

The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives this classic definition of prayer: “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” (#2559) The definition comes from the writings of St. John of Damascus who is considered the last of the great Fathers of the Church. An Arab Christian priest, he wrote at the beginning of the eighth century in an area of the world dominated by Moslems. St. John studied the writings of earlier Fathers, as well as the Sacred Scriptures, bringing together centuries of Christian wisdom. It is interesting that our Generations of Faith program has picked up St. John’s definition of prayer and made it our central focus this year. In one and a half weeks we will enter a time of intensive time of prayer – the holy season of Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17). Both in Generations of Faith and in Sunday homilies, I hope to speak about this fundamental aspect of our lives. In addition to Sunday Mass, I invite you to consider other forms of prayer: The Way of the Cross, Eucharistic Adoration and the Rosary.

This Lent we will have the opportunity to participate in an important prayer campaign: 40 Days for Life. A number of St. Mary parishioners have already made a commitment to spend time in prayer in front of the Planned Parenthood clinic of Everett. I invite you to contact Alicia and Dom Thomeyer (or Oscar & Maria Rodriguez in the Hispanic community) for more information. Abby Jacobo, who is one of our Confirmation candidates, has information on how teens can participate. I have made a commitment to pray in front of Everett Planned Parenthood on February 25 and March 18, from 3 p.m. until 4 p.m. I would love to have parishioners join me. In today’s bulletin you will see a flier that explains more about this campaign to save the lives of the littlest of our brothers and sisters – and to help their parents to avoid a choice that would damage their souls.

Our Social Justice Commission discussed the 40 Days for Life Campaign in our meeting last week. Some present at the meeting shared inspiring success stories, indicating that the 40 Days campaign has concrete results, saving the lives of the unborn and the hearts and souls of the women who choose life in response to the efforts of campaign participants. At meeting we also discussed the mission trip to Peru and the plans for the April 29 presentation on how parishioners can participate in this work. In addition, we heard reports of the March for Life and proposed legislation designed to cripple centers which assist moms in crisis pregnancies (more in future bulletins on this legislative threat), the Catholic Advocacy Day, and how we can learn about our bishops’ concerns regarding immigration reform. This Sunday I am making available material regarding the postcard campaign. I ask you especially to sign up to receive information directly from the U.S. bishops about this important campaign. I would be happy to gather any questions parishioners might have for our bishops – and to collect cards directed toward our senators and representative.

On January 28 our Finance council met (see picture below). As always seems be the case regarding money, there was good news and bad news. Ralph Chestine will be giving a report at our February 11 Parish Council meeting and Ludwing Silva to the Hispanic Leadership Group in March. Alfred Fontanilla will work with me in preparing a budget for fiscal year 2010-2011.

Speaking of finances, I sent 2009 IRS statements to our identified donors – that is, all who contributed to our parish or a work (such as St. Vincent de Paul, Mission Sunday, Mary Bloom Center, etc.) for which we collect “custodial” funds. If you find any error in your statement, please notify the parish office. I obviously want our financial records to be 100% correct.

Besides Stewardship of financial resources, we also count heavily on your sharing of Time and Talent. One of the major areas is the care of our buildings and grounds. At the last Building Commission, I asked James Yap and Jose Rodriguez (see picture) to work with me in preparing an overall plan regarding our landscaping needs. Jim will present the plan at our next Building Commission meeting (March 16) and we will use it to guide the volunteer work on our Parish Clean-Up Day (March 20).

Some final notes: On February 13, 9:30, at Providence Mount St. Vincent Chapel, Archbishop Brunett will offer a Mass for World Day of the Sick with Anointing of the Sick and Blessing with Holy Water from Lourdes. That same day in the afternoon we will have a “Mardi-Gras” retreat for Middle and High School students, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. On Ash Wednesday (Feb 17) we will have Masses at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. in English and 7:30 p.m. in Spanish. More about Lent in next Sunday’s bulletin. May God bless you all!



Social Justice Commission Meeting, January 29, 2010





Finance Council (L-R): Alfred Fontanilla, Fr. Bloom, Ed Williams (Parish Financial Services) Ludwing Silva, Ralph Chestine, Anita Maceda