



Blessed Sacrament News

Vol 1 April 2019

1029 Delaware Avenue | Buffalo, NY | 716.884-0053

SELECTED CALENDAR

April 28:

First Eucharist
Retreat/Rehearsal
10:00 am

Catholicism:
Word on Fire,
Session #3
"Mary, Mother
of God"
12:00 pm
Marian Hall

May 5:

First Eucharist
9:00 am Mass

May 12:

Mother's Day

May Crowning
9:00 am Mass

June 9:

Pentecost

June 16:

Father's Day

June 23:

Corpus Christi &
Golden Jubilee
10:00 am

Retirement Brunch
After Mass



Save This Date: Sunday, June 23, 2019

The Parish Council of Blessed Sacrament Church would like to invite you to save the date of Sunday, June 23, 2019. On June 23 we will be celebrating three different occasions of significance to our parish.

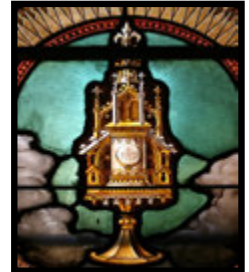
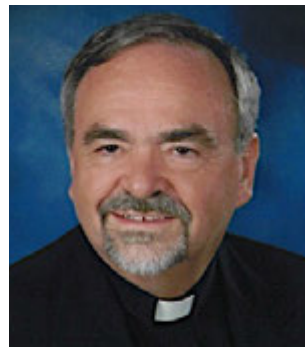
Corpus Christi

On June 23 we celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi, the liturgical celebration of the Real Presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Corpus Christi is the feast day of our parish. A procession and veneration of the Blessed Sacrament will occur at the end of Mass.

We will also honor and celebrate our fifth pastor, Rev. Paul R. Bossi, on two very special occasions in his life:

Golden Jubilee Anniversary:

This year marks Fr. Paul's 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood in 1969. Fr. Paul will celebrate and preach at his Golden Jubilee Mass at 10:00 am on June 23, 2019. Please note: no 9:00 am or 11:00 am Masses on June 23.



A detail of the Eucharist
from a window in the
Nave of the church



"You are a priest for ever of the
order of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 7.17

Retirement Brunch:

Immediately following the Golden Jubilee Mass, we will celebrate Fr. Paul's retirement from active ministry, here at Blessed Sacrament for the past 23 years, and from his 50 years as a Catholic priest, at a Retirement Brunch. This will be held in the gymnasium of Catholic Academy of West Buffalo. All members of our parish are invited to attend, and we hope as many individuals, families, and children will be there. Admission is free. However, reservations are required and we can seat only 250 people. We will start taking reservations at all Masses during the weekend of May 18-19, 2019. You can sign up in the back of the church beginning that weekend. Or, you can contact Kathleen McCarthy by calling 716.881.2897 or by emailing her at mccarthy2937@aol.com.

In preparing for the Retirement Brunch, we would like to ask for your help in two areas. We need some "muscle" to help in the set-up and clean-up of the gym area in the school. And, if anyone wishes to provide some of their delicious homemade goodies, please contact Barbara Bielecki at bielecki21@aol.com or by calling her at 716.854.4562.



Blessed Sacrament News

What's Next?...

Our parish is facing a lot change in the next few months. When we learned that Fr. Paul was retiring, a lot of questions arose: *"Will we be closed?"... "Will we be merged with another parish?"... "Will we get a new pastor?"* Currently, it appears that our parish will remain open and that the bishop will assign a new pastor. Shortly after Easter, we anticipate that a member of the Priests' Personnel Board will come to the parish and have a meeting to learn what qualities and characteristics we're looking for in a new pastor. We were told that every parish answers that question by saying they *"...want Jesus Christ, and if not Him, then give them a young priest!"* We pray that the Holy Spirit enlightens the decision makers' minds to send us the priest that is the right fit for Blessed Sacrament. To help create that fit, a parish profile has been written and distributed to the priests of the diocese. Those priests who are interested in being assigned to Blessed Sacrament make their interests known to the Diocese and the selection process is managed by the Diocese. At this time we don't know *"when"* a new pastor will be announced.

As the Parish Council learns more, that information will be shared in an appropriate and timely manner.

Lay Leadership...

During this time of change and transition, active lay leadership is more important than ever. Our Parish Council is very much focused on providing the appropriate stewardship to our faith community. The foundation for this leadership is anchored in the parish's five-year strategic plan that was created through the active involvement of over 65 people in 2013-2014. The completed plan was presented in 2014, and shortly thereafter, a Parish Council was formed. Strategic initiatives were identified and so much has been accomplished over the last five years bringing those initiatives to fruition. The Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles are listed below. A brochure listing the summary of the Strategic Plan and its Strategic Pillars is available in the back of the church.

Our Mission: Our Purpose for Being

As we reflect upon the Good News, it is clear that our purpose is simple, clear, and directly stated throughout Jesus' teachings, so why not just say it?

Mission:

**To love God, love our neighbors,
and make disciples!**

Our Vision: What We Wish to Achieve

Our Vision is what we imagine our future as a faith-filled community to be; where we are headed, and what we will become.

Vision:

**To become the joyful, vibrant, and
welcoming Catholic Church of choice
for the Elmwood Village and
the Delaware District**

Our Guiding Principles: Our Foundation

As a parish, our Guiding Principles are:

• **Faith** • **Hope** • **Love** • **Mercy** • **Justice**

We understand and explore these Guiding Principles when:

- **Faith** accepts and trusts God's Word as truth;
- **Hope** uplifts us and expresses confidence in God's praise;
- **Love** reflects God's divine Grace and cherishes all humanity;
- **Mercy** brings assistance to those in bodily and spiritual need;
- **Justice** compels us to cooperate, enabling our society to serve the common good.

We express these Guiding Principles:

- By being open, welcoming, and accepting of all;
- Through our joyful celebration of liturgical worship;
- By reaching out to all in our parish community and beyond.



Thinking about the 2nd Five-Year Strategic Plan...

The first five-year strategic plan covered a period of time from 2014-2019. As in the case of all long-range planning, the plan is not written in stone. Variations occur -- you have some successes and some things don't work out as projected. The key to long-range planning is to be able to revisit the plan and make the appropriate modifications.

In September 2018, aware that we were approaching the end of the first five-year Strategic Plan in 2019, a long-range planning session was held at the Saturn Club and was facilitated by Dennis Mahaney, the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis, Diocese of Buffalo. In that session the participating parishioners revisited the initial strategic plan, reviewed what had been accomplished, and then discussed what needed to be focused on going forward. There was a clear sense that the parish needed to work on attracting and retaining young families with children and young people as the future of the of the parish lay in those age demographics.

As a result, Dennis Mahaney started conducting Listening Sessions with young families with children. Dennis prepared a report based on what he heard from the group and presented these findings to Fr. Bossi, Kathleen McCarthy, Parish Council chairperson, and Michael Pitek, Marketing, Communications, & Membership chairperson. Pitek was asked to continue this outreach effort and conduct additional sessions with these parishioners and other age groups in the parish.



These new sessions will be called Coffee Talks. The sessions will occur with three different age groups:

- 20's-30's: unmarried, married, without children
- 40's-50's
- 60's +

Pitek will use a series of questions which will start the discussions. It's important to create an atmosphere where people feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves. This is a critical part of "listening" ...to listen without judging. We must first seek to understand in order to be understood. For it's only then can we come to appreciate each other and come together in community to re-invigorate our parish.

After ideas are expressed, statements will be summarized and categorized. Each group will identify those items which are most important to them. Then, the group will work to identify "actions" that can be implemented to either solve issues or create new programs and opportunities.

When each group has finished their Coffee Talks, a report will be prepared and given to the pastor (either Fr. Paul or our new pastor, based on the timing of when the Coffee Talks are completed). The Parish Council will also be informed.

Coffee Talks will be scheduled within the next six weeks. In hopes of getting the largest turnout possible, we will schedule the Coffee Talks on Sunday, between Masses. Announcements will be made in the bulletin when the Coffee Talks will commence.

As Divine Providence would have it, the end of our first long-range, five year Strategic Plan coincides with the arrival of our new pastor. This sets the stage for the formation of a second long-range, five year Strategic Plan.



Blessed Sacrament News

Empty Pews...

If you've attended a regular Sunday Mass (not a special occasion or holiday) you are well aware of the many empty seats in the pews. In 2012-2013, we had 450 households with 850 members registered in the parish. Today, the number of households has decreased to 316, with 643 registered members..

This negative trend is not unique to Blessed Sacrament. Throughout Buffalo and the country, declining church attendance is problematic. So what can we do? A couple of things are occurring which are positive. Consider the fact that Buffalo is experiencing a revival of sorts. People are moving back into the city: both millennials as well as empty-nesters. The Buffalo Medical Campus is thriving with the recent openings of the University at Buffalo's new Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, the new Oishei Children's Hospital of Buffalo, the Gates Vascular Institute, and the Conventus Center for Collaborative Medicine. New jobs, new people...moving into the city. And, consider where we are geographically located. We are the **only** Catholic church in the Elmwood Village today, sitting in proximity to Allentown with its diverse population of all ages and professions.



Now is the time to aggressively **"market"** our parish. Gone are the days when we relied on the old adage that "we built it and they will come!" "They" are not coming! So, we need to go out and attract "them," welcome "them," and get to know "them." We have recently combined the Marketing & Communications Committee and the Membership Committee of the Parish Council. This makes sense especially as Membership relies upon "getting the word out" and that's what Marketing & Communications does: each committee influences and impacts the other. We will be doing a number of initiatives over the next few months which will include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increasing our Social Media profile and outreach
- Conducting email blasts and campaigns
- Building our email list: if you haven't given us your email address, please do so
- Holding special events for new and prospective members
- Launch a **"Hello, My Name Is..." Campaign**. We need to get to know each other...from the **"Youngsters"** to the **"Oldsters"**...a community is built on relationships and we need to develop interactions with each other so that these new relationships grow and our community is built
- Coffee Talks (as mentioned on page 3)
- Create media and public awareness through marketing, advertising, public relations, tours of our stained-glass windows/church, parish social events (like the recent Fish Fry Dinner, and other events), Faith Formation Programs for all ages, and most importantly, through our religious and liturgical celebrations
- Develop a stronger brand for Blessed Sacrament Church by creating a consistent image and communicating messages which project who we are, where we are, and what our faith-filled community strives to become, as stated in our parish's Vision statement: "The joyful, vibrant, and welcoming Catholic church of choice for the Elmwood Village and the Delaware District."

We invite you to use your TIME and TALENT to help us reinvigorate our parish and achieve both our Vision and our Mission. If you are excited and willing to help, please contact Michael Pitek (by emailing him at michael@thepitekgroup.com or by calling him at 716-480-8313 (cell) or 716-816-0144 (office).



Parish Stewardship 2019...

GOD SO LOVED HE GAVE



TIME TALENT TREASURE

What shall I return to the Lord for all His bounty to me?
Psalm 116:12

Typically, Blessed Sacrament Church conducts a Stewardship Drive in the Autumn. However, we ask you to start thinking about Stewardship now during this Easter season of hope, rebirth, and renewal.

Stewardship – Doing What “We Believe”

At its heart, Stewardship is an expression of what we believe. We believe in “the Lord, the giver of Life” – that our infinite God is the source of infinite abundance. The more that we try to claim what God has given us as our own, the less we receive. It’s like trying to clutch water in your fist, the tighter you clench, the less water you can carry. It’s only when you relax your grasp and open your palm that you create a cup.

When we hear the word Stewardship, we think it will involve increasing financial contributions, spending more time in service activities, or visiting the sick. It’s true that stewardship requires giving. Your giving can be as complex as implementing an entire Liturgical

Engagement Program, or as simple as holding open the door for a young mother who’s juggling a toddler along with a newborn in a stroller. Stewardship is making a choice, one small step at a time, to acknowledge our dependence on God for all that we have, and all that we are. Stewardship lies at the heart and soul of Christian life.

When we talk about Stewardship we usually talk about the 3 T’s: Time, Talent, and Treasure.

TIME

The Gift of Our Action

One of the greatest gifts God gives us is the 24 hours of each day. The gift of **TIME** is a good place to start your stewardship.

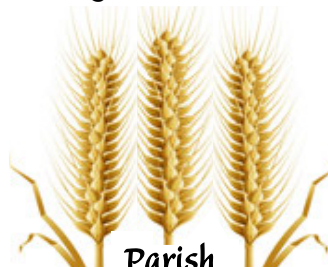
And don’t forget the power of prayer. Set aside some time for formal prayer i.e., Mass, Rosary, etc.). Informally, make all of your life a prayer...such as cooking, writing a memo, changing a diaper...all of these offered in the right spirit are gifts of **TIME**.

Participating in service is yet another way to give of our **TIME**: visit the sick, lector, volunteer, usher. We live the life of a steward when we hand back a portion of each day to God without thinking of what we get in return.

TALENT

The Gift of Our Ability

It doesn’t matter how rich or poor we are, how smart, educated, or famous we might be – each of us has been given at least one gift that we can use on behalf of all the rest of humanity. Our **TALENTS** should be recognized, cherished, and shared. Identify your **TALENT(S)** and then give of it/them freely.



Parish
Stewardship
2019

“It’s in giving that we receive.”

TREASURE

The Gift of Our Abundance

Most of our lives and homes are full of “stuff.” The more we have, the more we tend to acquire. Sometimes all of that “stuff” distracts us from what’s really important.

Think how you can share your **TREASURE** with the church. To adopt a practice of sacrificial giving, reflect over all that God has given you monetarily. Then think about the size of your donation. Consider a “tithe” or 10% of your gross income. If that’s too much, then consider 5% or 2%. Re-evaluate after six or twelve months, and consider increasing your gift. At all times, keep a spirit of gratitude at the core of giving your **TREASURE**.



Let's Talk Money...Online Giving

We are very fortunate that our Sunday sermons are not focused every week on "asking for money." As mentioned in the article on Stewardship, we are asked to reflect on what portion of our TREASURE we might give to support our parish. If you've read the bulletins over the last several months, you've probably noticed that the weekly contributions are decreasing. The parish is finding itself struggling to meet monthly operating costs. Often, it must dip into its savings to cover expenses.

We would like to ask each family to revisit what they're contributing to the church. If it's at all possible, would you please consider increasing your contribution? If you aren't currently contributing, would you think about becoming a contributor? If you don't have envelopes, would you contact the rectory and request them? Or, would you sign up for [Online Giving](#), Blessed Sacrament's [Intentional/Electronic Giving Program](#).



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **What forms of payment are accepted?**

The Online Giving Program (Intentional/Electronic Giving) accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, and Direct Debit through your checking account.

- **Does using Online Giving (Intentional/Electronic Giving) cost me anything?**

No. The parish pays a minor transaction fee per transaction. There is no cost to the donor and no additional cost to the parish beyond the transaction charge.

- **What are the advantages of Online Giving (Intentional Giving/Electronic Giving)?**

- 1) It makes it easier for you to donate to our parish, no more searching for envelopes or writing checks
- 2) Online Giving (Intentional/Electronic Giving) brings additional benefit to the parish in that it provides a steady stream of donations that we can count on, regardless of weather, vacations, travel, and other challenges which sometimes prevent families from attending Mass
- 3) Online Giving (Intentional/Electronic Giving) helps both the donor and the parish for a very modest transaction charge

- **Is this program secure?**

We have organized this program with a very reputable organization that meets all Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance regulations. No data checking or credit card data is stored at or accessible by the parish or parishioners - it is 100% data protected. We are using one of the 10 largest payment processing companies in the nation to handle all transactions. They process tens of billions of dollars per year in transactions.

- **Can I modify or cancel my donation?**

Yes. Simply call the toll free Intentional Giving line at 866.407.5831 or the Rectory at 716.884.0053.

- **If I participate in Online Giving (Intentional/Electronic Giving) will my donations end up funding lawsuits against the Diocese of Buffalo?**

No. The donations you give to Blessed Sacrament Church go directly to the parish. These donations do not go to the Diocese of Buffalo. The parish is a separate and distinct entity. Funds are not co-mingled.

- **If I sign up for Online Giving (Intentional/Electronic Giving) will I have anything to place in the basket each time I attend Mass?**

Yes. The act of placing an offering in the basket at Mass is an important part of church custom. We'll give you donation slips that you can place in the basket. The Rectory has a supply of these slips.

- **How do I sign up?**

Enrollment forms are available in the Rectory and in the back of the church. An enrollment form can also be emailed to you, upon request, just provide us with your email address.