

News for the Pews

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August 2018 was marked by the arrival of our new pastor Father Pius Iwu. He is obviously a Nigerian native, but he has long-standing connection to Arkansas. He was taught English in the 1960's by then Father Raphael, later Abbot Raphael DeSalvo of Subiaco and knew our former pastor Father Lawrence Miller. He has served the Diocese of Little Rock for a couple of decades, having been assigned to an impressive array of parishes around the state during that time. He's clearly a pastor at heart and wants to get to know us all. Let's meet him halfway and take advantage of the opportunity to work with this wise, spiritual man.

We officially welcomed Bishop Taylor and Father Pius after mass on Sunday, August 5 after our latest confirmation class was confirmed. The Knights of Columbus provided a great breakfast and a good time was had by all. Congratulations to the confirmees. Unfortunately, forecasts of heavy rains on August 19, as well as the lateness of the season, forced the cancellation of the parish picnic scheduled for that afternoon.

The Knights, led by Bill Leding, Marcus Berry and Kabel Robbins, quickly put together a lunchtime fundraiser for Nathan Myers and his family to help defray the cost of his hospitalization. About 225 pork loin lunches were served. There was a live auction of pies and other goodies (including Larry's cinnamon rolls), a silent auction of big array of items, a three raffles of varying types. As a result, the Knights were able to write Nathan and his family a check for \$14,000. The committee mentioned above worked very hard in putting it together and we can't thank them enough (although I think we should try really hard to do so). We should also do our best to thank all those who attended and gave so generously.

School is back in session, and that's true of St. Mary's CCD classes as well. Let's all make an effort to make those a success, so the younger generation can build a solid foundation for their faith. Also, adult education classes are set to begin next Sunday (9/16) at the same time CCD classes are taking place. The adult ed class will be taught by Megan Mayeux, who recently earned a degree in theology. Please attend. Also, RCIA classes taught by Deacon Brian will begin at that same time. Obviously, these classes are aimed at educating those interested in joining the church, but Brian welcomes all to attend. Steve and Phyllis Timmerman and Todd and Debbie Schultz went through a cycle of classes and endorse them wholeheartedly.

The church HVAC system is still the major topic, aside from the worship of God and the saving of souls, facing our parish at this point. As indicated in the recent letter from Deacon Brian, the proposed system has been approved by the building committees and experts for both the parish and the Diocese, and contracts have been signed. I believe the new chiller is now being built. But, as I understand it, the start date for work on removing the old system and installation of the new one has yet to be set. Hopefully, all will go smoothly and expeditiously, so we'll have heat in the church before the winter season is very far advanced. It does look as if it won't be done by the holiday season.

As Deacon Brian's letter indicated, the parish is asking us all to boost our giving to help us pay off the huge price tag for the system, the engineering consultations and ancillary costs. The bulk of the proceeds from this year's Thanksgiving celebration will go toward the debt as well. Brian has also been working on a fundraising letter to be sent to all those who contributed to the Church restoration in 1999-2000. That will be mailed during the days just ahead. If you know someone who might be interested in contributing (and who may not be on the old list), please put a note to that effect, along with contact information, in the collection basket, or leave it at the rectory, or give it to Parish Secretary Vicki Ross. The parish has established a line of credit under very favorable conditions with the Diocese, so we have no worries about being able to pay the HVAC system bills. Conversely, the larger the sum we can raise and pay off on our own, the less interest expense we'll incur and the overall cost will decline.

We are also looking at other fundraising ideas. We may have a spring picnic or some other event. If you have ideas and/or are interested in helping with organization, let someone on the parish council know. We clearly need the help.

There is a lot going on this weekend. First and foremost, we all need to utilize the sign-up sheet for "24 Hours with the Lord" beginning 6:00 PM Friday (9/14) and ending with Saturday evening mass (9/15). Please commit yourself to an hour with the Lord. We also have a Meet-n-Greet after Sunday morning mass. Come and join your faith community in our constant battle to reduce the excess doughnut population of the world. It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it. CCD attendees can grab a doughnut and a drink on their way to class.

There will be a wedding shower for Heather Flegel and William Carter held at 2:00 pm Sunday in Lawrence Hall. We wish them all the best this day and every day, especially on their wedding day September 22. They've extended a blanket invitation to parish members. Food for the reception will be supplied by Marcus and Brad's circle group. If you're part of it, be there or be 'un' square.

The parish council will also be meeting in the rectory at 4:00 pm Sunday (9/9). The HVAC system and fundraising will again be the main topic under discussion. We'll also be doing some preliminary planning for the parish's pre-Halloween event after 5:00 mass on October 27. It will be a chili supper with candy and games for the kids, along with a lesson (and a trip to the cemetery) to place the holiday in its proper context. There will be a hayride as well. There will also be a chili cook-off for the adults. If you're proud of your chili, Bring It! I joined one at A.G. Edwards about 20 years ago, but I used the beans for a 15-bean salad instead of pinto beans. I called it Fred's Fifteen Bean Fiasco. It was all about the alliteration. Somehow, I didn't win.

Also coming Wednesday night (9/12) after 6:00 pm mass is a Potato Salad Supper..., no..., wait..., a Potluck Salad Supper sponsored by the Women's Ministry Group. The ladies of the parish are most cordially invited to attend. If you're pressed for time and can't prepare a salad or dish, please come anyway. Also, the St. Joseph Society meeting next Monday (9/17) will be the initial planning meeting for the parish's annual Thanksgiving celebration. **ALL** are invited to attend. In some ways the meeting is rather routine, but we're always looking for volunteers to help.

Daniel "Dan'l Boone" Vaught