

PARISH FAMILY OF ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION

The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed
November 2, 2008

2510 Middle Road
Glenshaw, PA 15116
Founded 1834

PARISH STAFF

Mrs. Barbara Belski, Dir. of Youth Ministries
Mr. Francis Dadowski, Deacon
Mr. James Finn, Pastoral Associate
Mr. Robert Kardasz, Dir. of Music Ministries
Father John Marcucci, Pastor
Ms. Antoinette Pilarski, Principal
Father Edward Schleicher, Parochial Vicar
Sr. Lois Spinnenweber, CDP, Apostolate Minister
Miss Rose Stegman, Dir. of Faith Formation



Web Site: stmaryglenshaw.org

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Parish Family Administration Office: 412-486-4100

Religious Formation Office - 412-486-5521

Parochial School -412-486-7611

Youth Ministry Office - 412- 492-9344

Marian Hall - 412-684-1112

Social Ministry Office - 412- 486-4021

Fax: 412-486-4150



SUNDAY LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday at 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Sunday at 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

DAILY LITURGY SCHEDULE

Monday through Friday at 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Saturday at 8:00 a.m.

RECONCILIATION

Saturday at 11:00 a.m. until final penitent is finished

BAPTISM

On Sunday twice a month after parental interview

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Twice a year in a communal celebration
Individually upon request

MATRIMONY

Saturday weddings at 12:00 noon and 2:00 p.m.
Notification at least 6 months in advance

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Monday at 12:00 noon

TODAY --- NOVEMBER 2nd

COMMEMORATION OF ALL SOULS

November 2nd, now properly called “The Commemoration of All The Faithful Departed” in the language of the liturgy, is celebrated on Sunday this year. Because of its importance it takes precedence over the regularly scheduled liturgy of “The Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time” with its vestments of green. This is the day when we remember all of our loved ones who have passed from this world to the glory of the kingdom. We remember most especially all those who were buried from our parish church during this past year at this weekend’s special 6:00 p.m. liturgy on Saturday evening. We invite all parishioners to keep in their prayers those who have lost a loved one during this past year as we remember all the faithfully departed at all of today’s liturgies.

WELCOME TO GRIEVING FAMILIES

We open the doors and the hearts of our entire Parish Family to all those who have joined us at this weekend’s 6:00 p.m. liturgy as we remember their loved ones. Each candle, lit by a family member, that we see burning in the sanctuary represents a member of our Parish Family who was buried from our parish church since last November 2nd. We offer the comfort and consolation of our Parish Family to all those who have joined us for this celebration.

PARISH SHARE CONTRIBUTIONS

Those who have not as of yet contributed to the annual Parish Share Collection may do so any Sunday during these next two months. Any monies received after December 31st will be recorded on next year’s financial statements that are sent home to each family. Those wishing to contribute to the Parish Share may simply mark the envelope such, and drop it in the Sunday collection. Any monies given to the Parish Share is really a contribution to our Parish Family since we have already made our assessment for this year. This is a superb way of contributing to the everyday needs of the Parish Family.

PIE MAKERS ALERT!

BINGO THIS FRIDAY

HOME MADE PIES SELL EASILY

WOW THE CROWD WITH YOURS!!

“FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP” – USCCB

The Bishops of the United States reminded all of us of the importance of our political responsibility in the document entitled “Faithful Citizenship” with the words “...in the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation...” We encourage all parishioners to VOTE! However, we ask no person to use our property to disseminate information “FOR OR AGAINST” a particular candidate. This includes our buildings, parking lot and driveway leading into our sacred grounds!

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH
ELECTION DAY
PLEASE VOTE!
A UNITED STATES PRIVILEGE**

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

All members of the Pastoral Council are reminded of their meeting set for Monday of this week, November 3rd beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the rectory. Council members will be looking intensely at the results of the survey on the topics of mass, music and homily. Parishioners are always welcome to contact the Council members about their role in the Lay Leadership of the Parish Family.

“VOX POPULI” (part 8)

The analysis of the nearly 1500 surveys that were turned in by the parishioners is still under the scrutiny of the Pastoral Council. Members of the Council are committed to giving every reply of the parishioners some consideration. They are now collating these responses into broad areas of parish life so they might be able to assess the “voice of the people” in regard to the goals and objectives they are creating for the future direction of our Parish Family.

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS

Want a better way to direct your tax dollars? The state legislature passed a new addition to the Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program which permits C corporations, S corporations and now subchapter S businesses to give to your Catholic school from their tax bill. For information go to newpa.com or call Dr. Ron Bowes at 412-456-3090.



LITURGIES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, November 2, 2008 - The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed

- 4:00 p.m. Living & Deceased of Our Parish Family
- 6:00 p.m. For All the Faithful Departed
- 7:30 a.m. Dorothy Lang - Husband, Charles Land
- 9:00 a.m. Antonino Scolieri - Tina Mantella & Family
- 11:00 a.m. Robert Moyeroff - Daughter & Family

Monday, November 3, 2008 - St. Martin de Porres

- 7:00 a.m. Jim Soeder - The Cody Family
- 10:00 a.m. Bertha Bittner - Family

Tuesday, November 4, 2008 - St. Charles Borromeo

- 7:00 a.m. Herbert Reiter - Nancy & Chuck Zihmer
- 10:00 a.m. Donna & William Kelsh - Family

Wednesday, November 5, 2008 - Weekday in Ordinary Time

- 7:00 a.m. Giacomo Tolomeo - Lisa Ruffa & Family
- 10:00 a.m. Clarence Bittner - The Clarence Bittner Family

Thursday, November 6, 2008 - Weekday in Ordinary Time

- 7:00 a.m. 35th Anniversary of George & Lois Lutz
- 10:00 a.m. Agnes Bernas - Eileen Turiak

Friday, November 7, 2008 - Weekday in Ordinary Time

- 7:00 a.m. Mary Lou Costello - "The Walkers"
- 10:00 a.m. Duane Lis - Aunt Sally

Saturday, November 8, 2008 - Blessed Virgin Mary

- 8:00 a.m. Paul Berrang - Family
- 4:00 p.m. John A. Bell - Don & Joan Hammel
- 6:00 p.m. John W. Murray, Jr. - Murray Family

Sunday, November 9, 2008 - Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome

- 7:30 a.m. Living & Deceased of Our Parish Family
- 9:00 a.m. Deceased Family Members of Deasy Family
- 11:00 a.m. Josip & Katarina Simunovic - Family

Hospitality Weekend

We invite you to join us in Marian Hall after all the Weekend Liturgies, on Saturday and Sunday, to share in visiting with friends and neighbors. We hope to see YOU there!

Sept. 26, 2008	Envelopes	Contributions
Offertory	750	\$15,374.22
Cash/Loose Cks.	-	\$994.00
Children's Offertory	29	\$39.00
World Mission	9	\$70.00
All Saints Day	8	\$55.00
Parish Share 2008	10	\$380.00
Parish Needy	25	\$463.00
Total	831	\$17,375.22

Weekly Activities at a Glance

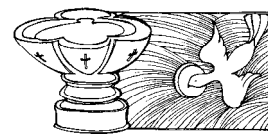
- Sunday** (Marian Hall) Hospitality Weekend After All Liturgies
Nov. 2 (Rectory) 10:00AM - R.C.I.A.
(PAC) 7:00PM - Youth Group
- Monday** (Marian Hall) 2:30PM - Brownie Troop #205
Nov. 3 (Marian Hall) 2:30PM - Jr. Girl Scout Troop #303
(School) 6:30PM - CCD Program - All Grades
(Rectory) 7:00PM - Finance Council
- Tuesday** (Marian Hall) 2:45PM - School Band
Nov. 4
- Wednesday** (Marian Hall) 9:30AM - Let the Little Children Come to Me
Nov. 5 (Marian Hall) 1:30PM - 55 Specials - Bingo/Cards
(Church) 2:45PM - Children's Choir Practice
(Church) 7:30PM - Adult Choir Practice
- Thursday** (School) 11:45AM - Early Dismissal -
Nov. 6 Parent/Teacher Conferences
(Marian Hall) 11:45AM - Cross Country Pizza Party
(Marian Hall) 1:30PM - School Drama Club
(Church) 2:45PM - Children's Choir Practice
(Marian Hall) 7:00PM - Readers Ministry Meeting
(Marian Hall) 7:30PM - Fr. John/Lectionary Cycle
(Church) 8:00PM - Adult Hand Bell Practice
- Friday** (Church) 10:00AM - School Mass
Nov. 7 (Marian Hall) 7:00PM - Super **BINGO**
- Saturday** (School) 9:30AM - CCD Program
Nov. 8
- Sunday** (Marian Hall) 6:00AM - CYM Breakfast
Nov. 9 (Church) 11:00AM - Liturgy of the Word for Children
(Marian Hall) 6:00PM - Youth Group

R.I.P.: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Dorothy A. Bigler, Karen Mickus, and Mary Joan Beck, sister of Fr. Bill Rutledge.

Almighty God,

As Catholic citizens of the United States, we ask for Your blessing. Impress upon us the importance of our voting privileges. May we apply the moral teachings of our Catholic faith to the decisions we make. We pray for ourselves and for our elected officials. May we help the unempowered and put those who are suffering before ourselves. May we be open to the promptings of Your Spirit, sensitive to Your will, and willing to seek Your grace. Gracious Lord, have mercy on our country. Preserve us as a God-fearing nation, ever ready to profess, defend, and seek your wisdom. Amen.

Daily Readings



IF, THEN, WE HAVE DIED WITH CHRIST,
WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM.

- Nov. 3: PHIL 2:1-4, LK 14:12-14
- Nov. 4: PHIL 2:5-11; LK 14:15-24
- Nov. 5: PHIL 2:12-18; LK 14:25-33
- Nov. 6: PHIL 3:38A; LK 15:1-10
- Nov. 7: PHIL 3:17 - 4:1; LK 16:1-8
- Nov. 8: PHIL 4:10-19; LK 16:9-15
- Nov. 9: Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 COR 3:9C-11, 16-17;
JN 2:13-22

SACRAMENTAL LIFE



BAPTIZED IN CHRIST

Benjamin Fezza

Congratulations to his parents, godparents, and grandparents. Please join us in welcoming him into our parish family!

A VOCATION VIEW

You can be an instrument of healing. Be open to that grace.

IT IS A GOOD AND WHOLESOME THOUGHT TO PRAY FOR THE DEAD

All Souls Day is on November 2, just after All Saints Day. It is a day of remembrance for friends and loved ones who have passed on into God's care. All Souls Day has its roots in the ancient Pagan Festival of the Dead, based on the pagan belief that the souls of the dead would return for a meal with the family. Candles kept in the window would guide the souls back home and another place was set at the table. Children came asking for food to be offered symbolically to the dead, but then gave it out to the hungry.

The Christian celebration of the feast of All Souls was started by 7th century monks who decided to offer a Mass for their deceased community members. St. Odilo, the fifth abbot of Cluny set a specific date for the offering of special prayers for the deceased.

All Souls Day is important because Catholics believe that those who die are not immediately eligible for the Beatific Vision (the reality and goodness of God in heaven). They need to be purged of their sins. This purification of the elect is called "purgatory."

The church maintains that there will be a purification of the believers prior to entering heaven and that the prayers and the Masses of the faithful here on earth benefit those in the state of purification.

On Saturday, November 1st at the 6:00pm Mass, relatives and friends of those buried from our church during this past year will gather to pray for and remember their deceased loved ones.

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME

This post baptism ministry to families with young children under the age of five sponsors various activities throughout the year. All are welcome to plug into this ministry. For more information call Monica at 412.492.0242.

PRAY AND PLAY DAYS

Every first and third Wednesday of the month, those with children under the age of five and their older siblings are welcome to come to the Children's Liturgy Room at 9:30am for a child-friendly activity and tour of the church. If you have never come, please come on Wednesday, November 5 and meet some new friends! All parents and care-givers are welcome and encouraged to attend!

A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE by Bud Ozar

"Come to me, all who are burdened, I will give you rest." Our loved ones, who have stepped through the door of death, are now at rest, free of all burdens. In going home to the Lord they brought their love and concern for us with them. Death cannot totally separate families; our love binds us together forever.

PARENTING POINTERS

Family time is great but many of the happiest families I know also make time for one on one with each child. One dad takes one of the kids out for breakfast on Saturday mornings. Another mom treats a different child each week to a walk in the woods. Other parents alternate the one on one time. If you have more than one child, give each one some alone time with you.

RELIGIOUS FORMATION

Faith Sharing for ALL SOULS DAY / MONTH

"The Church honors the saints who are already with the Lord in heaven. We who come after them draw inspiration from their heroic example, look for fellowship in their communion, and in prayer seek their intercession with God on our behalf. Christians have a DUTY to pray for deceased relatives, friends, and all the faithful departed. " These reminders from the Catechetical Directory emphasize the importance of our relationships which NEVER end. The month of November has traditionally been a time to focus specially on those who have gone before us and to invoke them for help on our journey to our eternal HOME. Could we storm ALL the Saints of heaven specially THIS week as voters discern which candidates could show the light of God in their governance. Then keep invoking all the blessed for their intercession before the face of God for those on earth striving to let God's kingdom come !

C.C.D. Faith Formation

Monday, Nov. 3 - Grade 6 meet in Church; all others go to classrooms.

Saturday, Nov. 8 - All meet in Church.

Catholic Vision of Love

Our diocesan catechesis on the dignity and sacredness of human sexuality, will be introduced to parents new to our programs. Those with children in Grades 5-6-7-8 are welcome to attend the presentation and discussion Saturday, Nov. 8, 9:30 AM or Monday, November 10, 6:30 PM. Meet IN church.

Our Lady of Victory is implored in a novena till November 4, Election Day. All are urged to pray the rosary daily that those elected to office will uphold the sanctity of life, which begins at conception. A kit with a statue of Mary, video, and rosaries is available for loan from our Faith Formation Office. Call 412-486-5521 if you will like to use it during the novena.

Middle School Faith Rally

THIS WEEK, Friday, November 7, 7:00-9:00 PM at Seton La Salle High School. You may still be able to get aboard! Contact Mark Tobin, 412-486-5521.

PIRATE's Rich Donnelly and author, Matthew Kelly, will speak and interact with attendees at a one-day spiritual conference Saturday, November 8 at Camp Kon-O-Kwee. Cost is \$45. A day camp for kids 6-15 yrs. is available. Call 724-538-3171 for complete information or to register.

Family Program

The next Sunday Family CCD session will be held on November 16th, beginning with the 9:00 am Liturgy (Grade 6-22 - G. Butera serves). Sessions for children and adults begin at 10:00 am. Closing Prayer will be Grade 6 - R. Stone.

The **Special Project** for November is ANGEL'S PLACE. Donations should be taken to Marian Hall at the beginning of the adult session. Needed items for Angel's Place are: all sizes of diapers, baby wipes, healthy snacks, art supplies, paper towels, storage bags, cleaning supplies and detergents. Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

TRUE VOCATION

The vocation of every man and woman is to serve other people.

~Leo Tolstoy

YOUTH MINISTRY

Monthly Parish Breakfast begins on Sunday, November 9 after the 7:30 and 9 AM liturgies. We could use some of those awesome **fish dinner volunteers**. Call 412-486-4100, ext. 409 if you are interested in helping out.

Call out to all Thespians:



Thespian - an actor or player; of, or relating to drama and acting. We have the cure for your "acting bug."

Calling on all adults, young adults, and teens: we actually need more men than women for this play! Stage crew also needed. All those over age 18 will need to obtain full diocesan certification under the "Safe Protection of Children" policy, but we will help you with that. **Auditions for the February 2009 production of "Arsenic and Old Lace" directed by Mr. Christian DeFilippo, will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 11, at 6:45 PM in Marian Hall.**

"Holy" wood Squares
Youth in Grades 9 – 12

and their parents/guardians:

Tonight's LIFE NIGHT for the teens will include Open Gym and a game with amazing prizes for teen participants. We ask each parent or teen to bring the following to tonight's Life Night to contribute to our hospitality, depending on the first letter of your last name:

A – F	desserts
G – L	veggie tray
M – R	fruit tray
S – Z	cheese or meat snack item

OPEN GYM WILL BE FROM 6-7 PM for all youth in Grades 9-12, **FOOD TO FOLLOW OPEN GYM. Please plan to stay!**

Meeting of all parents who will be working the breakfast fundraisers will begin around 7:30 PM in the PAC.

Call the CYM line for current information on our social, spiritual and service activities for teens and young adults at 412-492-9344 or 412-486-4100, extension 409 or email at belskib@verizon.net

ST. MARY



STUDENT COUNCIL INSTALLATION

The Student Council officers for the 2008-2009 school year will be installed officially at the 10:00 AM liturgy on Friday, November 7th. We look forward to the leadership role that they will assume within the school. Congratulations!

SUPER BINGO



Another Super Bingo will be held in Marian Hall on Friday, November 7, 2008. Advance tickets are \$35 each or \$40 at the door. Admission includes 12 cards for each regular game and four specials; 40 regular games at 50 points each, two specials at 100 points each, two specials at 200 points each; one 500 point jackpot and one 1000 point jackpot. Doors open at 5:30 PM; regular bingo begins at 7:00 PM. The evening also includes raffles, quickie and instant bingos. All proceeds benefit St. Mary School. Call Coleen at (412) 486-6622 for more information or tickets.

ONE-SIDED PAPER

We are still requesting donations of one-sided paper for school use. Please check that no personal information is included on the printed side. Donations can be dropped off in the school office Monday through Friday. Thank you!

VETERAN'S DAY PRAYER SERVICE

Join our school children on Veteran's Day, Tuesday, November 11th, for a prayer service in church at 1:45PM. All are welcome.

NORTH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

The future is looking bright at NC! To be a part of NC, now and in the future, enroll your student today. For all the latest news, visit them on the web at www.north-catholic.org or call the admissions office at 412.321.4823, ext.127.



Please pray for all the sick and those recovering from illness. Family and friends have requested prayer for the following:

Norma, Michael Ackman, Braden Bork, Frieda Boss, Renae Vivaldi Breskovich, Robert A. Deasy III, Robert Druga, Roberta Evankovich, Lauren German, Robert Hefferin, Martha Hornak, John Hoehn, Olivia Hutchenson, Helen Kolek, Evelyn Livingood, Mary Lou, Amy McT., Kitty Murphy, Margie Nist, Frank Ranalli, Judy Ranalli, Courtney Ryce, Elaine Settelaier, Patricia Sovek, Joshua Stanek, Shirley Stepnick, Maureen T., Mark Thimons, Virginia Thompson, V.A.W., Harry Vidmar, Bill Vistein, Archie Wharton, James Wilson, Christine Z., Paul Zoeller.

OUR PARISH NEWS



Those who wish to find out more about what it means to be a Catholic Christian, meet each Sunday morning following the 9:00am liturgy. All are welcome to join us in the rectory dining room. This week we will discuss JESUS and His miracles and parables and next week we will discuss THE BEATITUDES. Call Father Ed or Jim Finn to find out more at 412.486.4100.

READERS MEETING

There will be a meeting for **ALL READERS** in Marian Hall at 7:00PM - 9:00PM on Thursday, November 6th. The meeting will begin with a review of Ministry issues and distribution of workbooks for the new liturgical year.

LECTIONARY CYCLE

On Thursday, November 6, at 7:30PM, Father John will speak to our Reader's Ministry as well as interested parishioners who wish to come to hear about the Lectionary Cycle in the Liturgical Year. Please feel welcome to join us!

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

There will be a meeting for ALL Eucharistic Ministers on Monday, November 10th at 7:00PM in Marian Hall. Please call Alexis Raible at 724-443-2164 with any questions.

175TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING SET FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH IN THE RECTORY

Those interested in serving on the planning committee for our 175th anniversary in 2009, are asked to come to the rectory on November 5th at 7:00P.M. Call Jim Finn for more details 412.486.4100.

CAHAL DUNNE

Come and join us for an evening of fun with Cahal Dunne, singer, songwriter, pianist, and comedian at St. Mary's Parish in Marian Hall on Saturday, November 29, 2008, at 7:30PM. You are welcome to BYOB, and enjoy coffee and cake that will be served. Please call Sr. Lois for tickets at 412-486-4021 which will be on sale for \$12.00. Proceeds are for our Marian hall Kitchen renovations. This event is co-sponsored by the American Slovenian CU-KSKJ Life as a matching fund project.

Christian Mothers Women's Organization

Ladies, please continue to keep in prayer that all Christian Mothers and Christians everywhere recognize the link between civic responsibility and their Christian beliefs that call for a respect for life from conception to natural death. Our next meeting is November 20th, our annual covered dish dinner/surprise auction. Guests are welcome. Charge is \$5 person. Along with your covered dish, plan to bring a minimum value \$10 wrapped gift to be auctioned off by our very own CM auctioneers, Elaine & Ginny. It is a very fun night. Please consider coming to this first of only two fundraisers of the year. RSVP via e-mail or call Marilyn at 412-492-8367 or jambuck@verizon.net.



MARRIAGE MOMENTS

The election is at hand. Is it possible to love and respect those with different political opinions? Consider how you resolve serious differences of opinion with your spouse. Learn from your marriage. We must go on living together.

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GOOD NEWS TO SHARE



WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

November 14-16 at the Bishop Connare Center in Greensburg, Pa. for more information or to register, contact Mary and Lou Locante at 412.635.7775 or check us out on the web at wwme-pittsburgh.org.

ISRAEL: A JOURNEY TO THE HOLY LAND

March 24-April 2, 2009. Reservations are still being taken for this wonderful tour. Cost of \$3,429.00 includes airfare, hotel accommodations, 8 breakfasts, 6 dinners, all taxes and gratuities for motor coach and guide. Visit Haifa, Tiberias, Dead Sea, Massada, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Sea of Galilee, Garden of Gethsemane, etc. After this memorable journey, your Holy Week and Gospel readings will take on a whole new meaning. For information call Arlene (412) 487-1891, Mary Ann (412) 486-0165 or Ruth (412) 486-0614.

ST. VINCENT DEPAUL SOCIETY

The Homeless Ministry is in dire need of silverware to complete dish sets. When the homeless are able to get off the streets, this ministry helps them to furnish an apartment. There will be a box in the "Cry Room" marked **SILVERWARE** if you are able to donate your old sets.

TURKEY DINNERS, two for only \$8.29 at MARKET DAY includes turkey, stuffing and vegetables. Order now for November 17 pick up; in plenty of time for Thanksgiving. Fliers available at church exits and Scrip office.

Theology of the Body author, Sister Timothy Prokes, will speak about **Saint Paul's Challenge: Glorify God in YOUR Bodies**, Tuesday, November 18, 7:30 PM at St. Paul Seminary, Crafton. Call 412-486-5521 if you are interested in a car pool to the event.

"SISTER'S CHRISTMAS CATECHISM"

A humorous, interactive drama, will be back at City Theater, South Side. St. Mary's group will reserve Tuesday, December 16, leaving St. Mary's at 6:00 PM @ \$35.00 per ticket for the show. A free will offering will be asked to help with bus expenses; or if only a small group, car pools will be arranged. Call 412-486-5521 if you wish to make a reservation, and send check payable to "St. Mary CCD" for ticket(s).



GERMAN Mass, Saturday, November 8, 4:00 PM at Saint Catherine of Sweden Church, Wildwood. A worship aide with both English and German will help to participate with Fr. Warren Murrmann, OSB, of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, and a local German choir. A Dinner-dance with German food and beer available for purchase immediately after Mass in the social hall. Music by "Die Lustigen Almdudler" German band 6.30 - 10:30 PM. Performances by the Isartaler dancers and chorus during the band breaks. Tickets are \$10 at the door; (\$8 in advance, half price for children) ;call Theresa Goeller 412-487-1870.

ALL SOULS DAY – THE GREAT EQUALIZER

Pastoral Impressions by Barbara Belski BSN, MA, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,…” John 11: 25

Our Catholic liturgy and tradition use significant life moments to provide us with the challenge to reflect on and then answer God’s call; death is certainly one of those major events. Most of us have been touched by death and can recall the spectrum of emotions during funeral preparations, the exhaustion of the visitations at the funeral home, the poignancy of the draped casket, the sacredness of our funeral liturgy. All of us, rich and poor, will ultimately face judgment and death. Using one of Fr. John’s favorite analogies, ask yourself how close you will be to the end zone?

Will you score a touchdown with God?

Mary Ann Coholich and I have often been in the church at odd times, quietly going about our ministry work, cleaning up items placed in our sacred space. We wonder what motivates people to leave certain things in a church. For me, as I empty the CYM collection box for the homeless shelters, I sometimes need to pause and wonder. Among the good and new donations, I will find garbage. *Why do people drop off cans of soup that expired in 2005, with dirty and torn labels? Who should we give the clothing to when the shoes don’t buckle, the pants don’t zip, the dresses are stained or the coats don’t fasten?* Were these items placed in the church by mistake? Or, is it a reflection on how we view certain people in our society? Were these discards from our own parishioners, or just left by random people who find an unlocked church door?

These uncertain times in our world economy present a unique challenge. Should we allow ourselves to become absorbed by our own anxieties? Or, might we consider using this opportunity to examine our own selfishness and greed. Prior to my work in youth ministry, I worked in health care. I saw clearly that the truth before us is this: **death is the great equalizer.**

What can we learn from this? I wonder if perhaps we can best honor the souls of our beloved departed [my own father is among them] by taking a fresh look at how we live in the present.

“For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.” Romans 6:5

Growing into union with Christ does not just come about through suffering and death. A country and a people are judged by how they respond to the “least” among them. **How do we serve God in this lifetime?** Where does our prayer and service take us right now? Be assured of this much - those who are poor and deprived in this lifetime because of our failure to serve them are already secure in their place in the Kingdom of God.

“But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them.” Wisdom 3:1

I have not memorized much Scripture in my lifetime, but the very first passage that I committed to memory was Psalm 23. And, that was because my neighbor, an Episcopalian, gave me a small Bible back in 1982 after I asked him what prayer everyone in the room was able to recite without a book, except for me. Psalm 23 is simply beautiful, poetically challenging us to trust God and to know that God will take care of us. With all my heart, I believe that peace at the time of death will come to those who pray and serve the Lord in the present. And I long for the Reign of God, both in this life and the next. Are you ready to serve God?

“And I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.” Psalm 23:6