



SEPTEMBER 18, 2007

A Thank You from John Johnson

On behalf of my entire family, I want to thank the community of St. Thomas' Parish for the beautiful service on September 9th and the dedication of our new Godly Play Room. There are so many people to thank, but it was impossible to do it while choking back tears. Many hands went into the work of last Sunday and I just wanted to honor the work of all. I know that the Vestry, the clergy, parish staff, the parents of our children, teachers, the communications team, parish life team, the choir, committee chairs, and a number of individual parishioners all played roles in making last Sunday such a success. To all of you, thank you. I have had many wonderful experiences and opportunities in my time here in Washington, but none were as memorable or as dear to me as the honor offered by my parish home. As I reflect on the joy of my time at St. Thomas', I can't help but be thankful too for all those who kept St. Thomas' together after the fire. We stand on their shoulders as we build a bright and exciting future. Thank you to all that make St. Thomas' the community God calls us to be.

*Your fellow servant in Christ,
John B. Johnson*

Godly Play: No Single Way to Learn

Styles of learning vary as much as creative gifts. Some people learn most effectively when they see information written down, others when they hear it. Some people are kinetic; they need to move their bodies to learn. Some learn most effectively by working in small groups, others by concentrating on their own. There is no one proper way to learn; there are only individual styles of learning. Godly Play respects those differences.

In Godly Play, our Sunday school program for children beginning at age 3, we tell stories with multi-sensory materials to appeal to a broad range of learning styles: auditory, because the story is spoken our loud; visual, because the handmade



wooden figures represent what is happening in the story; kinesthetic, because the storyteller moves the materials around. Later, any child who wishes to learn to tell the story can respond in the same style.

In the "response time," those children who work best together can pair off or form groups to work on creative projects. Those who work best alone have the time and space to concentrate on projects by themselves.

We gather the children in a circle for the storytelling, and at the end for a feast, because they thereby learn about being in community and working together. Everything we do in Godly Play contributes to learning. The Godly Play program will be held Sunday mornings at 10:00 am in the John Johnson Godly Play Room.

Our Family Helps Another

On Saturday, August 11, a team of dedicated volunteers gathered at St Thomas' to help make a home for a family-in-need. The Outreach Committee partnered with the Transitional Housing Corporation to furnish a three-bedroom



apartment in the Partner Arms I transitional housing building.

Over the month preceding the move-in day, parishioners had provided the necessary trappings of a welcoming home, right down

to the alarm clocks, shower curtain, and extra pillow cases. Some brought pillows for the new family's heads to rest at night, others supplied bedroom suites and all the furniture the new home could handle. It was truly amazing to see the items build up over a month...everything that would transform a vacant apartment into a home for a special family.

The Outreach Committee wants to thank everybody who gave of their home, their wallets, and their time to make this project a resounding success.

Faces of St. Thomas' Parish: Sarah Stewart

Sarah Stewart has been attending St. Thomas' since April 2007 after moving from Denver, CO to Washington. Baptized Catholic, Sarah began an extended search for a church home as a soul-searching college student, specifically looking for a parish with a strong support for social justice. She was eventually confirmed as an Episcopalian in 1999. She works locally as a Financial Consultant.

St. Thomas' Holy Week Taize service is what initially attracted Sarah, a Maryland resident at the time, to our parish. Now, as a District resident, she has become quite active in parish life in just a short period of time, serving as a crucifer, member of the Pastoral Care Committee and volunteer at House of Ruth. Sarah admits, "I like to be involved. St. Thomas' is a place I feel a part of now. It feels like home."

This January, Sarah will compete in her first marathon, which will take place at Disney World and will support The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. She will be running in memory of a family friend, Ron Niedrauer, as well as all individuals who are battling blood cancers. Getting up early to train every Saturday, she is developing powerful new relationships with her fellow team members. (Please talk to Sarah if you feel moved to support her in this ambitious effort.)

Also blessed with a caring and generous heart, her girlfriend,



Sara, is currently working abroad to provide acute medical and surgical care in support of military forces and humanitarian operations around the world. Sara's current assignment is in Central and South America.

Welcome, Sarah and Sara! St. Thomas' is blessed to have you as part of our family.

Parishioner Strother Murray Settles in Spain

St. Thomas parishioner and past Vestry member Strother Murray arrived safely in Madrid on September 6. She and Benjamin worshiped one last time at the noon Eucharist on Wednesday, September 5. Your continued prayers for the ongoing transition (including suerte in dealing with the Spanish telecommunications monopoly!) are appreciated, especially as Benjamin prepares to visit for a long weekend and deliver the cats in early October.

Strother reports she has already found a church home away from home in the growing Anglican Episcopal Church of St. George's. The Parish web site is located at <http://www.stgeorgesmadrid.com/>. She was invited to attend a lively 10:00 am family service and looks forward to exploring the more widely attended later service and quiet early service when she is back in the capital.

Work will have her on the road for much of her second full week at post. First, she will meet two congressional delegations at the former U.S. military base in Rota and then she will visit Brussels for a workshop at the U.S. Mission to NATO. Since her arrival in Spain, Strother has been hard at work at the U.S. Embassy, where she covers the political-military portfolio including peacekeeping efforts in Afghanistan and other military cooperation. She acts as a liaison between the U.S. defense agencies and the rest of the U.S. mission as well as the Spanish government and civilian leadership of the armed forces. The Embassy is served by U.S. military mail, so Strother can be reached at:

PSC 61 Box 18
APO AE 09642

Strother continues to feel blessed by the good wishes and thoughtful farewells of her St. Thomas family and looks forward to keeping in touch from Spain!

St. Thomas' Treasury Report

As of August 31st, we received \$159,202 in pledges and plates versus a year to date (8 months) budget of \$203,336. We will be sending out pledge contribution statements within the next week.

