

## Reflections on the Gospel

Over a thousand years ago, an artist crafted what is known as the Cross of Lothor. One side of the cross is an assertion of imperial status and wealth. At the center of the gems and gold filigree is a cameo portrait of the Emperor Augustus. He is wearing a fine robe and an olive wreath, the symbol of military victory. On the other side there is only a flat piece of silver, on which is engraved an outline drawing of the crucifixion. There we see the King of the Jews wearing a crown of thorns. Its beauty makes the front of the cross look worldly and pretentious. The message is clear: our salvation comes not from power and wealth, but from the humility we glimpse in the Cross of Christ. God accomplished our salvation in weakness and suffering.

Yet we often prefer instant, painless solutions to the unpleasant situations we cause or face. We prefer extravagance and excess when it comes to living our lives in this world. Perhaps the Israelites felt that way as they made their forty-year journey through the desert. They looked for God to deliver them from their day-to-day lives by some extraordinary show of power. But God used snakes to teach them how God likes to accomplish God's saving plan.

To the Israelites, a dramatic, magic cure for their snake bites would have been so much simpler than looking at a bronze serpent on a pole. "Why this?" they must have asked. "We could get bit again when we're not watching, or we might strain our neck. Why a bronze serpent, for heaven's sake?" The reason: **faith**. To look upon the bronze serpent with **faith** brought healing. Yet the Israelites must have thought that an instant cure would have been much simpler.

To Nicodemus, a dramatic, magic appearance of the Messiah would have been much simpler. Nicodemus was ready to admit that Jesus was a teacher, and a refreshing one at that. Jesus had to tell Nicodemus that he was more than a teacher, that he was the one sent by God to die on the cross. Perhaps Nicodemus was looking for great signs and wonders that would convince the people that Jesus was the Messiah. Nicodemus thought it was all very simple.

To St. Paul before his conversion, a powerful Messiah would have been so much simpler to accept than a crucified one. Yet Paul came to understand the saving power of Christ's death on the cross. Thus, after quoting an ancient Christian hymn that declared Christ "humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death," Paul adds, "even death on a cross." So important was the death of Christ for Paul that it was the one thing he boasted in, the one thing he preached.

To us, a God who would shield us from all the hurts that come from being human and living our human lives would be so simple. But too simple. For we know that there was no easy escape from suffering for Jesus and his disciples; it was the one thing that they could count on. It won't be any different for us, those marked by the cross of Christ in baptism. As we face our sufferings and even accept them, we need to have what the Israelites in the desert, Nicodemus and St. Paul all had: **faith**. In faith we unite our suffering to one who suffered for us, the one lifted up on the cross. If we have faith, then the triumph of God's love in the Cross of Christ will be our triumph also.



## Stewardship Report: Revenue



September 7:	10,453.32
Faith Direct:	1,286.25
Total Offertory:	11,739.57
Last Year:	11,109.00
Poor Box:	165.00
Every Penny Counts Box:	46.75

Number of Adult Envelopes: 248  
Number of Children's Envelopes: 9  
Number of Faith Direct donors: 34  
Number of Registered Households: 635

**Second Collection:** Our second collection **this week** will be for the **Catholic University of America**. Catholic U., the national university of the Catholic Church in the US is located in Washington, DC and provides an academically rigorous education guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition to 6,000 students every year. Every dollar you give directly supports financial aid for students from dioceses across the country, including ours. Please be as generous as you can in helping our young people obtain a quality Catholic college education.

### Archbishop's Appeal Progress Report:

• Appeal Goal for our parish:	\$58,298.40
• Total pledged amount:	\$65,813.00
• Total received amount:	\$48,867.80
• % of goal pledged:	112.89%
• Average pledge (for 324 donors):	\$203.13

Thank you to all of our parishioners for helping our parish exceed our pledge goal yet again! Your generosity is truly a manifestation of your faith and your belief in the principles of stewardship...a joyful return to the Lord for all the blessings He bestows upon you and your family! If you have made a pledge and have not made your payments, please

## HELP URGENTLY NEEDED!

The school is in need of volunteers to assist teachers and students in the classrooms. Volunteers are also needed to assist with clerical duties. If you can help, please contact the school principal:

Mrs. Wilson at 301-577-9412 ext. 214

## Votive Lights

Sunday, September 14th through

Saturday, September 20th:

### Shrine of the Sacred Heart

#### **For the Special Intentions of:**

William & Romaine Pinchback on the occasion of their 51st wedding anniversary; Ladies of Charity; Dennis A. George

#### **For the Happy Repose of:**

Barbara Engel

### Shrine of the Madonna & Child:

#### **For the Special Intentions of:**

M/M Phil Ferrara; Madeline White; Kaitlyn DeMaio

## Faith Formation:

**Commissioning of Catechists:** Thanks to all 15 catechists who made it through the heavy rains for the training session last Saturday. These catechists will be commissioned at the 9:30 am Mass on Sunday, September 21st.

We are still in need of volunteers to share the Catholic faith with our young ones. **The Archdiocese requires that TWO ADULTS be in each class.** You do not have to teach right away, you can be an observer until you feel comfortable teaching. If we want our children to be fully equipped with the Word of God as they make major decisions in the future then **it is our collective responsibility** to at least ensure that they know the Catholic Faith. Please call Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey at 301-459-4814 x 205 for more information.

**Registration for Faith Formation:** Registration information is still available in the back of the church. Children cannot be assigned a class until all paperwork is completed and turned in. Late fees will be charged in addition to the regular registration fees.

**Classes for Faith Formation for the year 2008-2009 will begin on Monday, September 22 at 6:30 pm in Friendship Hall.**

**RCIA:** Have you ever wondered if you could truly and competently share your faith or even explain the basic tenets of the Catholic faith to others? Do you feel comfortable with your current level of knowledge of the Catholic faith? Do you know of anyone who is still seeking Christ and the truth and power of His resurrection? Come, find out more at our first session of RCIA on **Tuesday, September 23 at 7:00 pm in the School library.** The Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is tailored to address such needs.

**Young Adult Ministry:** A few people met with Julie Ibehuchi last week regarding beginning a Young Adult Ministry here at St. Matthias. There is still time to register with either Julie or me before the sessions start. One of the ways we can keep our faith alive is to study and share it with our peers and this ministry will do just that for our young adults who no longer attend either Youth Ministry or Faith Formation. Please call 301-459-4814 x 205 for more information.

## Youth News:

**Youth Group Registration Extended:** Calling all Teens 14 to 17. Are you looking for something new, fun and different? Do you often ask yourself questions about other teens, their cultures? What do they do for recreation? Do you need to brush up on your social skills? Ever been questioned about what you believe? The Saint Matthias Youth Group is for you! **Registration for Youth Group has been extended to September 19<sup>th</sup>.** Join us in Friendship Hall from 7:00pm to 9:00pm to register for the year. The cost is \$80.00 for one teen, \$150.00 for two and \$180.00 for three or more. Youth Group will officially begin on Friday September 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Youth Concert:** Youth Group will sponsor a concert on November 11<sup>th</sup>, titled "An Evening of Thanksgiving and Praise." Calling all voices from the age of 14 and up! Our concert will feature a Teen/Young Adult choir and a Mass choir (which will include our two guest choirs) and a "SPECIAL" choir! We will also be blessed with a guest Dance Ministry as well as our own Dance Ministry. All rehearsals will take place in the church on Sundays from 3:00 to 4:30p.m. Rehearsal dates are scheduled for: September 28<sup>th</sup>, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. We will be directed by Mr. George Stewart, a Howard University Music Major Graduate and the Director of our guest choirs. Teens and young adults: if you have something to be thankful for, then come and join us. It is said that when you sing you are praying twice! Contact Mrs. Moore 301-459-4814 ext 204 or Mrs. Zita Givens 301-451-8394.



## Mass Intentions for the Twenty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

**Monday, September 15: Our Lady of Sorrows**

8:30 am Rev. Msgr. James B. Joy

**Tuesday, September 16: Cornelius & Cyprian, martyrs**

8:30 am Eddie Cormier (living)

**Wednesday, September 17: Robert Bellarmine, bishop**

8:30 am Joey Florimbio

**Thursday, September 18**

8:30 am Robbie Florimbio

**Friday, September 19: Januarius, bishop, martyr**

8:30 am Virginia Craig

**Sat., Sept 20: Vigil – Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions**

5:00 pm George Alfred Jones

**Sunday, Sept 21: Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

8:00 am Lu Cabading (living)

9:30 am Salvatore Provenzano

11:30am Bill & Donna Moore (living; wedding anniversary)

**Please Pray for: ♦The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:**

Virgie Azareon; Barbara Brink; Audrey Brown; Linda Bryans; Fidel dela Cuesta; Eleanor DeMarco; Rosita Dietrich; Lisa Farland; Karen Fisher; Joseph Harrison; Charles Henry; Robert Hoke; Anne Mbimi Ifouini; Charles Jones; Paula Kelly; Robyn Kirby; Laura Elaine Kiessling; Nancy Maimone; Joe Makowski; Albertine Mandzo; Luke Martellotti; Bob Martin; Willie (Bill) Moore; Bernadette Murphy; Larry Murphy; Rosemarie Nardozi; David Obi; Peter O'Neill; Thomas Opalski; Joseph Otero; Alice Parker; Dawn Pearson; Evelyn Pierce; Jose Ocasio Rodriguez; Joe Sico; Walter Stewart; Jean Zanic; Ryan Zawada ♦**For Our Military Serving in Afghanistan or Iraq:** Spe. Michael J. Chiddo ♦**For Our Deceased:** Betty Ann Mills; Deacon Jerry Tintle; Barbara Engle; Randall Rushford ♦

*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).*

## Saint Matthias Fall Festival And Flea Market

Saturday October 11, 2008

9:00am - 2:00pm



**Festival Fun:**

Games, Crafts, Refreshments, BBQ, Square Dancing and More!

**Flea Market:**

Vendors welcome! \$25 fee per space

Please donate your new and gently used household items

Drop Off is on Friday October 10th from 4pm until 8pm

(please: no computers or clothing items...coats are acceptable)

**For information, please contact one of the following:**

Misty Oratokhai at 410-286-0396; Vicki Rookard at 301-537-9086

Darla Geper at 301-758-7717; Rosalind Boyer Bernard at 301-805-9283