



THE GOOD STEWARD

St. Jane Frances de Chantal Parish Stewardship Council Newsletter

Celebrating the Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure

VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 2 • SUMMER 2008

LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Parishioners of St. Jane de Chantal Church,

The summer edition of The Good Steward gives me the opportunity to reflect once again on your gifts of time, talent and treasure. Since the last edition, we have celebrated the seasons of Lent, Easter and Pentecost. During that time, we have welcomed new members into the Church at the Easter Vigil, thanks to the dedication of our RCIA team. We have rejoiced with those children who have received First Eucharist and Confirmation, so we should thank their catechists as well as their parents. We have celebrated Fr. Helwig's 50 years of priesthood, and so also acknowledge all those who made his anniversary such a joyful event for him and our parish.

I hope that you have a bit of extra leisure this summer. As you enjoy the beach or mountains or more family time, don't forget to give thanks to our God who provides us with all these gifts. Perhaps in the midst of reading the latest novel, you might squeeze in some spiritual reading!

August 18 is the Feast of St Jane Frances de Chantal, our patroness. After the 8:00 and 11:00 AM Masses we will have the public veneration of her relic. On Sunday, August 17, after the 10:00 AM Mass, we will have a parish celebration in her honor. Please mark your calendars. The other dates to note are September 21/22, when we will host our annual time and talent fair. Plan to come, and learn about the many ministries that serve our parish and community. We need new volunteers. Please join those parishioners who are already sharing their time and talent. Also on that weekend, I will be asking you to consider your stewardship of treasure, so critical to the life of our parish. As our expenses increase, we need a corresponding increase in our giving.

My final thanks to you is for your support for this year's Archbishop's Appeal, which helps so many in need within our Archdiocese. To date, we have pledged \$289,470, which is 98% of our assigned goal. May God continue to bless you for your care of the poor!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend Msgr. Donald S. Essex, Pastor 

SAVE THE DATES

August 17th following the 10:00 am Mass - St. Jane de Chantal Feast Day Celebration

August 18th following the 8:00 am and 11:00 am Masses - Public veneration of St. Jane de Chantal's relic

September 21st and 22nd - Time, Talent, and Treasure Fair in Caulfield Hall

FIFTY YEARS OF PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Webster's dictionary defines stewardship as: "The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; *especially*: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." Off and on for the past fifty years, parishioners of de Chantal have been fortunate to entrust their spiritual care to Fr. Alan Helwig, a wise and caring steward.

Father Helwig, a native Washingtonian, attended public grade school and high school in DC before going on to Catholic University. He then transferred to St. Bonaventure in New York where he received a B.A. in history. After spending time at Georgetown University Law School, his vocation became apparent and he entered the seminary at Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, MD. He was ordained a priest in June 1958.

His first assignment after his ordination was as an associate pastor at our own St. Jane de Chantal Church where he was in residence until 1962. After leaving de Chantal he was at St. Mary of the Mills Church in Laurel for two years. Father then moved to St. Francis Xavier Church in Washington where he remained until 1966. From 1966 to 1973 he was in residence at St. Andrew the Apostle in DC and then at St. Anne's until 1975. During that same time, Father Helwig received an MS in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola University in Baltimore. From 1975 to 1978 he was at St. Mary's in Laurel but left to be a therapist at St. Luke's Institute for the next two years. He was at St. Jerome's in Hyattsville from 1978 to 1983 when he returned, full circle, to de Chantal.

Known by de Chantal parishioners for his well-researched, thoughtful, and sometimes very amusing homilies, Father Helwig is also appreciated by many as a gentle and comforting confessor. Quite a few second graders have emerged from their first penance experience with

relieved and happy smiles on their faces after having experienced Father's kind and moderate spiritual direction.

Nowhere is Father's gentleness better known than at Suburban Hospital where his ministry has spanned thirty years, from 1958 to 1962 and again from 1983 to the present. Doctors, nurses, staff, patients and their families are all the beneficiaries of his deep spirituality which is evident at the most crucial times in people's lives. In the anointing of the sick and the dying, giving solace to distraught families, and lending a sympathetic ear to hospital caregivers, Father Helwig's presence is bedrock

at the bustling center. In addition, residents of several of the area nursing homes have had Father's warm attention over the years. Many of those residents look to Father's Masses as a highpoint in their week.

Father has also been spotted over the years at several area grocery stores as he gives careful attention to the repasts of his fellow priests. Those who have come into contact with him there are always impressed by his ability to cruise through the aisles in record time. At the same time, he will often take a moment to gently fill a fellow shopper in on the needs of others in the de Chantal community.

Regarded by one and all as a "dog person," Father has had a succession of four-legged friends and has been known to share pictures of his favorite pets. From his former dog Charlie, beloved by many former de Chantal schoolchildren, to his present Weimaraner Tipper, Father is generous in his care of God's furry creatures.

All of us at de Chantal are grateful to Father Helwig for his presence, care and compassion. We hope that he will remain with us for a long time. 🏠



Father Helwig

DE CHANTAL'S NEW YOUTH MINISTER KEEPS THE BALL ROLLING

On an otherwise quiet Monday evening in June, the St. Jane de Chantal parking lot is full of the sounds of summer. With sunset still hours away, the laughter of young voices, the scrape of a kickball and the pounding of feet echo through the grounds. In the center of the organized chaos is the teens' leader, who darts through the group, calling out directions and joining in their laughter. The young leader clearly has the teens' respect and attention, but right now, he just might be the biggest kid in the group.

Welcome to De Chantal Youth Ministry, the parish's own energy surge. The group plays an important role in keeping high school students connected to their parish and their faith at a critical time in their lives: after they've completed their "required" religious education and the sacrament of Confirmation, and before their adult lives begin and nurturing their faith becomes their own responsibility. And the ministry's new leader, Raul Yépez, is keeping the group on its toes.

Yépez has taken on one of the more demanding roles at the parish, at least in terms of its requirement for nonstop energy. Like its teen-aged members, the parish youth ministry is in constant motion, with a calendar full of activities each month for the group's 50 registered members and whoever else is interested in attending. There is a drop-in social hour on Wednesdays, where students can come and interact. There is the group's most well-known activity, the Sunday Mass and Social Hour, or SMASH, a monthly Mass and social event that's known for keeping students returning for more. On the first Sunday of the month, youth ministry members serve as lectors, ushers and Extraordinary Ministers at the 5 p.m. Mass, then gather at the Seton Center for different themed activities. One month it's a movie marathon; another it's game night; another it's an "Aloha Barbecue" welcoming summer. The group also serves breakfast once a month for SOME and sponsors food drives and parish activities throughout the year. Last November they attended the National Catholic Youth Conference in Ohio. And they were part of the large youth contingency at the Papal Mass in April.



*De Chantal Youth
Minister Raul Yépez*

Add to this what is probably the centerpiece of the program — the weekly faith formation program on Monday nights — and the challenges of running the group become apparent. During the summer months, some group members are part of a kickball league with 12 or 13 teams from other local parishes. And so kickball is part of the summer's Monday night faith formation meetings, which uses group discussions and social activities to explore the readings for that Sunday's Mass. "You have to keep things moving," Yépez said. "It keeps everyone focused, and it lets [the students] see faith as something joyful."

Yépez is a local son, having attended elementary school at St. Bartholomew's in Bethesda and graduating from Catholic University in 2006 with a degree in theology. He spent a year in Ecuador before arriving at de Chantal to take on the role of youth minister. His own joy in the role is evident as he describes the job and its challenges.

"I'm a big picture person, and I really like the planning: how to keep the program interesting, how to challenge the kids. I really like working with the kids," Yépez said. "There's an administrative side to the job too – you really need to be multitasking to make everything run smoothly."

His plans for the group include teaching the students Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body," which emphasizes the positive "life-centered" focus of the Church's morality teachings. Yépez says the Holy Father's teachings on the subject can be an important aspect of faith formation for young adults.

One thing that could greatly benefit the program is volunteers, Yépez said. The youth ministry is looking for adults and young adults willing to share a small amount of their time. Experience working with high school students is helpful but not necessary, Yépez said. "Really, we're looking for volunteers who like working with young people. It's a rewarding program, for the leaders as well as the kids."

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information on the De Chantal Youth Ministry, please call Raul Yépez at (301) 530-1640. 