

## **BULLETIN -- MAY 7**

**Welcome, St. Florian members and friends!** Our local St. Florian Society, made up of area fire fighters, retirees, family members, and friends, celebrates their patron's feast (actually on May 4) this Sunday with Mass and a fine breakfast following in the parish center. The first St. Florian Mass was in 1969 at St. John Vianney. I have had the privilege of celebrating or concelebrating at most of the Masses since my appointment as fire chaplain in 1976. It's been a delight since 1994 to have the Mass and breakfast right here at SS. Peter & Paul, which has become a familiar "home" for the ceremony (and gets me off the hook from lining up a sub). The bell will toll at least 19 times today, for a record number of deceased fire fighters during this past year. Some served with us only a few years, others for several decades. We gratefully and prayerfully remember their willingness to put themselves at risk at a moment's notice to save the lives and property of citizens of any ethnic background or economic condition. We assure all of the active members of our daily prayers for their safety and their skilled and heroic work.

**CSA 2017 news.** Your generosity to the Catholic Services Appeal is edifying, and is helping to build up the Church in West Michigan through your active cooperation in support of its variety of apostolates and needs. We had previously neglected to mention our target for 2017-18, which is **\$40,557**, a slight reduction from last year. We are hoping for 100% participation, and hope to use anything received over and above the target amount to continue the good witness to Christ which we have been able to provide in our neighborhood and community. Thank you!

**And even while** we are beginning our CSA campaign for the current year, your continuing generosity to last year's Appeal has brought us a March rebate check for **\$788.00**, bringing the total over target for the 2016-17 CSA to **\$21,342**. Just in time to pay the major part of a bill for repair of a leak in our heating system in church!

**Our April garage sale** netted us a cool profit of **\$3,344.61**, thanks to the unrelenting work ethic of Patricia and Ken Barnes and their faithful crew of workers who helped us display our treasures. God bless you, and all our patrons!

**Bishops' pro-life response.** This week, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, chair of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), responded to an announcement from the chairperson of the Democratic National Committee, who pledged to only back candidates who support abortion rights. Here is Cardinal Dolan's full statement on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

*"The recent pledge by the Democratic National Committee chair to support only candidates who embrace the radical unrestricted abortion license is very disturbing. The Democratic Party platform already endorses abortion throughout the nine months of pregnancy, even forcing taxpayers to fund it; and now the DNC says that to be a Democrat--indeed to be an American--requires supporting that extreme agenda. True solidarity with pregnant women and their children transcends all party lines. Abortion*

*doesn't empower women. Indeed, women deserve better than abortion. In the name of diversity and inclusion, pro-life and pro-'choice' Democrats alike should challenge their leadership to recant this intolerant position."*

**Neighbors departing.** On March 28, our parishioner and Hamilton Avenue neighbor Robert Clabeaux died at the age of 72. Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, Robert had been baptized in infancy in the United Church of Christ, but was received into full communion with the Catholic Church in 2009. He lived across the street from Charles and Adele Zygus, and Charlie was his sponsor for confirmation. Robert was the fellow with the abundance of flowers and plants EVERYWHERE on his porch and in his yard, so much so you would've thought he was a Lithuanian! He truly had a soft spot in his heart for any aspect of God's creation. He suffered from chronic ill health, so wasn't often able to be at church with us; but he kept better track of what was going on at church most days than the pastor did!

Our Webster Street neighbor Rick Chapla died Friday evening, April 28. Until very recent years, Rick's voice was well known to those who tune in to local talk shows. He had strong opinions about political goings-on, both locally and abroad, but those opinions were always well-informed and carefully crafted. He was always eager to learn more, to be pointed in a new direction to sharpen his point of view and to see things in a different light. He might still disagree with you on a solution, but he was always grateful for the debate and appreciative for learning what made other folks tick. Rick's body failed him even while his mind remained clear. One could often see him sitting on his porch on a summer evening, struggling to read the paper through his very thick glasses. He never got the hip surgeries that might have helped him get around a little better in his later years. If he was out on the porch, I could never pass his house on foot or bicycle without his hailing me over to clarify a point of religious belief or comment on some recent outrage emanating from the White House, the U.S. Capitol, or the City Commission. To my mind, he was the model citizen envisioned by our Founding Fathers, eager to participate in the republic as very much as he could. Along with our other recently departed, please remember this faithful neighbor in your prayers.

**Confirmation at last!** Our students who are planning to be confirmed will celebrate the sacrament this **Wednesday, May 10, 2017**, 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. Several of them have written outstanding letters to the pastor, requesting the sacrament. Please keep them in prayer this week so the gifts of the Spirit will find fertile fields in which to be planted, grow, and bloom. God bless you!

Fr. Den

**Definitions of the week:** CONSULTANT: Someone who is hired to bind apathy to vague objectives at a price no company would ever pay for actual work. STUDY: What a municipality will pay complete strangers over \$100,000 for, to come up with information that is guaranteed to be less accurate than observations and ideas from local citizens gathered at random on the street in a tenth of the time at almost no cost.

