annual dance.

Mr. Oscar Tello, the seminarian staying with us, has successfully completed his pastoral year this past May and has finished all his academic requirements for ordination to the priesthood. The Archdiocese is now waiting for his legal status to change so that he can be ordained to the diaconate and then shortly later on to the priesthood. In the meantime he will continue to live at our rectory and help out where ever he is needed. Please keep Oscar in your prayers and pray that his legal status will soon be changed so he can be ordained. Oscar is a good man and will make a good priest for our Archdiocese. Whatever parish he is assigned to will be lucky to have him.

Our finances are slowly improving. I am very grateful to our bookkeeper, Mrs. Sylvia Luna, who gives me weekly reports on all our accounts, our finance council who offers me good advice, and to you, the parishioner of SJB, for your continual financial support of the parish. Last month the financial council approved the budget for the new fiscal year. One of the big items on the budget was the debt we inherited from the school. This came about when the school became part of the Good Shepherd Network. Beginning July 1, 2011 any existing debt a network school had was transferred to its parish and from that time on the Network, not the parish, would

be responsible for all future school bills. If things go as planned we should be able to retire this burden in about eight years. If something should happen, (like a major leak in the school roof which would force us to borrow money for a new one), then significant changes may have to be implemented in order to help us deal with the situation we are in and retire the debt in a timely manner. It seems just as we begin to get ahead something happens. At times thinking about all these things weighs heavily on me and when things get to be a bit too much I call to mind what Jesus has taught us, namely, to come to him and we will find relief from the many hardships and burdens of life. In Jesus we will find our true rest. Someone once said, "Serenity is not freedom from the storms of life but peace amid the storms" (author unknown). I believe this to be true and know that God will always be there for us. Meanwhile I respectfully ask you to continue to support the parish through your weekly church support envelopes, your support of our second collections, and your support of our fundraisers like the parish dance, turkey bingo, and festival. With God's help and all of us working together we can overcome any challenges that may come our way.

The spiritual side of our parish continues to be very strong. We have a lot of great organizations who do a lot of good for the parish. I challenge everyone reading this newsletter to seriously consider joining one. The Guadalupanas gave ten thousand dollars of their hard earned money towards the cost of the recent church renovations and they also pay for the host and altar wine we use at mass. Each year they help out with our church festival by taking a booth and giving all the proceeds to the church. They also give out a scholarship each year to a deserving parishioner graduating from high school and going on to college. The Knights of Columbus call themselves the right arm of the church and with good reason. They do a lot of charity work in our community and in the state. They are always ready to help the parish with any request I may have. Like the Guadalupanas, they also take a booth in the church festival and give all the proceeds to the church. The CYO program provides a tremendous ministry for our youth. I am so happy to see such a large number of kids playing sports on our fields. Besides these groups we have many, many more in our parish. There are the office volunteers, Vigil Team, St. Vincent de Paul, Home Blessing Team, Rosary Makers, ACTS Men, Women, and Teens, the Ultreya group, the Acapella Choir and the choirs for the 8:00am, 10:00am, and 12:00 noon mass. We also have the English bible study group and the Share the Word Group. Why are all these groups being mentioned? It is because God is calling all of us to be laborers for his heavenly harvest right here at St. John Berchmans Parish. In the time of Jesus there were many needs yet so few joined him to say, Yes, I will serve. I will help with the harvest. Today the challenge is much the same as it was in the time of Jesus. There is so much to do and so few willing to do it. Someone once said that in every parish there are a few individuals who do the work for the entire parish. Another way to say this is that twenty percent of the parishioners are doing one hundred percent of the work that needs to be done. This is not fair. Sadly this seems to be true for our parish. I challenge everyone who has had an experience of God from a retreat, bible study, mass, or from another source to not let that experience go to waste. Say Yes to being a Knight, a Guadalupana, a catechist, a choir member, a faithful Catholic responding to God's call. Remember Jesus' words when he said to beg the harvest master to send out more laborers for his harvest. St. John Berchmans parish needs you. Please say YES to serve God by being involved in our parish.

Because there are deadlines to meet, newsletters and bulletins have to be written ahead of time. Sometimes things are written in the thought they will come to fruition by the time the bulletin or newsletter comes to print but sometimes things don't happen this way. Unforeseen things come up which causes a delay. Please be patient, these things will happen just as soon as possible.

In conclusion I again want to thank all of you for your support of the parish and me. Together we have accomplished a lot and together we can accomplish a lot more. You can be proud of all you have done and I respectfully ask you to keep up the good work and not let anything or anyone discourage you. We all want to have close relationships but sometimes this is not possible. We are not a perfect community and sooner or later we end up hurting someone or getting hurt ourselves. This is bound to happen and we should not be surprised when it does because the scriptures tell us our human nature is tainted. We live in a world full of temptation so we shouldn't be surprised when we say something hurtful or when it happens to us. The sacred scriptures are full of murderous, rebellious, and irresponsible people. They even tell us of the times the apostles fought amongst themselves. All these stories show us the spiritual weakness of human nature. They also tell us that while sin is strong, God is much stronger. God can be there to heal the wounds and divisions sin causes. As your pastor I encourage you to remember your baptismal promises when you said NO to Satan and YES to serving God in his church. Let us continue to do our best to live out our Catholic faith each day of our lives no matter how difficult it may be. May the Holy family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph watch over all of us and keep us in their care.

Remember, God loves you and so do I.

Fr. Rudy T. Carrola, Jr.
Pastor, St. John Berchmans Church and School