

BULLETIN – MAY 24

Our apologies! An internal office mixup resulted in the omission of the names of two of our graduates from last week's list. We happily add

Kane, Jean Elizabeth
Lantinga, Austin James

Forest Hills Eastern
Northview

to our list of 2015 graduating seniors. And once again, sincere congratulations to all!

Welcome, new initiates! Nine of our students have completed their sacraments of Christian initiation in receiving the sacrament of Confirmation on Wednesday evening, May 13, 2015. Retired Bishop Walter A. Hurley officiated, substituting for Bishop Walkowiak, who was on retreat. Our newly confirmed are:

Evan Michael (Sebastian) Brechting
Shaun Matthew (Michael) Brown
Charles David (Christopher) Bylsma
Matthew David Charles (Michael) Dunst
Jacob Charles (George) Flickinger

Evan John (Blaise) Heemstra
Jacob Steven (Nicholas) Pease
Shaylee Earleen (Valentine) TerHaar
Jacob Elijah VanAntwerp (Peter)

We look forward to their working side-by-side with us in giving eager and vibrant witness to Christ, Priest, Prophet, and King.

Remembering, on Memorial Day, we shall have the 8 a.m. Mass at our cemetery chapel on Preston Avenue. The capable staff will have refreshments available for us after Mass. Come and join us as we pray first of all for our deceased military, then for all our public servants, and for all of our own family members and friends who have gone before us.

Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to add another **\$925.00** to our parish accounts from your fulfillment of pledges for *last year's* CSA. This brings our total overage for the past year to **\$21,773.14**. Now we are happy to report that we have received 70 pledges for the 2015 CSA, already totaling \$33,016.10, over \$22,000 of that in cash gifts, well on our way to our goal of \$43,173. Please take a moment this week to find that CSA letter and pledge card and send it in so we can wrap up our campaign. If you've misplaced it, we'll send you another, no questions asked. We'll be glad to send out another reminder here in a month or so, but that's money we should not have to spend. If you can't make a pledge or gift this year, please just tell us. It's much easier for all of us if we get a 100% response, regardless of the size of your gift.

Why all these collections? We already have a collection for Catholic Relief Services on the Fourth Sunday of Lent every year. So why, every time there's a natural disaster somewhere, do we take up a special collection for here, for there, for everywhere? What do they do with all the money we give them in the annual collection?

These are legitimate questions, and they have legitimate answers. The people helped by Catholic Relief Services each year number in the millions, and they are scattered all over the globe. Many of them are in situations which are chronically in need of relief. Droughts and famines and civil wars often go on for years. CRS has boots on the ground in nations around the globe to distribute food, clothing, and other basic necessities directly to people who need it. The organization is spectacularly well-equipped to help local people deal with their local problems. Most often, the national governments are not involved, so there are no kickbacks to politicians who keep all the benefits for themselves and their cronies.

In the case of major earthquakes, such as in the Indian Ocean in 2004, Haiti in 2010, Japan in 2011, and Nepal last month, the sudden, vast, and catastrophic need dwarfs the resources that CRS ordinarily has on hand to respond to emergencies. When hundreds of thousands are left homeless and infrastructure is destroyed, there is such a need for massive and immediate relief that it takes a huge amount of funding to get it all in place. The overhead at CRS is minimal, but transport still has to be contracted, and relief workers themselves need to eat and need protection from disease.

We are free to donate to various causes through other charities. However, it's hard to beat Catholic Relief Services for putting the money where the mouths are. When you donate through the parish to causes approved by the Diocese, you can be sure that your donations are really doing good and getting to where they're needed. We are grateful, but that can't compare with the gratitude of the millions around the world who know we are Christians by our love.

Pentecost insights on Pope Francis. George Weigel, who provided us with a superb presentation on Pope St. John Paul II as part of our 40th Anniversary Speaker Series on May 5, the following day spoke on "Pope Francis: Continuity and Change" at the Acton Institute. We do Mr. Weigel some injustice by trying to boil that lecture down into a condensed version, but he wanted to highlight ten points regarding our Holy Father. We can't think of a better Pentecost reflection than to share them with you:

1. Pope Francis is a radically converted Christian disciple who feels an urgent need to share that with others.

2. He in effect says and means, "I am a son of the Church who believes and teaches what the Catholic Church believes and teaches." With that understood, his off-the-cuff comments can be put in context.

3. He is a very specific kind of Catholic: an old fashioned Jesuit superior!

4. He is completely a man of the New Evangelization, or of evangelical Catholicism.

5. He is a true Latin American pastor, with great empathy for those who are marginal and have fallen through the cracks of life.

6. He is free man, unencumbered by experience in Rome or by any obligations to persons or networks there.

7. He is a literary man. He reaches to novels for examples. Two of his favorites are *I promessi sposi* ("The Betrothed") by Manzoni and *Lord of the World* by Robert Hugh Benson.

8. He recognizes a spiritual poverty in the failure to commit to marriage and in the fatherlessness of society and of families.

9. He is not a financier. He has turned over Vatican finances to others.

10. He believes that mercy and truth go together. We exercise mercy in order to bring people to the truth, not to help them avoid it.

Uncharacteristically, I'm not going to comment on these points. I suggest that we keep them handy as we read or re-read Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel"), which he issued in November, 2013. Those 288 paragraphs, if carefully studied, will help us to avoid the pitfalls and pratfalls with which many in the media have entertained us while feverishly trying to outguess each other on what Pope Francis is going to do next. God bless you! And Happy Birthday, Church!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: What you are is God's gift to you. What you BECOME is your gift to God.