

# CENTENNIAL GAZETTE

St. James Cathedral, Seattle

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## TWENTY YEARS AGO... IN THE PARISH BULLETIN

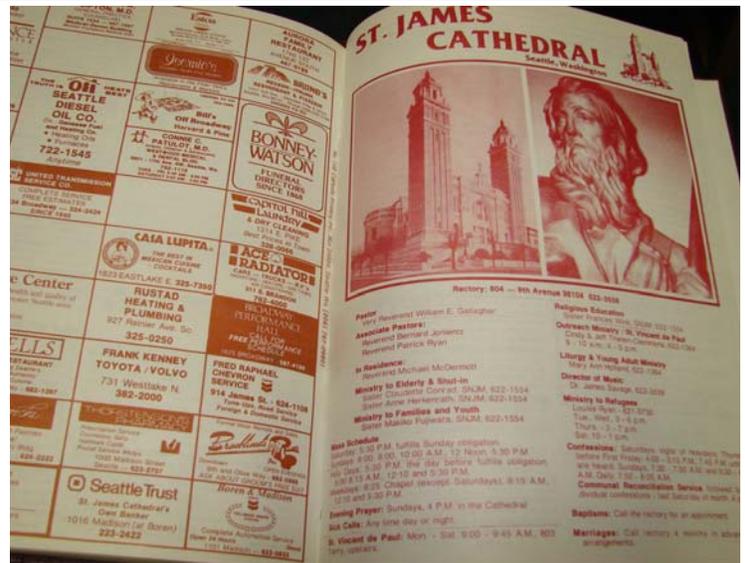
What could be more ephemeral than a parish bulletin, filled with notices of the various groups and gatherings, retreats and Bible studies, service and prayer opportunities, that make up the day-to-day life of a parish community? And yet when you pull a dusty volume of old bulletins from the shelf, you do get a surprisingly vivid glimpse into the life of the parish in another phase of its history.

The bulletins from just twenty years ago have not, of course, had time to gather much dust. But they do open a window on the life and times of St. James Cathedral, and of the broader community as well.

Looking back to November, 1983, we see a parish community with a strong awareness of peace and justice issues, both on the local and the global level. The parish was preparing for the annual Thanksgiving Day Mass, and the procession with gifts for the poor. The Cathedral's young adults were listening to a lecture from Sister Marie Nord, who had served a prison term for trespassing into a high security area of a nuclear weapons plant. A Mass was soon to be offered in the Cathedral in memory of the four religious sisters martyred in El Salvador in 1980, followed by an ecumenical prayer and program of speakers, music, and an all-night vigil of prayer.

Liturgy was a focal point as well. At each of the weekend Masses on November 13, a survey was taken up in an effort to improve the quality of the liturgy, with such questions as "At Mass, what helps you to pray with the community that is gathered? Is there anything that distracts you from praying with the community? Is there anything about the Mass—or the way we pray the Mass—that you find confusing or that you don't understand?" (Unfortunately, the results of this survey—doubtless interesting—were not published in the bulletin!) Sister Anne and Sister Claudette were working to extend the community's prayer beyond the walls of the Cathedral, with an Advent Retreat for the Homebound, with audio taped reflections by the pastor, Father William Gallagher, and members of the Cathedral staff. And something historic happened on November 27, 1983—Sunday afternoon Benediction was celebrated in the context of Vespers, the Church's office of Evening Prayer, for the first time. This beautiful service has continued uninterrupted, every Sunday afternoon at 4:00pm, to the present day.

The Cathedral's music program was already earning international renown, more than twenty years ago. In



Parish Bulletins of 1984 from the parish archives. The Cathedral's bulletin is a surprisingly rich source of information about the life of the parish!

November of 1985, James Savage (who had been music director at St. James for four years), was invited to Rome along with the music directors from the cathedrals of New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, to meet with the Vatican's music director and open up opportunities for American choirs to sing in Rome.

The weekly bulletins give us a glimpse into a lively and active parish community; but they also reveal that the Cathedral itself was showing its age. In April, 1989, Father Ryan (who became pastor in July, 1988) wrote in his letter to the parish community: "in case you haven't noticed, there is once again heat in the Cathedral! Thank you so very much for your patience throughout this long ordeal. At times, I became convinced that that Pyramids of Egypt were built in a shorter time than it took to bring back heat to the Cathedral... Considering the expense involved, I'd like to have a bit more to show for it than a torn-up parking strip, some new sidewalk concrete, and a subterranean stretch of steam pipe, but under the circumstances I guess I should simply be grateful that we no longer have to see our breath in front of us as we sing the hymns and acclamations!" In 1989, it was already clear that the Cathedral was due for thorough overhaul—and soon!

—Corinna Laughlin

*In our next issue, we'll explore the preparations for the historic 1994 renovation of St. James Cathedral. Do you have stories of the "Saint Gym" days of summer and fall, 1994? Pictures of baptisms or First Communions in the O'Dea Gym? Please share them by e-mailing [claughlin@stjames-cathedral.org](mailto:claughlin@stjames-cathedral.org).*