



Volume 7, Issue 4

Good News from St. Pius V

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Seeking Posada: Christmas Tradition, Christmas Hope

Dear Friends and Families of St. Pius V,

For the families at St. Pius V, Christmas isn't Christmas without *Posadas*, an old Mexican tradition that reenacts the drama of that first Christmas Eve. That night Mary and Joseph found themselves homeless in a strange city. Finally a door is opened for them in a humble stable, where they welcome their child into world. This year our Christian base communities again organize the evening *Posada* in our church: processing together, praying the rosary, reflecting on the nativity story, and finally sharing Christmas sweets and the delight of breaking the treat-filled piñatas.

As we listen to the familiar gospel stories recounting those dangerous early years of Jesus' life, we see the Holy Family's journey mirrored in the lives of parishioners who sought *posada* in St. Pius V and found a loving welcome. On pages 3 and 5 are stories of two of our parishioners, both single mothers. Erendira shares the story of her liberation from her abuser. For Elena hope fulfilled is a valid license, made possible by legislation St. Pius V Parish worked to secure.

This Christmas season we offer *posada* to the newborn Son of God as we celebrate his birth by committing ourselves to accompany families like Erendira's and Elena's, whose presence in our lives reminds us of the true meaning of gift-giving and the spirit of Christmas. Thank you for helping us to provide *posada* to so many people. Your prayers and financial gifts are needed and welcomed to sustain this ministry. May your family, friends and faith in God bring you peace and joy this holy season and throughout the New Year.

Fr. Brendan Curran, OP

Chuck Dahm, OP

Matthias Mueller, OP

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2013 NAESP Distinguished Principal Award Winner

Mrs. Nancy Cullinan Nasko

Congratulations, Mrs. Nasko!



For nearly three decades, Mrs. Nancy Cullinan Nasko has served the students, families, and staff of St. Pius V School. She has cared for us, prayed for us, cried for us, cheered for us and loved us with all her heart.

Her work here, first as a teacher and now as our principal, has shaped St. Pius V School into a top-notch institution, drawing students from across the city and suburbs. She deserves more gratitude than we could ever give her, and we are proud to announce that her work has not gone unnoticed.

On Oct. 25, at a ceremony in Washington, DC, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) presented Mrs. Nasko with their highest honor, the Distinguished Principal Award. NAESP honors outstanding elementary and middle-level administrators who give children a sound foundation for lifelong learning and achievement. They celebrate elementary and middle-level principals who set high standards for instruction, student

achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staffs in their learning communities.

Of the 61 principals who were honored, only three were Catholic school principals – that’s three honorees from among the 10,000 Catholic school principals nationwide!

This award comes fresh on the heels of another national award Mrs. Nasko received. Last April, she also received the National Catholic Educational Association’s Distinguished Principal Award at a ceremony in Houston, Texas.

Mrs. Nasko is a credit to our faith, spreading love, charity and kindness wherever she goes. Her educational philosophy - borrowed from St. Francis of Assisi - is posted on her office door: “Preach the gospel at all times. When necessary, use words.” If anyone has ever lived this philosophy, it is Nancy Cullinan Nasko. In the words of our school motto, Mrs. Nasko is truly “Making a World of Difference.”

Congratulations Mrs. Nasko!



News and Notes

- For the third straight year, the St. Pius V Pride are Chicago’s Catholic Flag Football League champions! Our brand new junior varsity team also won their championship, so we’re celebrating two big wins! Congratulations to Coach Trejo and both of his amazing teams.
- St. Pius V School is proud to introduce our brand new cross country team. Thanks to our incredible volunteer coach Dylan and his mom Joanne, we are thrilled to add this program to our growing list of extracurricular activities.
- Thank you to Rush University Medical Center for their generous gift to our school, a new science lab, where all of our students can participate in exciting experiments and expand their knowledge of the world around them. The donation of this lab is an enormous blessing, and we are eternally grateful.

The school’s cross-country team is the newest addition to a growing list of extracurricular activities that help the students develop new skills and interests.



Fortitude: An experience of HOPE at St. Pius V



St. Pius V is privileged to accompany women and men who courageously free themselves from domestic violence. Here is a Christmas story of hope, fruit of the Word made Flesh, who came to heal and lift up. Erendira Ruiz tells her remarkable story. Visit www.stpiusvparish.org to read her complete testimony.

My companions and I in our domestic violence support group at St. Pius V named our group “FORTITUDE” because we have learned what it is to live, love, have confidence, respect, healing and wisdom.

It has not been easy to get to know ourselves in order to recognize when someone is doing us harm, to cease being co-dependent, feeling guilty, negative, and pessimistic. To discard that heavy burden of past resentments; to be able to say that little word NO. No to the ill treatment, to the abuse, and to the self-inflicted punishment.

Instead, we have learned that we have a right to live in a peaceful home, free of domestic violence; to be loved; to have confidence in ourselves and in what we decide. We have struggled, my companions and I, day after day, to set limits, learning to live healthy and independent lives. For me, what has been most difficult is to raise my self-



HOPE at St. Pius director Dolores Tapia and counselor Sr. Virginia Jung, OSB, speak at the opening day rally for Domestic Violence Awareness month, Oct. 1 at the Illinois Building in Chicago.

esteem; to not permit anyone to think that he or she has the right to abuse me or invade my privacy; to not be so hurt when someone rejects me; to not want to always be with others so as not to feel abandoned, hoping with all my strength that those people will fill the voids within me.

I am tremendously grateful to all who work at St. Pius V. It is a diffi-

cult job to maintain their programs and the sessions are free for all in the community.

To my beloved friend, Rosalinda, who practically carried me to St. Pius V, to the HOPE staff, especially my counselor, Veronica Flores, many thanks for sharing your knowledge and time. My wounds are healing. I learned to say “stop” to things that hurt me and I now

realize it isn’t so bad to be alone. I sit alone at night and watch the moon. Because of help I received at St. Pius V, I walk with a lighter heart, with less burden because I forgave myself. Now I know God has been with me always; that he never abandoned me and he never will.



Fr. Chuck Dahm, OP, listens to Attorney General Lisa Madigan at the re-opening of Second Federal as a credit union.

Little Village Savings and Loan Rescued by TRP

The Resurrection Project, our community economic development organization, rescued a failed bank, and with the aid of the Self Help Credit Union, based in California, turned it into a valuable asset that will continue the bank’s century-old legacy of serving the immigrant community.

Now known as Second Federal Credit Union, the former savings and loan, with three branches, is helping mortgage-holders avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes and, with the help of The Resurrection Project, offers vital financial services to the communities of Pilsen, Little Village, and Cicero.

One first effort was to provide low-interest loans to “Dreamers” – undocumented young immigrants brought to the U.S. by their parents as children – so they can apply for and obtain permission to stay in the U.S. for two years, get driver’s licenses, work, and attend college.

After blessing the new credit union, Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P., president of the Resurrection project said, “This is a wonderful partnership that will help us strengthen our neighborhoods and provide hope for our families.”

Celebrating the Harvest

A night to remember and give thanks

Many thanks to all who attended St. Pius V's seventh annual *Celebrating the Harvest: Transforming Lives* awards banquet and silent auction on October 26.

Maria and Rene Herrera and family received the Family of Faith Award for their commitment to the parish and to Catholic education, and members of the Illinois' legislative and executive branches of government received the Community Service Award for passing the drivers' licenses-for-



Honorees Rene and Maria Herrera, left, with Illinois Senate President John J. Cullerton, his wife Pamela, and Father Brendan at the Celebrating the Harvest awards ceremony.

immigrants law. Receiving the award for the Illinois General Assembly was Senate President John Cullerton and his spouse Pamela. Javier Salas, senior advisor to Governor Pat Quinn, accepted the honor on the governor's behalf.

When accepting his award Senator Cullerton effusively praised St. Pius V for its compassionate and tireless ministry with immigrants.

Spontaneous laughter erupted when Maria Herrera recalled the day her enthusiastic kindergartener, Rene Jr., was anxious to begin school at St. Pius V, because he was certain that the school principal, Sister Erica Jordan, OP, was related to Chicago Bull's star Michael Jordan.

The unexpected presence of U.S. Senator Dick and Loretta Durbin was another highlight of the evening.

Many thanks to our faithful emcee, WGN reporter Julian Crews, his video producer Manny Medina who created a wonderful video for the event, and the many, many more friends who made it all possible and an enormous success, including the sponsors listed here.

Please mark your calendars for next year's 8th annual *Celebrating the Harvest* banquet, October 25, 2014.

Thank you to our supporters For your generosity!

These sponsors generously supported *Celebrating the Harvest*. Please remember them in your prayers of gratitude and let them know you appreciate their support for St. Pius V's ministries to welcome, teach, and transform lives.



El Milagro

Carnecerias Jimenez

The Family of Tom Curran

St. Anthony Hospital

Tom and Judy Herbstritt

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Woodlawn Funeral Home

Alderman Danny Solis and Family

Lisa Jusino, Allstate

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Dr. Thomas Caron

Dominicans at Carlos Morales House

Gonzalez Produce

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Parish News in Brief

Parish leaders' spirits were renewed during their October retreat with long-time St. Pius V friend, Fr. Ed Shea, OFM at St. Basil-Visitation Parish. † **Casa Juan Diego youth center staff are the stars** of two *Perspectivas Latinas* programs produced by CAN-TV. You can watch the English and Spanish language videos at www.stpiusvparish.org. † In October, our sharing parish, **St. Vincent Ferrer**, River

Forest, Ill., hosted our parishioners for a festive evening that included Mass, dinner, and dancing. † **HOPE at St. Pius V** passed its recent audit by the City of Chicago with flying colors. They are looking forward to their **Valentine's Day Dinner Dance** fundraiser to support their couple's enrichment program. † Thousands of pilgrims are expected to attend services at St. Pius V during the novena in honor of **Our Lady of Guadalupe** Dec. 3-12.

St. Pius V Parish: Front-and-center advocate for immigrants

“The joys and the hopes, the sorrow and the anxieties of the [people] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the sorrow and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

These brief words from the Second Vatican Council shape our ministry at St. Pius V. They especially come to mind when we see the needs of so many immigrants and attempt to assist them. Here is highlights of some efforts made at St. Pius V these past months to address the joys, hopes, sorrows and anxieties of the immigrants we serve and for whom we advocate.

MARCH FOR DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND JUSTICE, OCT. 12

More than 100 of St. Pius V Parishioners participated in this march organized by churches, labor and immigration rights groups in Chicago as part of a nation-wide week of action to convince Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform and end deportations that divide families.

TWO MILLION TOO MANY

Fr. Brendan, Fr. Chuck and members of St. Pius V joined 140 community, faith, and civic leaders who stood in solidarity with immigrant families by blocking access to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office building on Congress Parkway on Nov. 6. The non-violent action drew attention to the 2 million families torn apart by cruel and senseless deportations of one or more parents in the last five years, leaving their citizen children with one or both parents. U.S. Bishops have repeatedly denounced this cruel and unjust attack on immigrant families.



Fr. Brendan Curran speaks with the media outside Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters in Chicago, and above with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel at the March for Dignity, Respect, and Justice Oct. 12.

LICENSES FOR IMMIGRANTS

Illinois is poised to issue temporary visitors licenses in order to make our roads safer and allow undocumented immigrants to drive legally.

Elena Valdez, our parishioner and a domestic violence survivor, learned to drive in order to free herself from her abusive husband, avoid the gang activity on her block by driving her children to school, and get to her job as a home health care worker for disabled children and homebound elderly. This legislation is one more way that Elena can keep herself and her family safe.

Governor Pat Quinn praised St. Pius V for our work in passing the law creating the licenses. Hundreds attended two workshops we hosted for those seeking licenses, one organized by the Illinois Secretary of State and State Rep. Edward Acevedo. The day applications began, more than 4,000 people made appointments in a few hours, causing

the state to halt appointments until more sites and personnel could be mustered. Some immigrant advocates believe the law will also help decrease deportations that separate families, since driving without a license often leads to immigration officials deporting drivers.

WANT TO HELP?

U.S. House Speaker John Boehner has ruled out any House action on immigration this year. He said the House prefers to address reform piecemeal, rather than in a comprehensive way. This directly contradicts the approach of U.S. Bishops. For more information see www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Please phone, email, or write your U.S. representatives to urge them to support comprehensive immigration reform that will provide a pathway to citizenship and keep families together. (202) 224-3121.



Mary McCann Sanchez

Welcoming the new director of Casa Juan Diego

Mary McCann Sanchez's new role as director of Casa Juan Diego completes a circle for her, bringing her back to where she studied almost 30 years ago. Then, she was teaching in Catholic schools and public school ESL programs while she completed her master's in education at an NIU satellite campus in Pilsen.

"These are the golden threads that are woven through my story as an educator," Mary muses. "I've always focused on social justice and peace-building, and I've always encountered Dominicans along the way."

Mary studied at the Dominican-sponsored Siena Heights College in Adrian, Mich., collaborated with Dominican brothers in Honduras after working with Salvadoran refugees in Honduras for Catholic Relief Services, and, during her last tour in Pilsen in the 1980s, joined members of the St. Pius V community in social justice efforts. She is happy to be back, now at the helm of Casa Juan Diego, a position which seems tailor-made for her many skills and passions.

She begins her leadership of Casa Juan Diego at a challenging moment. The building at 2020 Blue Island is under construction, so the program operates out of a temporary facility nearby at Holy Trinity Church. The bigger challenge

\$20,000 for St. Pius V

CCHD awards presented

At the Catholic Campaign for Human Development awards banquet in October Chicago's Cardinal Francis George praised St. Pius V for our "commitment to social justice and helping break the cycle of poverty" and service to victims of domestic violence. Receiving the \$20,000 award with Fr. Brendan were husband and wife Gonzalo Aguilar and Caritina Temiquel, and Ramon Carreon, who along with his wife Elia was featured in a CCHD video for their inspiring story of healing from domestic violence. To see the CCHD video and Elia and Roman visit www.stpiusvparish.org.

is responding to the needs of our students in light of the constantly shifting priorities – and funding streams – of the Chicago Public Schools.

"Casa Juan Diego is a solid project because it is built on the felt need of the community, going back to 1996," she explains. "We have a committed staff with strong roots in the community who know this is not just a place to work. They have a compelling sense of mission."

She thinks of Casa Juan Diego as a "hinge" that opens the door to success for students, ages 6-17, who benefit from afterschool programs that focus on education, cultural appreciation, and peace-making. "Immigrant students and children of immigrant families face special challenges and benefit from the programs we offer," she says, "and so do the children of families rooted in the community for generations.

With all of the challenges also come the strengths of resiliency, tolerance, and an appreciation for family and faith."

For more information about Casa Juan Diego, or to learn ways you can support the center's mission, contact Mary at 312.421.7647 or mmccann@casajuandiego.org.



Casa Juan Diego director Mary McCann Sanchez enjoys interacting with the students who come to the center for academic, cultural, and faith-based support in a safe, welcoming environment.

