

The Passion of the Christ

I saw the Passion on Friday afternoon. The theatre was half full of people, mostly older adults. There was the usual smattering of conversation, until the room darkened and the screen lit up. There were hardly any further sounds from the audience except for a few audible gasps during the scourging and crucifixion scenes.

The Jesus of Nazareth depicted by this movie is not the plastic Jesus on a bedroom shelf or even the faraway Jesus of the Scriptures. No, this is Jesus in His humanity, True God but also True Man. This is the Jesus of relationships, friendships betrayed by a kiss, agonizing over where his Father's Will must lead. This is Jesus who was tempted, like we all are tempted, by the comforts and lures of the world. Yet this is Jesus who willingly bore all things.

Other critics and commentators will talk about the violence and it is true. Yet, it is not violence for the sake of gratuitous violence. The death of Jesus, like anyone else who died by crucifixion, was slow and agonizing. Scourging is a very bloody action. Yet it is because He was truly faithful to His Abba that Jesus' death became redemptive for us. The toddler Jesus who fell and cried when He skinned his knee grew to become the prophet whose death opened the heavens.

I recommend this movie to any older teen or adult who wishes to delve deeper, who doesn't want to leave their relationship with Jesus at a superficial stage. While it is only one director's interpretation of the Good News, it is an interpretation which helped me truly appreciate why the crucifixion was a stumbling block for some but a symbol of eternal love for others.

Note: This movie is rated R for good reason. I do not recommend that younger teens view this film. I also recommend that you go to the movie with another person so that you can discuss what you have seen and heard.

Reviewed by Karen Bushman-Director of Religious Education

Financial Update

Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, we at last have some good financial news to report. Our net income for the first half of the year was \$61,701 and we are on pace to finish the year without a deficit for the first time in many years. Total income was \$1,151,097 and total expenses were \$1,089,396.

Our current favorable position could not have been achieved without the generosity of our parishioners, particularly those who gave to the special appeal to balance the budget for this year. The appeal contributed \$30,000 to our income. We also owe a thanks to our staff and faculty who continue to provide the services we need, but are doing so at a lower cost to the parish. This year's expenses for the first half of the year were \$131,000 below our expenses for the first six months of last year.

Although we are showing net income of \$61,701 at this point, there are still some challenges ahead. Our income tends to be higher in the first half of the year, mainly because November and December are among the best months for contributions and June and July are among the worst. Typically, we cannot finish the year without a deficit unless we are showing a surplus at this time of year.

Mick McGavin-Trustee Treasurer St. Veronica

Coming next month: VIRTUS

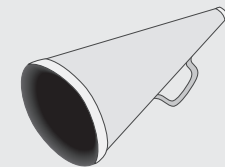
In next month's mailing, we'll have information about the new program beginning at SV and elsewhere, designed to safeguard children from sex abuse.

***This newsletter was put together by SV's
Communication Subcommittee.***

If you have ideas for future articles or would like to help, please contact Fred Schmitz at 744-1070.



St. Veronica's Voice
March, 2004



FAITH OPPORTUNITIES DURING LENT

Lent has just begun. If you're looking for ways to make *this a meaningful season*, St. Veronica's is offering several opportunities to help us deepen our faith and reach out to others.

1) *SV's Parish Mission Renewal:*

"Sharing the Good News" runs *March 7-11th*. It's a *retreat-type* experience, but at the parish and during the week. The first service will be Sunday, 3/7 at noon. Then Monday-Thursday, there will be a special 8:15am Mass and a service/Liturgy at 7pm.

Cancel your non-essential appointments that week and *spend time deepening your faith*.

Call the parish office (482-2920) if you need transportation or child care or, if you're home-bound and would like a visit.

2) *Cluster Lenten Series:*

This just began, but anyone can still take part. People from SV and our neighboring parishes will visit a different church each of the following evenings, experiencing three Stations of the Cross at each. The dates: 2/29 (*Nativity*), 3/8 (*St. Aug*), 3/16 (*SV*), 3/24 (*IC*) + 4/1 (*St. Paul*).

It's a great chance to meet and pray with fellow Catholics. See the bulletin or call the parish office (482-2920) for details.

3) *Good Neighbor Initiative:*

This program has just resumed, and will work to *build relationships among neighbors*. Several parishioners have volunteered to contact the people on their block who belong to SV's. The goal is not to recruit people for committees or persuade them to come to church, but rather to let them know that others are interested in their well-being.

If someone from the parish contacts you, *please welcome that call*. There are no strings attached.



PARISHIONERS STATIONED ABROAD

Several parishioners have been called to serve in the war in Iraq. They are all in our hearts and prayers, as are their families.

Here's a profile of one of these young people.

Joshua "Josh" Johnson

Josh is the son of Tom and Sue Johnson and the brother of Kate and Lizzy. He's been a member of St. Veronica's Parish nearly his entire life.

Josh joined the National Guard in December, 2000 as a military police officer. Last spring, he got the call that sent him to Kuwait and then to Baghdad, Iraq.

In Iraq, Josh guards gates and buildings and helps train the new Iraqi police force. Earlier, he helped repair many blown out windows and one of the "royal" family's swimming pools so U.S. troops could use it for relief from the scorching Iraqi summer heat.

He's told his family that Iraq is dangerous and the people there seem frightened of him and other American soldiers, yet are happy they are there. Sue says her son is proud of the work he's doing and has never expressed fear about his well-being (he hasn't yet had to use his firearm), yet is terribly homesick.

Josh and his unit hope to return to the U.S. at Eastertime. That would be one year since his parents last saw him.



Before being summoned to active duty, Josh was enrolled at U-W Parkside majoring in criminal justice. He plans to finish his college upon returning from Iraq.

If you haven't yet met Josh, he graduated with honors from grade school and high school in Cudahy. While in high school, he participated

in baseball, cross country, tennis and swimming.

At St. Veronica's, he served as the Youth Representative for the Parish Council for two years. He was also an aide in the Religious Ed program.

Josh's parents, who have every right to brag, say their son is down-to-earth, big-hearted, determined and always ready to lend a hand. His passions include his family and chocolate ice cream.

When you see Josh around Eastertime, please greet him and thank him for his service to us and our country!

NEW SCHOOL!

In case you missed it, St. Veronica's will become part of a new, district-wide school starting this fall.

The school will serve the members of our parish along with those from St. Paul, St. Augustine, Immaculate Conception, Nativity of the Lord and Sacred Heart.

Those parishes, including ours, were running up debts trying to keep their schools afloat.

Our campus will now become the site of the new upper school, grades 4 through 8.

St. Paul's facility will house K3-3rd grade.

The name of our new school will be St. Thomas Aquinas Academy, after the patron saint of students. It (one school, two sites) will begin operations on July 1st.

In the meantime, the new school board has begun charting the course. There are certainly a lot of ideas that need to be synthesized. Our two school board reps are Brian Gates and Penny Krafczyk.

If you have ideas for the new school or questions about it, Brian and Penny say feel free to contact them. Brian's #482-0823. Penny's #769-7422. Her email: krafczpa@hotmail.com

Stayed tuned for our plans to formally close St. Veronica's current school. It will certainly be sad, we have 75 years for which to be grateful!