



St. Matthias School Lights the Way

Today we begin the celebration of Catholic Schools Week throughout the United States. The theme for this year's celebration is: **Catholic Schools Light the Way!** We should all give thanks to God today for the gift and treasure of our Catholic elementary school of

Saint Matthias. We should also give thanks to God for our incredibly talented and dedicated faculty and administrative staff, including our Principal, Pat Wilson. Many of our school families from both within and from outside the parish sacrifice much to make a Catholic education a reality in the lives of their children. Last but by no means least, our student body is a bright, articulate, and well-mannered group of boys and girls who consistently and frequently make all of us so very proud of their endeavors, their accomplishments, and their efforts to always live in the light of Christ! Our school facilities have undergone immense improvements over the past many years and yet I know there is so much more we must do and can do to insure the continued safety and security of those who make this place their daytime home away from home.

Hopefully each registered household should have received the first-class mailing that went out through the postal service this past week. I hope you found a few minutes to read the contents of the mailing. I also prayed that you would show your support for the mission and ministry of our school by making a special gift in this weekend's second collection. Along with Pat Wilson, our school Principal, I want to extend a special invitation to all parents with elementary school aged children to consider enrolling in our superior school. Open house dates and times have begun (see bulletin announcement); however if the announced times do not meet your needs or schedule, please call the school offices and the Principal will be more than happy to arrange a mutually convenient time for a tour. As your Pastor, I would be thrilled to welcome all of our elementary school age parishioners into the halls of our school. I am convinced that Catholic education makes a profound difference in the lives of our young people. Every Catholic parish entrusted with a parochial school must collectively claim ownership and responsibility for the great commission of Christ our Lord when He ascended into heaven. At that hour He commissioned the disciples to "...go out and teach all nations..." and in turn that commission is given to us today. Let us not shrink from this responsibility! Let no excuse be heard among the faithful...excuses that range from I'm only here for a brief time; I don't have children in the school; I don't have any children; my children go to public school, etc. As Catholics we have a direct mandate from Christ our Lord to teach or support the mission of teaching the Christian faith. This mission is not accomplished in the public school sector but only in our parish schools and in our parish-based Faith Formation programs. Let us not shrink from this mission of teaching the enlightened ways of Christ to our children! Feeling passionately as I do about this topic, and as a second term member of the Archdiocesan School Board, I implore this entire community of Saint Matthias to embrace and own our parish school. ***Uphold it; advocate for it; contribute to it; affirm it; and pray for it.***

Please be generous this weekend to our school. You'll notice a vine with leaves running across the mid-section of the church windows today...the leaves contain the various items that you might desire to donate to the school. Some leaves have the hours and dates for our Open Houses. Peel a leaf from the vine and make a wish come true! Peel off a leaf with Open House hours and dates and come to visit with us and take a tour! I want to see our school continue to bear the light of Christ into our world. I believe you want this to happen too!

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE DATES: Visit us for Open House: Jan. 30 and Feb. 5 from 9 to 11:30am. If these times don't work for you, or for more information, please call the school office at 301-577-9412.



Stewardship Report:



Revenue

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| January 21st: | 7,673.56 |
| Faith Direct: | 1,039.00 |
| Total Offertory: | 8,712.56 |
| Last Year: | 10,067.42 |
| Poor Box: | 120.50 |
| Every Penny Counts Box: | 64.96 |
| Christmas: (to date) | 28,918.32 |

Number of Adult Envelopes: 245
Number of Children's Envelopes: 15
Number of Faith Direct donors: 31
Number of Registered Households: 664

Catholic Schools Light the Way: Our **second** collection **this** weekend is for our Parish School. Please give generously and help us support the future of the church by investing in the spiritual and academic education of our students! Our **second** collection **next** week is for the regular building and maintenance fund.

2008 Archbishop's Appeal Begins: Many of our parishioners have received a letter from Archbishop Wuerl announcing the 2008 Appeal and asking for their generous financial support. The programs, services and ministries supported by this appeal require financial support from each of us in order to continue to meet the challenges of our diverse and growing communities. The theme this year is "The Lord is my light and my salvation," psalm 27:1. As you reflect on this theme, consider God's gift of salvation as well as all the other gifts that He constantly gives up. If you receive the mailing from Archbishop Wuerl, please take a moment to recognize how God has blessed you and, then, as a symbol of your gratitude for His gifts, make a generous pledge in support of the work.

Annual End of Year Contribution Statements: During the next few weeks our business office will begin to prepare contribution statements for the year 2007 (for regular envelope users/contributors/Faith Direct participants). The parish is **not** obligated under the law to send these statements but rather it is done as a courtesy to our parishioners in gratitude for their faithful sacrifices of treasure and to assist them as they prepare their 2007 tax return. Contribution statements will be mailed sometime toward the end of January or the beginning of February. Statements will only be mailed to parishioners who contributed more than \$250 to the parish over the past year. Others may request a statement, should you need one, from the business office. We strive for accuracy in our record keeping but occasionally through human or technical errors we make mistakes. If there are discrepancies in your statement please call Mrs. Leslie O'Leary in the business office (ext. 202). Your canceled checks will greatly assist us in correcting our records! **Thank you to everyone who takes the time to use your offertory envelopes or Faith Direct and for your weekly sacrifice of treasure to our Lord.** We will be making a special effort to seek out more parishioners willing to commit to the Faith Direct automatic debit program for banking or credit card account. This valuable service is safe, easy, and simple. It assures the parish of a regular committed income from each parishioner each week and allows us to plan more accurately budget for the parish's needs each year. Please join your Pastor, Father Jeff, as a Faith Direct participant and sign up when the form arrives in the mail with your offertory statement. Thank you for your gift of faithful stewardship!

Lenten Regulations for Catholics

In preparation for the paschal mysteries of Easter, Catholics are reminded of the following regulations for the forty days of Lent: **All Catholics over fourteen years of age must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday (February 6) and all Fridays of Lent, including Good Friday (March 21). On both Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine should fast.** This means only one full meal that day. Other meals on those days should be of small portion. Snacking should be avoided. One is excused from the obligation if his/her health or work would be seriously affected by this fast and/or abstinence. The Lenten observance of our day places emphasis on prayer, the liturgy, good works, self-denial, and the giving of alms to the poor.

Blessing of Throats

The Feast of Saint Blase, bishop and martyr, is usually commemorated on February 3rd. Saint Blase was the bishop of Sebaste in Armenia during the fourth century. Legend holds that he saved the life of a young child who was choking on a piece of bone. He has become the patron saint of those who suffer from diseases of the throat. **We will honor his feast and the wonderful sacramental of the blessing of throats after all Masses on February 2nd and 3rd.** The Candles which are blessed on February 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, are utilized and Saint Blase is asked to be an intercessor before God to protect the recipient of the blessing from all diseases of the throat and all other illnesses.

Faith Formation

First Reconciliation: Congratulations to our 2nd graders both from Faith Formation and the School who celebrated their First Penance yesterday. Thanks to Mrs. Sandy Midgley and Ms. Becky Horning for preparing these children. Please continue to pray for them as they take the next major step of preparing for their First Communion.

Parent Meeting for First Communion: There will be a mandatory parent meeting on Monday, February 11 at 6:45pm in Friendship Hall. All parents whose children have prepared to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation must attend this meeting. Books will be distributed at this meeting, which is for parents only.

Confirmation: Congratulations to our 8th grade Confirmation Candidates from both the Faith Formation program and the School who went through the Rite of Enrollment this morning at the 9:30 am Mass. This step is a major step towards their all-important preparation for this 3rd sacrament of Initiation. I ask that you pray for the candidates, their parents and sponsors as they continue with this journey of faith amidst all the challenges of our daily lives.

Parents and Candidates, remember our next meeting will be held on Monday, February 4th at 6:45 pm in Friendship Hall. **All candidates must be accompanied by at least one parent.** If a candidate shows up alone without a parent, he or she will be sent back home.

Hearts Aflame Sacraments Course: This course will be offered here beginning on Saturday, February 2nd, 2008 from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm and will run for 4 weeks. It is part of the Archdiocesan Hearts Aflame Course to prepare catechists and teachers for certification. All interested parishioners are welcome. Please bring along your Bible and Catechism of the Catholic Church. We will meet in the classroom behind the library. Contact Dorothy M-Aggrey at 301-459-4814 x 205 if interested.



Mass Intentions for the Third Week in Ordinary Time

Monday, January 28: Thomas Aquinas, priest, doctor

8:30 am Barbara Wahle (LVG-Birthday)
9:30 am School Mass: Benefactors of our School

Tuesday, January 29

8:30 am George Harrison

Wednesday, January 30

8:30 am Fr. Jeff (LVG- Birthday)

Thursday, January 31: John Bosco, preist

8:30 am The Benefactors of Our School

Friday, February 1: First Friday

8:30 am Ethel M. Lof

Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during Mass

Saturday, February 2–Vigil: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions Fr. Jeff

5:00 pm Henning George Lof Fr. Jeff

Sunday, February 3: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 am Charito Beal Fr. Stan

9:30 am James Curran Fr. Jeff

11:30am Fr. Augustine Kizito Abizi Fr. Bob

Please Pray for: †The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:

Fr. Augustine Kizito Abizi; Sue Babbie; Ann Benson; Audrey Brown; Vicky Calizo; Arlene Case; Marco J. Clark; Ann & Ray Degraff; Fidel dela Cuesta; Eleanor DeMarco; Anne Diemer; Tom Donohue; Bob Drake; Mary Ennis; Ferris (Bo) George; Fr. Charles Green; Andrea Guiang; Gabriel Guzman; Joseph Harrison; Robert Hoke; Charles Jones; Robyn Kirby; Msgr. Peter Long; Nancy Maimone; Bill Moore; Larry Murphy; Michael Nardoizzi; Joseph Sico; Anna Stewart; Veronica Verna; Phil Vullo; **†For Our**

Military Serving in Afghanistan or Iraq: Brian A. Densmore **†**

For Our Deceased: Charito Beal **†** *Names will be placed on our prayer list for three weeks. To add a name or to request continuing prayers, call Tara Guevara at 301-459-4814 or email tguevara@stmatthias.org.*

Other Items of Note:

Knights of Columbus Family Shrove Pancake Supper: will be on Tuesday February 5th from 6 PM to 9 PM in Friendship Hall. Sponsored by Mother Seton Council K of C. Costs are \$6.00 per person, \$3.00 per child age 2-12, with a family maximum \$16.00. The meal includes pancakes, sausage, and one beverage. Open to all parishioners – call John Murray at 301-459-6452 or Serafin Avitia at 301-459-5730 for reservations.

St. Matthias School Raffle 2008

The 3rd Raffle Drawing was Monday, January 21st.

Flora Kelleher of Bowie, MD was the winner AND seller.

She won **\$350.00!** Congratulations!