Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Despite the tragic news of the last few months with regard to the Church and the sufferings of many throughout the world, the Word of God sounds hopeful notes of healing. The prophet Jeremiah spoke about the end of exile in these words:

Shout with joy for Jacob, exalt at the head of the nations...the Lord has delivered his people. (Jeremiah 31, 7)

The two most memorable events of liberation in ancient Jewish history were the “exodus” from slavery in Egypt and freedom from “captivity” in Babylon. Jeremiah even looked towards the return of earlier deported people from the North. Assyria had conquered the northern tribes of Israel and captured many of the people years before Babylon had exiled the southern tribes. Perhaps those whose ancestors have been enslaved or those who are refugees from oppressive regimes might have a glimmer of the joy described by Jeremiah.

The prophets and psalmists do not, however, want us to forget the cause of the exile. The twelve tribes of Israel had been surrounded by various kingdoms whose people worshipped myriads of gods and goddesses. The Israelites were frequently tempted to revert to paganism, thus breaking their bond with the one true God. These failures and their own selfish pride divided people from one another.

Idolatry and pride often go together and render relationships asunder. The result is the exact opposite of the intention of God for the “chosen people.” They were meant to lead all nations to God. The blind man we encounter in the gospel of Mark (chapter 10), Bartimaeus, displays concretely the effects of sin and division. People who are scattered often lose their way and their identity. Bartimaeus also provides an example of what is necessary for healing.

Once we realize that we are helpless on our own to effect a cure, we become desperate and cry out for God’s mercy. Twelve step programs require those who are addicted to admit their total dependence on God and others before any hope of healing can begin. When asked what he wanted Jesus to do, Bartimaeus simply said: “Master, I want to see.” (Mark 10, 51) The request for sight implies more than a physical healing.

One of the greatest causes of division in families and communities is the refusal or inability to “see the bigger picture.” Some years ago, Bishop Barron put it this way:

To overcome fear is to move from the ‘pusillima anima’ (the small soul) to the ‘magna anima’ (the great soul). When we are dominated by our egos, we live in a very narrow space, in the ‘angustiae’ (the straits) between this fear and that, between this attachment and that. (Barron, And Now I See, p.5)

The events of recent months can cause us to recoil into our own prejudices and fears and threaten to render us a divided people. A focus on the bigger picture and on the “high priest” who has won the victory for us, I believe, gives us better perspective and hope!

Does anyone recall the four “marks” of the Church? We are one, holy, catholic (universal) and apostolic. We are also diverse racially, ethnically, politically, and in so many other ways; but our unity is rooted in the mystery wherein our sufferings and joys are united with one another and with the Lord Jesus who has promised to remain with us at all times!

Once Bartimaeus was healed, he was filled with the courage and grace to follow Jesus up the mountain to Jerusalem. The next chapter in Mark’s gospel describes the triumphant entrance of Jesus into that holy city which we commemorate on Palm Sunday. Then begins the heart and soul of the gospel message: the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus (made present at every Eucharist)!

Shout with joy for Jacob, exalt at the head of the nations...The Lord has delivered his people. (Jeremiah 31, 7)

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Bill Foley
Blessed Sacrament Mourns
the Death of Msgr. Duffy,
Former Pastor

During the mid-week of October, both religious and laity from Blessed Sacrament, Washington, D.C., and Rome, all places he served, grieved the passing out beloved former pastor, Rev. Msgr. Thomas M. Duffy.

The Reception of the Body, Viewing, and Vigil Mass on Thursday, October 18, were followed on Friday, October 19, by a Viewing and Funeral Mass with His Eminence Donald Wuerl as Principal Celebrant and Msgr. John Enzler as homilist.

Throughout the ceremonies, Father Duffy was remembered for his kindness, peacefulness, love of the poor, exceptional leadership and moral resolve, all with a priest’s heart of dignity and grace and a touch of humor.

Below is an excerpt from a tribute in the newsletter 13 years ago (Summer 2005 issue) upon his retirement from Blessed Sacrament; it provides additional insight into Msgr. Duffy’s life.

Tribute to Monsignor Thomas M. Duffy

There’s something about Monsignor Duffy that strikes a chord with everyone. A way about him that draws all sorts of people in, whether for soothing comfort, gentle challenge, or something between or beyond. Never mind, for the moment, his collar and his title; deserving of respect as those are, they can say only so much about a person. Here is a man of complexity, kindness and intellect, held in high regard by cardinals and kindergartners, who chooses to call himself not “monsignor” but “father.” Which, of course, is what he’s been to us for the past 24 years and to many thousands of others since his 1953 ordination in Rome.
Summer Evening on a Mirrored Lake

By Joe Bozik

Ah these golden years to take in!
Summer evening on a mirrored lake,
As catamarans rev their engines
And wash me ashore in two-foot wake

These are the new “Good Ole Days”
That Dad instilled in my young veins,
A wisdom not realized but now plays
In his precious many sayings.

Pipe smoke now about to burn out
Campfire embers need one more turn.
Sky-filled stars and moon soon about
Evening settles, no daylight to yearn.

Light up my Dad’s vintage wood pipe
Essence of him in memory smoke.
Fond loving memories, then that swipe
You finished chores! But then we spoke.

This sunset really needs a cloud
To really show off creation’s beauty
 Bringing out those colors aloud
Yet each day’s a blessing really.

Turtles are bobbing their pointy heads,
Ducks are floating by still awake
Sunset now yields shades of reds:
Summer evening on a mirrored lake.

Loved him to death, my hero, my Dad.
Wish he was here to share his view
Of how he so loved life as he said,
“Soon memories will be up to you.”

It’s time for more wood and a beer
To keep wafting smoke on the water
Celebrating that Dad is so near
Pipe and campfire smoke now together.

As my pipe smoke drifts over campfire
Mingling with that hot ember flame
Witness heart-shaped rings of desire
Realize these moments are the same.

Supposed to read chapters of a book;
Instead witnessing all around
Pages of a novel can always look
But new words here can now be bound.
The beginning of a new school year, the turning color of the leaves, the cooler temperatures...what does all this mean? The Sodality Bazaar is just around the corner! Come one, come all, Saturday, November 10th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Sodality Bazaar is a parish-wide event, with money raised going to many worthy causes including DC Diaper Bank, Washington School for Girls, and Little Sisters of the Poor. This is the Sodality’s primary fundraising event, and it’s an opportunity for the parish community to come together to support some great causes, have fun, and connect (or reconnect) with fellow parishioners. With over 200 Blessed Sacrament women working to bring this event to you, you can bet it will be a great day!

Some of the things you will find at the Bazaar

**Christmas Shoppe**
A perennial favorite! Great hostess gifts or some delicious treats for your holiday table, including sauces, jams, and Bloody Mary Mix.

**Vendors**
Get a jump on your Christmas shopping with vendors for every type of person on your list—jewelry lovers, the hostess with the mostest, chocolate connoisseurs and more.

**Used Clothing and Chic Boutique**
From wardrobe basics to designer clothes, looking fabulous has never been more affordable. Clothing includes men’s, women’s, and children’s options. If you have a young professional in the family, this is a great way to build a wardrobe on a budget.

**White Elephant and Elegant Elephant**
Let the treasure hunt begin! Find household staples and upscale items to brighten your home.

**Baked Goods**
Indulge in homemade baked goods during the bazaar. Or pick up a pie or cake for the whole family to enjoy at home. Pick up another one to pop into the freezer for holiday guests.

**Lunch**
All this fun can really work up an appetite. Drop by for a bite to eat as delightful piano music fills the air.

**Raffle Baskets**
Take a chance on one of our themed baskets.

**Second Chance Sporting Goods**
New this year! Find affordable, used sports equipment for your kids.

**Replay Toys**
Also new this year! Gently used toys for kids of all ages.

Contact: sodality@blessedsacramentdc.org
Welcome, New Members of the Religious Education Team

Three new highly educated and experienced leaders, Jane Baily, Marilyn Campbell, and Tammy Flippo have joined the Blessed Sacrament Religious Education and Faith Formation Department. Together with returning members, Rosalie Days and James Strahota, they will form a reorganized and realigned department conducting instruction and development in the Faith for more than 1000 parish youth and adults.

Jane is Director of Faith Formation for Children. In this role she will also direct the School of Religion. She comes to Blessed Sacrament with 23 years of experience in the ministry of Faith Formation and service as a Providence Hospital chaplain.

Marilyn will serve in a joint role as Director of Youth Ministry and Athletic Director. In her role, Marilyn will provide parish middle and high school students with opportunities for service, faith and social activities.

Tammy is Director of Adult Faith Formation and will lead the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) for Adults. She comes to Blessed Sacrament from the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, and is a doctoral candidate in religious studies at Catholic University.

The parish welcomes the entire team as they begin a new and exciting year!

Blessed Sacrament Links With Southern Maryland

By Mary Shimp

If you head down to southern Maryland, you will be treated not only to some of the most beautiful countryside in the Mid-Atlantic, you’ll also get to see some of the most historic Catholic churches in the country. This is where our own Blessed Sacrament seminarian, Conor Hardy, spent his summer. It was something of a reunion as well, as he worked under the direction of Father Rob Maro, the former Director of Religious Education at Blessed Sacrament. Conor had also worked under him as a student aide in the School of Religion before Father Rob left for the seminary and was ordained in 2015.

Conor spent the summer at St. Francis Xavier, established by the Jesuits in 1661, the oldest Catholic church in the original 13 colonies. The parish is comprised of about 300 parish families and is situated across from a cornfield and a five-minute drive from the beach.

During his time at St. Francis Xavier, Conor helped Father Rob around the parish and took communion to parish members. He counted it as a great honor to take communion to someone right before he/she died. Conor also gave a series of three talks: “Power of Prayer,” “Confession,” and “Zeal and St. Francis Xavier.” Containing both wisdom and good humor, the talks were well-attended by parishioners. Conor was able to get to know many of the parishioners through their gracious invitations to dinner, and by summer’s end they were sorry to see their good-humored and faithful seminarian leave.

Please continue to pray for Conor as he continues in his studies to become a priest!
Guadalupe Pilgrimage: Understanding A Mother’s Love

By Conor Hardy

In early July, fourteen men journeyed south from the U.S.A. and made pilgrimage to the neighboring lands of Mexico to pray before the tilma of Our Lady of Guadalupe. There are a few familiar expressions that capture a moment concisely and completely for its meaning to be understood directly. Consider this blog not one of those. Yet, two expressions that deemed applicable for an accumulative depiction of our experiences are, “A painting is worth a thousand words” and “Love is a universal language”.

One of the common joys of living life through the lens of Faith is being wondered by occasions that are seemingly coincidental but in reality are Providential. So it was that on the first day while journeying to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, our group was met by a seminarian of Mexico City named George whom our pilgrim leader, Fr. Ivanly, had encountered earlier and unplanned. You cannot love what you do not know. Hence, it was a grand blessing to begin our pilgrimage with George fixing our minds and hearts to the story of the apparition of Our Lady to St. Juan Diego. With confidence, conviction, and occasional comic translation, George explained how our “Our Lady ‘tackled’ – no, other American football term… ‘intercepted’ Juan Diego” along Tepeyac Hill and gave him instruction of her wishes.

It was during this exchange when one of the most beautiful expressions of her maternal love was voiced: “...Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms?...”

As George continued, we grew in further understanding and depth of appreciation for the many, many significances of the intricate designs imprinted on the tilma (cloak worn by St. Juan Diego), which were immediately grasped when he first unfolded it on December 12, 1531.* The story eventually passed down from the mouth of St. Juan Diego through the ages to George, and from George to us. From George’s retelling, we were brought to a fuller realization of God’s unique love for the individual, His acute attention to detail and the small things, and that He thirsts for particular relationship with each of His children.

On the second day, while holding this encounter and knowledge in our hearts, we were brought to a place where the trash from a city of 21.2 million people is daily disposed. Our bus rolled through dirt paths brushed between bulking heaps of garbage and waste forming eight to ten stories high. The air became rank and each breath was repulsive. After several minutes driving through passages surrounded by junk, the bus stopped and its doors opened. We stepped outside and were met by a frenzy of flies swarming in countless numbers, and packs of sickly dogs skittishly scurrying about us.

Why were we here? Our accompanying missionary, Zac, explained that approximately 1,000 families live among these flies and dogs and heaps of filth. Our missionary provided us with the privileged opportunity and honor to be a guest in their home, shake the palm of their hands blackened with muck and grime, share our food, play games with the children, and sing. Laughter and song filled our particular corner of the junkyard. Together, we were graced and unified underneath a grotesque and shabby shelter where Christ was made our most beloved Guest at the command of the priest in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Although all fourteen pilgrims could not speak Spanish, the language of love was universally understood. Love was communicated and reciprocated, and the truth of each person’s dignity being recognized as precious and valued resonated in every gleaming eye. St. John summarizes the visit precisely: “Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.” (1Jn 3:18)

We concluded our last day in Mexico City by spending our time visiting the hallowed sites of two people who embodied this love and truth: Blessed Conchita, a mother and mystic, and Blessed Miguel Pro, a priest and martyr. Early the next morning, we made our flight and returned home to the United States of America in time to celebrate the freedom declared by our country two hundred and forty-five years after the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We ventured our way to the local brew pub and reminisced of the deeper freedom resounding in our souls from the knowledge of being loved by such a God and such a Mother.


Conor Hardy, Blessed Sacrament parishioner, former police officer and teacher, is now a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Washington. This blog post was originally published on the DC Priest website: www.dcpriest.org.
Troop 90 Scouts Build Picnic Tables for Rock Creek Park

In early July, Eagle scouts from Blessed Sacrament’s Troop 90 gathered to build picnic tables for Rock Creek Park. For this service project, they built nine tables . . . in a little less than three hour’s time! Park Service representatives were most appreciative.

Photos courtesy of Troop 90

Scout Service Project @ Camp Bowman

Also this summer, Troop 90 scouts enjoyed a very successful week at Camp Bowman, which is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. The Troop was selected as the Troop of the Week and received the Honor Paddle Award. In addition, the Troop completed a major service project—built a new fire safety sign at the entrance to Camp Bowman—for which its members achieved many merit badges.

Photos courtesy of Troop 90