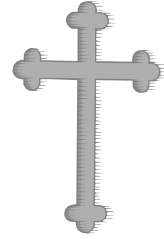


AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2010

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 you had the opportunity to take some time off to relax and renew yourself. It has been a hot summer but thank God not as hot as it was last year. Please keep all those people who work outdoors and those who live with no air conditioning in your prayers.

There are going to be several exciting happenings this month. The first one is our 100th anniversary as a parish on August 8th. We have been planning for this day for three years and it will soon be here. There are so many people who helped out with this event and I want to thank each of them personally. Without their assistance this celebration would never have gotten off the ground. I also want to thank Dora Duran for accepting the challenge of being the chairperson of this occasion and her husband for the support he has given her. Many have been asking about when they will be receiving the anniversary plates they ordered and the pictorial directory. These items are now at the rectory and we are in the process of selecting the best way to distribute them. Please keep an eye on the bulletin so you will know when and where this will all take place. The pictorial directory looks great and I am so grateful to the "army" of volunteers who helped make this a reality. I think most people believe a parish pictorial directory is very easy to put together. The truth of the matter is it is a very difficult thing to do. It takes a lot of planning, patience, and volunteers giving many hours of their free time to this project. The result of their work is something we and future generations can be proud of. ***Please remember that on the weekend of August 7th and 8th the mass on Saturday will be at its usual time, (5:00pm), and on Sunday, August 8th, there will only be one mass at 9:00am.*** There will not be an 8:00am, 10:00am, or 12:00 noon mass on this day. Even though this has been announced for some time now there are still individuals asking if there will be other masses on August 8th. If you plan on coming to the mass on Sunday, August 8th, please arrive early as space is limited.

Monday, August 16th is our first day of school, a day of sadness for most of the 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 over three hundred students but this year we will probably have less. This is due to a new policy we have implemented. From now on only those who are current on their financial obligations will be allowed to continue attending St. John Berchmans' School. While we would love to have as many students as possible attending our school we cannot afford a negative cash flow. We regret any problem this new policy may cause.

Another exciting event we will be having this month is our dance at La Villita on Friday, August 27th. Dinner will be from 6:30pm till 8:00pm and the dance will be from 8:00pm till 12:00 midnight. Ruben Ramos and The Mexican Revolution will be playing so you know we will all have a great time. Many people commented they would have gone to last years dance but could not find transportation. For this reason we will be using our school bus to offer shuttle service from the church to La Villita and back to the church. This is a free service for all those who have purchased a dance ticket. Those wishing to avail themselves of this service are asked to be at the parking lot where the bus will be ready to pick them up at designated times. There will also be a security guard from 6:00 pm to 12:00 midnight at our parking lot to keep on eye on the cars that will be parked there. This dance and our festival are the only two fundraisers the church has. The money made from these events goes into our festival account where it is used to help pay for needed items that are too expensive for our regular collection. Also, whenever the balance in our General Fund gets too low some of the money in the festival account is transferred to the General Fund so that we will have enough to pay

our regular bills. As you can see it is vitally important that we do well on these two fundraisers. Please do your part to help make this dance and our yearly festival a success. I am counting on you.

On July 29th Miguel Moreno left our parish to return to Assumption Seminary where he will continue his studies for the priesthood. Even though he was with us for just two months he made a positive impact on our parish and was a big help to me. I will miss him very much and I am asking everyone to keep him in their prayers. On August 30th we will be getting a new seminarian to stay with us. His name is Oscar Tello. Oscar is finishing his studies at the seminary and will be doing his pastoral year with us. During this time he will be helping in the parish and his ministry will be evaluated by a selected team of parishioners, the priest from the seminary and me. Upon successful completion of his duties here and with the recommendation of the seminary staff he will be ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Amongst all this good news there is some bad news. Our school has a big debt to the Archdiocese and when it became part of the Good Shepherd Network of Schools the obligation to pay the debt was shifted from the school to the parish. This was done because when the Network assumes financial responsibility for the schools in its care it wants to start with a clean slate. Once it is in control the Network, not the parish, will be responsible for all bills the school will have. Since this money is owed to the Archdiocese they want to be paid back. After numerous meetings and conversations it was decided the best way to pay the Archdiocese back was for the church to get a bank loan. When I was shown an amortization schedule for loans I felt sick to my stomach for I knew we would not be able to make the proposed payments. After meeting with the Archdiocesan Debt Review Committee it was decided to accept my proposal of a smaller payment and to revisit this issue in a year when the parish would no longer be subsidizing the school and have more money to make a bigger payment. This recommendation will be forwarded to Bishop Cantu and he will let me know by letter if this is acceptable or not.

The second problem we have is the poor condition of the school roof. When the school was set on fire the insurance company only repaired the part that was damaged. The rest of the roof was left untouched and it is this part that needs to be replaced. Our finance council is currently looking at different ways to raise this needed money. Once we have decided on something we will let the parish know what we want to do and keep you informed of our progress. Please support this good cause. We all use the school building and we all need to do our part to take care of it.

I am sure you have noticed the improvements we have been making to our church. These items cost a little more than seventy thousand dollars and were paid for by our Guadalupanas and anonymous donors. The Guadalupanas gave ten thousand dollars and anonymous donors gave the rest. Another person heard about the big debt the parish inherited from the school and gave one hundred thousand dollars to be used exclusively for this debt. This person does not belong to our parish and wishes to remain anonymous. All that was asked for in return from me was prayers. These generous people are my heroes and will forever have my respect and gratitude. When I met with the Archdiocesan Debt Review Committee I was afraid they would want us to use some of our Capital Expenditure money for the school debt. To my relief they said they would not and whatever is deposited in this fund will be used exclusively for the improvements we want to make.

In closing I want to thank all of you for your support and trust. Things are getting difficult and the school debt along with our aging school roof is going to be the cause of a lot of stress. In spite of these challenges I believe we can make it if we just remain united in our support of the church, its fundraisers, and each other. Let us continue to pray for each other. 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. - Proud Pastor, St. John Berchmans Church and School