

From Your Pastor

January News Notes

Blessing of Throats Next Weekend. February 3rd is the day on which the Church traditionally remembers Saint Blaise. Since that day falls on a weekday this year, the Blessing of Throats will be available at the conclusion of all Masses next weekend. The custom of throat blessing comes from the veneration that the Church has had for Saint Blaise since the sixth century. Saint Blaise lived in the late third and early fourth centuries and we do not know much about him. Tradition hails Blaise as a man who put his trust in Christ completely. Born into wealth, Blaise received a Catholic education and was a physician before being called to serve as a bishop during the Roman persecution of Christianity. Blaise suffered greatly for his witness to the faith. Yet the more he was persecuted, the more the healing power of Christ worked in him and through him. Most of us are familiar with the story of Blaise's cure of the boy who was choking to death on a fishbone caught in his throat. It was this report that gave rise to the tradition of the Blessing of Throats on Saint Blaise's Day. The Blessing of Throats with blessed candles, like other blessings that we receive with Holy Water or Ashes, for example, is a "sacramental." It is a "sacred sign which bears a resemblance to the sacraments" and by which "various occasions in life are rendered holy" (CCC, 1667). As we take part again in this pious tradition, may it remind us of one of the most important truths of our faith: the saving life and healing power of Jesus Christ is God's perfect and abiding gift to his children. Though we were sinners, Christ loved us unto death and reconciled us to the Father. As Saint Paul proclaims, "Where sin abounded, grace abounded the more" (Rom 5:20).

Catholic Schools Week. Our Catholic Schools have been an enormous grace to the Church in the United States. We are profoundly blessed at St. Columbkille to have had a school affiliated with the Parish since

1901. With you, it is my fond hope and expectation that Saint Columbkille School will serve the Catholic community in Allston-Brighton for many decades and centuries to come. St. Columbkille School was put on a very solid footing in 2006 when it was incorporated as a new entity, owned and managed by the Archdiocese of Boston and Boston College in partnership with Saint Columbkille Parish. Both the Archdiocese and Boston College have been enormously helpful in offering their expertise and their resources to ensure that our new St. Columbkille Partnership School is a model elementary school for others to emulate throughout the country.

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week this year from January 31 through February 6, I want to extend, on behalf of all of us, my profound thanks to Cardinal Seán O'Malley and to Father William Leahy, SJ, the President of Boston College, for their foresight and commitment. I also express heartfelt thanks to Dr. Michael McCarthy and to the teachers and the staff at Saint Columbkille Partnership School for their commitment and their service. The gift they are to our children and to us is truly God-sent.

Increased Weekly Giving Program – This week St. Columbkille Parish will begin an Increased Weekly Giving Program. As I mentioned to you in my Annual Report last fall, our parish needs to improve its financial well-being. I will be writing every family during this week asking you to consider increasing your current weekly offering and to make use of our parish envelope system. Please use the special response envelope that you will find enclosed with my letter next weekend to indicate your new total weekly giving amount. The following weekend, simply return to your regular envelopes while maintaining your new giving amount. Please also pray for the success of this most necessary program.



God bless each of you.

Mrs. Fay