

## TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

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No. 9

### Ours is not to question why ... Why?

Last month we mentioned the change of perspective that the continuing revelation of the Word of God offers to the church and her members. With that in mind, I would ask you to take a fresh look in your Bibles at 2 Cor. 13:13. My NRSV reads: "...and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." There is, however, an alternate reading listed in the footnote, which may also appear in your Bible version. It reads instead: "... and the sharing in the Holy Spirit be with all of you." Murray Harris in *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* presents this paraphrase of the selection: "and your common participation in the life and power of the Holy Spirit, be the constant portion of you all!" (p. 962)

The New Testament scholar James D.G. Dunn expands upon this when he writes that the technical term *koinonia* found in 13:13 means not only "something objective created by the Spirit" such as our shared communion, but instead something active and more akin to "sharing in" the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul's benediction refers not only to the community that the Spirit has called together, but to the power inherent in that community through all of her members. *Koinonia* is the Spirit active within the gathering of believers. It is what Bp. Hodur would refer to as *regeneration*.

The earliest church has been referred to as an "enthusiastic" religious movement. Again, in 2 Corinthians it is written: "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life," (3:6) and also "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (3:17) The word *enthusiasm* is derived from two Greek words, *en* and *theos*, which mean "in God." While originally associated with divine inspiration, even possession, it has come to be defined as an intense, eager zeal and passion. Enthusiasm implies initiative. Enthusiasm for a cause connotes both passion and perseverance. Historically, however, enthusiasm has fallen out of favour in church parlance because it is unmanageable due to its concentration on personal initiative. It became associated with schism. Church officials equated enthusiasm with division. The institution of church came to value order as a

fundamental quality. Charism was gradually replaced by office, and the power of all believers was subsumed in the authority of office holders.

In the earliest church, Christian prophets were an accepted vocation (cf. 1 Cor 12:28). At Acts 9:10 Ananias is referred to as "a certain disciple" even though he had received a valid prophetic revelation. The charism of prophecy may then be ascribed to all Christian believers, but the term "prophet" itself may be reserved for a select number of Christian leaders who prophesy on a regular basis and with the sanction of the inspired church (cf. Acts 15:22, 32). Prophecy was open to all believers (1 Cor. 14:1, 5) for the purpose of upbuilding the church (1 Cor. 14:12, 26). Prophecy was also tested by the inspired community of the church (14:29) in the ultimate act of ecclesiastical democracy. Order was preserved by the self-government of the Spirit's enthusiasm by the Spirit's enthusiasm (1 Thess. 5:19-20).

The *koinonia* of the church is not a passive concept. Since all share in the Spirit and have responsibilities to the church because of this baptism-bestowed charism, *koinonia* is church as enthusiastic advocate for God both in the world and in the church. This spiritual vitality is often manifested and reinforced by the grace of the Word of God. Paul tells the Corinthians that he became their spiritual father "through the gospel [proclamation]" (1 Cor 4:15) The Word of God is called the "power of God" in Romans (1:16). Paul explains his ministry to the Thessalonians by first pointing to the courage they had "in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition." (1 Thess 2:2) As 1 Cor. 14 makes clear, the Word of God as enthusiastic proclamation was often found within the church's liturgy. The church community was not limited to a passive role. Coming together as church opened up a sacred pathway for the Spirit to become active among believers often through the Word of God. Is it any wonder that Bp. Hodur saw the sacrament of the Word of God as not only the Bible, but also its liturgical proclamation? <To be continued ...>

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
MONTH OF SEPTEMBER**

- September 1, 2009 – Bible study group will meet at 7:00pm.  
September 4<sup>th</sup> – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.  
September 5<sup>th</sup> – Annual United YMSofR Track and Field Meet in Scranton, PA.  
September 6<sup>th</sup> – Polish Mass will be recited at 7:45am.  
September 8<sup>th</sup> – Monthly meeting of the Parish Committee at 7:00pm.  
September 9<sup>th</sup> – Monthly Mass for Health at 6:30pm.  
September 12<sup>th</sup> – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am (Please note special week)  
September 13<sup>th</sup> – **FEAST OF BROTHERLY LOVE.** Mass at 9:00am. Special collection accepted for the Manor at Waymart.  
School of Christian Living classes begin the new academic year.  
September 19<sup>th</sup> – Diocesan SOCL Seminar in Westfield, MA beginning at 10:00am.  
September 22<sup>nd</sup> – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall at 7:00pm.  
September 27<sup>th</sup> – Spojnia Sunday. Special prayers offered for the church's fraternal organization. Monthly meeting of the Adoration Society at 10:00am.

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“The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people halfway.” - Henry Boye

**BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

Our ecumenical Bible study group will meet twice this month as we continue to read through the Gospel of Matthew. This is a book written from the perspective of Jewish-Christians. The earliest church consisted mainly of Jews who had come to accept Jesus as the Messiah. This group eventually became a minority within the church as more and more Gentiles accepted the faith. Matthew's story reflects both of these realities. Matthew deals with the reality and the tension of a church in transition, which also has a lot to say to us a church members today.

We will continue meeting this month and next. We then take the winter off and reconvene after Easter. At that time we will still be reading from Matthew's Gospel so please do not feel that with only two months to go this year it is too late to

join our group. If you have any questions, please give a call to the rectory.

**TRACK AND FIELD MEET**

Every year the United YMSofR sponsors a Track and Field Meet in Scranton. For many, many years it was held on Labor Day. Recently it was moved to mid-August. Now the event has been moved to the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. Events will take place throughout the day of September 4<sup>th</sup>. Pre-registration information will soon be made available and this will be posted on the church bulletin board. Athletes are invited to compete from throughout the National Catholic Church. If you choose to be a spectator, that can be fun too. There are also a lot of Polish and American foods to choose from throughout the day. More information will follow in the parish bulletin as it becomes available.

**MASS FOR HEALTH**

Now that the summer heat is hopefully over with we are able to return to our monthly Mass for Health. The Mass will be offered on Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. At this Mass we will pray for all of our parishioners who are hospitalized at the time or in long-term care. We will also pray for the intentions that the congregation presents. If you or someone you know needs to be remembered at our Mass for Health, I hope you will join us at church.

**FEAST OF BROTHERLY LOVE**

At the Special Synod that had to be convened in 1906, the body voted to establish a feast day dedicated especially to the topic of Brotherly Love. 1906 was a difficult year for our then nine year old church. Its cohesion was threatened by both internal and external disturbances. In this highly charged atmosphere that necessitated the calling of a Special Synod three years earlier than planned, the church chose the amazing course of action to respond to these threats by praying for Brotherly Love. Rather than return antagonism for antagonism, the gathered lay and clergy delegates at that Synod decided to name a unique feast day for our church, the Feast of Brotherly Love. Of all the important religious innovations of our early history, this is one whose story is most inspiring.

In our world that is plagued by violence, prejudice and hatred, where far too often these plights are instigated by religious teachings, I hope that you will join me for Mass on September 13<sup>th</sup> as

we pray instead for Brotherly Love. Two days after the anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, let us come together to pray to God not for retribution, but for Brotherly Love.

As a sign of our care for our neighbour, **a special collection** will be accepted after Mass for Way-mart Manor, which is an elder-care facility located in Waymart, PA in the vicinity of Scranton. Our donations help that facility, associated with our church, to better care for her residents. This act of charity is a sign of our Brotherly Love for others.

#### **SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Our School of Christian Living classes will begin on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> after the 9:00am Mass. A solid Christian education is one of the pillars of a strong faith. It is important that our families and students make a serious and concerted effort to attend regularly. We only meet once a week from mid-September through mid-June. This really is not a lot of time to impress upon the students the lessons of 3,000 years of religious history. Please make every effort to attend on a regular basis so that our teachers have the chance to progress at a steady pace through the church's curriculum. Faithful attendance at Mass and our SOCL classes is good for the students, the teachers and our church.

#### **SOCL TEACHERS**

**We are looking for some new volunteers to help by teaching our SOCL classes.** All of last year's teachers have served in this capacity for many years now. Are there others out there who are now involved with our religious education program who could help as teachers? Are there members of the parish at large who could help in this way? It is a significant offering of time, but your efforts will help a young person grow in their faith. I still remember my SOCL teachers from Westfield, and when I visit my home parish I still thank them. You have a chance to make a lasting impression upon a child or young person for the good. If you would like to accept the challenge of becoming one of our teachers, please speak with Fr. Calvo in the nearest future. Thank you.

#### **SOCL SEMINAR**

The annual diocesan School of Christian Living Seminar will be held in Westfield, MA on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. The day begins with a Prayer Service at 10:00am led by Bp. Gnat with a

sermon by the diocesan SOCL chaplain, Fr. Sen. Soltysiak. This will be followed by sessions that celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sacrament of the Word of God. Fr. Stanley Bilinski, National Youth Chaplain, will be our main presenter. His topic is *The Bible: Bring It On!* As National Youth Chaplain, Fr. Bilinski has attended several Christian youth ministry conferences. He will be making use of what he has learned at these conventions as he teaches the teachers how to engage our young students in Bible learning. Both the topic and the presenter are energetic and enthusiastic. I am sure it will be well worth our trip to Westfield.

Later in the afternoon, two of Westfield's parishioners who have long been involved with youth activities will offer sessions on teaching the small class and an activity project.

A sign-up sheet and flier are posted in the church vestibule and hall. The \$10 registration fee will be covered by the parish for anyone involved in our parish SOCL program. For more information, please contact the rectory.

#### **SPOJNIA SUNDAY**

On September 27<sup>th</sup> all of our parishes will observe Spojnia Sunday. At this time we offer our prayer intentions for the fraternal organization of our church, which was organized in Scranton by Bp. Hodur and local parishioners in 1908. It still serves the financial needs of our members today.

"Is everyone in your family a Polish National Union member? Not yet? Well from July 1 through September 30, 2009 everyone in your family will have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of being a PNU member. During this open enrollment period, all medical exams will be waived making enrollment easier. For more details on the PNU, its products and benefits, please contact the Home Office at 1-800-724-6352."

There are several pamphlets and fliers posted on a parish hall bulletin board about the various credit union and insurance products offered by Spojnia from life insurance policies, to home and auto loans, to credit union services. Since Spojnia is a fraternal associated with the church, her profits are then reinvested in our church. It's a win-win situation. Please take the time to look at the various materials available after Mass in our parish hall.

**If someone you know needs a hospital visit, please notify the rectory.**