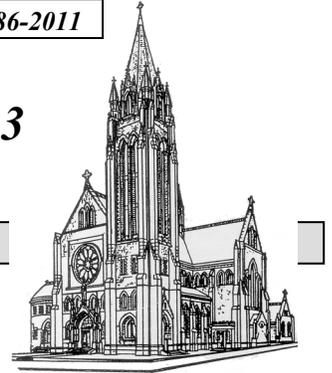


**OUTREACH WINTER 2012-13**

6th Avenue & Carroll Street  
225 6th Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11215-1299 (718) 638-1880 [www.stfxbrooklyn.org](http://www.stfxbrooklyn.org)



A PARISH FAMILY    GATHERING IN FAITH    RENEWED IN SPIRIT    SENT FORTH TO SERVE

**THE FAITH OF CHILDREN NURTURED AT SFX** *By Vivian Toy*

Ask anyone who has been through St. Francis Xavier's CCD program and they'll tell you the highlight of the program is the annual Breakfast with Santa. The event draws about 300 family members from the parish each year, and it perfectly blends the religious and the secular. The fourth grade class performs a Nativity play to remind us all of why we as Christians celebrate Christmas, while the children in the other classes sing Christmas carols. And everyone eagerly awaits the arrival of the big man from the North Pole, who makes a big entrance and then patiently poses for pictures with the children and their families.



*The CCD program is held on Saturday mornings during the school year in St. Francis Xavier School on President Street.*

The breakfast is the main fundraiser for the program, which of course has the more solemn mission of educating the youth of our parish about the church and their relationship with God. It also helps prepare children for the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation.

Few of the children or their parents probably even know what the acronym CCD stands for (that's **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine**), but the program plays an important educational role in the parish. The program description on the parish Web site reads: "Our main goal is to help the children know how much God loves them and to help them to develop a strong personal relationship with Jesus." **Sister Helene**, who has run the program since 1975, says several things set the parish's program apart. The first is the dedicated and creative crew of catechists who teach the classes, many of whom are professional teachers. Second is

the program's active parent committee, which helps organize the Breakfast with Santa and other events during the school year. "Some of the teachers I'm blessed with have been with me for a very long time, and they do it because they all love the children," Sister Helene said. The parent committee, she added, helps her create a strong family environment and a sense of community spirit.

The program this year will meet 21 times during the school year, on Saturday mornings for children between kindergarten and sixth grade, and on Friday evenings for grades seven and up. **Monica Messina**, known by her students as Miss Monica, has been teaching third graders in the program since 1993. "It's been very rewarding for me," she said. "Because the way they respond to some of my questions sometimes makes me think about my own perspective on life."

For example, when talking to them about how to be more caring with others, students sometimes have talked about their experiences with bullying and she has marveled at how other children respond with suggestions on how to react and how to intercede if they come across another child who is being bullied. "They're just in third grade, but their spirit is so alive," she said. The catechist with the longest tenure is **Sister Dolores**, who has taught fourth graders in the program since the 1970s. She directs the Christmas pageant every year, providing the script for the

**What's In This Issue**

- ◆ SFX Confraternity of Christian Doctrine
- ◆ Rosary Society Donates Statue in Memory of Deacon Jack Franca
- ◆ Highlights from Fall SFX Ministry Fair
- ◆ 2012-2013 Calendar of Events & Liturgies

narrators and ironing all the costumes the night before the play, including the robes for Joseph, Mary and the three Wise Men.

But **Virginia Gorman** has turned the program into a family affair. Miss Virginia is in her 25<sup>th</sup> year of teaching in the program. Her son, Brendan, started teaching the confirmation class about eight years ago. "He's a thousand times better at it than I am," she said with a smile. And her daughter, Meghan, has been teaching kindergartners for the last five years. Asked how she feels to have two of her four children follow in her footsteps in the CCD program, Miss Virginia said only, "I'm very blessed."

As for the parent committee, several parents who no longer even have children in the program continue to volunteer their time and energy. **Noreen Axon** – whose children are now 27, 25 and 18 – helped start Breakfast with Santa in the early 1990s, and she still helps run the breakfast's popular raffle. "It's just such a great way for the community to get together," she said. "It's a way to celebrate God and have a great time doing it." **Ann Bell**, another parent volunteer, said she joined the parent committee years ago when her son, William – who is now 19 – asked her to. "I never asked him why he wanted me to do it, but I think it made him feel that this way we could both be part of this community of faith," she said. She stuck with it, though, she said, because it became a great way to meet other people in the parish and to volunteer her time.

The program this year has about 165 children enrolled in it, down from a high of as many as 240 children in the 1980s. Regardless of the number, Sister Helene has always known each child by name. "I have a gift for remembering names and faces," Sister Helene said. "But I think getting to know each of them is so important because the children should know that they're important to the parish."

## ✿ GARDEN STATUE TO HONOR MEMORY OF DEACON JACK FRANCA ✿

*By Julia Cornely*

**P**lans are underway by the **Rosary Society** to install a garden statue in the SFX garden as a loving memorial to Deacon Jack Franca. Deacon Jack, who passed away in 2009, served the St. Francis Xavier parish community for all the years of his diaconate. His kind and gentle nature endeared him to all. We were truly blessed with his presence.

**Maria Franca** made a donation to the Rosary Society in memory of her husband because she said Jack always had a soft spot in his heart for the Rosary Society. So, we, in turn, want to honor Deacon Jack for his dedicated service to St. Francis Xavier Parish. The Society is currently reviewing statue designs and garden placement to appropriately honor Jack. A memorial plaque will sit beside the statue.

The Rosary Society, which just celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, dedicates all its efforts to the service of the SFX community as well as to neighborhood charities. You may know the Society for its annual rummage and bake sales. But, be assured, the Rosary Society also prays for the benefit of the parish community. Another of the Society's outreach missions is the annual Christmas Cards for Seminarians project. The Society receives many thank you's for this project. There have actually been seminarians who have come to Mass at SFX because they were so impressed with the number of cards our parish sent to them. Rosary recitation and meetings are held monthly on the first Sunday. All women of the parish are welcome to join the Rosary Society. If interested, please call the rectory for specifics on upcoming meetings.

At Christmas time, the Rosary Society donates all the funds raised during the year to SFX church and local charities, such as CHIPS. With your support the Rosary Society will continue its efforts in support of the parish for years to come.



*...along a garden path next to the Church of St. Francis Xavier...*

# SFX OCTOBER MINISTRY FAIR *by Christine Napolitan*

The Ministry Fair, held after each Mass the weekend of October 27 and 28, was an enjoyable and enlightening event. With 29 ministries represented, there was certainly something for everyone to consider. A total of 80 names were collected of parishioners who are interested in becoming involved with one or more of the parish organizations.

Anyone who missed Mass at SFX that weekend also missed S. Helene's invitation to join the work of the parish. All who heard it were greatly moved. With Sister's permission, part of her talk is reprinted below.

"Composer Giacomo Puccini wrote a number of famous operas. In 1922 he was suddenly stricken by cancer while working on his last opera, Turandot, which many now consider his best. Puccini said to his students, 'If I don't finish Turandot, I want you to finish it for me.' Shortly afterward, he died.

"Puccini's students studied the opera carefully and soon completed it. In 1926 the world premiere of Turandot was performed in Milan with Puccini's favorite, Arturo Toscanini, directing. Everything went beautifully until the opera reached the point where Puccini had been forced to put down his pen. Tears ran down Toscanini's face. He stopped the music, put down the baton, turned to the audience, and cried out, 'Thus far the Master wrote, but he died.'

"A vast silence filled the opera house. Then Toscanini picked up the baton again, smiled through his tears, and exclaimed, 'But the disciples finished his work.'"

Sister then went on to encourage all of us to find a way to use our talents for the church because "We ARE the Church."

St. Francis truly offers opportunities for everyone. Whether you're interested in knitting or crocheting, gardening, singing, working in the library, teaching CCD, praying for a pregnant woman, performing acts of social charity, working for social justice, writing for this newsletter, distributing the Eucharist or a number of other possibilities, there's a place for you to help SFX remain the vibrant, wonderful parish that it is. Anyone interested in joining a ministry should approach someone involved in the ministry of your choice, speak to S. Helene, or ask the rectory for further information on how to contact a member. There is definitely a place here for your particular talents, skills, and time constraints.



*Photos by Stephen Kabacinski*

*Each St. Francis Xavier Parish Ministry set up a display board and sign-up sheet after Mass to encourage new members. Parish Ministry members were on hand to explain their mission and service needs to those interested.*

## WINTER & SPRING CALENDAR 2012-2013

### SPECIAL LITURGIES

Dec. 3		<i>Feast of St. Francis Xavier</i>
Dec. 24	5:00 PM	<i>Family Christmas Mass</i>
Dec. 24	11:15 PM	<i>Christmas Concert followed by Midnight Mass</i>
Feb. 13		<i>Ash Wednesday (see bulletin for schedule for ashes)</i>
Mar. 24		<i>Palm Sunday (see bulletin for schedule)</i>
Mar. 25		<i>Diocesan Day of Reconciliation (see bulletin for schedule)</i>
Mar. 28	8 PM	<i>Holy Thursday Solemn Liturgy</i>
Mar. 29	3 PM	<i>Good Friday Solemn Liturgy</i>
Mar. 30	8 PM	<i>Easter Vigil Solemn Liturgy</i>
May 19		<i>Pentecost Sunday</i>
May 19	12:15	<i>Celebration of Confirmation for Adults</i>

### HOSPITALITY WEEKENDS

Feb. 2,3, May 18,19, June 8,9. After all Masses

### SPECIAL DATES

Nov. 21, 22		<i>Jack's Sandwich Project (see bulletin for further details)</i>
Dec. 10	7:30 PM	<i>Lessons and Carols</i>
Jan 6		<i>Rectory Open House After Masses</i>
Feb. 18, 25	7:30 PM	<i>Disciples in Mission Faith Sharing Group</i>
Feb. 20, 27	7:30 PM	<i>Disciples in Mission Faith Sharing Group</i>
March (All Mon & Wed)		<i>Disciples in Mission Faith Sharing Groups</i>
Mar. 9		<i>Family Lenten Retreat Day</i>
April 15, 22, 29	7:30 PM	<i>Adult Confirmation Preparation Classes</i>
April 18, 25	7:30 PM	<i>CATHOLICISM, Parts One and Two. Faith Formation Series</i>
May 2, 9, 16	7:30 PM	<i>CATHOLICISM, Parts Three, Four, Five</i>
May 6, 13	7:30 PM	<i>Adult Confirmation Preparation Classes</i>

### FAITH SHARING ON THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURES

Dec. 9, Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 10, Apr. 14, May 12 & June 9. 10:45 AM. Rectory

### PRAYER GROUP MEETINGS

Dec 18, Jan 15, Feb 19, Mar 19, Apr 16, May 21 & June 18. 7:30 PM. Rectory

### BOOK CLUB MEETINGS

10:45 AM.	Rectory
Dec. 16	<i>A selection of POETRY</i>
Jan. 27	<i>Annual MOVIE showing</i>
Feb. 24	<i>SIMPLIFYING THE SOUL: LENTEN PRACTICES TO RENEW YOUR SPIRIT</i>
Mar. 17	<i>CATHOLICS</i>
Apr. 21	<i>AMISH GRACE: HOW FORGIVENESS TRANSCENDED TRAGEDY</i>
May. 19	<i>MEDITATIONS FROM A MOVABLE CHAIR</i>
Jun. 16	<i>OPEN MIND, OPEN HEART</i>

### IDEA PEOPLE/WRITERS WANTED FOR OUTREACH

OUTREACH, the quarterly newsletter of St. Francis Xavier Parish, is seeking parishioners who would like to be part of our publishing team.

Our newsletter has been published 3-4 times a year for the past 3+ years. It was begun as a means to spread the news about our parish and increase communications among parishioners. In the past, various ministries have been highlighted, articles about general issues in the Church discussed or explained, and special celebrations featured.

Parishioners have had an extremely positive reaction to OUTREACH, and we believe it's important to keep this ministry active.

If you would like to help us get this newsletter out on a regular basis, or if you'd like to be an occasional contributor, please contact Chris Napolitan at [chrishg321@aol.com](mailto:chrishg321@aol.com) or at 718-499-2596. Most of our work is done online, so a basic knowledge of computers is preferable.

The newsletter work is done largely without the need for meetings, but does require the ability to meet a deadline. Our work is sent via email for editing, layout, printing, etc. and occasionally phone conversations are held for clarification. We really need people who are writers, and/or have new ideas for articles.

In short, let us know your ideas for articles, write the article, if you're willing, and choose whether you'd like to be a "regular" or intermittent contributor. All of the above can be handled through emailing as mentioned above, or calling Chris at 718-499-2596.

Thanks for considering donating your time and talent.