

PARISH NEWSLETTER

SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

SPRING 2017



MESSAGE FROM FATHER RON

Dear Parishioners:

As we begin our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017, we accept the invitation of Jesus to deepen our commitment to 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. Jesus 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 Lenten season gives us opportunities to deepen our prayer life, experience the gift of solitude, experience the Lord's forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance, fasting and abstinence, and acts of charity as we reach out to serve the needs of our sisters and brothers. May this season be a time of renewal in our lives as we accept the invitation to draw closer to Jesus as we experience His mercy, grace, and compassion.

In addition, there are many opportunities during our Lenten season that will enable us 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. beginning Wednesday, March 8, and continuing until Wednesday of Holy Week, April 12.

Thank you for all you do for our parish. Please pray for our catechumens and 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 begin our Lenten journey in order to celebrate Easter with our hearts and minds renewed.

Peace,
Father Ron

ON THE PAGES OF THIS ISSUE

Social Concerns Lenten Programs and Activities

2

Those Arms Stretched Wide Open: A Poem

3

For Teens: A Summer Week in Service to Others

4

Troop 90 Confers Awards and Honors

4

Soup Kitchen Ministry Marks 40th Birthday!

5

Fun in February @ Blessed Sacrament School

5

You Just Don't Understand!!

6



Artwork by Ireland Donahue
3rd Grade

LENTEN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY SOCIAL CONCERNS OFFICE

By Pat Kavanaugh, Director, Social Concerns Office

Year-round, the Social Concerns Office offers programs and activities that emphasize the core of Catholic social teachings, but during Lent, a very special time for all Catholics, the office will offer unique programs that enable parishioners and friends to actualize their beliefs in a very real way.

Lent begins Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017, with Masses and the distribution of ashes. (For Mass times, see the Sunday bulletin or www.blessedsacramentdc.org.) The collection at each Mass on Ash Wednesday will benefit the poor in our parish and community, a parish tradition.

During the first week of Lent, the parish will gather at a Hunger Mass on Friday, March 3rd, at 5:30 p.m. A speaker will briefly discuss the needs of the poor and vulnerable in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area; a collection will benefit the poor. This will be followed by Stations of the Cross and a gathering of parishioners for a shared dinner on the main level of the parish center.

Again this Lent, the Archdiocese of Washington and Catholic Charities will partner with parishes and schools in conducting a food drive to benefit families in need, local parish food pantries, and local food banks. The Lenten Food Drive will take place at the Masses at Blessed Sacrament on Saturday, March 25, and on Sunday, March 26. Food drive bags with a list of requested items will be distributed after Masses the previous weekend, March 18 and 19. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Catholic Relief Services' Operation Rice Bowl is a Lenten faith-in-action program offered to Blessed Sacrament Parish and its School of Religion students and families. Rice Bowls, along with instructions, will be available on February 26 at the School of Religion office and at the main entrances to

the church. Participation is a wonderful way to more fully embrace your Lenten journey.

Traditionally the Social Concerns Office and the School of Religion's fifth and sixth grade teachers have celebrated a "Hunger Banquet" to educate students about the discrepancies that poorer nations face with food and water shortages. This year instead of the traditional Hunger Banquet, the School of Religion teachers and fifth and sixth graders will hold an event for area refugees.

The Social Concerns Office will present a Lenten Day of Recollection on Sunday, March 12, on the main level of the parish center after the 10:30 a.m. Masses. Father John Adams will begin with a blessing and then discuss the challenges faith communities face in their continual struggle to assist the poor and homeless in our metropolitan area. A group prayer, discussion, and lunch will follow. The event is open to all. RSVP to Pat Kavanaugh, pkavanaugh@blessedsacramentdc.org or 202.449.3987.

Another very popular event that addresses food insecurities in Washington area populations is scheduled in the Blessed Sacrament School gym and auditorium on Tuesday, March 21, after the 5:30 p.m. Mass. "Empty Bowls" organized by SOME (So Others May Eat) offers custom-designed ceramic bowls created by local artists for a minimal price and a supper sponsored by area restaurants. This is a unique way to raise funds for a population facing food insecurities and a way for friends and families to come together to enjoy a night out at Blessed Sacrament.

Personalize and enrich your Lent by participating in these events.

Year-round, the Office of Social Concerns conducts programs to address the following issues. Consider joining in one or more of these efforts:

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

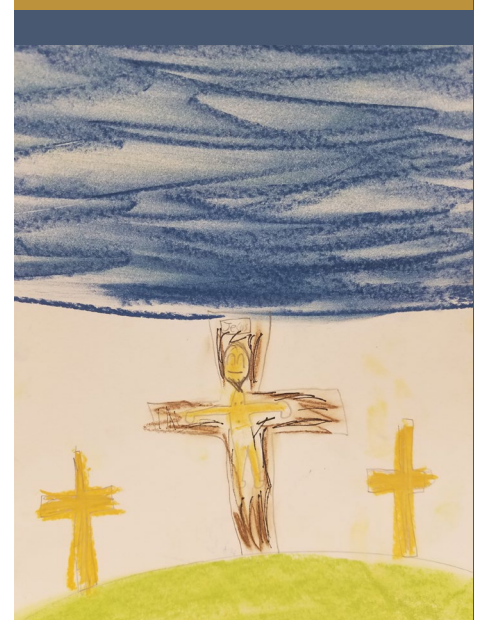
Right and Responsibilities of the Human Person

Options for the Poor and Vulnerable

Dignity of Workers and Rights of Workers

Solidarity—We Are One Human Family

Care of God's Creation



Artwork by Nora Neill, 3rd Grade

THOSE ARMS STRETCHED WIDE OPEN

Poem and Photos by Joe Bozik

When we look at the Crucifix,
Oh, what you have done, my Jesus!
Your arms so stretched wide open,
Oh, my Lord, what have we done?



It is such a feeling of guilt,
So much blood that you have spilt,
For what? For me, I ask myself?
Give me answers, my other self.

Up there, you seem vulnerable -
On that Cross, so, so horrible.
Such a loving, giving person,
And still I hurt you with my sin.

Your arms so stretched wide open,
An irony and an omen,
Your arms each receiving a nail,
Yet open to welcome us all.

And yet I am seeing a sign,
Your "hints-Holy" are inviting
Me - asking myself: what is this -
A bitterness or a sweetness?

So what are you now showing me?
I look around and what I'd see,

Typical statues and crosses,
Of you, such a loving Jesus.

Praying and thinking about You,
A candelabra casts a shadow
Onto the altar cloth, I see,
So striking an image that hit me,

On the altar's side, this shadow,
An open hand, as an outflow,
More than just a shadow picture,
A welcome, loving sign, I'm sure.



An outward sign of an embrace,
From my Savior, my one Jesus.
All it took was a closer look,
A clear sign that I oft mistook.

And clear as day, on this altar,
A sign from You, loving Father.
You are calling us to be strong,
You've been doing so, all along.

I look at the Crucifix now,
And see a difference somehow,

Such suffering like no other,
By You, yes, once; now no longer.

You're no longer dead, but alive -
A feeling I had, deep inside.
Your love's alive each day for us,
How special you are, My Jesus!

On that cross, you suffered just once -
Yes, an inhumane sufferance,
You endured once, but love forever -
A mystery of Your loves' fervor.

Conquering death once and for all,
And for that, we should be grateful.
You died once, back in history,
Now you love us, eternally.

How joyous it is to be alive,
To be doing your work at your side,
To be praising your majesty,
To understand what you tell me.

You turn into joy, my sadness,
Your suffering, now history past -
Your passion eternal - I see in
Those arms stretched wide open.

Author's Commentary:

Two events sparked the inspiration for this poem. The first occurred as I was praying. I was struck by the shadow cast onto the altar's purple linen from the nearby candelabra. I then realized I was "looking" at an image of an outstretched hand, a gesture of welcoming and of loving openness.

The second occurred at Holy Hour devotions when I was fixated on the Corpus and Jesus' open crucified arms. A constant, stark reminder of how much He suffered for all our sins, the crucifixion was a "one-time" event, whereby Jesus conquered death and showed us the way to eternity; yet, this is a "repeating, loving event" whereby Jesus is constantly showing us how we can repent, become as joyous as He, and know that there is a path to eternity. He is alive, and joyously pouring out His love to us, constantly, unconditionally, repeatedly. Such a loving Jesus. Such a living Jesus.

FOR TEENS: A SUMMER WEEK IN SERVICE TO OTHERS—THE MANUS CHRISTI PROGRAM

By Father Alec Scott

One of the paramount expressions of our Catholic faith is the desire to show particular care for the poor, the weak and the marginalized—those for whom Jesus held unique affection. This parish has always impressed me with its constant commitment to the core component of Catholic social teaching, be it in collecting money for and serving at the soup kitchen downtown, standing vocally for the rights of migrants, immigrants and refugees, aiding the Gabriel Project's mission to assist women in crisis pregnancies, or any of the many other outstanding causes we support.

This summer, I am hoping that our parish community will expand that Catholic spirit to a new initiative. Our parish will be teaming up with the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda to sponsor a joint service

trip for our high school students to the Appalachia region of West Virginia. This trip will be a unique opportunity to see first-hand the reality of poverty and need in our country and to offer much-needed support to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

The site we have chosen is about a four-hour drive from the District. We wanted to begin this program close to home particularly to emphasize the nearness of the reality of severe need, and to offer true assistance as neighbors in accord with Christ's greatest commandment. Father Patrick Lewis from Little Flower and I will be attending along with the youth to offer assistance and spiritual context for the work that we do: the Corporal Works of Mercy, the commandments of Christ for his disciples.

The program is entitled Manus Christi (The Hands of Christ), emphasizing the Church's need for Christ's disciples to carry out His mission in the world, and aside from being an excellent opportunity to live our Christian faith, will be a real chance to grow deeper in faith and community. I am very excited about this program and truly believe it will be of great benefit to anyone who participates. If you or your high school (or rising high school) son or daughter would be interested, please feel free to contact me (ascott@blessedsacramentdc.org) or our Youth Minister Casey Esser (cesser@blessedsacramentdc.org) for more information.

Thank you, and God Bless!

TROOP 90 CONFERS AWARDS AND HONORS

Troop 90, Boy Scouts of America, National Capital Area Council, has met at Blessed Sacrament for more than 100 years. On February 1, 2017 the Troop held a Court of Honor, awarding rank advancement and merit badges to 17 outstanding young men.

Five scouts gave descriptions of the projects that they completed for their Eagle awards. These projects included a variety of achievements; three are described briefly here.



Photo courtesy of Audubon Nature Preschool

Jimmy Bailey constructed and stained an outdoor shed for the Audubon Naturalist Society's preschool, complete with space for students to store their coats, lunches, and backpacks while they explored outdoors.

Ryan McCarragher led a scout team to fundraise for materials and completely build 40 lap desks for use by seriously ill children in pediatric care at the Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health.

Jack Mendenhall built and painted picnic tables and basketball court benches, revitalizing an overgrown basketball court at his school, St. Anselm's.

Candidates approaching Eagle status must conceive a project and follow through its development while involving and leading other scouts.



Photo by Jack Mendenhall

Merit badge awards in 12 different categories included achievements in such categories as: camping, cooking, emergency preparedness, and salesmanship. These young men will be well prepared to live a successful, honorable adult life!

SOUP KITCHEN MINISTRY MARKS 40TH BIRTHDAY!

By Kathy Beal

Forty years ago during a “stone soup Lenten dinner” in the school gym two parishioners decided they needed to do something else besides the dinner to show concern for the city’s poor. Just for that Lent, they told themselves. Wrong! Sheila Langevin and Ellen Ozga founded The Zacchaeus Soup Kitchen, former Jesuit, Ed Guinan, organized it, and they located in an abandoned car repair shop in Washington at 6th and L Streets, NW. They found a huddle of companionable men and a few women in a drafty upstairs room eating soup and little else. On that very day, the cook approached Ellen and Sheila and asked if the duo might be willing to return on Mondays, since he had taken a job elsewhere. That was 1977, the beginning.

Blessed Sacrament’s soup kitchen ministry has been alive and well since that very day. That means more than 2000 Mondays and holidays. Both Sheila and Ellen quickly realized they would need more volunteers. Naturally, they asked friends to join them. Soon it was a team of about five to six women eager to help serve the 100 homeless men and women who showed up. Sheila’s aged mother began cooking 24 gallons of soup stock each week. She begged the ingredients from local grocery stores, charming the managers with her sweet Irish tongue! A small group picked up the stock and lettuce for salads before heading down to the kitchen. Nutrition concerns intro-

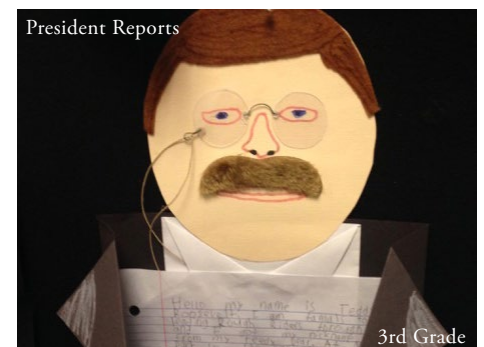
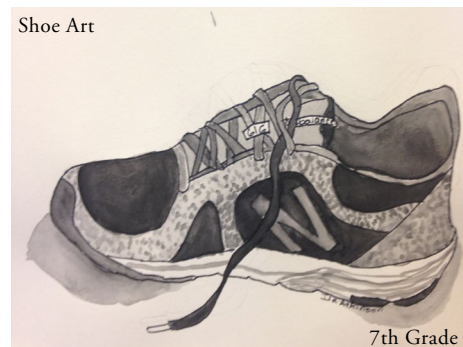
duced healthy supplements to the soup diet, and as the soup became more healthy and was served with a sandwich and a salad, the soup kitchen ministry took on a life of its own. The then Blessed Sacrament pastor, Monsignor Corbett, was happy to approve the ragtag group of volunteers as a Blessed Sacrament ministry, but cautioned that funds for food would have to be sought outside the parish’s budget. He gave permission for a collection to be taken outside the doors of the church on the first Sunday of the month by soup kitchen members. The members thought it was particularly appropriate to beg, basket in hand, on behalf of the city’s poorest people. Monsignor Duffy, Monsignor Enzler, and Father Potts all have approved and lauded the long continuance of what has become the parish’s soup kitchen ministry. The “collectors” remain today at all four doors of the church for Saturday evening and Sunday Masses and the Gym Mass; Monsignor Duffy always managed to toss in a “twenty” on his way into Mass.

While the location of the kitchen has changed four times over the 40 years, the ministry remains the same in spirit as the day Sheila and Ellen put on their aprons and rolled up their sleeves to “feed the hungry”. The funds collected on Outreach Sunday go toward a portion of the rent in each location, salad ingredients, and when feasible, the donation of large items such as a commercial refrigerator and a steam table.

The parish neither owns nor manages the locations of this ministry, but each new service welcomes the Monday Blessed Sacrament group. Today the group works for Thrive, DC located at 16th and Newton Streets NW in the basement of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church. Thrive is a multi-faceted organization dedicated to a broad range of needs for the indigent and homeless city population. Guest numbers vary from 100-250. Chef Terrence Brown directs the volunteer group to provide a full breakfast of sausage, eggs, grits, toast, salad, a piece of fruit, and most often dessert. Both Magruder’s and Whole Foods have been generous in donating veggies, fruits, and desserts each week.

The team of 10 -15 volunteers includes retired men and women, moms still raising children, and assorted interested adults who “heard about us”. We are always looking for newer (and younger!) volunteers for the Monday routine (roughly three hours) as well as “foot soldiers” to man the doors of the church on Outreach Sundays. You didn’t really think we would write a 40th birthday piece just to blow our own horns, did you? If you are interested in this most worthwhile and enjoyable volunteer work, either in the kitchen on Mondays or collecting for Outreach Sundays, please contact Barbara Betsock @ 202.244.5324 or Kathy Beal @ 301.881.7711.

FUN IN FEBRUARY @ BLESSED SACRAMENT SCHOOL



YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND!!

By Ann and Jim Hoffman

The focus of the Blessed Sacrament Communication Workshop reflects the title of Deborah Tannen's book about men and women in conversation. The book highlights the genders' differences, showing how a word or turn of phrase has one meaning for one person and has a different slant with another. Unfortunately, this reality often leads to misunderstandings, especially when one adds expectations and assumptions to the mix. Listening is key; however, as Steven Covey said, "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand. Most people listen with the intent to reply."

Let's see if any of the following sentences sound familiar and resonate with your lived reality:

I don't need a solution; I just want you to listen to me.

Please look at me when I am talking to you!

Let me finish what I was going to say.

Why would you feel that way?

Why do you always have to have the last word?

In Joy of Love, Pope Francis' exhortation on Marriage and Family, our Holy Father seems to validate some of Tannen's findings as he notes, "Men and women communicate differently. They speak different languages and act differently." Francis then advises, "To encourage authentic dialogue means

being ready to listen patiently and attentively to the other person. Instead of offering an opinion and advice, we need to be sure we have heard everything the other person has to say. Often the other spouse does not need a solution to his or her problems, but simply to be heard, to feel that someone has acknowledged their pain and disappointment, their hopes and their dreams". (136-137)

Prayer of Spouses for Each Other

Lord Jesus, grant that my spouse and I may have a true and understanding love for each other. Grant that we may both be filled with faith and trust. Gives us the grace to love with each other in peace and harmony.

May we always bear with one another's weaknesses and grow from each other's strengths. Help us to forgive one another's failings, and grant us patience, kindness, cheerfulness and the spirit of placing the well-being of one another ahead of self.

May the love that brought us together grow and mature with each passing year. Bring us ever closer to You through our love for each other. Let our love grow to perfection. Amen

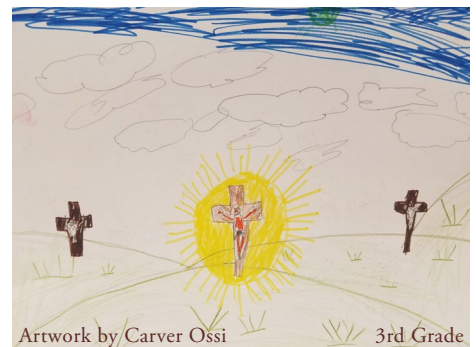
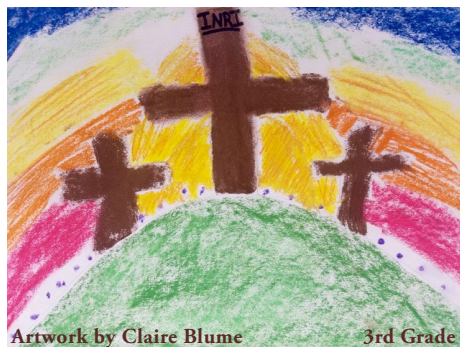
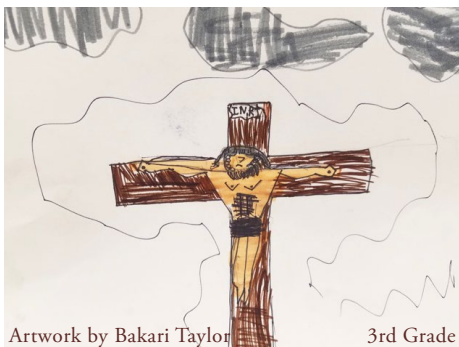
The Pope encourages an exchange of ideas and opinions which brings a fruitful outcome: "Keep an open mind. Don't get bogged down in your own limited ideas and opinions, but be prepared to change

and expand them. The combination of two different ways of thinking can lead to a synthesis that enriches both." (139)

Communication is key in a marriage, not only for the sake of a couple's relationship, but also for the sake of a harmonious family life where respect and love strives, where Mom and Dad's behavior is a model to follow. But let's face it, that kind of perfection is hard to achieve. Pope Francis recognizes, "There is no need to lay upon two limited persons the tremendous burden of being perfect... No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love." (122) Of course, one also needs to be open to receive God's grace in this process.

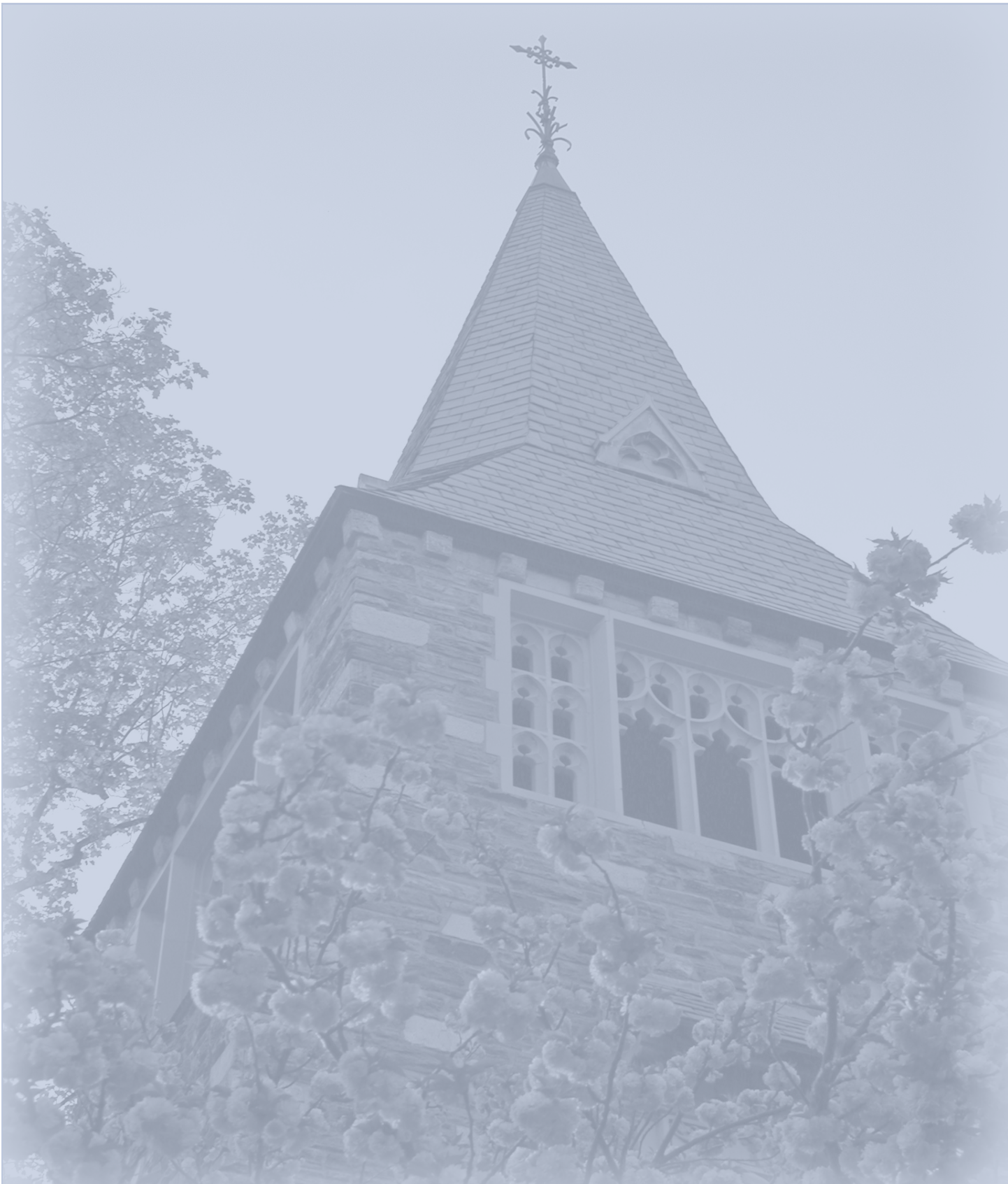
So let's heed our Good Shepherd's advice, "A love that fails to grow is at risk. Take time, quality time." (134) We can all use help, support, and graces. Blessed Sacrament has offered such help for the past seven years during Lent through its Communication Workshop. Listening is the workshop's key component which, in turn, brings closeness and ensures more satisfying decision making. The listening technique taught also applies to our children, and they just love to be heard!

Although this year's workshop is already full, consider attending the workshop we will conduct next year. For more information, contact hoffmanja2@msn.com.



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