



Volume 3 Issue 1

1919 S. Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL 60608
www.stpiusvparish.org

February 2009

Dear Friends of St. Pius V Parish:

We hope you are well and have survived the bitterly cold weather, wherever you are. May God continue to watch over you and inspire you to continue doing the work of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

From Crisis to Desperation

The recession has hit our community extremely hard. People come to our office daily in search of work, food, and assistance with rent and utility payments. Many face destitution. One day last week, five different families came in, all of them desperate because they cannot find work. Even the day-labor offices in our neighborhood have no jobs for the hundreds of men and women who line up before dawn in search of work. The number of families coming to our food pantry has tripled in the last four months and the line at our soup kitchen has grown dramatically.

Dolores, a mother of five children, is undocumented and a victim of domestic violence. Her husband was deported. How can she possibly support herself? Magdalena has three children under the age of six. Her husband's hours were just cut in half, lowering his income from \$400 to \$200 per week. Behind on two month's rent, they now face eviction. Each story is more tragic than the next. Our parish is responding to the crisis: in our Sunday preaching, our parish programs, our personal generosity to our neighbors and our community actions. We are asking government and church officials to respond compassionately as well. We need to respond as Jesus would.



Urge President Obama to Reform Immigration

Arrests and deportations of undocumented immigrants nearly doubled last year as Immigration and Customs Enforcement targeted workers instead of undocumented people with criminal records. We have seen the devastating consequences: more and more families are divided, parents from children, spouse from spouse. A new study confirms that federal prosecutors have greatly increased their attention on non-criminal immigration cases while passing over white-collar and drug crimes. Fear permeates the immigrant community. With President Obama busy with the economic crisis and two wars abroad he has put immigration reform on hold. Having won office with 65% of the Hispanic vote he will need those votes again in 2012. In Chicago, Priests for Justice for Immi-

St. Pius V Celebrates Catholic Schools Week

This year's theme, "Celebrating Service," inspired our students and teachers to put their faith into action. Our school is known for academic achievement but we are also proud of our commitment to community service. The students enthusiastically collected snacks, lotions and other basics to send to service people overseas; pre-schoolers and Kindergarteners made lunch for our parish soup kitchen; the 8th graders conducted a collection for the missions in Peru; the 6th & 7th grade students organized recess and breakfast (90% of our children qualify for federal breakfast and lunch). We ended the week with a Mass focused on Jesus' call to service, remembering His words: "The greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven is the one who serves more."

That same week our school celebrated Martin Luther King's birthday with a ceremony in each grade to honor the outstanding peacemaker. Bishop John Manz spoke to students about Dr. King and challenged them to imitate his commitment to non-violence. Almost all of our 8th graders took the entrance exams at Catholic schools and are anxiously awaiting the results. In solidarity with so many of our families who are struggling economically, our teachers responded well to the archdiocesan mandate to freeze salaries in all Catholic schools and parishes for fiscal 2010.

grants organized a Lenten prayer campaign to support the President in this difficult time and to remind him of his need to take action on immigration reform. The priests are distributing a card locally and nationally asking people to call President Obama (202-456-1414) each week of Lent (6 times) to assure him of our prayers and to remember the needs of immigrants. We invite you to participate in this effort.

Save the Date!

You can support St. Pius V School and enjoy an evening of culture and cuisine at the 3rd annual *Noche Mexicana*.
Thursday, April 30 at the ZOCALO Restaurant
358 W. Ontario St., Chicago.

Parish Launches Spring Raffle



This year's parish raffle features a Ford Flex SUV as our Grand Prize! With the drawing at our June 14 street festival, raffle proceeds will support our amazing and dedicated school staff and the after-school and counseling programs. Last year's raffle helped us install a sound system and projector in our church hall. Your generosity makes this all possible!

A Busy Season for Religious Education

Hispanics celebrate the Epiphany of Jesus with great enthusiasm. Instead of a Christmas party and Santa Claus, our catechists and the 450 children in the program celebrate Epiphany and the Three Kings. The event includes a posada, a Nativity drama, singing, dancing, gift-giving and lots of food. This is a joyful and packed celebration every year and this January was no different. Later in the month the catechists organized a Family Night modeled on a vast Mexican food fair. They shared the cooking and food service in booths, which they themselves subsidized. Our children enjoyed face-painting, games and dancing. Again, hundreds of children, parents and friends supported our catechetical program.

In February the catechists once again outdid themselves with "A Day in the Life of Jesus," where volunteers transform our church hall into a 1st-century Jewish market! The experience immerses children into the world of Jesus with storytellers, carpenters, artisans, cooks, scribes, magicians and even live goats, sheep and rabbits. The celebration impresses our children on so many levels, exhausts the catechists, and creates a life-long memory for everyone. We thank God for the outstanding service our catechists provide our children.

We are entering the holy season of Lent, a time of prayer, fasting and acting in love on behalf of others. Let us remember in particular those most deeply affected by these harsh economic times. Thank you so much for your contributions to St. Pius V. May God continue to bless you and your loved ones!



Brendan Curran, O.P.
Pastor



Charles W. Dahm, O.P.
Associate Pastor



Matthias Mueller, O.P.
Associate Pastor

Domestic Violence Ministry Grows

Developing ministry to victims of domestic violence: Our domestic violence program at St. Pius V has become a model and inspiration for other programs around the area. Our staff helped found the Archdiocesan Task Force on Domestic Violence and Fr. Chuck has been invited to several other parishes in the last year. In October he preached at all the Masses at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Charles Borromeo in Melrose Park. His message inspired 30 volunteers to form a new committee and create a welcoming refuge within their parish for victims of domestic violence and their children. More importantly, many domestic violence victims themselves approached Fr. Chuck after hearing his preaching and have come together in their own support group. He has successfully implemented this model in several parishes in Waukegan and Schaumburg as well.

Local Homeowners Find Support



So many families, in Pilsen and beyond, dreamed of owning a home and have fallen victim to predatory lending, not having the basic knowledge to navigate this complex process. Many families' mortgage payments skyrocketed after their subprime mortgage terms expired and these families now face the possibility of losing their homes. The Resurrection Project (TRP), our economic development corporation, has been a crucial resource for these people, offering support and helping to save their homes.

When Martin bought his home in Pilsen a few years ago, he trusted his loan officer. Unfortunately, the agent was not completely honest with him and Martin's house payment ballooned beyond his ability to pay. He turned to TRP for help and we were able to save his home. Pilsen has seen 150 foreclosures in recent months but TRP has saved 50 homeowners from losing their homes. This amounts to an \$11 million investment. Martin, now a well-informed homeowner, said "We need TRP to make sure what happened to me doesn't happen to anyone else. I hope they stay in business a long, long time."