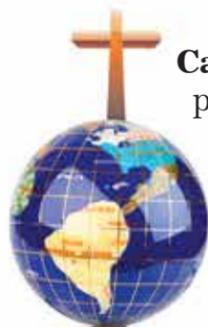


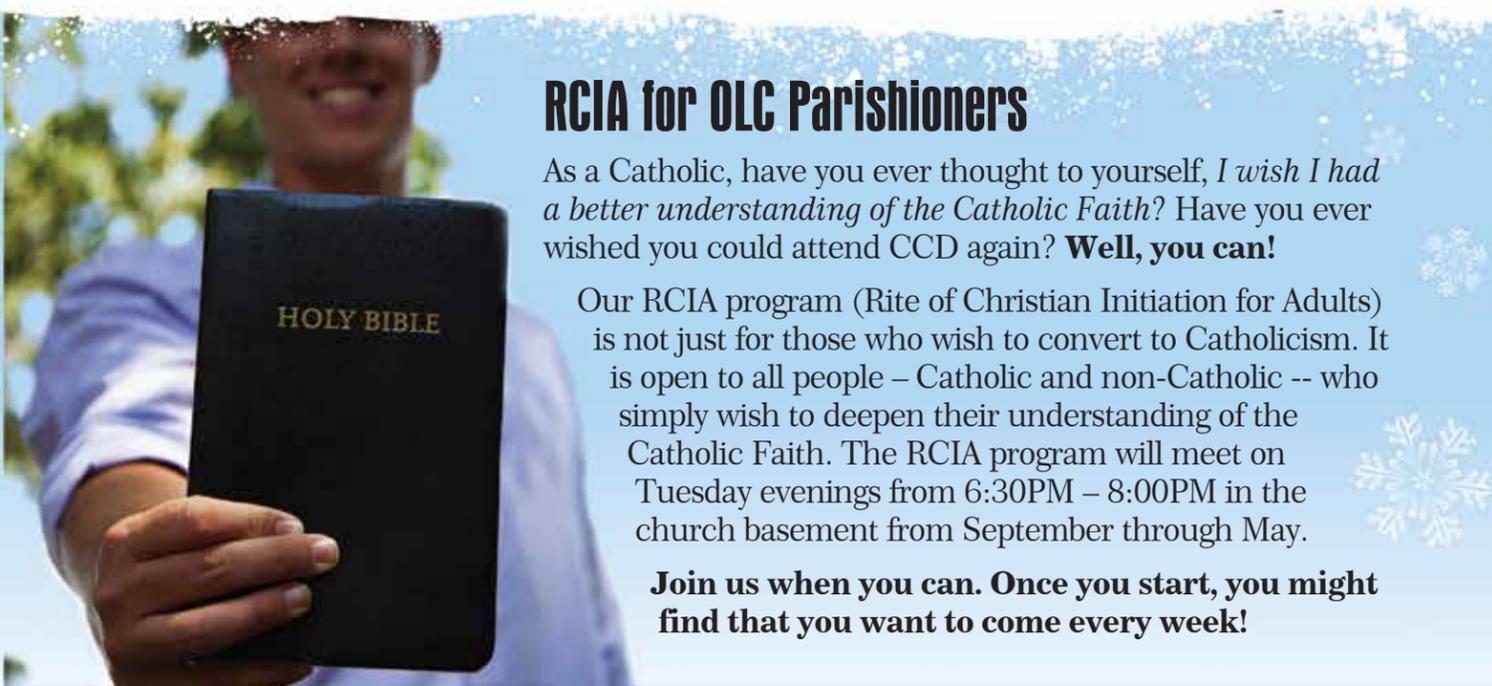
CAFE CORNER



Catholicism hits home! Café made its fall debut with the powerful new series, "Catholicism," hosted by Father Robert Barron. The class had an overwhelmingly positive response with over 70 parishioners signing up to attend. Each participant attended at least one session during the ten week course, with the average attendance at approximately thirty-five people per week.

Prayer and a thirst for understanding led the participants on a journey of a lifetime as they visited more than 15 countries through the video series. The Catholic Faith is a faith rich in history, beauty and life. This is evident in every part of the world. Father Barron's series opens your eyes to those things you may never see in person and helps you to see them not only with your eyes but with your heart. Look for more series like this from Café in the upcoming months.

For more information or to offer suggestions on what you would like to learn, please contact Paul Harkins at harkfam1@verizon.net or Angie Raabe at raabeacm@yahoo.com.



RCIA for OLC Parishioners

As a Catholic, have you ever thought to yourself, *I wish I had a better understanding of the Catholic Faith?* Have you ever wished you could attend CCD again? **Well, you can!**

Our RCIA program (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is not just for those who wish to convert to Catholicism. It is open to all people – Catholic and non-Catholic -- who simply wish to deepen their understanding of the Catholic Faith. The RCIA program will meet on Tuesday evenings from 6:30PM – 8:00PM in the church basement from September through May.

Join us when you can. Once you start, you might find that you want to come every week!

OLC CONNECTION TEAM: Maureen McCormick, Newsletter Coordinator · Paul Harkins, Café Corner · Bill Mann, Editor and Printing Advisor · Charlene McCaw, Contributing Editor · Alan Reger, Contributing Editor · Marty Sannino, Parish Website Administrator · Rev. Victor J. Eschbach, Pastor · Joy Cobler, moxie!NK Design, Graphic Designer. Special thanks to parishioners Scott Cresmer, Kathleen Hood and Donna Martin for providing the beautiful photos in this edition. The OLC Connection newsletter is a monthly to bi-monthly publication depending on church events and news. Our team wishes to thank all of the people who assisted us in preparing this edition. If you would like to join our team, please contact us at olcconnection@olcchurch.org.

The Joyful Family of God

OLC Connection

Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church · November/December 2012 & January 2013 · Volume 7, Issue 5



A new year has begun!

OUR PASTOR'S PONDERINGS BY FATHER VICTOR J. ESCHBACH

The Holy Father has proclaimed 2013 a Year of Faith. Our Church Family will celebrate numerous milestones in this Year of Faith. This year marks the 175th Anniversary of St. Malachi's Church; the 160th Anniversary of Our Lady of Consolation Parish; the 25th Anniversary of Deacon Gene Favinger's Ordination; and the 20th Anniversary of my appointment as Pastor. It is indeed a Year of Faith for our Parish!

Each of these events speaks of great faith on the part of our people as a community bonded by the Eucharistic Presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That's who we are! That's why we are here! To proclaim Jesus Christ present in our midst in Word, Sacrament, and Loving Service throughout the towns, boroughs, townships, and villages that comprise our parish.

Therefore, we will begin living this Year of Faith in our parish with the Forty Hours of Devotion before the Blessed Sacrament beginning February 9th until the closing with Procession and Benediction on Tuesday, February 12th. Father James Degrossa, a wonderful young priest ordained in 2010 who is presently serving as Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Pennel, PA, will lead us through this Forty Hours' Devotion.

I have asked Kathleen Hood to chair the Celebrations of our Anniversaries. The dates of these Celebrations are gradually coming together. Acknowledging the Irish roots of our Parish and anticipating St. Patrick's Day, we will be enthralled by concerts of Irish Music on the

evening of March 9th at the Parish Center and the afternoon of March 10th at St. Malachi's. We will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Deacon Gene's Ordination at the 5:00 P.M. Mass on Saturday, June 22nd, at Our Lady of Consolation, followed by a Parish Reception. Archbishop Chaput has agreed to preside at the 175th Anniversary Mass, at St. Malachi's at 12 Noon, on Sunday, July 7th. I have asked Bishop Kevin Rhoades, Bishop of South Bend/Fort Wayne, IN, who has become a son of the parish, to preside at the 160th Anniversary of Our Lady of Consolation Parish in late September or early October. He will provide us with a date shortly.

As Kathleen gathers her Anniversary Committee and they begin work, there will be many other events to deepen our faith, strengthen our bonds of love, and welcome our relatives, friends, and neighbors to join us in celebrating our Year of Faith. As these plans unfold, mark your calendars to join in this great journey of celebrating our Faith in Christ Jesus, Who is Lord forever and ever!

With love. Your brother in Christ,
Father Eschbach

Many volunteers are needed to make our Year of Faith celebrations a success. Please contact Kathleen Hood at kadaholo@verizon.net or 610-383-5068 to help out.

A YEAR OF EVENTS

Here are five to get you started!
Mark your calendars.

1. February 9th - 12th
Forty Hours of Devotion before the Blessed Sacrament
2. March 9th & 10th
Irish Music Concerts
3. June 22nd
25th Anniversary Deacon Gene's Ordination
4. July 7th
175th Anniversary Mass St. Malachi's
5. September/October
160th Anniversary Our Lady of Consolation

Merry Christmas "From an Angel"

by Maureen McCormick

As has become an early December tradition at OLC, hundreds of colorful paper tags that once adorned our Christmas Giving Trees find their way into the homes of our parish families. These tags, which each bear the cherished Christmas wish of a local needy child, are then "magically" transformed into that very wish – and sometimes even more!

It would be fun to think about our Christmas Giving Tree Project that way, but OLC coordinators Diane Sager and Mary Ellen Sannino know firsthand that many hours of planning and work and a quick response from members of our OLC family and Parkesburg community go into making each child feel special and grateful on Christmas morning.

Diane, who coordinates with the Parkesburg Churches Community Outreach (PCCO) effort and Mary Ellen, who is the Misión Santa Maria, Madre de Dios Giving Tree liaison work with their teams within an extremely short timeframe -- this year from December 2nd to December 14th. Within these 12 days, they distributed after all Masses and kept track of the hundreds of tags, picked up and sorted the hundreds of gifts from each worship site, ensured that each child received 3 of the gifts from his or her wish list (which involved last minute shopping trips to fill in some gaps), bagged all of the gifts and then transported them to the PCCO and Santa Maria mission sites for pick up by the children. And this was after all the planning, list checking and tag-making sessions throughout the fall!

This year, our parish provided 3 gifts apiece for almost 200 children. "Each year, Mary Ellen and I are just overwhelmed by the generosity and enthusiasm of our parish members and the way everyone gets their gifts purchased, wrapped and brought to church so quickly – with such obvious care and thoughtfulness," said Diane. The gifts are beautifully wrapped and some even include little notes and prayers on cards attached to the gifts, sometimes a small amount of money or a gift card tucked into the pocket of a shirt or jacket. In one case, there was a wrapped gift for the child to present to his mother on Christmas morning. Some gifts are labeled, "From a Friend" or "From An Angel."

Diane loves to see the expressions on her own children Alec and Olivia's faces when, as they are helping her sort the gift bags, they keep saying, "Mom, this little girl is going to be SO excited!" or "This little boy is getting exactly what he asked for!!" This gives Diane a preview of the excitement of the boys and girls who will be receiving their gifts.

"It's the direct and specific response to the children's requests that makes imagining their reactions so fun," said Diane. "How lucky and special they must feel knowing that someone cared enough to go out and select exactly what they wished for."

Thanks to Mary Ellen Sannino, Diane Sager, their team and everyone at OLC who assisted in making this year's Giving Tree such a heartwarming success! PCCO welcomes donations of money, food, furniture and clothing throughout the year. Please contact PCCO at 610-568-5835 or the rectory if you are in need of assistance or if you would like to volunteer in this ministry or make a donation. Be assured that all requests for assistance are held in the strictest confidence.



CELTIC CHRISTMAS MAGIC

Returning to raves and sell-out crowds, this year's candlelight Celtic Christmas Concerts in the beautiful historic St. Malachi's Church featured the Brandywine Celtic Harp Orchestra on December 2nd, and FTW Hammered Dulcimers, the Cara School of Dance and Burning Bridget Cleary on December 9th. Over 600 people attended the thrilling performances which also serve as highly-popular fundraisers for our parish. Here are a few of the many glowing comments we have received:

"I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the concert last night. Perfect setting and the food was absolutely wonderful. I grew up in Cochranville on a dairy farm and the area which surrounds the church is one of the most beautiful places on earth. I love to just take a drive through the countryside. I'm so thankful it has not been spoiled by development. This is the 3rd time I've heard the harps and they are just beautiful. Thanks for organizing such a great event."

"... just want to tell you how much we enjoyed the Celtic Concert tonight! It was wonderful and certainly put us in the Christmas spirit!! Burning Bridget Cleary and the FTW Hammered Dulcimers were great! We loved all the enthusiasm from everyone in the audience! It was just a very entertaining and fun evening!"



PCCO Busy During the Holidays

by Alan Reger

November and December were especially busy for the Parkesburg Churches Community Outreach (PCCO). On November 21st, the Parkesburg Mobile Food Pantry conducted the monthly food distribution at the Schneider Parish Center, providing food to 240 client families. To provide additional help to families celebrating Thanksgiving, PCCO held a drive-thru turkey giveaway in the parking lot at the former site of Charlie's Thriftway on Main Street on November 17th.

Frozen turkeys with all the trimmings were provided to 230 families who wanted to prepare their own Thanksgiving meal. PCCO also distributed individually-packaged Thanksgiving meals (including dessert) on Thanksgiving day. Diane Sager of Our Lady of Consolation and Pat Softchin of Penningtonville Presbyterian Church in Atglen coordinated the annual event.

In the beginning of November, PCCO collected donations of plates, glasses, utensils, turkeys and canned vegetables. Twenty turkeys were cooked, carved and frozen and 50 pies were baked and donated by volunteers in advance. On Thanksgiving morning, approximately 100 volunteers arrived at the Schneider Parish Center to cook, package and deliver 179 meals to local residents. Each meal included a card or drawing created by children from Highland Baptist and Our Lady of Consolation Churches. Anyone who has prepared a large Thanksgiving meal can appreciate the logistics to make it all happen. It's not easy to package turkey, potatoes, stuffing, applesauce, vegetables, biscuits, cranberry sauce and pie and then deliver it all! Not only did Diane, Pat and the volunteers make the giveaway happen without a hitch, there was definitely a holiday atmosphere at the SPC. Many of the volunteers said they expected to participate again next year.

On December 4th, the Octorara Area Food Cupboard (OAF) opened at 714 Main Street, the former site of the District Justice office. The OAF replaces the Parkesburg Mobile Food Pantry held monthly at SPC. The OAF is open every week with hours of operation on Tuesday 10-12 and 2-4 and Wednesday 10-12 and 3-7. The name change better reflects the mission of the food bank to serve residents of the Octorara Area School District, while the change of location reduces congestion and provides more flexible hours for clients. In the first two days of operation, OAF served 70 families! Volunteers and food donations are always needed. For more information, please contact the OAF at 610-857-4000.

Christmas Craft Fair Gets Better & Better

by Shelly Carr

Much like the OLC Early Learning Center, the Christmas Craft & Book Fair gets better every year! Not only was this year's crafts original and fun, but the food was absolutely awesome, too. With a full house of crafters, both upstairs and downstairs, the building was packed. Some vendors actually exhibited outside and if you were lucky enough, you got to taste the yummy Kettle Korn made near the front entrance.

This year, organizers sadly had to turn crafters away due to a lack of space. Be sure to get your forms in early next year to secure your crafter spot! Those who came enjoyed the great crafts, delicious baked goods, festive basket raffles, tasty food from our kitchen featuring home-made soups and sandwiches, and much, much more.

A great big thank you to the dedicated ELC staff and the many volunteers. Not only did the OLC parents help, but many of our church families, parents, children and previous students did too. Volunteers arrived early to help crafters bring in supplies from their cars, take and deliver food orders, and then helped return goods to cars and clean up. That's dedication! Many crafters noted that our fair is one of the best-organized around.

We hope this wonderful, fun and festive event continues to be a successful fundraiser for our school, with monies divided between school expenses and the OCL - ELC Scholarship Fund. Special thanks to all for your continued support!



Here Comes Santa Claus!

Another Great Pancake Breakfast with the Jolly Ole Elf!

by Wendy Michalski

"One, two, three... SANTA!" The cry rang out from over 80 families as Santa shared his Christmas cheer (and his lap!) on Sunday, December 16, 2012 at the Schneider Parish Center. With a hearty breakfast in their bellies, our OLC children reveled in both the presence of Santa and the many holiday activities the event volunteers provided. From popsicle stick reindeer, to snowflakes, to stories celebrating the Nativity, to decorating a giant Christmas tree, and adorning homemade gingerbread men, our children were amply infused with the spirit of Christmas.



The event would not have been possible without the support of an incredible volunteer staff. Much thanks goes out to the Breakfast with Santa committee for their energy and commitment as well as to the LTJV, OLC Seniors, ELC teachers, and PREP teachers. Special thanks to Donna Martin and her kitchen crew, Scott Cresmer and Rob Sager for their awesome photos that garnered many thanks from appreciative families, and Dan Wildoner who stepped up at the last minute to play the most important role of all!