

A Few Words from Fr. Gary for Second Sunday of Easter - March 30, 2008

Jesus first words to us in the Gospel today are 'Peace be with you.' The word 'peace' is a term used in our world today, which reflects on external events and experiences. It is used when people are not at war with one another. It can be used when violence is not used to solve problems. Jesus' words after the resurrection focus on the internal. For Jesus peace is something to be received. It is received when we are able to be reconciled with others and with God. This reconciliation takes place when we are willing to let go of past hurts and failures to forgive. Jesus goes further to use peace as a greeting. He comes into the disciples midst greeting them with 'Peace be with you.' Through out this week let us think of ways we can forgive and be reconciled with others so that we may experience the internal peace that Jesus offers.

Young Adult Gathering: Last week a group of Young Adults (both single and married) from the parish met to discuss the idea of forming a Young Adult Ministry, here at St Thomas Aquinas. They discussed getting together monthly to do adventures and trips such as Camping, Canoeing, visits to Shreveport, Little Rock and community service activities. It was also suggested to have a discussion forum on Church topics at different times. They want to meet again this coming Wednesday, April 2nd at 6:00 PM and would like to invite any Young Adult in the parish to consider gathering with them at the Friary (*the priests' house*) to continue the discussion. They plan on ordering out for a meal, so be prepared for a meal. If you are interested in attending, please plan on attending and consider bringing a friend.

Parish Picnic: Next Sunday, April 6, please join us at 1:00 PM for our Parish Picnic in Lincoln Parish Park at Pavilion L-6. Please check bulletin article for what you can bring.

Vocations: Over my time as a religious and priest I have had a number of people talk about a shortage of young men and women entering religious life and the priesthood. Here's some recent statistics regarding the numbers. In 1965 there were 58,632 priests in the United States with a Catholic population of 45.6 million Catholics which was 24% of the total US population. In 2007 the total fell to 41,449 priests in the US with a Catholic population 64.4 million Catholics which was 22% of the total US population. These numbers equate to each priest serving two times as many Catholics today as in 1965. Is God not calling people to serve in the priesthood or religious life? Some people believe that God is calling, but many young people do not grow up in a culture that shows the goodness and blessings of Religious life and the Priesthood. They call for fostering a culture of vocations. On Sunday, April 13 we begin a World Week of Prayer for Vocations. I would like to invite all youth and young adults to a video reflecting vocational callings on Sunday, April 13 at 4:00 PM. More will be coming forth in the coming weeks.

150 Year Celebration: During this year our Province of Franciscans from the Sacred Heart Province are celebrating 150 years of ministry in the United States. On Wednesday April 16th, the friars from the area will gather at St Thomas Aquinas to host a prayer service at 7:00 PM. During this service we will renew our vows as a community of men in fraternity and celebrate God's calling us to serve the area. We would like to invite all parishioners to join us as we celebrate God's goodness to us in our vocations. Following the service we will have an open house in the friary. Please consider joining us.

New Building: This past Wednesday there was an article in the Ruston Daily Leader describing St Thomas' vision for a new facility the parish has plans to build in the coming years. The article incorrectly stated that the Catholic Student Center would be demolished in order to make way for this building. This is not in the plan, the building that will be demolished is the St Francis Building on the southern side of Carey Avenue between Carey and California. The new facility will add five more classrooms, office space, a commercial kitchen and a multi purpose center for parish celebrations, pot-lucks, education and sport activities. The committee believes this vision of our future will help us to continue to grow. If you have not had an opportunity to see the vision and plans please call the office and we can arrange to have a member of the building committee to share this vision with you.

NEW ACTS LEADERS

ACTS welcomes the 2008-2009 leadership team:

Natalie Fasullo—Sam Graves—Alex Marquardt—Jorge Montesdeoca—Allison Tohme—Hilary Whaley

SENIOR MEETING

Friday, April 4th the Seniors will attend noon mass with lunch to follow at China Wok. Those who can not attend Mass, but would like to join us at China Wok please meet us there at 12:45pm. Let us bring some new ideas for consideration. Please call 255-4053 for transportation needs. See you then. ~Bonnie