

The Net Worker

Christmas 2009



YOU ARE NEEDED!

By Eleanor Grybowski

At this time of the year when we hear words of "good will towards men", we would like to bring to your attention three organizations that need more members.

The first organization is **STARFISH OF RIVER EDGE AND ORADELL**, an interfaith organization sponsored and financed by the houses of worship in River Edge and Oradell.

Starfish will be in existence 34 years come February of 2010. The all-volunteer organization provides rides to doctors for the elderly and those with disabilities that prevent them from driving. The people requesting rides have no other means of transportation.

Besides drivers, officers of the day are needed. They are the people who are assigned one day a month to answer calls at their home from the answering service. They are given all the information pertaining to the request for a ride by a caller. The officer of the day must find a Starfish driver to answer this call.

The volunteers tell us how rewarding this ministry is.

**To ask questions or volunteer,
please call Eleanor at 262-0306.**

The next organization of good will is **ST. PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN**. This organization has been in existence for at least 30 years. The Prayer Chain receives about 15 calls a week for prayers for those who are ill or have serious problems in their lives. These requests come by phone or e-mail.

The names are passed on to the primary callers and then down the chain. Only first names are used. The people on the prayer chain pass the

name on to the next person on their list and PRAY. There is a list of the 4 primary callers in the bulletin each weekend.

For more information or to join the Prayer Chain, please call Rose Mary at 262-5637.

Now we come to the need for more volunteers in **ST. PETER'S LENDING LIBRARY**. Your assistance is needed immediately after either the 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., or 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday. You would be called on every 3 or 4 weeks for about 20 minutes.

Your responsibility is to be available to answer any questions a parishioner might have concerning the library. A background in library work is not necessary. You would be informed as to the workings of the library.

The room in which the library is in has been there for 9 years. Before that we could take out books in other locations in the building. In those 9 years the library has expanded. We should be proud we have such a library in our parish.

**For questions or to volunteer,
please call Marge at 262-3022.**

*May the care and
service we give to
others enhance the
spirit of Christ
in our lives at
Christmas and
throughout the
New Year.*



THE NET WORKER

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MINISTRY TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

By Joyce Bowen

Our Mission

St. Peter's Ministry to the Sick and Homebound wishes to show love and care for our parish members who for reasons of health or infirmity cannot be with us as we gather for worship.

Ministry to the sick and homebound makes God's love and the Church's care present to those who suffer the effects of illness, disability or the aging process through prayers, sacrament and pastoral presence.

Our Ministers

Eucharistic ministers visit our sick and homebound parishioners on a regular basis.

Sometimes for weekly visits, for First Fridays, or anytime someone requests a visit. Some make home visits and others go to health care facilities. These ministers share Eucharist, life stories, prayer and make the community present to our absent members. We currently have 12 parishioners who share themselves in this important ministry. Mary Baker, Joyce Bowen, Beth Ann Caruso, Mary Clark, Steve Cirino, Eleanor Grybowski, Margaret Mahoney, Valerie Mercer, Pui & Peter Ng, Steve Sahagian, Terry Lesman, and John Kampmann.

All of our priests also participate. Fr. German attends to our parishioners who are in nursing homes and Fr. Mike and Fr. Matt visit parishioners who are in the hospital.

John Kampman remarks, "When I go, I feel like I bring the whole community with me. I bring the bulletin and we talk about what is happening in the parish. We pray together and I put my hand on his shoulder."

Pui and Peter Ng visit the Oradell Health Care facility each week. Pui says "This is a very rewarding ministry. When we visit I feel like they really appreciate our taking time for them. They are excited to see us and greet us with a bright smile. They like the prayer service we do. When I show the bulletin to one of our ladies she says, 'That is my church.' She is really great."

Pui also remarks on the sending from Mass. "I really enjoy the sending at the end of Mass. I feel empowered and sent on a mission."

Say it with Flowers



Flowers help us to express our feelings in a concrete way. To express our feelings of love and care for our sick and homebound St. Peter's sends flowers at Christmas and Easter to those who can not be with us to celebrate these important feasts. They are sent in the name of all of the members of this faith community.

The Flowers are greatly appreciated by the recipients. Here are a few of the responses:

"Thank You so much for thinking of us...."

"I want to say a heart felt thank you for the beautiful flowers and kind wishes..."

"Thank you for the lovely tulips. They were a welcome surprise at a difficult time..."

"Just a word of thanks for the beautiful plant and your caring at this time...."

Expanding the Ministry

In ministry as in life one thing leads to another. Our ministry to the sick has expanded to a wellness ministry also. In September we offered a blood pressure screening to all our parishioners. We sent out the call for nurses to help in the screening and in true St. Peter's fashion so many replied. Twenty nurses helped with the screening. We served 82 parishioners in September and are looking forward to another screening in February.

As the ministry grows our need for help grows. We started by visiting 20+ now we are visiting over 40 parishioners on a regular basis.

Anyone who would like to become a part of this rewarding ministry should call Joyce Bowen at the rectory 201 261 6633.



OUR HOMEBOUND GIVE BACK

As a Christmas gift to the parish some of our homebound send Christmas wishes and some delicious recipes to brighten the holidays.

A recipe from...

Italian Anise Cookies

Compliments of Mary Mackin

Dough

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|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3/4 cups sugar | 1 stick unsalted butter |
| 2 large eggs | 1/4 cup milk |
| 1 tsp anise extract | 2 3/4 cups all purpose flower |
| 2 1/2 tsp baking powder | 1/4 tsp salt |

Glaze

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 cup confectioner's sugar | 4-5 teaspoons of milk |
| 1 tsp anise extract | Whisk in a small bowl until smooth. |

1. Heat oven to 325 degrees. Coat baking sheet with non stick spray.
2. Beat first five ingredients in a large bowl with mixer – until well blended. Then next 3 ingredients on low speed until blended.
3. Drop rounded teaspoons of dough 2 inches apart onto the prepared baking sheets.
4. Bake 8-10 minutes until the bottoms are light golden. Remove cookies to a wire rack to cool.
5. Dip top of cookies in Glaze and while wet sprinkle with nonpareils. Let set. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

I hope you all enjoy the cookies.

Merry Christmas to all. - Mary Mackin

Irish Soda Bread

Compliments of Veronica and John Furey

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4 cups sifted flour | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1 tsp baking powder | 1 tsp salt |
| 1/4 pound butter | 2 cups seedless raisins |
| 1 1/2 cups of buttermilk | 2 eggs |
| 1 tsp baking soda | 1 tablespoon of caraway seeds |

1. Mix flour, sugar and baking powder and salt in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add butter and blend with the mix by rubbing between the fingers until mix resembles coarse corn meal.
3. Add caraway seeds first and then raisins.
4. In a second bowl mix buttermilk, eggs and baking soda with electric or hand mixer. Add this to the first mix and blend all together with a large spoon.
5. Sprinkle flour on a baking board or table, sprinkle a little more flour and knead thoroughly.
6. Place mix in a buttered 9 inch pie dish and press mix flat on top. With a sharp knife make two cuts diagonally across the bread.
7. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes.

Test by sticking a long needle through the center of the bread. If needle is wet and doughy the bread is not done.

Eggplant

Compliments of Nancy Garzolla

Ingredients:

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 large eggplants | 2 large eggs |
| 1 lb mozzarella cheese - shredded | 1 cup grated cheese |
| 2 cups bread crumbs | 1 cup light olive oil |
| 4 cups of tomato sauce | |

1. Peel and slice the eggplant.
2. Beat the eggs.

3. Dip the eggplant slices in the egg and then in the bread crumbs

4. In a large skillet heat the olive oil. Then fry the eggplant discs. Let them drain on paper.

5. Layer the eggplant, mozzarella cheese, grated cheese and sauce in a medium sized baking dish.

6. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes – until the sauce is bubbling.

Enjoy with some nice Italian bread! - Nancy

The Strength in Weakness

By Pam Lobley

A couple of years ago my father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and this past summer my mother realized she could no longer care for him at home, and we had to find a place that could care for him. We toured various nursing homes and living situations for dementia patients.

During these visits, we saw many patients much more progressed than my father. It is a human tragedy to see patients, no longer verbal, spending their days silent, staring, in a wheelchair. I just kept thinking of my own grandmother, stubbornly healthy but tired of living at age 96, saying, "I just don't know why the good Lord doesn't take me."

Why doesn't the good Lord just take these people?

The standard response, of course, is that we don't know God's plan, and life is precious at every stage. Those words are easy to say and hard to live.

When I explained to my children about Alzheimer's disease, how there is no cure, and that grandpa would just get worse, my son blurted out "My God, I'd rather be dead." He immediately felt guilty for saying something so harsh out loud, but I assured him it was fine, that is exactly how most people feel.

I call my father several times a week (he lives in Maryland) so we can stay connected. The routine goes something like this: I realize it's been a couple of days since I've called my father. I miss him, but I'm absurdly busy with housework, kids' homework, errands, my own writing work, a conference call, a volunteer thing at school. I always make time to call him, though, because he has so little else to make him happy each day. I call, we talk, sometimes we laugh about things. He can be having a really good day and the conversation is practically "normal". He can be having a bad day we just talk in circles. He might think I'm in college and coming home soon, or that he is on a business trip. The calls usually last about 10 minutes. After we hang up, I sit. Sometimes the sadness is like a punch in the stomach. Sometimes it's like a blanket – soft, but covering everything.

And then I get up and get on with my day. There's a lot to do.

We all know that we should be going out of our way to serve the weak. We should be visiting prisoners, feeding the hungry, fighting for social justice. I'm not doing any of those things. OK, I do the food drives, the toy drives, the coat drives. But my world is with the strong. I'm not apologizing. I'm just stating a flat truth. As they say in Alice in Wonderland, it takes all the running you can do just to stay in place.

If it weren't for my father, I would have no regular contact with the needy. I would not have a daily, close to the

heart reminder of the temporal nature of life. I would not be screeching my day to halt for the sole purpose of being tender and patient. I would spend all my hours wrestling my list of things to do, with no time taken to see the slow, fragile and powerless side of life.

My father has been strong his whole life. A good son, a Marine, a husband of more than 50 years, a father who set an excellent example of how to live. He was ALWAYS decent, always fair, knew how to listen. Now he is weak, but he has not outlived his usefulness. My father still has an important job on this earth. What's left for him is to be a service for others. He needs constant care and attention, which gives other people the opportunity to serve Christ by serving him.

He is helping us all to take time each day to love more deeply, to practice patience. He is giving a job to the angels that take care of him. What about Myhrat, his favorite aide, who hugs him and flirts with him and cajoles him along to meals? She smiles and teases all the patients in her care, asking this man to marry her, waking a napping woman with a kiss on her cheek, giving my father silly nicknames -- how would else would she practice her puckish brand of angelity?

The people that work in these positions, aides to the disabled, the elderly, the infirm – the ones that are really good -- they have a special light they bring to their work. Where else could that light shine as brightly?

When God decided to send a Savior, he sent the weakest possible person -- a baby. Not just a baby, a poor baby, a baby that was almost born out of wedlock. And that baby, when he grew up, kept reminding us that whenever we helped the weak, we were helping him, Jesus, directly. It wasn't "as if" we were helping Jesus, we were ACTUALLY helping Jesus. Weakness is obviously very valuable to God. Yet our earthly world finds weakness embarrassing, inconvenient, laughable, shameful. We'd rather be dead.



The Miracle of Christmas

All this urging to help the weak and suffering is not just so that we can be a nice guy. It is because living among the robust only is not really living. We need the mystical power of the weak to teach us be gentle.

This season, as we celebrate the birth of a poor baby in a manger, let's also celebrate the weak around us, for the ways they bring us closer to God.

Wishing all of you a very Merry Christmas!

May God bless you!

The Staff of The Networker