

BULLETIN -- JANUARY 10

Our bulletin boards in church are positively littered / lettered with expressions of thanks to our congregation from numerous local charities for the help we have been able to provide them at Christmas. All this has been due to *your* generosity, which we cannot be inclined to hoard when there are people in need *right now*. With the help of our Finance Council, we are very selective in our aid to local charities, striving to help those whose overhead and administrative costs approach being as low as our own. We are displaying the letters of gratitude, not to blow our own horn or yours, but to show you the great good which your offerings can accomplish. Occasionally we hear people say things like, "We should be helping those right here at home," and in fact we are. Thanks to you, we never have to turn anyone away who is in genuine need. When we are not equipped to meet a particular request, we try to assist the agencies to which we refer people for help. We cannot on our own be a one-stop-shopping center for social services, but we *can* re-direct your gifts to us in ways that will do the most good. We do require identification and verification of claims to guard against the ever-present inclinations of fallen human nature. For those who see our steeple and confuse us with a bank, we ask for *real* addresses, names and phone numbers of *real* landlords, and copies of *actual* police reports. We get license numbers of cars whose owners claim to be out of gas on their way to grandma's funeral in Houston. When someone comes in with a story line that smells like a load of manure, we can shovel it back with the best of them, and do it with a smile. And yes, we do on occasion still get swindled--but the offenders are quickly reported to the police, and not infrequently apprehended.

All this is to let you know that we treasure your gifts, and the intent which accompanies them. And we humbly thank you for letting us assist you in our common vocation of witnessing to Christ by our charity.

We regret to report the demise of *The Catholic Weekly* (serving Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo with a West Michigan edition, and Gaylord and Saginaw with their own) and *The Catholic Times* (serving Lansing) newspapers. It was just announced that after years of financial struggle, the papers are shutting down permanently. We shall miss them. Father Neil O'Connor began the paper in Saginaw in 1942, and served as both publisher and editor practically until his death in 1989. When our own *Western Michigan Catholic* folded some years ago, it seemed opportune to make available *some* regular coverage of local, national, and international Catholic news. Our *Faith* magazine is not intended to be an up-to-the-minute reporting medium as a newspaper should be. But these days many people, perhaps even a majority, do not get their news from a paper medium, but online, if they bother with news at all. The difficulty with that, of course, is that you might not be inclined to look online to get *all* the news and information that might be of benefit to you. We tend to be very selective, and to see or look for just the items we are interested in. Gone are the days when someone says, "I just happened to see in the paper that . . ." The disappearance of a regular readership has left many print media in the financial mess that finally swamped The Catholic Weekly Publishing Co. We're sorry to not have its news and its columnists all in one place anymore.

Did you know that in the State of Michigan, it is *illegal* to divide up the ashes or cremains of a deceased person so that each child, relative, or paramour may have a portion as a keepsake? The cremains are by law to remain integral. And for Catholics, this should not even be a question or a problem. The Church *allows* cremation for a serious reason, but does not favor or promote it. For a Catholic, the required manner of disposition of the body or of cremains is *always* burial, in the ground or in a mausoleum (or in emergency or absolute necessity, at sea). The body has served as a temple of the Holy Spirit. The body has been nourished in life with the sacraments, especially with the most holy Body and Blood of Christ. The body has been intimately united with the soul of the person who has died. Cremated or not, the body does not become our toy or keepsake to play with or hang on to as we wish. And both civil and church law support the right and privilege of the deceased to *rest in peace*, awaiting the resurrection.

Confirmation news! Our students who are planning to be confirmed will celebrate the sacrament on **Tuesday, March 8, 2016**, at 7 p.m. at the Cathedral with Bishop Walkowiak. Sincere thanks to our catechist, Mrs. Cathy Lindgren, for her fine and conscientious work in preparing our young people. **If you are older than 8th grade**, have not been confirmed, and are not in RCIA, we'll be having classes on the Friday evenings of February 19, March 4, and March 18 to prepare you. Attendance at all three sessions with your confirmation sponsor is a requirement. If those dates don't work for you, we suggest you try the preparation at another parish or wait until fall. Remember, your sponsor must be an active, practicing Catholic. A godparent is preferred, but any confirmed Catholic other than a parent is also eligible. Start thinking now about a confirmation name, the name of a saint whom you wish to honor or emulate in your own life. Remember that the Church is most eager that any Catholic being married should be confirmed before marriage, if at all possible. So, if you have a wedding coming up and either you or your Catholic fiancé is not yet confirmed, this is tailor-made for you. **With the Bishop's permission, any high schoolers and adults who are in need of the sacrament of confirmation can be confirmed at the Easter Vigil on Saturday, March 26, 2016, at 8 p.m.; or at the adult confirmation Mass with the Bishop at the Cathedral on Sunday, May 15, 2016, at 3 p.m.** Please plan ahead. Call the parish office at 454-6000 to register, so we have a sufficient amount of materials available.

"Safe, legal, and rare." That became the mantra of the Clinton administration (1993-2001) regarding its position on abortion. During her term as senator from New York (2000-09), Hillary Rodham Clinton espoused this mantra as her own. In 2008, in response to a question from Rev. Joel C. Hunter, pastor of Northland Church near Orlando, FL, she reiterated the "safe, legal, and rare" position and emphasized "and I mean rare." She acknowledged that "it's a moral issue, and it should not be in any way diminished as a moral issue, no matter which side you're on." It becomes difficult to see how Mrs. Clinton defines "rare" in the light of the fact that 324,000 abortions were performed *at Planned Parenthood clinics alone* during the past year, some 7 years after she made that public statement. Certainly the words "safe" and "rare" would be of little consolation to any one of those 324,000 infants who was brutally wrenched from the security and warmth of a mother's womb, let alone the 50-million-plus who have been so terminated / executed since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. Can there be a "common ground"

between life and death, as pro-choice advocates claim they would be happy to find in dealing with pro-life supporters? And is it possible that, considering the loss of 324,000 potential voters just through one agency's "health services" in just one year, pro-choice advocates are supportive of very liberal immigration policies precisely to replace those who are being eliminated by the other "freedoms" they promote? God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: We only live in the land of the free because of the brave.