



St. Mary's Alumni Action News

Volume 11, Issue 1

Spring 2010

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Alumni & Friends,

It is a great joy for me to write to all of you in this new Alumni Newsletter. It has been a while since you have heard from us and we have so much good news to share. The Diocese of Brooklyn has designated St. Mary Star of the Sea School as a Mission School in the diocese. This means that special funds are allocated to assist our children and their families so that they can receive a Catholic education.

This special boost from the diocese is a great blessing for our school. All over the United States Catholic schools are struggling to exist. In our own Diocese of Brooklyn we have seen the unfortunate closings of many of our schools. I even thought that we could be on that list soon without help. The designation of Mission School Status helps us a great deal but we still need your help.

In order for any school to thrive the support and involvement of their alumni is key. We have been blessed to have a large and active Alumni Association. We are blessed that so many of our alumni help us with their generous financial support. But we need even more help still.

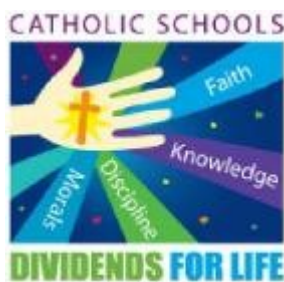
We are especially looking for younger alumni from the 80's and 90's to consider getting involved. We also are updating our website so that we can also update all of our contact information. The mailing list that we have been using is quickly becoming outdated. Please let us know where you are and what is happening in your lives. We want to know about how St. Mary Star of the Sea School helped form you into the person you are today.

We want to work together to assist other children in our parish today who would love to attend our school. There are currently over 340 Catholic children in our Religious Education Program. These children could come to our school with your help. Did you ever consider sponsoring a child? Did you ever consider having your family sponsor a family living in Far Rockaway today? Working together great things can continue to happen at St. Mary Star of the Sea School.

Please consider helping us in any way that you can.

With Love in Christ,
Father Jim Cunningham, Pastor

SMSOS "Big Raffle" Returns for 2010



As most of you know, 2009 was a busy and productive year for the newly merged parish of St. Mary Star of the Sea and St. Gertrude. Highlights included the parish's first annual (combined) dinner dance and the creation and dedication of the Msgr. James J. McKenna Conference Center.

These activities — among others — made it difficult to successfully organize and present our widely popular and hugely successful "Big Raffle."

That was then...this is now. At this time, we are both pleased and excited to announce that the SMSOS Alumni Association "Big Raffle" is set to return for the summer of 2010!

As is our custom, tickets will be priced at \$ 100 each, and ticket sales will be limited to 400. We will be awarding \$ 5,000 in preliminary prizes, with a grand prize award of \$ 10,000. We expect that the drawing will be held at Sun 'n Surf Beach Club on Sunday, September 12, 2010, during a three-hour cocktail party, beginning at 3:30 pm, complete with music, dancing, tasty hors d'oeuvres and drinks.

This year, we will post an online ticket order form, with a dedicated PayPal account that will also accept all major credit cards, or you can pre-order your ticket(s) with the order form included on page 5.

Special points of interest:

- St. Mary's designated Mission School by Diocese of Brooklyn
- Great turnout at 2009 Mass for Deceased Alumni
- New Parish website release to include new and improved alumni section
- Popular "Big Raffle" returns for summer of 2010

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Report from the Principal's Office

Dear Alumni & Friends,

This year's Catholic Schools Week theme was "*Catholic Schools –Dividends for Life*". This theme seems very appropriate when I think about the Alumni of our school. Many of you speak so beautifully about the foundation you received at Saint Mary's. I truly believe that that foundation has paid off in many "dividends" throughout your lives. I have often said that Saint Mary's Alumni are the best. I have never met a group of people who are so committed and connected to their elementary school.

For the past few years, I have written to you about the difficulties we encounter. I'm sure you are aware of the crisis Catholic Schools are facing. Declining enrollment and lack of financial resources are at the center of the problem. Last year, many schools closed or were re-configured into "academies". The academy model is one where a board of directors assumes all the responsibilities for the operation of the school. Those schools are no longer parish schools. The names of the schools are changed.

Our school's future was definitely in question until recently. Father Jim met with the Bishop and was assured that our school would remain open for the 2010-2011 school year as Saint Mary Star of the Sea School. This is wonderful news! I'm sure you are as pleased as we are. Our school has such a long, beautiful history. We certainly want that to continue for as long as possible.

We are, now, filled with hope for the future of our school. But, we need to re-energize ourselves and work to sustain a viable future. How can this happen?

First, and foremost, we know that there are many children in our parish. There are over 300 children in the C.C.D. program. These are Catholic children who are part of our parish. We would love for these children to attend our school. For many of them, the only thing preventing them from enrolling is the cost of tuition. We are, at the present time, able to offer three types of financial aid to qualified families. However, this is still not enough. We are constantly trying to secure other scholarships for new students.

Secondly, I am thrilled that Joe Barden, as President of the Alumni Association, has promised to help us. He, too, has been re-energized by the possibility of our future viability. I am anxious to meet with the Alumni representatives to hear their thoughts and ideas. I'm sure you will be hearing more about this.

As always, I am most grateful for all your support over the years. You are always in our prayers. Please keep us in your prayers, as well.

Sincerely,
Angela Brucia, Principal

Chairman's Report

As we enter the last year of the first decade of the 21st Century, our alumni association is favorably positioned to take this rather unique "thing of ours" to an exciting and rewarding new level. Yes, time inexorably marches on, but the God-given gifts of age are many, and opportunities to share these gifts in meaningful ways are few.

Historically, the Church has assisted parents in the fulfillment of their marital vows 'to raise and educate their children in the faith' by providing exceptional educational opportunities - in addition to preparing them for and administering the sacraments. Reports from both pastor and principal in this edition of our newsletter give us reason to rejoice and remain hopeful that, at least in Far Rockaway, this strong tradition will continue.

Rather than re-state our achievements and goals, my task is to re-engage our present membership and effectively reach out to build a future for our association. The small but active core group of committee members continues to honor its commitment to help preserve St. Mary's School and the mission of Catholic education in Far Rockaway, and will need help from all, young and old alike.

To that end, we have developed an exciting and ambitious agenda for 2010 that honors our traditions and demonstrably advances our mission. This includes a complete overhaul of the parish/school website, with major improvements in design, content, functionality, connectivity and a few surprises (social networking and "smart phone" fans should be pleased). We're planning for an official "go live" date early this spring, as this year's theme for both school and association is "*Resurrection*."

As we approach the official release date, we will implement a strategy of promotion and outreach intended to draw all interested parties to the site. As most of you know, we have been working off a membership list originally compiled in the mid 1990's, so our first order of business is to re-build that list via an online registration form (see page 6) designed to capture the most recent, up-to-date, accurate and extensive membership list possible. Our outreach strategy will, perhaps for the first time, aggressively target more recent graduates, in an effort to transform the association into a more vibrant intergenerational community.

We are also kicking off our "big raffle" early this year, and will offer the convenience of online ticket ordering (see page 5) directly through our site. It'll be fast, easy, fun and SECURE! For the foreseeable future we remain equally committed to hard copy *snail mail* announcements of all association related activities, and the publication of a semi-annual newsletter (on or around each Easter & Christmas).

The full text of our 2010 agenda will be posted to the alumni association pages of the website immediately upon final review and approval of the committee. Please feel free to take the site on a "test drive" (see back page for URLs) and share your thoughts with us in the 'comments' section of the new online registration form. Hope to hear from ALL of you soon.

Joseph G. Barden, *Class of '69*

Our Reader's Corner

Dear Alumni Association,

I'm enclosing a check to help the Alumni Association in its work. I graduated from St. Mary's in 1928 — a thousand years ago! My five siblings also graduated from there and, to put the icing on the cake, my four children graduated from St. Mary's, as well.

The state of Catholic parochial schools in America is certainly in a sad state, and with the present tightening of budgets throughout the country, a big turnaround certainly does not seem to be in the future.

But — as every little bit seems to help — I'm enclosing a donation to add to the pot.

The best of good fortune to all of you in your efforts.

Mary Snowber Gruning, *Class of '28*
April 13, 2009

Editor's Note: Mary's husband, Dr. Carl Gruning, graduated with the Class of '21.

Dear Ms. Higgins,

I sincerely appreciated you contacting me regarding my beloved Dad, John J. Terino. He loved Far Rockaway, having grown up on McBride Street and then, after World War II, living with my Mom on Muhlebach Court.

Up until his last year he enjoyed driving my Mom to see the old neighborhood, never failing to pass St. Mary Star of the Sea.

I would truly appreciate you placing his name in the next newsletter:

John J. Terino
April 19, 1917 - May 16, 2009
Loving Son of Rose & Michael Terino

If a copy of the newsletter could be mailed to me, I would be very grateful. May God bless you and watch over you.

Sincerely,
Theresa Terino Thomson
Dannemora, NY

From our new online registration form comments section:

Love the new Alumni site for St. Mary's. Found a lot of my childhood friends for whom I have had so many memories over the years and were such a big part in who I am today and I have often thought of them, with no way to know how to reconnect.

~ Marie Anne (Santella) March

Hi Joe,

So glad you're starting this up. Many of us have joined Facebook and have been having a ball connecting. It's really fun to post our 1st grade photo and see if you can remember all 50+ names. Looking forward to hearing news from SMS.

~ Mary Ellen (Jordan) Muscarello

Glad to see a new Alumni Website. I am planning a 1990 Class Reunion for September. I will have all of my classmates register with this association. Thanks.

~ Lawrence Wilson II

This is a great way to stay connected with past alumni. Thank you.

~ Carmen Rodriguez

IN MEMORIAM

In the brief time that has passed since our last newsletter was published, we have suffered the painful loss of the following alumni and faculty:

Joan Anderson Ambruso
Class of '51

Grace Carnival
Class of '34

Joseph J. Clancy
Class of '57

Sr. Mary Corita
1946-48 / 1962-65

William Cruse
Class of '75

Mary Spellman Giordano
Class of '43

Cathleen Kelly Godfrey
Class of '45

Dorothy Smith Hochschwender
Class of '29

Joseph Kiskis
Class of '57

Thomas O'Brien
Class of '55

Joseph Gerard Phelan
Class of '55

John Terino
Class of '31

***"May They Rest in Peace!
Amen."***

**Please remember SMSOS when
planning your estate.**

Alumni Mass 2009



St. Mary Star of the Sea Alumni Mass
Saturday, November 21, 2009

SMSOS "Big Raffle" 2010

St. Mary Star of the Sea School
Alumni Association

Big Raffle Ticket

Grand Prize of \$ 10,000 !!!

Total Prize Money = \$ 15,000

Drawing: Sunday, September 12, 2010
Sun 'n Surf Beach Club, Atlantic Beach, LI

Lounge and Patio Area, 3:30 - 6:30 PM

Only **400** Tickets Will be Sold - Donation \$ **100**

Each Ticket Admits Two to the Drawing.

Fill out form below, tear off, and return to rectory with your check for \$ 100.00. Please make checks payable to:
SMSOS Alumni Committee. You will receive your ticket via US Postal service.

Mail to: SMSOS Alumni Big Raffle
1920 New Haven Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11691



The Alumni Association is going digital! Within the next few months, you'll be able to order your "Big Raffle" ticket online. It'll be quick, easy and SECURE! Visit the link below when activated...

[http://saintsmaryandgertrude.org/alumni.htm#alumni association](http://saintsmaryandgertrude.org/alumni.htm#alumni%20association)
We hope to accept PayPal and all major credit cards.

_____ Name

_____ Street Address

_____ City _____ State _____ Zip

_____ Telephone _____ Email Address

Number of Tickets Requested: _____

Do you plan to attend the drawing? Yes No Will you bring a guest? Yes No



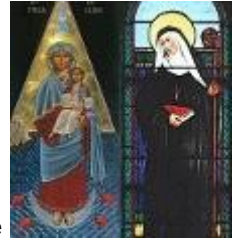
Alumni Registration

Our alumni association has been working off a mailing list that dates back to the hugely successful school reunion held back in the mid 1990's. To maximize connectivity and operate effectively we MUST compile a new list of the most recent contact information of all our graduates and friends.

We encourage our readers to visit our new web presence and update your contact information via our simple, intuitive and easy to use online registration form:

<http://saintsmaryandgertrude.org/alumniregistration.htm>

For those unable to go the web-based route, we ask that you complete the form below and mail it to the St. Mary's Alumni Association, c/o the parish rectory (see back page for mailing address).



Contact Information

Please fill out your contact information below.

Name

Prefix First Name Middle Name Last Name Suffix

Maiden Name

Please tell us your maiden name if applicable

Address (please include apartment or unit number!)*

City State/Province Zip/Postal

Country

Home Phone

Please enter your phone number as per applicable format for your location (area code, country code, etc.)

Work Phone

Email

Class of

Please enter the year (yyyy) you graduated.

I wish my contact info be treated as (please check one) Public Private

Please indicate preferred method to stay connected (please check one) Home phone Work phone Email Newsletter

Comments

Please share your thoughts on our new web presence!

Memory Lane



Grade 1-B, November 20, 1915 - with Anna Marie Kestler Miller, 6 years old, and her classmates



St. Mary's Glee Club, as directed by Brother Leo in 1940



"Ave Maris Stella"

Rectory: 1920 New Haven Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11691

School: 595 Beach 19th Street
Far Rockaway, NY 11691

School Phone: 718-327-2242
Fax: 718-327-0797
Rectory Phone: 718-327-1133
Fax: 718-327-3276

St. Mary's Alumni Association



Place Mailing Label Here

We invite all SMSOS graduates and friends to "test drive" our new web presence...

<http://saintsmaryandgertrude.org/school.htm>

And – PLEASE – take a moment to update your contact info...

<http://saintsmaryandgertrude.org/alumniregistration.htm>

If you have trouble with typing in the URLs above, drop me a note for a live link...

jgb@nyct.net



'The hands and heart of Jesus'

On September 18, Bishop William Murphy presented the St. Agnes Medal to honorees of all parishes in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. The St. Agnes Medal, named for the patron saint of the diocese, was instituted in 2007 as part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the diocese. It is awarded each year to an individual or couple from each parish chosen by their pastor in recognition of their service to the Church and their parish community. In this special section, TLIC presents a brief profile of each of this year's honorees, who Bishop Murphy called "the hands and heart of Jesus."



John Terino, (posthumous)
Our Lady of Lourdes, Massapequa Park. Recently deceased, John Terino and his wife Mae were "at the parish constantly, in generous service to the needy. They literally began the parish outreach," and "John served on just about every parish committee over the last 40 years."

— *Monsignor James Lisante, pastor*

John Terino graduated from SMSOS with the Class of 1931