



724 Main Street
New London, NH 03257
(603) 526-4484
www.olfic.org

Dear Friends,

First of all thank you to John and Patricia Sheehan who worked on this newsletter so diligently. Their dedication showed in every finished product. The search for themes and the parish pictures could only come from a great love for their parish. We are indebted to you as we are to so many people who want to serve by giving of themselves to this spiritual event that I call a parish. Welcome to Marion Reid, who has consented to become the new editor of our newsletter, and to Allyson McGinn, who is assisting her. We are grateful for their talents. You can meet Marion at IC at the 8:30 mass surrounded by her husband and children.

A young woman teaches brain-injured children. She does a lot of wonderful things with them. She put on a class production of *My Fair Lady*. The young woman gave the lead role to a little girl in a wheelchair. In so doing it never occurred to her that the audience would weep when the little girl rolled herself across the stage singing, "I Could Have Danced All Night."

I know I am dating myself by mentioning that musical, but there are times when you see the glory of God and you think of the words (memorize them!): "If you, evil as you are, can give good things to those who ask you, how much more will your heavenly Father give to you when asked?"

On December 8th of this year an 11 month-long Jubilee of Mercy will begin. In proclaiming this extraordinary year of grace our Holy Father spoke of Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy, says our Holy Father, is the bridge that connects God and man, opening hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

Look for it wherever you can find it...even in a person dancing in a wheelchair!

Blessings,
Father Bob

Faith Formation: Then & Now

Sunday School, God School, Religion, CCD—what did you call it when you were a kid? What was it like? What does it mean to you now? Go back with us. Hear about a memorable afternoon in our parish religious education program, and let it stir up memories of your own experience. Consider the forces that shape religious education currently, and learn our great hopes for all it can be. Okay, everyone, class is starting.

Monday Class: the Stable Song

It's a Monday afternoon in early December. In the parish hall program director Teresa Jackson gathers the bustling crowd of children which comprises the OLF/IC Faith Formation Program, to practice the songs for the upcoming Christmas pageant. Teresa has stacks of lyrics to be handed out and motions the teachers her way. "Bear with me," Teresa says to them, with her warm laugh and a wry smile, "This song is a bit hokey...but we needed to liven things up a bit!"

Hokey is an understatement...but so is joyful, exuberant and totally fresh: 70 or so children ages 4 to 12 singing a snappy song from the perspective of the stable animals, making sheep calls and cow calls and grooving their shoulders in tune. Traditionally stable scenes of Jesus' birth are peaceful, and the faces in them reverent and cautious. By contrast this crew pays homage to the newborn king with proper reverence and a whole lot of joy. The Messiah is born, and the celebration has started! It is Teresa's hope that the Christmas message--along with other lessons that the children have reviewed, might take root in the minds of these young children, sowing seeds of faith formation.

Finding the Time

Over the years faith formation programs have evolved to meet concerns and realities of the day; in our parish Teresa guides this process. For example, one modern challenge is helping families find time for religious education, among all the other activities that fill our schedules. In response to the

(Continued on page 2...)

(...Continued from page 1)

time-crunch, the parish holds all youth classes on Mondays, and they are kept to 45-60 minutes. Also, though teachers address many faith matters, they focus on the basics: that God is real, that Jesus knows and loves every child, that he is present in the Eucharist, and that there is hope and life beyond this world. These are simple but powerful lessons. As Teresa reminds us, “The Holy Spirit can do so much with our small efforts.”

The Mindshare Quandry

A second, modern challenge is to help families prioritize faith development, among the many competing activities that we enjoy and value. To this end Teresa reminds us that enthusiasm for the faith grows in our hearts to the extent that we nurture it in our minds. Classes help accomplish this in many ways; they teach children the faith and walk them through the sacraments. They expose them to church seasons, customs, and the great saints. They encourage attendance at mass, and participation in church events. The desired end: to make of faith not a history that children memorize, but a heritage to call their own. Other interests come and go, but this foundation settles in children’s hearts and remains with them.

#Jesus

A third challenge in Teresa’s work is to make class content and approach suit each age group. Among older children, the scope of religious education broadens, and seeks to connect faith to daily experiences. First, much work goes to challenging the messages of popular culture that bombard young people, to create space for faith lessons to be explored. Discussions evolve, focusing on Jesus’ own words in the Gospel, and their real-life application and implications. With an adult to guide them, young people might question, explore, and grow to understand Catholicism. The goal: that faith becomes a tool for discernment, and a lifelong relationship that they might continue to cultivate.

Mark Your Calendars!

Please join this fall—join the privilege of learning and sharing our great Catholic faith. Classes resume on September 14th, and there is always space for another student or another assistant. As for the Christmas pageant, watch for it after the 10:30 mass, mid-December. Your own children may not be participating, yet those of your parish family will be, eager to entertain. If you can make some free time that Sunday, consider attending. You won’t regret it. †



Above: Honoring Our Mothers, May 2015



Above: First Communion Day, May 2015

Focus on Family: World Meeting of Families

September and October will see two major events concerning families and the Church, and the world will be watching! The World Meeting of Families, first inaugurated by St. John Paul II in 1994, will take place in Philadelphia Tuesday, September 22 through Sunday afternoon, September 27. The theme for this educational and celebratory gathering is “Love is our mission: The Family Fully Alive.” Tuesday through Friday will feature a congress on the family as the primary learning place for the Gospel. Over 7,000 people are expected to attend the congress portion of the World Meeting of Families. Saturday’s Festival of Families is an outdoor, informative celebration of family, community, and

faith featuring musical performance and exhibits, culminating with a visit by Pope Francis on Saturday evening. At 3PM on Sunday Pope Francis will celebrate Mass to conclude the World Meeting of Families.

Separate from the Philadelphia gathering but very much related to it, will be the Synod of Bishops held in Rome October 4th through October 25th. Bishop representatives from each country around the world will meet to advise the Holy Father on “the vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world.” You may recall that in October last year there was another Synod of Bishops that captured a great deal of media attention concerning so-called “hot button” family issues. That “extraordinary” synod last October was meant to prepare for this year’s Synod. It would be safe to assume that the timing of these “family focused”

events was not left to chance.

What can we expect from the Synod that will issue a final report and recommendations of October 25th? Major change to church teaching on family issues is unlikely. New norms for pastoral practice in matters related to marriage and the family would be more in keeping with results from previous synods. Perhaps the best indication of the Holy Father's thinking can be gleaned from his address to Congress on September 24th, to the United Nations on September 25th and his homily at the Philadelphia Papal Mass on September 27th. What can we do in the mean time? Prayer is always a good thing!

Official World Meeting of Families Prayer

God and Father of us all, in Jesus, your Son and our Savior, you have made us your sons and daughters in the family of the Church. May your grace and love help our

families in every part of the world be united to one another in fidelity to the Gospel.

May the example of the Holy Family, with the aid of your Holy Spirit, guide all families, especially those most troubled, to be homes of communion and prayer and to always seek your truth and live in your love. **Through Christ our Lord, Amen.†**



Above: Confirmation Students, Fall 2014

Who is the Church?

United in faith, each of us bears a personal call to discipleship that is framed by our God-given gifts, our natural interests and personalities, and by the unique circumstances of our lives. Like a snapshot, this article shares a glimpse of how different parishioners meet this calling, bringing church into their homes and communities. Graciously agreeing to be our first featured family are Paul and Jeannie Miller.

Paul and Jeannie Miller moved to Salisbury after living and raising their family outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Paul has many interests, and quite rewarding among these has been assisting others to trace their family histories. This process satisfies curiosities and gives people fresh understanding of family history and cultural identity. It creates meaningful connections to ancestors we may have forgotten, yet whose story has impacted our own. Consider Paul's own experience: a family search led him to learn that his ancestors were among Salisbury's settlers. Among these, some actually resided in his current home. We derive heritage from many countries and cultures but as Catholics, Paul recalls, we are united by our profession to a "holy, Catholic and apostolic church." The integrity of our universal church, derived from the writings of the apostles, was defended to the death by Paul's own grandfather, going back fourteen generations. You just may know of him: Sir Thomas More.

Married to Paul is his college sweetheart, Wisconsin-native Jeannie. Salisbury, NH might seem far-removed from the problems of urban African American children, yet not so for Jeannie. Currently she drafts an initiative in the field of education, aimed at closing the achievement gap among African American students in a lasting and meaningful manner. To do so Jeannie draws upon years of teaching experience in and around Milwaukee city schools, during which she witnessed children struggling to cope with stark deprivation. They motivate her efforts today. Also informing Jeannie's abilities is her experience working in the private sector. There she met bright, earnest people whose unpolished language skills thwarted their professional success. Jeannie addressed this disadvantage by publishing a book that focuses on helping adults to improve their language skills. Further shaping Jeannie's current work is her familiarity with successful Chicago-based remediation programs. To all of this Jeannie adds a pure love of education and of children. Casually she remarks that she dreamed of having many children. God blessed her with two—yet he also blessed her with the wisdom and inspiration to better the lives of countless more.

We are "Companions on the Journey," or so a familiar hymn describes us—companions on our journey to discern God's will, to grow in holiness, to serve each other and to find joy along the way. Paul and Jeannie Miller are among us. They are faith at work. *They are the church.†*

Did you know our website, www.olfic.org, offers two opportunities for prayer and devotion? The first application is Preparing for Sunday. It provides the lectionary readings for Sunday Mass. You can access the Sunday readings at your convenience, enabling you to participate more fully in weekly worship. It includes overview, scripture backgrounds, a reflection and a prayer starter. It also provides last week's, this week's and next week's readings as well.

The second opportunity for prayer and devotion is Take Five. Take Five for Faith is a simple and effective way to keep yourself inspired and informed each morning with well-crafted reflections with scripture tie-ins that draw on the rich teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. Filled with wisdom, insight, and humor and written by trusted Catholic authors, Take Five for Faith is a simple and fruitful way to keep you focused on faith at the start of your day.

Both these can be easily found on our website. Go to <http://www.olfic.org>. Go to the navigation bar and select Devotions. You will find both Preparing for Sunday and Take Five there.†



OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH
724 Main Street
New London, NH 03257

Non-Profit
US Postage Paid
Permit #11
New London, NH

Upcoming Events

Sunday, September 13th 2015 – 18th Annual Parish Picnic - 11AM-4PM, Camp Coniston, Croydon, NH

Event begins with mass said by Fr. Biron, followed by lunch, and all sorts of fun! There will be something for everyone: swimming, hiking, kayaking, tennis--to name a few options, in addition to all sorts of children's activities.

Tickets are available for purchase after all masses. You may purchase them at the picnic as well, though advance purchases are helpful for food planning purchases.

This event happens rain or shine! **Hope to see you there!**

Sunday, October 24th 2015 – Blessing of the Animals - 2PM, Our Lady of Fatima

Celebrate the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi: bring your pets for a special blessing said by Deacon Greg!
Note: this event occurs in the parking lot, not in the actual church.

In our next newsletter, we hope to feature Adult Faith Formation, Loaves & Fishes, and the recent "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" event. Stay tuned! Also, we welcome comments and suggestions. Please email them to reidmarion10@gmail.com.