

# Gratitude News

Basilica of Our Lady  
Immaculate

## WELCOMING A FAMILY SEEKING REFUGE

*by Ted Laxton, Chair of Settlement/Orientation/Transportation Committee, The Refugee Council*

In response to Our Holy Father's exhortation to all Catholic parishes to sponsor a refugee family, Our Lady Immaculate parish joined with Holy Rosary parish in December of 2015 to begin the process of sponsoring a family. The Diocesan Office for Refugees will be presenting us with the profile of a family that matches our request. Once we have selected a family to sponsor, it may only be a matter of weeks before their arrival. Our family may come from any of a number of countries.

Our responsibilities began in January with preparation for the family's arrival and extend for their first year in our community. We have formed a number of sub-committees that are attending to the various tasks of orientation and settlement. I am the chair of the Settlement/Orientation/Transportation committee. We are actively preparing a 'Welcome Binder' for the family. In addition, members have been busy with police checks and driver screening. We have been greatly assisted by a number of different local organizations that work with refugees.



We are most appreciative of the financial support provided by the parish through the envelope collection, and through the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women's League. Together with Holy Rosary Parish, we have raised over \$63,000.00 to cover the costs of the first year for the family. We have just been informed that since our family will most likely be a non-Syrian family, their air transport costs will not be covered by the government. We continue to make the government aware of the need to treat all refugees the same, no matter their country of origin.

We still have a couple of fundraising activities planned. There will be a Dinner/Dance on April 30th at the Victoria East Golf and Country Club. Tickets will be available at the weekend masses of April 9/10 and April 16/17 at a cost of \$100.00 each. The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring a garage sale on May 15th. Thank you for your support!

Easter 2016

### **Wilma Jean the Worry Machine by Julia Cook**

Wilma Jean worries about absolutely everything. She stresses about doing a math problem wrong on the board, getting picked last in gym, whether kids will make fun of her hair, and even the weather. With the help of special adults in her life – her mom and her teacher- she comes to understand the things she can control and the things she cannot. She tries some creative coping strategies at school and realizes there are lots of things she just doesn't need to worry about. She says she feels “a lot better ‘cause now [she] just knows what to do with [her] worries when they're inside [her] head.” Wilma Jean worries about the exact things today's kids worry about. This book gives great strategies kids can actually use. There is also a great Note to Parents and Educators at the back of the book which gives wonderful tips for “dealing with an anxious child.”

### **What If Everybody Did That? by Ellen Javernick**

We don't give thanks because we're happy. We are happy because we give thanks! This beautifully illustrated book takes the reader on an illuminating journey through nature, stopping often to marvel and appreciate simple and lovely things along the way. The story exposes still other things we take for granted, like the golden rays of the sun, a pet dog, and shade on a hot day. Sometimes you have to be quiet and still for a moment or you might not hear the secret when a bird sings, or when a family member tells you a story around the dinner table. This book teaches us to really respect and embrace the world around us. It would make a fantastic gift for First Communion or to welcome a new baby. It is a wonderful way to start a discussion in your family about gratitude.

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## **THE GIFT AND INVITATION OF MERCY**

*Report by Angie Hunt*

On March 5, Sister Margaret Kane presented to parishioners on “The Gift and Invitation of Mercy”. This event was organized by the Volunteer Co-ordinator Committee in keeping with the Holy Father's designation that this be a “Holy Year of Mercy”.

Sister Margaret used a modern day parable to help people look at the good in each person and to identify the underlying roots of mercy. She said that God bestows mercy towards self and towards others when we ask for it. Jesus is God's mercy made flesh and we must ask ourselves, “What was the heart and attitude of Jesus?”. She also spoke of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy from the Gospel (Matthew 25) and guided the group to look at the different ways that people are fulfilling the works of mercy in today's world.

As one participant noted, “Mercy is the expanding of the human heart and lack of mercy is the shriveling of the human heart.” Sister Margaret ended her presentation with the closing prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero titled: Creating the Church of Tomorrow.”

On Sunday January 24th our own Knights of Columbus Basilica of Our Lady Council #1507 hosted a Parish Breakfast. The breakfast was open to all parishioners after both the 9am and 11am Masses. This has become a very popular event and is held a few times each year throughout the winter months. Stay tuned for a BBQ lunch date in the Spring or early Summer. Pictured at left are members of the Knights serving their fellow parishioners a delicious breakfast!



## ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Update from Steve Nagy

Even though Easter is early this year, it is not too early to be thinking of the parish's golf tournament. This year's tournament will be held on Sunday, June 5 at the usual place, Victoria Park Valley. Everyone (meaning 'all playing abilities') is welcome to join us for a day without rain (Father Noon has already begun his prayer cycle). It will be a day that promises fun golf, good food, and pleasant company. We will begin to sell tickets in May and the cost should be about the same as last year; \$95 per person for golf with a cart, a substantial meal and prizes. If you don't want to golf, you can join us for the meal. Here's hoping to see you on the first Sunday in June.

## OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Tuesday April 26th      | Volunteer Appreciation Night   |
| Saturday April 30th     | Refugee Council Dinner / Dance                                       |
| Monday May 9th 7pm      | Dr. Josie Lombardi speaking on Mary and the Year of Mercy            |
| Sunday May 15th         | Regugee Council / Knights of Columbus Garage Sale                    |
| Sunday May 29th         | Cupcake Sunday after the 9 am and 11 am Masses                       |
| September 11th          | 10th Annual Parish Picnic  |
| Friday October 28th 7pm | Cardinal Thomas Collins speaking on Mercy and the Gospel of St. Luke |
| December 10th to 13th   | Advent Year of Mercy Mission with Father Michael Prieur              |

# UPDATES FROM St. MICHAEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*One of our parish's family of elementary schools*

## PASSION PLAY

As Grade 8 students of St. Michael School, we feel that the Passion Play is the most important event of our school year. We are honoured to be able to portray the Stations of the Cross and the suffering of Jesus to our school community and the parish of the Basilica of Our Lady. We feel that this process helps bring us closer to God and strengthens our faith.

*- Nathalie A. & Devan M.*



A significant part of Holy Week at St. Michael Catholic School is the Passion Play, which is traditionally performed by Grade 8 students. The Stations of the Cross, and the final days leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus, are brought to life using the dramatic form of tableaux. The performance provides the opportunity for students to contemplate the images that they see on stage, and reflect upon the life and suffering of Jesus. - *E. Dametto & J. Sgrignoli, Teachers*

## FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST COMMUNION

*Mrs. Sewell and Mrs. Gloor, Teachers*

As Gr. 2 teachers, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to guide our students as they make the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion. Each year begins the same way - a group of children with many questions and a fear of the unknown. They are both excited and nervous. As we guide them through their spiritual journey and prepare for each sacrament, we begin to see this fear dissipate. As the students gain a real understanding of the importance of forgiveness, there becomes a sense of calm. The school day following First Reconciliation is always uplifting, as we hear the whispers of students expressing how confident and comfortable they felt sharing their thoughts and confessions with the priest.

