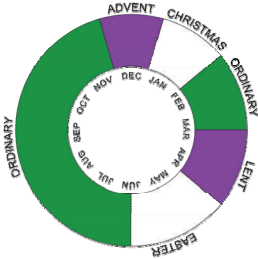


The Canticle



Fall 2006



**Liturgical
Year
Calendar**

We are in ...
"Ordinary Time"

"The Christian faith has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried." — G.K. Chesterton

Inside this issue:

"Rapid Mass" Transit	3
PPC/ New Happenings	4-5
SMART/ Parish Show	6
RCIA Reflections	7
Christmas Craft Fair	8

Christians Called To Serve — Living The "Sermon On The Mount"

By
Claudia Combs
Canticle Staff Writer

Festival, food, fun, and --- faith. Is this a strange chain of concepts to interconnect?

"Not at all," says Teddie Paczkowski, one member on a team of seven organizers for September's Generations of Faith Festival and Picnic planned for Sept. 24 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"People see the event as a parish party, but I see it as a community in action; loving your neighbor as yourself," she says. And with the program theme, "Living out the Beatitudes," Paczkowski notes, "That's what a major event like this is all about.

We really are a family here at St. Francis. Just like the Beatitudes, our parish is all about helping each other, and it's also what Generations of Faith is all about.

"The Faith Festival and Picnic highlights include: 10 a.m. Mass; children's learning centers for ages 4 to 12 featuring Catholic heroes - saints and people of faith - and how they lived the Beatitudes; a parish picnic with delicious barbecue fair, activities, games, and crafts; special entertainment by nationally acclaimed actor, Frank Runyeon, who will perform "Sermon on the Mount."

"Selecting the "Living out the Beatitude" theme for the Faith Festival sprouted from a lively collaborative brainstorming effort that Generations of Faith team members claim "was definitely guided by the Holy Spirit." Along with Paczkowski, team members Pam Lupien, Colleen Judge, Dave and Celeste Allard, Dawn Bastien, and Kathy Long met throughout the summer to plan details and confirm Faith Festival theme connections.

"The Beatitudes are the functioning basis of our

faith," explains team member Pam Lupien, "but a lot of people don't understand them. Most people are already living the Beatitudes but they just don't realize it."

As an example, Lupien points out the Beatitude: Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. "At St. Francis," she says, "every time our parishioners host a mercy meal after a funeral, they are offering comfort to a family in their time of mourning. They are offering food and a place of gathering to a mourning family in their time of need."

The Beatitude theme will repeatedly surface throughout the day's events.



The Sermon on the Mount

During the children's learning centers, examples of the Beatitudes in action will be illustrated through the lives of such saints and people of faith as: Mother Teresa of Calcutta; Dorothy Day; St. Vincent de Paul; ; Pope John Paul II; St. Maximilian Kolbe; St. Francis of Assisi; and St. Therese of Lisieux.

At noon, a dramatic, one-man presentation by actor Frank Runyeon, "Sermon on the Mount" will powerfully portray Jesus' Beatitude message.

Runyeon, a renowned actor of stage (Aristophanes' The Birds, Deathtrap, The Spider's Web) screen (Sudden Death, Bolero), television (As The World Turns, Santa Barbara, General Hospital, LA Law), and radio (comedy talk show host in L.A. and Atlanta), holds a Masters Degree from Yale Divinity School and General Theological Seminary.

He has recently translated and adapted five Biblical texts for performance as one-man dramas, including "Sermon on the Mount."

Tickets for the Generations of Faith Festival and Picnic will be available after all Masses and the parish office beginning Sept. 9. Cost: \$5 adults; \$3 for children over 6.



“Tips” & Gratuities

By

Michael K. Cockrell

Editor-In-Chief

Did you know that the word “tips” is really an abbreviation for the phrase, “To Insure Prompt (or Personal) Service” and that it differs from a gratuity in that the tip comes first and the gratuity is given after the service is rendered? The gratuity then is a “thank you” or an expression of gratitude for services rendered.

For example, people have been heard to say, “There’s a ten dollar tip in it for you, if you get me to the airport in (such and such a time).

If the person doesn’t get you there speedily, you wouldn’t give the tip or a gratuity for services rendered if the service didn’t meet your expectations.

Fortunately for Catholics, here’s a tip wrapped up in a gratuity... To Insure Prayerful Service, we must remember to show our gratitude for services rendered.

This is our mission and mandate as faithful Catholics to be in service to each other, giving support to each other and our Church community in the process.

In the new academic year, we will be highlighting the various ways that we plan to implement and extend that mandate of Christian service via our liturgies, ministries, catechetical programs, finan-

cial support and parish events designed to foster such community involvement in our parish mission of loving Christian service. One such way to do this, is to recall our intent to live as the Beatitudes would suggest and from which we draw blessings.

There is an increased emphasis on the role of the laity in parish life. It was an emphasis proposed in Vatican II, but due to misunderstandings concerning what Vatican II proposed, the value and fruitfulness proposed in those council documents was undermined and went unexamined until recently.

We will also be highlighting other examples of liturgical participation, e.g.; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, Cantors, Ushers, Greeters, Choir Members and other ministries whose reliance on the lay faithful is critical to parish vitality and Christian service to the community.

Christ said and showed many times how we are to reflect who we are and what we believe as Christians...by being a living example of Christ’s love in the world.

In fact Jesus told his disciples, “By

this will all men know that you are my disciples...that you live in my love and do the will of The Father.”

The Latin phrase, “*Deo Gratias*” means “Thanks to God” The word gratitude comes from this Latin word and so does the word, “gratuity.”

When we give Thanks to God for all He has done and for all He has given us, we are acknowledging that the “tip” is included in the price He paid for our salvation starting at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday.

One might say our Lord was a “big tipper.” He didn’t merely give 10 percent or 15 or even 20 percent .

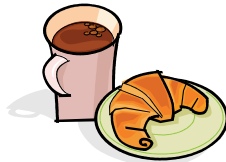
He gave 100 percent of Himself, 100 percent of the time in loving faithful service to others without charge expecting nothing in return.

He picked up the tab so we wouldn’t be embarrassed when the bill came due.

So, here’s a tip...To Insure Prompt (Personal) Service and be more like Christ, try living and loving and giving in emulation of “The Beatitudes” and your attitudes may well be transformed, too.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

St. Francis Annual Church Picnic



It’s that time of year again! Join us on **Sunday, September 24th beginning with the 10am Mass**. Our picnic this year will include delicious food, great music and a special entertainment portion: Frank Runyeon, an actor who has won national acclaim, will do a special performance of Sermon On The Mount! Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children age 6 and older. Tickets will be available after all weekend Masses beginning September 9th as well as in the Parish Office. See you there!

“The Canticle”

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“Rapid Mass” Transit

Rev. Robert M. Blaney

Pastor

When we were kids, our father would often get us up early on a Sunday morning, letting our mother sleep, and take us to the Catholic Chapel in South Station in Boston.

My father liked to go to Mass there because the Masses were typically less than fifteen minutes (most likely to accommodate those catching a train). The Masses were not only short, but quick. There was no preaching or music. I remember that priests would appear in cassock and surplice from seemingly nowhere and start distributing Holy Communion just after the words of consecration.

I was not sure why, but this struck me as an odd way to celebrate Mass. I asked my dad why we came all the way in here, when there was a Church so close to our house. I added that by the time we drove into town, found parking, walked to the station, attended Mass, and drove home again, we could have gone to the “regular” Mass at our own Church. (Sacred Heart, Quincy)

I don’t think he appreciated my inquiry, though I was not denied a chocolate honey-dipped donut that always followed the quick Mass.

One of the most profound statements that came from the Second Vatican Council is that “The Sunday Eucharist is the Source and Summit of the whole activity of the Church.” It is profound because it proposes in a bold way the order of our priorities as a faith community.

Everything we do as a Church, and thus as a parish, begins with our Sunday Mass. In the same way, all of our activity is intended to bring us back to the Eucharist. Such a concept was not expressed at the Masses at South Station.

They were Masses of convenience which I understand now served a genuine pastoral need.

My guess is that there are many Catholics who would prefer a “quick Mass”. Recently, I celebrated a Sunday Mass here which lasted about forty minutes. Afterward, a number of people innocently asked if I were feeling OK. I wasn’t sure why they were asking until someone mentioned the brevity of the liturgy.

Why is a shorter Mass so popular? I assume it’s because our overall experience of Sunday liturgy has been something between boring and painful.

We tolerate it, putting up with bad preaching and dirge-like music (not here at St. Francis of course!) On one level, we appreciate the importance of Holy Communion, but are not able to connect Mass into our daily lives.

I think we work hard at St. Francis Parish to provide quality and meaningful Sunday liturgies.

Having said this, I also think we could do more in light of the mandate from the Council which I mentioned above. I have asked a few parishioners to form a liturgical commission with a task of taking time to read through documents on liturgy and assess our parish Masses in light of what the Church expects.

I am excited about this endeavor. Beside my personal interest in liturgical theology, I am convinced that every resource put into the Sunday Masses will have a significant impact in every other aspect of parish life: religious education, sacramental preparation, social gatherings, care for the sick and elderly, fi-

nances, youth ministry, community outreach, and most importantly, each parishioner’s personal relationship with the living Christ.

I don’t want us to have quick Masses. To rush through the sacred rites is not fitting worship to the Almighty and All-loving God. Quick Masses do not help to form us and bind us as a faith community. Sometimes Masses will be short in duration, sometimes long. It depends on lectionary readings, points of the homily, musical selections, extra collections, number of people in attendance, etc.

Taking our time to celebrate the rites with dignity and devotion is what is important.

Aside from homily preparation and choir practice, the quality of Sunday Mass involves so many things, such as ample parking, the atmosphere of the Church, how we are greeted when we enter, how folks are dressed, etc.

Everything counts when trying to let Sunday Mass be the “source and summit” of our lives!

I hope, in the months ahead, the liturgical commission will be able to offer some insights about our Sunday Mass.

I look forward to learning with them what is in the mind and heart of the Universal Church and allowing that to be experienced when we gather in *our* beautiful Church.

PPC



New Access Road and Parking Expansion Project Progresses To Completion

The parking expansion project is slated to be completed by the start of Fall Religious Education Classes and other Parish activities requiring additional parking,

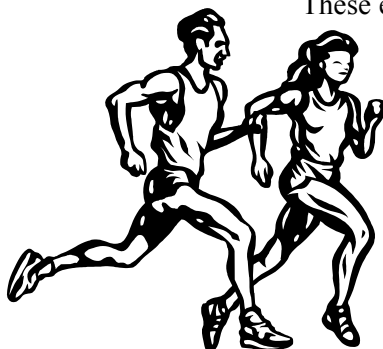
The additional parking capacity will allow for a safer drop-off and pick-up location for Religious Education classes and will also be useful in handling increases in congregational volume during holiday celebrations such as Christmas and Easter and allow greater participation at parish-sponsored events.



St. Francis to Host Fund Raiser ...

On November 4, 2006 @ 11:00 am Saint Francis Church will be home to a 5K road race and a 1 Mile Fun Run.

These events will be followed by a day of fun for families with children of all ages. Little Battlers Foundation, a Charitable Organization, will be sponsoring the event.



Little Battlers is an organization who's goal is to help families and organizations who are battling diseases and handicaps which threaten the lives and well being of children. This year Little Battlers Foundation has chosen the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund Clinic to be the recipients of their efforts. If you want to help Little Battlers and also have a great day full of fun and laughs this event is for you. Check out the Little Battlers web site which can be found at <http://www.littlebattlers.org>

You can also call Wade at 978-319-9003 for more information.



New Happenings!!

By
 Pamela J. Lupien



Are you presently in the 7th or 8th grade? Are you tired of sitting at home on Saturday evenings with nothing to do? Are you looking for something new and exciting? Do you like social gatherings with your peers that are non-threatening though sometimes challenging? Looking for a place where you can just be yourself, where your opinions are always valued, where your leadership and humor is not only welcomed, but a necessity? Or are you a parent or guardian looking for social gatherings for your 7th or 8th grader where Christian values and morals are at the heart of the gatherings? If any of these questions peaks your interest, then we have exactly what you are looking for.

Beginning October 14th, St. Francis is happy to announce the start of a youth ministry program for 7th and 8th graders. Meeting every other week from 5pm-7pm these gatherings will be filled with games, music (yes, even some rap), activities (team and individual based), videos, and for those aspiring actors or just plain “hams” some role playing and maybe even presentation skits. As you can see there will be something for everyone! Some activities may be accomplished in one session; others may take several gatherings for completion. It’s really all up to the group and what they decide to be their goals and objectives. Of course, there will be adult guidance, (Pam Lupien and Gigi Hovanec as well as others) but the true leaders are the youth. Some ideas and activities that will be presented are: developing a fall festival, bring your blanket or lawn chair for a St. Francis “Drive-In” movie night, snow tubing night, a rope course leadership day, or joining other youth ministry groups for a Spirit of Boston Harbor Cruise. These are only a few suggestions, as previously mentioned it is all up to the youth as to which activities they choose to implement.

So, you’re sitting there reading this thinking “okay you’ve whet my appetite with the bait, but what is the hook?” “What is the bottom line, the cost, and what is required from me or my child?” Are you sure you’re ready for the answer? I mean really ready? Are you thinking second mortgage yet? I would be with all these and possibly other activities. Okay, here it is hook, line, and sinker: all that is required is a way to get to and from the meetings, an open mind, a willingness to expect the unexpected, and a sense of humor. That’s it!

Oh, I almost forgot the most important requirement, a simple phone call to Dawn at the Religious Office @ 978-453-4460 saying you are ready to become part of this exciting new experience. This is simply a request so we can be sure to have enough supplies and/or snacks for each meeting.

If lines are busy, please be patient and try again. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you in October.



Peer Leader Fund Raiser: St. Francis T-shirt and Hoodie Sales



The Peer Leaders will be selling **“God Squad” T-shirts and Hoodies** as part of a parish fund-raising effort.

The sales will take place starting Sunday Sept. 24th during the parish picnic. Sales will continue after weekend Masses until the Nov Christmas Craft fair.

Order forms will be available in the church foyer and may be filled in and dropped off at the parish office.

SMART Program Set To Go With Another Eight—Week Session

The Fall is quickly approaching, and a new session of the S.M.A.R.T. (Supporting Moms and Raising Toddlers) Program is about to begin! On Wednesday, September 13th at 10am, our group will meet again to begin a new eight-week session. Each Wednesday includes circle time with songs and a Bible story especially designed for children Preschool age and younger, time for sharing, a craft, free play, snack and tons of fun! A new element has been added this year, too! Caregivers of children too young to participate in the craft portion of the program will have the opportunity to have a mom's reflection and group sharing. As we nurture our children, it becomes ever so important to nurture ourselves as well.

As I look at our world and where our Catholic faith comes into play, I feel a strong commitment to teaching our children early on that they are children of God. If nothing else, this knowledge and learning about God's love prepares our children to do well unto others and unto themselves. It is my hope that the S.M.A.R.T. Program can help in a small way to get our children started on the path to morality, goodness and faithfulness. I hope you will join us! The cost is \$20 per family for the session. For more information, please call the Parish Office at (978) 452-6611.

—Jessica Smith

SAINT FRANCIS PARISH SHOW

IT'S SHOWTIME!!

The seventh Saint Francis Parish Show will take place on Saturday, September 30, 2006 and Sunday, October 1, 2006. As it quickly approaches, the cast members are busy sewing costumes, memorizing lines, learning dance moves, and trying to remove any notice of nerves! Every year, this show gathers in a larger "family" than the preceding year, and now our "family" includes community members and individuals from the ages of 5 to 77.

Our musical show begins with George Washington, played by Mike L'Heureux Sr., and Martha Washington, played by Betty Aubrey. George and Martha are in a discussion of what will become of the newly formed country that the patriots have fought so hard to establish. George wonders if future generations will preserve all that has been formed.

Young people from the future arrive to wake George from a dream to let him know what the future holds. They travel through time explaining that future generations want to take care of the United States, but that things have changed. George is astonished at what has developed in the future and decides that the "people of the 21st century" will be able to preserve the freedoms he helped to establish.

George and the future people discuss differences in dance and music. George and Martha try to show the youngsters about their "hip" minuet, only to receive a laugh that they don't know what "real" music is. So the young people proceed to show George a 35 minute medley of Rock and Roll tunes.

Your support, as parish members, helps to keep our shows going strong. It is important to the cast, who work three days a week, that a wonderful audience is present on performance nights. Please consider purchasing tickets that go on sale after Masses on the weekend of September 2nd. Tickets are \$12.00 and the proceeds will go to the many programs that the parish supports, some of which assist the community. We would love to see all of you come and wish us to "break a leg"!!!!

Dr. Linda Trouville, Saint Francis Parish Show Director



Spiritual Life Commission's Fall Enrichment Series Kicks Off with a Family Evening of Prayer

"Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got.

Taking a break from all your worries sure would help a lot....Wouldn't you like to get away?

Sometimes you want to go; where everybody knows your name and they're always glad you came..."

If you find that you can identify with the lyrics of the song from "Cheers," then perhaps, you might consider participating in the newly conceived faith enrichment program. For the past few weeks, the recently formed Spiritual Life Commission has been meeting, praying, reading, and brainstorming various ideas to help design a program to encourage our parish family members to learn and grow in our

faith and in our relationship with God.

Spirituality is about connection—with God, self, and community, and thus is woven into all aspects of life. With this in mind, an invitation has been extended to Dr. Barbara Redmond, a well known author, to lead us in our exploration of the roles that spirituality and prayer play in every day life activities. Our fall session will begin on Monday October 15th from 7 to 8: PM. and continue for 5 weeks. Mark your calendar and than come join us, to learn more about God's movement in our individual and communal lives.

As a prelude to Dr. Redmond's course and the Fall enrichment program, a Family Evening of Prayer is planned for Monday September 18th at 7: PM with the

theme of "Finding Peace in our hearts through our Mother Mary".

Hospitality will follow. Please join us.



Please join us as we pray for
"Peace in Our Hearts
Through Our Mother
Mary"

Monday September 18, 2006

7:00p.m.

St. Francis
Church

Dracut

All Are Welcome



RCIA – Gift and Blessing

By

Grace O'Connor

Most of us who have been born and raised in the Catholic faith may not be able to comprehend what it is like to be without the anchor of FAITH, the beauty of TRUTH, and the comfort of being part of a community which confirms, supports and reinforces us during our life/faith journey.

Yet, there are others in our families, neighborhoods, workplaces, etc. who are searching, seeking, studying and wondering about the purpose of their lives and where their place might be. Who is God? What truths, maxims, values should they believe in and live by.

Over the past year, we have met some of these people through the St. Francis RCIA program. These individuals varied in age, education, profession and life experiences.

During the year, they came, one by one, in response to God's prompting and inner call, perhaps due to the encouragement of others.

In praying, studying, sharing, listening and talking with them during our Sunday morning classes, we were inspired as we witnessed the expression of their desire and commitment to become Catholic.

Each story and journey differed. Some were new to the presence of God and His reality in their lives. Others were converting or becoming reconnected to the faith of their early childhood.

In all cases, God called and they responded. This is the inspiration and hope that the RCIA program offers to the Church.

Our faith is a gift: a valuable treasure.

This gift is particularly confirmed when the RCIA candidates make their *personal and free commitment* to become members of the Catholic Faith at the Easter Vigil.

RCIA is truly a gift and blessing to those who accept its call.

It is also a gift and blessing to not only our Parish, but the entire Church. We are encouraged, strengthened and uplifted by the joy of those who have made the choice to know and love God by means of our Faith.

We ask the Parish to pray for those who may be considering becoming Catholic (or reconnecting to the Faith) with the hope they will participate in the RCIA program as part of their discernment process.

"I began the RCIA program because I wanted my son to be introduced to the Catholic faith at an early age.

I wanted him to have an established foundation of faith which I did not have as a child. I felt if I were going to have him do that, I should do so as well. The RICA experience far outweighed my expectations.

I expected to learn about the Catholic Faith, the history behind the traditions and philosophies of the Church. I wanted to know more about the Mass itself, the prayers, the saints and the life of the early Church founders.

These subject and many more were covered and discussed, but it was what I was not expecting which surprised me and rewarded me most.

A spiritual awakening began to occur during the first few meetings of the group. The ceremony during the Easter Vigil at first seemed to mark an end to the process and the experience, but I have realized in the time since that the ceremony in truth only marked the beginning."

—Wade Sauls

**Saint Francis Parish
Christmas
Gift & Craft Fair
Saturday, November 18
9 - 3**

Raffles
Great Gifts & Crafts
Fabulous food from St. Martha's Kitchen
Chocolate & Bake Shop



***New this year...* Kids Corner**

Face Painting ~ Arts & Crafts
These activities provided by the St. Francis Peer Leaders



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