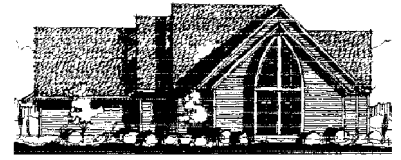


TOLLE LEGE

"Take & Read"



Newsletter of the Church of the Transfiguration & St. John the Evangelist Parishes~ Vol. 1, Issue 1 (July, August, September)
7624 Roanoke Road, Fincastle VA 24090 ~ 99 Second Street, New Castle VA 24127



First Holy Communion May 18, 2008

First Communicants 2008

On May 11th, St. John's welcomed three First Communicants and on May 18th, Transfiguration welcomed 15 First Communicants. It was doubly joyful for Father Arlon to have the opportunity to celebrate the reception of the Holy Eucharist for the first time with children from both communities.

In Father Arlon's advice to the kids, he shared these insights: "The Eucharist is the most sacred gift to sustain us physically and spiritually. Every time we come forward to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, we need to be properly prepared and receive it with reverence."

The preparation of these children was facilitated by respective Catechists at both parishes with the cooperation of the CCD Coordinators. Parents also have a special role to be witnesses to their children to in the Catholic faith. They are truly the first teachers or Catechists, inspiring and leading their children to a more intimate relationship with God.

The fifteen children from Transfiguration are the following: Katie Corrao, Christopher Duvall, Knox Dyal, Ashley Hendrix, Catelyn Hoyt, Clara Keeley, Maxwell Klimczak, Lilianna Kryckowski, Emma Layman, Luke Nackley, Susan Schulz, Anna Trinity Sears, Claire Seibel, Ethan Stickler & Ian Wright. The three children from St. John's are: Devin Ratcliff, Marcella Allison and Melina "Molly" Allison.

Our Congratulations!

Second Resident Priest of COTT

The parishes of Church of the Transfiguration and St. John the Evangelist have been blessed by the presence of Father Arlon Vergara, OSA, the newly appointed Parish Administrator, whose assignment includes all the duties of a pastor. The appointment was announced on June 1 by Bishop Francis DiLorenzo, DD. The Fincastle Herald reported that Father Arlon "will become administrator of the Catholic Church of the Transfiguration in Fincastle, as well as St. John the Evangelist in New Castle on July 1. For several months, both Fr. René and Fr. Arlon have shared duties at Transfiguration as Vergara became accustomed to church life in the Virginia Diocese."

Father Arlon hails from the Philippines. He is the sixth of eight children and has a brother who is also a priest in the Philippines. After his ordination in 1990, he worked as National Director of Vocation and served in various other capacities for the Augustinian Order. From 1993-2004, Father Arlon was engaged as a missionary in South Korea. From 2005 to August 2007, he pioneered a mission parish of the Augustinians in the southern part of the Philippines.

Feeling the constant call for missionary work, Father Arlon applied for leave from the Order to work in the Diocese of Richmond. He arrived in America on September 17, 2007.

When he came to this parish, he was assigned as the Parochial Vicar, serving under Father René Castillo. It was here that Father Arlon felt his jolly personality and personable character would be assets in helping him to build a community, as friendliness is a charism of the Augustinian Order. Father is committed to sharing his missionary spirit with us, and he is very happy to be a part of the big families at both Transfiguration and St. John's.



PASTOR'S VIEW

Fr. Arlon Vergara, OSA

From the Book of St. Augustine, The Confessions, Chapter XII, "I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo, I heard the voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, coming from a neighboring house, chanting, and oft repeating, 'Take up and read; take up and read (Tolle Lege).' Immediately my countenance was changed, and I began most earnestly to consider whether it was usual for children in any kind of game to sing such words; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from Heaven to open the book and to read the first chapter I should light upon."

"Tolle Lege" is a powerful phrase that led St. Augustine to open his heart to change by reading and taking the sacred scriptures with a message. He did not hesitate to live out what he read from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans 13:13-14. This scriptural text made him realize the need to conversion in Jesus Christ.

This direct quotation from the St. Augustine's Book inspires me to start this parish newsletter as an avenue to promote openness and communication to all parishioners of St. John and Transfiguration. "Tolle Lege" is Latin for "take" and "read". *Tolle Lege* parish newsletter has been conceived with the motive of creating an accurate representation of our parish community to other neighboring Christian communities, and for promoting the ideals that we all share for the good of our community.

Tolle Lege will serve as a tool for communication, to help eliminate misunderstanding and confusion, and will provide a means for encouraging conversion of our hearts in order for us to better understand our very purpose. Living together in harmony and peace requires constant dialogue, which is essential in order to fully understand both the messenger and the message being sent. The Newsletter will also provide a format for all of us to come together as a parish family, serving as a venue for the sharing of the noble thoughts and ideas of every parishioner. Our sharing will be beneficial in advancing this Christian community's role of evangelization at the local level. *Tolle Lege* will be a window to allow others to learn from us. Through the art of expressive writing, the newsletter will allow us to share the talents that God has given us.

Tolle Lege is meant to inspire the confidence of every parishioner. We can achieve so much when we **TAKE** our responsibility to heart with great love and respect and **READ** every person's heart with kindness. Please let this newsletter be a part of your experience in our two unique and vibrant parishes.

Editorial

For any relationship to work and last, communication is a fundamental factor in achieving any goals in preserving a long and unwavering harmonious relationship. As a community, that is precisely what we are called to do. We have the ability to express our ideas and opinions via the quarterly newsletter *Tolle Lege*.

Tolle Lege is our avenue to communicate with one another and to make known to our parish communities both Transfiguration's and St. John's various activities. It is open to any suggestions or ideas to make us feel we are part of a big happy family. However to the same extent, being family as any other family, there will always be some "miscommunication." The lines of communication can be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Conflicts and judgments can be unjustly passed without knowing the root cause of the difficulties that are present. Hence, stress, frustration, anger, and/or anxiety can set-in and be manifested through hurtful words, accusations and actions.

One of the most famous lessons in the Bible the "let he who is without sin cast the first stone" can be related upon to any kind of relationship(s) and manifested through jealousy, gossip, or deceit. We are all sinners and yet God still forgave the adulterer and said to her "sin no more." It is with this lesson we learn not to look upon others and judge them because in the eyes of men she is a sinner; but, to look upon ourselves and ask "do we have the right to judge anyone when we ourselves are sinners?"

As a family, we are here not to cause pain or hurt but to help and nourish one another positively; to encourage growth, peace, love, and understanding. In doing so, our communities can come together as one, working and living together in harmony and loving each other as God continuously reveals His love for all of us. All of these things can be achieved and the needs of the community can be reached if all of us communicate so that lines are not crossed, and make dialogue an important aspect of our life as a community. It is basic necessity for all of us to consistently share our God given gifts through creative writing, poetry and literary proficiency in order that we may move forward into the future.

Tolle Lege is our means to accomplish just that in meeting our goals and advance our friendships and fraternity...With God's divine providence, He will be there for us to be the MESSAGE. (By **Trish Watson**)

NEEDED: ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS!

We are in search of news items, articles and pictures from parishioners. If you have any contributions for the next newsletter, please submit them by September 15th.

Altar Servers: On June 14, the Altar Servers were given award certificates by Fr. Arlon and Dave Nelson. These certificates were sponsored by K of C Council #12134. Before the awarding, Dave Nelson gave a review of the ordinary Mass guide to them. A special award was given to Samuel Gerstemeier for being the most active and regular altar server. After the meeting, parents and altar servers enjoyed a pizza dinner.

Youth Group: The active Youth Group of the parish sponsored Mass on June 7. The parishioners were amazed to hear them leading the community. They did a great job with all of their roles during the Mass. We hope they will continue to play an active role in our parish liturgy.

Catechists: June 14 was a day for CCD Catechists to enjoy a potluck lunch together. It was also the first time to have brainstorming and sharing of ideas to improve our commitment as Catechists. We are planning to have a consolidated year-long program. Please read future bulletins to find out how you can be a part of this ministry.

Young at Heart: On June 10 there was a gathering of active members of the COTT Young at Heart group for a summer picnic outing held at Rosalie Sloan's ranch. It was a sumptuous lunch after a Mass offered for the living with all their special needs and for the departed members of the church. Jim Karl was the chef in charge of the tasty barbeque. In addition to the menu, some prepared delicious recipes for all to enjoy. It is reported that a wonderful afternoon was had by all!

Bible Study Group: Summer is here! The group decided to have a recess on Wednesday Bible Study so all could enjoy time with their families. Let us altogether enjoy summer with lots of blessings from God.

First Parish Pilgrimage: The Bible Study Group and other parishioners made a holy visit to the Shrine of the Sacred Heart parish in Hot Springs, Virginia, on July 23. Fr. John McGinnity and Fr. Arlon celebrated Mass at the church. Fr. McGinnity shared that the parish was founded during the reign of Pope Leo X. It was a great spiritual experience for those who attended. Thank you to the Bible Study group for initiating this activity and we look forward to our next pilgrimage.

Thank You Fr. René and Welcome Fr. Arlon: On June 29, the parishes of Transfiguration and St. John's gathered together at Transfiguration to thank Fr. René for his service to our parishes over the past year and to welcome Fr. Arlon as our new Parish Administrator. Chef Paul and his helpers prepared a wonderful meal that was complimented by the various salads, fruits and desserts the parishioners brought to share. Those present were also treated to the vocal stylings of both priests as they performed various karaoke favorites. Many parishioners also tried their hand at singing. A good time was had by all!

Dlugopolski 50th Wedding Anniversary: Tom and Fran Dlugopolski, COTT parishioners, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 5, 2008. The couple's four sons and their families traveled from Wisconsin to share this joyous occasion with their parents. Tom and Fran renewed their wedding vows at the Mass that night and invited the parish to join them for a coffee and cake reception following the Mass. Congratulations Tom and Fran and may God continue to bless your union. May your marriage be an inspiration to other couples.

Blasts from the Past: Transfiguration was recently graced with visits from two former parish leaders. Sister Eveline Murray, Pastoral Coordinator from 1991-2003, visited the area in April while on break from her mission work in Zimbabwe. Deacon George Heise visited from his home in Arizona in June and even celebrated several Masses with us. It was great to see both of them again and we wish them many blessings in all of their future endeavors.

Knights of Columbus: The John C. Webb Council of the Knights of Columbus recently installed new officers. Tom Sellinger was named Grand Knight, Vance Barrett as Deputy Grand Knight and Fr. Arlon as Chaplain. Congratulations to them and all officers in K of C. We are also proud to have Bernie Odasz serving as the District Deputy for District 23.

St. John's Pastoral Council: St. John's PPC recently expanded from three members to six. Faye Conn, Tom Tainer and Tom Deane join existing council members Mary Kay Williams, Mary Craddock and Jamie Morris. We are blessed to have members of the PPC who work so diligently for the good of our community.

St. John's Increased Membership Campaign: A letter was mailed to all former registered and unregistered parishioners who live in the vicinity of the parish. This campaign is to enhance the membership for a continued growth of community.

Baby Shower: On July 19th the ladies of St. John's parish attended a baby shower for Melissa Morris, hosted by Melissa's family. There was lots of food, games and everyone had a wonderful time. Melissa received lots of presents to help welcome her twins, Claire and Frank, due in October.

TOLLE LEGE STAFF

Editor:	Please Volunteer!
Assistant Editor:	Please Volunteer!
Advisor:	Fr. Arlon Vergara
Contributors:	Deacon Mark Allison Faye Conn Trish Watson

Volunteer Staff Needed! Contact the Parish Office!

Let's Learn Liturgy

“The Lord be with you. And also with you.” This is a very familiar greeting we use several times during the Mass, but do we really take note of what we are saying? Often when we do or say the same thing for years we begin to do so without thinking. We forget why we say or do them, if we ever knew in the first place. We will try in this column of the newsletter to answer questions from you, the parishioners, about the Mass and other liturgies. We encourage you to get us your questions by dropping them in the collection or simply calling them into the office. Since this is the first article, we thought we would look at the liturgy in general.

The liturgy has gone through many adjustments through the centuries, but its basic form has remained very consistent. But where did this form come from? After Pentecost the apostles and those others who with them formed the early church were still devout Jews, like Jesus had been. Therefore, they continued to keep the Sabbath. The Sabbath is, as you probably know, Saturday. It begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. The worship of the Sabbath was fairly simple; they sang psalms, prayed, the rabbi or an elder would read from the scriptures (the Hebrew Scriptures that we call the Old Testament), and then the scripture would be explained to them. It would perhaps be explained how the scripture related to their everyday life; how it could help them understand that Yahweh was still active in their world and their lives. Perhaps it was explained in terms of faithfulness and betrayal. The Apostles and their followers kept the Sabbath as devout Jews, but after the sun set on Saturday they would come together to share a meal. Gathering together at one of their homes where they would eat together. From the beginning this was a very special meal. They would share the blessing of the cup of wine and the blessing of the bread as Jesus had instructed them. Over time the other foods at the meal were omitted and the cup and the bread were all that were shared.

This should sound familiar, I hope, as this is still the form of our Liturgy today. We come together to sing psalms and songs, to pray and to listen to scripture. We listen to readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, the letters from the Apostles, and from the Gospels. They are explained to us; hopefully showing how they apply to our everyday life, how God in all three Persons is active in our world and our lives. It is often described in terms of love and forgiveness. After this, what we call the Liturgy of the Word, we continue with the meal. We as a community of believers join with Jesus in faith at the Last Supper. We experience His words of blessing and His sacrifice. We share His body and His blood as He instructed us to do.

Over the centuries certain practices have come and gone, some have been modified, some words have been changed, but the very basic form has remained the same. This is the form of the liturgy that comes to us from the apostles themselves.

Please get us your questions. We are not experts on the liturgy and if we do not know the answers we can go to the experts and get them for you. Thank you and the Lord be with you always.

PS. Why do we say “The Lord be with you...And also with you”? Maybe that is the topic of another article.

(By **Deacon Mark Allison**)

St. John's Today

It's hard to believe that St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church has been in Craig County now for 8 years. Although we are a small parish relative to others, St. John's was built on faith and determination that guides our current efforts to serve as witness to the Catholic faith in this rural area of Virginia. We are now recognized as part of the New Castle community where we enjoy supporting town activities such as the Fall Festival and songfests.

St. John's church community remains very close knit. Thank you to all who volunteer your time and talent. We are very proud of the children in their religious education activities this year. The Christmas play was great! This year, we especially want to recognize Devin Ratchiff, Marcella and Molly Allison in their receiving the sacraments of First Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist, as well as Jessy and Danny Alley in receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. Also congratulations to Jessy Alley and Amanda Sixbey as both graduated from Craig County High School this month.

Our adult parishioners are still among the best cooks in the county demonstrated by our monthly parish luncheons the first Sunday of each month. This is one of the highlights we all look forward to, where good food and fellowship always take place. We love having visitors come to St. John's and always try to extend a warm, welcoming smile to all. We feel especially blessed to have Father Arlon, Deacon Mark and Linda Allison with us. Their leadership has made all the difference for us this year, stabilizing our focus and challenging us to grow.

This month, we have renewed a main focus: it is why we were named St. John the Evangelist, that is, to do our part in building the Kingdom of God in Craig County. Fr. Arlon has asked that we compile a list of potential additional church members to build St. John's community. All can help by giving names to Fr. Arlon/Allisons or by inviting them to come with you to St. John's for Mass sometime this summer. Our liturgies are Sunday at 11:15 am and Thursday at 10 am. Our church office has reopened on Thursday mornings, with Fr. Arlon and/or Linda Allison being in the office. Feel free to call (864-8686) or stop by if you have any questions or concerns. If you are interested in volunteering at St. John's, just let them know. There's always work to be done! And finally, watch the New Castle Record for news about St. John's. We're looking into opening our church to the Craig County community for weddings and other family events.

So, how is St. John's doing today??? We're just one happy family. (By **Faye Conn**)