

**FROM THE DESK OF FR. DAVID**

**49 BOXES ON THE WAY TO IRAQ!!!!** Thank you for the outpouring of food items, toiletries, letters and cards that were gathered to send to Iraq. Due to the large amount of goods we divided everything between the three soldiers (see below) whose names I had received. Thanks also to the folks from Saint Stan's who volunteered for the sorting, packing, taping, labeling and delivering to the Post Office that was needed. The names and address of the three men are listed below.

**Remember those in the military  
connected to our parishes**

**SSG Folckemer, Jason E.** (*Janette Folckemer's son*)  
D Co 2-22 IN (4th PLT) 1/10 MTN, Fob Warrior,  
APO AE 09338

**H.M.3 Barth, Andrew J.** (*Helen Podolec's grandson*)  
3/5 H+S Co., SSP VIC40380, FPO-AP 96426-0380

**Capt Benjamin Bennett** (*Florence and John Trzaskos*)  
HHC 2-12-1N, Unit #42507, APO AE 09361-2507

**TODAY**

**Advent Communal Penance Service  
& Celebration of First Reconciliation**

Sunday, 16 December 2007 @ 4:30pm

Saint John the Baptist Church

This will be preceded at 3:00pm by a rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant.

**My Advent Dreams...**

*This is last week's homily for the Second Sunday for Advent to encourage you to dream your dreams for our future.*

Last week I spoke of dreaming. If we cannot dream of a future situation, a different way of being - then it is not possible...it cannot happen. The Books of Proverbs was much stronger and harsher: "Without a vision, imagination and creativity, in others words, without dreams...the people will perish."

At a parish meeting this past week the discussion as usual revolved around the present situation of the church and our parishes and as usual was clouded by negativity. The issues: the lack of clergy, why no vocations, the lack of people, the poor economic situation of the county and city, dwindling funds, the rise in the elderly population, the fear of the closure of parishes and in general of the unknown. One the parishioners noted not only the negative slant of all such discussions but that what has not been articulated for all of us to seek out...is a new vision. And she was correct...

Last week I invited us into the dreams of God for his children as articulated by the prophet Isaiah. Today I would like to take up the observation of this parishioner and invite you into my dreams for our future...and to do so as fodder to encourage your own dreams. For if the negative discussion continues and there is no dreaming, no vision...we will die.

Imagine with me...the former Bishop Scully High School as The Amsterdam Catholic Center...a center for faith formation, youth ministry, and outreach to our community. The high school was paid for by all the parishes of the region, let it now truly serve the Catholic Community and all who come to our doors. The Center could be a place where adults and children, adolescents and seniors can come to

talk, struggle and grow in faith and community together. A place to work on service projects together across the generations; to form and build a truly Christian Community...

Can you envision a cafeteria for our teens filled with pool tables and games - a safe haven for them to be and a place to congregate. Big stuffed chairs and couches for conversation about faith, service and issues that are young people are interested in since this is their world and future also. Computers and TVs to explore and open us to various aspects of our faith and the situations of our sisters and brothers around the world and the universal church.

Can you envision the area of the center where all questions, doubts and fears can be voiced without judgment as we walk with each other in the faith? A place for spiritual direction, confessors and counselors; a place to cry, to laugh and wonder.

Rooms that can be used for faith formation for all ages, especially our adults and parents, the prime teachers of our children; day care; and one of several places throughout the city for seniors to come, to reconnect and to dispel loneliness and isolation.

Imagine a chapel open all day for prayer and devotion; for healing where the confession of sins can be celebrated; and anointing for healing. The Center could be one of several places to collect recyclables to contribute to the greening of our earth. The gym? What else but a place for play. Playfulness is of God, Saint Thomas Aquinas taught. To engage in play is when we our most human. And a stage for community theatre.

In other words a Catholic Center could be a bustling hub for our community out of which we offer worship and from which we return to God in prayer, sacrifice and praise.

Where will we worship? That really is the main crux and question, isn't it?

One solution that has been voiced is to build one, I would suggest two new churches, to emerge like the phoenix from its ashes from the beauty that was created by our ancestors. Can you imagine a new structure with a massive dome to embrace and protect all of God's people? Great carved wooden doors to welcome everyone saint and sinner and a great bell tower filled with the Meneeley Bells which are in a number of our churches. Bring them together in a grand peal of rejoicing and proclaiming God's presence in our midst. Meneeley bells were some of the finest bells created at in Troy at the turn of the last century - they are found all across our nation and all across our city.

Can you imagine a new patron saint for all Catholics in the area to claim? Do you realize that we are the only diocese in the United States to have the holy ground of martyrdom and not one church is dedicated to the North American martyrs? Might a new church in fact be a renovation of Auriesville?

How do you get there? If small storefront Pentecostal Churches can afford busses to pick up their seniors and infirm...can not we Catholics do the same with a fleet of busses transversing the city to bring people to holy ground.

Can not such a new place of worship incorporate the rich stained glass and statuary from some of our churches with a rich and grand pipe organ composed of a number of the instruments in the city to lead us in sung prayer and bring grandeur and honour to our worship? A place with excellent sight lines, comfortable seating, good acoustics and fellowship spaces that support a positive worship experience.

What of our original church buildings?

Let us reach back in our history to the medieval monasteries which addressed the remains of a fallen Roman Empire. These great Romanesque buildings served diverse roles. So to as our own

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

spiritually empty empire continues to crumble, might these beautiful buildings double as homeless shelters, refuges for run-aways and crisis centers? Might one or two remain open as places for daily services be that the Eucharist or the Divine Office; for funerals and weddings; for prayer and devotion.

What I envision is not a church of buildings as our ancestors did and needed; but a church of people that worships and learns together and extends itself in service to others. This in fact is why in the first four centuries of Christianity we grew exponentially. People saw, not beautiful basilicas - there were none. They were drawn by the life Christian people lived...and how they put the most vulnerable: the sick, children and outcasts at the center of the community's life.

I dream of a Catholic Center, a central church or two with vibrant liturgy rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition while stretching itself to touch the human spirit and concerns of our own day; former places of worship offering the greatest of sacrifice and praise - the care and welfare of the human being.

Is this not how the Gospel of Matthew envisions the Kingdom of God in its parable of the last judgment? Who did you serve?

Who did you give to drink, to feed, to clothe, and visit? Church is people reflecting the community of being that our God is - a trinity of being. The doctrine of the Trinity is not an esoteric piece of theology that has no connection to our daily lives. The Blessed Trinity, in fact is the core of our life. Father loving Son and Son loving Father blossoming in the fruits and gifts of the Spirit that are continually poured upon the children of God and the earth.

Then the dream of God for his children that we heard today will be fulfilled...

*"The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.*

*There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as water covers the sea.*

*On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out for God's dwelling...that is God's people...shall be glorious."*

Let us dream together that the people may live!

### **Healing for Today's Church**

#### **An Understanding of Reconciliation (Confession)**

Since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the Church has been in the process of revising the rites of the various sacraments so that their meaning and power may be allowed to better nourish the faith-life of Catholics. In his pastoral reflections on the sacrament, the theologian Timothy O'Connell, brings out the following points for consideration in our understanding of the sacrament and its celebration. I have summarized his insights from an article that appeared in [Chicago Studies](#).

#### **What makes for a successful celebration of a sacrament?**

All sacraments are radically communal experiences presuming a gathering and a sense of call and responsibility. Through song and prayer, posture and movement, action and silence, the people orchestrate a communal expression of faith. But for all this "communality", sacraments also include a note of individuality". Think of Sunday morning Eucharist. In the context of the community of believers, each person receives communion for himself or herself. The note of individuality is secondary, taking a few seconds, in comparison to the communal act of the whole Eucharist. This describes the "ideal" Eucharist, though there are other forms possible: Eucharist with a few people vs. the whole

community or just a priest and a single participant. Such celebrations though are deficient in comparison with the ideal.

#### **Application**

With this as a backdrop let us turn to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). The most familiar form of the sacrament is the penitent and priest. Following O'Connell's thinking the best form of celebrating a sacrament is one, which is rooted in the communal with a note of individuality. Though all the forms are valid and necessary for special circumstances, the first form (penitent and priest) is deficient in the communal aspect. This form is more appropriate for those in mortal sin, which in the teaching of the Council of Trent is the only kind of sin Catholics, are obligated to confess in kind and number. The "one on one" experience with a confessor also allows for counseling and spiritual direction.

What O'Connell proposes is a communal celebration focused on the root causes of sin in our lives with a note of individuality and God as the initiator of grace. Thus for our Advent Penance Service the form that we will use is a communal expression of faith in God's mercy, listening to God's Word and singing God's praise, with a note of individuality, each penitent coming in procession to priests as if for Communion and expressing their sinfulness and trust in God's love. The outline of the rite to be used follows.

#### **Introductory Rite**

#### **Liturgy of the Word**

#### **Rite of Reconciliation**

Litany of Mercy (Examination of Conscience)

Invitation to Reconciliation and Absolution

*People will be invited to approach one of the priests and in procession as if going to Communion, stand before him and express that they are a sinner and confess their sins. Absolution will be prayed and the penitent will return to their place until all are absolved and together sing a Song of Thanksgiving*

#### **Concluding Rites**

I hope that this manner, true to the tradition of the Church, will allow for greater healing in the lives of God's people. I have invited other priests from our area to assist me.

### **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**22/23 December 2007**

The Mass Schedule is the same as on any Sunday. Both the Sunday and the Solemnity of Christmas are holy days for Catholics to be marked by the celebration of the Eucharist.

#### **Christmas Mass Schedule**

#### **Christmas Eve, Monday, 24 December 2007**

#### **Mass at the Vigil**

5:30pm Saint John the Baptist

preceded by caroling and pageant beginning at 5pm

#### **Mass at Night**

10:30pm Saint Stanislaus

preceded by caroling beginning at 10pm

#### **Christmas Day, Tuesday, 25 December 2007**

#### **Mass at Dawn**

8:30am Saint Stanislaus

#### **Mass during the Day**

10:30am Saint Casimir

**Remember our homebound for Christmas**

Listed below are the parishioners of St. Stanislaus, St. Casimir and St John the Baptist, in our area health care facilities. Let them and their families know they are not forgotten, please consider visiting or writing to them for the Christmas Holy Days.

**Wilkinson Residential Health Care Facility**  
**4988 Route 30, Amsterdam, NY 12010**

Jennie Cwiakala, Agnes Benosky, Stacia Bubniak, Veronica Augunas, Alice Jarasz, Stanley Gorzycki, Winifred Malecki, Lavina Padowicz, Joseph Furman, Andrew and Doris Lasky, Mary Klementowski, John Nye, Noreen Fruamane, Ann Saj, Mary Schell, Florence Piech, Florence Litwa, Jean Rokitowski, Frances Konieczny, Edwarda Ratajczak, Kay Knapik, Mary Rakowski, Alfreda Ochal and Violet Flannigan.

**Hillcrest Spring, Upper Market Street, Amsterdam, NY 12010**

Alfreda Fedaszczyn, Regina Pawlowski, Agnes Rokit, John Maylunas, Eleanor Kindar, Jean Maryzak and Michael Scott.

**River Ridge, Sandy Drive, Amsterdam, NY 12010**

Chester Kwiatkowski, , Dorothy Krysik, , David Zarecki, Josephine Dudka, Dorothy Bubniak, Eleanor Brasko, Leona Zakaeka, Veronica Joralean, Clementine Alexander and Al Przybylo

**Park Hill Adult Home, 52 Grove Street, Amsterdam, NY 12010**

Gordon Briskie, Genevieve Borowski, Elizabeth Packzek, Frances Wolan, Genevieve Nichols, Genevieve Gutowski, John Migut and Edna Johnson.

**Mount Loretto Nursing Home**

**Swart Hill Road, Amsterdam, NY 12010**

Addie Rabacoukas, Laura Mazur, Clara Sweet, Katherine Smiech, Gertrude Ceterski, Mary Sierzega, Ziggy Petroski, John Dziewierz, Helen Gubas, Agnes Bielecki, Jeanette Kedik, Amilia Pabis and Rose Prill.

**Advent Taize Prayer**

Wednesday, 19 December 2007 @ 6:30pm  
Saint Stanislaus Rectory

**Winter begins heralding the Christmas feast**

Saturday, 22 December 2007

**THE RECTORY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED** from Friday, December 21<sup>st</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup> and will re-open on Thursday, December 27<sup>th</sup>.

**SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST NEWS**

**Ministry Schedule**

for the Masses of Christmas and Holy Family

**Christmas Eve, 24 December at 5:30pm**

READERS: Tony Rokitowski, Thomas Fryc

**Prepare the readings for the Mass at the Vigil**

EUCH MIN: Larry Steiger, Irene & William Bartlett

USHERS Albert Zierak, Lori Crosby, Mary Bartlett

**Holy Family, Saturday, 29 December at 4:30pm**

READERS: Bradley Steiger, Thomas Fryc

EUCH MIN: Larry Steiger, Irene & William Bartlett

**FYI...**

- The names of Albert Zierak and Lori Crosby were submitted by the Council as new Trustees of Saint John's Parish. They have accepted the position and their names have been in turn submitted to Bishop Hubbard for appointment. The corporation for each parish consists of the Bishop as president, the pastor as secretary-treasurer and two lay trustees. I am grateful for them stepping forward to serve at this time.

- Three pews have been removed by the side entrance in front of the Sacred Heart altar to allow for a more ease of movement into the church.

**FAITH FORMATION:** There will be no Faith Formation classes December 16 thru December 30. Classes will resume on January 6, 2008

**PIEROGI WORKERS:** THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!! The Pierogi Crew made over 12,000 Pierogi for the Christmas Season! Happy Holidays to all!

**ST. JOHN'S CHOIR REHEARSAL FOR CHRISTMAS:** Saturday, December 22 at 10:00 am. Singing of Carols will begin on Christmas Eve at 5:00 pm, followed by the Christmas Pageant at 5:15 and Mass at 5:30 pm.

Rehearsal for the pageant will be Sunday, December 16 at 3:00 pm followed by the Communal Penance Service at 4:30 pm.

**Church Decorating Friday, December 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 6:00pm.**

**SAINT CASIMIR NEWS**

**Ministry Schedule**

Masses of Christmas, Holy Family and Mary, Mother of God (New Year's Day)

**CHRISTMAS DAY, 25 DECEMBER AT 10:30AM**

READERS: Felice Druziak

**Prepare the readings for the Mass during the Day**

EUCH MIN: John & Edna Sajdak, Chris Tambasco

USHERS John Sajdak, Joseph Druziak

**HOLY FAMILY, SUNDAY, 30 DECEMBER AT 10:30AM**

READERS: John Kot

EUCH MIN: Gloria Martuscello, Gerry Drenzek, Felice Druziak,

Ronald Rogers

**MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, 1 JANUARY AT 9:30AM**

READERS:

EUCH MIN: Ronald Rogers

**The Christmas Wafers, PLOKEIES, are available in the back of the Church!**

**CHOIR REHEARSAL** for the Christmas Mass will take place after the 10:30 Mass TODAY. Also on Thursday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.

**FAITH FORMATION:** There will be no classes on December 23rd or 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007. May you enjoy the Holidays with your families and friends. Classes will resume on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Feast of the Epiphany.

**OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION** will take place on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 as part of the coffee hour immediately following the 10:30 am. Mass. The Faith Formation students and their families invite all to our Epiphany celebration. We ask that the students and families donation food and drinks for this celebration. Also your help would be most appreciated.

We will be working on the **schedule for the Coffee Hour**, January through June 2008. Please call the office to let us know if your team is willing to continue for the new year. Also we invite others to consider forming additional teams.

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**ST. CASIMIR'S FAITH FORMATION** families and community has again offered to support Community Maternity Services. Gift tags with the name, gender and age of the clients are available next to the Christmas tree in the Social Center. There is a list of popular gift items. There are several tags remaining--we invite you to take a name tag and provide a NEW gift. It has also been requested that these gifts be put in a gift BAG rather than a box for convenience purposes. Monetary gifts are also appreciated. The presents should be brought to the rectory or social center no later than December 18<sup>th</sup>. **This will be the last date to participate as these gifts must be brought to the clients in a timely manner so that they too can enjoy Christmas. We thank you all for your support in making the holidays happy for those less fortunate**

**THANKS TO OUR FAITH FORMATION STUDENTS** who, under the direction of Kathleen Tesiero, signed over 400 Christmas cards that were delivered to our area Adult Homes and to our home bound. Cards were delivered to Park Hill, Hillcrest Springs, River Ridge, Wilkinson Center and Mt. Loretto. We extend a **"special thank you"** to **Sophie Olbie** for donating stickers; to the teachers and parishioners who donated the beautiful cards for this project; and to Kathy Tesiero for your time spent in delivering these cards to the various locations. This act of kindness and caring touched so many hearts during this holy season. "May God Bless You All"

**ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup>**, St. Casimir's will be having a special Christmas Season Holiday Brunch, which will begin shortly after the 10:30am Mass. There is no charge for this event which is open to everyone in the community and affords great opportunity to relax and enjoy some special time with family and friends. If you would like to help by volunteering or donating food items, please contact the rectory at 842-5481.

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS** the late Sophie Albright, a long time member of St. Casimir's Church, who passed away on November 23, 2007 in Lincoln California where she had resided for the past 6 years **Also** Nellie Togaila who passed away on December 2, 2007. May they rest in peace with the Lord.

### **SAINT STANISLAUS NEWS**

#### **Ministry Schedule**

#### **for the Masses of Christmas and Holy Family**

##### **Christmas Eve, 24 December at 10:30pm**

READERS: Paul Tonko, Debbie Humphreys

##### **Prepare the readings for the Mass at Night**

EUCH MIN: Ed Niski, Pat Tonko, Joanne McNamara, Dolores Szkaradek

USHERS Kevin & Joanne McNamara

##### **Christmas Day, 25 December at 8:30am**

READERS: Mary Ann Louison, Cathie Ozug

##### **Prepare the readings for the Mass at Dawn**

EUCH MIN: Dolores & Jim Dybas, Elaine & Paul Blaze  
USHERS Eileen Andrzejewski, Milton & Florence Bryant

##### **Holy Family, Sunday, 30 December at 8:30am**

READERS: Amanda & Dorothy Piurek

EUCH MIN: Fran Luzinas, Gene Piurek, Jean Trainosky, Elaine Blaze

**ROSARY SOCIETY THANKS** for "stepping up to the plate" and donating \$2,000.00 for work that has been completed on the roof which had resulted in major leaking last winter; also for a donation of \$600.00 toward our heating bill this winter...Many thanks...Fr. D.

**CHURCH CHRISTMAS DECORATING** beginning at 1:00 pm Wednesday, 19 December 2007; All are welcome to come and assist.

**CHRIST BE OUR LIGHT**..broke the darkness last Saturday evening. Thank you to **Dot Savarese** for coordinating, to **Dave Jablonski** and **Paul Houlihan**. from the Fire Department for putting the lights on the tree and for those who prepared the reception.

**FUND RAISING REPORT:** Our fund raising efforts this autumn to defray our diocesan debt have been very successful. **The Spaghetti Dinner:** \$1600.00; the **Pierogi Sale:** \$5,500.00 (with more pierogi still available) and **Christ Be Our Light:** \$4,000.00 (all amounts are rounded off). Which means we have raise \$10,000.00+! All proceeds are sent directly to the diocese. Many thanks to those who worked on these successful efforts and to all your generosity.

**NEW STAGE CURTAINS** for the interior of the stage in the church hall have been sewn by **Maryanna Simpson**. Many thanks!

**ST. STAN'S PROJECT PIEROGI** - Frozen pierogi sale - this Sunday, 12/16 after Mass - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the church hall. Potato and cheese pierogi and cabbage pierogi available for \$8.00 a dozen.

### **MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

#### **MONDAY, DECEMBER 17**

**Bogumil Cisek**, req. Mary

**Richard Slosek and Dec'd Members of the Family**, req. Family

#### **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18**

**Charles Lis**, req. Officers of PAV Auxiliary

#### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19**

**Steven Niemczyk**, req. Mary

**Eleanor Niemczyk**, req. Michelle & Jim Draus

#### **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20**

**Julia Bednarz and Deceased Members of the Family**, req. Klem

#### **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21**

**Katherine Skrzynecki (2<sup>nd</sup> Ann.)**, req. Kathy, Fran & Dave

#### **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 (St. John's)**

**Kay Skrzynecki**, req. Niece, Lorraine

**Bernice, Peter & Joseph Pac**, req. Ray & Helene

**Freda Krzysko**, req. Son

**Alois Sumigray**, req. Katherine M. Skrzynecki

**Jean Wancewicz**, req. Jo Komazenski

**Thomas Szumski (Ann.)**, req. Grandchildren

#### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23-8:30 @ St. Stan's/10:30 @ St. Casimir**

8:30am **Sick Members of St. Stanislaus Ladies Rosary Society**

**Walter Dybas (1<sup>st</sup> Ann.)**, req. Wife

**Eugene Piurek (1<sup>st</sup> Ann.)**, req. Family

**Edward & Florence Opiela**, req. Robert & Vivian Dylong

**Deceased of Rokitowski & Brzezinski Families**, req.

Family

**Pietro Russo**, req. Lynette, Peter, Natalie & Chrissy

**Walter (3<sup>1st</sup> Ann.) & Mary Tomasik**, req. Daughters

Barbara & Gloria

10:30am **For Parishioners**

#### **SANCTUARY LAMP -December 16-22, 2007: In memory of:**

**Dombroski Family** from Helen; **Maryann & Ignatius Wachnicki and Stasia Wszolek**, req. Helen; **Health & Blessings Received - Leon & Virginia Wyzkowski; Winnie & John Sumigray from Family**