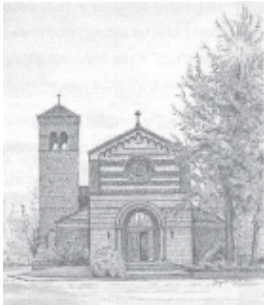


THE SPIRIT

Volume 4, Issue 1

Spring/Summer 2004



SACRED HEART CHURCH

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Kwiatkowski

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Deacons
Gil Parra
Bill Riehl

Religious Education
Sr. Mary O'Meara,
RSM

School Principal
Raymond Burnell

Administrative Staff
Barbara Valentini
Rosemary Purtill

We are all ambassadors of Christ

The focus of our Spring Newsletter is to provide you a profile of some of our parishioners who can be referred to as Ambassadors of Christ. This is a term that St Paul used to describe those who embrace the teachings of Jesus and spread His word. As Sacred Heart Parishioners, we are all part of a spiritual community committed to the teachings of Jesus Christ. In fact, by embracing and living our lives by the precepts of our Catholic faith, we are all ambassadors of Christ. The commonality of our faith unites us in our individually sought missions to serve humanity. In our cover story, we share with you the vision of one young man willing to commit his life to serve Christ through the Jesuit Volunteers International program. We also look at some of our parish spiritual community groups, such as Disciples in Mission, Catholics Returning Home, CCD, and RCIA, that embrace our faith from multiple perspectives. These stories and others along with our regular features are designed to help provide you with some insights into our spiritual community at Sacred Heart.



Guided by His Faith ...

Matt Petrich has found his mission in Tanzania, Africa. As a member of the Jesuit Volunteers International, he has worked as a high school teacher and coach for over two years there. Some of you may remember the announcements in the Sunday bulletins last summer when we were asked to donate our old tennis rackets to Matt's school. Matt's mom, Mary Pat Petrich, personally delivered

the rackets to him when she visited him for a month this past summer.

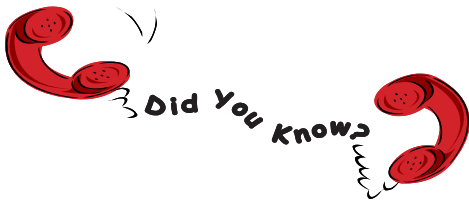
Subsequently, last December, you may have heard Matt speak at Sunday Masses where he shared his experiences with his beloved children in Tanzania. His words about poverty and the daily struggles of his village community left all of us moved and inspired by his commitment.

Matt recently extended his time with the Jesuit volunteer ministry for another year. His acculturation to Tanzania and specifically to his home in Dar es Salaam (Arabic for "haven of peace") has been enhanced by his fluency in Swahili and by his genuine love for the people of his very poor neighborhood in Mabibo and his commitment to the children and their families.

Matt's letters to his family capture the spiritual essence of his acculturation to Tanzania. He reflects that his experience in Tanzania has had a significant impact on the way he thinks about and sees God in his life. He says:

"Poverty, illness, and disability or other facts of life that may disturb us are not hidden here. You are confronted much more with a life full of problems here more than any place I have lived. Constantly living in an environment like this hopefully will cause all people to begin to ask God "why?"Life here resonates with the life you read about in the Gospels;

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The Youth Corner...



Danielle carries their motto...

Valentine's Day at Sherwood Nursing Home

Three years ago my neighbor Hazel was at Sherwood Nursing Homes recovering from an accident. Valentine's

Day was coming and I felt I needed to let this single 98-year-old woman feel special. As I was searching for a way to do that, the idea came to me - I will go over to her place and surprise her and the other residents by bringing flowers to each of them. After visiting Sherwood many times, I had realized that most of the residents didn't seem to have many visitors. This made me sad as I would have disliked seeing anyone go unloved on such a wonderful day. So I called the activities coordinator and asked if I could bring flowers to those wonderful people. Ecstatic about the idea, the woman graciously allowed me to



Danielle between Father Sylwester and her friends

come in on Valentine's Day with huge baskets of flowers and to personally give each one a flower. The smiles that I received that day explained it all. The residents were all beside themselves to see that I had bought real roses, not plastic ones. It made me realize what the true meaning of Valentine's Day really was.

Some of these residents were not mentally capable of understanding why I was there, but something as simple as a carnation or a rose really can explain more than words. After giving the last flower to my neighbor, I walked home reflecting on what I had just done. I decided after that moment that I would come back and turn my simple idea into an annual event. I was later informed that I was some of the residents' only visitor that week.



Hillary Riehl offering flowers to a resident

After another year of doing this by myself, I thought how cool it would be if I were to share this with someone else. With Tony Caselli's encouragement, members of the Sacred Heart Youth Group core team joined me on my mission to reach out to the elderly. Early this Valentine's Day morning Hillary Riehl, Celina Spencer, Jacalyn Spitz and Father Sylwester shared my experience at Sherwood. At first some of the teenagers did not understand how such a simple act could make someone so happy but they quickly learned, as I had, that, although some of the residents did not understand which day it was, somewhere in their hearts they knew someone was thinking of them. It is now my tradition on Valentine's Day and it will always remain so, either at Sherwood or somewhere else.

- ... Sacred Heart Parish School formed its Academic Decathlon Team and entered the Diocese of Sacramento's competition. All had a great time with two of the decathletes bringing home gold medals: Dave Tracy in mathematics and Elizabeth Van Home in language arts.
- ... almost half of the fourth through eighth grade students at the school earned either "High Honors," or "Honors" during the second trimester. Seventeen percent achieved a G.P.A. of 3.70 or higher!
- ... a Family Faith formation was started for the families of the kindergarten/first grade students who are preparing for their first Sacrament of Reconciliation and their First Communion.
- ... March 29, 92 parishioners attended the discussion on the recently published book the "Da Vinci Code." The panel did an excellent job in discussing the topics assigned to them.
- ... the 34 members of this year's class of the R.C.I.A. program had a wonderful year with the help of a very dedicated team. The class was fully initiated into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil Mass.
- ... a new service has been added to the Holy Week schedule. At 7:00 p.m. on Good Friday a meditation service was held on the Seven Last Words of Christ.

Sister Mary Martin

Danielle Dana (edited by staff)

Second Grade CCD

Kristin Hansen serves Christ through her work with the Parish C.C.D. program. Seeing Kristin interact with the children is truly an inspiration. Everyone who has such an opportunity truly appreciates her good planning and her dedication to her mission. This is how she describes the program and her ministry:



Kristin Hansen and the Second Grade CCD



*It is hard work...
...but well worth it*

“For the past three years, I have been blessed with the opportunity of teaching second grade C.C.D. At the heart of the program are the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Therefore, each Sunday from September through May, my primary focus is to bring the young believers of our parish into a personal covenant with Jesus through the preparation and celebration of these sacraments. (John 6:57). Thus they come to understand that in the Eucharist the body and blood, the soul and divinity of Jesus Christ are truly present. With the sacrament of Reconciliation, we concentrate upon the fact that Reconciliation reminds us of the good that God has for us. Though we are sinners, we can obtain from God the help we need to reach heaven. This is truly a wonderful gift indeed.

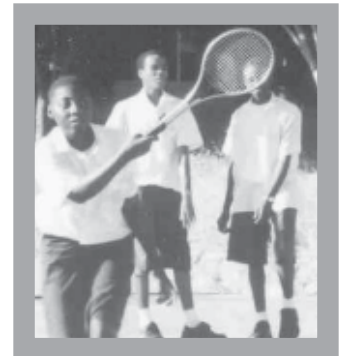
“I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the clergy and staff of Sacred Heart Church and parish school. I would also like to thank the parents and students for their support as well.”

Kristin Hansen



Guided by His Faith. . . continued from page 1

it resonates with the problems that may have been encountered with even Jesus himself. That is the culture shock I have continually experienced, and will always struggle with. I like to think that through prayer, namely the examination of conscience for myself and attendance at daily Mass ...I will come to live this life and any style of life with constant recognition and love of God in all things.”



The tennis rackets are put to good use...



Matt surrounded by many of his charges

Matt’s strong faith is grounded in his experience with Catholic education at Sacred Heart Church where, while attending Brookfield School, he participated in the CCD program and was an altar server. His experiences as a student at Jesuit High School and his work in a campus ministry at Santa Clara University further strengthened his resolve. His willingness to step outside the safe boundaries of life as we know it in Sacramento, however, has provided him with a new dimension of spirituality. His daily work provides him with opportunities to understand and experience the cycle of poverty in one small far away community. In Matt’s own words:

“Changing the situation can be extremely difficult and overwhelming though. The point, which I am having a hard time summarizing, is that I have learned to see Jesus in this impoverished culture I live in, and it is a thing of beauty, but only if we absorb ourselves in the culture while still trying to encourage social change to end the suffering and lack of security in life for these new friends we have created.”

Matt expresses his gratitude and appreciation for all the support that the members of Sacred Heart Church have given through the extra collections after the Sunday Mass when he spoke in December and with the gift of the tennis rackets. Your generosity has meant a great deal to Matt and to his mission.

Pam Milchrist

Catholics Returning Home



The participants listening to Father Walton

As described in the previous newsletter, the *Catholics Returning Home* program is a nationwide ministry to invite Catholics who have ceased to participate in the activities of the church to renew their relation with God and with the Catholic Church. At the beginning of this year Sacred Heart Church sponsored its first program consisting of six weekly sessions. Based on feedback from the participants and from the seven team leaders, the support program was successful, and the parish will continue offering this important ministry for inactive Catholics.



Jeannette Holmes

The sessions were conducted every Thursday evening from January 8 through February 12. Initially, 17 people signed up for the program. Despite a few “drop-outs,” the participants were diligent in their attendance and participation.

With the assistance of Sister Mary Martin and Fathers Walton, Healy, and Folmer, the participants explored several themes, including changes since Vatican II, a walk through the Mass, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

When the participants were queried on their response to the sessions, some of their comments captured the essence of the Catholics Returning Home program. One person wrote, “I feel that I’ve made the right move coming here. You people opened your arms and made me feel very welcomed.” Another confided, “Many of my fears from long ago are gone and I’m now going to church every Sunday and confession on Saturday. I even attend Mass during the week. These things I am sure would not have happened if it weren’t for you people being so nice and kind.” Another overall comment was, “I enjoyed the presentations by the lay people—(they) helped make the series very relaxed and laid back and helped make us feel comfortable....It was also important that the priests and Sister Mary Martin spoke and gave their thoughts on the church today, which is very different from the church we remember growing up in....”



The team leaders and Sister Mary Martin

Additionally, the participants had several suggestions for improving the program. Some felt that they wanted

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Jim Paquette, Joyce Flynn, Marilyn Tornatore

Disciples in Mission

In the Summer of 2001, several parishioners from Sacred Heart gathered together to learn from the Diocese about a new program from the Paulists. The program was called *Disciples in Mission*, and it was being adopted in many parishes throughout the diocese. The program was intended to begin during Lent 2002. As explained by Sister Susan McCarthy, this was a program of evangelization, to make Catholics comfortable about sharing their faith with others, Catholics and non-Catholics.

As one of the group from Sacred Heart, I must confess my first reaction was one of great skepticism. The word “evangelization” evoked visions of people who ring the doorbells of strangers and offer to save their souls, whether those who answer the door have the least interest in being saved. However, as I learned about the program, I realized that my definition of evangelization was very narrow indeed. This was less about approaching strangers and more about sharing one’s faith with others and letting them share theirs with you. During the fall of 2001, the Sacred Heart group, with the blessing of Father O’Hara and led by Kathy Pooler, began to prepare for the first year’s program that would officially begin the first week of Lent in 2002.

In January 2002, leaders were recruited to host the small faith-sharing groups. As the parish had never participated before, these brave souls were volunteering for the unknown. But they were assured that hosting was not difficult, and that being a Scripture expert was not a requirement. All they were to provide was a welcoming place for up to 10 parishioners to meet once a week during the six weeks of Lent.

Disciples in Mission is a lectionary-based program, meaning that participants begin their discussions with Old and New Testament readings for the upcoming Sunday. After that, the program provides discussion questions that ask the participants to share how their personal experiences relate to those readings. At the end of the discussion, all decide on a task to be done during the upcoming week that reinforces their faith.

That first year, we had no idea how many people would join. To our delight, nearly 200 parishioners signed up. Some groups were made up of people who did not know each other, other groups were all old friends. Most groups had a mix. Some groups had people who resolutely announced they would not say a thing during the entire six weeks as they attended only “because my wife said I had to come.” But most people were willing to participate and share their faith.

Over the six weeks, participants, even those who had been strangers, got to know each other. Now friends, they shared easily how Christ had affected their lives. In many cases, people were genuinely moved as someone shared an event in his or her life where the Gospel came alive. In other cases, participants discussed a problem where societal values conflicted with Church teachings.

By the end of the six weeks, the participants were bonded together in a spiritual way. All felt they understood the Scriptures better, and were eager to embrace the mysteries of the Easter Triduum. In sum, the program was a great success for all.

continued page 6 . . .

Catholics returning Home . . . continued from page 4

more opportunities for small group discussions. Others felt that the program should address controversial issues, and others thought a longer series would be appropriate. Overall, the feedback was constructive and helpful and the Catholics Returning Home team will consider all of the participants' feedback.

Jeannette Holmes, one of the team leaders, provides her insights into the program.

“It was rewarding, and humbling, to have the opportunity to journey six weeks with these courageous people. They were very honest with their questions and open to the spirit.”

Steve McCurdy, the chair of the committee, was pleased with the overall program, and adds. “I’m very excited over the possibilities this program offers. It represents an invitation to those who have left to return to a loving family. For many, the happiness and resolution this homecoming brings is beyond description. Please tell your friends about it!”

The Parish will offer another six-week Catholics Returning Home program starting April 15. Please let your interested family and friends know about it.

Pam Milchrist



Disciples in Mission . . . continued from page 5

In the second year of the program, during Lent 2003, 220 participated. The same bonding took place within the groups, as people became comfortable talking about faith and their daily lives. Evaluations, as in the first year, were very positive.

This year the program is in its third year and under Laurlynn Jones' leadership. The routine of Lenten discussions has become something we fervently anticipate as preparation for Easter, in the same way we do other Lenten practices. I look forward to Lent and the grace of getting to know other parishioners, and sharing their faith. And, surprisingly, I have learned not to hide my faith with others. While I would never feel comfortable knocking on doors of strangers, I now will speak easily about faith in my daily life to coworkers. When asked what I did on the weekend, I list the various activities, including “I went to Mass.” I don't flaunt my religion, but I am no longer reluctant to let others know that faith is not merely a once-a-

week activity for me, like cutting the grass. I guess I have become an evangelist!

THE SPIRIT

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In addition to deepening my faith the program has allowed my to meet many other parishioners and expand my faith community. Too often, we always go to the same Mass every weekend and our social interaction with parishioners ends after the handshake during the exchange of “Peace be with you.” And then we wonder why we don't really know anyone from the parish! *Disciples in Mission* has introduced me to many parishioners, and given me many new friends. Those new friends, who share my Catholic faith, reinforce my own attempts to live by the Gospel and act as a support system for me, just as I do for them. The Christian community is nourished and grows through these friendships. I should not be surprised that we 21st century Christians, by sharing the Word with each other, would be imitating the lives of 1st Century Christians and spreading the news of Jesus just as they did. We are Disciples in Mission indeed.

Marti Geiger (edited by staff)

The newsletter staff welcomes your suggestions and submissions. Please contact Sr. Martin.



The Sacred Heart Family



In Memoriam . . . September-December 2003

"May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace."

Clare Kolancheck
Ann R. Domich
Margaret Shorrock
Victoria Valente
Mary Ann Rugaard

Phillip Hugo
Thomas P. Corrigan
James Crowe
Jeane Santana

Kathryn L. Smith
Letha Mulloy
Lester J. Blucher
Leah Rossi Connolly

James Winchell
Paul Jackson
Carl Dominic Dumbra
Christopher Herrmann
Lucille C. Crowe

Baptism . . . September-December 2003

"You have put on Christ, you have been baptized." (Rite of Baptism)



Michael Samuel Dufur
Mary Alivia Klosinski
Gregory Stone
Nicole Masich
Elena Maria Moorehead
Lexie Calderon
Bailey Avery
Zakary John McMurry
Khalil Evans
Jack Matthew Becker
Connor Patrick Twomey

Ian Christopher Evans
Parker Marik Madrigal-Geary
Matthew Charles Ospeck
Katherine Beverly Gervais
Janine Ann Milne
Jacob Ryan Schnetz
Tai John Rubia Miller
Grace Mary Klosinski
Carter Wilson
Aidan Matthew Thompson

Amaya La Branch
Raegan Kopka
Connor Fallero
Isabella Orciuoli
Mark Allen Mustybrook Jr.
Skylar Marie Rapp
Lillian Krystyna Winger
Malia Susan Lee
Alexandra Spring Evans
Charles Vincent Acquisto
Ryan Werner
Gavin Whitehawk Hernandez
Joshua Tyler Talag Mar
Audrey Paoletti Fry
Charlotte Josephine Egan

Marriages . . . September-December 2003



"I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life." (Rite of Marriage)

Roxana Bombalier & Bryan Tong Cheah
Sonya M. Marquez & Jason Grapski
Tamara Lemieux & Christian Weightman
Angela Renee Ryan & Michael Francis Mix

Magda Espindola & Ernesto Belmonte
Dawn Brewer & James Fuhs
Holly Ann Turner & Ross Leland Gotwals
Jennifer Paula Dunivan & Nicholas P. Lendman
Margaret K. Farley & Renzo C. Sanchez-Silva

RCIA 2003

"You have become a new creation and have clothed yourself in Christ." (Rite of Baptism)

Sandy Brown
Angela Carnahan
Kim Clark
Shauna Collins
Danielle Farnan
Jessica Gutierrez

Robin Hefner
Sam Hyde
James Lee
Emily Mc Kerras
Bill Rapp
Scott Sterling

Christian Weightman
Michael Wilson
Kris Caputo
Nathan Carnahan
Amber Cole
Jeff Donlevy

Barrett Franklin
Raymond Hay
Joshua Hurley
Steve Hyde
Joseph Manuele
Marc Moorehead
Courtney Snell
Katherine Thompson
Margaret Wilson