

August 24, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I'm not happy to see summer winding down and although I know there's plenty of fine weather still ahead of us, the slower pace of summer life is about to pick up quickly as school vacation ends and the "program year" begins.

This week is our Vacation Bible School! I'm so grateful to the parishioners who have worked for months to provide this fine catechetical moment for your youngsters. I especially appreciate that some are so willing to give of themselves precisely when taking time for one's self is certainly understandable. The VBS is on the 10 Commandments and I'll bet that by the end of the week some of our children will know these laws better than many of us! On Thursday night we will close the VBS with Mass in the church at 7:00 p.m. Everyone in the parish is invited to this special liturgy.

Speaking of special liturgies... On Sunday, September 9, we will celebrate the 11:30 Mass under the trees in the backyard of the rectory, across the green from the church building. We'll provide some folding chairs for our seniors but others are encouraged to bring blankets, towels or lawn chairs for seating. After Mass we'll have a BYO picnic lunch. We'll provide ice cream treats for dessert. No need for elaborate lunches – brown bags will do just fine. At the picnic the children will be invited to work on a banner for our parish for the Walk for Hunger in October. Remember: Sunday, September 9 at 11:30!

Do you know the birthday of Mary, the Mother of Jesus? Not sure? Well, you can figure it out from the church calendar. You know the day when we celebrate Mary's having been conceived immaculately (December 8). Now, just count about 9 months across the calendar and you'll land on September 8! Just the next day, on the 9th, two of our music ministers, Lauren Sprague and Carol Messina, will present a special concert in celebration of the Blessed Mother. Lauren is one of our cantors and Carol one of our accompanists (usually the Sunday 7:30 but at other times, too, during the summer). The program they have prepared is a celebration of Mary's birthday, presenting a variety of pieces written for and inspired by Mary including: a 9th century chant setting of the Annunciation; a piece entitled "Mary Alone," written from the perspective of a mother whose son has been killed in war; a contemporary song, "Breath of Heaven" in which Mary sings of her concerns about becoming a mother; as well as a number of musical settings of the Ave Maria prayer by lesser known composers and, of course, the two most familiar settings (Schubert and Bach/Gounod). The repertoire is quite diverse and offers something for everyone.

In honor of Mary's birthday we will sing **Evening Prayer at 7:00 p.m.** on Sunday, September 9 with the concert following *immediately*, around **7:30 p.m.** There is no admission fee, but all free will offerings will benefit Rosie's Place, a sanctuary for poor and homeless women in Boston.

While our parish staff has enjoyed vacation time this summer, they have also worked overtime on preparing for our revised Faith Formation program. The amount of time and effort which has gone into this revision is staggering and I'm most grateful, especially to Helen Cushman, Sandra Mueller and Susan Bierwagen for their work on this. **BUT!** This is the kind of religious education program that cannot begin without **TEACHERS!** And teachers we need aplenty! **NOW** is the time for you to call, volunteer and speak with Helen and Sandra about the class **YOU** will offer to teach.

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming

Check out my blog at www.ConcordPastor.blogspot.com