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# Reflections

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The word "Reflections" is written in a large, serif font. A silhouette of a person stands on the letter 'c' in "Reflections". Below the word, there is a reflection of the word and the person, creating the illusion of water. The entire graphic is framed by two horizontal lines, one above and one below.

## **Our Assumption Family**

In our last issue we published an article entitled *What is Parish Council?* The article described the nuts and bolts of our PPC. In future issues of Reflections we would like to introduce you to the commissions and organizations that work through the PPC to make the activities and special projects of our Parish possible. Their time and efforts are endless, but rewarding and prove beneficial to all of us.



## **Zeal for Your House Consumes Me**

In the book of John, when Jesus turned the money changers out of the temple, his disciples recalled the verse of Psalm 69, "Zeal for your house consumes me." That's sort of the way the Art and Environment Committee thinks of their mission.

*Continued on page 2*

## **Zeal for Your House Consumes Me (cont. from page 1)**

The group used to be called Art and Seasonal Planning. These days “the group” consists mostly of Kathy Blauth and Barbara Testa who are probably best known as the women who do the Christmas and Easter flowers. When they need additional creative talent they call on Mary Vic Taylor and Judy Meals. When they need his many years of experience in church-building problem solving, they turn to Tom Carlucci.

The committee operates under the auspices of the Parish Pastoral Council's Worship Commission from whom they receive feed-back at the Commission's monthly meetings. What the Art and Environment Committee does is enhance our worship experience at Assumption by preparing the space.

Art and Environment sets up the candles we have been using for our Penance services. They purchased the icons we have used during Advent and Lent. They take care of the Advent wreath. They decorate the church for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Last year they hand made all new wreaths for the church pillars for Christmas. All those little physical details that contribute to a seasonal and holy mood in the church are probably done by Art and Environment.

Their first responsibility is making sure our worship space is liturgically correct. That means they were the ones who ordered the new purple curtain which hung behind the tabernacle during Advent. The purple curtain we have used for years is fine for Lent. Its somber shade reflects well the penitential tone of the season. But Advent is a time of joyful anticipation. And our new curtain symbolizes that much more clearly with its vibrant tone. So the Art and Environment Committee does more than just decorate the altar with poinsettias and Easter lilies. They help our praise and petition rise like incense before the Lord, by making our sanctuary a more prayerful space during all seasons of the year.

## School Bells

### Happy and Blessed New Year from the Assumption School Family

We hope that all of you enjoyed a joyous Christmas. Our Intermediate Department started our Christmas season off with a beautiful liturgy. The students and teachers in Grades 3, 4 and 5 prepared a prayerful addition to our usual Wednesday 8:00 Mass. One of the most moving reflections was the Communion Mediation. The students enacted “The Christmas Alphabet”. The culmination was a living tableau of the Nativity scene. This has become a Christmas favorite that helps all of us who watch it to enter into the true spirit of Christmas.

The upcoming months will see two of our grades receive the Sac-

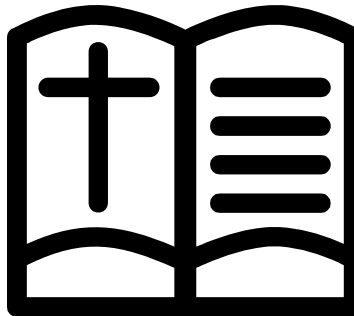


raments. Our second grade students will receive First Reconciliation on February 11 and First Holy Communion on April 30.

Our eighth grade students will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on May 9. There is a book in the church vestibule for you to sign to be a prayer partner to one or more of the eighth graders who are preparing for Confirmation. Please keep all of the students who are preparing for the reception of the Sacraments in your prayers as we continue to keep you in our prayers.

## Assumption's best kept secret

“Can I tell you something?”, this is the phrase my 4 year old granddaughter uses when she wants to share something special and exciting from her life. So-----can I tell you something? There is a very exciting and wonderful ministry happening at our Assumption parish and it's been happening for 20 years. It's “Children's Liturgy of the Word”. Exciting because we get to share the word of God with little children. Wonderful because they are so eager to hear and learn. Let me set the stage for you.



A child processes into church carrying a children's bible along with the presider, adult lector and alter servers. After the greeting, Father asks any children wishing to attend Children's Liturgy to come forward. A dismissal hymn is played as the children gather and are led to McGovern Hall by the child carrying the bible and the adult team. Upon entering the hall, the children see quilts and blankets gathered together on the floor with a small cloth covered table at the head. On the table are a few pillar candles. The bible carrier places the bible on the table then joins the others sitting on the blankets. The adult team welcomes the children. The candles are then passed by the children to each other as a symbol of sharing the light and love of Jesus. We might then sing a song such as a verse of “Living Stones”. We remind the children of how impor-

## Assumption's best kept secret (cont.)



tant they are to our church family. Many times I've been at mass and I hear a child "belting out" the verse. It makes me feel so good down deep inside. We then read the gospel for the day in a context the children can understand. Sometimes the children act out the gospel. Sometimes it is taught with puppets. We will then discuss what lesson Jesus wants us to learn from the reading. From the time the children sit on the blankets they start to raise their hands. They are so eager to share their thoughts and experiences. We usually follow our discussion with making a craft that the children take home to remind them of God's word. This year our service is ending with the children forming a circle and singing the song "This Little Light of Mine". Some children do sign language while we sing. The children are then led back upstairs for the remainder of the mass.

Once again, this is a very exciting and wonderful ministry. My husband, Dick, and I have been a team since it's birth at Assumption. We love the children. We love their enthusiasm; their awe; their wonderment. We love sharing time together in the preparation and delivery. We love watching the ministry



Cont. on page 6

## **Assumption's best kept secret (cont. from page 5)**

grow. We taught children who have grown into adults and now have children of their own. Three years ago, the ministry "Little One's Liturgy" was formed. Little One's Liturgy is for children 2-5 years old. Children's Liturgy is for children kindergarten through third grade. The Children's Liturgy is



available at 10:00 mass, September through May on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday's. Little One's Liturgy is also available September through May on the first Sunday of the month. Any adult (18 & older, single, married, widow, widower) can be involved. You may join an existing team, start a new one, or work as a couple like my husband and I. It is a wonderful ministry because there is very little time commit-

ment. Eileen Quolke, our pastoral assistant, always says "This is Assumption's best kept secret". You may teach only two Sunday's in the year. Resource books are available for craft ideas and gospel readings. Preparation before could be as little as 2-3 hours. Your teaching Sunday takes approximately another 2 hours with set-up and clean-up. If you have two Sundays a year that's 8 to 10 hours. The Spirit fills us with thoughts and ideas so that we may pass the Spirit onto our children. What a great pleasure for so little time! Feel free to become a part of our Assumption secret, witness it some Sunday but most of all pray for the continuation.

## A SAINT FOR THE SEASON (cont. from back page)

He joined the Redemptorist at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1840, taking his vows in Baltimore in 1841. Home missionary in Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Rector of St. Philomena church in Pittsburgh in 1844. Vice-regent and superior of the Redemptorists in America in 1847. Bishop of Philadelphia in 1852.



John never lost his love and concern for the people. He had the ability to learn Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch (in addition to English and his native German) so that he could hear confessions in at least 6 different languages. It was he who organized the first diocesan schedule of the Forty Hours Devotion in America. He is credited for establishing the first system of parochial schools and opened almost 100 schools. He also founded the religious order for women, the Third Order of St. Francis of Glen Riddle. He wrote newspaper articles, two catechisms and many works in German.

He died on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1860 of a stroke in Philadelphia. He is the first American man and bishop to be canonized. He was canonized on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1977 by Pope Paul VI.

## A SAINT FOR THE SEASON



This American saint was born in Bohemia on March 28<sup>th</sup> 1811. He was one of five children born to Philip and Agnes Neumann, owners of a stocking factory. An excellent student John was drawn to the religious life early on, he studied astronomy and botany in addition to theological topics.

When it came time for his ordination the bishop was sick and could not come, the date was never reset because Bohemia had an over abundance of priests. But John never gave up, he wrote to all the bishops in Europe to no avail. He had learned English by working in a factory with English speaking workers so he wrote to bishops in America. Finally the bishop in New York agreed to ordain him. He walked most of the way to France, then took a ship for America.

In New York Josh was one of thirty-six priests for 200,000 Catholics. John's parish in western New York stretched from Lake Ontario to Pennsylvania. He traveled from village to village staying in taverns and homes to teach and celebrate Mass.

Continued on [age 7

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### A Prayer

St. John Neumann, you helped organize Catholic education in the United States. Please watch over all Catholic schools and help them to be a model of Christianity in their actions as well as their words. Amen.