



# InFormation

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Implementing the Plan

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**A Happy and holy Christmas to all, From every one at the Office for Research and Planning**

Fran Stratton

Tom Denton

Bob Miller

Ron Lill



## Home For the Holidays

**A special Christmas issue highlighting the fact that many of our normally absent parishioners will find their way into the pews at Christmas time**

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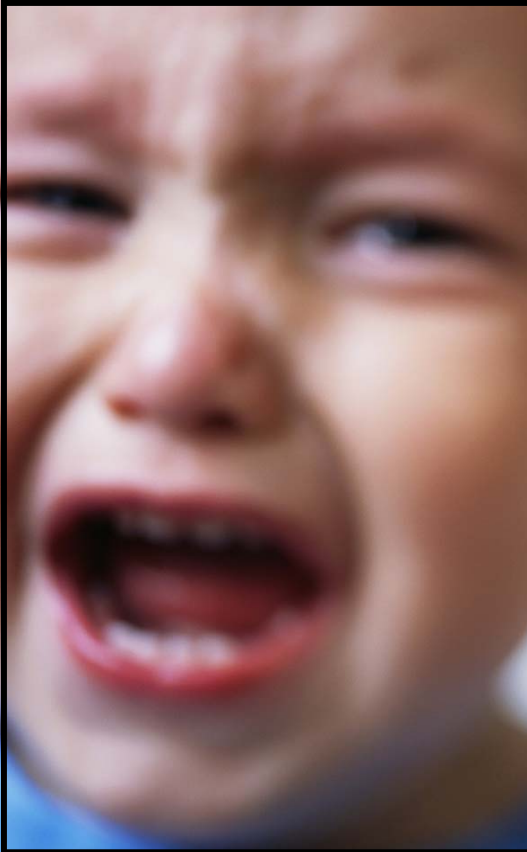
Suggestions for future articles should be directed to Ron Lill *editor*

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Phone: 1-215-587-3545

These suggestions are encouraged and welcomed

## Children & Teens bear immigration enforcement burden



### WHAT'S HAPPENING

- As immigration enforcement workplace raids and deportations increase, a heavy burden is placed on Latino children and teens.
- According to a report by the National Council of La Raza and the Urban Institute, *Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children*, consequences include separation of children from one or both parents, emotional trauma and economic hardship. Raids forced schools, childcare providers and extended families to act swiftly as safety nets for children
- For immigrants who are high school age, the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors), was defeated Oct. 2007, by the Senate, would have allowed young people brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents to earn legal resident status by attending at least two years of college or enlisting in the military
- The Migration Policy Institute estimates that there are 360,000 high school graduates who are in the U.S. illegally and who would have been eligible, with another 715,000 younger students qualifying if they graduate high school (USAToday.com 10.7.07). They now face deportation.

### WHAT THIS MEANS TO PARISHES

- Children are most affected whenever their parents are involved in work-site enforcement and deportation operations. Developing and supporting programs to provide for their welfare takes precedence as such enforcement and deportation activities increase.
- Aspiring high schoolers facing deportation will most likely move into the shadows of society while Congress puts off meaningful immigration reform until the new leadership takes office. A place where they might be able to connect is with their parish programs for youth.



## Encendiendo una vela para el bilingüismo en Carolina del Norte

### LO QUE ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO

- Construyendo un puente lingüístico entre culturas, en Greensboro, Carolina del Norte, la Iglesia está emparejando a hablantes de inglés con inmigrantes de habla hispana para ayudar a cada uno a aprender la lengua del otro.
- Un programa de la Primera Iglesia luterana, nombrado *La Vela*, entrena cada pareja a conversar informalmente. Los participantes reciben una lista de frases para comenzar en la lengua de la otra persona. Por ejemplo: ¿Desde cuándo está en Greensboro? ¿Cuál es su alimento favorito?

Éste es un derivado de un programa *Platiquemos* patrocinado por la *Asociación de Salud Mental* en Greensboro. Su objetivo clave: extenderles una mano a los inmigrantes que están aislados, temerosos y solitarios en una tierra extraña (News-Record.com 4.2.08).

## Lighting a candle for bilingualism in North Carolina.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

- Building a linguistic bridge between cultures, a Greensboro, North Carolina, church is pairing English speakers with Spanish-speaking immigrants to help each learn the other's language.
- A First Lutheran Church program called *La Vela* ("The Candle") trains each pair to chat informally. Participants receive a list of starter phrases in the other person's language. Examples: "How long have you been in Greensboro?" "What's your favorite food?" It's a spin-off of a program called *Platiquemos* ("Let's Chat") sponsored by the Mental Health Association in Greensboro. A key objective: to extend a hand to immigrants who are isolated, fearful and lonely in a strange land (News-Record.com 4.2.08).

F.Y.I.

For nearly 3 in 10 households, don't even bother trying to call them on a landline phone. In the second half of 2007, 16% of households had only cell phones, while 13% also had landlines but got all or nearly all their calls on their cells.



# Home For the Holidays



by Ron Lill

## When You Notice the Empty Pews: What Can You Do?

Maybe you've noticed empty pews where a bustling Sunday crowd used to gather in your church. Maybe members of your own family have abandoned regular practice of the Catholic Faith. Maybe you have wondered how this happened and what can be done about it, short of closing and merging more and more churches.

**Good News!** These pews have a story to tell and are meant to be more than a source of discouragement. Let's delve into their story and see where it leads us. Let's search out their message. Perhaps these pews are meant to be like the empty manger during Advent. They look dark and deserted, but the Christmas star burns brightly just over the horizon and Jesus has not abandoned us.

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[www.catholic-evangelizer.com](http://www.catholic-evangelizer.com)

Our research tells us that on any given Sunday about 1 in 3 registered Catholics will show up in the pews. We also know that a high percentage of the registered and non-registered Catholics do show up for Mass at Christmas time.

The Christmas liturgy is an opportunity to show annual Mass attendees that the parish is the same place it was last year, or that a great transformation has taken place since last Christmas. It is even more welcoming and joyful, a place where the presence of the Holy Spirit can be felt strongly. The parishioners and the clergy play a major role in the atmosphere of the Mass. It is the obvious presence of God in the people gathered that will draw people to the liturgy.

Suppose you picked up the Philadelphia Inquirer one morning and the front page headline said "the Lord Jesus will be at Our Lady of .... Catholic church tomorrow morning at 8:00 AM at the corner of 15th & Elm". Would folks show up to see the Christ? You bet they would! It should be the headline every day. Never forget that the living Christ is present in our church and that knowledge alone should make us the most loving, joyful and enthusiastic people on the face of the earth. Think about that when trying to welcome people "Home for the Holidays". Sometimes we overlook the obvious specialness of the Holy Mass.

When asked about our church by family or friends who really want to know "why we show up each week," take a deep look inside and verbalize the thoughts in your heart. After all, folks want a truthful answer. They don't want cool or trendy words they really want to know! The Holy Spirit is urging them to search for the truth the way and the life and God wants you to explain why you're in the pews. The Holy Spirit will use you if you let Him and He'll give you the words if you speak from your heart.

**I remember the words of John Boucher spoken at a workshop I attended "If this isn't in support of evangelization, then why are we doing it?"**

For more help on the web go to: The Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association (<http://www.pncea.org/>) and

[http://www.iame3.com/UserFiles/pages/File/2008-E-Exchange\\_/23\\_When\\_You\\_Notice\\_the\\_Empty\\_Pews.pdf](http://www.iame3.com/UserFiles/pages/File/2008-E-Exchange_/23_When_You_Notice_the_Empty_Pews.pdf)



*The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has a Director of Evangelization, Sr. Louise Alf. Sister has a lot of helpful ideas, and training programs to aid parishes with an Evangelization effort. Sr. Louise also leads a workshop entitled: Too Few in the Pew: Practical ideas to invite the inactive and unchurched to return.*

*When you boil it all down spreading the Gospel is our mission, you, me and the whole Church. To contact Sr. Louise: e-mail [SRLALFF@adphila.org](mailto:SRLALFF@adphila.org) or Telephone: 215-587-0547*



Sr. Louise Alf

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## Trivia Box

Generation cohorts differ because  
of their experiences

**Can you name the 6 living generations?**

Go to Page 5 in the answer box

**Has your parish or Cluster entered into a  
Planning Process?**

**Do you need a professional Facilitator?  
The office of Research and Planning maintains a list  
of trained and experienced Resource people.**

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## Total Projected Population Percent Change

Pennsylvania Counties: 2000 to 2030

**Pennsylvania Percent Change: 7.4%**

Name	April 1, 2000	July 1, 2030	Change, 2000-2030	
			Numeric	Percent
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>12,281,054</b>	<b>13,190,400</b>	<b>909,346</b>	<b>7.4</b>
Chester	433,501	692,054	258,553	59.6
Bucks	597,635	697,961	100,326	16.8
Delaware	550,864	583,942	33,078	6.0
Montgomery	750,097	888,265	138,168	18.4
Philadelphia	1,517,550	1,408,232	-109,318	-7.2

Source-



## Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

[http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/pasdc/data\\_and\\_information/briefs/RB110308.pdf](http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/pasdc/data_and_information/briefs/RB110308.pdf)

## Where Are the Kids?



Its ten P.M. do you know where your kids are? A few years back, this was a public service announcement repeated frequently on the network television stations. One of the important jobs of a parish community is to know the children of the parish. Parents and godparents of children are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of a Christian life by word and example. By virtue of his office, the pastor is obliged to provide for the catechetical formation of adults, young people, and children. A first step to providing support for parents and education for the children is to account for the children living in the parish. (Canons 774, 776)

U.S. Census report 4B, distributed to the Pastors in July, 2002, accounts for all the children under 18 living in the parish at the time of the 2000 census and the living arrangements that they were in. This includes those living with both parents, just their father or mother, a grandparent, other relative or non relative, or in a group home.

The part of the **Annual Pastoral Report** entitled *Report on Catholic Education* asks parishes to account for all Catholic children in public schools, non-Catholic private schools, or Catholic schools other than the parish school. When these numbers are added to the parish school enrollment, they comprise all of the children that the parish knows about and is able to count.

The number of parish children in public and non Catholic private schools can be compared to the number enrolled in the parish religious education program. The difference represents an opportunity for different or better parish programs to attract the missing children and their parents to religious education programs.

This number of parish children known to be enrolled in some school can also be compared with the number of babies baptized at the time the children were born. For example, children in elementary school (K-6) in 2000 were born between 1989 and 1995. Taking into consideration the number of children who may move in and out of the parish before starting school, this can give the parish a very rough estimate of the number of children to be accounted for. In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we estimate that parishes are able to identify the enrollment status of about 88% of children in the elementary grade levels (K-8) and 61.8% of the high school age children. At any point in time, about 75% of the elementary age children are enrolled in Catholic schools or some type of Catholic religious instruction--only 40.4 % of the estimated number of high school children are enrolled. How does your parish compare?

Finally, by looking at the total number of children living in the parish on U.S. Census Report 4B, the parish can consider the share of all school age children who are known by the parish. This may provide opportunities for evangelization by addressing the needs of the children and, through them, their parents.

*Article by Dr. Robert Miller*



## What do the numbers tell us?

What we have below is a chart depicting the amount of leadership in the church of Philadelphia at the parish level and how it has evolved over the last 100 years and through the turn of the century (*compiled from the Kennedy reports*)

*\*In 1962 the numbers were reduced because a portion of priests parishes and Catholics became the newly founded diocese of Allentown.*

<u>Phila. Data</u>	1900	1925	1950	1960	1965*	1999	2000	2006
<b>Diocesan &amp; Religious Priests</b>	488	910	1,915	1,941	1,720	1,243	1,219	1,028
<b>Catholics</b>	180,000	734,663	1,058,058	1,513,269	1,324,853	1,411,256	1,418,575	1,462,388,
<b>Priest to Catholic Ratio</b>	369 to 1	807 to 1	553 to 1	780 to 1	770 to 1	1135 to 1	1,164 to 1	1,423 to 1
<b>Parishes</b>	207	352	398	439	306	287	286	270
<b>Professional Staff</b> <i>(Paid Lay Ministers and permanent Deacons)</i>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	365	436	564
<b>Priest &amp; Staff to Catholics Ratio</b>	—	—	—	—	—	878 to 1	857 to 1	919 to 1

## Prayer for a Meeting



Loving and Gracious God,

you are indeed the giver of all good gifts and we come together this day to seek your wisdom, guidance, courage and strength. Be with us in our deliberations and help us to be wise in the decisions we make for the good of all those who have placed their trust and confidence in our leadership. Give us insight to lead with integrity that our decisions may reflect what is right and good. Keep us from short-sightedness and pettiness. Help us to make decisions that strive to be for the good of all and guard us from blind self interest. Finally, dear Lord, grant us the humility to always seek your will in all that we do and say. All Glory be to you, loving God, now and forever. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

*By Reverend Arthur A. Holquin, Pastor  
Mission Basilica San Juan Capistrano, California  
[www.missionparish.org](http://www.missionparish.org)*



**You ask me whether I am in good spirits. How could I not be so? As long as Faith gives me strength I will always be joyful. Sadness ought to be banished from Catholic souls... the purpose for which we have been created shows us the path; even if strewn with many thorns, it is not a sad path. It is joyful even in the face of sorrow.**  
*- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati*

## Answer Box

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Born</u>
<b>1-builders</b>	<b>1901-1924</b>
<b>2-Silents</b>	<b>1925-1942</b>
<b>3-Boomers</b>	<b>1946-1960</b>
<b>4-Generation X</b>	<b>1961-1981</b>
<b>5-Millennials</b>	<b>1982-2005</b>
<b>6-Gen Kids</b>	<b>2006-2026</b>