



ST. PIUS V PARISH

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



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September 2008

Dear Friends and Families of St. Pius V:

Despite these troubled economic times, we trust this letter finds you well and hopeful for positive change in our world. The sinking economy has taken its toll on our community. Illinois unemployment stands at 7.3%. Prices of food, fuel and other basics have risen sharply. Many struggle to pay rent and many have defaulted on mortgages. Furthermore, the federal government has drastically escalated raids and sweeps of undocumented workers. All these factors have shaken our community, creating hardship and instilling fear. As a result, our parish programs are challenged: parents lack financial resources to place their children in our school or religious education; victims of domestic violence depend more on the support of their abusers and hesitate to free themselves, and many are more reluctant to get involved in community activities. But we are forging ahead, relying on the grace of God and the faith of our people.

Faith-based initiative aids marriages

In fall 2006, St. Pius V began a program to strengthen marriages, funded by the federal Faith-Based Initiative. We invited couples to a short course of 6 classes to enrich their marriage. The first year, we served 172 couples. If we found domestic violence, we placed the couples in our domestic violence program. The second year, we served 186 couples and began providing courses to teenagers about how to develop healthy relationships with the opposite sex. We served 388 teens last year. For our third year, we have set even higher goals.

lition, known as Family Bridges (see familybridgeschicago.org). Among 1,000 organizations in the U.S. applying for funding, our proposal received the highest rating. And since we began operating, we have served the highest number of people among the 242 organizations funded through the federal program. And in our coalition, St. Pius V serves the highest number of couples.



This ministry has produced amazing results. Couples are not only empowered to improve their marriage; many have become more active in St. Pius V. The classes have energized them and enlivened their faith and commitment to the church.

We are very proud of our dedicated staff which has provided outstanding service to so many couples and adolescents.

Carmen originally came for help with her abusive husband. He was both physically and emotionally violent to her. When we challenged him to get involved in our men's group, he accepted; he was open to change. He worked with Carmen to improve their relationship, and eventually they entered our marriage enrichment program, and now are two of our most active parishioners. She volunteers in our parenting program; he is a motivational speaker for our men's group, and this fall they will be trained as teachers for our marriage enrichment program.

We got involved in this effort when Fr. Chuck joined an ecumenical, Hispanic coalition interested in obtaining federal funds to strengthen marriages. The government recognizes that healthy marriages help mitigate many social problems, such as gang activity, school dropout, domestic violence, and academic under-performance. St. Pius V was the only Catholic parish in the coa-

You are invited to celebrate with us

La Cosecha 2008!

A joyful night celebrating the people who so generously collaborate to produce the abundant harvest from St. Pius V ministries.

Saturday, October 18, 2008
St. Pius V Church
1901 S. Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60608

Eucharist at 5:00 PM
Reception follows in
the Church Hall.



St. Pius V School off to a good start

Although our parish school enrollment is down slightly, our school is "rocking." In September, Hispanic Heritage Month, the teachers organized many cultural and historical activities in their classrooms. On September 16, 2008, a mariachi band visited our school, and many students dressed in traditional Mexican costumes; the whole school gathered in the playground to enjoy their music and participate in traditional Mexican dances.

We welcome Lauren Hodge to our faculty from the Inner-City Teaching Corps. She is in her second year of study for a M.A. in education at Northwestern University. The Corps pays her education while she serves in our school. We are delighted because she brings enthusiasm and energy to our school and her 7th grade.

Our generous patron from Big Shoulders is helping us acquire three more interactive whiteboards. These boards, the latest in technology, provide internet access on what used to be the blackboard and allow teachers to post many educational materials and information, engaging students with many dynamic features.



Parish aids survivors of fire

Early on August 11, a fire broke out in the Bombón Café on 18th Street in our Pilsen neighborhood. Within minutes the fire spread through two buildings, but, miraculously, no one was injured. Sadly, the fire displaced four families; one found temporary shelter in our parish rectory with the Dominican priests.

Families lost everything but a few belongings. Gerardo and Cecilia survived. He has worked as a waiter at Tuscan Restaurant on Taylor Street for more than ten years. He was rescued his family Bible he had brought

from Mexico; its pages were singed and waterlogged but inside, amazingly, his passport and \$50 were intact. He also saved his album of photos with celebrities at his restaurant, including Pres Bill Clinton and Michael Jordan. When Fr. Brendan consoled him on his losses, Gerardo responded, "I have my family and my most personal belongings. The rest is just stuff which can be replaced, but my family is irreplaceable. I thank God we survived."

Get out the immigrant vote



St. Pius V has been working to register voters among new citizens and unregistered citizens in our community. During the summer we registered 215 people at Sunday Masses. Together with our community organization, The Resurrection Project, we have registered 700 new voters in surrounding parishes. As part of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, we have registered 20,000 new voters in metropolitan Chicago.

After Oct 7, we will concentrate on getting out the vote. Not only are Hispanics a key group in the presidential election, but elected officials need to respect their vote and work for comprehensive immigration reform. Because we are part of a statewide campaign to get out the immigrant vote, we will train parishioners to canvass our area and urge everyone who can to vote. In Sunday Masses, we will encourage people who cannot vote to reach out to those who can, and we will send forth the voters and non voters alike with our blessing.

We also thank you all for your prayers and donations of support for our ministry. Without your help, we would not be able to serve as many people as we do. May God continue to bless you.

Brendan Curran, O.P.
Pastor

Charles W. Dahm, O.P.
Associate Pastor

Matthias Mueller, O.P.
Associate Pastor