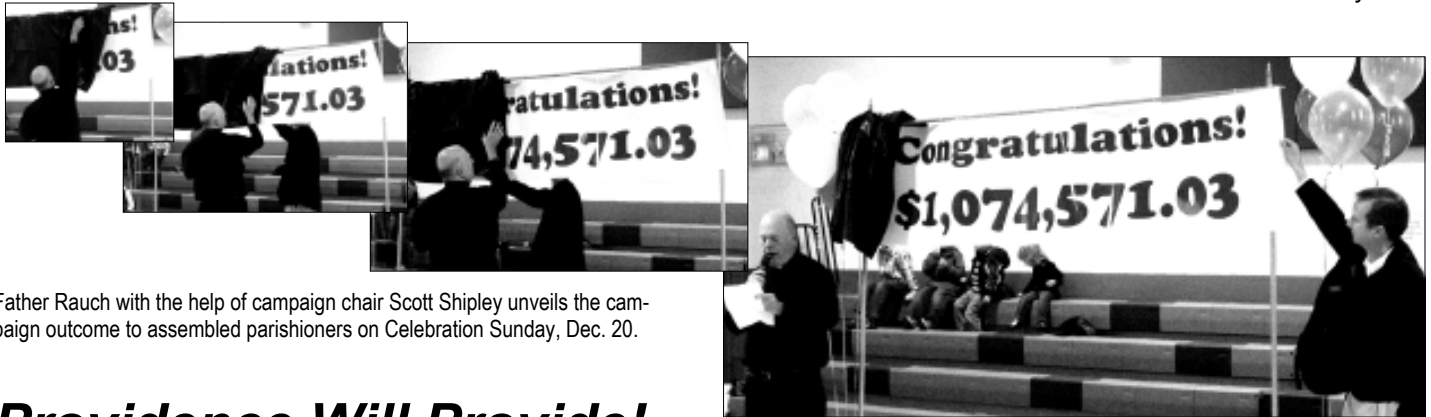


Spirit of Providence

VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 1 • January 2010



Father Rauch with the help of campaign chair Scott Shipley unveils the campaign outcome to assembled parishioners on Celebration Sunday, Dec. 20.

Providence Will Provide!

Gasps and applause accompanied the announcement of the results of this Fall's *Providence Will Provide* capital campaign. The Celebration Sunday receptions in the gym after morning Masses gathered together donors, workers and other parishioners to learn the campaign outcome: \$1,074,571.03 in gifts and pledges.

The campaign contacted all parishioners through mailings, a series of informational meetings and phone contacts. It generated gifts from 375 donors. While the campaign plan provides for payment of pledges to extend over three years, donors gave directly over \$200,000, thus enabling us to move forward quickly to address immediate needs.

Parishioner generosity and sacrifice enabled the campaign to surpass its stated Preliminary Goal and its Challenge Goal to almost reach the Celebration Goal of \$1.1 million. This will allow us not only to deal with critical problems such as replacement of the church roof and structural settling in the school building. We can also address accessibility needs in the church and school and undertake additional renovations in church such as improving the space for musicians and choirs and increasing accessibility to the sanctuary.

We are currently forming an advisory committee of parish members knowledgeable in areas of construction, building, and bidding to identify work and develop plans for projects. This time next year, many improvements will be noticeable.

The amount raised also enables us to meet fully our \$239,000 assessment for *Faith for the Future*, the archdiocesan capital campaign to address physical plant needs and endowment plans at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary.

Special thanks to Scott Shipley for his leadership and to the

hundreds of parishioners who helped in so many ways to make the campaign a success. Please continue to use the special envelopes in your monthly packet marked "Providence Will Provide" Capital Campaign to return your pledge payments. Statements will be sent to those who have pledged quarterly, semi-annually or annually. If you have any questions regarding your pledge or payment of your pledge please contact Julie Ramacciotti at the rectory.

Look for updates on campaign plans and progress in a report that will appear regularly in *Spirit of Providence*.

Enjoy a Spectacular Evening

Good company on a late winter evening for a good cause. That's the promise of the "Reach For The Stars" Dinner/Auction Saturday evening, February 27 to benefit the parish. The event includes cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and dinner along with silent and oral auctions and various surprises. The event will be held at nearby Orlando Gardens, 8852 Watson Rd.—less than 5 minutes from OLP, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$65 per person, \$30 of which is tax deductible.



Tables will seat ten guests. Gather together a group of ten friends or come as a single or a couple and enjoy meeting other parishioners. For something even more special, themed tables with enhanced benefits are again available for an additional amount.

Reach For The Stars / continued on pg. 4



Midwinter Thoughts

Father Dave Rauch

I hate winter and I especially dislike the letdown I experience after Christmas. In Church life we have a few weeks of Ordinary Time between the Christmas Season and Lent. This year Ash Wednesday is February 17, a week earlier than in 2009. Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. This year the date is April 4.

Despite the winter blahs, parish life moves on. One major task is implementing the projects to be funded by the highly successful parish capital campaign. I have asked a group of parishioners knowledgeable about repairs and construction to form an Implementation Committee to oversee the work. We will establish a timeline and begin getting bids and gathering ideas for the various items we will undertake.

Another task at this time of the year involves setting the tuition rate for the 2010-2011 school year. This involves preparing a budget, looking at enrollment figures, the amount of parish subsidy we can afford, and the rates we will charge. Since there was a salary freeze for all employees last year, I know that salaries will be increasing. The benefits offered to all employees also must be reviewed. Trying to keep tuition as low as possible while also covering our cost involves a lot of creativity. I take comfort in knowing that every other parish with a school faces similar issues. Our current school enrollment for kindergarten through grade 8 is 148. Our Little Providence Pre-school is full, with 54 children enrolled in the two year program. Our hope is that the full pre-school will translate into full classrooms in the rest of the school. I am grateful to Julie Ramacciotti, the Finance Committee and the School Board for their assistance in these decisions.

Wednesday, February 3 is St. Blaise Day. The traditional Throat Blessing will be given at both the 7:30 a.m. Mass and the 8:30 a.m. School Mass. This special blessing reminds us of God's loving concern for our bodies as well as our souls.

The second Gala Dinner Auction is Saturday, February 27 at nearby Orlando Gardens on Watson Road. This is an exciting fundraising event. Why not invite former parishioners, friends and family members to join you? Many wonderful auction items have already been received. I hope to see you there.

The Spirit of Providence is published bi-monthly to celebrate the many ways in which generous gifts of time, talent and treasure enrich our faith community. Suggestions, articles and and photographs can be submitted to Joe Dunne, 843-2563 or jdunne63@yahoo.com.

*From Marilyn Price,
Parish Nurse*

On Laughter

"Laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God."

Theologian Karl Barth

Most of us have seen the hit movie, *Patch Adams* starring Robin Williams. Dr. Hunter "Patch" Adams is both a medical doctor and a clown. He believes that laughter, joy and creativity are an integral part of the healing process. He has devoted his whole life to the study of what makes people happy. Even though researchers aren't sure if the act of laughing makes us feel better, a good sense of humor and a positive attitude play a role in a happier life.

Laughter is a natural part of life that begins in infancy.

Infants begin smiling during the first weeks of life and laugh out loud within months of being born. It is a joy to watch an infant laugh heartily. What sibling or parent has not delighted in getting the baby to laugh?

Laughter is strong medicine for the body and the mind.

Laughter is a powerful antidote to stress, pain and conflict. A good laugh brings your body back into balance. It lightens your burdens, inspires hope and connects you to others. It keeps you grounded, focused and alert.

Laughter is good for your health. Laughter relaxes the whole body. A good, hearty laugh can relax your muscles for up to 45 minutes. Laughter boosts the immune system. It decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection fighting antibodies, improving your resistance to disease. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, giving us a sense of overall well-being. It also protects the heart, improving the function of blood vessels and increasing blood flow.

Laughing with others is more powerful than laughing alone. Shared laughter is one of the most effective tools for keeping relationships fresh and exciting. All emotional sharing builds strong and lasting relationship bonds, but sharing laughter and play adds joy, vitality, and resilience. Humor is a powerful and effective way to heal resentments, disagreements, and hurts. Laughter unites people during difficult times.

The Benefits of Laughter

Physical Benefits: lowers stress hormone....decreases pain
....relaxes muscles....prevents heart disease.

Social Benefits: adds joy and zest to life....eases anxiety and fear....relieves stress....enhances resilience.

Mental Health Benefits: strengthens relationships....attracts others to us....enhances teamwork....promotes group bonding.



Where Reading Is Never Out of Style

Catholic Schools Week, January 31-February 5, offers an opportunity to spread the good news about our school. We have much to be proud of in the efforts of our students, as well as in faculty, staff, programs and resources. We can especially be proud of our library, a facility that serves students from pre-school through eighth grade.



Librarian Donna Hellwege talks with fourth graders about books they have checked out for class assignments and personal enjoyment.

Donna Hellwege has been our school librarian for ten years. An elementary teacher before she became a full-time mom, she took up library work after her children had grown. She is on the staff of the St. Louis County Library's Meramec Valley branch in Fenton. Two days a week at OLP, Mrs. Hellwege is available as classes make weekly visit for books. She also develops and maintains a collection of quality publications appropriate for our programs and values. Volunteer parents and other parishioners help by performing such services as reading stories to younger students.

The library holds a wide-ranging collection of fiction, non-fiction and reference materials for students at every level. The youngest students visit the library for story time. Older students can check out books for recreational reading or assignments. Book reports are standard assignments for students in upper grades. Their teachers and Mrs. Hellwege guide them in selecting books appropriate for their level. Students then use an on-line accelerated reading program which provides tests on a number of books available in our library or in other collections.

Materials are added to the library through the generous support of Parents of Providence (POP) and programs such as the Birthday Club. In that program, parents can purchase a book as a birthday gift, choosing from a selection available on shelves in the school foyer. They then donate the book to the library collection.

"Involvement with a library is important to counter the tendency of students to read less today," Mrs. Hellwege notes. Moreover, with electronic resources easily at hand students need to recognize when publications are going to provide accurate and reliable information they won't find on line.

Reading is indeed fundamental. Our library program is one way we enable that ability.

On Finding Forgiveness

God forgives. It's forgiving oneself that can become a formidable challenge. That was the message shared by Debbie Schisler in a talk sponsored January 17 by the Pro-Life Committee. At fifteen, a high school freshman, Schisler found herself sick, scared, alone and pregnant. After telling her parents, it was decided she and her mother would go to New York where abortion was then legal and end her pregnancy.



Now many years later, a mother and grandmother, she explained her purpose as a speaker for the Respect Life Apostolate was not to talk about abortion or about her abortion. Rather she focused on her healing through Project Rachel, a national post-abortion healing ministry. Her abortion left her alone after her parents ordered her never to speak of the matter again. When she first sought forgiveness, the negative response of a priest left her depressed and even more isolated.

Years later it was on a Rachel retreat that she found the compassionate response and support to forgive herself. She emphasized the need to seek and to accept forgiveness. Project Rachel offers that support for women who have received an abortion as well as men who have been involved in that decision. She encourages all to make that message known. Locally Project Rachel can be reached at stlprojectrachel.org or (314) 792-7565.



Our school is a place **where every child is known by heart...**

Children are also **Known for EXCELLENCE** Technology program Outdoor Experience (Nature Classroom) 5th Grade Nature Camp Math League / Speech Team Spanish Program Music and Art Programs Full-time Learning Consultant OASIS Tutoring

OUR LADY of PROVIDENCE

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Reach For The Stars / continued from pg. 1

Like our previous dinner-auction in 2008, auction items will include a wide variety of items from gift certificates to jewelry and electronics, various services and tickets to upcoming sporting events.

The committee continues to add to the auction catalog and welcomes donations. One easy way to donate would be right from your computer. OLP is registered at Target.com so your donation is just a point and click away. Just log onto www.target.com/lists/find. Type "Our Lady of Providence" in the Search by Organization box. Once there, you can purchase

items that are on the committee's wish list and have them mailed to the rectory. The committee is also registered at Bed Bath and Beyond in Sunset Hills Plaza near Home Depot. Ask for the OLP Auction List, purchase items from the list and bring them to the rectory or to the back of church. Cash or gift cards are being accepted at the rectory during normal hours or can be dropped in the collection basket at any Mass. Mark the outside of the envelope "Reach for the Stars."

We hope you'll be able to join us for what promises to be an exciting evening!



Parish men shared a great ACTS Retreat in early January unimpeded by snow and bitter cold outside. Here the retreatants and team members gather for a group portrait following the closing Mass.

Our next ACTS retreat, an opportunity to grow in faith and community, will be conducted by parish women for parish women. It is scheduled for Thursday evening, July 22 through 11:00 Mass, Sunday, July 25. All women are invited.