

St. Brendan Parish School Alumni & Friends Newsletter

THE NAVIGATOR

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Because of your kindness, St. Brendan School was able to install a new sound system and new floor in our gymnasium/auditorium, new DVD players were purchased for each classroom and the Computer Lab now has wireless networking.

Anniversary Mass Kicks Off Celebration of 100 Glorious Years

A strong turnout among parishioners, alumni, past and current faculty and friends of St. Brendan Parish made for a great day when the church and school kicked off the centennial celebration at an opening Mass on October 21st. Those in attendance recalled the blessings of the past 50 years while they looked forward to a future filled with joy and prosperity.

Founded in 1908 in a storefront on Webster Avenue, St. Brendan's was built on the dedication and love of it's community that has always remained strong and faithful.

The parish is planning several upcoming events to mark this grand milestone. On April 5, a Mass honoring the Sparkill Dominican Sisters who ministered to

the school's students will take place at noon. All are invited to attend Mass and celebrate the Feast of St. Brendan on May 17th. A gala dinner dance will take place at Maestro's on October 24. And a centennial closing Mass will be celebrated at 1 p.m. on October 26 with Edward Cardinal Egan in attendance.

"I'm in constant awe of the incredibly strong loyalty that alumni show for St. Brendan's. No matter how long someone has been gone from the school, the bond is still very strong," said principal, Michele Pasquale.

From its humble beginnings in a storefront on Webster Avenue, the church has continued to grow, serving a faithful and loving community. Once a predominantly Irish parish, St. Brendan's now ministers to a large number of Hispanic parishioners. Whatever your background, the dedication of St. Brendan's to its own is strong and steadfast, and in return, the church and school have been blessed with those same deep feelings and commitment from its people. May St. Brendan's stay vital and ever a beacon of hope and goodness to those who love and serve it.

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Principal, Michele Pasquale with former principals, Sr. Rita Farrell and Patricia Gatti gather to honor St. Brendan School and Parish.

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Alumni,

Now that the Parish 100th anniversary year is underway, I would like to take the opportunity to keep you updated. Back in October, the parish opened the centennial celebration with a beautiful Mass and reception. Anyone in attendance would tell you that it was a great success. Many of our former clergy and religious were in attendance, in addition to a sea of familiar faces, some of which had not been seen in years.

The Parish Council has been working hard in preparation for this year, and their plans are just starting to bear fruit. Upcoming events include a Parish mission, youth retreat, cultural events, 100th anniversary journal and the banquet and closing celebration and Mass. Cardinal Egan will celebrate our Closing Mass which certainly will add to the solemnity of the event.

As for the enrollment of our school, we are doing quite well. We have 382 students thanks to the hard work of our current principal, teachers and staff, and not only are we doing well with the number of students, but in the quality of education that they are receiving. I would gladly boast that while there are many good parochial schools in the Archdiocese of New York, there are none better than St. Brendan's.

We also received some very good news this past autumn, again due to the incredible work ethic of our current principal, Ms. Michele Pasquale, we have managed to make our school self-sufficient. After three years, we are no longer dependent on the IPF (Inter-Parish Finance) which is an indicator that we are moving into a healthy direction. This is not to say that we are not financially strapped. Rising fuel costs, insurance and benefit packages for our employees, unforeseen problems with our school roof and boiler all make the challenge of keeping our head above water difficult to say the least. We depend on the generosity of people like you who have received a fine education through this school. For many of you, your success began with your families and the educational decisions they made for you. I ask that if it is in your means, to please help us to continue the good work that was begun so many years ago. The children of today deserve nothing less.

I hope to see you at one of our many events this year and until then, may God bless you and your families.

In Christ

Fr. George R. Stewart

A Letter from the Principal

Dear Friends and Alumni of St. Brendan School,

Since our last newsletter, I have heard from many of you and it has been a pleasure. Your stories and photos are fascinating. Much of the copy for this issue has been supplied by you.

We had a wonderful start to the school year. Our students are excelling academically, socially and spiritually. On November 19th we honored a large percentage of our school with academic honors. Grades 4 through 8 are pursuing top prize as they invest in the NYC Stock Market Game and reading is encouraged with frequent visits to the school library. Five of our 7th grade students were honored for superior achievement and excellence in the study of American History. During the holiday season, our school community reached out to others. Greeting cards were created for senior citizens, food was collected for the Parish Food Pantry, and our annual toy drive for the Catholic Charities Organization produced their largest donation of the year.

It is clear that St. Brendan's is a school where children receive an exceptional education. It is also a community that fosters the development of compassionate, well-rounded citizens. In order for this caliber of program to continue, we need you, the alumni. Your financial support is what will allow us to expand on what is already a cut above.

Good health and happiness for you and your family. God Bless.

Sincerely,

Ms. Michele Pasquale

ALUMNI MEMORIES

Spring Play—two exciting nights of entertaining our parents, as well as the Christmas Pageant and Living Stations of the Cross.

The whole school walking down to the Bainbridge Theater to see the *Ten Commandments*.

Communion Breakfasts.

Friday Night Dances.

Hiding under the seats in the auditorium repeating, “Jesus, Mary and Joseph”, covering our heads to protect us from the threat of bombs in the 60’s. Thank goodness it was only practice.

Freezing in place during the Recess bell.

Holy Thursday Processions.

Miss Dunne’s art classes.

Movies on Tuesdays in the auditorium for 10 cents.

Clapping erasers on the side of the school building.

Ann Marie Daly winning the 24th annual New York City Spelling Bee in 1988.

Irish step dancing for the seniors at the nursing home each year.

Class visit to City Hall and meeting Mayor Dinkins.



School Play 1949



Students circa 1967

In Memoriam

Please pray for departed alumni and parish family.

Toni Saxer
 Sr. Marie Alexander
 Mrs. Carmody/Curley
 Kathleen O'Boyle '43
 Fr. Patrick Hennessy

Donations in memory of an alumni or loved one can be made at any time of year to St. Brendan School.

St. Brendan School Alumni Association Being Formed

St. Brendan School invites graduates and past parents to become involved in its Alumni Association. Interest from alumni of the school is high in this 100th anniversary year.

The association is seeking to update its mailing list and to recruit officers and class representatives. St. Brendan's receives many inquiries from graduates of both schools about reunions, anniversaries and information on former classmates and teachers. Involvement in the Alumni Association will help us to organize such events, reach out to our alumni and friends, and to create alumni newsletters.

To update your address or volunteer for the board of the Alumni Association contact St. Brendan School at 718-653-2292 or at 268 East 207 Street, Bronx, NY 10467. Send name (maiden), address, phone number, email address and year of graduation.

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Bronx, NY 10467

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For additional details, or to make reservations for the Mass, Open House and Luncheon on April 5, contact stbrendanchurch@gmail.com or Sr. Catherine Naughton at 718-547-6655 or Joan Reilly '68 at 718-798-4806. Suggested donation \$15.

Save the Date - Upcoming Anniversary Events!

April 5, 2008 Noon

*Mass, Open House and Luncheon honoring
The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill*

April 26, 2008

Interfaith Prayer Service

May 3-8

Parish Retreat

May 17

Feast of St. Brendan

June 7

Multi-cultural concert & poetry reading

October 24

*Gala Dinner Dance at Maestro's Restaurant
(call Rectory for details or reservations)*

October 26 1 p.m.

Centennial Closing Mass

Continued from cover...



Father Stewart welcomes alumni and friends of St. Brendan Parish and School to the reception following .



Alumni return to St. Brendan's, thrilled to reconnect with old friends.