

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2011

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS' CHURCH AND SCHOOL

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

In a way, I am glad to see September come to an end. It was unbearably hot. In my younger days I used to do a lot of work outside and the heat did not slow me down as it does now. I guess this is my body's way of telling me to do things differently as I get older. A lesson I learned that would like to share with you is that we all need to take care of ourselves, physically, mentally, and spiritually, so that we will be able to take care of those people God puts into our lives and do His work to the best of our abilities. I would hear on the news about the importance of taking care of our health but I always thought it did not pertain to me. I was foolish to think this way. I know now with all the challenges and stressors around us we need to try our best to live a balanced life. May God help us all to do this.

The summer drought and heat took a toll on our landscape. Trees and bushes showed signs of stress and our grassy areas are almost non-existent. It all looks terrible and about the only thing growing well are a few weeds. I am afraid when the drought is finally over several of our trees and bushes will be dead. It is such a shame. We had put a lot of work and money into improving our landscapes and it hurts to see it all wither away.

There have been changes in our rectory staff. John Ruiz is no longer with us. Friday, September 9th, was his last day. He has done a lot for the parish in the time he was here and we wish him well as he begins a new phase in his life. Lydia Ramirez is our new bulletin editor and the other duties John was responsible for are now being done by others. As we go through this transitional phase I respectfully ask all of you to be patient if things do not always go smoothly. We are trying our best to make this changeover as painless as possible. There may be times when schedules are late or rosters not up to date. Please try not to complain too much. We are putting our best effort forward to take care of the things John used to do. Right now we just need time and your understanding. Another change to our rectory staff is the addition of Mr. Joey Gutierrez as our youth minister. Mr. Gutierrez has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and is currently working towards a Masters in Divinity from Oblate School of Theology. He has certifications as a youth minister, Life Teen Minister, and Director of Religious Education. In addition to leading our high school youth program he will also be teaching the confirmation class and be giving a high school bible study class. Mr. Gutierrez brings a passion for youth ministry and we are very blessed to have him on our staff.

Our School has gotten off to a good start. This year we have seven new teachers and many returning ones. The seven new teachers we have this year are providing a great service to our students and the other teachers who have been teaching here for a long time are doing their usual great ministry to our children. One of the new teachers we have was

once a student herself at our school. She came here as a little girl, graduated, went on to high school and college then has come back here to teach. When asked how it feels to be back as a teacher at the school where she started she says it's great. These teachers we have could be making a lot more money teaching at a public school but they have chosen to teach at our school because they believe in Catholic schools and the values they stand for. These people are all my heroes, I am grateful for all they do for our students and I respectfully ask everyone to keep supporting them and remember them in your prayers.

The spiritual side of the parish continues to be our strength. Under the direction of Mrs. Rosalinda Rodriguez, we have a great religious formation program. There are classes for those making their first communion, confirmation, as well as bible study for our adults provided by Mrs. Rodriguez and Deacon Diaz. There is also a bible study for high school students given by Mr. Joey Gutierrez. I am very happy with all of our catechist and I thank God for them. They are all volunteers who generously give of their time to pass on our Catholic faith to others. I have the highest respect and admiration for all of them. These people put in months and months of service to our children and they hardly ever get one word of thanks from us. If you have your children in a faith formation class, tell their teacher how much you appreciate what they do for your kids. If you do not have children in CCD tell the teachers anyway how much you appreciate what they do for our parish. It is the least we can do for these adults who do so much for us.

The Men's Acts team are currently preparing for their retreat which will be in November. Please keep the team and those who will be making this retreat in your prayers. October is traditionally the month of the rosary and we will be praying the rosary Monday – Friday at 4:00 pm in the chapel and also at 7:15 am on Sundays in the church. Please make plans to come and join us in this beautiful prayer. One area in our liturgies we need improvement in is with our lectors, and Eucharistic ministers. It seems at some masses there are never enough Eucharistic ministers and at other masses we are always having trouble with lectors not showing up. To remedy this we will be having a meeting for all greeters and lectors on Tuesday, October 11th at 7:00 pm in the church and another meeting for all Eucharistic ministers on Friday, October 14th, also in the church. These meetings are for those who are now serving in these ministries as well as those who are not part of these ministries but would like to be involved in them. It is my hope we can get a lot more people to commit to these areas of our worship so that we will no longer have problems with a lack of ministers.

Our finances continue to slowly improve. The dance we had at La Villita went well. I am grateful to the dance committee who worked so hard and to all those who supported this fundraiser. You helped us to make a profit of just over \$6,000.00 dollars. A full financial report on this dance will be given out very soon. Next month we will be having our annual turkey bingo. It will take place on Sunday, November 20 starting at 2:00pm in the school cafeteria. With Dora Duran and her helpers once again in charge of this event it is sure to be very successful. As always, come early so that you will get a good seat. In May we will be having our annual parish festival on the field behind the school. An anonymous donor has already given \$500 dollars that will be used towards a raffle prize. Hopefully more prizes will come in and our raffle will be a big success. Even though the festival is over seven months away now is the time to start preparing for it. Thanks to

your support of our church and its fundraisers, a lot of needed projects have been done. These projects benefit all of us and it makes me happy to see them finally get accomplished. As mentioned in last weeks newsletter the finance council decided not to follow through with the new church ramp. It came in at \$11,000.00 dollars over budget and even though we have the money on hand to do this project the cost was just too much. We will now be looking at the cost to build a CYO concession stand.

In conclusion I want to thank all of you for everything you have done for me. Together we have faced difficult challenges and together we have prevailed. These past five years we have accomplished a lot and you can be proud of what you have done. I respectfully ask you to keep up the good work and not let anything or anyone discourage you. There is one big thing that threatens everything we have worked so hard for and that is the fighting and gossiping that sometimes goes on in our parish. It bothers me when I hear of how some people are hurting each other but I am not surprised by it because scripture tells us human nature is tainted. We live in a world full of temptation so we shouldn't be surprised when we say something hurtful or it happens to us. Sin is strong but God is much stronger. God can be there to heal the wounds and divisions sin causes, if we just let him to. As your pastor I encourage you say NO to Satan and all his works 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 & School