

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

JANUARY NEWSLETTER 2010

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS CHURCH & SCHOOL

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

We are now in a new year. Last year with all of its good moments and bad is now behind us. As you read this newsletter perhaps you are wondering what the new year will bring for you, your family, and our church and school community. I think we would agree that 2009 had more than its share of ups and downs. As we begin a new year let us all promise each other to meet the challenges of 2010 **together**. At St. John Berchmans Church and School we are a family and as such no one should have to face any trying circumstances alone.

The big "happening" this month is the work we have been doing for our 100th anniversary directory. I am grateful to Mrs. Dora Duran for the fine work she has been doing as chairperson of this event and all the dedicated volunteers who have been working together to ensure we will meet all our deadlines. Most people do not realize the amount of work that goes into making a parish directory. I thank God for all those who came forward to help us with this project. They are too numerous to list individually but they know who they are and so does God and he will bless them for the good they have done. It is because of them that we will soon have something to be proud of. All this month we will be taking pictures for the directory. If you signed up for this we will remind you of your appointment, if you have not please consider signing up at the rectory as soon as possible. Pictures will be taken from January 5th to the 23rd. There are still some slots available so please sign up as soon as possible. It would make me happy to have all the available time slots taken. Archbishop Gomez, Bishop Cantu, and I will write letters congratulating the parish on achieving this milestone. These will be part of the directory as well as a history of our parish. Since the photographers will only be taking pictures of individuals and families, the pictures of our organizations will have to be taken by one of us with a digital camera and sent to the company for inclusion into the directory. As of this writing we have not yet determined how this will be done but when we have we will let our organizations know in a timely manner. In the meantime please put August 8, 2010 at 9:00am in your calendar. This is when we will be having a special mass with Archbishop Gomez, Bishop Cantu, and the entire priests who have served our parish in the past.

Another thing we have been working on is the renovation of our church. Many people have been asking about it and wondering when it will start. The first part of the plan is to replace the front doors of the church, turn the original baptismal area into a devotional area to St. John Berchmans, put a new floor in the sanctuary, and if possible, make a new ambo to use for our readings and a new stand for the announcements. This will be expensive and hopefully it will be done before our 100th anniversary mass on August 8, 2010. To pay for this we will be using most of the money in the Capital Expenditure Fund plus the money that will be made on the baby pageant, and any other fundraisers that may come up. In addition to this my birthday will be next month and this occasion will be used to help the parish. All the money I will get for my birthday will be given to the church for this renovation project. Last year's birthday money help pay for the stone work at the entrances of the church and school which eliminated the mud problems we had every time it rained. Now when it rains, our people no longer have to step in the mud as they go to the church and school. I am so grateful to all those people whose monetary birthday gift made this possible. While we are doing work on the first phase of the renovation project we will begin building up our funds again for the next project which will be the purchase of new pews and the installation of a new floor in the church. We will be taking pledges for the pews and give the donors two years to pay for them. All those who do this will have their names on a bronze plaque located where everyone can easily see them. If we can

afford it, the floors in the rooms behind the altar will also be done, that way everything will match. Since I want to pay for this in cash or have ninety percent of the needed funds in hand before work is started, it will probably take about three to four years to raise the needed capital. When this is done the focus will be on remodeling the restrooms and then refurbish the chapel. To finish all four phases will probably take anywhere from six to eight years or maybe even longer. If we are lucky we may be able to get it all done in less time. This is the current church renovation plan and timelines. This is all being shared with you so that you will know what is going on and will support future fundraisers aimed at helping us achieve our goals. I am well aware that the best of plans can change due to circumstances beyond one's control and hopefully our plans will not get derailed. May God continue to bless our work and efforts to improve our facilities.

The spiritual side of our parish continues to improve. Many men, women, and teens have benefited from our Acts retreats. A group of young adults, (ages 19 – 29), have requested an Acts retreat be started for them. Hopefully this will become a reality in the very near future and then we will have four Acts groups: men's, women's, young adults, and teens. I am very happy with the good work Mrs. Rosalinda Rodriguez and the catechists have been doing with our religious education students. She has a busy schedule and in spite of this has managed to add an RCIA related program for children who have not been baptized. Many children have signed up for this and have been attending classes faithfully. I will be so happy to see them make their sacrament at the end of this school year. Mrs. Rodriguez has also given religious education classes to parents and guardians of our faith formation students. Many have commented on how much they have learned and are grateful to her for taking time out of her busy schedule to do this for them. There are a lot of high school students in our parish and unfortunately we have not had any kind of program meeting their spiritual needs. This was something that bothered me for I was afraid we would be losing them to other places. In the state of Arizona a very successful program for Catholic junior high and high school students was developed. One of our parishioners, Monica Rodriguez has been trained in this program and is implementing it in our parish. There is about sixty high school students in it and hopefully a lot more will attend. These are a few of the new spiritual things happening in our parish.

The financial part of our parish is slowly improving. We have an aging facility and it seems like something is always in need of repair or maintenance. When I first got here there was so much to do that I did not know where to begin first. Thanks to God and your financial support we have been able to get a lot of things done and our situation has improved. I no longer have the stress of wondering if we will have enough money to pay for the things we need. It is hard to save money each month but I'm trying my best to build up our accounts so that if something happens we will have a cushion to fall back on. I respectfully ask every wage earner to contribute to the church so that we can continue funding our good works.

At the beginning of this newsletter I mentioned how we need to stand together as a family and help each other with the challenges we will face in 2010. We don't know what will come our way but it's a comfort to know we do not have to stand alone. We have a great parish and it's our people who make it the special place it is. I am grateful to Archbishop Gomez for sending me to St. John Berchmans. I have always wanted to be in an active parish with a school and this place has been a good fit for me. Being in the country for thirteen years it was a big adjustment for me to come back to the city. I want to thank all of you for helping to make the transition a good one. Please note I will do my best every day to earn your trust and I will serve you with all my heart. May the holy family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph watch over our parish family and help us to grow in wisdom and grace.

Remember, God loves you and so do I!



Fr. Rudy T. Carrola, Jr.
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