

§ REFLECTION >

St. Paul refers to the Catholic Church as being the “Body of Christ” of which Jesus is the bread. Paul also calls the church the “Bride of Christ” with Jesus being the groom. Almost every New Testament book, especially the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, speaks about the Holy Spirit. The spirit is said to be ever at work in the church, especially in guiding and inspiring the church’s leaders.

How then, can we have problems, dissension, error and even sinfulness in the church? The answer is easy. Because the church, though fed by the Body and Blood of Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit, is made up of human beings, sometimes weak and ever prone to selfishness, self seeking and sin. It is peopled with men and women who are free to spurn any graces offered.

Today’s reading shows the church in its very first months of existence. St. Stephen had not yet become the very first martyr. Saul, later to be known as Paul, had not yet taken up in earnest his role as a main persecutor of the followers of Jesus. Already though, there was a large issue at hand, one gnawing at the young Christian community, dividing it and weakening it. It was a problem of power and fairness.

There were some in this infant church who were ethnic and religious Jews, speaking Aramaic and native to Palestine. There were also new Christians who spoke Greek and who came to Jerusalem from other parts of the Roman Empire.

The problem: discrimination. The Greek speaking Hellenist felt they were treated as “second best” when the leadership distributed food and other goods among the small Christian community. We can imagine a similar situation arising in our parish today., where we have multiple ethnic groups, spoken languages and citizenship statuses.

How were complaints handled and resolved? In modern day management terms, you might say the 12 Apostles set up a committee. They selected seven reputable men, highly esteemed in the church and considered to be filled with “the Holy Spirit and wisdom.” They asked the community for input. They used all available resources to come to a just resolution for this newly arisen problem.

This was the first recorded crisis in the church after Jesus had returned to the father, and would be no means, be the last. Crises of one kind or another continue today. Why? Because of the fragile, sometimes sinful nature of the clergy and laity that comprise the church. The same devil that operated in Judas continues to operate in some Christians, now and will, until the end of time. Our God given free will allows us to make our own choices, whether driven by goodness, weakness, desire or loneliness.

Today, Jesus offer us consolation as well. We hear him tell his disciples, on the very verge of his execution, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God; have faith in me. I am the way, the truth and the life.” The promised Spirit is ever at work in the Body and the Bride of Christ. So let us pray for the weak in our church and in our midst. Let us strive to be strong ourselves—trusting in the Lord and striving for faithfulness to the Lord in all things and at all times.



Stewardship Report:



Revenue

April 13th :	8,358.21
Faith Direct:	1,100.00
Total Offertory:	9,458.21
Last Year:	8,841.95
Poor Box:	193.00
Every Penny Counts Box:	82.85
Easter Contributions To Date:	16,189.00
Last Year:	16,865.75
Easter Flowers:	3,759.00

Number of Adult Envelopes: 263
Number of Children’s Envelopes: 17
Number of Faith Direct donors: 34
Number of Registered Households: 656

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Second Collection: Our second collection next week will be for the Catholic Home Mission Appeal to strengthen the church at home.

Faith Direct: Have you signed up for Faith Direct? This program is an easy way to give your contributions to the church each month through an automatic debit to a bank account or credit card. By using Faith Direct, you provide the Church with a steady and dependable source of income which is used to operate the various programs here at the Church. If you did not receive a form and would like to sign up for this service, please call the rectory office.

Votive Lights



The votive lights burning from
Sunday, April 20th through
Saturday, April 26th:

At the Shrine of the Sacred Heart: **For the Special Intentions of:** Joseph Sico; Michael & Rosemarie Nardozzi and **For the Happy Repose of:** Ann Sico-Pendergast & for Saint Jude.

At the Shrine of the Madonna and Child: **For the Special Intentions of:** Michael & Rosemarie Nardozzi and Rose Dickerson and **For the Happy Repose of:** Pasquale Ciccone & Hugh Watts.



St. Matthias School Raffle 2008

The Raffle Drawing for
Monday, March 31st

Sonia Brooks of Bowie, MD **won \$350**
Was the winner AND the seller!

Faith Formation:

Drop Off and Pick Up: Children are being dropped off later and later as the weeks go by. Parents, please remember that when children are late, the whole class is adversely affected and that is not fair to either the catechists or the students. Let us manage our time well and get our children here on time just you would for sporting activities.

First Communion Retreat: The date is still Saturday, April 26th from 9:30 am till 12 noon. At least one parent must be present for this retreat. Remember to hand in the permission slips and photo order forms.

Sacramental Fees: We appreciate the effort most of you have made in paying the sacramental fees. There are a few still outstanding. Please make sure to pay the appropriate fees if you have not already done so. The fees are \$50.00 for Confirmation and \$35.00 for First Communion. These fees are already heavily subsidized; therefore any delinquencies will weigh heavily on the funding of our programs.

Baptism: Please read the Bulletin carefully. Families must be registered for at least six months before any sacraments including Baptism may be administered. Look at it from another angle. Six months will give you enough time to decide if you really want to be a part of this parish; and, it will also show us your commitment to this parish which is a key component within any community.

Other Items of Note:



Mother's Day Novena: Starting next week, cards will be sold after all masses by the Ladies of Charity. Make an offering to purchase a card or spiritual bouquet so that a special mother in your life (living or deceased) can be remembered at our Masses during the Mother's Day Novena. Cards will be available in the rectory office during regular business hours beginning on Monday April 21st.

St. Matthias Leisure Club Seeks New Members!: If you are 55 or over, the Saint Matthias Leisure Club is the meeting place for you! Meeting are held the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month with lunch in Friendship Hall beginning at noon. If you are interested in joining, please come to any of our regular meetings, we look forward to having you there. Our next scheduled meeting is at noon on April 28th in Friendship Hall and will feature an international menu of members' favorite dishes.



Jubilarian Mass: On Sunday June 8, 2008 at 2:00pm, Archbishop Donald Wuerl will celebrate the annual Jubilarian Mass honoring married couples celebrating 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50 and 50+ years of marriage at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Personalized scrolls signed by Archbishop Wuerl will be distributed to the couples being honored. Please contact Tara in the Rectory to sign up for this special Mass. You can reach her by phone at 301-459-4814 (x 201) or by email at tguevara@stmatthias.org.

The Word Made Flesh- Letting out the Light of the Sacred through Painting: Father Jerry will be teaching an artist workshop at the Washington Theological Union where he is an Artist in Residence. Workshop dates are June 18th, 20th, 25th and 27th from 10am until noon at a cost of \$200. This workshop will show you how to do "the visual reality check" and go ahead on your spiritual journey. If you find God's inspiration in writings and ideas, his fingerprints in nature, so you should be able to see traces of his touch in you. This art studio workshop will help you to start by taking a look at your own inspired image "expressed" onto canvas through the act of painting. For information, contact Enrollment Services: 202-541-5210; admissions@wtu.edu; www.wtu.edu



Mass Intentions for the Fifth Week of Easter

Monday, April 21: Anselm, bishop, doctor
8:30 am Anthony Bello & Brandon Troup

Tuesday, April 22
8:30 am Virginia Craig

Wednesday, April 23: George, martyr; Adalbert, bishop
8:30 am Betty Barry

Thursday, April 24: Fidelis of Sigmarigen, priest, martyr
8:30 am Teresa Staronka (living- birthday)

Friday, April 25: Mark, evangelist
8:30 am Gina Pezutti

Saturday, April 26-Vigil: Sixth Sunday of Easter
3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions Fr. Bob

5:00 pm Daniel Enahoro Fr. Bob

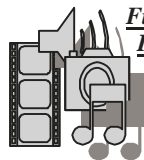
Sunday, April 27- Sixth Sunday of Easter
8:00 am Francis J. McDonald Fr. Bob

9:30 am Severino Santos Fr. Jeff

11:30am Lucy Adaba Fr. Jeff

Please Pray for: †The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:
Pearl Aitcheson; Audrey Brown; Linda Bryans; Fidel dela Cuesta; Lisa Cuthbert; Mary Ennis; Lisa Farland; Karen Fisher; Ferris (Bo) George; Joseph Harrison; Robert Hoke; Charles Jones; Katie Kennedy; Robyn Kirby; Nancy Maimone; Bob Martin; Carol McDonagh; Willie Moore; Larry Murphy; Michael & Rosemarie Nardozzi; David Obi; Peter O'Neill; Thomas Opalski; Charles Shryock; Ryan Zawada
†For Our Military Serving in Afghanistan or Iraq: Spc. Michael J. Chiddo; Brian A. Densmore; Ryan A. Morgan
† 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.

Youth News:



Finding His Presence in Song Through Photography and Images:

Our talented youth group has embarked on a project that involves interpreting meaningful song lyrics through use of photographs that they take and original art. The youth have been challenged to find songs that inspire them and that illustrate Christian values. They will then interpret the feeling and inspiration of the song into a visual presentation through use of original photography and art which has inspired them to see God's presence in the world around them. Please watch for news on this wonderful project as it unfolds and for a planned exhibit to show the parishioners the inspiring work of our wonderful and talented youth!

***The Parishioners of St. Matthias Thank
Pope Benedict XVI
For His Presence and For Bringing
His Message of Christ Our Hope
to the United States!***