

ALUMNI  NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XIV

FALL 2010

Letter from the Pastor

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

We are happy to report that we began our 70th year of St. Helena's School on September 8. We are happy to welcome back the children who have been here before and we are equally happy to welcome the children who are coming to us for the first time. When parents send their children to St. Helena's School, they are putting great trust in us. They trust us to do the best for their children – academically, spiritually, and socially. They trust that we will love their children as much as they do. And they trust that we will do our best to help their children grow – grow in knowledge, grow in faith, and grow as the future citizens of our country. We believe that their children are in good hands at St. Helena's School.

So very often I receive letters from alumni telling us about their "St. Helena days." Those letters are filled not just with nostalgia, but with genuine thanks for what St. Helena's School did for them. I received one such letter this past summer from a good friend of mine, Kenneth Ackerman (Class of 1960). Ken and I went to Cathedral High School together and we have remained friends ever since. I remember him telling me about his grammar school, St. Helena's, which he obviously loved. He wrote this letter to me about a friend of his from St. Helena's School, Dave Bridge. I would like to share it with you:

"This letter is about the richness of St. Helena School. William David (Dave) Bridge was a friend of mine at St. Helena's. He was in the graduating class of 1961. Dave was a bright, cheery, capable student and friend. He played baritone horn in the St. Helena Cadet Corps. He was an accomplished swimmer and all-around athlete. Upon graduation, Dave went to Mt. St. Michael H.S. and then on to the University of Dayton, graduating in June of 1969. By April of 1970 he began a tour of duty in Vietnam.

Dave was a First Lieutenant in H Troop of the 17th Calvary, 198th Infantry Brigade, known as the Americal Division. In two months and one day, he was dead. He died on June 16, 1970 in Quang Ngai Province in South Vietnam. He died heroically, trying to save some soldiers trapped in a tank. His name appears on the Vietnam Wall in Washington (Panel 9W line 57).

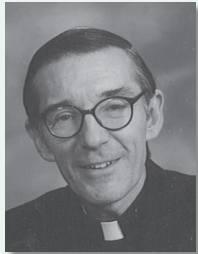
Dave always smiled and was a great whistler. One day both Dave and I got sent to the office of Sister Richard (our wonderful principal) for whistling too loudly in the hall. Sister Richard admonished us that sometimes being too cheerful rubbed people the wrong way. We were sent back to class with the warning, 'Try not to whistle too loudly.'

St. Helena's School has produced hundreds of leaders and great contributors to our society. Dave Bridge was one of those leaders.

Please say a prayer for – and to – Dave, and also for all the great kids in your school who are becoming the leaders and contributors of tomorrow."

I am so grateful to Ken for writing this letter to me. I asked his permission to share it with you for it certainly puts things in focus for all of us here, and, I am sure, for you as well. I hope we are doing what he reminds us we should be doing – preparing the leaders and contributors of tomorrow. May God bless our children and help them to follow in the footsteps of Dave Bridge, who, I am sure, is whistling now in heaven.

Father Thomas B. Derivan



Memories of Our School

Ofentimes graduates write about their memories of St. Helena's School, sometimes going back not just for years, but decades. We thought you would be interested in some memories written by our most recent graduates and contained in their 2010 Yearbook.

The Class of 2010 would like to thank the teachers of St. Helena's past and present. We thank you for teaching us everything we need to know for years to come. Thank you not only for teaching us our subjects, but for helping us prepare for a brighter tomorrow. We appreciate the consideration and hard work that you gave us to succeed and move on in life. We thank you for being there when we needed the help with a certain problem. Most of all, thank you for teaching us that, by staying on the right path, we will be able to do what needs to be done now and in the future. Thank you to all our teachers from the Class of 2010.

— Aidan Dominguez

The people I will miss the most from St. Helen's are my friends. Throughout my many years at this school I have met some really great people. I have known most of them since I started this school ten years ago. We have been through a lot together, and even though we may have had our differences, we always managed to find a solution. I am truly going to miss my friends and even though most of us are going our separate ways starting the new school year, I hope our friendship will continue and grow stronger as the years go by.

— Briana Nieves

There are so many memories I will always have from St. Helena's. I first started off in St. Helena's in Fifth Grade. Right away I had new friends. They all made my school years so welcoming, and worth it. My friends helped me keep a smile on my face every day. Eighth Grade was the best year for me, I had achieved many goals. I was captain of the Cheerleading Squad and earned that position. St. Helena is not just a school; it is family and I will never forget that as I graduate.

— Luzellis Cruz

When I first came to St. Helena's School in the Seventh Grade, I was really nervous. I thought it would be hard being the "new kid," but it was not for me. The people at St. Helena's School were very welcoming, especially my Seventh Grade teacher, Mrs. McHugh. Mrs. McHugh welcomed me with a big smile on my first day and said, "Hello, welcome to St. Helena's School!" Right there, I just knew I would like this school. I am sad to leave St. Helena's School, but I have enough memories of my friends and teachers to hold on to.

— Christian Rivera

Reunion for the Classes of the 70's, 80's, and 90's:

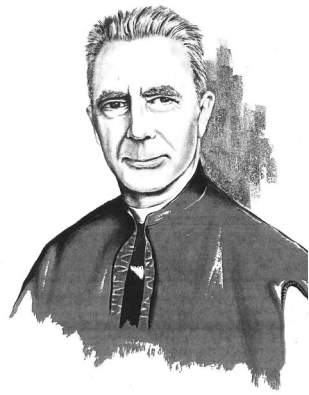
You are cordially invited to the "Younger Graduates Reunion," which will be held on Saturday, October 9, beginning with Mass in our church at 4 PM and followed by the reception and buffet dinner in the auditorium until 10 PM. Special honorees will be the last three Sparkill Dominican Sisters who served as principal of our school: Sister Patricia Anne Murtha O.P., Sister Mary Grey O.P., and Sister Theresa Mark McPartland O.P. Tickets are \$40 per person, \$70 per couple.

For tickets, call Kathleen (McClafferty) Schaefer at (718) 518-8241 or Stephanie (Wallach) Turtle (718) 892-3233.

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

We thought you may be interested in some recent happenings in our school. St. Helena's is a busy place, to say the least.

- Our latest graduates from St. Helena's School walked down our church aisle on Saturday, June 19. We are proud of the fifty two young men and women who graduated. They were very much a part of the life of our school, involved in sports and other activities, serving and lecturing at Mass, helping younger students with their studies and being true "St. Helena leaders." It will interest you to know that our 8th graders last spring took it upon themselves to organize a series of bake sales, book sales and other fund-raising activities to help the earthquake victims in Haiti. Their motto was "Helping Hands for Haiti." The money that they collected was given to Sister Valori Lordi O.P., a Sparkill Sister who is the nurse at Msgr. Scanlan High School and who is part of a nursing contingent which went to Haiti to help the suffering people there. Congratulations to our recent graduates and thank you for giving your helping hands to Haiti!
- The Class of 2010 is dedicating their yearbook to two wonderful ladies who have served St. Helena's School for many years: Mrs. Arleen Schaefer is our faithful school secretary and Miss Sheila McCannon is our long-time 2nd grade teacher and librarian. Thank you to these ladies for their faithfulness to our school. May our graduates follow their sturdy example.
- Four former St. Helena students received their Eagle Scout medal on August 14. These young men are a credit to our Scout Troop 65 and to their families. They are all now attending fine colleges. Congratulations to Eagle Scouts Gabriel Mulero (Siena College), Dewahar Senthooor (Harvard), Marcial Mulero (Rochester) and Noel Titus (Carnegie Mellon).
- Our school has "gone green." We have installed solar panels, both because they are cost-efficient and because they emphasize the importance of using clean energy. We have also joined in a "roof gardening" project with the Botanical Gardens to help our children develop their "green thumbs."



REV. REV. ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, P.A.

- Our new 8th grade students will travel to Washington, DC on October 15. This has become a yearly tradition for our senior class, featuring visits to the Lincoln, Korea, and Vietnam Memorials and the celebration of Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. This year, our 8th graders will remember Lieutenant Dave Bridge (whom you read about in the letter above) on the 40th anniversary of his death. They will also pray for all our alumni and benefactors at the Mass at the National Shrine.
- The second annual Burke House Dinner/Dance will be held at St. Helena's Auditorium on Saturday, September 25 from 6 PM to 10 PM. Burke House is a foundation established by alumnus Tom Whelan (Class of 1960), a Vietnam veteran, to assist street children in Vietnam with jobs and education. For information and tickets, contact Tom Whelan at BurkeHouse@prodigy.net or consult the website www.burkehouse.org.
- Many thanks to all our alumni who offered their help in our Spring Giving Campaign. Our alumni support is crucial to our school. Your generosity keeps us going!
- During the months of July and August, St. Helena's School keeps open. We offer a Summer Program for our children, including morning instruction in reading and math and afternoon recreation. Our children this year took part in a Summer Reading Challenge sponsored by Assemblyman (and St. Helena parishioner) Peter Rivera, whose grandson attends our school.
- St. Helena's School is proud of what we offer to our children. Our school is blessed to have a fine principal, Mr. Richard Meller, now in his 14th year as principal. We are blessed with an excellent faculty, committed parents, and wonderful children (ranging from 3-Year Old Class to Grade 8) who see St. Helena's School as their "second home." We offer a full-day program to all of them, from breakfast at 6:45 AM to After-School program which goes to 6:30 PM. In classes, educational trips, the Christmas Concert and Talent Show, sports and other extra-curricular activities, we keep our children busy!
- But central to all of this is the fact that we are a Catholic School. We join frequently in Mass, on first Fridays and many other occasions. We have monthly Confession and Benediction, weekly hymn practice, and daily prayers in school. Just as the familiar Christmas saying puts it, "Jesus is the reason for the season," so too we are proud to say Jesus is the reason for St. Helena's School!!

REMEMBERING OUR PRIESTS

St. Helena's Parish has always had great love her for priests. Let us remember several of them:

- Of course, there is no one greater than our founding pastor, the incomparable Monsignor Arthur J. Scanlan. Even though Monsignor died on November 21, 1974, his example and inspiration are ever with us. In our gymnasium, we have his famous saying, "It's fun to be good." As our children see that every day, hopefully they remember that powerful lesson of goodness taught by a priest who lived that goodness for 93 wonderful years of life.
- We remember our priests with gratitude. Father Owen McEnaney died on September 3, 1997. "Father Mac" graced our parish with his music, poetry and beautiful hymns. Our children sing his beautiful hymn "Happy Birthday Jesus" at Christmastime as countless St. Helenites (including yourselves) have done for all these years.
- Nineteen years have come and gone since Father John Cody went to heaven on July 15, 1991. Father Cody's love for the sick and elderly was legendary. He greeted parishioners in front of the church, rain or shine, and was affectionately known as the "Olmstead Avenue Priest."
- Father John Haggerty served as Administrator of our high school for a quarter century. He died on September 25, 1999. Father Haggerty suffered from diabetes throughout his adult life. He gave to all of us the example of patient endurance of suffering, offered in unison with the Cross of Our Lord.
- This past August 7 marked seven years since Father Joseph O'Shea was called home to heaven. Father O'Shea served our parish for 61 glorious years of priesthood. Even though he was room-bound for the final years of his life, he continued to pray long and hard for the people on his "prayer list," people who had asked for his prayers. He continues to do so from his place in heaven.

How blessed we have been to have these priests and all the others who have served St. Helena's Parish. Please pray that more young men from our parish will follow in their footsteps.



ST. HELENA'S SCHOOL: TRAINING THE FUTURE "APOSTLES OF LIFE."



One of our main emphases at St. Helena's School is the right to life. We try to help our children understand, in the beautiful phrase of the late Pope John Paul II, that we must all be "apostles of life," defending particularly the right to life for the most vulnerable people in our society, namely unborn children. We call upon the intercession of the late Terence Cardinal Cooke (now called Servant of God) for whose canonization we should all be praying. May our beloved Cardinal Cooke help our children to reject the "culture of death" and live the "culture of life."

We thought you would be interested in this article written by recent graduate, Robert Schaefer, on the right to life and on the impact of Cardinal Cooke on our young people.

"YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES"

By Robert Schaefer

Two years ago Pope Benedict XVI went to Australia for World Youth Day. In his speech to the youth, he said these powerful words: "Empowered by the Spirit, a new generation of Christians is being called to help build a world in which God's gift of life is welcomed, respected and cherished – not rejected, feared as a threat and destroyed; a new age in which love is not greedy or self-seeking, but pure, faithful and genuinely free, open to others, respectful of their dignity, seeking their good, radiating joy and beauty; a new age in which hope liberates us from the hollowness, apathy and self-absorption which deaden our souls and poison our relationships." These words are powerful because they show us that the youth of today are the next generation of Christians and they will be the ones who will carry on Christ's mission.

I believe that Servant of God, Terence Cardinal Cooke, lived those words of our Holy Father. He wanted to protect children for he knew they would become our next generation. He was aware that these children would be the ones to follow Christ's mission. He also knew

that our world was changing and that it would be difficult for our young children to stay faithful to God. But he had great faith in all young people. He believed that they would be strong enough to carry on God's work. Terence Cardinal Cooke lived by example. He encouraged youth to be better people. In his address in Australia, Pope Benedict said, "God's gift of life is (to be) welcomed, respected and cherished – not rejected, feared as a threat, and destroyed." Cardinal Cooke believed that each life, big or small, born or unborn, should have the chance to live. He believed that unborn children would be the ones to fulfill God's mission and that they should have the right to have a life in which they could help make the world a better place. For Cardinal Cooke, that was one of his greatest messages to everyone and most importantly to teenagers. He wanted everyone to see that the unborn child was as important to God's world as an older person. Cardinal Cooke wanted young people to realize that they must respect everyone, black or white, Catholic or non-Catholic, man or woman, born or unborn.

Cardinal Cooke is now called Servant of God. Truly he was. Trusting in his faith, he always saw the good in every person. That was another message that he wanted people to follow. He wanted us to see that there is good in everyone, if we give that person a chance. Cardinal Cooke wanted youth to know that there is hope in them. They are the future. Without them, God's mission cannot go on.

Servant of God, Terence Cardinal Cooke, is a true witness for Christ. He spent his lifetime doing God's work. He not only preached the Word of God, but he lived it. Cardinal Cooke was an inspiration to young people. By his teachings, he helped guide all people to a stronger faith. Even though he had his own personal battles with sickness, he continued to live for God. He showed all people that, with God in your life, you can get through the toughest of times. I believe that what Cardinal Cooke was able to accomplish in his life was exactly what God wanted from him. This is what a true witness for Christ is all about.

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Would you consider being a sponsor for a St. Helena's student? Each year some generous alumni offer to pay all or part of the tuition for a deserving child in our school. Because of the current financial situation, many of our parents are finding it more and more difficult to meet the cost of tuition and keep their child in St. Helena's School. Simply put, our sponsors help to keep these children in our school.

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.

Please consider becoming a St. Helena School Sponsor. Full sponsorship is \$3,400; partial is \$1,700. If you wish to discuss this program, please contact Mr. Richard Meller, Principal, at (718) 892-3234.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

"The memories of St. Helena's are very distinct, even though I graduated fifty years ago:

- The white pencils used in K-4
- Lining up in the yard around 7:50 AM with Sister Mary Richard on the top step ringing her gold bell with the black handle for the Pledge of Allegiance
- Taking home the statue of the Virgin Mary for a night
- A shrine in the corner of the classroom in honor of Mary
- The May Crowning
- Sister Richard coming to the classroom to distribute report cards
- Patti Smith making a drawing on the blackboard in about four minutes
- Mrs. Hanley expecting us to know the difference between sharp and flat
- Miss Lanning's school plays with Monsignor Scanlan giving us a day off at the very end
- Monsignor handing out report cards in the auditorium on the final day of school in June

Thanks for the memories to Rich Kiffney (Class of 1960)



R.C. Church of St. Helena



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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	
ALL PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING & HANDLING UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.			SUBTOTAL	

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