

## **BULLETIN – APRIL 26**

**Next Sunday** we shall welcome our area fire fighters, retirees, their families, and friends to the annual **St. Florian Mass and breakfast**. St. Florian has long been revered as the patron of fire fighters. Devotion to him is very strong in Central Europe, where he died as a witness for Christ while serving as a member of the Roman imperial army. He is usually depicted in a Roman soldier's gear, pouring water on a burning house. His feast day is celebrated on May 4. He is also, appropriately, the patron saint of brewers. Nothing like teamwork among his devotees!

Capt. Bud Morrow organized the first St. Florian Mass in our area in 1969. That initial service took place at St. John Vianney Church in Wyoming; and for practical reasons, it has most often been held at the church where the Catholic chaplain is assigned. The St. Florian Mass is scheduled annually on the first Sunday of May. Fire fighters, family members, and friends gather to pray for one another. A special commemoration of those who have answered their last alarm is made by tolling a fire bell once as the name of each of the past year's deceased is read, and then the tolling of the bell with the traditional 5-5-5 signal, indicating that a member has responded to his or her last alarm. While the St. Florian Mass is Catholic in form, fire fighters of all faiths are welcome to attend the Mass and the breakfast which follows. In addition, the St. Florian Society, made up of all the Catholic members of the Department, has a memorial Mass offered very soon after the death of any individual member or retiree.

**Heard from the Bishop lately?** Check that mailbox! If you haven't already received a letter from the Bishop and from your pastor, it should be arriving soon. It will concern this year's Catholic Services Appeal, and will include a gift / pledge form for your use, along with an envelope. Please pray about the gift you will make, and then fill out the form, including, if you wish, all or a part of your gift. We hope to soon receive a commitment from each household in the parish. You may mail the form in to the parish office, or save a stamp and put it in the regular Sunday collection anytime in the next three weeks. If you're in the neighborhood, you may also drop the completed form and envelope through the mail slot on the front of the parish office, or through the milk chute drop box on the back of the rectory just off the alley.

**Our scholars do us proud** once again, as we receive the names of our parishioners who have made the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter honor roll at West Catholic High School. They are, with their (grade level) in parentheses: Joshua Augdahl (9), Michael Edozie (9), Maggie Hassinger (12), Holly Holtzclaw (9), Samantha Knight (10), Christopher Kohane (12), Joshua Kohane (9), Maria Kohane (11), Benjamin Walters (12), and John Worm (11).

Lest you think we're being unduly partial to our students who attend West Catholic, we are more than happy to hear about and publicize the achievements of our other parishioners, at Union, Kenowa Hills, Comstock Park, City High, or other schools and home school. Also, if someone in your family is serving in the military and you'd like us to remember them in prayer, please let us know. Our parishioners and their family members are serving, studying, and working far and wide around the country and around the globe in various capacities. They can keep up with us by checking us out on our

website, but it's a little difficult to keep track of *them* unless we're given the information. Thank you!

**Part of one another.** What did Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner have to do with me? What's so important about "community"? Why did Christ establish a Church? Isn't it enough just to have a personal one-on-one relationship with him? I love God, it's other people I can't stand. Et cetera, et cetera . . .

It's so easy to stop with just the first great commandment, and to forget, as Jesus said, that *the second is like it*. The English poet John Donne (1572-1631) put it beautifully:

No man is an island, entire of itself;  
Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;  
If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less,  
As well as if a promontory were,  
As well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were.  
Any man's death diminishes me,  
Because I am involved in mankind;  
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;  
It tolls for thee.

So before you distance yourself too quickly from the street crime and violence and death among people with whom you might seem to have nothing in common, remember that it was precisely just such people for whom Christ said he had come into the world, and with whom he spent so much time, scandalizing the good and genteel people of his day.

**Q & A: How long can a priest deny baptism to an infant before it becomes a burden on his conscience?** Ooooh, there's a sharp edge in that question, isn't there? Presumably an anxious grandparent or relative has someone in the family who's not going to church, and there's a new baby, and zealous shopping around hasn't uncovered a priest who will overrule their pastor's decision to postpone baptism until the parents show they have some faith to share with their child. And you're blaming all this on the *pastor*? Hello, it's not the *pastor* who's not going to church!

It's been the practice for 21 centuries in our Catholic family that we gather to celebrate the Eucharist on each Lord's Day. It's the most important thing we do in our life as Christ's Church. Baptism is the introduction into that life. It's not just a cutesy photo-op or an occasion for a dinner and some baby presents. If the parents are disregarding the most important thing we do as God's people, why introduce a child into something in which the parents obviously don't believe in strongly enough to *do*? I mean, it's not like the Church is asking them to do anything *wrong*, now, is it?

It's always easier to blame someone else. Adam started it in the Garden: "The woman you put here with me, *she* did it!" The real bottleneck in the case at hand doesn't live in the rectory, but right in the family home. And, sorry to say, if you claim that the parents will probably leave the Church over this, you apparently haven't noticed that they're already way ahead of you. They're welcome back anytime. Our arms are open,

but you might have noticed that Christ never calls us on our terms. What kind of Savior would he be if he did? God bless you!

Fr. Den

**Thought for the week:** “You may well be content to serve our Lord in illness, for when he calls people to suffer instead of working for him, he is calling them to a higher state. While on earth, it is most fitting that we should carry the cross with Christ, who loved it so dearly that he chose to die on it. We can do this better in sickness than in health, for illness is repugnant to flesh and blood and can never cause vainglory” (St. John of Ávila, 1499-1569).