



Dear Parishioners,

“What A Wonderful Ride It Has Been.” This will be the title of my book if I get the time to write it. As we enter the final days of *The Year Of The Priest* (June 19, 2009- June 19, 2010), and I celebrate my 44 years as a priest on May 14th, I find myself reminiscing about those years. Although it has been a wonderful ride, the ride was not always smooth. I am sure that any married couple could say the same about their journey. I still vividly recall a June meeting back in 1961 with Monsignor Sullivan, the Rector of my college seminary, when he informed me I was not to return to the seminary because my grades were not up to par - especially in chemistry which I had failed miserably. Later I learned that four others in my class of 16 were also asked to leave. Vocations were plentiful back in the early '60's. It was not uncommon to have an ordination class of 10-12 men each year, so seminarians were expendable in the late 50's and early 60's. Ironically, these days Providence is ordaining only two or three seminarians each June. After researching dioceses, I was accepted by the Diocese of Richmond, which was considered a missionary area that encompassed the entire state of Virginia. The Bishop of Richmond assigned me to St. Bernard Seminary in Cullman, Alabama, some 1500 miles from Providence. To this young 20 year old city boy, who had never traveled beyond New England, Alabama seemed like exile. That “bump” in the road turned out to be a blessing – there was life outside of New England! I found myself living in the midst of the civil rights movement in Selma and Birmingham and encountered classmates that would become lifelong friends from Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas! Looking back, I think that was where the “travel bug” entered my life. For today, I have traveled to every continent but one and to 27 European, Central American and Asian countries.

After two years at St. Bernard Abbey with the Benedictine Monks, the seminary closed and our class was shipped to Loretto, Pennsylvania with the Franciscan Fathers. Having witnessed first hand the segregation of the South, I now found myself mixing with classmates whose fathers were coalminers and rather poor.

Ordination finally came May 14, 1966 and this young 26 year old who thought that he knew it all, was about to convert the world. As many young people, who think that after leaving college with their degrees that they know it all, I found myself thinking the same. As I look back, I realize how very little I knew. Yes, I had book knowledge but that was it. On the bottom of my paten (communion plate) I had inscribed the words *I Am The Good Shepherd*. It was also the Gospel for my first Mass and has become my personal mantra during these past 44 years. The image of Shepherd is synonymous with caring, concern, understanding, forgiveness, gentleness and love. The joys of my priesthood are countless. I have been with people in their high moments, Baptisms, First Communions and Weddings, as well as, in their times of sadness - illness and funerals. Often, people come to me in their time of sin or pain or who have been away from the church. I have always felt that my job as shepherd was to hold the door open for all of them and above all not to put barriers in their way. One priest recently told me that the church is like a spiritual gym. People do not have to be in perfect shape to join a gym. They join a gym to get in shape. The Church is not for the perfect (haven't found any yet); they come because they want to grow in love for God and especially for others. As priests, we must not stand in their way. I get angry with priests who seem to put up hoops for people to jump through! Jesus never did and we shouldn't be any different.

If anyone were to ask me what I enjoy the most and what I least like doing as a priest, I would probably answer the same as my brother pastors. *People*, even with all their demands, are my greatest joy, and *administration* and a cluttered desk with overdue reports would be the least. In addition to the many that hopefully I have helped in their time of trial, I feel especially blessed to have encountered the destitute of Haiti. Over the past eleven years we have helped build some 800 houses, 5 community centers, a clinic, a tilapia farm, a two story school, rebuilt an orphanage, 2 fishing village co-ops with 5 boats each, 2 sewing co-ops, fed thousands of hungry people and helped thousands live in dignity amidst their poverty. And this might never have been accomplished had I remained in Providence! Perhaps being asked to leave the seminary in 1961 was a blessing in disguise.

Yes, it has been a wonderful ride with all the bumps. I'd like to think that those pot holes have helped mold me into being a better man and pastor. While I learned the “book stuff” in seminary it was you, the people, in my ministry that truly helped me to grow. And among those important people my Mom, Dad, Brother, Jack and sister, Madeleine, as well as my extended family and friends have always been there for me with their love, support and witness.

And now a few seasons later and feeling somewhat weatherworn, I can honestly say it has been a wonderful and diverse ride these past 44 years, even with the bumps. I'm glad that I didn't agree with Monsignor Sullivan back in 1961 who said that I did not have a vocation to the priesthood. Please continue to remember me in your prayers that I may live up to and follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

And as a side note: after ordination Monsignor Sullivan became a dear friend until he died last year. As a matter of fact, at my 25th anniversary Mass, he concelebrated with me. Interestingly, the Gospel at that Mass was about the pruning of the vines. Msgr. Sullivan told the congregation that as the "Master Pruner" in the seminary, he now realized he had pruned too much. Instead of Msgr. Sullivan and Mr. Martin, we were now Arthur and Dick – good friends and fellow priests. Yes, sometimes God does paint straight with crooked lines.

Have a nice week!



HAPPY 44th ANNIVERSARY, FATHER MARTIN



Monday, May 17

Mother's Day Novena Mass.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Tuesday, May 18

Scott Smart.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Wednesday, May 19

Mother's Day Novena Mass..... 7:30pm - Fr. Martin

Thursday, May 20

Mother's Day Novena Mass..... 7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

Friday, May 21

Special Intentions for

Manuel Florez & Family..... 7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

Saturday, May 22

Joseph Talarico.....9:00am - Fr. O'Keefe

Special Intentions for

Jennifer Hay..... 5:00pm - Fr. Basil

Spanish Mass.....7:00pm - Fr. Russo

Sunday, May 23

Nellie Jett.....7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

Christine Sapienza.....9:00am - Fr. O'Keefe

Parishioners.....11:00am - Fr. Martin

Brian McCourt.....12:45pm - Fr. Wilson



Final Religious Education classes — Sunday, May 16; Monday, May 17; and Tuesday, May 18. Report cards will be distributed.

A big **THANK YOU** to the Religious Education Program's students, their families, and our volunteers for their participation in the Program's Operation Starfish Lenten Project. Due to the enthusiastic and generous support to help families in Haiti recover from the devastating earthquake, the Religious Education Program collected \$9,120.78!!

Evening of Gratitude for Religious Education Program volunteers on Sunday, May 23, 6:00pm in the church.

Student Registration for 2010-2011 is now open. Class placement is on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date the registration form is received in the Religious Education Office. Return a completed Student Registration form with payment as soon as possible to increase the chance of placement in your first choice session. **Important: registrations will not be processed without a copy of a student's baptismal certificate included with the form (including students baptized at Nativity)** unless the baptismal certificate is already on file in the Religious Education Office. Forms are available in the Religious Education Office, on the community board in the church vestibule, and at website: www.edu.nativityburke.org; on the Nativity CCD tab click on Student Registration.

Congratulations Father Kevin O'Keefe



Father O'Keefe was ordained on May 20, 1995. He has served the Arlington Diocese for 15 years. May Our Divine Savior keep him in His loving care. Thank you, Father, for your dedication and guidance to the parishioners of Nativity.

"You will be My witnesses to the ends of the earth." If you think the Lord may be inviting you to carry on His mission as a priest, deacon or in the consecrated life, call Father Brian Bashista (703) 841-2514, or write: b.bashista@arlingtondiocese.org

A MEMORIAL DAY MASS will be celebrated on Monday, May 31st at 11:00am at Fairfax Memorial park, 9900 Braddock Rd. in Fairfax. Fr. Terry Specht will be the celebrant. If outdoor services at the cemetery are cancelled due to inclement weather,

Thought for the Week

When we are old all our pleasures are behind us, but when we are young all our troubles are before us.

Bits and Pieces

The Altar Flowers this week are

In Memory of Evelyn M. Kaelin
And
In Loving Memory of Henry Krynick
From
Gayle Tomasetti



The Nativity ESL (English as a Second Language) Program for Spanish-speakers invites parishioners to join the teaching staff for next year. Classes meet in Nativity school on Saturdays from 10:00am to 12:00pm and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7:00pm to 9:00pm from September through May. We invite volunteers who are interested in serving our parish's Hispanic community. Proficiency in Spanish is not required to teach in the program. We especially invite those who might be interested in part-time (less than two hours per week) or occasional substitute teaching. To volunteer or to get more information, please call Bob Clark at 703-323-6717 or the Parish Office at 703-455-2400.

JustFaith to be offered this fall

Did your religious formation essentially stop with confirmation in your teen years? Are you ready to encounter your faith and the Church's social mission through adult eyes and with adult experiences as your lens? If so, then **JustFaith** can help you take that next step. **JustFaith** is a thirty-week program that uses books, videos, conversations about the most difficult topics of the day, face-to-face encounters with the poor, and an exploration of what the Christian tradition says about addressing injustice in our world.

For additional information see the insert in today's Bulletin. Next weekend, we'll have a **JustFaith** information table outside all masses. For further information, contact Joe Pettit 703 455-4937, Mary Lee, 703-924-6279 or George Alexa, 703-425-2581.

Nativity's Grief Support Group, for all who have suffered the death of a loved one, and are in need of the comfort that sharing can bring, meets at **7:30pm** in our school building on the **First & Third Thursday of each month**. The next meeting is this **Thursday, May 20th** and is open to all adults at no charge. Prior registration is not required. Contact Carol Mack for more information 703-455-2400, ext. 117.

Passing on the faith is a Catholic's most important responsibility and privilege. What does the Church teach about how we carry on this mission? Catechists-paid and volunteer alike-will find out when Education for Parish Service (EPS) presents the 4-week course **Ministry of Catechesis and Catechetical Methodology** evenings beginning Thursday, June 3. The course, an overview of Church teaching documents on catechesis and their application to lifelong faith formation, will be taught by Neil A. Parent, former Executive Director, National Conference for Catechetical Leadership. EPS will offer the course in 2 locations: its main classroom on the campus of Trinity Washington Univ., 125 Michigan Ave. NE, or live via webcast at the Benedictine Pastoral Center, Bristow, VA. The course runs June 3, 10, 17 and 24 from 7-9pm. To register, contact 202-884-9031 or e-mail byrneg@trinitydc.edu. For more information about EPS, see <http://trinitydc.edu>



WON'S Annual Baby Shower - this year our baby shower will be held the weekend of **June 5th and 6th**.

Some of the organizations that will benefit from your generosity include ECHO, Catholic Charities, A Woman's Choice, and a few more local groups. This year these groups are in need of diapers (sizes 3, 4, and 5), wipes, baby clothes (new or gently used,-cleaned) sizes NB to 24 months.

Or, if you prefer, **gift cards** from **Target, WalMart, and Babies R US**, as well grocery stores are welcomed. Your generosity to this project has enabled many parents to care for their babies in a healthy, nurturing way. As always, your generosity is greatly appreciated by WON and the recipients.

If you have any questions, please contact Donna Gomez at 703-426-9230.

**PRO-LIFE CORNER**

Some call abortion a good thing and a woman's "right" It is not a good thing and destroying a baby should never be anyone's "right". In the words of the prophet, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness." Speak out and act for life while you can! **Choose Life Today. Choose Life Tomorrow. Pray Always. We Must Do No Less.**

The **GABRIEL PROJECT** supports women who are facing a crisis pregnancy and need help. Contact 1-866-444-3553 or gabrielproject@arlingtondiocese.org You are not alone! (Gabriel Project is a crisis pregnancy program open to all and sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Arlington.)

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 info.

Pregnancy Resource Centers Phone Numbers:
Catholic Charities National: 1-800-CARE-002
Catholic Charities Local: 703-425-0100
A Woman's Choice: 703-538-4305

DIOCESAN RETIRED PRIESTS

This week's Second Collection is for our diocesan Retired Priests. This collection aids in caring for our retired priests who have served so faithfully over the years. Currently there are 14 retired priests who served our diocese and an additional 21 diocesan priests who are anticipated to retire within the next 10 years. During this Year for Priests, please consider donating to this special collection. Thank you for your support.

PRAYER SHAWL MEETING....The next daytime meeting will take place in the APR on May 17th at 9:30am. The evening meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 19th at 7:00pm in the APR. Come and bring your project to work on or learn how to make a prayer shawl for someone who is seriously ill. For more information call Toni Rausch, 703-455-3260; Flo Grike, 703-250-7799 or Joanne Dezzutti, 703-455-5702.



Please keep our military personnel and their families in your prayers.

Receiving From the Chalice

On Saturday, May 1st, approximately 200 children here at Nativity made their First Communion. It was a beautiful day for such a happy event and our parish celebration was complete with an adorable four week old black and white baby lamb named "Oreo". In preparation for receiving First Communion, all the children tasted the unconsecrated hosts and practiced the ways of receiving the bread in communion. However, because receiving from the chalice is always an option and not required, they did not have the opportunity to taste the wine or practice how to hold the chalice. So parents, if your young first communicants would like to receive from the Chalice at Mass, it would be very beneficial if they had the opportunity to taste the wine beforehand, as well as practice holding the chalice. Please feel free to stop in the sacristy before Mass begins and talk with one of the adults. We will be most happy to allow your child to taste the unconsecrated wine and also hold the chalice. It really is helpful that a child be aware of how to receive from the Cup, so that spills may be avoided and the Communion experience is all that it is intended to be.



SHARING HOPE, a support group for men and women going through separation and divorce, will meet this Friday, May 21st at St. Mary of Sorrows Historic Church Hall, off Rte 123. The topic will be "Good Grief". 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) 240-497-4279.

Nativity Venturing Crew 1100 is hosting an Open House on **Thursday, May 20, 7:30-9:00 PM** in the Nativity School, Room 4. Venturing is a co-ed high adventure group for girls and boys ages 14-21 years old. Venturing gives older youth an opportunity to learn new skills, experience new activities, and develop leadership ability, while making new friends and having a lot of fun. Venturing is 100% youth-run and lets you as scouts determine your activities, create a plan, and carry it out. Past activities have included things such as backpacking, canoeing, mountain biking, caving, skiing, and volunteer work. Come find out how you can join in the fun! For more information contact Lee Cass (LHCass@cox.net), Bob Melchior (MelchiorR@aol.com), or Tim Grayson (graysonfam@verizon.net).

The Teenage Enrichment for the Apostles of Mary (TEAM) Retreat is sponsored by the Legion of Mary Fairfax Curia. It will be held at Holy Trinity Jubilee Park Inc., 4407 Aldie Road, Catharpin, VA. This retreat is open to all Catholics from ages 12-18. Join us for an exciting day on Saturday, June 26, 2010 from 7:00am to 6:00pm. The day includes Mass, benediction, confession, uplifting talks, skits, games and two hours of exciting activities. The theme is **Occult: Forewarned-Forearmed, Put on the Armor of God**. Speakers: Father Francis Peffley, Father Richard Guest and Father Mark Mullaney. The fee is \$40 (early registration) and \$50 (after June 13), which includes breakfast and refreshments. Bring a bag lunch. Participants will have opportunities to meet new friends, have fun, learn strong Catholic values and particularly, be drawn closer to God.

For more information call Seggy Acosta at 703-323-5271 or Lynn Gildon at 703-250-1097.

ViBe

The **CYO** will be having a **Pasta dinner on June 5th** at 6:00pm to support our summer Workcamp trip. We will be serving dinner and sharing a bit about what Workcamp has done in our lives. We will be performing a skit that is done at Workcamp every year and we will also have various other performances throughout the night. Please come out to support the youth group as we prepare to do God's will this summer. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased through the youth office. Please call Meghan O'Connor at 703-455-2400 ext 115.

SECCIÓN en ESPAÑOL

Actividades de la Comunidad Hispana
 Iglesia de la Natividad 6400 Nativity Lane-Burke, VA 22015
 Telephone 703-455-2400 Rev. Cedric Wilson

SANTA MISA EN ESPAÑOL: Todos los sábados a las 7:00pm

CONFESIONES: Los sábados antes de la Santa Misa de. 6:15pm a 6:55pm

Catequesis Para niños y Jóvenes: Sábados de 5:00pm a 6:45pm
 Informes: 703-455-2400, ext 116 or Sr. Ponciano 202-262-6659

Catequesis para adultos: Bautismo, Comunión, y Confirmación
 Sábados de 5:15pm a 6:15pm Contacto: Tito Pinto 703-912-9220

Charla para el Bautismo: Primer Miércoles del mes 7:30pm

Sacramento del Bautismo: Tercer Sábado del mes. 1:30pm

Grupo de Oración: Miércoles 7:00pm a 9:00pm. Están todos invitados

Grupo de Liderazgo Juvenil reuniones: Domingo 11:00am-1:00pm aula 5 Contacto: Nelson Pineda 571-234-3664

Reunión del Grupo de los Jóvenes Sábados: a partir de las 5:00pm aula 4. contacto: Juan Carlos Chavez 703-473-6941

Solidaridad Cristiana: Mayor información Llamar a Mirian Ponciano 703-913-5494.

Para mas información: Maria Guevara 703-444-5716

Un cristiano fiel, iluminado por lo rayos de la gracia al igual que un cristal, deberá iluminar a los demás con sus palabras y acciones, con la luz del buen ejemplo. (San Antonio de Padua)

**THE WEEK AHEAD
 IN OUR PARISH**

Sunday, May 16

2:00, 4:00 & 6:00 pm.....CCD Classes (S)
 2:00 pm.....Baptism (CH)

Monday, May 17

9:30 am.....Prayer Shawl Meeting (APR)
 4:00, 7:00 pm.....CCD Classes (S)
 8:00 pm.....AA Meeting (APR)

Tuesday, May 18

9:30 am.....Bible Study (APR)
 4:30, 7:00 pm.....CCD Classes (S)
 7:00 pm.....Knights of Columbus (PH)
 7:30 pm.....Legion of Mary (APR)

Wednesday, May 19

10:00 am.....Mom & Me (APR)
 3:45 pm.....Daisy Troop 1449 (APR)
 7:00 pm.....Hispanic Prayer Group (Room 6)
 7:00 pm.....ESL (Room 5)
 7:00 pm.....Prayer Shawl Meeting (APR)
 7:00 pm.....BSA Troop 1100 (PH)
 7:30 pm.....Evening Bible Study (Room 9)

Thursday, May 20

9:30 am.....Craft Group (APR)
 6:30 pm.....Troop 2948 (GR)
 7:00 pm.....ESL (Room 5)
 7:00 pm.....Spanish Class (Room 2)
 7:30 pm.....Grief Support Group (S)
 7:30 pm.....Prayer Group (APR)
 7:30 pm.....Baptism Class (SL)
 7:30 pm.....Venture Crew (Room 4)

Friday, May 21

6:00 pm.....GS Troop 2948 (APR)
 7:00 pm.....Pack 1101 (PH)

Saturday, May 22

10:00 am.....ESL (Rooms 5,6,7,8)
 10:00 am.....Dog Obedience Class (PL)
 5:00 pm.....Hispanic CCD (S)

“Girl’s Summer Soccer Camp at Paul VI Catholic High School. July 5-9th. Ages 7-13. Information and Registration Form available at paulvi.net-athletics-girl's-team-soccer”

Vocation Prayer

O Mary, virgin and mother, draw close to your heart all those who are discerning the vocation to which your Son Jesus is inviting them. Help them realize the presence of the Word within them and teach them to listen to Him in the silence of prayer, that they may respond with faithfulness and love. Amen

