

## Š Reflection on the Gospel >

The story in today's gospel is one marked by contrasts: on the one hand, the waste and failure of most of the farmer's hard work, and on the other hand, the abundant harvest in spite of everything.

Farmers in that time scattered seed on the unplowed ground and then turned the seed into the soil by plowing over it. Some of the seed would be lost to the wind or picked up by birds. Some seed would fall on rocky and shallow soil, so that even after plowing, the soil wouldn't be deep enough for proper root development. Some seed would fall among the wayside weeds and be plowed under with thorns, and the thorns would spring up again and crowd out the tiny plants.

Waste and failure are what we have in Jesus' story up to this point. All of the seed and all of the farmer's hard work produce nothing. This is exactly Jesus' own experience. He was first embraced for his wise teachings and miraculous cures, and then later, he became the object of growing hostility and rejection leading to his condemnation and death. Jesus' efforts for the reign of God, like the farmer's for the harvest, seemed to end only in waste and failure.

But the story's conclusion brings a sudden contrast. Some of the seed falls on good soil and yields many times more grain than usual. Jesus knew that in spite of all of the waste and failure, an abundant harvest is certain.

As Jesus faced the mounting evidence of his own rejection and failure, he continued to be filled with the confidence of ultimate success and victory. Jesus knew well God's promise through the prophet Isaiah which we heard in the first reading: "My word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

Jesus' message today is one of encouragement in the midst of defeat. So much of the church's work seems wasted; how many ecclesiastical wheels seem to spin to no purpose! Our own efforts to live as sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, to be his living and life-giving disciples, end time and time again in failure. We wonder, will we ever make any real progress?

Perhaps our progress is slow because each of us has all four kinds of soil within: hardened, rocky, weed-infested, and productive. There are certain times in our life and certain levels in the self in which we are hard ground, rocky ground, thorny ground and fertile ground all in one. And often it seems that our yield of holiness is so small.

Jesus never denied the power of evil or the reality of failure, whether it was his own failure, the church's failure, or our own personal failure. But Jesus encourages us to have confident hope in spite of failure. "Have patience and faith," he tells us. "Do your God-given work for God and others. Sow the seed of holiness in every part of your life. Leave the rest to God. The harvest is certain. When it comes, it will be greater than you can possibly imagine." Why? Because this harvest really depends on God. How blessed are our eyes to see it, how blessed are our ears to hear it. To God be the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.



## Stewardship Report:



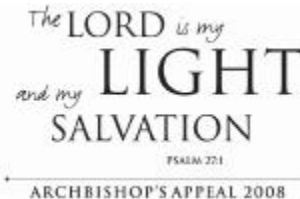
### Revenue

<b>July 6:</b>	<b>9,463.22</b>
<b>Faith Direct:</b>	<b>1,290.00</b>
<b>Total Offertory:</b>	<b>10,753.22</b>
<b>Last Year:</b>	<b>9,173.60</b>
<b>Poor Box:</b>	<b>185.00</b>
<b>Every Penny Counts Box:</b>	<b>65.04</b>

Number of Adult Envelopes: 267  
Number of Children's Envelopes: 14  
Number of Faith Direct donors: 34  
Number of Registered Households: 625

◆  
**Weekly Offertory Envelopes:** Have you received your weekly offertory envelopes for the months of **JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER??** If not, please contact Tara in the rectory. If you have moved, please update your address so that you can continue to receive your envelopes and parish mailings. And don't forget that you can sign up for **FAITH DIRECT** and have your weekly gift automatically debited from a bank account or credit card! Information and forms are available in the rectory.

◆  
**Summer Stewardship:** Please remember that your parish counts on your weekly sacrifice of treasure, joyfully given to the Lord in gratitude, and that treasure is needed even when you're away from us on vacation. Please remember to mail your offertory envelope to the rectory before you go away on a well-deserved holiday or drop it in the collection basket the week before you leave. Thank you for being a faithful steward!



### **ARCHBISHOP'S APPEAL UPDATE**

- 2008 Appeal Goal for our parish: \$58,298.40
- Our current pledged Appeal amount: \$63,208.00
- Total collected from our parish: \$41,920.00
- Percent of goal pledged: 108.42%
- Average pledge amount: \$204.56

Thank you to our generous parishioners for once again helping our parish to exceed its annual pledge amount goal! If you have fallen behind in your pledge payments, please do your best to catch up so that our parish may be counted amongst those who collect 100% of their pledged amounts. We know that times are hard for many parish families, and we truly appreciate your generous sacrifice of treasure joyfully given to the Lord in return for the many blessings in your life!

### **St. Matthias School Raffle 2008**

**For the July 7th Drawing:**  
Winner & Seller ~ Mrs. Elaine May of Bowie, MD

## Faith Formation:

### Did You Know...????

Why are we Catholics so lukewarm when it comes to committing some extra time to learn about our wonderful faith? Read the bulletin next week to find out! (CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK):

You know the answers better than I do...work, work and work. Often times we forget *“And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.”* Hmm, rest was also created by God for a purpose and I need to remind myself continually that rest is GOOD. Now, back to my question; what are we going to do about this? We have all summer to think this through. May Our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten our minds and touch our hearts in such a way that we will find time for him despite our busy schedules. Taking the time to learn about our faith, to come to KNOW GOD is not adding one more thing to our busy schedule. Rather, it is making time for the most important...our relationship with God for on that final day when he calls us, our relationship with him is what will count the most.

This is just to give you an idea of things planned for the fall. Yes, we will surely have RCIA. Hopefully, there will be enough dedicated young adults who take their faith seriously to come together and study in depth why we believe what we believe and do what we do. I am open to comments and bright ideas.

I may be reached at 301-459-4814 x 205. Make sure to leave your name and number so that I can return your call. Thank you, for making St. Matthias such a unique parish!



Dear Father Jeff:

On behalf of the poor of the Third World, Cross International Catholic Outreach thanks you for hosting Reverend Richard Kunzman on the weekend of June 28-29, 2008. Please express our gratitude to your parishioners for their generous response to his message.

Cross International Catholic Outreach strives to create a stronger link between the churches of the First World and their counterparts in the Third World. Your gifts supporting church-based orphanages, schools, clinics and home building programs, will empower the Church overseas and extend its outreaches to the poor.

I hope and pray that Father Kunzman's weekend with your parish was uplifting and spiritually challenging. I hope that you will consider hosting another Cross International preacher in the future to explain to your parishioners what their generosity has accomplished and to update them on our ongoing new initiatives.

Scripture says, "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and the Lord will reward him for what he has done." (Prov. 19:17) God bless you for hearing the cry of the poor and for responding so generously.

Yours in Christ,  
Jim Cavnar



## Mass Intentions for the Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

### Monday, July 14: Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha, virgin

8:30 am Ayodeji Fatogun

### Tuesday, July 15: Bonaventure, bishop, doctor

8:30 am Alma Avitia

### Wednesday, July 16: Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

8:30 am Carmen Velasco & Victor Sanchez

### Thursday, July 17

8:30 am Fr. Augustine Kizito Abizi

### Friday, July 18: Camillus de Lellis

8:30 am Fr. Augustine Kizito Abizi

### Saturday, July 19: Vigil— Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions

5:00 pm Betty Barry

### Sunday, July 20: Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 am Joe Rubenstahl (living)

9:30 am John Petko

11:30am Vivian Dedovitch

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

Virgie Azarcon; Barbara Brink; Linda Bryans; Fidel dela Cuesta; Lisa Cuthbert; Lisa Farland; Karen Fisher; Jose Guevara; Joseph Harrison; Robert Hoke; Anne Mbimi Ifouini; Charles Jones; Robyn Kirby; Nancy Maimone; Albertine Mandzo; Bob Martin; Willie (Bill) Moore; Bernadette Murphy; Larry Murphy; Michael & Rosemarie Nardozi; David Obi; Peter O'Neill; Thomas Opalski; Joseph Otero; Evelyn Pierce; Jose Ocasio Rodriguez; Joe Sico; Marian C. Wahle; Ryan Zawada

### †For Our Military Serving in Afghanistan or Iraq: Spc. Michael J. Chiddo; Ryan A. Morgan

†For Our Deceased: Norma Louise Roxburgh; Roy Patrick Wahle  
†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](mailto:tguevara@stmatthias.org).

## Votive Lights

The votive lights burning from

**Sunday, July 13th through Saturday, July 19th :**



### Shrine of the Madonna and Child:

**For the Special Intentions of:**

John and Frani Peifer

**For the Happy Repose of:**

Victor Sanchez; Hugh McGarvey; Roy Patrick Wahle

### Shrine of the Sacred Heart:

**For the Happy Repose of:**

Carmen Velasco; Hugh McGarvey; Angelina Sico