

SPIRE

To Educate, Inform and Nourish the Faith of the St. Anne Parish Community

LIGHTING THE WAY

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. They pitched their tent under the stars and then went to sleep. In the middle of the night Holmes awakened and exclaimed, “Watson, look up and tell me what you deduce.” Watson opened his eyes, and said, “I see billions of stars. It’s likely that some of these stars have planetary systems. Furthermore, I deduce that there is probably oxygen on some of these planets, and it’s possible that life has developed on a few of them.” Is that what you see? Holmes replied, “No, you idiot. Somebody stole our tent!”

Few of us are as astute as the great sleuth of Baker Street but there’s no arguing that a vigilant mind is a useful asset. Should we have seen it coming?

Enrollment in Catholic elementary schools has been declining for decades. But this was not always the case. In the mid-1960s, the biggest problem faced by our Catholic elementary schools was where to put the students. The classrooms were overflowing. During that time there were nearly 132,000 students enrolled in schools in the Newark Archdiocese. In the 2011-2012 school year there were 17,500 students enrolled in grades K-8. That’s about an 87% decline. This decline has resulted in the closing of 70 schools in the past decade alone. While solv-



ing this mystery will probably not require an exercise in Holmesian deduction, it nonetheless demands the attention of anyone who would prefer Catholic education not going the way of cassette tapes and phone booths.

In June of 2011, Newark Archbishop John J. Myers formed a team consisting of more than 30 laypeople, clergy and religious with expertise in education, parish management, marketing, finance and other fields to conduct a study on the future of Archdiocesan elementary schools. They were called The Catholic Education Commission. From this study grew a program called *Lighting the Way* which, beginning this school year, will significantly change the way Catholic elementary schools in the Newark Archdiocese are structured and managed.

As is true of most financial conundrums the problem is quite simple: the amount of money coming in is less than the amount

going out. Why was this not the case in the 1960s? There are a few significant factors to consider.

The emergence of charter and magnet schools, first appearing in the 1990s, offered a cheap (free) alternative to both Catholic and public education. Both of these alternatives had a notable impact on Catholic education and helped decidedly to thin the pool of prospective Catholic students.

The financial burden of replacing nuns with lay teachers, along with the rising maintenance costs of aging school buildings, also had a profound effect. Average annual tuition has gone from next to nothing to just below \$4000.

But there’s an old cliché: You get what you pay for. Studies by scholars at the University of Chicago, Northwestern, the Brookings Institute and Harvard, have all supported the conclusion that Catholic schools do a better job educating children than public schools.

Some will argue that the decline in enrollment can be attributed to factors other than the cost of tuition. The fact that personal income has risen more than the cost of living since the overcrowded classrooms of the sixties seems to buttress this argument.

Some suggest that the disparity between the Gospel message of self-sacrifice and the grandiosity of the Catholic Church is a factor in the public’s lethargy regarding all things Catholic. Others regard the recent sexual scandals (one of which cost the Boston Archdiocese more than \$150 million in legal settlements) as being nails in the coffin where earning the public trust is concerned. These arguments propose a laxity in church leadership.

But a year and a half ago that leadership changed.

Pope Francis, since he was elected in

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LIVING OUR LIVES TOGETHER

My father served in World War II in France and Germany. He was in one of General Patton's regiments. When I was a boy in the 50s, I remember once going up to the attic of our home in Bloomfield and discovering the letters that he wrote to my mother while he was overseas.

I couldn't really read the handwriting, but what stood out for me were the breaks in many of the lines of the notes sent to my mom, breaks put in there by the censors who reviewed every letter sent home by service men and women. The armed forces wanted to be sure that, if any mail from the front lines got into enemy hands, no one could figure out where the regiments were. At least, that's what my folks told me when they found out that I had discovered these letters and their odd cross outs.

Part of the sacrifice

Years later, I realized something else about those crossed-out lines: they helped those at home to realize that they too were part of the sacrifice for this national effort. This and other techniques, like war bonds, movies, sending metal cans to war-collection depots, rationing of gas and some food items, reminded everyone that the nation was at war, that all were part of something bigger than themselves.

Since then, that sense of national sacrifice has not been as sharp as it was in World War II. Even if we all know that a conflict is going on, the sacrifice is felt by the families and friends of the service men and women and by those in harm's way to be sure. The rest of the nation, though, is more removed from their experience.

What has happened, of course, is that we have become more individualized as a country. We're encouraged to do our own thing and to do it on our own terms.

This individualism has affected all parts of our lives. It has fragmented our politics, it has fed the natural penchant for selfishness in business and in the workplace, and it has eroded a sense of teamwork in our local communities and parishes.

While there's nothing wrong with being an individual in itself, *individualism*, the belief that there are *only* isolated individuals, is too extreme. It overlooks the fact that

we learn to be human by being part of a family and part of a community. Unless we act on what we share with each other, we will not only become intensely lonely. We won't become at all.

Acting together

In addition, as the "greatest generation" has demonstrated, individuals acting on their own can't achieve what people acting together can. This has been particularly true in parishes like ours. St. Anne's became the community that it is especially through the joint effort of that generation. Unfortunately, the pressures created by individualism have had a negative effect on the generations after them. These later folks have suffered from a lack of connection to something greater than themselves that a place like St. Anne's espouses.

That "greater thing" is the challenge offered us all by Christ to be his disciples, to be those who live their lives together "learning to love God above all things and to love our neighbor, as Christ taught us." A parish community exists to form women and men, boys and girls, to do this. We can't do it on our own. We need each other. That's how Christ inspires us – in and through one another.

This is a cause bigger than a national effort like World War II. It aims at nothing less than transforming the world to be more true to God's original intention, to live in "his image and likeness." That may seem like more than we can handle. The way it's done, however, is one community at a time, local parishes and families learning to love and forgive, to understand and to grow in justice. This is what can happen when people dedicate themselves to help each other to live Christ's vision.

Helping newer generations

It's to help the newer generations of our parish to learn from Christ how to do this that we have created the Family Mass at 9:30 each Sunday. The basic idea is simple: help **our** children to hear Christ's message on their level, in comfortable and safe settings in the church, and provide Christ's word to their parents and older members in our families and our parish in ways that meet their needs.

To do this, we've resurrected an old tra-

dition at St. Anne's – the Liturgy of the Word for Children. At each 9:30 Mass, the children, from 6 to 11 years old, will go with a specially trained team of people to the church hall where our "Launch Pad" is located. Meanwhile, the youngest children can be left off in our "Pray Pen" in the front of the church, just off the main entrance, where some adult and young adult volunteers can take care of them while their parents celebrate Mass.

In every Mass, of course, Christ seeks to form disciples. In every Mass, he presents himself to us so that his word and his life transforms what we say and do with others. Our Family Mass aims at the same thing. The big difference is that we want to address the new needs of our newer generations so that they can become alive to Christ and pass that life to those who will follow them.

– J.C.D.

Christian families are missionary families... the salt of the earth and the light of the World.

– Pope Francis on the unique and irreplaceable role of the family in the life of the church

CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION: PAST AND PRESENT

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as of the 2013-2014 school year, there are over 5,300 Catholic elementary schools in the United States and more than 1,100 Catholic high schools. These institutions are educating more than 1.9 million students, with a breakdown of 1.4 million in elementary schools and over 500,000 in high school. Collectively, 16 percent of the students are non-Catholic. The statistics further tell us that 99 percent of Catholic school students graduate on time and 85 percent go on to college.

The purpose of Catholic school education is to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ so that Christian individuals are able to contribute to society with the worldview of Catholicism in mind. This is accomplished through the development of respect for mankind's dignity by developing intelligent and proper values in these young men and women through the sacraments and liturgy. The bishops tell us that parents, first and foremost, are responsible for their child's initial acquaintance to the Catholic faith, but it is they, the local bishops, who establish these schools to assist parents to promote the Catholic faith. History has demonstrated that parents have indeed assumed responsibility for their children's Catholic education. One example occurred following the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore. Even after the edict stating

that every Catholic child should attend a Catholic school, roughly 50 percent of children attended what was referred to as a government school. Since the availability of a Catholic school education was not possible, the parents insisted to government officials that their children be granted release time from school to attend religious education instruction at their local parishes.

A Catholic school can arise from several different venues. It can be considered a parochial school associated with a specific parish, a diocesan school associated with a diocese which is a much larger entity, or a private school which identifies with distinct groups that are part of the Catholic church, such as the Christian Brothers, Dominican, Jesuit, and Marianist Orders. The first parochial school in our country, St. Mary's in Philadelphia, was established in 1783.

The number of Catholic schools continued to increase as the country developed. At the core of this expansion were the teaching sisters, primarily Saint Elizabeth Seton's Sisters of Charity, along with the Felicians, School Sisters of Notre Dame and Ursulines. The development of the Catholic school escalated after the meeting of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884. The significance of this gathering of American Bishops was the decree that all Catholic parents were obligated to send their children to Catholic schools. As a result, parishes were to provide Catholic education for their youth. Thus began a movement of growth, with parishes building facilities to meet this demand.

The establishment of Catholic high schools had also begun. However, because parishes themselves did not have the resources to sustain them, they were mostly created at the diocesan level, with the parishes from local neighborhoods acting as feeder schools. In 1890, Roman Catholic High School in Philadelphia was the first diocesan secondary school.

Catholic schools today operate through the authority of the local Bishop. This came into being through the efforts of John Carroll, the first Bishop in the United States. He was of the mindset that to enable the Catholic church to grow, Catholic schools should be established



▲ Loretta Stachiotti.

and immigrants should be welcomed and embraced.

The number of Catholic schools escalated during the early part of the 1960s, educating 5.2 million in 13,000 schools, only to go into a steep decline in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1990 there were 2.5 million individuals attending a little more than 8,700 schools. This is in sharp contrast to the 1.9 million students attending 5,300 schools today.

Closer to home, St. Anne's School opened its doors for the first time in 1949. Presently, there are 244 students from pre-kindergarten to grade eight. Our principal, Loretta Stachiotti, first arrived at the school in 1982 as the vice principal, teaching both Math and Social Studies and became the principal in 1987. Looking back at the history of St. Anne's School, Principal Stachiotti is most proud of the manner in which the school has embraced technology in the classroom.

Through the years, Ms. Stachiotti states that although the makeup of the student is different from when she first began her stay at St. Anne's, the teacher-student relationship has remained unchanged where it continues to be a family type of atmosphere. "I could go down into the cafeteria at lunchtime any afternoon and tell you the name of every student there. They know me by name," she said, "so it is just as important for me to know who they are as well."

S P I R E

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AROUND THE PARISH



▲ Father Joe enjoying time with parishioners at the Street Faire.



▲ A furry four legged parishioner after being blessed in honor of St. Francis' feast day.



▲ Hopeful winners at the Street Faire games.



▲ The Alan Quinn Band entertaining at the Street Faire.



▲ St. Anne's Feast Day Mass.



▲ Father Colin hanging out with the "little people" at the Street Faire.

A R O U N D T H E P A R I S H



▲ *The St. Anne's School traditional Halloween Bunny.*



▲ *Teddy welcomes the summer Faith Formation students.*



▲ *Every year since 1955, churches from all over the country send representatives to the Ocean Grove Choir Festival. This year, the Church of St. Anne sent eight choir members to represent our church. Six hundred and two singers from over one hundred churches gathered and participated in the 60th annual event. This year's attendees from left to right were Lois Dekker, Liz Ward, Kate Humble, David Lee, Terry Buksar, Judy Keyes, Eileen Corcoran and Mary Maloney.*



▲ *Landscaping the school.*



▲ *Summer Faith Formation students with Father Colin.*

LIGHTING THE WAY...

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March of 2013, has spoken more openly of these hypocrisies than many in his flock. His determination to right the wrongs of the past has won him many admirers. Perhaps, like Sherlock Holmes, our pontiff has the gift of seeing the obvious. We'll see.

For those of the opinion that the crisis in our schools is strictly due to financial and managerial inefficiencies the *Lighting the Way* program is sure to provide some comfort. Some points of interest in the plan include:

- All parishes, whether or not they sponsor a school, will participate jointly in financing the elementary schools within the archdiocese by contributing to a central school fund. The archdiocese will determine how this fund is divvied up.

- School advisory boards will be formed in each school and will assist school administrators in five key areas: strategic planning, finance, facilities management, marketing and development. The pastor of each parish will submit the names of prospective board members to the archdiocese. The archbishop will then have final approval.

- Several communications and marketing consultants were hired by the archdiocese to employ a series of new marketing/advertising and fundraising campaigns to spur increases in enrollment.

- New instruments for teacher evaluation and accountability will be designed and implemented throughout the archdiocese. Contract renewals and compensation for school leaders will be linked to performance outcomes.

- Each school will be required to formulate a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) goal for improved student achievement that will be used to assess school performance.

In essence, *Lighting the Way* will initiate a change from the parish model, which has been the norm for generations, to a new archdiocesan school advisory model. This has some parents concerned that they will lose their say in school matters. Others question why the Newark Archdiocese is alone, so far, in making these sweeping changes. The Paterson Diocese, which has also been affected by school closings, is sticking with its traditional structure as is the Trenton Diocese.

Yes, someone may have stolen our tent.

PRAYING, PLAYING AND LAUNCHING

Have you heard the latest news? St. Anne's Church is expanding its family ministry to the children of St. Anne's Parish. With the recent addition of The Praypen and Launch Pad to the 9:30 a.m. Mass, the parish hopes to gear the family Mass to meet the needs of our beloved children and families. The Praypen and Launch Pad are a part of St. Anne's Kids Christ ministry, which is under the umbrella of new initiatives specifically geared towards ministering God's word to young parishioners.

The Praypen is primarily for toddlers in pre-kindergarten. Volunteers from the parish take the time to watch over, care for, pray for and read God's word to those who attend. As Father Colin Kay said "The Praypen provides the perfect balance of fun, games and a little bit of Jesus thrown in." Father Colin encourages parishioners to stop by the Praypen and allow their children to be involved and join in the fun.

The Launch Pad is geared towards young children, ages Kindergarten through grade 5. Father Colin explained that the children are "getting a message that is tailored to their age... that is in tune with their needs. Children are our hope, and we want to minister to children and their families."

Planning for The Praypen and Launch Pad began over a year ago. Although the 9:30 a.m. Mass was geared towards children, the concern was whether the parish could meet the needs of children, young teens and adults during the same Mass. With the redesign of the new Mass schedule came the opportunity to alter the schedule and dedicate it to the ministry of families. The set-up of the new Mass schedule allows for a "Primary" evangelist to minister to the adults of the parish, while a "Primary" evangelist, along with several parish leaders, take turns ministering to the children at The

Praypen and Launch Pad. The Archdiocese of Newark provides the curriculum for the readings every week.

According to Father Colin the purpose of The Praypen and Launch Pad is not to remove children from Mass. "Children are welcome, and we want to encourage their attendance". He said the goal of the Praypen and Launch Pad is "to allow parents to get a break during the Mass and to listen and be fed. We want parents to get a little more out of their attendance of Mass. Older teens and adults get a message tailored to their needs." The Praypen and Launch Pad are options for families with young children. The little ones are "welcome in Mass, from start to finish." We offer those services for those families who feel they would like to get a little bit more out of church.

The pastoral counsel of the parish and the Faith Formation community work together to meet the needs of the children, parents and family. The Praypen and Launch Pad are an opportunity for the children of St. Anne's to be fed by the word of God and I encourage all families to participate. It is a blessing to know our children are being watched over and taken care of by volunteers in our parish. However, we need our church family to make this work. All are welcome to volunteer.

– H.W.

EDUCATION...

Continued from page 3

In conclusion, Mark Brumley, the CEO of Ignatius Press, wrote an article for the *National Catholic Register* titled "What Makes Catholic School Education Catholic?" In the article he reviews the mission of Catholic school education and looks at how the "education" and "Catholic" components of the mission fit together. He refers to that as "two friends keeping each other honest." The gist of his article is that what makes Catholic education Catholic is to balance the two components by forming the intellectual, moral and physical development of the individual all within the framework of knowing, loving and serving God.

It sounds like that's what is happening at St. Anne's School.

– J.M.I.

LIGHTING THE WAY...

Continued from page 1

But the stars will be lighting the way if our administrators in Newark were correct in their deductions. After all, as Sherlock Holmes would say, it may all have been elementary.

– D.L.

30 YEAR TRADITION OF THE GIVING TREE

One of my favorite times of the year is Christmas and here at St. Anne's we make it possible for those families who can't celebrate without a little help from us. Our Giving Tree is in its 30th year.

In 1984, after visiting her daughter's parish, a parishioner suggested the idea of a Joshua Tree (Giving Tree) to Lenora Mosca, our Human Concerns Minister. To help those in need at Christmas Lenora went to the pastor, Fr. Ted Cavanaugh O.F.M., with the idea. With the full support of the Franciscans and with the help of parishioners Jean Daley and Lucy DePadova, Lenora made it a reality here at St. Anne's and has been the "rock" that has kept this project growing to what it is today. Lucy is still very involved as the head of the volunteer committee, which has grown from eight members to well over 20. Lucy said that it wouldn't be Christmas for her without the Giving Tree. It is in her heart and she feels that we are really helping those in need at this special time of the year. It has been a family affair for her for 30 years. Her children and grandchildren have been involved and are still volunteering, living their faith following their grandmother's example.

After a few years the name was changed to the Giving Tree, as we know it today. We started by giving 30 gifts the first year to our needy fellow parishioners and last year donated over 3,000 gifts. These gifts



▲ Lenora Mosca and Lucy DePadova with the Giving Tree.



▲ Giving Tree volunteers with the some of the many gifts collected.

go to help the needy families of our parish as well as the surrounding communities. Other recipients include Our Lady of Victories, Oasis, Straight and Narrow and a small day care center, all in Paterson. Also included are flyers for 100 women veterans. Following our Franciscan tradition, there is a small tree for gifts for cats and dogs. Last year the pet tree held 75 tags. This is a parish wide activity that lets everyone get involved by helping others at this special time of the year.

Planning for the Giving Tree project begins with a meeting in February to critique the last giving tree project. Preparations start in earnest in August and continue until the tree goes up two weeks before Thanksgiving. Two weeks later after the gifts are returned they are sorted, packaged and distributed to the needy in time for Christmas. The overwhelming number of gifts makes this a very formidable task checking to see that everyone on the original list gets a gift and that it gets to the correct charity for distribution. Everyone involved with the effort agrees that it definitely makes it feel like Christmas when the halls of the rectory and every little space are filled with wrapped gifts, as they get ready for distribution.

A sampling of the thank you letters received expresses the gratitude from the recipients. One from the Department of

Veterans Affairs N.J. Health Care System states "your generosity helped our Chaplain Service make the strong statement that goes beyond the welcome home we want all veterans to hear. Your tangible connections to them through your gifts say both thank you and you are not alone. You are connected to people who care."

And one from Our Lady of Victories: "Please express my gratitude and appreciation to the good people of St. Anne parish family for the many and beautiful gifts which you collected for our children. The beautifully wrapped gifts that we picked up are living testimony of the care, concern and love of the parish family of St. Anne. I wish the people of your parish family could have seen the faces of the children as they received their gifts. Their smiles, surprised looks and excitement were a joy to behold. Your gifts most definitely provided comfort and cheer and made the lives of our children and their families happier and more enjoyable on Christmas morning."

Lenora Mosca is very proud of the commitment that we, the parishioners, have made over the years. "The Giving Tree is so successful because of your generosity. It wouldn't work without your support and commitment."

– E.M.M.

A Sad Note...

Joan Tuohy, a member of the *Spire* editorial staff, passed away August 20, 2014. Prayerful, intelligent and well-read, Joan approached life with humility and simplicity despite the fact that she held a doctorate degree in English. Her articles were filled with both faith and humor.

She will be missed.



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St. Anne's Youth!

HOW MY FAITH WAS PASSED ON TO ME

By Nicole Moran

As each year goes by, we see that the amount of young adults practicing our faith is decreasing slowly. As a child growing up with a mother who attended church regularly, going to Mass on Sunday is not something I question anymore; it's just something my family and I do. As a toddler my mom would take me to church every Sunday starting at St. Stanislaus, a Polish Parish in Manhattan where I was baptized, and then to St. Anne's here in Fair Lawn where I received my First Holy Communion in 2nd grade and where I was confirmed recently. Being a Catholic is part of my everyday life. Growing up going to church every Sunday has shaped me into the Catholic I am today. To me faith is not just in church on Sundays; it is every day, at home, at school, and with my friends too.

My faith is being formed not only by my parents and priests, but also by my relationship with God. Since I was a little girl I remember every night before bed praying with my mom, dad and younger sister. I was also taught that being a good Catholic means to give to others in need. I volunteer with my mom one Sunday a month visiting residents in a nursing home. I am also an altar server here at Saint Anne's along with being an assistant teacher in the religious education program (currently known as Faith Formation) on Tuesdays.

I have learned that sometimes we do things from the goodness of our hearts rather than benefiting from it. Being a Catholic has taught me some of the most important lessons in my life. Being in touch with God has helped me through some very difficult times in school, with my friends, and even with my family. My dad is an inspiration to me. He overcame many difficult obstacles in his life through his faith and by strengthening his relationship with God.

Sometimes we get lost in holding grudges but my religion has educated me to forgive and move on because when you forgive you in no way change the past but you sure do change the future.

I am proud to call myself a Catholic because it has shaped me into the person that I am today and who I want to be.

*Nicole Moran is a guest contributor to Spire's Youth Page.
The 15-year-old Fair Lawn resident is a sophomore
at Fair Lawn High School.*



WORD SEARCH

*There are 31 Catholic schools of all types in Bergen County.
This puzzle has 30 of them and two "saints."
Extra Credit: which one is missing?*

B	E	T	R	A	E	H	D	E	R	C	A	S	T	D	P
E	L	A	D	Y	O	F	M	E	R	C	Y	Q	Z	A	N
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G	J	O	S	E	P	H	U	Z	R	R	P	A	L	L	I
E	A	E	I	S	E	S	P	T	A	V	M	F	D	E	T
N	M	C	H	T	E	S	A	E	M	U	N	R	O	M	A
I	E	A	L	I	A	D	E	I	S	M	H	A	N	R	R
R	L	E	D	U	A	T	S	R	N	O	O	N	B	A	U
E	I	P	I	E	A	O	I	A	E	T	J	C	O	C	G
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C	E	U	L	H	I	A	N	N	E	U	Q	M	F	O	N
A	T	Q	U	S	A	I	N	T	O	R	A	U	E	M	A
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E	R	R	E	H	C	A	E	T	T	S	I	R	H	C	T

AHA, Anne, Assumption, Bergen, Blessed Sacrament, Catherine, Christ[the]Teacher, Corpus Christi, Don Bosco, Elizabeth, ICA, IHA, John, Joseph, Joseph, Lady Of Mercy, Leo, Mary, Francis, Mount Carmel, Notre Dame, Our Lady Of Grace, Paramus, Paul, Peter, Queen[of]Peace, Sacred Heart, Therese, Transfiguration, Visitation