

ALUMNI  NEWSLETTER

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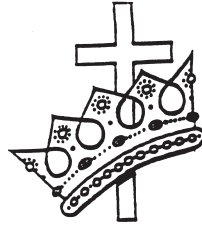
Letter from the Pastor

Dear Alumni and Friends of St. Helena's School,

The symbol of St. Helena is the Cross and the Crown. I am sure you are very familiar with that symbol. It graces the wall above our altar in church. Our children wear that symbol on their school uniforms. It appears on all our stationary and publications. It is a beautiful symbol-and it is an important symbol, one we do well to reflect on frequently.

Historically, of course, the Cross and the Crown are symbols of our holy patroness St. Helena. You will recall that she was an earthly queen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine (hence the Crown) who found the True Cross of Jesus buried on the hill of Calvary (hence the Cross). Whenever we see this beautiful symbol, we remember that we belong to St. Helena. She is our heavenly protector who guides us on our way to heaven.

But the symbol of the Cross and the Crown has a deeper meaning. It represents our whole Christian life. Every one of us has a cross to bear. It may be the cross of physical suffering, either our own or that of a loved one. It may be the cross of making ends meet in these difficult times or the cross of anxiety over a friend or family member experiencing difficulties. Every person has a cross. But we have more-we have the promise of the crown, the crown of life. The symbol of the Cross and the Crown reminds us of this basic truth of our faith-if we bear the Cross, like Jesus and with



Jesus, then He will give us the Crown of life in heaven. Every time we see this beautiful symbol we remember that we are "heaven-bound."

That is the message that St. Helena's Parish has tried to proclaim-and to live-for the past sixty-nine years, since our founding in 1940. Monsignor Scanlan taught people in the 40's and 50's to carry their Cross, including the Cross of getting through the Depression and World War II. He trained children to carry their Cross of life well, all the while learning the "fun of being good." And Monsignor Scanlan always reminds his people that the Crown of life awaits us all. If we bear the Cross of life, we will have the Crown of heaven.

That is the message we continue to teach our children and to proclaim in our church sixty-nine years after our parish was established. Times change. Faces change. But the challenge of the Cross and the Crown remains. May St. Helena's School and St. Helena's Parish always be proud of our symbol, the Cross and the Crown. Like St. Helena our patroness, may we find our Cross and may we one day receive our Crown, the Crown of eternal life.

Father Thomas B. Derivan



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP
1011 FIRST AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

July 20, 2009
Year of the Priest

Reverend Monsignor Thomas B. Derivan
Church of Saint Helena
1315 Olmstead Avenue
Bronx, NY 10462

Dear Monsignor Derivan, Teachers, and Students of
Saint Helena's School:

Thank you all so very much for your letter and handmade cards on the occasion of my anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. It is, indeed, my privilege and pleasure to serve you as your Archbishop.

Our Catholic schools are, by all accounts, extraordinary, and I look forward to visiting all of them over the years that lie ahead. Be assured that Saint Helena's is high on the list.

With prayerful best wishes, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York

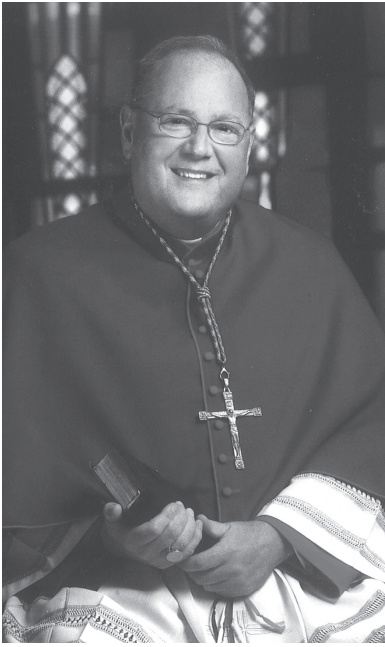
MEMORIAL MASS FOR
SR. LINDA BONASERA O.P.

Sister Linda Bonasera was a true "St. Helenite" all her life. She graduated from our elementary school in 1957 and from our high school (then called St. Helena's High School for Girls) in 1961. After her religious profession as a Dominican Sister of Sparkill and brief teaching assignments elsewhere, she returned to her high school for the next thirty-nine years, first as a Math teacher, then as Assistant Principal. Sister went home to God on June 2, 2008. She was dearly loved by the students and the faculty of our high school for her warmth, gentleness and patience. She is sorely missed.



A Memorial Mass for Sister Linda will be celebrated on Sunday, September 13 at our church at 1:00 PM. This date coincides with her date of religious profession (September 8) and our parish feast day, the feast of the Holy Cross (celebrated on the Sunday nearest September 14). We invite all the many friends, former students and fellow parishioners of Sister Linda to join us in remembering this wonderful Sister who is surely praying for us all from her place in heaven. May many more young women hear the call of Jesus to serve Him in religious life as Sister Linda did so faithfully.

WELCOME, ARCHBISHOP TIMOTHY DOLAN



The Archdiocese of New York has been blessed with wonderful leaders. Let us remember that our church was the first church established by the newly appointed Archbishop (later Cardinal) Francis Spellman in 1940. Throughout the decades, we have been blessed with visits from the succeeding Archbishops, the saintly Terence Cardinal Cooke (whose cause for beatification we pray for at Mass); John Cardinal O'Connor, the great champion of the right to life, and our recently retired Edward Cardinal Egan. We at St. Helena's Parish owe a great debt to Cardinal Egan for his kindness to us in visiting our beloved Father O'Shea during his final illness six years ago and also visiting Father Edmundo Gomez during his sickness last year. Cardinal Egan has also helped out over one hundred of our students through the Cardinal's Scholarship Program without which their parents would not be able to afford to send them to our school.

On April 15 a new chapter in the history of the Church of New York began. The children of St. Helena's School joined the rest of New Yorkers in praying for our new Archbishop as we celebrated his installation as the Archbishop of New York. Already Archbishop Dolan has won the hearts of all of us by his warm and genuine embrace of all of the people of our city. The children sent Archbishop Dolan their own home-made cards congratulating him on his appointment as Archbishop and also on his 37th anniversary of priestly ordination. The Archbishop was kind enough to send a beautiful reply (printed on page 1).

"I say to you, my sister and brother disciples, let us not turn inward to ourselves, our worries, our burdens, our fears; but turn rather to Him, the way, the truth and the life, the One who told us over and over, 'Do not be afraid,' who assured us that He 'would be with us all days, even to the end of the world,' and the One who Pope John Paul the Great called 'the answer to the question posed by every human life.'"

ARCHBISHOP TIMOTHY DOLAN, INSTALLATION MASS, APRIL 15, 2009

BURKE HOUSE DINNER

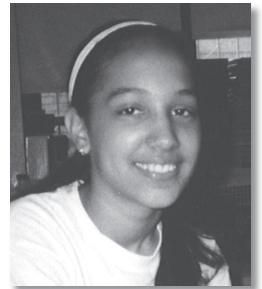
Burke House is a foundation established by Tom Whelan (St. Helena's School, Class of 1960). Tom served in the Vietnam Conflict and in recent years has taken up the challenge of assisting young street children in Vietnam, assisting them in finding jobs and education. He works with a Vietnamese religious order, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions and visits Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) each year at Thanksgiving time.

A benefit for Burke House will be held at St. Helena's Auditorium on Saturday, September 12 from 6:00PM to 10PM. For further information and tickets, contact the Burke House website at www.burkehouse.org or Tom Whelan at BurkeHouse@prodigy.net.



Congratulations to Our Ronald McDonald's Scholarship Winner!

Stephanie Gomez graduated from St. Helena's School in 2005. Her sister Natalie is going into the Fourth Grade here. Stephanie works in our After School Program and in our Summer Day Camp. She graduated this June from our own Msgr. Scanlan High School.



We are happy to report that Stephanie is this year's recipient of the Ronald McDonald's Scholarship of \$100,000, which was awarded to her at the Msgr. Scanlan High School Graduating Ceremony in our church on June 12. She will be going on to Mt. St. Vincent College in September and then hopes to study dentistry.

We are extremely proud of this young lady. She is certainly a worthy recipient of this scholarship and is a credit to her parents and to St. Helena's School and Msgr. Scanlan High School. All the best, Stephanie, for a wonderful future!

THE ST. HELENA SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Each year we are fortunate to have some dedicated alumni and friends who are assisting some deserving children in our school. The sponsor offers to pay all or part of the tuition for a child whose family circumstances would otherwise prevent him or her from attending our school. As we all know, the cost of tuition becomes greater each year and many families find it impossible to handle. Our Sponsorship Program helps these families to continue the Catholic education of their children. Recipients of the sponsorship are carefully selected by the pastor and the principal.

Some sponsors choose to have contact with the child; others choose to remain anonymous. In some cases, through the Matching Gift Program, a sponsor's contribution for tuition actually makes it possible for two children to continue in our school.

If you can become a St. Helena School Sponsor, you will truly be making a difference in the life of a child. Full sponsorship is \$3,400; partial is \$1,700. If you would like to discuss this program, please contact Mr. Richard Meller, Principal, at 718-892-3234.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST. HELENA'S SCHOOL?

September brings a new school year. Just to let you know what has been happening and what will be happening this year at St. Helena School:

- Under the leadership of our principal, Mr. Richard Meller, now in his 13th year as principal, and his faculty, our school enrollment stands at over 500, from 3-year old class to Grade 8. We have children from every ethnic background, from every corner of the world, and we welcome them all to our St. Helena family. We celebrate our "diversity in culture, unity in Christ."
- Our graduates this past June made us very proud. They achieved \$250,000 in high school scholarships and have moved on now to excellent Catholic high schools (including Regis High School), some to specialized public high schools, and many to our own Msgr. Scanlan High School.
- Our 8th Grade class completed their Senior Year with a trip to the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts on June 1. This has become an annual tradition for our 8th Graders each year and since we carry on the proud "basketball tradition" of St. Helena's School, it is a trip they look forward to.
- Our 7th Graders visited the Shrine of St. Francis Xavier Cabrini (Mother Cabrini) in Washington Heights. We are blessed to have in our city the shrine honoring the first American citizen to be declared a saint. The children had studied about Mother Cabrini in class and it was a great experience for them to join in Mass where she is buried.
- As you know, St. Helena's School is a "full-day operation." We open our doors at 6:45 am for the children in our Breakfast Program. Since we have an extended-day program (which features 90 minutes of extra instruction), classes start at 8:00 am and extend to 3:45 pm. We have many children (about 150) who attend our After School Program each day and are here until their parents pick them up by 6:30 pm. During the months of July and August, we have a Summer Program which includes both learning and recreation. In all of this, we carry on Monsignor Scanlan's mission to help children to understand that "It's fun to be good!"
- Our new 8th Grade Class will once again visit the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington on October 9. They will join there with a group of Seniors from Msgr. Scanlan High School. We began this tradition two years ago and it was truly enjoyable for all the students involved. It is also a chance for our two "Senior Classes" (one from the grammar school and one from the high school) to meet and join in Mass together honoring Our Blessed Mother and asking her intercession for their Senior Year.
- This year has been designated by Pope Benedict XVI as the "Year of the Priest." Our children will be learning about some of the great priests of our Church history and among them will be our own Terence Cardinal Cooke. Our children will make it their special intention to pray for Cardinal Cooke's canonization. He is now called "Servant of God," the first step in that process. Please keep this intention in your prayers as well.

Those are just some of our "happenings." Remember, you are always welcome to stop by and see for yourself. "All are welcome."

MEMORIES OF OUR SCHOOL

So many graduates have written about their memories of their "St. Helena's School days." In many cases, these memories go back three or four or even five decades. We thought you would be interested in the memories of our most recent graduates, written for their 2009 Yearbook. Times may change, but St. Helena's School lives strong in the hearts of her graduates.

The best part of St. Helena is the teachers. They are the people whom I am really going to miss. Even though at times they do not seem fair because they give us work, they try to make school as painless and fun as possible. I am really going to miss the random conversations we have with them. Having the same teachers for most of my education and knowing all of the teachers in the building made school easy and enjoyable. I know that even after graduation when I am in high school, I can always come back and talk with them. I will never forget any of my teachers from St. Helena because they are the ones who really began to make me who I am. — *Mariah Gabrielle Jusino*

Going to St. Helena School has been a great experience for me, one that I will never forget. St. Helena School is the best school I have ever been in. If it was not for this amazing school I would not have all these wonderful people in my life. I was blessed to be able to go to such a great school. I will never forget the memories I had in St. Helena's. They will be with me till the day I die. — *Gisselle M. Castro*

What I will remember the most about this school is the family that we had. Everyone was always willing to help each other in the person's time of need. The teachers were also great help for us because they kept us going with their encouragement to continue pursuing our dreams. I think that finding a school where everyone is family is the best thing to find because you know that people care about you. I am so happy I got to finish my grammar school years here. — *Sarah Rosario*

There are many memories of my time here at St. Helena. My most favorite memory is of the time I had with my classmates in my first year here at St. Helena. From them I received many good tips on succeeding. I am grateful for that. Although there were many bad times, the best times I had were with my classmates. WOW! This is the last year of school. I cannot believe it! To all the teachers, thank you for everything you have done for me and thank you to my parents for never giving up on me. I love you all! — *Abigail Matamoros*

GRADUATION DAY, JUNE 13, 2009

Our latest graduates from St. Helena's School had their Commencement Ceremony in our church on June 13. We congratulate the fifty young men and women who now go on to high school. Like so many of our graduates since the beginning of our school in 1940, they now move ahead to face the challenges of life, but always knowing that St. Helena's is their first home. They-and you- always belong to St. Helena's.

The following is the Valedictorian Address at the Commencement Ceremony, written and delivered by Emmanuel Plaza. Emmanuel will be going on to Regis High School in September.

Father Derivan, Reverend Fathers, Mr. Meller, Parents, and Friends of the Graduating Class of 2009:

As our Commencement Ceremony comes to a close, I would like to speak on behalf of the Graduating Class of 2009. These past few months, we have been really thinking about this moment in our lives. It is one thing to be excited about- we all are. It is another thing, however, to actually think about it. Most people might be thinking that we are excited, happy, and glad to move on from this chapter in our lives. This is most certainly the truth. However, we are also sad to be leaving. Just thinking about our past years at St. Helena's School- the friends, the teachers, and all the good times we have shared- makes us really appreciate our time spent here. Up to now, most of us might have been taking our school for granted. Some said, "Yes! I'm finally graduating!" The truth is, there are so many memories that go along with this school. This school has given us a lot to be thankful for.

"Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin the work of remaking America." These words were spoken by President Barack H. Obama, on January 20, 2009- his Inauguration Day. We were able to see the Inauguration of our 44th and first African-American President together. In a sense, this is our "Inauguration Day" as well. Just as President Obama started a new chapter in his life and stepped up to the challenge of becoming our President, we too are starting a new chapter in our lives. We will meet new friends, see new places, and do new things. As President Obama said, we must dust ourselves off, and begin the work of remaking America. This will be a challenge to us all, but we will succeed in shaping our country into whatever we want it to be. As doctors, nurses, lawyers, police officers, and good citizens, our parents have stepped up to that challenge. The challenge will be harder for us, however, in the sense that we can be any of those people just mentioned, and much more. As we dust ourselves off from this previous chapter in our lives, we all look to the future- a future that we will make together, remembering that we were students at St. Helena School and the Graduating Class of 2009. So, all parents, friends, teachers, and classmates, here's to the future. We know that we can make it a good one. Please pray that we do.

— *Emmanuel Plaza*

GREEN & GOLD STORE

Dear Graduates,

Please take advantage of the opportunity to own a keepsake from your Alma Mater. Every purchase you make will help our children.

Name _____ Tel _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

QUANTITY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	*UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
	1	St. Helena's Key Chain	\$5.00	
	2	A Priest and His Parish - A Book on Scanlan Years	\$25.00 + \$4.00 S&H	
	3	Church Note Cards - 12 pack	\$5.00 + \$1.50 S&H	
	4	A Piece of History (Original Auditorium Floor)	\$25.00	
	5	St. Helena's International Cookbook	\$5.00 + \$1.50 S&H	
			SUBTOTAL	
ALL PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING & HANDLING UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.				

PLEASE SEND THE COMPLETED ORDER FORM WITH YOUR CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO:
 St. Helena's Grammar School Alumni Association, 1315 Olmstead Avenue, Bronx, NY 10462
 or Email:sthelenasalumni@yahoo.com or Fax: (718) 892-3078 or www.sthelenabronxny.org

R.C. Church of St. Helena



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