

# **BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH**



## **HANDBOOK OF MINISTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**“As the body of Christ -- Put your gifts at the  
service of one another.”**

**1 Peter 4:10**

# HISTORY

In June 1936, eighty-seven residents of southwest Erie sent a letter to Bishop John Mark Gannon petitioning for the establishment of a new Parish in their neighborhood. The chief reasons for their request were the distance to Sacred Heart Church and School and the congested conditions of their Church and School. Two years later on June 1, 1938 the Parish of Blessed Sacrament was established and Father Raymond A. Geiger was appointed founding pastor.

The first Mass was celebrated on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1938 while one of the heaviest rains of the season pelted the tent erected at 27<sup>th</sup> and Auburn Avenue. At the Mass, Father Geiger announced that he would continue to celebrate Mass in a tent until a more permanent structure could be built. Within a month, the Heberlein farmhouse at 26<sup>th</sup> and Greengarden had been purchased for the Priest Residence and Parish Offices, and the large tent was moved to the west of the Rectory for Sunday services for the next five months. The 175 original families were generous enough to enable the cornerstone for the combination School and Auditorium to be laid on October 12, 1938. Bishop John Mark Gannon was prophetic when he said: "Your parish will grow and prosper. God will be with you because you dedicated your work to the most beautiful devotion of our Catholic faith – The Blessed Sacrament."

Sister Amelia and Sister Regina Ann lived over the three-car garage behind the old farmhouse, which was now the Rectory. The school opened in the Fall of 1939. Father Geiger began to form parish organizations, the first of which were the Ladies of Blessed Sacrament on February 15, 1940. The second organization was the Sewing Guild. They made quilts all year long and the Ladies of Blessed Sacrament raffled them to benefit the Church. The Greengarden Youth Council was established on March 15, 1940, with the purpose of promoting youth activities in the parish. This was a forerunner of the Ushers Society. During that same year the Parent Teacher Council was also organized.

In 1950, the Parish embarked upon a \$260,000 building project that would include a new Church and four additional classrooms for the expanding School. Father Geiger and the parish organizations continued to work very hard to raise the funds needed to build the Church.

Sister Damian who was the principal and teacher recalled there were 395 students in 1952 and by the year 1958 there were over one thousand enrolled in Blessed Sacrament School.

The wit and wisdom of Father Raymond Geiger, who served as pastor of Blessed Sacrament for twenty-one years has fostered a wellspring of spirituality and goodness that is still at work in the parish in 2003.

The parishioners were shocked with the announcement that their beloved pastor had resigned for health reasons effective January 2, 1957. Monsignor James Weithman was appointed to succeed Father Geiger. It is difficult to follow in the footsteps of this popular and charismatic leader. But the records indicate there were many practical accomplishments attributed to the leadership of Monsignor Weithman during his brief pastorate. On November 11, 1957 Archbishop Gannon dedicated our current Church facility. This unique design with a seating capacity for 1200 people with a sloping floor toward the massive sanctuary, a descending tiered ceiling with indirect lighting and oblique flanges on both sides for Station of the Cross was the plan for this modern Church on the west side of Erie. The beautiful stained glass windows in the Church were later donated in 1961 by seven families and parish organizations; each window featured a Saint whose life was characterized by their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. A ten-room addition to the School, at a cost of \$175,000 was constructed in 1958 and dedicated on September 7, 1958.

One of Monsignor Weithman's major accomplishments was the building of the convent to accommodate twenty Sisters, which was formally dedicated on April 19, 1959. A visionary priest/businessman, Monsignor Weithman also acquired property surrounding the Church and closing West 25 Street between Haybarger and Greengarden. He was also instrumental in bringing the Carmelite Monastery to Erie and had a leadership role in raising funds for the building of St. Mark Seminary. A joyful Silver Jubilee Celebration for Monsignor Weithman on August 30, 1961 was followed sadly a year later by his declining health and resignation as pastor in late 1962. He went to live with his uncle, Bishop William McCarty in Rapid City, North Dakota. He served there until he died on January 19, 1973.

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1962 Monsignor Ennis Connelly was appointed the third Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church. He was a humble and spiritual priest gifted with a keen sense of humor. Monsignor Connelly was a great orator; he had a tremendous love for

children. He brought optimism to the parish during the turbulent years of the 60's. Those were the days of Vatican II and changes in the Liturgy, the five day Summer Festival in the parking lot, and the Annual Continental Ball, and the family picnics.

On September 16, 1968 Bishop John Whealon granted permission for construction of a huge Auditorium-Gymnasium-Cafeteria-Rectory complex, and ground was broken on October 9, 1968. One of the most glorious days in the history of Blessed Sacrament Parish was May 7, 1972, Dedication Day for the new buildings. In his popular weekly column "Potpourri" printed in the Church bulletin that week, Monsignor Connelly wrote, "The most pleasantly received announcement was that the Auditorium – Gymnasium building of the new complex would be dedicated to our first pastor, and would, from now on, be known as Geiger Hall."

Bingo games were begun in 1971 when the parish faced a larger debt than had been anticipated. Monsignor Connelly dubbed the football field Bixby Bowl in honor of Dr. Chet Bixby who was instrumental in the development of the athletic program.

Some of the successful organizations during Monsignor Connelly's tenure were Boy Scout Troop 90 with over 1400 young men participating, many Girl Scouting honors in the 70's and 80's, a model parochial School supervised by principals Sr. Marie Sylvia, Sr. Mary Arnold and Sr. Marie Corde, a library and Kindergarten began in the 1970's and great sports teams and coaches; there were seven Bulldog football championships, and the 1972 Basketball Team won the State Championship!

Monsignor Connelly's health began to decline in the late seventies and on November 5, 1981 he died of heart failure. No doubt, he presided over what many would consider to be the golden era of the parish. His life and work was quite well put in perspective on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary plaque of his Priestly Ordination which read, "Monsignor Ennis Connelly, our humble and beloved pastor, confessor, orator, educator, builder, writer, sports fan, confidant, inspiration for our children, our ideal of Jesus as priest on earth."

There was a period of uncertainty following Monsignor Connelly's death. A new era was begun at Blessed Sacrament Parish with the installation of a Team Ministry. The team consisted of two assistant pastors, Fr. Thomas Fialkowski, and Fr. Gerald Koos, and the retired President of Gannon College Monsignor Wilfrid J. Nash. Bishop Michael Murphy appointed them Co-pastors on January 5, 1982. This innovative concept of Team Ministry allowed the three Co-Pastors to divide responsibilities to meet the spiritual and temporal needs of one of the largest parishes in the City of Erie.

Monsignor Nash recounted some of the accomplishments of the Co-Pastorate: "...the restoring of buildings to first-rate condition, women's participation in the Lector program, appointment of Eucharistic Ministers to help not only at Mass on Sunday, but also to take Holy Communion weekly to the shut-ins; the altar railings were removed, and one of the Team Ministry's most important goals was achieved: the establishment of a Parish Council; Jack Hoffman served as the first president.

The Parish undertook a \$800,000 building campaign of rebuilding a portion of the school, the renovation of roofs, ventilation and security systems, the purchase of a new organ, the updating of liturgical services and ministries according to the guidelines of Vatican II, and the expansion of Christian social services.

During the early years of Team Ministry, Sister Jane Matheis became the full time Director of Music and Sister Mary Alice Reed became Principal of Blessed Sacrament School. The School Board was organized in 1984 and in 1988, the Pre-School was opened in a remodeled home on West 24<sup>th</sup> Street. The appointment of Sister Mary Paula as Pastoral Minister also led to the founding of several purposeful organizations within the parish in the 80's: SAGE – a Senior Action Group, LIFTS – Life is For the Sharing for the widowed and older parishioners who never married and a Parish Food Bank.

One of the most serious problems for the Team Ministry had been the need to remodel the school in 1981. The original Church/auditorium was torn down, and Monsignor Nash stated in 1984, "When completed, the new 16 room school building was one of our great joys."

The original Team Ministry remained until 1985 when Fr. Thomas Brooks replaced Fr. Koos and Father Dan Arnold joined the Co-Pastorate on June 22, 1987 to succeed Fr. Fialkowski. In 1988, The Golden Anniversary of the founding of Blessed Sacrament Parish was a year filled with many celebrations. On June 5, 1988: Monsignor James Burke, a priest-son of the parish and Vicar General of the Diocese celebrated an outdoor Golden Anniversary Mass in a tent on the football field. In the Summer 1988 a complete Parish History was published and distributed. A parish family picnic was held at the Villa Maria College campus. On October 30<sup>th</sup> a Golden Jubilee Mass was celebrated by Bishop Michael Murphy.

With the retirement of Monsignor Nash on September 8, 1989, Monsignor John Hagerty was appointed senior member of the Team for a brief time until his appointment as pastor of St. Thomas in Corry on February 9, 1991.

The Blessed Sacrament Parish Family was devastated by the death on August 19, 1992 of their beloved Monsignor Wilfrid Nash, a priest so deeply spiritual, profoundly wise and infinitely loving of God and His people. Monsignor had often said, "It's the people of Blessed Sacrament who have made the parish great."

Team Ministry was the model of Pastoral Leadership for thirteen years until the transfer of Father Brooks to our neighboring parish of Sacred Heart on June 3, 1995 as Co-pastor. Now Father Dan Arnold soldiered on as the sole pastor of Blessed Sacrament. He was named a Monsignor on September 5, 1996. Father Dan's efficient administrative skills brought about the installation of a new energy efficient boiler system and the new carpeting in the Church. The Pre-School was moved back into the School as a cost saving effort and the home on West 24<sup>th</sup> Street was sold. Together with the School Board he looked for a better way to manage and collect school tuition and they adopted the FACTS Tuition Management Program. In the Fall of 1998 Darlene Kovacs was hired, as the first lay principal of Blessed Sacrament School. Together with the Pastoral Council he explored the concept of Development as a vehicle for addressing the future financial challenges facing Blessed Sacrament in the years to come. His twelve-year term expired on June 30<sup>th</sup> and he was appointed by Bishop Trautman to serve as pastor at St. Boniface Church. During his years as pastor Father John Detisch assisted him. Father John remained as Parochial Vicar for the transition of Pastors until August when he began his first assignment as a pastor at St. Titus, Titusville.

On July 1, 1999, Monsignor Daniel Magraw, a gentle, witty Irish priest began his appointment as our Pastor; and he was later joined in August by a newly ordained priest, Father Michael Ferrick as Parochial Vicar. Together they are helping to restore the spirituality, the harmony, and the dynamism so reflective of this holy place: Blessed Sacrament. On April 9, 2000 at St. Peter Cathedral, a Papal Honor Ceremony recognized the dedication of priests, religious and laity of the Diocese. Five of them have association with Blessed Sacrament Parish. Mr. John Hoffman received the Benemerenti Medal and our weekend assistant Father McCullough received the title of Monsignor along with our native sons Father Gerald Ritchie, Father Koos and Father Barcio. Monsignor McCullough after a prolonged battle with bone cancer died on October 17<sup>th</sup>. How truly blessed we were with his ministry as a weekend assistant since 1982. A wonderful sense of humor and thought provoking homilies characterized this wonderful priest who was truly loved.

With the passing of time many major repairs and renovations need to be done to maintain our beautiful facilities. The Buildings and Grounds Committee was formed to help develop a plan for preventive maintenance and upkeep for the entire Blessed Sacrament complex. The renovation of Geiger Hall and the School Library are some of the many major projects and improvements that have been accomplished with the enthusiastic support and financial sacrifices of the people of Blessed Sacrament. Together we strive to reach out to the young people through Youth Ministry and to our neighbors and fellow parishioners through our Care and Concern efforts. The Blessed Sacrament Usher Society continues to fund and sponsor the athletic program for our youth and the P.T.C. provides many additional opportunities for our School and students. Our success as a Parish is due primarily to the goodness of God but also the generous sacrifices and dedication of the parishioners who have shared their time, talent and treasure to make Blessed Sacrament Church more than a building; but a true Community and Family of Faith. We also acknowledge and thank the priests who have faithfully served this Parish over the years and for their spiritual leadership. In this third millennium, we CELEBRATE YESTERDAY; and work together toward CREATING TOMORROW for all those who will continue our history as the People of God and the Body of Christ.

## **The Mission of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Parish is:**

*To nourish our love of God  
through Jesus Christ  
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.  
Centered in the Eucharist,  
we are developing a faith community  
through  
prayer, education, worship, and Christian fellowship.  
As stewards of God's love,  
we strive to share our  
gifts and talents  
for the service of God  
and all His people.*



# **WELCOME TO BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH FAMILY!**

Blessed Sacrament fosters a sense of welcome, warmth and community. Each Sunday, we gather together around the table of the Lord to receive the Presence in that “common-union” of ours that is Holy Communion. Into that Presence, we welcome you and ask you to share your life, your time, your talents and interests with us in order that we might be enriched by your presence among us.

Our time began at birth and ends on this earth with death. Time is precious. Once it passes it is gone forever. God created us so that one day we would be with Him in Heaven. Each day we live is a day closer to this reality. In helping others we serve for the glory of God. We are called to show our love for God by letting Christ use our feet, our hands, our eyes and our voice. The gift of time is unique. We are the only ones who can give it. All of us have special talents and gifts given to us for the enrichment of the lives of others and so that we can serve God better. Christ’s work needs to be done in our parish and community. He depends upon us to do spiritual and corporal works of mercy in His name.

“Each one of you has received a special grace, so like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of one another” (1 Peter 4:10).

Take time to become better acquainted with the many organizations and ministry opportunities available in our parish family and through our Diocese. Many parishioners are already actively involved, but there is room for you and many more.

If everyone would do their share, there would be more than enough volunteers and sufficient funds to finance all our programs. Gifts of God are meant to be shared. Sacrificial giving takes faith and trust. It is a way of life for Christians. If you want to see how people set priorities in their life, look at how they spend their time and how they spend their money. You are called to be good stewards of God’s gifts of time and talents, finances and resources for your Church and our faith community.

Again, welcome to Blessed Sacrament! We are happy to have you as a member of our faith community.

# **STEWARDSHIP PARISH**

## **A Stewardship Parish: The Church of Blessed Sacrament**

We have been called to be the People of God. This calling is special and good. It comes to us from God and asks that we be bound more closely to one another and to our world in witness, service and love.

As the Community of the Church of Blessed Sacrament, we are challenged to be a community of Stewardship.

Stewardship involves for us all the challenge to share time, talent and treasure for the good of God's People. In this manner we each then share equally in the mission we have in this world by virtue of our Baptism in Christ.

To be a stewardship person or family involves taking most seriously your involvement with the parish. One's relationship to the parish needs to be strengthened by doing more than just the minimum -- more than just attending Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day. A person of stewardship has in their heart a love for their parish and their God which invites them to do and be more.

### **TIME . . .**

A most valuable commodity in our very busy lives is time. We all wish to have more of it. There are so many good things to do and accomplish. But to include a sharing of time for our parish and our faith is vital. Among all of the vital things to do there should be time for our parish needs. In our parish even those who are confined to their home for illness can share their time with another by praying for the families in need. There are a thousand different things to do and much more will be accomplished by your parish when all share their Time.

### **TALENT . . .**

Another of the great gifts God has shared with us, and He asks that we share our God-given talents with our church community. We have persons who share their voice in singing in our choir or offering to be a cantor. We have others who teach and offer their services in religious education as teachers. There are carpenters who help build things for the parish and school. We have people in business who offer their expertise to help us in our parish finance committee or development plans for the school. A sharing of talent can lead us to a church wherein there are families who want to help clean the church twice a year -- there are cooks in the kitchen, bakers for bake sales and lawyers who give their services free to the church. When you begin to share your talent -- others will too. It will help create a climate of care and gratitude for all. Share your Talent!

## **TREASURE . . .**

For many Catholics this is the hardest gift of all to share, yet it can be the most rewarding when shared properly and when used wisely. The scriptures recall that those who really share can be rewarded a hundred fold. The concept in the Scriptures of tithing is well grounded and part of our ancient heritage of doing what is right.

All we have in our lives is a gift! Our financial resources have been given to us through the generosity of the Lord. We are called in faith to share this resource for the good of the Kingdom. Church communities, like all communities in our age, need financial resources to carry out their mission and to expand their services to the people in attempts to serve.

Monetary gifts to the Church are essential. We offer no apology for seeking the generous and sacrificial gifts of our members and visitors. These gifts are not sought for the glory of man but for the service of God.

## **PARISH EXPECTATIONS . . .**

A hope that individuals and each family will their share time, talent and treasure for the good of their parish community.

Each family and individual is asked to share from all they have received a just portion of their financial resources, hours of time and from their God-given talents for the good of our church. In regard to financial stewardship, we ask that each family that is beginning to tithe for the first time start at 2 - 3% of their gross annual income. For most people this is a realistic beginning. For others who may have fewer needs, a higher amount is always welcome.

It is our parish goal to involve all members in the sharing of these three essential resources for the parish. So along with your financial commitment we hope you will dedicate time to parish activity and share your special talent with the community.

In any case -- strive to do your very best -- it is all we expect and certainly what God deserves.

# THE SACRAMENTS

## OUR POLICIES:

### **INFANT BAPTISM . . .**

is a treasured practice dating from the earliest tradition of the Church. Baptism is normally celebrated within the first few weeks after birth. Parents contact the parish office to make arrangements to celebrate Baptism at one of the weekend Masses or apart from the Mass at another time. Baptisms are normally not celebrated during Lent.

### **BAPTISMAL POLICY:**

Parents are required to attend a pre-baptismal session PRIOR to the baptism of their child. If this is your first child, you are new to our parish or it is five years since you've last attended.

It is recommended that parents attend **before** the birth of the baby. During the session the requirements and role of the sponsor are clearly explained. BEFORE asking persons to be Godparents, it might be wise to see if they meet the requirements and expectations of the Church.

The parish community in which a family are members, is the preferred and proper place for the baptism of their infant. Families who live out of town and desire to have their baby baptized here **must** attend a pre-baptismal class in their parish, and have written permission of their pastor.

Sponsors are always required to obtain sponsor certificates from the Church to which they belong.

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION/ FIRST EUCHARIST:**

These important Sacraments are received in the second grade and third grade. Preparation begins in the home by regular attendance at Mass and the experience of forgiveness and love from family members. Parents are required to attend preparation sessions and to reinforce the information taught in the classroom at home.

### **CONFIRMATION:**

Students entering the 11th grade are eligible to become candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. All students must complete all the requirements outlined by the Diocese of Erie. Candidates not attending a Catholic High School must attend Religious Education classes for two years prior to their Confirmation year. Each candidate performs service hours, attend regularly the preparation sessions, participate in scheduled group service projects and attend the Confirmation retreat. Requirements are outlined at the parent / candidates session in the Fall.

### **MARRIAGE:**

The policy of the Diocese of Erie and our parish is that engaged couples begin their preparation for marriage at least 6 months in advance. Most couples plan almost a year in advance. No wedding date is to be set by the engaged couple until they have personally met with one of the parish priests. The Catholic party should be registered independently of their family and receiving and using parish envelopes. Weddings are not normally scheduled during Lent or on Holy Days.

**ANOINTING OF THE SICK:**

This sacrament is for the healing and strengthening of all who are seriously ill. The Anointing of the Sick is celebrated as needed either in the home or hospital or with the parish community.

**RECONCILIATION:**

Opportunities are provided throughout the year to experience the healing power and presence of God's forgiveness on Saturday afternoon. Communal celebrations are provided during the seasons of Advent and Lent .

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**

Parents have an obligation and responsibility for religious education and formation of their children. Please register them in the program, bring them to Sunday Mass and to class. Our policy for student attendance in the Religious Education program states: "Students who attend public school are required to attend classes regularly and faithfully before the reception of First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation." It means students in Grades 1 and 2 or Grades 9 and 10 are to be attending Religious Education classes to be eligible for the reception of these sacraments.

**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (R.C.I.A.):**

A spiritual journey, in which adults become full, active and participating members of the Catholic Church. The process is open to those who have not been baptized, those baptized in another faith and those baptized as Catholics who have not yet celebrated the Eucharist or Confirmation.

**CHURCH BULLETIN:**

This weekly publication is a valuable tool of communication for our Parish Family. The listing of events, meetings and activities keeps you informed on what is happening at Blessed Sacrament. Announcements must be submitted **in writing or e-mail** to the Parish Office by Monday at noon, prior to the Bulletin in which the information is to be published.

## EDUCATION / FORMATION

- **CATECHISTS:**

Assist parents in their role as primary teachers of their children by fostering through the Religious Education Program information that will help the child grow in knowledge and understanding of their faith. The Diocese requires and provides formation programs for certification of those adults who work with children in this important ministry.

- **CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD:**

Children have the opportunity to hear and celebrate the Liturgy of the Word in language and activities on their level of understanding. This is celebrated during the School Year at the 9:00 AM Mass for children ages four to seven.

- **PRE-CANA TEAM:**

Shares information and experiences on a range of subjects to aid these couples in their preparation. Each year we host a Pre-Cana for engaged couples to enhance their communication and understanding of a sacramental marriage by presentations of subjects and topics important to their future vocation.

- **R.C.I.A. SPONSOR:**

Accompany candidates on their faith journey, provide support and encouragement, answer questions the candidates may have, are available to listen to and share personal faith stories, pray with and for the candidates, and accompany the candidate to sessions and liturgical celebration.

- **YOUTH MINISTRY:**

Provide a variety of activities that are organized throughout the year with our teenagers by the Youth Minister and adults who help with the program. Our young people are not only the church of the future, but an integral part of the Church NOW.

## WORSHIP / OUTREACH

- **ADULT CHOIR:**

Men and women who desire to serve the Lord through a choral music ministry under the direction of the Minister of Music. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings and the choir sings at the 11:00 am Sunday Liturgy as well as other special Liturgical celebrations.

- **ALTAR AIDE (CHURCH CLEANER):**

Clean the Church on a weekly basis. Duties include dusting, vacuuming and cleaning.

- **ALTAR SERVER:**

Assist the priest at Liturgical Celebrations. Open to all boys and girls in the Parish in grades 5 thru 12.

- **ART AND ENVIRONMENT:**

Devote their efforts to decorating our worship space for various liturgical seasons and feasts. It is a team of creative individuals, both men and women, who help transform the Church through fabrics, color, flowers and plants to enhance our sensory experience.

- **CANTOR:**

Leads singing and provides leadership and support for the congregation with the singing of hymns, psalms and acclamations at Mass.

- **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER:**

Assists with the distribution of Holy Communion; at weekend and Holy Day Masses. These laypersons are commissioned by the Bishop.

- **GREETER:**

Offers a welcome greeting to those who come to our parish for Sunday liturgy. Hospitality is important in welcoming people to our parish, especially newcomers and visitors, so that they feel at home with us. Greeters of all ages are needed at the entryways fifteen minutes before liturgical celebrations.

- **LECTOR:**

Proclaims the Word of God through their reading of sacred scriptures from the Lectionary. The Word of God is central to our liturgical celebrations. Initial technical training is provided. Ongoing prayerful preparation of the readings enhances this ministry for the community as well as the Lector.

- **RESURRECTION CHOIR:**

Men and women assist with the singing for Funeral Mass of a parishioner.

- **THE LORD'S CHOIR (TLC)**

Children in Grades 3-8 help lead the Student Liturgies during the school year and at special Masses when needed. The "TLC" sings once a month at a Sunday Liturgy.

- **USHERS:**

Attend to the needs of the community during the weekend masses. They welcome the faithful together with the greeters. They assist in finding seating, identify a family or persons to carry the offertory gifts to the altar, take up the offertory collections, hand out bulletins and assist in straightening up the Church after Mass.

## CHRISTIAN SERVICE / FELLOWSHIP

- **BEREAVEMENT:**

Provide liturgical, practical and moral support to members of the parish at the time of death, funeral and afterwards. Death of a loved one affects the inner depths of the bereaved, extended family members and the community.

- **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER TO THE HOMEBOUND:**

Takes the Eucharist and the prayers of our community weekly; along with the bulletin to those who are confined either permanently or temporarily in their homes.

- **PRAYER LINE:**

A network of people who agree to receive prayer intentions by telephone and then pray for all requests they receive. The process begins when a request is called into one of the coordinators who then starts the chain of calls to those members on the prayer line to pray for the intentions of the caller or for someone the caller knows who is in need of prayer. Names do not need to be given to call in a Prayer Intention. A willingness to raise prayer to God for the intention and request received is all that is needed.

- **WELCOMING NEWCOMERS:**

Extends a welcoming greeting through a personal visit or telephone call or a note in the mail to new parishioners. During the visit the volunteer answers any questions and acquaints the new parishioners with the programs and services available in our parish family.

- **FOOD BANK:**

Food is distributed to parishioners and people in our neighborhood every other Tuesday morning.

- **COFFEE & DOUGHNUT HOSTS:**

Social in the cafeteria after the Sunday morning Masses. Hosts rotate each month and make the coffee, serve the doughnuts, clean up and extend hospitality to those present.

- **BLESSED SACRAMENT USHER SOCIETY:**

They organize and coordinate the athletic program for Blessed Sacrament School. They sponsor fund raising events to defray costs associated with each sport, such as: referees and uniforms. They find coaches for the various sports and honor the achievements of our student athletes with a school assembly. They sponsor a variety of activities for the members and their families. They meet every third Thursday in the fieldhouse.

- **GIRL SCOUTS:** (Daisys, Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes and Seniors)  
Open to all girls from Kindergarten to grade twelve. It helps the girls develop Christian values and provides a foundation for them to grow in their promises through activities and instruction in a supportive environment.
- **CUB / BOY SCOUTS:**  
Aims at building character of boys and young men by promoting honesty, courage and integrity. Citizenship is fostered through teaching the duties, obligations, privileges and functions of a good citizen.
- **PARENT TEACHER COUNCIL:**  
Foster a closer relationship between parents and teachers regarding the total educational welfare of all children of Blessed Sacrament School. They promote social activities for members and the youth of our school community as well as raise funds for designated projects.
- **RESPECT LIFE COMMITTEE:**  
Strive to protect human life from conception to natural death. Methods include prayer, education, pro-life activities such as Respect Life March and breakfast, rosary for life and Mother's Day Carnation Sale.
- **HEALTH CARE MINISTRY:**  
Promote health and wellness, and answer health related questions. Educational materials related to various health issues available.
- **VOCATIONS (31 CLUB):**  
Member goes to Mass the same date each month and offer prayers for Church vocations; for all priests, sisters, brothers and deacons, for those who have served the parish in the past and present and for future vocations. There are no meetings and no dues.
- **CURSILLO:**  
This is a short course in Christianity. Over a weekend, an individual experiences through this Catholic Movement how they can better live their religion within the Christian community and the true meaning of God's unconditional love.
- **CATHOLIC CHARITIES:**  
A Diocesan social service agency that provides counseling and adoption services.
- **CATHOLIC FELLOWSHIP OF DIVORCED AND SEPARATED:**  
A Diocesan sponsored ministry for those who have experienced the pain of separation or divorce. The ministry provides fellowship, information referral to community resources and the opportunity for spiritual renewal.
- **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS:**  
A Catholic men's service organization based on the four ideals of Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. The Knights of Columbus provide support services for the Church, education programs, lobbying activities and various social activities.

Membership is open to practicing Catholic men in good standing with the Church, 18 years of age or older.

- **ENGAGEMENT ENCOUNTER:**

A Diocesan sponsored marriage preparation program for engaged couples. A weekend experience provides couples the opportunity to dialog in depth on topics related to their future vocation.

- **TEC:**

A weekend retreat experience for teenagers who are at least 17 years old or a Junior in High School, Young Adults and Adults. The weekend includes a variety of activities and discussions which call the participants to make some self discoveries and to examine relationships beyond the superficial level and to realize how faith in God applies to everyday living.

- **MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER:**

A weekend retreat program to enhance healthy marriages. On this weekend which is lead by a priest and several trained couples, the participants learn communication techniques which enable them to know and love each other more by a deeper understanding of each others needs and desires. It is a very romantic experience and is deeply spiritual as the couple discovers the presence of the Lord in their marriage.

- **NOVA:**

A marriage preparation program for couples entering a second marriage. One or both were either widowed or granted an annulment by the Church.

- **RAINBOWS:**

Support group for children who have suffered a significant loss in their lives, by death, divorce or other painful transition.

- **RETROUVAILLE:**

Assists couples in troubled marriages. It consists of a weekend program and six follow up sessions that present positive aspects of relationships. Rediscovering the goodness in themselves, their spouse and their marriage are emphasized.

## ADMINISTRATION / FINANCE

- **PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL:**

Assist the pastor in the fulfillment of his administrative and financial responsibilities by offering advice or expertise from their backgrounds of business and finance. They assist in the preparation of the Annual Budget for the parish in accord with the priorities established by the pastor and Pastoral Council; assist with transactions of major administration; assist in managing parish investments, long-range financial plans and proposals for increased parish revenue.

- **ANNUAL CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL:**

Together with our larger family, our parish conducts an annual appeal to raise funds to assist our Bishop with the many charitable and educational programs that our Diocese offers. A chair-couple works together with the pastor during the campaign to assist in raising the goal set for the year. Parishioners' participation benefits specific projects that enable us to be good stewards for our facilities, grounds and programs.

- **COLLECTION COUNTERS:**

Teams of four persons who open, record, count, wrap and prepare the deposit of Sunday offerings for the bank. Confidentiality regarding details of their work is essential. Teams are scheduled and count on Sunday morning.

- **PASTORAL COUNCIL:**

Appointed members of the parish, who with the pastor assist in carrying forward the mission and ministry of Christ and His Church in the parish community. It is a consultative body which makes recommendations to the pastor regarding the life and mission of the parish.

- **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:**

This committee works with the Pastor and Maintenance Supervisor to make recommendations on building and grounds maintenance. Look at both short-term and long-range planning goals that we strive to achieve over five years. Good stewardship requires careful planning and responsible management of our facilities and grounds.

- **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE:**

Our weekly offering to the Lord is a tangible challenge to our discipleship. It is a sacrifice which says, "Thank you, Lord" for the many blessings received. We give back to God a portion of what He has generously given to us.

Each person or every family is asked to complete a confidential commitment card of their weekly sacrificial gift in the Fall and to make known opportunities for sharing their Time and Talents throughout the year. They sponsor the annual Ministry Fair to make parishioners aware of the opportunities available to get more involved with parish ministries and organizations.

- **SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

Advisory group that assists the pastor and principal on the administration of the school. The board has the responsibility for planning and setting goals and objectives, establishing and evaluating school policy, monitoring financial plans and setting tuition, public relations and recruitment of new students.

- **CLERICAL VOLUNTEERS:**

Assist the parish at home or in the office, skilled or unskilled from time to time for such tasks as preparing parish mailings, answering phones, copying or collating.

- **FALL FEST COMMITTEE:**

This committee shares the responsibility of planning for our major fund raiser that benefits the school. They meet to organize and plan the day. New ideas and suggestions are always welcome. The more the work load is divided the less work those on the committee have to do.

- **ADOPT-A-GARDEN:**

Maintain the beauty of our property and grounds. Many parish volunteers do general work like trimming, weeding, shrubbery, raking, planting, around the buildings.

# BLESSED SACRAMENT SCHOOL

Blessed Sacrament School opened in September 1939. Our school is open to children of all faiths. We offer a comprehensive academic program from Pre-School through Grade Eight. On April 5, 1995, we were accredited by Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools and a member of the National Catholic Educational Association.

Our School recognizes the child as a unique individual and utilizes a holistic approach in the development of the child in a Christian environment.

Our curriculum provides the basic skills necessary to motivate students to achieve their individual potential and prepare them for future educational opportunities.

Parents are encouraged to support and become involved in all phases of their child's education, both religious and academic.

All students actively participate in weekly liturgies throughout the school year. The School's athletic program offers the opportunity for students to participate in interscholastic sports on the Varsity and Junior Varsity level, such as: basketball, football soccer, cross country, swimming and cheerleading.

Seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to participate in regional and state competition through the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science.

Our School has an active and involved Parent-Teacher Council along with the School Advisory Committee that assists the pastor and principal with administration of the school.

The Pre-School program is offered for three and four year old children. There is an enrichment program available for them as well as a before and after school program. An all day Kindergarten helps children to prepare intellectually and socially for First Grade.

School registration takes place in February of the year prior. Registrations are taken up until school begins. There are both parishioner and non-parishioner rates and tuition assistance programs and Endowments for parishioners who otherwise could not afford Catholic Education.

