



## FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

### ST. JOHN BERCHMANS CHURCH AND SCHOOL

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

So far this winter has been very cold. January is usually a cold month and February is even colder! Please keep all the street people, those who do not have adequate shelter, and those who have to work out doors in your prayers. May God help all these people with the situations they are in.

Our school is now taking registrations for PK3-7<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2010-2011 school year. If you are interested in visiting the school please give them a call at 433-0411 to schedule a tour of the school. I know it is a big sacrifice for parents to make but take it from me, a person who attended a catholic grade school, high school, and college, it is worth it. My parents made sacrifices for many years to send their children to catholic schools and for this I will always be grateful. These schools helped to make me the person I am today and I am thankful to God I have an opportunity to pass this same blessing on to the children of our parish school. Our students are our greatest treasure for today and tomorrow. I feel it is imperative that we, as parishioners of SJB, do all we can to make sure our school will always be able to continue providing strong academic programs while integrating faith in all levels of learning. I feel this is our mission from God and we must not back down from this great service to His children.

Lent will soon be upon us. Before he began his ministry, the scriptures tell us Jesus spent forty days in the desert. He prayed, fasted, confronted the temptations of the devil and prepared for his mission. As we begin Lent on Ash Wednesday let us imitate Jesus. Like Jesus we too are called to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Using God's Word and the spiritual practices the church gives us we can, little by little, grow into the kind of people God wants us to be. This year Ash Wednesday falls on February 17<sup>th</sup>. We will be having a mass at 8:15am, then services at 10:15am, 12:15pm, and 5:15pm. The evening mass will be at 7:00pm. In addition to this we will be having Stations of the Cross every Friday during Lent led by a parish organization. To properly dispose ourselves for Easter we will have a parish penitential service on Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. I will be trying to get five other bilingual priests to help out. Please say a prayer this will be successful. With so many parishes having reconciliation services and fewer priests around it is difficult to get all the priests we need. If things don't work out an alternate date will have to be found. If this happens you will be advised of the change in a timely manner. The ACTS community will be having their famous fish fry on Good Friday, and our choirs will be getting ready for Holy Week. As you can see we are very active. I am grateful to all our volunteers who help to make the season of Lent such a special time.

The big "happening" continues to be our preparations for our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is now just six months away. I am so grateful to all those who have been working on our parish directory. It takes a lot of people to make something like this happen and without them we would not have made it. In your prayers remember all of them and ask God to bless them for all the work they did for us. The last time we had a directory 180 families took their picture. When we started our current one the extreme cold weather at the beginning caused many people to cancel their appointments and not set up another date. In spite of a high number of cancellations we still ended up with over 200 portraits taken. By the time you read this newsletter the directory will almost be finished and we will be getting it sometime in the spring. It is something we can all be proud of. Those who had their picture taken will get a free directory and those who did not will have the opportunity to purchase one. After this we will start planning for the dinner and mass. In the meantime mark your calendars for Sunday, August 8, 2010 at 9:00am. This is when we will have our anniversary mass with Archbishop Gomez, Bishop Cantu, and the other priests who have served our parish in the past. It will be good to see our former pastors again. These priests are all busy but hopefully they will be able to come.

Another event this month will be our first ever Mardi Gras Bingo on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and my birthday party on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The bingo proceeds will go towards the expenses of our May festival. Details on the bingo are in the bulletin. Please make plans to come and invite all your relatives and friends. Let's make this event as successful as possible.

As mentioned in last months newsletter, the first part of our church renovation will be the front doors, the original baptismal area, a new floor in the sanctuary, and if possible a new ambo for the readings. This was the plan but since then something has come up. The parking lot has continued to deteriorate; the concrete spill-over near the Ten Commandments stone tablet has been the cause of many accidents and the school roof is getting worse and worse. Concerning the parking lot, there is a 480 square foot area of asphalt that is completely deteriorated. It needs to be removed and repaired before it spreads out and causes additional damage to the surrounding areas. There have been numerous problems with the concrete spill-over near the church. Several people who have walked on it have fallen down. Thank God nobody has been seriously hurt. This needs to be removed for the good of all. When someone set fire to the school the insurance company paid for the part of the roof that was damaged by the fire. They would not pay to have the rest of the roof replaced. This roof is now 35 years old and has already had a leak. These items will not go away or get better just by not thinking of them. With time they will only get worse and more expensive to fix. I have been meeting with individuals knowledgeable in concrete, roofing, and asphalt work. They have given me many things to think about and I will share all this with the finance council. Hopefully we can take care of these and still meet our deadlines for the church renovation.

The spiritual side of our parish continues to be as strong as ever. I am so happy with the direction Mrs. Rosalinda Rodriguez has given to our faith formation program and with the dedicated catechists we have. These people work very hard and have given so much to our children's religion education. They deserve all the help we can give them. For a time we did not have anything substantial for our teens. Monica Rodriguez has experience in a program called Life Teen and has started it in our parish. This national program is for high school teens only and has been very successful in many parishes. I am so happy our kids have this resource available to them and to Monica for all the time she has put in it. Many years ago we had a young adult group called "friends" in the parish. This group of young adults met on a regular basis for fellowship, prayer, and fun. With time this group ceased to exist and nothing took its place. Our young adults have expressed a desire to form a group consisting of people their age. After much discussion it looks like this group is about to take shape. I am so happy to see this dream of theirs become a reality. These things are just a few of the many spiritual things happening in our parish.

In closing I just want to thank everyone for all you do for the parish and me. Since it is impossible to tell everyone this in person, consider this my thank you to you. Please come to our bingo on the 12<sup>th</sup> and my birthday on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The money made on the bingo will go towards the expenses of our May festival and all the money I get for my birthday will be given to the church to help pay for the improvements we need. As always you can count on me to be accountable to you and serve you with all my heart. May the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph watch over all of us and help us to walk in God's ways.

Remember, God loves you and so do I!

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

