



PARISH NEWSLETTER

SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

SUMMER 2019

FATHER FOLEY REFLECTS ON HIS FORTY YEARS IN THE PRIESTHOOD

The following is the homily given by Father Foley on May 19 at the Mass celebrating the fortieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

*A new commandment: love one another...
(John 13, 34)*

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Consider for a moment the context of this “new commandment.” It is “Holy Thursday.” Jesus had just instituted the priesthood and the Eucharist and illustrated the effects of these sacraments in the washing of the feet. Judas had just departed the assembly to do his dastardly deed; and the Scripture noted that “it was night.” The powers of darkness were casting their shadows over the group; and, yet, Jesus was able to proclaim that “his hour” of glory had arrived.

I do not believe in coincidence! Today I celebrate with you my fortieth anniversary of priesthood! As I continue to repeat the words of consecration and heed the command to “do this in memory” of him, your stories and mine converge in the mystery to which we are more and more conformed every day. As many of you know, I am the eldest of seven children. My siblings will testify that I love tradition – which literally means “handing on.” Little did I realize what that would mean when in fourth grade I told by brother Chris that “I want to do what the priest does at the altar.” That “vision” sustained me throughout the turbulent years of adolescence and kept surfacing during college years and into graduate school. When one New Year’s Eve I asked a young priest



Photo by David Gardiner

here at Blessed Sacrament rectory if “God might be calling me to be a priest,” his words “why not” were all I needed to hear. The next day he took me to see the vocation director!

I have been privileged to serve in eight parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington – five as pastor – in two counties of Maryland and in the District of Columbia. In 40 years, I have lived with 20 different priests, nine of whom have gone home to God. Each has revealed to me both a love for the priesthood and his own unique way of living this vocation. Every parish has demanded of me gifts that I did not know I possessed. Like training for a marathon (which I have done 7 times), I discovered muscles, talents, that

had not been fully developed. I resonate with St. Paul’s words towards the end of his first missionary journey:

*It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.
(Acts 14, 22)*

Recently, a good friend and mentor (who has had his share of sufferings) mentioned that the people to whom we minister often teach us far more about the gospel by their daily struggles than we could ever impart to them in our preaching or teaching. I continue to learn from those I serve. As I get to know a community better, the words “Body of Christ” I speak at the moment of Holy Communion mean so much more than one might imagine.

Forty-nine years ago this September, I was a freshman at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota. I noticed an ad for something called a “Pre-Divinity Club.” I had been thinking of priesthood, but I was not a seminarian. Before being admitted, I had to be interviewed by a panel. One Benedictine brother wondered why I would consider the priesthood amid all the confusion

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FORTY YEARS IN THE PRIESTHOOD



Photo by David Gardiner

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and chaos in the Church of 1970. Two years prior to that the whole culture was thrown into upheaval by the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr, race riots, the assassination of Robert Kennedy, and the letter of Paul VI called "Humanae Vitae" on birth control. Many good priests were leaving ministry. So, the brother's question was appropriate! I naively answered: "I don't know why I want to be a priest! I just do!" In the wake of the turmoil of the past year, that desire not only remains but grows more ardent every time I celebrate Eucharist!

In recent years, I have become very close to a woman who is very influential. Her words in the midst of a crisis continue to lead me to the source of life and hope. She simply said: "Do whatever my Son tells you!"

I have had the opportunity (which at one time I had dreaded) of presiding here over the funerals of my parents and other close relatives. Every now and then, I sense their presence in the midst of this mystery and experience a longing for the "new heavens and the new earth" of which the "Book of Revelation" spoke. After all, this is a "taste of heaven!"

RCIA: OUR FAITH COMMUNITY WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

During the Easter Vigil Mass on April 20, we welcomed seven new members to our faith community.



Photos courtesy of Tammy Flippo

WE WELCOME BEN BRALOVE, OUR SUMMER SEMINARIAN



Photo: <https://dcpriest.org/our-seminarians>

As a Chevy Chase youth, Ben Bralove never attended Blessed Sacrament Church. He never went to Blessed Sacrament School either. That's because at that time, he was Jewish. Ben converted to Catholicism in college.

After college, Ben graduated from Boston University School of Medicine, became a resident doctor in the Bronx and practiced emergency room medicine in Manhattan for six years. While he was involved in the physical healing of the body, Ben experienced a stronger call to spiritual healing and decided

to pursue a vocation as a priest. He enrolled in the St. John Paul II Seminary to study to become a priest in the Archdiocese of Washington and has completed his first year of studies.

We are fortunate Ben is spending this summer at Blessed Sacrament, praying and working with parishioners; we wish him a wonderful experience!

Thank you, Ben, for your generous gift of time and talent!



Artwork by Anya Chaban, First Grade



Artwork by Charles Cleghorn, Second Grade



Artwork by Julia Murray, First Grade

MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE CYO ADVISORY BOARD

By Marilyn Campbell, Youth Minister and CYO Athletic Director

The newly formed CYO Advisory Board will offer non-binding advice on issues related to the sports program at our parish. As men and women of faith, they will be role models for our athletes, using sports to show players how to live out the teachings of Christ.

Tiffany Cissna – Tiffany has supported the CYO program as a parent volunteer. She is co-chair of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Bryan Corbett – A CYO basketball coach for more than five years, Bryan is the Basketball

Commissioner for Blessed Sacrament and serves on the Parish Pastoral Council.

Steve Grimberg – Steve has coached both soccer and basketball for CYO. He is the Soccer Commissioner.

Laura Grimm – Laura is one of the board's co-chairpersons and has coached CYO basketball and cross country.

Cabral Hobson – Cabral is an avid sports fan who has coached youth soccer, basketball, and lacrosse.

Katie Howard – An accomplished distance runner, Katie coached the inaugural CYO cross country and track teams last season.

Brett Kavanaugh – Brett has coached CYO girls basketball for six years.

Monica Murphy-Kumar – Monica is an avid sportsperson and soccer coach. She is the Soccer Co-Commissioner.

Tom Williams – Tom has coached CYO basketball for more than 20 years and serves as one of the board's co-chairpersons.

THE HEATED HEARTH: STORIES ON STUMPS

By Conor Hardy

I recently read a line from an instruction by Saint Columban that said, “Wisdom asks: Who will find out what is so very deep? As the depths of the sea are invisible to human sight, so the Godhead of the Trinity is found to be beyond the grasp of human understanding.”¹

What a wondering and ponderous line; a bewildering insight into the infinity of God. Fittingly, the magnitude, mystery and wonder of the ocean in the 7th century was an image for the magnitude, mystery and wonder of God. Hence, I was surprised by my initial reaction; I scoffed! Why? Moments before reading that line I glanced through the means of video technology at an image of the deep ocean, an image of the deepest depths, an image of the Mariana Trench. At first thought therefore, the depth was no wonder to me, for having glimpsed its gloom and the loathsome creatures that dwell there.

What then was lost by having seen the image of the Mariana Trench? In some degree, what was lost was a sense of curiosity, mystery, imagination, wonder. Arguably, due to the forceful invasion of many technological influences in our lives, we have lost aspects of ways in which we relate with and see the world and each other. Nothing seems to be left unknown. As the depths of the ocean are exposed and laid bare, what becomes hidden is the mystery of it all – that reality truly is wondrous.

Yet, there is wonder in the unknown; mystery in the sacred. We learn from a young age to see things anew and wonder at them. We questioned, why does the shade in the forest seem to be menacing? We queried whether the dust dancing on falling sun beams were not small persons, elves, or fairies? Our imagination, which has been dimmed, if not darkened by the continuous breach of videos or social media, is however illuminated by the experience of a personal encounter made through means of storytelling, poetry recitation, and theatre reenactment. C.S. Lewis

said, “The value of the myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which had been hidden by ‘the veil of familiarity.’”² The Heated Hearth: Stories on Stumps, is a club composed at JPPII Seminary in an attempt to lift such a veil, weighed down by distractions of fast-paced modernity, and regain the ability to see afresh the world with wonder and marvel at what is truly real and present.

We tell fables, legends, myths, lore, and stories of our history and our heroes. The structure of a good story is already set in tales that have been refined, passed down, retold, and nourished from person to person, until we have listened and received them ourselves. Aesop’s Fables, Grimm’s Fairytales, Anderson, Shakespeare, Hopkins, Elliot, and Yeates are to name a few of the revered masters of our language. They have treated, fenced, and played with words, understanding their value as precious gems; powerful jewels bringing light and meaning to sift heart and mind.

These stories have been enjoyable to us as a connection is built between the narrator and the listener. This connection is made between all who are under the spell of wonder and imagination cast by the storyteller. It is here where hope, desire, fear, sadness, joy etc. are experienced and learned in common. Morals of the community are absorbed and wisdom is learned and remembered as the stories are given and received. This is the development and enrichment of culture and what we have experienced as a club.

Upon further reflection, we discussed how the practice of these arts, and storytelling in particular, reflect the rhythm of creation. There is a return to a sense of the ‘natural,’ not only in terms of communicating directly with another person, as opposed to through a machine, but also regarding the rhythm of story. Humanity is pushed along by the law of time. Things are changed and experienced anew, but carry an aspect of sameness that is

pattern and repetition: day then night, winter then spring, breath in, breath out, birth then death. Repetition is natural to us, and a delight is taken in its familiarity. We enjoy having stories told and retold to us, as they are a reflection of our very lives.

The fathoms of the deep; God speaks and it becomes; man speaks to reflect what already is. As we reflect and articulate what is real, true, beautiful and good, we discover and grow in a deeper understanding of our participation in this world, and in this life, as a participation in the grandest of all stories; a love story between God and man.* We have become more aware of the realization that all creation echoes the greatest story ever told; “God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son...” (John 3:16)

Such a realization provides us with joyful interactions and fond memories to cherish. The club aspires to model a desired home for rest and recourse, which is aptly described by J.R.R. Tolkien in the following excerpt from his story, *The Fellowship of The Ring*:

“That house was, as Bilbo had long ago reported, ‘a perfect house, whether you like food or sleep or story-telling or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all.’ Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness.”

The Heated Hearth then, unlike the Mariana Trench, is a place easily and excitedly made accessible for a warm cup of tea and rejuvenating leisure attained through the arts of storytelling, poetry and theatre.

*<https://heights.edu/podcast/storytelling/>

Conor Hardy, Blessed Sacrament parishioner, former police officer and teacher, is now a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Washington. He recently completed pretheology courses at St. John Paul II Seminary and will continue his studies at Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg in the Fall. This blog post was originally published on the DC Priest website: www.dcpriest.org.

¹ Lewis, CS. “Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings” from *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*

² Ordinary Time Psalter, Week III, Thursday. Office of Readings, Second Reading

PASTORAL COUNCIL YEAR-END REPORT

By Fran Scango

As the Pastoral Council year comes to an end and as outgoing President of the Council I am writing to give a summary of our work. All of the ministries of the parish are represented on one of six commissions. Our parish engages in over 100 ministries that each are in support of more than 4,000 families. The community engages countless volunteers throughout the year.

Two years ago when Father Foley was appointed our pastor, we began a review of the Mission Statement and the process for creating a three-year Parish Plan. With the results of a parishwide survey and focus group in-

put, the commissions have formulated a plan that will be published in October.

As pastor, Father Foley has given careful direction not only to the council but also to the commissions. He emphasizes that the work of the parish begins at the "Tabernacle" and moves out to the parish and larger community. Soon after Father's arrival the abuse crisis in the church became public and needed to be addressed. Father showed great leadership in collaborating with the Pastoral Council in sponsoring a traditional Town Hall as well as a virtual Town Hall. He has led the council in ensuring that we support those as victims,

offer open communication, and be as transparent as possible as a parish community.

For the first time a joint meeting of the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, School Board, and parish staff met in late Winter 2019. After focused prayer Father heard the concerns of these groups as well as their recommendations for a path forward in the areas of stewardship.

As President I am very grateful to those who have stepped forward as lay leaders, some empty nesters and some raising families. We need all to engage as we are the Church.

BLESSED SACRAMENT TROOP 90 EVENTS

Below, scouts of Troop 90 prepare to honor fellow members: Will Loveland, Brendan Miller, and Justin Missar at a recent Court of Honor evening.



Troop 90's Weekend Campout, including fishing, took place off Point Lookout on the Chesapeake Bay in St. Mary's County, Maryland.



Photos courtesy of Troop 90

CAPTURED IN PHOTOS: 2019 BULLDOG 5K AND FUN RUN

Photos by Kathryn Loomans



GIRLSUP SUMMER CAMP BENEFITS FROM BULLDOG RACE PROCEEDS



Partial proceeds from the Bulldog Race benefit the GirlsUp summer camp. This group of girls gathered on race day to represent the organization and to share information about it. If you missed chatting with them, learn more at: www.girlsup.org. Photo by Pat Watson

MEMBERS OF THE ADULT CENTER AND FRIENDS ENJOY A SUMMER PICNIC ON THE GROUNDS OF THE PARISH RECTORY



Photos by Pat Watson



Artwork by Joe Madden, Seventh Grade

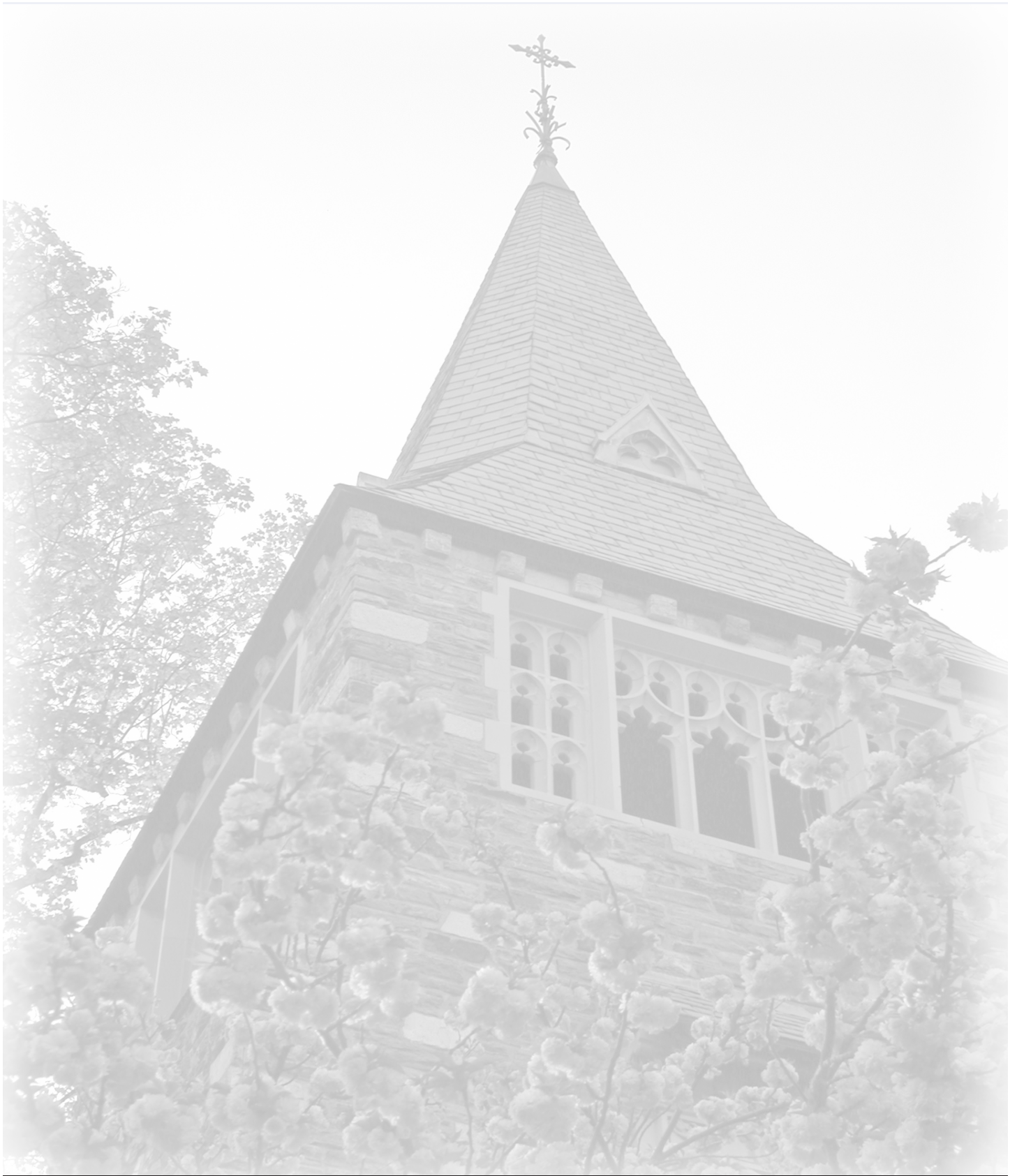


Artwork by Lee White, Seventh Grade



Artwork by Jimmy Corcoran, Seventh Grade

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