

Reflections archive, May 2nd, 2010 to September 12th, 2010

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of September 12th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

I hope that you had a wonderful and enjoyable Labor Day Weekend. As you know, our parish has been without a formal parishioner-input process for a while. I am, therefore, very seriously thinking about reinstating the pastoral council and finance committee after the clustering process is over.

Meanwhile, while we want our focus to be on our faith journey, we also realize that our monthly bills must be met. Unfortunately, I must report that the present weekly offertory is not enough to pay all the bills of our parish. Therefore, we have to think of bringing some revenue to the parish by having some events and programs which will give some vitality to the parish and some revenue to the church, as well. Please, if you can afford to give some TIME to the parish, please contact me at 860-754-4977 or at frjoe1954@aol.com to be a member of the Fund Raising Committee of the parish. I am looking forward to the joy of hearing from you at the earliest so that we can plan something for this fiscal year 2010-2011.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of September 5th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

I hope you had a wonderful and enjoyable summer. I have completed one year in this wonderful parish: September 1st was my anniversary. This past year was an active one for all of us here at St. Catherine of Siena. Many people donated many hours of their time, used their talents, and gave of their treasure to support our parish. From the 50th Anniversary Celebration to new wine chalices, from painting and repairing parts of the Church to creating a time capsule, our parishioners exhibited a deep desire to make our parish a very special faith family.

For many people, summer offers the opportunity for a change in routine: going to visit loved ones, traveling, camping, entertaining company from far away, picnics, outdoor grilling,

swimming, sleeping in a little longer, staying up a little later..... But, when September brings cooler temperatures, shorter days, school homework, team practices, and committee work, we tend to settle into a routine. Perhaps we might all consider carving a special time in our daily routine to spending more time with the Lord.

As the children (and the teachers!) head back to school, let this year be a year of blessing to everyone of you.

Please mark your calendar for

“One Day Life in the Spirit Seminar” at St. Catherine of Siena on Saturday, October 9, 2010.

Sincerely yours in Jesus,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of August 29th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

Summer is still with us although August will bring some families back from vacation. Vacation time means the attendance at Mass decreases and there is a corresponding decrease in offertory giving. To maintain the income needed for St. Catherine of Siena’s operating expenses, we encourage parishioners to make up their envelopes when they return. Bills have to be paid throughout the summer and the parish needs your ongoing support. As I mentioned last weekend, the offertory collection is the lifeline of the parish. Thank you so much for helping our parish maintain a stable financial footing.

Please mark your calendar for “One Day Life in the Spirit Seminar” at St. Catherine of Siena on Saturday, October 9, 2010. For more information, please see the bulletin insert. Thank you.

Gratefully yours,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of August 22nd, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

Summer is still with us and I hope that you are all enjoying it. Although August will bring some families back from vacation, we missed some of you at some wonderful events in the parish during July and August.

Another big program is being launched in the diocese: Why Catholic?

Why Catholic? is a program created by RENEW International that balances prayer, sharing of the Scripture and reflection on the teachings of our Catholic Faith. This is not Scripture study, even though that is a part of each session. Participants will find they are more deeply connected to their faith, and grow more connected to God our Father.

Why Catholic? is based on the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. Part One, starting in October, will be Christian Prayer: Deepening My Experience of God. The program runs for 6 weeks and each session is about 90 minutes long. For more information on Why Catholic?, please look at <http://www.whycatholic.org>

I am contacting Rev. Joseph Whittel, the coordinator of this program in our diocese, to present an information session sometime in the month of September. If everything goes well, we will have an abbreviated Why Catholic? session to give everyone a taste of the how their life can be enriched with a deeper understanding of our Faith. Please consider joining us for this opportunity to grow in our faith.

Have a wonderful weekend,
Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of August 15th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,
FINANCIAL REPORT - 2009/2010

As I mentioned last week, this weekend's bulletin has an insert with the financial report for fiscal year 2009-2010. It will give you a picture of the parish finances for the last year. We have printed the revenues, disbursements, and the assets of the parish, as well.

The last part of the second page gives detailed revenue and expenditures of the 50th Anniversary celebration, from January to August 2010. It is there for you to review. Please note: we did not use the church account for the celebration. We used only the funds that were raised for the event. No priest likes to speak about money. However, I am taking this opportunity to ask every parishioner to review their weekly offering and consider a reasonable increase. The Church of St. Catherine of Siena has great tradition and we have the opportunity to build on that tradition. To do so, we must come to terms with our financial situation. The offertory collection is the lifeline of the parish.

Thank you for your support! These are tough times for all, financially, but I know from past Parish history that even in times of hardship, you will continue to give what you can to St. Catherine of Siena Parish. I only ask that you do your best. It is all that can be expected - and certainly, what God deserves. God bless you all!

Yours Sincerely in Christ,
Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of August 8th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

FINANCIAL REPORT – 2009/2010

The financial report for fiscal year 2009/2010 will be in next week's bulletin. It will give you a picture of the parish finances for the last year. We have printed the revenues, disbursements, and the assets of the parish, as well.

Thank you for your support! These are tough times for all, financially, but I know from past Parish history that even in times of hardship, you will continue to give what you can to St. Catherine of Siena Parish. God bless you all!

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of August 1st, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

Our Three-in-One Parish Evening, held last weekend on July 24th, was a wonderful celebration. The sun came out after the cloudburst; the Time Capsule was blessed and buried; we shared cold soda, delicious appetizers, and lively conversation, and had live music, courtesy of Eric Covino. Special thanks to Bob Payette and Ron & Rose Bossie for the wonderful audio-visual presentation.

Many thanks to everyone for their cooperation and support! A very special thank you to the committee: Kathy Coon for the site work and rock; Pat Bell for the landscape design; Len Kostek for the trim work; Bob O'Neil for obtaining the vault; Joe Barile for the moisture proofing; Nancy Mignault, Wendy Majcher and Dot Gauthier for organizing the party; and Jan Clancy, Eleanor Miller and Mary Ann Melgey for coordinating the capsule contents.

Celebrations help our faith community become a faith family. Thank you for making this happen.

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of July 25th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

For the past two and a half years our Parish has been blessed by the service of our parish sexton, Bob Edwards. Bob, however, will soon be moving to Texas. The community of St. Catherine wishes Bob all the best:

"Thank you, Bob, we will miss you! God bless you in your new home and this new part of your life."

We would like to fill the sexton position as soon as possible so that the new sexton will have some training time with Bob to learn the details of the position. We are not currently advertising the position because I have received referrals from some parishioners and have heard directly from others who have heard of the vacancy. Please contact the parish office at 860-887-9966 if you or someone you know might have an interest in the position.

Sincerely,
Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of July 18th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

This weekend Gospel reminds me of a story about a newly ordained young priest fresh out of seminary who was assigned to his first parish in a small, farming community. Each Sunday he preached exegetical sermons that had nothing to do with the lives of the people. In fact, over the years the village congregation had become quite patient and tolerant, gifted with the task of training young priests in the realities of church life. Months went by and then one Sunday the elderly sacristan who prepared the sanctuary for the Mass left a note on the pulpit. Read John 12:21. That is all it said, John 12:21. Well, the young priest arrived in the sanctuary to prepare for the morning's Mass, he saw the note on the pulpit which read "John 12:21." A curious thing to find in the pulpit, he thought. Therefore, he quickly thumbed through his Bible and found the passage, which read: "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." In today's gospel story while Martha was busy preparing to feed Jesus, Mary wanted to see Jesus and listen to him.

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of July 11th, 2010:

My dear parishioners,

In today's Gospel, a scribe asked Jesus a very basic religious question: "What should I do to inherit eternal life?" In answer to the question, Jesus directed the Scribe's attention to the Sacred Scriptures. The scriptural answer is "love God and express it by loving your neighbor." However, to the scribe the word "neighbor" meant another Scribe or Pharisee – never a Samaritan or a Gentile. Hence, the Scribe insisted on further clarification of the word

“neighbor.” So Jesus told him the parable of the Good Samaritan. The parable clearly indicated that a “neighbor” is anyone who needs help and anyone who gives that help. Thus, the correct approach is not to ask the question “Who is my neighbor?” but rather to ask, “Am I a good neighbor to others?” The final command of Jesus, the Heavenly Good Samaritan, given during the Last Supper was: “Love others as I have loved you” because the invisible God dwells in every human being.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of July 4th, 2010:
My Dear Parishioners:

Last weekend, we collected \$985 for the mission diocese in India. On behalf of my Bishop, I express my sincere gratitude to everyone in the parish for your generosity. Bishop Thomas had a safe flight back to India and sends his love, gratitude and blessing to all the parishioners. Mark your calendars to celebrate our Three-in-One Parish Evening: July 24, 2010 For the details please read the insert. Thank you.
Have a great July 4th weekend!

Fr. Joe

Welcome to Most Rev. Thomas Thiruthalil, C.M., India for MCP in our Parish From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of June 27th, 2010

My dear parishioners,

This weekend we welcome Most Rev. Thomas Thiruthalil, Bishop of Balasore, India to our parish for the Annual Missionary Co-operative Plan 2010. He is my own Bishop and is making a Mission Appeal for his diocese in India, and the second collection this weekend will be for his mission diocese.

Thank you so much for your generosity to continue the work of Christ in the mission diocese of Balasore, India.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Fr. Joe

Welcome to Most Rev. Thomas Thiruthalil, C.M., India for MCP in our Parish From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of June 20th, 2010

My dear parishioners,

It will be our joy to welcome Most Rev. Thomas Thiruthalil, Bishop of the Diocese of Balasore, India to our parish in the last weekend of June for the Annual MCP. He is my own Bishop.

Diocese of Balasore was a part of the Archdiocese of Calcutta until 1990 when Balasore was erected as a Diocese. Although there are 25,000 Catholics in the Diocese of Balasore, its work extends among seven million people. There are 45 priests, a good number of women Religious and catechists rendering service to everyone in the region irrespective of religion and race. The Diocese has 30 Parish/Mission stations, one hospital, 16 dispensaries, three technical institutions, 28 hostels, two Minor Seminaries and 14 schools. These resources, human and material, are far too short of what is required to carry on the evangelization and social development work that is needed. The Diocese makes every effort to raise as much resources as possible locally. It depends on the support, generosity, and prayers of Catholics across the world such as you, to continue the work of Christ in Balasore, India.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of June 13th, 2010
Thank You Letter From Father Joe: (Parish Bulletin Insert)

Thank you note from the Administrator

Alive with the faith and zeal of our forebears, our parish family cherishes the sacrifices and commitment of the Bishops, Priests, Religious and laity who with their foresight, leadership and generosity to build up this wonderful parish family of St. Catherine of Siena.

What goes into any celebration? Planning, hard work, emotions, people; usually food; sometimes music; and always money.

Our 50th anniversary celebration is no different: many people helped plan it; many people were involved in executing it; and the dear Lord knows there were all kinds of emotions involved!

The most important part of our celebration, however, is the people. For fear of inadvertently leaving out a name, I will not thank individuals, with one exception: our Bishop Most Reverend Michael Cote, for celebrating this thanksgiving Holy Mass and giving a very inspiring homily. Bishop Cote is a successor to the Apostles in whom the work of Our Savior, Jesus Christ, lives and grows. He is our father in Christ. Bishop, your presence shows your love for the people of St. Catherine of Siena. Thank you for making our celebration extraordinary. May I take this opportunity to congratulate the Bishop as he celebrates 35 years of his priesthood.

Congratulations, Bishop.

Additionally, I would like to thank every member of the Anniversary Celebration committee; in particular, the liturgy, the booklet, Ladies Guild and the K of C, and each and every individual who helped by donating their time, talents and treasure. This celebration has been possible because of the hard work of each and every one of you.

I would like to thank all who attended: the parishioners, the visitors, the religious, and the clergy. Many of you have been active members of this parish during the past 50 years and, as such, had a part of bringing our parish along the road to this jubilee celebration.

A special word of thank you to all my brother priests for taking time to concelebrate this anniversary mass. In this year for priests, I would like to congratulate you for your dedication.

Thank you.

I like to acknowledge the beautiful choir, which made the celebration more prayerful. We cannot forget our wonderful altar servers and greeters. Thank you.

We will continue our celebration in Siena Hall soon after the mass, where we will acknowledge the priests and the religious and a few dignitaries who worked in the past here at St. Catherine of Siena. Please join us downstairs. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of June 6th, 2010

My dear Parishioners,

Today, we celebrate the solemn feast of Corpus Christi. Corpus Christi is the celebration of the abiding presence of a loving God as Emmanuel – God with us – in order to give collective thanks to our Lord living with us in the Eucharist. This feast gives us an occasion to learn more about the importance and value of the “Real Presence” so that we may appreciate the Sacrament better and receive maximum benefit from it.

Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist during his Last Supper. Jesus commanded his disciples to repeat it. We explain the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist by “transubstantiation” which means that the substance of the consecrated bread and wine is changed to the risen Jesus’ glorified body and blood by the action of the Holy Spirit and its accidents like color, shape, taste etc. remain the same.

"The Catholic Church teaches that in the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of the God-man are really, truly, substantially, and abidingly present together with his soul and divinity by reason of the Transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This takes place in the unbloody sacrifice of the the Mass."

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of May 30th, 2010

My dear Parishioners,

Today we celebrate the feast of the most Holy Trinity. The mystery of the most Holy Trinity is a basic doctrine of faith in Christianity, understandable not with our heads but with our hearts. It teaches us that there are three distinct persons in one God sharing the same divine nature. Our mind cannot grasp this doctrine, which teaches that $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$ and not 3. But we believe in this mystery because Jesus who is God taught it clearly, the evangelists recorded it, the Fathers of the Church tried to explain it and the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople defined it as dogma of Christian faith.

Importance in Christian life: 1) All prayers in the Church begin in the name of the Holy Trinity and end glorifying the Trinity. 2) All sacraments are administered (we are baptized, confirmed, anointed) in the Holy Trinity’s Name. 3) Church bells ring thrice inviting us to remember and

pray to the Holy Trinity. 4) We bless ourselves and the priest blesses us in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Have a wonderful Memorial Day weekend,
Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator: From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of May 23rd, 2010

My dear Parishioners,

As you might have noticed, our church parking lot is being fixed. It is going to look wonderful as we celebrate the Anniversary of our church.

I would like to explain about the money involved in this work. We obtained three quotes and chose M&M, 331 Valley View Rd, Sterling, CT. This company gave us the most reasonable price of \$ 4,500.

In the maintenance account, we have \$2,252. We will be receiving approximately \$1,000 from the Booklet Committee because the memorials and ads we sold generated more income than the cost of printing. We have, therefore, \$3,252. That means we need \$1,248 to complete the repair work of the parking lot.

At the call to build a parish in Preston, the parishioners rallied. So, too, when the call came to build a rectory, to renovate the parish, and to purchase a pipe organ. Every time the parishioners saw a need in their parish, they were always very, very generous with their time, talent, and treasure. Please know that your generosity is very much appreciated.

Unfortunately, however, the physical plant of our parish continues to age and deteriorate. In keeping with the spirit of maintaining our St. Catherine of Siena faith center, if you are able and willing, any donations toward meeting the balance needed to repair the parking lot would be gratefully received. Thank you so much for your generosity. God bless you.

Gratefully yours in the Lord,

Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator:
From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of May 16th, 2010

My dear Parishioners,

What do you remember about life in 1960? Some of you might be cherishing the memories. Do you remember women wearing a hat to church—or a hanky, if they forgot their hat? Do you remember men tipping their hats when passing a woman on the street? Do you remember the music and TV shows of 1960? Getting “dressed up” to go into the city. No stores being open on Sundays? Family dinners?

Do you feel that the old values are being left behind? Those traditions are being lost? Those religious beliefs are being ignored? Ever feel that technology is leaving you behind? Those teenagers can program the digital clocks and you cannot? That news spreads almost before it

happens. That time is racing by. That ATM cards, video games, Twitter, email, Google, blogs are from another world.

If we feel this way in 2010, what will the world be like in 2060 - The Year of the Centenary of our Church? We cannot predict what 2060 will bring, as change comes about so very quickly, but we CAN remind the parishioners of the 2060 St. Catherine of Siena Parish what the parishioners of 2010 held near and dear.

Join the fun: we are going to make a parish time capsule, designed to be opened in 2060. Watch the bulletin for more details to follow.....

Have a great weekend, Fr. Joe

Reflection from the Administrator:

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of May 9th, 2010

My dear Parishioners,

The origin of "Mothers' Day." Anna M. Jarvis (1864-1948) first suggested the national observance of an annual day honoring all mothers because she had loved her own mother so dearly. At a memorial service for her mother on May 10, 1908, Miss Jarvis gave a carnation (her mother's favorite flower) to each person who attended. Within the next few years, the idea of a day to honor mothers gained popularity, and Mothers' Day was observed in a number of large cities in the U.S. On May 9, 1914, by an act of Congress, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mothers' Day. He established the day as a time for "public expression of our love and reverence for the mothers of our country." By then it had become customary to wear white carnations to honor departed mothers and red to honor the living, a custom that continues to this day.

Mothers should be saluted 1) for their tenacious and sacrificial love for their children 2) for the tremendous impact they have on their children and 3) for our intimate relationship with them from birth to death.

Happy Mother's Day. Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of May 2nd, 2010

The History of St. Catherine of Siena

Catherine was born in Siena, Italy, on March 25, 1347. Her parents were Giacomo di Benincasa, a cloth-dyer, and his wife, Lapa.

As a tertiary or lay affiliate, Catherine lived at home rather than in a convent. Far from leading to laxity, this arrangement allowed her to practice austerities that a prioress would probably not have permitted.

She is especially famous for fasting and practicing physical mortifications in ways that sound unhealthy today—modern scholar Rudolph Bell uses her life as an example in his book Holy Anorexia.

In about 1366 Catherine experienced what she described in her letters as a Mystical Marriage with Jesus, and in 1370 she received a series of visions of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. After these visions she heard a command to abandon her withdrawn life and enter the public life of the world.

Catherine began to write letters to those in authority, begging for peace between the republics and principalities of Italy and for the return of the papacy from Avignon to Rome. She had a

detailed correspondence with Pope Gregory XI, asking him to reform the clergy and the administration of the Papal States.

In June of 1376, Catherine went to Avignon herself as ambassador of Florence to make peace with the Papal States, but was unsuccessful. She impressed the Pope so much; however, that he returned his administration to Rome in January of 1377. In the Great Schism of 1378 she supported Pope Urban VI, who summoned her to Rome. She lived there until her death on April 29, 1380.

Pope Pius II canonized Catherine in 1461, and her letters are considered one of the great works of early Tuscan literature. Her feast day is April 29th. She is the patron saint of fire prevention, pestilence, and headaches.

St. Catherine of Siena, pray for us.
