

The Advocate

Saint Brigid Social Ministries Newsletter
Volume I, Issue 1, Summer 2002

Social Ministries: A Group with a Mission

By Catherine Barley

Members of St. Brigid Parish have long been active in social justice. Three years ago, the St. Brigid Social Ministries Group was formed to coordinate the parish's various social justice ministries. This new group hoped to enrich the spiritual life of the parish by enabling more people to participate in service. A portion of the group's mission statement reads:

"The mission of our Social Ministry...is to promote the integration of social justice in all aspects of our parish life. It is our hope to encourage existing programs as well as identify, develop, and implement new programs, in response to the urging of the Spirit."

This quarterly newsletter is the most recent addition to the Social Ministries outreach. Through the St. Brigid Social Ministries web site, bulletin announcements, monthly meetings, and now, this newsletter, we hope to keep parishioners informed about all the wonderful opportunities to serve that are available. We also hope to communicate the joy and satisfaction of serving one another through personal stories of ministry, volunteer profiles, and progress reports from our various ministries.

Children's Hospital Shows Care

By Mark Trout

St. Jude Children's Hospital is an organization in Tennessee that cares for children going through the crisis of cancer and their families. I saw a program on television that touched my heart to help this cause. St. Jude is not to be mistaken for Judas Iscariot; St. Jude is Jude Thaddeus, who is recorded in history as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Jude Children's Hospital gives care, even free care, to children suffering from cancer. The hospital aims to cure the children and to ease their suffering.

Please show your care by purchasing a ticket to wash your vehicle at Body Beautiful Car Wash. To purchase a \$10.00 ticket, please call Mark Trout at (858) 581-6813. St. Jude Children's hospital will be the focus of an upcoming Give Back Sunday. (See article on back page.)

"Juvie" Ministry Brings Surprises, Rewards

By Mary Dawn Reavey

Would you be amazed to have a group of adolescents listen attentively and then exchange ideas as you shared your thoughts on that Sunday's readings? When was the last time you saw kids scramble for holy cards? Heard heartfelt prayers, verbalized in front of a peer group without a sign of embarrassment, asking God to show His love and mercy to family and friends? These unusual experiences are commonplace for members of the St. Brigid community who serve in the Juvenile Hall Detention Ministry.

The "Juvie Team" is a group of diverse Catholics who divide into three teams to provide a one-hour prayer service to six separate groups within juvenile hall on the second Sunday afternoon of each month. Typically, they read the gospel and readings for that Sunday and discuss their meanings, pray for the needs of the detainees and their families, sing songs that pertain to the message of that Sunday or season, and hand out religious reading materials. The gratitude and enthusiasm displayed for these services and items is incredible.

You are welcome to join this ministry and share your gift of faith with our incarcerated brothers and sisters in a variety of ways:

- 1. Pray for the needs of the inmates, their families, and those that care for them.** Pray that the detainees are able to be open to the messages God wants them to receive and that the team members are able to share God's word and presence with them. Pray that the inmates are able to accept God's help in overcoming their problems.
- 2. Donate religious reading material.** Holy cards, prayers, soft-back spiritual books and Bibles, Magnificats, and any other paper-based religious materials written in Spanish or English are greatly appreciated. The detainees use these items to fill empty hours and to decorate their personal living spaces.
- 3. Become a team member.** The total time commitment to this ministry is two hours each month. If you are interested in sharing your faith in a personal way with this population, contact Pat Hulburt at (858)490-0507 or patriciahulburt@aol.com. Your service is needed and welcomed in this inspiring, blessed, faith-filled ministry.

Why Is Our Newsletter Called *The Advocate*?

"The Advocate" was the name Jesus gave to the Holy Spirit: "...the Father...will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth..." John, 14:16-17. As social ministers, we pray that we will be guided by our Advocate who is the Holy Spirit and that we, in turn, will serve as social justice advocates for our brothers and sisters in need.

Hammering It Home

By Sean Allen

It was a change that was inevitable. In fact, everyone knew it would happen eventually. But somehow, when it finally did, it was still surprising and exciting. Our construction site will never be the same now that Kathleen calls it "home."

The Border Outreach construction project in Tijuana, Mexico, recently entered a new and exciting phase—the very first resident has finally moved in. Under normal circumstances, this would seem to be the natural progression of things, but this has not been a typical project.

Initial construction began back in 1999, with the intent that the structure would house young women from the nearby Casa Eudes girls' home. Unfortunately, after several months of sweat and muscle from countless volunteers, the project encountered zoning problems. In late 2000, the property changed hands when it became apparent that the city would not allow a non-profit organization to operate in a residential area.

The new owner, Madre Antonia, had her own plans. After living in the La Mesa Penitentiary of Tijuana for almost 25 years, ministering to the prisoners and guards in one of the roughest prisons in Latin America, Madre Antonia founded an order of sisters to continue her ministry—the Servants of the Eleventh Hour. Women interested in serving in the new order would need a location for discernment, training, and study during their formation period. Immediately, providing such a location became the new direction of the construction, or, at least in the short term, destruction. With the new focus, the previously built bunkrooms and community showers had to be torn down and replaced with small, private bedrooms for quiet prayer and reflection.

Today, the project has come a long way, but still has a way to go. The roughly 5000 square foot building will include seven bedrooms, five bathrooms, a large kitchen, a living area, a reading room, a small chapel, and a conference/training room. Several of the bedrooms and two of the bathrooms are finished, complete with fresh paint on smooth walls and tiled floors. Our plan was that the kitchen would also be completed before any residents moved in, but the Lord did not waste any time in choosing someone to join us.

Kathleen came to Tijuana in mid June, hoping to enter the new order. With her came the addition of pictures on the walls, flowers in the bathroom, and a pot of hot coffee ready for guests, all of which distinctly changed the feel of the construction site. Suddenly, the remaining work does not seem to lead to the end of a project, but to the lively beginning of the amazing ministry of women who will be living in their new home.



Kathleen working on her donated computer at the construction site that she has made into a home.

Giving Back

By Joan Marler

This summer we started a new community service project called Give Back Sunday. The two main motivations for the project are:

- To collect specific goods for local organizations based on their needs.
- To disseminate information about these organizations to people who may need their services or who would be able to volunteer there.

The first three organizations we have chosen to sponsor are Birthline, a pregnancy support center; CCSA, a homeless aid center; and Nativity Prep, a free Catholic school for low-income students. As always, St. Brigid Parishioners have responded with abundant generosity and we have been able to deliver carloads of goods to these organizations.

If you would like to get more involved with this project, please call Joan Marler at (858) 274-3623. And don't forget to check the bulletin for dates and wish lists for upcoming Give Back Sundays!

Want to Learn More?

More information on all the ministries highlighted in this issue of *The Advocate*, as well as other social ministries at St. Brigid Parish, can be found at the Social Ministries web page: www.stbrigidparish.org/socialministries/.