

The Pastoral **V**isi **or**

January 2003

Volume 5, No. 3

Dear Coordinators,

Last evening, as I was getting ready to leave the office, my eye landed on a bag of materials that I had ‘unearthed’ from the office closet earlier in the day, and I decided to quickly go through it before heading home. The bag contained ‘mementos’ that I carried with me from my previous ministry. As I was going through it, a funeral program with the picture of a young African American boy on the cover literally leapt up at me.“Bop”! I realized that it was one year ago today that he was shot to death in the bedroom of his home. “Bop’s” short-lived life story is much longer than space permits here, but let me just say, that he and his family touched me in a very profound way. The realization that this was the first anniversary of his death prompted me to call his “mother” who lives alone now because since her son was killed, her husband suffered a stroke, and her other son was jailed for gun possession. “Bop’s” mother is a woman who is getting along in years, with severely compromised physical health, extremely limited financial resources, but an enormously rich and healthy spiritual life. She raised “Bop” from infancy, taking him home from the hospital 26 years ago when his drug addicted birth mother was not able to care for him.

As Gladys and I spoke last night, I heard both her heartache and her strength. Despite it all, she still believes in the goodness of people, and of God’s presence in her life. Mostly, Gladys knows this because of those who come to offer her support and a caring presence. Gladys is very open in telling her story and sharing her feelings, which makes it easy for others to “come by” and “be with” her, but clearly there are many lonely moments and heart-wrenching hours.

It’s humbling for me to speak with women and men like Gladys, whose lives hold so much pain and suffering, and the conversation reminds me of the importance of “just showing up”, following our instincts, and letting our faith lead us into the lives of those in need. The conversation also left me wondering how many others, are sitting in empty houses, alone with their memories and their grief. That thought brought you to mind, and the many people within our church who extend God’s love and care to those who are sick and homebound. You may be the strongest evidence some people have of God’s love at work in their lives!

Since we are honoring the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King this month, a quote of his comes to mind:

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness,
only light can do that.*

*Hate cannot drive out hate,
only love can do that.*

May you be blessed for the *light* that you bring and the *love* you extend into the lives of so many.

Sincerely,

Jean Marchant

“Communion is strength; solitude is weakness. Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast and lies prone on the meadow. In the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane.”

- Charles Spurgeon

11th World Day of the Sick February 11, 2003


A time to remember in prayer those who are sick and those who care for them . . . a time to reach out with compassionate concern.

Some suggestions for celebrating the World Day of the Sick are as follows:

- ? Parish Celebration of Anointing of the Sick
- ? Include a Blessing for Health Care Workers at Sunday Eucharist
- ? Celebrate a communal ecumenical prayer service at a local health care facility (The Office of Health Care Ministry has samples of services done by St. Mary's in Ayer that we could copy for you.)
- ? Encourage those who are homebound to watch Mass on Boston Catholic T.V. on Feb. 11. As part of the Eucharist, Msgr. Charles Bourque will celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
- ? Distribute Prayer Cards. The National Association of Catholic Chaplains has created two prayer cards: *Prayer for the Sick* and *Prayer for the Caregiver*. (On both cards, the prayer appears in English on one side and Spanish on the other.) The cost is 15¢ each or a set of both cards for 25¢. A minimum of 10 cards must be ordered. **Orders must be received no later than Jan. 24.** An order form may be printed from their web site at www.nacc.org; scroll to Resources, then to World Day of the Sick or call the Office of Health Care Ministry (617-789-2457) for a form.

Catholic School Memories

The following are from Sophia Zufa, who found notes she had done as a third-grader in the late 1930's, when Benedictine nuns were the teachers. Published in *The Joyful Noise-letter* (Aug.-Sept. 1995).

 "We had to sit on the one side of are seats to make room for are garden angels to sit with us. They diden need much room. Garden angles are sumthing you cant see but you can feel there holy presents. There is one for everybuddy, even the wiked who don't dezerv it."

"Sister Mary Celeste wuz xtremely holy. Sum sed she never ate or drunk water. This is hard to bleeve but with nuns all things are posibel."

Days of Prayer for Pastoral Ministers and Ministers of Communion

"Do not be afraid, just have faith."

Mk 5:36

SOUTH REGION

Saturday, January 18, 2003

9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Holy Family Parish, Duxbury

WEST REGION

Saturday, January 25, 2003

9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

St. Bridget, Framingham

MERRIMACK REGION

Saturday, March 1, 2003

9:30 AM—1:30 PM

St. Francis Parish, Dracut

CENTRAL REGION

Saturday, March 8, 2003

9:30 AM—1:30 PM

St. John Chrysostom Parish

West Roxbury

Ed note: One month in advance of each program, Visitation Coordinators will receive a flyer that can be copied and distributed to their volunteers. Remember, if a volunteer cannot attend the regional program, they are **welcome to go to another site**. There is no fee for these programs.

Resources

The Office of Health Care Ministry (617-789-2457) has a video tape available for loan entitled *"Grown-up Tears: Adults Grieving the Loss of a Parent"* (29 minutes).

* * *

"The Holy Longing: The Search for Christian Spirituality" is a book that comes highly recommended. Most Rev. Rembert Weakland, OSB, Archbishop of Milwaukee was quoted as saying: *"Without doubt, Ronald Rolheiser's "The Holy Longing" is one of the best books about Christian spirituality that has been published in many a year. Its insights are just what all of us need at this moment in*

history. It blends the old and the new in ways that few other authors can do.” \$21.95. Available from Pauline Books & Media. 781-326-5385.

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African Palm Crosses are made from dried branches of a dwarf palm and are produced in seven villages in Africa. Donations received are returned to Africa in the form of non-denominational self-help grants to meet very basic needs. Each palm cross is approximately 4 ½” by 6”. (These crosses can be inexpensive, special gifts for pastoral visitors to give to the homebound and those in health care facilities.) The crosses are sold in multiples of 50. The price is \$7.50 per each 50 ordered, plus shipping. For each additional 50 crosses ordered, an additional 25¢ is added to the postage. Telephone: 301-774-2832; fax: 301-774-1346; e-mail: africanpalms@stjohnsolney.org; web page: www.stjohnsolney.org.

Network Groups

(An opportunity for Visitation Coordinators to meet with others to share resources, develop skills and discuss challenges.)

NORTH REGION

Facilitator: Sally Rooney
Feb. 11, 2003 1:30 to 3:15 PM
St. Margaret, Saugus
April 8, 2003 1:30 to 3:15 PM
St. Pius, Lynn
June 10, 2003 1:00 to 3:15 PM
St. Paul, Hamilton

CENTRAL REGION

Facilitator: Patricia Dunn
Feb. 4, 2003
April 1, 2003
June 3, 2003
All meetings will be from 1:00 - 2:30 PM
St. Thomas Aquinas Rectory, Jamaica Plain

WEST REGION

Facilitator: Patricia Dunn
Jan. 29, 2003
April 2, 2003
May 7, 2003
All meetings are from 1:30 to 3:00 PM
Joseph Center, Natick (Catholic Charities Office)

MERRIMACK REGION

Facilitator: Carol Shepherd
March 4, 2003 (April 9 snow date)
May 7, 2003
All meetings will be from 1:00 to 3:00 PM
St. Anne, Littleton

SOUTH REGION

Stonehill College, Fr. Payton Center
“Taking Care of Parents Who Didn’t Take Care of You”
Date to be announced.
For more information: Sheila Sullivan
508-587-0815

Opportunities for Volunteers and Eucharistic Ministers

Please let your volunteers know about these opportunities if they are in your geographic area and encourage their participation

PASTORAL CARE TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

(A six week workshop for new and experienced pastoral visitors offered from 7:00—9:30 PM.)

Sacred Hearts, Bradford

Tuesdays: March 4, 11, 18, 25; April 1, 8
Instructor: Sr. Eunice Condrick, CSJ

St. Barbara, Woburn

Wednesdays: March 5, 12, 19, 26; April 2, 9
Instructor: Judith LoGerfo

COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS FOR LAY MINISTERS

(A six week workshop that offers experienced parish visitors an opportunity to discuss their ministry and enhance their pastoral skills.)

St. Mary, Dedham

7:00 to 9:00 PM
Tuesdays: March 4, 11, 18, 25; April 1, 8
Instructor: Edna Lezotte

PASTORAL VISITORS:

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND PRACTICE

(A five week workshop for new or experienced pastoral visitors that focuses on the formation of pastoral identity and the ministry resources available: prayer, sacrament, Scripture.)

St. Theresa, North Reading

7:00 to 9:30 PM
Thursdays: April 24; May 1, 8, 15, 22
Instructor: Rev. Raymond Benoit



Bereavement Seminar

The 8th Annual "A Wise Management of Grief" Seminar will be held at two locations. **Feb. 12, 2003**, at the Venus de Milo Restaurant in Swansea and **Feb. 13**, at the Boston Marriot Newton in Newton. Both seminars will be from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Speakers: William Lamers, Jr. MD, Therese A. Rando, Ph.D., BCETS. Sponsored by Affiliated Family Funeral Homes, 492 Rock St., Fall River, MA 02720. This seminar is free and parish volunteers in bereavement ministry would be welcome. For more information or to register call: 508-676-1933.

Movie Review

The following are excerpts of a written review by Frank Frost, which appeared in *Every Day Catholic* (Dec. 2002), of a movie entitled *Moonlight Mile*. (We thought this might appeal to chaplains/pastoral care ministers.) *The truth shall set you free: That's the worthy message of Moonlight Mile. While the movie's premise deals with the way a father, a mother, and a young man deal, respectively, with their grief over the death of their daughter and fiancée, the movie is really about truth and honesty the movie is essentially a story about grief complicated by guilt...the story becomes one about the difficulty of facing and admitting the truth... In Moonlight Mile, comedy becomes an apt vehicle for exploring the unexpected dimensions of grief. (Let us know what you think!)*



Sr. Cathy O'Connor, former Director of Mission and Spiritual Care Services at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, wrote and read the following prayer to open a Martin Luther King Celebration at the Center.

Creator God,

We gather today to remember the dream, and honor the memory and legacy of Martin Luther King. You, O Lord, have created us equally. You have called us to be brothers and sisters together, taking responsibility for one another and for all your creation. We acknowledge and ask forgiveness for the woundedness and brokenness caused by racism and oppression in our communities.



Help us realize that our diversity celebrates the myriad expressions of your presence in our midst. Inspire us with greater sensitivity and compassion. Give us courage, so that, following the example of Martin Luther King, our attitudes may inspire peace, our voices will speak your truth, and our lives and actions will proclaim reconciliation.

May we, in the words of the prophet Micah, Act justly, Love tenderly, and Walk humbly with you, our God.

Amen.

The Pastoral Visitor is published by the Office of Health Care Ministry for the Pastoral Visitor Project.

Jean Marchant, Director
Office of Health Care Ministry, RCAB
617-789-2457 e-mail: jean_marchant@cchcs.org

Patricia Dunn, Director
Parish Social Ministry, Catholic Charities
508-875-9545

Ann Lally, Director
Office of Volunteer Resources, RCAB
617-746-5840 e-mail: ann_lally@rcab.org

Robert Short, Director,
Caritas Christi Parish Based Health Ministry
781-551-5782 e-mail: robert_short@cchcs.org

Sr. Dorothea Masuret, CSJ, Assistant Director
Office for Pastoral Ministries, RCAB
617-746-5870 e-mail: sister_dorothea_masuret@rcab.org

Sr. Nancy Charlesworth, SSMN, Associate Director
Office for Ethnic Apostolates, RCAB
617-746-5805 e-mail: sister_nancy_charlesworth@rcab.org

Mary Ann McLaughlin, Associate Director
Office of Spiritual Development, RCAB
617-779-3640 e-mail: mmclaugh@rcab.org

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