



# PARISH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2015

## SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT



### MESSAGE FROM FATHER RON

Dear Parishioners:

As we prepare to begin our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2015, Jesus calls us to a deeper commitment in our relationship with Him. We find it so easy to get caught up in the world around us and its selfish and empty pursuits that do not bring true peace and joy in our lives. He is inviting us to examine our hearts in light of His teaching and what He has called each of us to do in our lives. This season of Lent gives us the opportunities to draw closer to the Lord by deepening our prayer life, experiencing the gift of solitude, experiencing the Lord's forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance, fasting and abstinence, and acts of charity. May this season be a time of renewal in your life as the Lord Jesus calls you by name to draw closer to Him and experience more fully His life, mercy, compassion and peace.

There are many opportunities during our Lenten season that will enable you to have a fruitful journey. I encourage you to attend daily Mass; spend time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament during the week, Monday through Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.; participate in the Stations of the Cross on the Fridays of Lent at the conclusion of the 5:30 p.m. Mass; go to confession on Wednesday evenings during "The Light is On for You"—confessions will be heard from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; or attend one of our parish retreats. Our Lenten Parish Mission, "When Faith Feels Fragile," will be directed by Father Scott Hurd beginning Monday,

February 23, through Wednesday, February 25, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Thank you for all you do for our parish. Please pray for candidates who are preparing to enter the Church at the Easter Vigil. Be assured of my daily prayers especially at the altar for you and your families as we prepare for our Lenten journey in order to celebrate Easter with our hearts and minds renewed.

Peace,

*Father Ron*



During Lent . . .  
*I am going to make the world a better place!*  
Artwork and quote by Phoebe Sood, Second Grade

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# RCIA CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Each year, in response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, tens of thousands of adults in the United States enter the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. Blessed Sacrament shares in the gift that so many new members bring to our Church and specifically to our parish. Each catechumen and candidate has a unique story about how the Lord has worked in his/her life to bring the candidate to the Catholic faith. Here, some of our catechumens and candidates share their stories with us. Their witness is truly an inspiration for all of us as we journey through Lent towards Easter. —Therese Recinella, Director of Religious Education



Back row left to right: John Coleman, Alvin Schall, Suzanne Yavor, Debra Higdon, Darcey Thomson, Micheal Senko. Front row left to right: Deborah Royster, Cora Hong, Sandra Mihelic, Kelly Richards, Nancy Miles. Not pictured: John Ford, Christopher Tuttle.

### NANCY MILES

My name is Nancy Miles, and I am a catechumen of the Catholic Church. I am from Seoul, South Korea, and I moved to DC almost five years ago for college. My family is non-religious, but I found my way into a Christian Protestant church through a very good friend of mine in middle school. Since then, I have always had a thirst for God and His grace. During my high school and college years, I started gaining a keen interest in the Catholic Church, but I did not know how to join. Then, I met my now-fiance David Chee, who, with God, has guided me into

the faith and into RCIA. A cradle-Catholic, David has always been able to answer so many of my questions and feed my curiosity about Catholicism, and together, our love for the Church has exponentially grown. Now, I just cannot wait to officially become a part of the Church!

### SANDRA MIHELIC

I come from a small European city, Ljubljana, in Slovenia, where I spent most of my life. My dad's side of the family is Catholic; my mom's side is mostly not religious. Grandma and dad taught me prayers when I was a child, and pray-

ing became part of my life. However, I did not pray every day, and I wasn't going to a Sunday Mass with parents. We always celebrated Easter, Christmas, and All Saints' Day when we gathered and spent time with extended family. One of my best friends is Catholic, and I went to Mass with her several times, so I was close to religion.

I've gone through many difficult situations in my life; God was always there for me, helping me. After looking back, I started realizing how greatly God works in my life. I believe He has a plan for me, and I should always trust His timing and situations that at first don't have much meaning. Moving to DC and other big changes in the past two years led me to join the RCIA. Because my religious experiences, especially within my family, were with Catholics, I decided to formally join the Catholic community. With my wedding coming up soon, I felt now was the right time.

### DEBRA HIGDON

I have thought about Baptism for many, many years but somehow "life" got in the way. My journey began in April 2014 when I "hit rock bottom" so to speak. I'd had all I could take and decided to inquire about the RCIA pro-

gram. I met with Therese and went through my recent past, telling her I "felt like a sheep who had lost her shepherd." I attended my first meeting and quite honestly felt like I didn't belong; everyone else was more knowledgeable. I felt as though I needed to run out and buy a copy of Catholicism for Dummies. I left class very unsure whether I wanted to return. I thought long and hard all week and decided to give it another try. In the next class Brother Joseph was teaching on the Holy Trinity. He mentioned that if we didn't let go of grudges or hatred that it was like "a clogged drain"; this was such an eye opener. That was one of the moments when I felt something change. I had several issues with people in my past "doing wrong" against me, and I held it against them for years. I went home and I prayed. I prayed for Jesus to forgive those who had trespassed against me, and I felt as though a burden had been lifted from my shoulders. I definitely felt "different." Also, on the same night I spoke to Therese and told her about feeling like I didn't know anything. She encouraged me to just open the Bible and start reading. When I got home the first page was Luke Chapter 15:1-7 (The Parable of the

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Lost Sheep). I was so stunned that I read it a couple times. What were the chances that I would have described myself to Therese on our first meeting as “feeling like a sheep who lost her shepherd” and then the first passage I turn to when I opened the Bible was The Parable of the Lost Sheep? Those two significant events led me to continue this journey.

Fast forward to December and the Rite of Welcoming. Something happened when Father Ron made the sign of the cross on my forehead that morning. At that very moment it was as if I could see Jesus hovering between the altar and the tabernacle with his arms spread wide as if saying “Come to me” or “Welcome home”; this was similar to what a parent would do when they get home from work and their child runs into their open arms. I can honestly say that I have attended church more in the last almost 6 months than I have my entire life. That’s not something I’m proud to admit, but I’m pleased and extremely happy that I did decide to continue with RCIA. I’ve not regretted a single day that I decided to take this step. I look forward to the day when I, too, can celebrate the Eucharist with not only my fellow classmates, but also the entire parish. I will no longer feel like I’m being left out when I attend Mass.

#### KELLY RICHARDS

Raised primarily an Episcopalian by a Protestant father and a Jewish mother, I had exposure to many different Christian denominations growing up, from main-



line Protestant to evangelical churches. I’ve lived in the area for the last eight years and had been to a number of Masses at Blessed Sacrament. I always felt at home in the church and became more and more intrigued with the Catholic faith as the years went by. In June of last year, I took the next step and enrolled in RCIA in order to learn more about Catholicism and the Church. I will be baptized and confirmed during the Easter Vigil in April of this year.

#### DEBORAH ROYSTER

Although I was baptized and raised in the Baptist Church, I have had a life-long affiliation with the Catholic Church through volunteer activities at St. Ann’s Infant Home and Providence Hospital, and as a student at Stone Ridge School. The values that were emphasized in these activities—including love, compassion, and service to others, particularly those who are less fortunate—have been very meaningful and resonate with my spirit. After much prayer and deliberation, I was moved to answer the call to deepen my faith and convert to Catholicism through RCIA at Blessed Sacrament. This is a very rewarding experience that is so much more than I could have ever anticipated, and it is a true blessing to pray and learn with kindred spirits who seek to deepen their faith and relationship with God through the Catholic Church.

#### MIKE SENKO

I was always a believer, albeit not always a regular churchgoer, incorrectly interpreting God’s desires myself in accordance with my convenience. I was also, however, always attracted to Catholicism. As a child, most of my close cousins and relatives were Catholic, and I noted with admiration what I saw as their deeper understanding of, and commitment to, their faith. I married a “Cradle Catholic” and over the years irregularly attended the Catholic Church, but without taking communion, and with an uncomfortable lack of understanding of the faith and its rituals. RCIA is filling this gap in understanding, and I believe becoming a practicing Catholic will allow me to more fully express my gratitude for the many blessings God has given me.

#### SUZANNE YAVOR

Once my husband and I knew we would share our lives together, we began talking about our values and how we wanted to raise our children one day. We both agreed we wanted religion to be a part of our lives. Over the years, we attended Catholic Mass together and I became more curious about Catholicism (I grew up as a Presbyterian, attending church occasionally). The RCIA process has proven educational and has confirmed this is the right journey for me. We are expecting our first child in February, and couldn’t be more excited to begin our lives as a Catholic family and instill strong values in our son from day one.



Artwork: clay crosses made by students in Mrs. Easterlin’s 2nd grade class in celebration of their upcoming First Holy Communion in May.



# MAKE EVERYDAY A VALENTINE'S DAY!

By Ann & Jim Hoffman

Usually Valentine's Day is celebrated with flowers, chocolates, a romantic dinner, a dance, a special gift. These are ways we show our love for our partner. There is an intensity and determination to mark the day as special. This is all very similar to celebrating a birthday, anniversary, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. But, how intentional are we about showing our love for one another the rest of the year? We can't possibly do this day-in, day-out without running out of ideas or going broke!

Yet, this is exactly what our Sacrament of Matrimony calls us to do. Really?

When we were married we said the words: "I Do." Quite often one thinks that we received the Sacrament of Matrimony on that day, but instead we are called to live out our sacrament on a daily basis. This isn't a one-shot deal, but an on-going commitment. We promise to love and cherish, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, for

every single day of our married life. WHY?

Let's remember that we are God's hands and feet and heart in this human world, and He is asking us to show His love through our love for one another. Our couple love is the engine that drives our family, where the most sacred moments in life are played out daily: birth, death, forgiveness, compassion, love, healing, and faith, in and outside the home. A natural question is: HOW do we carry this out daily?

There are ways that do not involve flowers, candy, and jewelry, but everyday, run-of-the-mill situations where our love will shine for the other. Ordinary duties, chores, responsibilities, no matter how small, can become "sacred moments" when done in God's name and with God's spirit because it reveals God's spirit within us: i.e., instead of doing the dishes grudgingly, doing them out of love makes the task a "sacred moment." Other opportunities for our daily "I Do":

spending time together (without electronics), listening, saying we are sorry and thanks, praying together, encouraging one another, being patient, doing favors even when not asked, minimizing criticism, cooking a favorite meal, looking for the positive in the other person, affirming one another.

A way to be pro-active and intentional is by taking the time to strengthen our marital relationship such as regularly going on "date nights," retreats, and enrichment experiences. Another opportunity is to offer the gift of listening to one another: for the sixth year, our parish is offering a Communication Workshop for Couples during Lent. It is held on four Tuesdays in March: 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the parish center. For more information and to register, contact Jim & Ann Hoffman: 202.362.4510 or 202.486.8291; [hoffmanja2@msn.com](mailto:hoffmanja2@msn.com).



Artwork by Griffin Pardo  
First Grade

## Prayer of a Husband and Wife

*Keep us, O Lord, from pettiness. Let us be thoughtful in word and deed. Help us to put away pretense and face each other in deep trust without fear or self-pity. Help us to guard against fault-finding and be quick to discover the best in each other and in every situation. Guard us from ill temper and hasty judgment; encourage us to take time for all things, to grow calm, serene and gentle. Help us to be generous with kind words and compliments. Teach us never to ignore, never to hurt, never to take each other for granted. Engrave charity and compassion on our hearts. O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us. Amen.*

—Columban Fathers

## GOD = LOVE

By Joe Bozik

We see.

Can we see God?  
We hear.  
Can we hear God?

We smell.

Can we smell God?  
We taste.  
Can we taste God?

We touch.

Can we touch God?  
We love.  
Oh? What is love?

Is it a sixth sense?  
Love seems abstract.  
Is it a feeling?  
How do we react?

Can we feel God?  
Do we know?  
For to see,  
We know.

For to hear,  
We know.  
For to smell,  
We know.

For to taste,  
We know.  
For to touch,  
We know.

For to love,  
We feel, oh.  
We CAN feel God.  
And we know.

Love is there  
In our heart.  
We feel love  
As one part.

God IS love.  
Love IS God.  
Love = God.  
GOD = LOVE.

# HOUSE CHURCHES REVISITED

By Milton W. Grenfell

*What life have you, if you have not life together? There is not life that is not in community, and no community not lived in praise of God. — T.S. Eliot*



Artwork by Elizabeth Clark  
Fifth Grade

If you've been a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament for years, and yet still often

find yourself a stranger in the pew, you're not alone! During Lent, in order to draw our parish closer into community and to deepen our faith, the Parish Council Faith Formation Commission will seek to emulate the hospitality of the "house churches" known in the Early Church. House churches date from the Apostolic Age, before the Church was institutionalized under Constantine at the beginning of the 4th Century. Christians met in homes, where they often had Mass during these years of persecution. The Christian hospitality these homes radiated, despite a hostile culture (history repeating itself?), were a great witness to the Faith in these dying pagan cultures.

The concept of house churches nurtures community: parishioners will gather in a nearby neighbor's house for six Sunday nights during Lent, beginning February 22, and wrapping up on the final Sunday after Easter, for potluck dinners, prayer, and conversation centered on Pope Benedict XVI's book, "Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week." At these gatherings, a dozen adults of all ages will discuss the reading for that week, while in another room, children will watch installments of the mini-series "Jesus of Nazareth" (Franco Zeffirelli, 1977). If you would like to help lead a group, serve as a host, or just participate, please contact Milton Grenfell, Chairman of the Faith Formation Commission: [grenarch@verizon.net](mailto:grenarch@verizon.net).

## BREAD, BOOK & BRETHERN BIBLE STUDY

### RESOURCE FOR YOUR FAITH JOURNEY

By Sandra Sheppard

Blessed Sacrament's Wednesday Bible group presents a fountain of spiritual blessings for so many of us. We study the Old Testament books for half the year and New Testament work for the other half. In addition to learning the factual knowledge about Scripture, it's very helpful to hear the individual stories of other Bible study group members as they relate their personal spiritual struggles and victories.

Most of our preparation for each Wednesday involves listening in silence. As we read the assigned Bible passages, God reveals a part of His awesome mystery to each of us. As an artist, this revelation resulted in a show of my ink and drawings. Including a few

saints and covering the sweep of history, the show culminated in Christ's Last Supper, when He became the new Pascal Lamb.

Blessed Sacrament is blessed with many faith-development resources. I personally have been touched by the lovely, small Stations of the Cross paintings in the parish center chapel. They're a powerful aid when praying the rosary's fourth sorrowful mysteries. These inspired me to work on a small painting of the Visitation and a large painting of the woman in the desert clothed in gold.

I'm privileged this month to participate with Nan Levine, another parishioner and Bible

study member, in an inter-faith pilgrimage to Nepal and India. I believe this, too, will deepen my faith and my journey toward God through silence and contemplative prayer.

Bread, Book, and Brethren Bible Study meets in the parish center on Wednesday mornings after the 8 a.m. Mass. From mid-February through May we will study "Praying with Scripture" from Little Rock Press. Discussion includes scripture's application to everyday lives; guest speakers from a city rich in scholarship explore the theology and historical context of the readings with us. New members are welcome at any time. The fee is \$25 per semester; the fellowship, price-

less. For more information, call Nan Levine: 202.244.7691 or contact Lisa Greenberg: [eogreenberg@gmail.com](mailto:eogreenberg@gmail.com).



Artwork by Keegan Corbett  
First Grade

# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

## ROCK CREEK CLEANUP

By Kevin Kelley



On Saturday, January 17, parishioners celebrated the Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend of Service by joining more than 60 participants from several churches, neighborhood groups, and scout troops to remove invasive English ivy from tree trunks and to clean up trash near the Broad Branch tributary of Rock Creek. The Blessed Sacrament Environmental Action Ministry (EAM), the Rock Creek Conservancy, and the National Park Service sponsored the two-hour event that began at the corner of

36th Street, NW and Nevada Avenue, NW, DC.

These efforts intend to eliminate environmentally harmful materials from Rock Creek and its tributaries which feed into the Potomac River and to preserve habitats for native birds and other wildlife. Events took place at 18 locations along Rock Creek in Washington, D.C., and Montgomery County, Md. The Rock Creek Conservancy provided tools, trash bags, training and technical advisors for the effort,

and many students were able to earn SSL hours.

Recently, the Pope has publicly acknowledged he is developing an ecological encyclical to be released this year. Pope Francis in his New Year's Message For The Celebration Of The World Day Of Peace provided a larger context for participation in these efforts:

*Fraternity helps to preserve and cultivate nature. The human family has received from the Creator a common gift: nature. The Christian view of creation includes a positive judgment about the legitimacy of interventions on nature if these are meant to be beneficial and are performed responsibly, that is to say, by acknowledging the "grammar" inscribed in nature and by wisely using resources for the benefit of all, with respect for the beauty, finality and usefulness of every living being and its place in the ecosystem. Nature, in a word, is at our disposition and we are called to exercise a responsible stewardship over it. Yet so often we are driven by greed and by the arro-*

*gance of dominion, possession, manipulation and exploitation; we do not preserve nature; nor do we respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations....*

Looking Spring-ward, the EAM invites all to celebrate Earth Day, April 11: participate in the Seventh Annual Rock Creek Extreme Cleanup. Contact Jon Foley: [jfoley5east@gmail.com](mailto:jfoley5east@gmail.com).

Blessed Sacrament's EAM sponsors speakers and articles on the Catholic perspective on the environment (Care for Creation, Care for the Poor), and offers parishioners hands-on opportunities to steward natural resources locally. In addition to the Rock Creek Clean Up described above, the EAM supports a community garden for the poor, composting demonstrations, and events with other parishes and churches. For more info, visit [www.blessedsacramentdc.org/environmental-action-ministry](http://www.blessedsacramentdc.org/environmental-action-ministry).

## CALLING ALL GOOD MEN

Blessed Sacrament's male demographic numbers are in the thousands, and all are called to join the Men's Retreat, at Loyola Retreat House in Faulkner, MD, on February 27-March 1, 2015. Over the years Blessed Sacrament men—aged 10 to 90—have found silence, beauty, and faith formation at the annual retreat.

Now, when was the last time you went to a meeting or conference and were told all activities are optional? Yes, there is a full schedule of activities from your Friday arrival at 6:45 p.m. (earlier if you chose to see the splendid sunset over the Potomac cliffs and/or avail yourself of the Rite of Reconciliation at

5:30 p.m.) which is followed by a crab-cake dinner—you **do** want to choose this option! However, if you choose to meander through the surrounding woodland or just sit and think in quietude, you can do so. You'll have a private room and attractive common areas in this unique environment.

This year's theme is "Behold the Face of God," and the retreat director will offer you a privileged point of contact between yourself and the Lord. The retreat concludes with lunch on Sunday. Register online at [www.blessedsacramentdc.org](http://www.blessedsacramentdc.org), or contact Loyola: 301.392.0819.



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# VOLUNTEERS CREATE A CHURCH BEAUTIFUL

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The children know: Santa and the Easter Bunny bring the presents! But do the adults know who decorates the church for those same holidays filled with such joy and beauty? Someone suggested that it may be somewhat like those pop-up books that children read: it just happens. NO!!

The real truth is that talented Blessed Sacrament parishioner-volunteers, generous with their time and energies, produce a splendidly decorated church, filled with flowers, greens, garlands, and candles. Whether it is working with the red poinsettias for Christmas or the white lilies for Easter, David M. Gardiner, principal of Gardiner-Hall Associates, assisted by Carol Bemis and volunteers, Rosemary Powers, Mary Tull, and others, transform the artistic ascetics of Blessed Sacrament Church, and chapel. The transformative process, achieved in a few hours, is orchestrated

like a symphony: there is a talented director, David, and there are distinct roles with many parts; each person has a coordinated job.

In the church, a priest removes the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, leaving an empty church that is essentially a workshop. The volunteers bring from behind the scenes the ladders, the boxes of greens and garlands, the potted plants, the ribbon, the scissors and cutters, the brooms and vacuum. A sure-footed volunteer balances on top of a ladder to change the drapery behind the tabernacle. Someone else changes the altar linens, adding a last-minute ironing of wrinkles. (A separate cadre of generous women volunteers regularly wash and iron all the altar linens.)

At Christmas, staff members assemble a crèche, and volunteers decorate it; at East-

ter, volunteers set and decorate the Easter candle. They balance ladders against the eight church pillars which get special attention with flowers, wreaths, and candles. They decorate the side altars, corners, and doors that add to the festive appearance as the entire building takes on a new aura. It's no wonder that parishioners voice appreciative comments when they witness the completed project!

And why, while most people are doing some last minute shopping or errands, does "the team" decorate? It is for you, their fellow parishioners, and for the glory of God.

*Editor's note: It is not only on Christmas and Easter that the work of these volunteers is evident. We thank them for their on-going time and talent regularly spent to beautify the church.*

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## GIVE WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL

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Would you consider an opportunity to provide a final act of compassion for a fellow parishioner? Perhaps you were an altar server in your youth? To bury the dead is a work of mercy, and becoming an Arimathean involves a volunteer in a unique manifestation of faith witness and love for others.

The name, Arimathean derives from Joseph of Arimathea, who, according to all four canonical gospels, donated his own prepared tomb for the burial of Jesus after the crucifixion. An Arimathean participates as an altar server at a burial or memorial funeral service, a liturgy that expresses

our faith in Jesus, offers prayers for the deceased and bereaved, and proclaims our belief in the Resurrection. The role of Arimathean, formerly accorded only to men, is open to both adult women and men.

The duties are similar to those of altar servers at all other Eucharistic liturgies, with added

opening and closing ceremonies for Masses of the Resurrection. You will need only very brief training, and you will be infrequently called upon. The rewards are many; the cost is ninety minutes of your time. Contact: John Vittone, [vittone.john@gmail.com](mailto:vittone.john@gmail.com).

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## PARISH "PIZZA PARLOR" TO OPEN ON FEBRUARY 20TH !!

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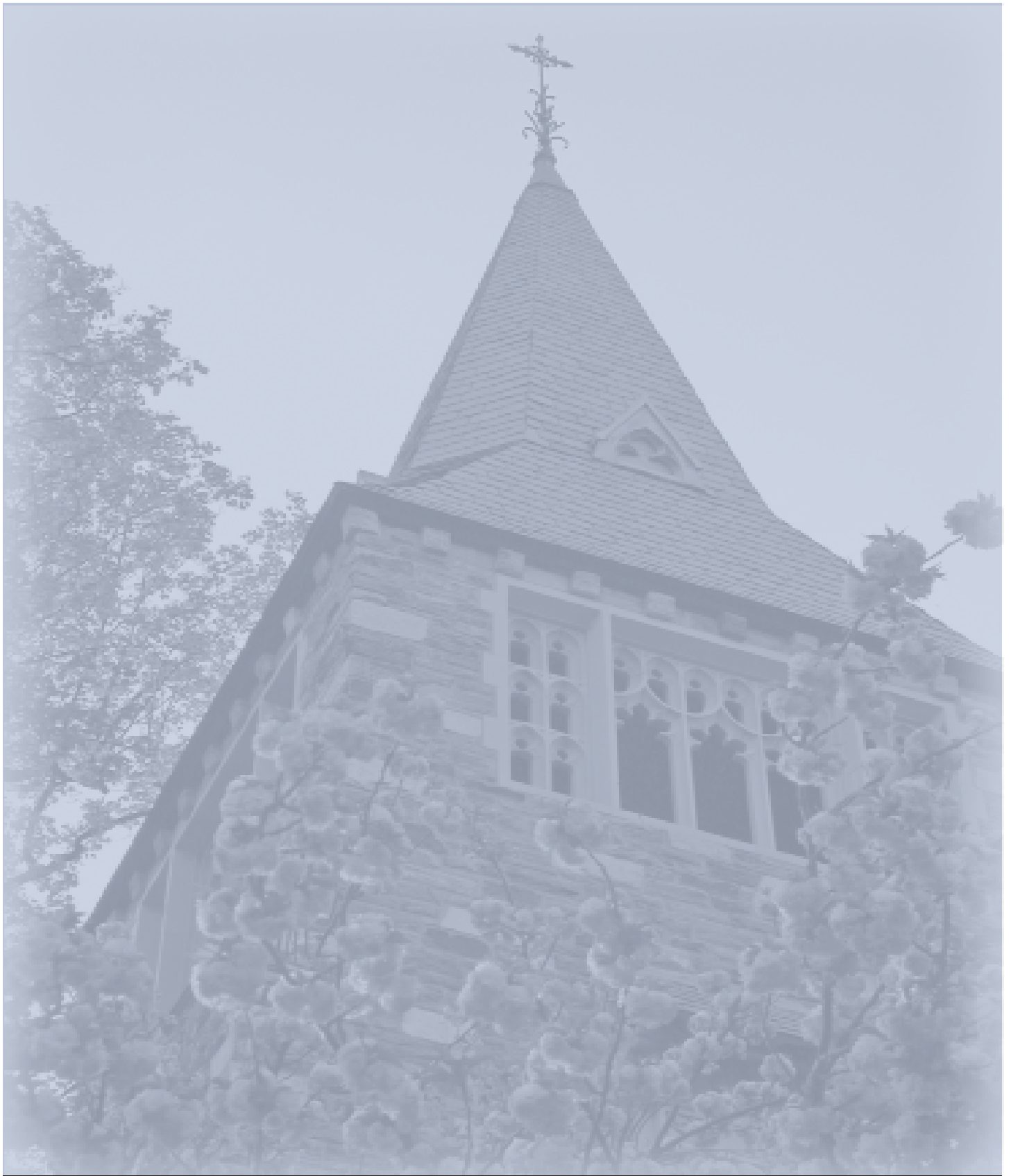
On the Fridays of Lent, bring yourself and your family to Friday 5:30 Mass, followed by the Stations of the Cross, followed by pizza in the parish center.

This long-standing Blessed Sacrament activity has become a tradition of many parishioners; there is more than one happy parent who enjoys taking a break from the

kitchen and doing something concrete for Lent at the same time.

The father of our former pastor, Msgr. John Enzler, wrote the words for the Stations of the Cross used at Blessed Sacrament. The ideas expressed are particularly current and applicable to the busy world in which we all live. No lofty platitudes here; just practical applications to every-day life!

We salute the Deale family, who for many years, has volunteered to make the pizza event happen: preparing, ordering, serving, and cleaning up. They even decorate the tables with flowers, giving a restaurant look to the room. The Deales would welcome volunteer help, so come to eat, meet your friends, and maybe even volunteer to help. Fun guaranteed!



3630 Quesada Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20015  
202.966.6575  
[www.blessedsacramentdc.org](http://www.blessedsacramentdc.org)