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 PASTORAL SHARINGS
 

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Dear Friends,

I have always believed that kindness to others is so very important. While I have tried to practice it I have oftentimes failed. Listening to another, writing a note of concern to one who is ill or struggling - and yes, I still prefer the old fashioned note written with pen and paper as opposed to the email. It has been my practice to send a card of welcome to every new parishioner, as well as a plant to parishioners whose mother, father or spouse has died. Since college days, I have always sent my Mom flowers on *my* birthday in appreciation for the life that *she* gave me. This will be a tough October 17<sup>th</sup> with Mom no longer here on my birthday. Bob and Lillian Grandon used to drive here to Nativity for 5PM mass every Saturday. A month ago I visited Lillian in the hospital, a visit I knew would be our last. Returning to the office I asked Josefa, my secretary, to send a bright bouquet of flowers to her. It was one of her last gifts, but I know from her family the smile it brought to her face when she received them. Mom once told me *"it's nice to receive a gift when you're not expecting one."* Each one of us is capable of giving those kinds of gifts- a note, phone call, email, a kindness, our time, and yet so often we put it off. *Tomorrow. Tomorrow.* It's our proverbial excuse or rationalization. And on more than one occasion in my life the *tomorrow* was too late. I can identify with the words of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama of Tibet: *"My true religion is kindness"* and the words of our own Mother Teresa: *"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."* Several years ago I shared the following true story about a taxi driver with you. From time to time I think it bears repeating. I also think it underscores the words of the late lecturer and author Leo Buscaglia: *"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."*

### THE CAB RIDE

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. When I arrived at 2:30 a.m., the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window. Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a minute, and then drive away. But, I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself. So I walked to the door and knocked. "Just a minute", answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80s stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie.

By her side was a small, nylon suitcase. The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knickknacks or utensils on the counters.

In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware. "Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness. "It's nothing", I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated." "Oh, you're such a good boy," she said.

When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?" "It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly. "Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice." I looked in the rear-view mirror and saw that her eyes were glistening. "I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

"What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes she'd ask me to slow down in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now." we drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair. "How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse. "Nothing," I said. "You have to make a living," she answered. "There are other passengers," I responded. Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly. "You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you."

I squeezed her hand, then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life. I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away? On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life.

We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware—beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

PEOPLE MAY NOT REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID OR WHAT YOU SAID, BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

Edited Version of a story published in a book by Kent Nerburn titled *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace* and published by Harper, San Francisco.

I ask you to reflect on this story and this week keep your eyes, ears and heart open. You might remember the words of that famous actor Lionel Barrymore: "*The older you get, the more you realize that kindness is synonymous with happiness.*"

Have a nice week!

*J. Martin*



Masses For The Week

Monday, August 17

RITA MOON.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Tuesday, August 18

ROBERT MASON GREEN, JR.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Wednesday, August 19

ANNE MARIE MERCIER.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Thursday, August 20

STEVE & JERRY VALENTINE.....7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

Friday, August 21

FRANCES & DOM BUTERA.....7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

Saturday, August 22

ANN MURPHY.....9:00am - Fr. O'Keefe

DR. & MRS. H. ROBINETTE.....5:00pm - Fr. Wilson

Sunday, August 23

MARIE GIARDINA.....7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

MRS. KASHURA.....9:00am - Fr. Wilson

ELISE SIEBENTRITT.....11:00am - Fr. Wilson

EDMUND HATCH.....12:45pm - Fr. O'Keefe

**Is Your Marriage in Trouble?** Retrouvaille can help!

Please call (703-351-7211) or visit

[www.HelpOurMarriage.com](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com).



CCD NEWS

Answer God's call to teach Nativity's children in the Religious Education Program. With over 1,250 students, the need is great for teachers and assistants! Call 703-455-0372 to volunteer!

Students enrolled in the Religious Education Program by August 31, begin classes the week of September 20.

Students enrolled in the Religious Education Program after August 31, begin classes the week of September 27.

Student Registration forms should be turned in to the Religious Education Office along with the student's baptismal certificate (unless it has been previously submitted) and payment. Forms are available in the Religious Education Office, on the community board in the church vestibule, or at [www.edu.nativityburke.org](http://www.edu.nativityburke.org); on the Nativity CCD tab click on Student Registration.

All Catechists and Assistants should attend the Orientation Meeting on September 13, at 6:00pm in the Parish Hall. This is a very important information meeting regarding the Religious Education school year.

### Are You Interested in Becoming Catholic?

If so, we invite you to participate in Nativity's RCIA program, beginning Monday, September 14, 2009, at 7 pm, in the "Green Room" at the back of the Church. RCIA, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, is the Catholic Church's way of forming new disciples of Jesus Christ, and welcoming new members into the Church at the Easter Vigil. Our program involves instruction, prayer, group discussion and spiritual events designed to prepare those seeking to enter the Church. RCIA is open to those who have not been baptized, Christians baptized into another faith, adult baptized Catholics who have not been confirmed and anyone else who wants to learn more about the Catholic faith. For more information, contact the Church office at (703) 455-2400 to speak with Fr. O'Keefe, or send an e-mail to Ron Riggins at [riggins@cox.net](mailto:riggins@cox.net) or pick up an RCIA brochure at the back of the Church.

### *Thought for the Week:*

People are funny; they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the Church.

Irene Lagan

### PRO-LIFE CORNER



The truth is that abortion kills innocent human beings made in the image and likeness of God. Today we live in the midst of a national atrocity. Since the 1973 Supreme Court abortion decisions, over 50,000,000 babies have been killed before they were born. Does that number have any meaning to us? The loss of even one of these innocents is an atrocity!

Please support the **TEPEYAC FAMILY CENTER**, 11135 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22030, 703-273-9440 x 107, with your prayers and financial resources. Info on this crisis pregnancy center can be found at [www.tepeyacfamlycenter.com](http://www.tepeyacfamlycenter.com)

Pro-Life Rosary-A prayerful, peaceful and public gathering of friends and neighbors who pray the rosary for one hour takes place on Saturdays at 10:00 am on Rolling Road across from Kings Park SC Giant Food. Please call Jane Hamilton, 703-646-5051 for more information.

### Crisis Pregnancy Centers Phone Numbers

**Catholic Charities National: 1-800-CARE-002**  
**Catholic Charities Local: 703-425-0100**  
**A Woman's Choice: 703-538-4305**  
**Gabriel Project: 1-866-444-3553**

**Nativity's ESL (English as a Second Language) program** for Spanish speakers begins classes in September. We offer three levels of classes (beginner, intermediate and advanced) on Saturday mornings, from 10:00am to 12:00pm, an advanced class on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 9:00pm, and an intermediate class on Thursdays, also from 7:00 to 9:00pm. Registration and placement testing for all classes will be held on Wednesday, September 9, and Thursday, September 10, both evenings from 7:00 to 8:30pm in the Green Room at the rear of the Church, and Saturday, September 12, from 10:00 to 11:30am in the Nativity School. We want to thank the parishioners of Nativity for your generous support of our program. Our teaching staff now consists of fifteen volunteers from the Parish. The Parish office staff is always generous with their time and assistance, our local Knights of Columbus chapter provides much need financial support and Father Martin's generous help ensures that no student will ever be turned away for lack of funds. Thank you all. If you have questions about our program, please call Bob Clark at 703-3323-6717 or Ben Jacinto at 703-644-1787.

### **New University of Mary Washington Student?**

Drop by the Catholic Student Center when you arrive. We are conveniently located across the street from campus at 1614 College Ave. (the red brick building with white columns). Meet new friends, and grow in knowledge and love of your Catholic Faith. Come to our events, such as, Tuesday Pizza with the Pope Bible Study, Thursday Supper Seminar, Thomas on Tap, Adoration and social outings. Join us at Sunday and weekday Masses. Discover retreat and service opportunities and much more. Contact us at 540-373-6746 or visit our website for additional information: [www.umwccm.org.m](http://www.umwccm.org.m)



### Altar Flowers

**In Loving Memory of  
Michael Knechtges on his Birthday**

**From**

**The Mike Rademacha Family**

**And**

**In Loving Memory of Joseph I. Connolly, Jr.**

**From**

**Ellen and David Langreth**

Vocation Prayer: **Lord Jesus**, You promised that those who choose the better portion will never have it taken from them. Grant that all men and women whom You are choosing to live their portion of Your saving mission as priests, deacons and in the consecrated life will respond courageously and faithfully to their vocations. Amen.

**Unusual Facts about Some Old Churches –**

Did you know that centuries ago there was great symbolism, and some superstition, connected with a church building? For example, within the building, the east was God's side, complete with his throne. The west side of the church was considered the human side, the south was the saints and angels side, because that was where the sun would shine the most (almost all European churches were built with the nave pointing due east). The north side was considered the devil's side. According to the book, *The Catholic Source Book*, (Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2000), male servants and the poor were seated on this north side of the church, while the females sat on the south side. There also was a superstition that only evildoers could be buried on the north side of the church graveyard. Also did you know that Gargoyles were often used as decoration on Gothic churches as symbolic of evil exorcised by the gospel? The fact that I found the most amusing was that some old churches had a small door in their north wall "to let out the devil" during a Baptism or Communion service. This tied into the superstition that the north side of a church was "Satan's side", where the devil lurked to prey on the unwary. Thankfully these superstitions are a thing of the past and the church building today is known as a sanctuary and a building of love and hope.

**Engaging Spirituality Introductory Session Scheduled**

A 45- minute Introductory session for *Engaging Spirituality* will be held at 7:30 pm August 26 in the Green Room at the back of the Church. *Engaging Spirituality* includes 21 weekly sessions starting in late September and highlights the linkage between spirituality and compassionate engagement by emphasizing personal and communal prayer, reflection on the writings of spiritual masters, personal encounters with vulnerable people, and contemplative dialogue in a small faith community. More information is available on the bottom shelf of the table marked "Social Justice Directory" between the doors of the Church lobby next to the Gift Shop. Further information is available from Joe Pettit, 703-455-4937, [pettit@georgetown.edu](mailto:pettit@georgetown.edu).

--**Social Action Linking Together (SALT)--Update:** The Minimum Wage Increases. **SALT** has been a leader for the Fair Wage Act. On July 24, the final stage of the 2007 federal wage increase was implemented, raising minimum wage from \$6.55 to \$7.25. The legislation, the "Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007", raised the pay for the nation's lowest-income workers from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 over a three-step process with the final increase occurring on Friday July 24th. **SALT** thanks parishioners and advocate partners for adding your voice to let working families escape poverty. **SALT** is a grass roots community faith-based network of individuals who deal with public policy issues at the State level. For more information or to join **SALT** go to [www.S-A-L-T.org](http://www.S-A-L-T.org) or contact John Horejsi, **SALT** Coordinator at [jhorejsi@cox.net](mailto:jhorejsi@cox.net).

The *Arlington Catholic Herald's* website is a great resource for parish and school information. The site also contains inspirational reflections from Bishop Paul Loverde, award-winning Gospel commentaries from Fr. Paul Scalia and a complete list of upcoming events for young adults. Visit [www.catholicherald.com](http://www.catholicherald.com) today.

**Haven of Northern Virginia** is committed to offering support, compassion, information, resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. Volunteers offer comfort and support while helping people cope with feeling of fear, loneliness and a host of other emotions associated with grief. **To become a Haven volunteer:** **1.** Attend an orientation to acquaint yourself with the purposes of Haven. To register for orientation, call 703-941-7000. **2.** Attend a 30-hour training course. **3.** Commit to one year of service answering Haven's phones (a minimum of 2.5 hours weekly.)

**MOTHER'S GROUP....Mom & Me** is a cooperative organization of mothers of young children who meet weekly for socialization and service in a Catholic faith environment. We invite you to join us at a local park during the summer on Wednesdays from 10:00am to 11:30am. For more information, please contact Kate O'Connor at [k8oconnor@gmail.com](mailto:k8oconnor@gmail.com) or Magda Lee Ungerecht at [magdalee@yahoo.com](mailto:magdalee@yahoo.com)

**Have you served overseas and seen the poverty up close and personal? Would you be interested in social justice advocacy? Have you written grants for non-profits and/or are willing to learn? Are you a handyman/woman? Would you have the heart to be a friendly visitor? Opportunities for service to the materially poor are many and varied.** If you are an active senior interested in volunteering two days a week for the materially poor and growing spiritually through the Ignatian Volunteer Corps:

1. Attend info session at 7:30pm Thursday, August 13; the Broadway Club Room; 502 W. Broad St.; Falls Church 22046;

2. Contact IVC Regional Director Jim Kelley (703-533-7322 or [jkelly@ivcusa.org](mailto:jkelly@ivcusa.org))

Health care reform should not include coverage for abortion on demand. Please communicate with Congress and join our National Prayer Campaign. For details see [www.PrayerCampaign.org](http://www.PrayerCampaign.org)

**FESTIVALS****Catholic Heritage Festival, Saturday August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009**

Mark your calendars for the Catholic Heritage Festival, Saturday August 22nd, from 10:30am to 4:00pm at Bull Run Regional Park in Centreville. Celebrate with fellow Catholics of all ages and nationalities from across the Diocese with Mass, great food, games, music, sporting events, dancing and more. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate the oneness of our faith at Arlington's first ever Catholic Heritage Festival.

**Sell Your Wares or Promote Your Catholic Organization at the Catholic Heritage Festival.** You're invited to sell your artwork, crafts, food, etc or showcase your Catholic organization at the Festival. All vendors and exhibitors must receive prior approval. To reserve a vendor table, please contact Tom O'Neill at 703-841-3807.

**Good Shepherd Church 34th International Festival**

Labor Day, September 7, 2009 12:30pm to 6:00pm  
8710 Mount Vernon Highway, Alexandria 22309  
Games, white elephant sale, live entertainment, bake sale, international food and more! Proceeds benefit local charities. Free admission (tickets required for some activities). Call 703-780-4055 or visit [www.gs-cc.org](http://www.gs-cc.org) for more information.

**Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church 35th Annual Slavic American Festival**

Sunday, September 13, 2009 Noon to 6:30pm.  
3410 Woodburn Road, Annandale, VA 22003  
Traditional Slavic foods: holupki, pirohi, kolbasi, haluski, potato pancakes; John Stevens' Doubleshot Band from NE PA; Children's rides and games, Religious art & craft sale; Slavic art & crafts sale; Bake sale; Rummage sale; Bingo; Raffles; Cold refreshments and more. For more info call 703-573-3986 or visit [www.epiphanyofourlord.org](http://www.epiphanyofourlord.org).

**Holy Family Catholic Church** is hosting their annual Family Fall Festival 2009!! Friday, September 11 from 6-11pm and Saturday, September 12 from 4-11pm. Lots of international foods, music, entertainment, games and prizes for everyone. Holy Family is located at 14160 Ferndale Rd., Dale City, VA 22193

**Looking for Confirmation or School Service Hours?**

The Arlington Diocese will put you to work at the Catholic Heritage Festival on August 22, 2009 at Bull Run Regional Park. For more information, please contact the Office for Family Life at (703) 841-3888 or email, [c.monogue@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:c.monogue@arlingtondiocese.org).

**THE WEEK AHEAD  
IN OUR PARISH****Sunday, August 16**

2:00 pm.....Baptisms (CH)

**Monday, August 17**

9:30 am.....Prayer Shawl Ministry (APR)

8:00 pm.....AA Meeting (APR)

**Tuesday, August 18**

9:30 am.....Bible Study Summer Session (APR)

**Wednesday, August 19**

7:00 pm.....Hispanic Prayer Group (SC)

7:00 pm.....Prayer Shawl Ministry (APR)

7:30 pm.....Legion of Mary (GR)

**Thursday, August 20**

9:30 am.....Craft Group (APR)

7:30 pm.....Prayer Group (APR)

7:30 pm.....Grief support Group (S)

**Saturday, August 22**

9:00 am.....Mass (CH)

10:00 am.....Dog Obedience Class (PL)

7:00 pm.....Hispanic Mass (CH)

**Sharing Hope**, a support group for men and women going through separation and divorce, will meet this Friday, August 21st, at St. Mary of Sorrows Historic Church Hall, off Rte. 123. The topic will be "God's Hand in Our Lives." Newcomers are warmly welcomed and there is no fee. For further information, directions or encouragement, please call Barbara at 703-425-5467 or Maureen (work) 703-610-5805

**FYI....Schedule Change for August and September....**

For the months of August and September 2009, we are changing the dates of the **baptism classes** (English) which are scheduled the 3rd Thursday of each month. **Note the following change...August 27th (4th Thursday)-instead of August 20th and September 24th (4th Thursday)-**

The **Little Sisters of the Poor** will be visiting next weekend, August 22/23. Please be generous so the Sisters can continue their work in helping the elderly poor. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Gratitude is a shortcut to holiness.

Sister Ida