

## BULLETIN -- MAY 21

**Congratulations to our graduates** as we mark their rite of passage from high school to further endeavors! Those who began school with us at SS. Peter & Paul in the mid-2000's had to transfer to other schools when we closed in June, 2009. Nonetheless, we salute them all, including their parents and families who have guided them through the succeeding years of education. Among them (with their schools of graduation in parentheses) are: Michael Francis Flickinger (home school), Samantha Marie Knight (West Catholic), Mary Rose Lindgren (home school), Brooke Allison Raap (Coopersville), and Karlene Rose Vainavicz (Jenison).

**And, congratulations** to parishioner **Kaitlyn Christine Augdahl** on her graduation from St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana, with a degree in psychology; and to parishioner **Bridget Therese Lindgren** on her graduation *magna cum laude* from Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy in Barry's Bay, Ontario, Canada. It is good to have them home with us before they embark on further adventures.

**Better than halfway** to our CSA target of \$40,557, we thank all those who have already made their pledges or gifts. If we have yet to hear from you, we urge you to attend to that mail from the Bishop as soon as you can. We would like to get the main business of our campaign wrapped up. The more participation we get on the "head" end of the campaign, the less energy we'll have to spend chasing the "tail"! ☺

**The Venerable Father Solanus Casey, O.F.M. Cap.** (1870-1957), has justifiably become a great favorite of many people here in the State of Michigan and throughout the Midwest. Many of you have made pilgrimages to the Capuchin Monastery in Detroit to pray and to learn more about him. On May 4, Pope Francis recognized a miracle attributed to Fr. Solanus' intercession, clearing the way for his beatification. Our friend and classmate, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron, issued the following statement on receipt of the good news from the Vatican: "The beatification of Father Solanus Casey is an incomparable grace for the Church in the Archdiocese of Detroit and for the whole community of Southeast Michigan. He is an inspiration to all us Catholics – and to all – of the power of grace to transform one's life." A date and place for Fr. Solanus' formal beatification has not yet been set at the time we have gone to press.

**Hatred has no ears.** White racists proved this back in the '50's and '60's when they closed their minds, hearts, and lives to the profound challenges and stirring words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and those associated with him in the struggle for civil rights. Some still continue to prove it today, when they continue to view people of color as "other" than the community or people among whom they feel comfortable or with whom they wish to associate. And it might just have been proved with the reception given to U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos by many (but not all) of the graduates and assembled guests as she delivered the commencement address at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach on Wednesday, May 10. One sophomore who refused to lower his raised fist and sit down was escorted from the event. He couldn't

figure out why he was being ejected: “No one likes her, man. Period. I don’t like what she said, and nothing at the end of the day is going to change my opinion.”

A pity that a young man who came to college ostensibly to *learn* something is apparently adverse to learning anything more than what he thinks he already knows. Was he even listening to “what she said” to know he didn’t like it? (One wonders how he could even have heard “what she said,” what with the catcalls, boos, and obscenities directed at her by unruly students throughout her 20-minute address.) Does a university education aim to teach students the art of critical thinking, or does it just specialize in confirming the prejudices with which they might arrive? Among many other things, DeVos said, “One of the hallmarks of higher education, and of democracy, is the ability to converse with and learn from those with whom we disagree.” To answer that with nothing more insightful than “I don’t like what she said” is disturbing. Even if she is considered to be or to represent “The Enemy,” anyone with any wisdom at all knows that one must *know* one’s enemy and the enemy’s tactics and goals in order to mount effective opposition.

One young woman said she supported the anarchists because it was *their* graduation that was ruined by an unfortunate choice of speaker forced upon them. But what about the graduates who did *not* disrupt the proceedings with boorish behavior? It was *their* graduation, too; and it was defaced by schoolmates and others who hijacked the ceremony to make--well, what exactly *was* the point?

Some have questioned the motivation for the University’s invitation to DeVos in the first place. Why have a rich white woman from a Republican administration come into an auditorium full of people who by far and away are neither rich, white, nor Republican? To be sure, the media were licking their chops over this latest affront to people they love to insult. But what would be the media reaction across the nation if a man or woman of color were invited to address the graduates of a mostly lily-white institution, only to be greeted with the same reception given to DeVos? Imagine the marches, protests, and riots that might occur nationwide to redress such behavior. And imagine the (feigned?) shock and awe of the commentators whose duty it would be to try to contain their own emotions as they reported such an incident, over and over and over, to drill it into the public consciousness and to assure themselves of fat paychecks for reporting the news they help to create.

Through several recent years of crises drenched with racial components, we have often heard community leaders say that we need to “have a conversation.” A presentation from a Secretary of Education unpopular with her audience might have seemed to be an ideal opportunity to do just that: to highlight accomplishments, to congratulate achievement, and to lay out thought-provoking ideas and proposals about how we might proceed together to improve life for everyone in our country. But there was not a hint that anyone intended to have a conversation. DeVos was accused of conducting a “monologue.” Has a commencement address itself ever been anything but? She met with representative students before the event, pointed out by name some specific examples of perseverance among the graduates, and planned to visit the home of university founder Mary McLeod Bethune. That’s considerably more “dialogue” and interest than many commencement speakers bring to their task. And certainly more than what DeVos was treated to as she gave the commencement address.

The real tragedy in what we witnessed on May 10? It's that the sad fact that hatred has no ears is again being confirmed, only with different actors. The shameful actions of the white racists of the '50's and '60's are now being repeated by young people of very different backgrounds. This is not "poetic justice." There is no progress when we choose to imitate the very worst behavior of people who have oppressed us and wished us harm--and about whose behavior we have justifiably complained! There is only a tear shed that the fulfillment of Dr. King's magnificent hope, so eloquently related by him on August 28, 1963, is delayed yet again: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." How can that content be developed without conversation? And how can conversation be held without ears? God bless you!

Fr. Den

**An old Irish blessing for our graduates.** "May those who love you, love you. And may those who don't, well, may God turn their hearts. And if they don't allow God to turn their hearts, well, then may he turn their ankles, so you'll know them by their limping, and be able to lend them a helping hand as you walk together on the road to his Kingdom."