Dear Parishioners,
A few weeks ago we completed our celebration of the Parish's 60th year of growing in faith together. Our many celebrations throughout the year helped us to recognize the great gift of faith that we share and also the great heritage we enjoy in that faith here at Immaculate Heart of Mary. One of the greatest accomplishments of our Anniversary Year was our capital campaign, *Resounding in Praise*, which made possible the installation of our new Pipe Organ. We are very grateful to the generosity of so many whose contribution will enhance our liturgy for decades to come. The campaign will also provide funds for the replacement of the school when this needs to be done, probably in about five to seven years. Our thanks to all who given so much and who continue to support our Parish in so many ways.
On behalf of the entire staff and myself, we wish you a very Blessed Christmas and the fulfillment of all the promises that the Saviour brings.

Merry Christmas,
Fr. Mike and Fr. David

++

THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD
NEW YEAR'S EVE DECEMBER 31, 2008 MASSES 4: 30 & 6:00 PM
NEW YEAR'S DAY
MASSES: JANUARY 1, 2009 – 9:00 am and 11:00 am

◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆ ◆◆

BAPTISM INFORMATION

The Baptism Preparation Program for **new or expecting parents** is held each month on the first Thursday of each month at 7:30pm in the New Parish Center. When possible we encourage parents to participate in this program before their baby's birth. Please call the Rectory to schedule this program as soon as you know that you are expecting. We encourage families to share this sacrament with the worshipping community by having their children baptized at the regular Saturday evening or Sunday Masses.

GODPARENTS and SPONSORS

Those asked to be godparents or Confirmation sponsors, whether it be here or at another Catholic Parish, are required to be Baptized, Confirmed, practicing Catholics who receive the sacraments regularly and are in good standing with the Church. Those seeking documentation to be godparents or sponsors would also be expected to be registered in the Church where they worship weekly. If you are presently not eligible to receive the sacraments yourself because of a Marriage or other situation, you would need to address this issue before you could be a godparent or sponsor. (see Divorced and Remarriage section above.)

****

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

You, as parents, are the most important people in the religious education of your children. This parish-centered Religious Education Program is designed to help you carry out your duty to educate your children in the Catholic religion. In addition to teaching by your example at home and by attending Mass every weekend, it is important that your children attend Religion classes regularly. Classes for children in K through grade 8 are held on Sunday mornings from 8:50am to 10:15am. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC), a program that prepares children 6 years old and older who wish to be received into the Catholic Church, are held once a month. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a program that meets on Tuesday evenings to prepare those who wish to be received into the Catholic Church.

^*

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SCHOOL

After serving as Principal for 23 years, Mrs. Wilma Short retired over the summer and our School welcomed Mrs. Amy Belz as our new Principal. Mrs. Belz was formerly a teacher and Assistant Principal at Sacred Heart School in Glyndon. Mrs. Belz has shown that she is committed to the principles of Catholic education and to faculty, students and families at Immaculate Heart of Mary. An education in Gospel values and the importance of a personal relationship with Christ continue as the persuasive elements that underlie the curriculum at IHM School. We are committed to preparing our young people to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We offer a dedicated staff, and a support community of active, caring parents and guardians. An emphasis is placed on developing self-worth, personal responsibility, self-discipline and respect for life. Students are empowered to live the gospel message thus developing an understanding of membership in the communities of family, church and society.
For further information or registration applications, call the school office at 410-668-8466.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Mrs. Amie Post directs the programs and activities of the Parish Youth Ministry Program. Currently there are opportunities for Middle School students, both in our School and in Parish Religious Education Programs every Monday at 3:15 pm and for those in High School on the First Sunday evening of each Month. Information concerning Confirmation Preparation for current eighth graders will be sent out soon. Those in High School who have not been confirmed should contact Mrs. Post for more information on Confirmation. More activities and information can be found in the weekly bulletin on the website.

****

ATTENTION SPRING AND SUMMER BRIDES AND GROOMS

Now is the time to be planning your wedding for the summer of 2009 and beyond. In order to have time for adequate preparation for married life, the Church requires that you contact the priest or deacon that you wish to officiate at your wedding at least six months in advance. If you are planning a wedding for 2009 or early 2010, please contact Fr. Mike, Deacons Jack Martin, Ken Pivec, or the priest or deacon of your choice to make the appropriate arrangements, not just for your wedding day but for your life together.

ARE YOU DIVORCED OR IN ANOTHER MARRIAGE AFTER A DIVORCE? ARE YOU MARRIED TO SOMEONE WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY DIVORCED?

The number of Catholics who answer "Yes" to these questions is continually increasing. Unfortunately many are not aware that the Church does provide possibilities for those in these situations to once again be able to receive Communion and the other sacraments and even to have their present union blessed. If you are divorced and remarried or even if you are in a first time marriage for both you and your spouse but that marriage did not take place in the Church, you are encouraged to contact Fr. Mike or Fr. David to receive information on getting your marriage blessed in the Catholic Church and returning to the regular reception of the sacraments.

>>>*<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<

RITE OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

The death of loved one is always a sad and often stressful time for family members. It is also a time when many people are faced with unfamiliar situations in making the final arrangements. Questions are frequently asked about the Church's position on cremation, on what is expected for a Catholic funeral and what role the family should take in these liturgical celebrations. Information is available at the rear of the Church or by contacting the rectory to help you understand the Church's funeral celebrations and to help you plan for yourself or for a loved one. Materials are available at Parish Office for those who wish to choose specific music and readings for the funeral Mass of their loved one.

UPCOMING EVENTS: 2009

- Catholic Schools Week: January 25 to January 30, 2009
- Mardi Gras Dinner February 24, 2009, 6pm
- Ash Wednesday, February 25, 2009
- Seder Meal: Sunday, March 29, 2009, 5pm
- Lenten Penance: Saturdays, 3:30pm and
  Wednesdays at 8:30am and 7pm-8:30pm (except Feb. 25 & April 8)
- Easter Sunday, April 12, 2009
- First Eucharist Weekends - April 18 & 19 – April 25 & 26(all Masses except 7:30 am)
- Organ Recital April 26, 2009
- School Carnival: May 2
- IHM School Graduation - May 31, 2009 4 pm

For more information about Parish and School or for any changes or additions to our schedule of events we invite you to consult our website at: www.immaculateheartofmary.com