The Musings of the Pastor

Last weekend Pope Francis visited Romania. On Sunday, June 2, 2019, on the last day of his visit, the Holy Father presided over a Divine Liturgy in the small town of Blaj, the heartland of the country’s Greek-Catholic Church. Although the largest religious denomination in Romania is Orthodox, a small percentage is Catholic. Some of the Romanian Orthodox entered into union with Rome in 1700. They kept their Byzantine liturgy and Eastern-rite traditions. During the Divine Liturgy in Blaj, Pope Francis declared “blessed” seven of the Greek-Catholic bishops who had died a martyr’s death in the decades following the suppression of the Eastern-Rite Romanian Church in 1948.

Pope Francis remarked that “in the face of fierce opposition from the regime, they demonstrated an exemplary faith and love for their people. With great courage and interior fortitude, they accepted harsh imprisonment and every kind of mistreatment, in order not to deny their fidelity to their beloved church.”

Pope Francis continued his remarks by noting that these “pastors and martyrs for the faith re-appropriated and handed down to the Romanian people a precious legacy that we can sum up in two words: freedom and mercy.”

Here are the names of the newly beatified bishops: Iuliu Hossu, who had been imprisoned in 1954 and who died in a hospital in 1970; Vasile Aftenie, who died in prison in 1950; Ioan Balan who was imprisoned from 1950-54 and who died in a monastery in 1959; Valeriu Traian Frentiu, who died in prison in 1952; Ioan Suciu, died in prison in 1953; Tito Livio Chinezu, who died in prison in 1955; and Alexander Rusu, who died in prison in 1963. Pope St. Paul VI named Blessed Iuliu Hossu a cardinal but at Blessed Iuliu’s request, St. Paul VI did not reveal this elevation until after Bishop Hossu’s death.

Recently Bishop John Michael Botean, who leads the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church’s only diocese outside of Romania commented on the beatification ceremony saying that it would be very, very important for his community. Bishop Botean, who leads the Eparchy of St. George’s in Canton, Ohio that serves Romanian Catholics both in the U.S.A. and Canada, made reference to the pope’s decision to celebrate the beatification ceremony personally. Bishop Botean continued: “The big deal for me and our church is the beatification of our martyred bishops, that he is doing it himself, he is doing it in our home turf, and in a place of immense historical importance.”

Bishop Botean also commented on the now-beatified bishops: “They were the leaders of our church, they stayed faithful. In their minds there were explicitly being faithful to the see of Peter. They set just a profound witness for me as examples of firmness of conscience and willingness to sacrifice oneself.”

Continued in the column to the right…….
QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth,” we sang in the responsorial psalm. Having received the Holy Spirit, how can I assist in renewing the face of the earth?

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

As I read about the courage of these newly beatified martyrs, I think of other martyrs whom Pope Francis has beatified during the last two years, including Blessed Stanley Rother from Oklahoma who was martyred in Guatemala in 1981 and beatified in 2017 and the nineteen martyrs from Algeria (including Bishop Pierre Claverie and seven Trappist monks) who were all killed by Islamic terrorists in Algeria between 1994 and 1996 and beatified in 2018.

The Bishops of Algeria wrote in a press release in October 2018 that the purpose of the beatification of the nineteen martyrs of Algeria was not to make of those women and men heroes. Rather it was to show that through these ordinary men and women we see how even in the darkest of times there are glimpses of hope. And their conditional love, their country and their people show how “only love can end the alienating spirit of evil.”

These sentiments also apply in the case of Blessed Stanley Rother and the seven martyred Greek-Catholic bishops of Romania beatified by Pope Francis on June 2, 2019. May they all pray for us!

Until next week,

Fr. John

COME TO THE PARISH MINISTRY FAIR THIS WEEKEND!

All members of our parish are invited to attend the Parish Ministry Fair to be held after all Masses this weekend in the Gathering Space. The Ministry Fair will feature about 20 ministries in the areas of Worship, Community Building, Faith Formation, Social Concerns and Administration, including:

- Religious Education/High School Youth Ministry
- Respect Life Ministry
- Pax Christi
- Spanish Ministry
- Knights of Columbus
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Couples for Christ
- Upcounty Community Resources
- Love of One Another
- And many more!

Refreshments and kids’ activities will be offered! Please join us to find out how to live your faith in action at St. Francis of Assisi Parish. For more information, please contact Daniel Kosinski at danielgkoscinski@gmail.com or parishioner Ann Pierre at pierrea35@hotmail.com.

LOOK FOR THE BREW CREW NEXT WEEKEND

The Brew Crew will be serving coffee and donuts after the 9:30 and 11:15 a.m. Masses next Sunday. This will be the last time until September. They will be taking the summer off for a well-deserved rest.
June 9, 2019

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING Join the Lamb of God Prayer Group for worship and the study of Scripture on Tuesday, June 11, 7:30 p.m., St. Clare’s Chapel in the Rectory. For details, please call Louise, (301) 977-5217.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next weekend will go to the UMAN (Upper Montgomery Assistance Network). Thank you for your generosity.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PRAYER CHAIN If you have a prayer request, please contact Marianne Bullen, (301) 963-3420 or mariannebu@comcast.net with your requests.

ROSARY FOR PRIESTS Every Wednesday evening at 6:45 p.m. we pray the rosary for our priests before the 7:30 p.m. Mass.

HOLY HOUR FOR THE DYING On Thursday evenings in the St. Clare’s Chapel in the Rectory, a prayer group meets at 7:00 p.m. to pray for the dying. This is a Holy Hour Devotion for the Dying. As a central work of our Catholic faith, we are called to pray for the dying, especially for those who may die suddenly, unprepared to face God. For additional information, please call the Parish Office, (301) 840-1407.

ROSARY CENACLE OF OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE Cenacle of Our Lady, Queen of Peace to pray for priests and vocations, 2:00 p.m. in the St. Clare’s Chapel (Rectory) every Sunday. Please join us.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS - COUNCIL 2323 The Knights of Columbus are looking for new, transferring or readmitted members to share in their Charity, Fraternity, Unity and Patriotism activities. Council 2323 supports many St. Francis activities and has many social events. The KofC offers life and long term care insurance opportunities as well as annuities. A new opportunity: join as an Online Member for $30 per year; go to www.kofc.org and click on “Join Us”. If you wish you can join the Council later. If interested in learning more, contact Gary Palmer (301-948-6494 or email gtdbpalmer@verizon.net).

WALL OF HONOR A place of Honor, Prayer and Support On display the 4th of July in the Gathering Space Recognizing the active duty military family members of our parishioners. Would you like to honor a member of your family serving in the military on American soil or deployed to a foreign land? Do you have a loved one in the military who you would like to raise in prayer? At every Mass during our Prayer of the Faithful we pray for our military active duty service members “whose names appear in the Gathering Space.” Our SFA Wall of Honor is an initiative of the SFA Health Ministry. The purpose is to connect those names in the Gathering Space with a face by displaying pictures of your active duty military family members with information about their service to our country. The intention is to make your family member more present to the parish and avail them to the prayer support of our entire parish family. By honoring our service members, we also recognize your sacrifice as a family member and likewise extend to you our prayerful support. To have your loved one remembered in prayer and featured on our 4th of July Wall of Honor please email the Wall of Honor Information Form with a photo of your active duty family member to Betty Baklarz at lbbaklarz@yahoo.com. by June 25. Wall of Honor Information Forms are available at the Information Desk in the Gathering Space.

PASTORAL COUNCIL RECEIVES UPDATE ON PARISH’S KEY PRIORITIES At its meeting on May 23, the Parish Pastoral Council discussed the three key priorities it has synthesized over the past year on enhancing the church plant and facilities, increasing participation in the liturgy and other forms of worship and engaging young adults and non-participating parishioners to be more actively involved with ministries.

Under the first priority of plant and facilities management, Fr. John reported that the archdiocesan College of Consultants has approved the parish’s petition to enhance the church through several projects. With a general contractor and architect hired, Fr. John said the parish has issued bids on replacing the roof of the church. He reported that the church will start with replacing the roof, enhancing the outdoor lighting and repaving and repairing the parking lot.

Under the second priority of increasing participation in liturgy, Fr. John recommended that the church develop a data baseline of Mass attendance. The council voted to empower Fr. John to ask the ushers to conduct a monthly count of Mass attendance from June to December of this year. In discussing the third priority of engaging young adults and non-participating parishioners to be more active in ministry, Fr. John reported that a parish family has agreed to lead a Young Families Ministry.

Under other business, the council also:
• Discussed the five open council vacancies, either because members have moved away or are unable to continue serving. Coupled with four council terms that are up in December 2019, parish council members were asked to begin recruiting new members for the Parish Pastoral Council.
• Discussed the Parish Ministry Fair, scheduled for June 8/9 in the Gathering Space.
• Heard reports from the Communications Ministry, Small Groups and Religious Education.
• Talked about the 2022 50th Anniversary Summer Planning Task Force, which will begin meeting this summer.
• Discussed the council’s last meeting on June 20, which will coincide with a social.

To see past minutes of the Parish Pastoral Council meetings, go to https://www.sfadw.org/pastoral-council-meeting-minutes. To ask questions of the Parish Pastoral Council, e-mail asktheppc@gmail.com.

SHRIMP FEAST Montgomery Council #2323 of the Knights of Columbus will be holding a Shrimp Feast on Saturday, June 22th from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The feast will be held at Father Cuddy Hall, 17001 Overhill Road in Derwood, and proceeds will benefit the Warriors to Lourdes Pilgrimage. The cost is $20.00/Adult; $15.00 for over 65; and $10.00 for children 10 and under. It includes spiced shrimp, grilled chicken, corn on the cob, french fries, coleslaw, beer, wine, and soft drinks. For reservations/information, call Mike Thomas at (301) 330-5970 or cinnabarmike@verizon.net.
CATECHESIS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
Our parish offers monthly catechetical sessions specifically designed for children and youth with special needs and their families. Our next session is today, Sunday, June 9, from 3:30-4:30 pm in the St. Clare Room. If you would like to learn more about these sessions, or if you are interested in serving as a catechist or aide for children with special needs, please call Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

REGISTER NOW FOR 2019-2020 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES
Return your completed form by August 1 to receive $25 discount off total registration.

Our program offerings for children and youth include:
• Pre-school and Kindergarten classes on Sunday mornings, 11:10-12:15 pm (Preschool classes are for children age 3 or 4 by September 1)
• Grade 1-5 classes offered at two session times:
  Sunday mornings, 9:20-10:35 am
  Monday afternoons, 4:45-6:00 pm
• Grade 6, 7, and 8 classes offered at two session times:
  Monday evenings, 6:45-8:00 pm
  Tuesday evenings, 6:45-8:00 pm
• Grades 9-12 (Youth Group) meet Sunday evenings 6:00-8:00 pm (following the 5 pm Youth Mass)

Since the curriculum of the Religious Education Program is designed to be taught in sequence and each year builds on the content presented in previous years, families should plan for their children to participate in Religious Education classes each year.

Registration forms are available on the parish web site (www.sfadw.org), in the Gathering Space of the Church, and in the Parish Offices. Completed forms can be sent in by mail, or dropped off in person at the Rectory Office (Monday-Friday, 8 am-4 pm). Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

As we prepare for next year’s Religious Education program, please consider whether you can serve as a catechist for our children and young people. If you would like to learn more about this important ministry, please contact Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

Continued in the column to the right……..

MOVING/CHANGE OF ADDRESS/E-MAIL
Please notify the parish office, (301) 840-1407, of any changes in your address, cell/telephone number or E-mail. We appreciate your help in keeping the parish database current. You can also e-mail changes to sfaparishoffice@sfadw.org. Thank you.

RELIgIOUS EDUCATION (continued)
Registering for Sacramental Preparation Sacramental preparation for 1st Reconciliation, 1st Eucharist, Confirmation, and Christian Initiation for Children/Teens (CIC/CIT) is not grade specific and involves preparation in addition to grade level Religious Education classes. At minimum, children are expected to have participated in religious education in the year prior to preparing for a sacrament. Please note: students preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation will attend their grade-level Religious Education classes as well as monthly Confirmation sessions.

Families requesting sacramental preparation for their child are asked to mark their registration form accordingly so that additional information can be provided. Please note that there is a separate materials fee for sacramental preparation programs. More details will be provided at the parent meetings next year. If you have any questions, please call the Religious Education Office at 301-258-9193.

Please pray for the success of our Vacation Bible Camp 2019 –

ROAR! Life is wild * God is good.
June 24-28 from 9:00 am to 12:15 pm
All are welcome to join us for our Family Program, Open House and Italian Ice Social on Thursday, June 27, 7 pm

Please notify the parish office, (301) 840-1407, of any changes in your address, cell/telephone number or E-mail. We appreciate your help in keeping the parish database current. You can also e-mail changes to sfaparishoffice@sfadw.org. Thank you.

ST. FRANCIS YOUTH MINISTRY
UPCOMING EVENTS
JUNE 9 MOVIE NIGHT
(Youth Room)
6:00 pm
JUNE 30 GAME NIGHT
(Youth Room)
6:00 pm
GET SOCIAL
Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @ SFADWYOUTH.

Please pray for the success of our Vacation Bible Camp 2019 –

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ST. FRANCIS YOUTH MINISTRY
UPCOMING EVENTS
JUNE 9 MOVIE NIGHT
(Youth Room)
6:00 pm
JUNE 30 GAME NIGHT
(Youth Room)
6:00 pm
GET SOCIAL
Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @ SFADWYOUTH.
BE VIGILANT AGAINST POTENTIAL E-MAIL, ONLINE SCAMS

As we enter the summer months, Fr. John Dillon would like to remind parishioners to be vigilant about recognizing e-mail scams purportedly coming from him or other members of the clergy that ask for your personal information or money in any form, including cash or gift cards. Catholic clergy in dioceses across the country, including in the Archdiocese of Washington, have reported that their parishioners have received e-mails allegedly from them asking for help buying gift cards for an emergency situation. Fr. John would like to reiterate that he would not make a financial appeal through an e-mail; if you have doubts about the legitimacy of an e-mail, please contact the Parish Office at (301) 840-1407 to check on its veracity. To read more about online scams targeting Catholic dioceses, see the National Catholic Reporter’s story, “Scammers pose as pastors in e-mail, ask faithful to buy gift cards,” at https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/scammers-pose-pastors-email-ask-faithful-buy-gift-cards.

LAST FEW WEEKS TO REGISTER FOR THE UCR 5K WALK & ROLL-A-THON!

Now that the end of the school year is in sight, it’s time to start planning some fun! Come join us from 4-7 pm Saturday, June 22, for the Upcounty Community Resources 5K Walk- and Roll-a-Thon at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg. Join nearly two dozen parishioners from St. Francis of Assisi Parish in helping support this worthy nonprofit that promotes the full inclusion of persons with developmental and intellectual differences into every aspect of community life. As the major fundraiser for UCR, the 5K Walk and Roll-a-thon supports the many social, therapeutic, exercise, skills development and respite programs that serve adults primarily in upper Montgomery County. Enjoy a fun summer night out, with food and beverages provided by Mayorga Coffee, Corn Beef King and Rita’s Ice. Attendees can enjoy music by HOT 99.5 and buy chances for a 50/50 Raffle. Register for the walk or make a donation at https://www.ucresources.org/5k-walk--roll-a-thon.html; be sure to indicate you are from St. Francis. For more information, please contact Deacon Dan Finn at deacondan.finn@gmail.com.

MEMORIAL MASS FOR POET & PHILOSOPHER MATTIE J. T. STEPANEK TO BE HELD JUNE 22

To memorialize the life of Mattie J.T. Stepanek, a 13-year-old poet, philosopher and peacemaker who died in 2004, St. Francis of Assisi Parish will host a 15th Anniversary Memorial Mass and Reception at the parish where he belonged. The Mass will take place at 11 am, with Msgr. Charles Pope giving the Homily. It will be interpreted in American Sign Language. The life of Mattie Stepanek resonates because, at the age where children are learning to navigate the world, Mattie called for peace in the world. He lived with dysautonomic mitochondrial myopathy, a rare disorder from which his three older siblings died. During his brief time on Earth, he wrote several books on peace, including the best-selling Heartstrings, met former President Jimmy Carter and served as the Muscular Dystrophy Association’s national goodwill ambassador. All are invited to attend the 15th Anniversary Memorial Mass, with a brief reception to follow in the Gathering Space. For more information about the memorial Mass, please contact Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick at abosnick@sfadw.org.

AMAZONSMILE ENABLES ST. FRANCIS TO INCREASE FUNDRAISING THROUGH ONLINE SHOPPING

St. Francis parishioners can support our church whenever they’re shopping online at Amazon.com. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church recently became a recipient of AmazonSmile, which enables the church to receive 0.5 percent of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases you make. Go to our Home Page to start shopping! For more information, please contact Fr. Jack Berard, jberard@sfadw.org.

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School

We are...St. Jude www.StJudeRockville.org

NEED A SUMMER TUTOR FOR YOUR CHILD?

Get tutoring from the best! These SJRCS teachers offer their services during the summer months.

Courtney Collis Reading, Writing and Math (Grades Pre-K – 4) 240-595-0173 (cell) courtney.collis@stjuderockville.org

Carol Hampe, Science and Math (Grades K-9) carol.hampe@stjuderockville.org

Pat O’Connell, Reading, Math, and Spanish (Grades K-8) patoconnell2@hotmail.com or patricia.o’connell@stjuderockville.org

Susan Sella Language Arts and Math (Grades K-3) 1-301-633-3206 (cell) or susan.sella@stjuderockville.org

CATCH OUR SPIRIT!
REGISTER NOW FOR FALL 2019!

Spaces are filling up quickly so register now! Applications for fall enrollment are being accepted on a first come basis for our 3-year-old Pre-K to 7th grade (limited spaces are available). For information on the curriculum, admissions policies and registration, contact Ellen Donnelly in the school office at 301-946-7888 or register your student online at www.StJudeRockville.org

ORDER YOUR 2019 SCHOOL SUPPLIES NOW!

Order securely online until June 16 (late orders from June 17-July 7). For more information, contact Hazel Gita at hzlgi-tau@yahoo.com. https://www.educationalproducts.com/ShopPacks/School code: stj002

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS
If you wish to visit us during the summer our hours are 9-1 Monday through Thursday, beginning June 17th.

STRONGER MEN’S RETREAT
All men are welcome and encouraged to come to the Saint John Paul II National Shrine for a retreat on Saturday, June 22. Explore how God calls you to lead as a man of faith, husband, son, and father. Lunch is included with registration. More information and registration at strongerretreat.eventbrite.com. For questions, please email events@jp2shrine.org.

NATIONAL TELEPHONE ROSARY
A National Telephone Rosary in recognition of Fatima is held on the 13th of each month at 8pm by the National Council of Catholic Women. Call 515-739-1261 and insert code 703993#. Questions? Contact Province Director Cindy Perry at cindy.perry@hotmail.com.