

From My Rectory Window...



We are so happy to have the Franciscan Sisters who have a Convent located in Atlantic City, joining with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal stationed in Harlem to provide us with a Lenten Mission on March 11th, 12th & 13th. It will be a great opportunity to hear consecrated souls share their story of renewal and conversion as they help us to ask the question: ***“To Whom Shall we go?”*** The purpose of the mission is the help increase the devotion of our Parishioners and anyone else who comes to our Church, to love the Lord Jesus even more. It's much like servicing a car prior to a long trip, as Lent is very much a journey through a darkened place which illustrates our need for personal growth and enlightenment. Lent is definitely not for the perfect, but for those who are convinced that without God they would get nowhere rather quickly. Lent becomes a great opportunity to grow in virtue and self-awareness. I hope you will put these special days aside and join us as we quiet down (a major task for me) to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. We had a really good meeting last Sunday to plan for our Parish Ushers. There will be a general meeting of ALL active Parish Ushers on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 24th at about 1:45 P.M. in St. Matthews Room in our Parish Center. As many of our loyal Ushers have passed on or become incapacitated due to illness, we must plan to recruit ushers of mature years and of much younger years to ensure that the orderly conduct of the various Masses and other observances in Church will continue in a peaceful way. The membership is open to properly disposed members of the Parish who wish to exercise this special service for the good of the Parish and the parishioners. Also, we have discussed security in any event and handling medical emergencies etc. I would hope that the folks would step forward to give us a hand in this regard to keep things running as smoothly as they have been. We have begun to provide new spaces for our handicapped brothers and sisters to have a comfortable place to glide into if they are dependent on wheel chairs and walkers etc. Again, these places are specifically set aside for those who really need them. If you do not rely on mobile aids like the above mentioned, then of course you do NOT sit there. We sometimes have had situations where folks who are not handicapped or limited, sit there anyway so that after they have received Holy Communion, they can bolt out the side door. Can't understand this! You surely know my feelings about this. May the Lord deliver us from this. We are so fortunate to have the frequent celebration of Holy Mass. I often hear stories from Father Evarist and other missionary Priests, of how in some villages of places in Uganda or Philippines etc., they rarely have Mass because of the distance for the Priest to travel and the lack of Priests, and so they have the celebration of Mass irregularly. The people begin to gather hours ahead of time to pray and sing as a preparation for their very high-spirited Liturgy. Father Evarist tells me that they will have been singing for even an hour prior to Mass, just to get into the mood. When Father arrives, he may have to hear confessions, baptize children, bless marriages and anoint the sick, and then have a very musically high-spirited Mass which could go on for a couple of hours (Could you imagine?). But the Faith is strong, young and not compromised. While Mass is a daily event here in Whiting, may it be a generous expression of our love for God. Father also told me that when Mass ends, that everyone stays to sing what seem to be endless verses of hymns and then they stay to share what food they have brought. This is highly reminiscent of what the early Christians did on the Lord's Day. How closely should we resemble them in essence, if not in external custom? Let's give our best in worshiping the Lord in Spirit and Truth. By the way, Father Evarist will be returning from Uganda about the 25th of the month. Father Quill continues to be my great helper during Fathers vacation, along with our weekend Fathers, and our devoted Deacons and other helpers. Keep praying for our four candidates in formation in the RCIA program. Our oldest Catechumen Will who is 38 is doing much better after a serious illness, thank the Lord. Thank you to everyone who continue to join us in prayer for his complete recovery. Praising the name of the Lord with you: Your Pastor and servant: Father Pat Papalia

P.S. Next week we will begin our Catholic Annual Appeal. We will use the rebate from last year's appeal to cover the renovation of the Handicapped space. Please consider and be as generous as you always are. PAP.