



# St. Rita News

The new monthly newsletter serving Saint Rita Parish

OCTOBER 2012 ■ VOLUME I, ISSUE 4

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:** 40 Days for Life is a Peaceful, Prayerful Witness; Parish Picnic; School News; Attending the Mass with Children



## Aloha to the McKeagues!

Our parish family would like to wish a fond farewell to **Nancy and Kelly McKeague**, who will leave soon for Hawaii due to a military transfer. Active members of St Rita for many years, these two have been involved in many areas of parish life. Kelly has skillfully taught and organized our altar boys, adding significantly to the beauty of the liturgy; was a Fathers' Group leader; and a Knight. Nancy led the Women's Group since its inception bringing priests and others knowledgeable in the faith to these gatherings. She also taught at the school as a long-term substitute and is a lector. Together they organized the Vocations Crucifix program. We are grateful to Kelly and Nancy for sharing their time and talents with us. Please keep the McKeagues in your prayers as they leave their beloved parish and diocese and settle into their new home.

## A Note From Fr. Gee on Pope Benedict's "Year of Faith"

The Pope's document, *Porta Fidei* ("The Door of Faith"), announces that from October 11, 2012 through November 24, 2013, we will be celebrating a Year of Faith. During this year we will reflect on the gift of faith we received in baptism, and how to go about not only renewing our faith, but in turn learning to share our faith with others.

Christ's last command to His disciples was: "Go out to the whole world, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We in turn, having received this great gift some 2000 years later, are now responsible for continuing the work of Christ in bringing Him to the world. This year will give us an opportunity to unite our minds and hearts in what the faith is and what it calls us to do.

Here at St. Rita, in addition to the preaching at Masses, we've just begun a Legion of Mary Presidium for English speakers, the purpose of which is to spread the faith through door-to-door evangelization. We will also have an adult Bible study based on faith and scripture. In the words of Pope Benedict, "During this time we will need to keep our gaze fixed upon Jesus Christ, the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Heb 12:2): in Him, all the anguish and all the



YEAR OF FAITH 2012  
2013

longing of the human heart finds fulfillment." (*Porta Fidei* 13).

Let us pray that our faith, with all its beauty, may find its way into our hearts and minds so we can all come to a greater love of God and neighbor.

### For More Information...

Visit the homepage for the Year of Faith at [www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en.html](http://www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en.html), where you can read the apostolic letter *Porta Fidei* in its entirety.

Resources and prayers for the Year of Faith are available at: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/year-of-faith/>



The **St. Rita Knights of Columbus** are featured on the National Knights of Columbus website for their work on renovating the St. Rita School teacher's lounge this summer! They are featured in the "Knights in Action" section under the southeast region -- for more details, visit <http://www.kofc.org/un/en/knightsinaction/detail/1210Southeast.html#6>. Thank you to all the Knights for their continued service to our parish and school!

# Parish Life



In football, the Knights of Columbus team defeated Fr. Gee's team, 6-5.



## Thank You!

A special "thank you" to all who helped with our annual Parish Picnic! Thanks to the following Members of the Knights of Columbus, for all their work organizing the event and grilling -- **Mike Cahill, Mike Carney, Paul Doerrer, Brian Hart, Dan McClafferty, Rafael Orellana, David Petron Jude Prabakaran, Kevin Schweers, Rick Strobach, Dan Verdonik and Brian Worth**; and thanks to the American Heritage Girls Troop VA1381 for their help with the children's activities. It was a wonderful day with our parish family -- gorgeous weather and a record turnout!



## UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR DIOCESE

■ St. Mary's School will host a **free concert by the University of Notre Dame Glee Club** on Wednesday, October 17 at 7:30pm in Bishop Ireton's Garwood Whaley Auditorium.

■ **The Institute of Catholic Culture's Fall Schedule** includes these October events:

-- **Creed or Chaos: An Introduction to the True Faith** by Rev. Paul Scalia on Thursday, October 11 at 7:30pm at St. Ambrose Church Hall, 3901 Woodburn Road, Annandale

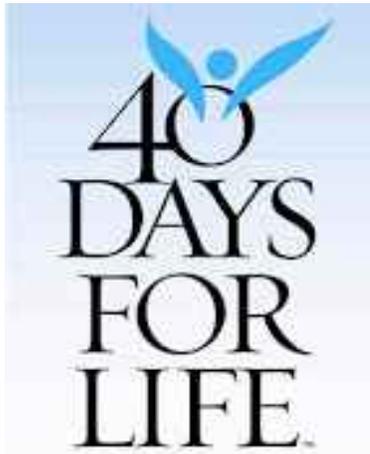
-- **"Forming Sacred Scripture: Understanding How the Bible Came to Be"** by Eric Jenislowski, PhD (cand) on Sunday, October 14 at 6pm at Epiphany of Our Lord Church Hall; 3410 Woodburn Road, Annandale

-- **"Dei Verbum: Keys to Understanding the Word of God"** by Deacon Sabatino Carnazzo on Thursdays, October 18 and 25 at 7:30pm at Holy Spirit Church Hall; 8800 Braddock Road, Annandale

-- **"Roots of the Mass: A Study of the Jewish Influence on the Divine Liturgy"** by Rev. Paul Schenck on Sunday, October 28 at 6pm at Our Lady of Hope Church Hall; 46639 Algonkian Parkway, Potomac Falls



# 40 Days for Life is a Peaceful, Prayerful Witness



From September 26 to November 4, 2012, our community is uniting with hundreds of other cities around the world for a new 40 Days for Life campaign. Recognizing that “with God all things are possible,” people of faith are praying that this effort will help bring an end to the tragedy of abortion.

40 Days for Life is a prayerful, peaceful, and focused pro-life campaign that has already mobilized

over half a million people worldwide, saved over 5900 lives from abortion, led to the conversion of 69 abortion workers, and seen 23 abortion facilities close. 40 Days vigils are being held around the world in 316 locations -- the most ever!--including 49 US states and Washington, DC, seven Canadian provinces, Australia, England, Spain and--for the first time--Uganda.

40 Days for Life has three components:

- **Prayer and Fasting:** Believers throughout our city are invited to join together for 40 days of fervent prayer and fasting for an end to abortion.
- **Peaceful Vigil:** Spend some time standing for life

during the 40 day prayerful witness at one of two local abortion sites:

1. Alexandria Medical and Professional Plaza, 2839 Duke St., seven days a week, 7am - 7pm; and
2. Landmark Towers, 101 S. Whiting St., seven days a week, 7am - 7pm.

■ **Community Outreach:** Help spread positive pro-life information on abortion alternatives throughout the Alexandria area.

Learn how you can speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Contact Sara Dina at [sara.40days@cox.net](mailto:sara.40days@cox.net) or 571-218-6224 or visit <http://www.40daysforlife.com>

## Prayer for 40 Days for Life

*Holy God, Throughout the Bible we learn of many awesome events that took place over the course of 40 days. Knowing that You are our God Who never changes, we commit the coming 40 days to You, asking that You stir our hearts to remember the lives of the unborn---especially those for whom death is planned before life outside the womb is achieved. May the prayers of all Your people bear bountiful fruit as we join with others across this nation to pray to You, our Creator. Stir our spirits with Your passion and unwavering faith as we petition You in this matter of life and death. Make us instruments of Your love and blessing. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.*



### Baptisms at St. Rita

- + James Augustine Balsler, September 2
- + Marcus Raymond Reeder, September 22
- + Meylin Gissel Vasquez-Baiza, September 22

- + Michael Justin Vasquez-Baiza, September 22
- + Nancy Yanizel Peny-Pablo, September 22

### Funerals at St. Rita

- + Mary Gaskins, Funeral Mass September 11  
*May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*



### Weddings at St. Rita

- + Nicholas Ryan Noonan & Kristin Maria Hughes, September 15
- + Michael Scott Gamble & Caitlin Marie Giebel, September 22
- + John Phillip MacNaughton, Jr. & Micki O'Brien Howard, September 24

*Do you know of a parishioner who is ill, and in need of prayers? Or a parishioner who is serving in the armed forces, overseas? We will be happy to publish their names so that fellow parishioners can pray for them. Please contact Catherine Feil ([catherine.feil@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.feil@gmail.com), or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church ([erinmchurch@gmail.com](mailto:erinmchurch@gmail.com)).*



## Happy 60th!

St. Rita School is celebrating its 60th Anniversary! Look for a celebration in May, in conjunction with the parish's celebration of the Feast of St. Rita.

## Run/Walk for Education!



St. Rita School's Annual 5K Fun Run & Walk for Education will take place on Saturday, Nov. 10 at 9am on

Four Mile Run Trail (start and end at Cora Kelly School, 3600 Commonwealth Avenue, Alexandria). All proceeds benefit St. Rita School. For more information on registration or to become a sponsor, please contact Jenel Beck at [jenelbeck@gmail.com](mailto:jenelbeck@gmail.com).

## Social Justice in Action

Each year, St. Rita School sponsors a mini-walk for the homeless. This year, our mini-walk will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 17, at 11am (following the 10am School Mass) on school and church grounds. All proceeds benefit the ALIVE! House. If you are interested in joining the mini-walk, please contact Ann McLaughlin at 703 548-7913 or [mclaughlin62@verizon.net](mailto:mclaughlin62@verizon.net) for more information.

## Preschool Openings!

Saint Rita Catholic Preschool and Atrium of the Good Shepherd is pleased to announce additional openings are now available in both the Three and Four Year old program. Please call 703-548-1800 to schedule a tour, or join us on Nov. 13 at 10 am in the school hall for our open house.

# How To Help Your Children Behave During Mass

Small children, with their boundless energy and short attention spans, often have difficulty remaining quiet and engaged during Mass. As parents, we hope that those without children who are seated near us during Mass will be gladdened that we are bringing our children, who are the future of the Church, to Mass, and bringing them up in the Faith. And yet, we cannot expect everyone around us to completely ignore any and all loud or distracting behavior from our children--we need to do our part! And we parents also need to be able to find some time for quiet prayer and reflection, ourselves.

We asked some St. Rita moms to share what they've learned about bringing little ones to Mass. Many moms brought up the same things over and over--a sure sign that an approach is tried and true! Some things they shared with us:

- In simple, age-appropriate terms, discuss going to Mass before you go. Talk about why we go to Mass every Sunday, what happens during the Mass, and the importance of sitting quietly and not disturbing others' prayer. Make your expectations clear well in advance!
- Consider sitting up front, near the altar! Families with small children often sit near the back, but counterintuitively, many children may find it easier to behave when they are sitting at the front of the church, where they can easily observe the priest's actions on the altar.
- Many families find that religious books or coloring books can be very helpful (or even essential!) for occupying children during Mass; others find they are more likely to encourage children to make noise, or that children will "act out" when they become bored with them. Be attentive to whether or not books or coloring supplies are helping or hurting your child's behavior at Mass!
- When your children have questions about the Mass, answer them during the Mass, while the child is still interested and engaged.
- Be considerate of others and react quickly when your child is misbehaving or making noise during Mass. Take the child out of the sanctuary, where you can explain to them what they were doing that was unacceptable, and how you expect them to act when you go back into Mass.
- Many moms said that if you must take a misbehaving or noisy child out of the sanctuary, don't reward them by making it fun for them! Once they've calmed down, bring them back into the church, rather than letting them run around and play outside or in the vestibule.
- Keep expectations age-appropriate, and be consistent. Be firm about enforcing consequences for bad behavior and rewarding good behavior, and your efforts will pay off!
- Consider going to daily Mass, which not only affords your children extra "practice," but is usually shorter and not as crowded.
- Use positive reinforcement! After Mass, discuss what went well and make sure your children know that you noticed their good behavior and are proud of them.
- Consider your own example! When you show a love for the Mass and look forward to going, and have an appreciation for its beauty, and are praying reverently during the Mass, your children will not fail to notice. Your patience will be rewarded over time!



*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."*

-- Luke 10:14

Do you have ideas for future items in the parish newsletter, or would you like to submit a feature for publication? Is there an upcoming event of interest to St. Rita's parishioners that we should know about? All submissions can be directed to our editors: Catherine Feil ([catherine.feil@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.feil@gmail.com), or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church ([erinmchurch@gmail.com](mailto:erinmchurch@gmail.com)). *Thank you!*