

MARCH NEWSLETTER 2010

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS' CHURCH AND SCHOOL



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

I am glad to see winter come to an end and am looking forward to the spring time and its warmer weather. Please keep in your prayers all those people who have been suffering from the cold as well as those places that have had earthquakes and tsunamis. Let us not forget these people and do whatever we can to help them.

There will be many exciting things going on in our parish this month. During its February meeting the finance council approved doing work on our parking lot. Bids on this project were reviewed and the contractor who was selected has been informed of the council's decision. He will be seal coating 77,195 square feet of asphalt with a two coat application that will include stripping. This product which is called "pave shield" will have 3% sand and latex to extend the life of the sealer. The contractor will also repair a 480 square foot of asphalt and breakout the concrete on the corner curb on the north side of the church. This concrete is a safety hazard and I am glad we are finally getting rid of it. The funding for this will come from the monies I received for my birthday. The counsel also gave its approval to go ahead with part one of the church's renovations. This will involve new entrance doors on the west side of the church, converting the original baptismal area to a devotional area to St. John Berchmans, putting a new floor on the sanctuary and relocating the original baptismal font to the front of the church. Rather than purchasing new furniture for the sanctuary we will be looking into the possibility of refurbishing what we have so that it all matches. The architectural firm of Fisher-Heck has been selected to oversee this project and we will also be getting assistance from the Director of Worship from the Archdiocese of San Antonio. On March 15th the parish office will be closed so that the final work on our electrical panel can be finished. City Public Service has been contacted and they will be here that morning to cut off the power to our plant. This job should be finished by noon on March 16th. Please pray that everything goes well and that we will not run into a problem like we did the last time. The finance council also discussed replacing the old worn out school roof with a new one. Details on this are still being worked out but by next month we should have a good idea of how much it will cost and a plan to help us reach our goal. As more information on this becomes available it will be passed along to you by means of the weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter.

Our school continues to enjoy a high enrollment. It is taking registrations for PK3-7th 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. 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 any kind of sacrifice you have to make. My dad worked four jobs and my mom gave up many things so that their children could attend catholic schools and for this we will always be grateful to them. Each morning I enjoy greeting the children as they come to school. Seeing them being dropped off or walking in with their parents or grandparents reminds me of the time I was in grade school. I see myself in them and want to do all I can to ensure they too will have a positive experience. As a parish we must support our school so that it will continue providing strong academic programs while integrating faith in all levels of learning. I feel we are blessed to have a school and must do all we can to insure it will continue serving children and their families for many more years to come.

The spiritual part of our parish continues to be very strong. Deacon Sandoval gave a great Spanish mission the early part of this month. The attendance at the retreat increased each day and many people have commented on what a good experience it was. On Tuesday, March 9th we will be having our parish reconciliation service. I know there are those who would much rather confess their sins to a priest who does

not know them so for this reason we will be having five other priests coming. Please make plans to come. We will be starting at 7:00pm and with the extra priests you will not have to wait too long. This will be the only penitential service we will be having prior to Easter. Our DRE, Rosalinda Rodriguez and her catechists have been doing a great service for the children in our faith formation program. I am so grateful to all of them. To the best of my knowledge there has never been a formal program for unbaptized children in our parish. Mrs. Rodriguez saw this need and instituted the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children in our parish. There are twenty kids involved in this rite. They have been coming to class faithfully each Sunday since August and will be making their sacraments at the Easter Vigil mass in April. As a priest it gives me much joy to be a part of this process. Both the Women Acts and Teen Acts are busy preparing for the retreats they will be having in June. Many people have commented on what a wonderful experience this has been for them and how it has brought them closer to the church. Please support the fundraisers these people will be doing for their retreats and keep them in your prayers. We are one of a few parishes to have a Life Teen program. This is a national religious formation program aimed at high school students only. Monica Rodriguez is in charge of this and has been doing a good job. When you see her thank her for the time she gives to our youth.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter the big event on the horizon is our 100th anniversary this August. To do a celebration like this takes a large number of committed people. I am grateful to all those who had their picture taken for the directory. Now that this part is finished we hope to have the rest of it finished very soon so that the printing process can begin. All the parish organizations have had their picture taken, Archbishop Gomez, Bishop Cantu, and I have submitted our letters, and we are now working on the history of the parish and how the pictures will be laid out. So far the directory has taken hundreds of hours and an army of people to get everything done. There is no way I can list all the names of those who helped but God knows who they are and he will bless them for all that they have done. When the directory becomes available those who had their picture taken will be given a free one and those who did not will have the opportunity to purchase one. Very soon we will be working on our dinner and liturgy. Details on this will be given out just as soon as they become available. Please keep all this in your prayers. We are working hard to have the best possible celebration for our anniversary.

In closing I just want to thank all the parishioners of St. John Berchmans' Church and School for the love and support you show me. I was taken back by the large attendance at my birthday party and the kind words that were said. For those who were able to make it please know your presence meant a lot to me. I am also very grateful to those who prepared the food, did the decorations, provided the cake, and helped in any other way. Thank you so much for what you did, I will never forget it. After opening all the birthday cards and adding up the money that was in them the total came out to almost seven thousand dollars. This money has been deposited into our Capital Expenditure Fund and will be used to upgrade our parking lot and remove a dangerous concrete spill over near the north side of the church. We cannot afford to do a complete overlay but the seal coating and repairs will extend the life of our asphalt. This had been something we needed for a long time and I want to thank all those who made it possible. Together we have accomplished a lot in four years. Please keep me in your prayers and I will keep you in mine. I am humbled by the trust you have placed in me and I promise never to abuse it. Let us continue to work together as a family for the benefit of our church and school. May the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph watch over all of us and keep us always in their care.

Remember, God loves you and so do I!

Fr. Rudy T. Carrola, Jr.
Proud Pastor, St. John Berchmans' Church & School