

daniel f. O'RILEY *Funeral Home*
6107 EAST STREET 787-8224

SHELBYVILLE ROAD VETERINARY HOSPITAL
Timothy J. Thunell, D.V.M.
784-ARRF (2773)
784-MEOW (6369)
10% discount to Holy Rosary parishioners!
Mon-Sat • 5120 Shelbyville Road
www.shelbyvilleroadvet.com



7Leaf Design
Uncommonly Elegant and Simple Web Design
www.7leafdesign.com Brandon A. Evans




CAFÉ ROSARIO
Enjoy gourmet coffees and teas, hot chocolate, doughnuts, fellowship and more!
Sundays in Priori Hall after the 9:30 Mass



G.H. HERRMANN FUNERAL HOMES
A Finer Service • A Fairer Price
5141 Madison 787-7211
1505 S. East 262-8488
1605 S St Rd 135 787-7211

Betsy Rabold, RN, NHC
Natural Health Consultant
317-748-6980 • betsyrabold@aol.com
Accepting New Clients
Individual, Family & Group Rates



Catholic Cemeteries Association • Since 1861
St. Joseph "Courtyard" Mausoleum 2446 S Meridian, Indianapolis, IN 46225
Pre-Construction Pricing Available
317-784-4439
Full-Service Cemeteries
Archdiocese of Indianapolis • Serving the Greater Indianapolis Area With 2 Other Locations

Calvary Cemetery & Mausoleum 435 W Troy Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46225
 ♦ Chapel Mausoleum For Prayer
 ♦ Beautifully Landscaped
 ♦ Self Planting Flower Program
 ♦ Positive Spiritual Surrounding
 ♦ Peace of Mind Forever

Huser HomeCare
Elder and Special Needs Care
Homemaker and Companion Services
Personal Care Services
Kathy & Terry Huser
(317) 255-5700 or (317) 332-8261

Italian Heritage Society
Reaching out to promote, preserve and share inherited Italian values of religion, family, art, history, music, food and camaraderie.
For membership information: Kevin Pastori, 694-2173



KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY
Chris Camperelli - The Camperelli Group
Guaranteed **SOLD**, or I'll Buy It!
317-388-3343
chris@camperelligroup.com
Donation given to Holy Rosary upon closed transaction
Call for details



Mailing Address
520 Stevens St.
Indianapolis, IN 46203

Telephone
(317) 636-4478

Emergency Pager
(317) 314-5334

Fax
(317) 636-2522

E-Mail & Web site
hchurch@hotmail.com
www.holyrosaryindy.org

Sunday Mass Schedule
Ordinary Form:
4:30 p.m. Saturday
12:00 p.m. Sunday
Extraordinary Form:
9:30 a.m. Sunday

Confessions
Sundays: 45 minutes before each Mass.
Weekdays: 30 minutes before each Mass.

Joining the Parish
Parish Census Forms are in a blue folder in the pamphlet rack in the vestibule. Completed forms can be placed in the collection basket or mailed to the office.

Baptisms & Weddings
Baptisms and weddings can be scheduled only after an initial meeting with the pastor or associate pastor. The Church requires that both sacraments be preceded by a period of preparation. Weddings must be scheduled at least six (6) months in advance.

La Chiesa del Santo Rosario
Holy Rosary Church



The Italian Parish of Indianapolis

March 29, 2009
Ordinary Form:
Fifth Sunday of Lent
Extraordinary Form:
Passion Sunday

PARISH STAFF:
Rev. Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, VG, pastor
Office (317) 236-1405 • Residence (317) 634-4519
Rev. Michael W. Magiera, FSSP, associate pastor
Office (317) 636-4478 • Residence (317) 634-4519
Sister Diane Carollo, SGL, director of religious education
Office (317) 236-1521 • Convent (317) 423-9791 • dcarollo@archindy.org
Bernie Greene, business manager • David Walden, bulletin editor
Office (317) 636-4478
CENTRAL CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL • Sara Browning, principal
Office (317) 783-7759 • Fax (317) 781-5964

Orario settimanale delle Sante Messe

Saturday, March 28, 2009

4:30 p.m. — Ordinary Form (Sung)
Fifth Sunday of Lent
 ☩ Ken Fox

Sunday, March 29, 2009

9:30 a.m. — Extraordinary Form (Sung)
Passion Sunday (1st class)
 Christensen family

Noon — Ordinary Form (Sung)
Fifth Sunday of Lent
 Pro populo

Monday, March 30, 2009

Noon — Extraordinary Form
Monday of Passion Week (3rd class)
 Danny Jones

5:45 p.m. — Ordinary Form
Feria of Lent
 ☩ Jack Cecil

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Noon — Extraordinary Form
Tuesday of Passion Week (3rd class)
 Intention of Fr. Richard Eldred

5:45 p.m. — Extraordinary Form
Tuesday of Passion Week (3rd class)
 Celebrant's intention

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Noon — Extraordinary Form
Wednesday of Passion Week (3rd class)
 Gary Jones

(Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament between Masses)

5:45 p.m. — Ordinary Form
Feria of Lent
 ☩ John Oechsle

Thursday, April 2, 2009

Noon — Extraordinary Form
Thursday of Passion Week (3rd class)
(St. Francis Paola)
 Lena Peoni

Thursday, April 2, 2009 (continued)

5:45 p.m. — Extraordinary Form (Sung)
Requiem (30th day) (3rd class)
 ☩ Dorothy Magiera

Friday, April 3, 2009

6:30 a.m. — Ordinary Form
Feria of Lent
 Celebrant's intention

Noon — Extraordinary Form
Friday of Passion Week (3rd class)
(Seven Sorrows of the B.V.M.)
 ☩ Gus Gatto

(The Way of the Cross will immediately follow Mass)

5:45 p.m. — Ordinary Form
Feria of Lent
 ☩ Fr. Anthony Spicuzza

(The Way of the Cross will immediately follow Mass, as will Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The latter will end just prior to the 9 a.m. Saturday Mass.)

Saturday, April 4, 2009

9 a.m. — Extraordinary Form
Saturday of Passion Week (3rd class)
(St. John Capistrano)
 Intention of Michael Schott

4:30 p.m. — Ordinary Form (Sung)
Palm Sunday
 ☩ Tony Rene

Sunday, April 5, 2009

9:00 a.m. — Extraordinary Form (Sung)
Palm Sunday (1st class)
 ☩ Richard C. & Ann L. Walden

Noon — Ordinary Form (Sung)
Palm Sunday
 ☩ Gus & Margaret Minardo

MASS INTENTIONS: The standard stipend for Masses in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is \$10. Requests should indicate whether people are living or deceased, and must be typed or written legibly. *We can accept only five stipends per calendar year, per family/household, when they are available.* Place requests in the collection basket or mail them to the office. Make checks payable to Holy Rosary Church.

Spaghetti & Spirituality

Ninth Annual Lenten Speaker Series at Holy Rosary Catholic Church

Five Wednesdays in Lent — Open to the Public

- Mass (in English): 5:45 p.m.*
- Light, meatless pasta dinner: 6:30 p.m.*
- Featured presentation: 7:15 p.m.*
- Questions & answers ending at 8:30 p.m.; book sale immediately following
- * See schedule below for changes on March 18

March 4 — Mr. Tarek Saab



Catholic author, speaker and businessman
The Battle of the Ordinary

March 11 — Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D.



Education Director, National Catholic Bioethics Center
**Stem Cells and Cloning:
Understanding the Scientific Issues
and Moral Objections**

March 18 — Fr. James Jackson, F.S.S.P.



Chaplain for the FSSP apostolate in Littleton, Colo.
The Four Last Things
Solemn Mass in Latin at 5:15 p.m.; presentation in church at 6:30 p.m.; dinner in Priori Hall at 7:30 p.m.

March 25 — Dr. Charles E. Rice



Professor emeritus at Notre Dame Law School
**Natural Law:
What Is It and When Was It Repealed?**

April 1 — Dr. Ray Guarendi



Father of 10, Catholic author, speaker, radio show host
Parenting Then and Now

This adult education series is designed for those who have reached at least high school age. Out of respect for all who come, we ask that no one bring younger children.

MEN'S NIGHT OF REFLECTION:

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

**Saturday, April 4
6:30 p.m. — 11 p.m.**

Holy Rosary Church

The Passion of The Christ
 Exposition of the
 Blessed Sacrament

Reflection by Fr. Magiera
 Recitation of the Rosary
 Chaplet of Divine Mercy
 Chaplet of St. Joseph
 Opportunity for Confession
 Benediction

**Open to all men
16 and older**

Other than recitation of
 prayers, this will be a
 SILENT evening
 of reflection and meditation

Please arrive before 6:30 p.m.

**Free-will donation
will benefit Seminarians**



Sponsored by
**Knights of Columbus
Santo Rosario Council**

mother was alive, I stayed at her apartment. Not so after her death. I stayed with friends. But the milestones were there, one by one: my mother's death, her visitation, her funeral and burial, the return to her apartment, the process of going through her things, discarding, moving, giving away, paperwork, the deletion of her telephone numbers from my cell phone. Each milestone had its own particular effect on me. But the penultimate one was particularly jarring, and that was the removal of her apartment key from my key ring and the final time I locked and closed her apartment door behind me. I am now officially an orphan, and I must tell you, I don't like it much.

Still, I am a Catholic and a priest and, as painful as all this was and still is, I must

hold true to what I wrote and what Monsignor passed onto you in the bulletin a couple of weeks ago: "Right now, I'm all out of kilter because there is a void where she once was. Sometimes I'm tempted to think that I'll never be able to recover from this. Yet, I know, as those of you who have lost a parent or parents know, that God gets us through this. I know He won't fail me."

I now give advice: Those of you who still have them, treasure your parents. One day you will lose them. If there is a rift, heal it. If there have been words, try to take them back. If there have been wrongs, ask for forgiveness. If they have wronged you, forgive them. I beg all of you to do this, before it's too late.

Now, something profound. My mother was

not a learned woman. She was a high school graduate. But she had insight. She could assess a problem or situation very quickly and come up with a solution. She also had uncommon common sense. She was also fiercely devoted to her own mother. Her mother's death was a great blow to her and to my sister and me, who adored her. She told me more than once that she still missed her. I now know just what she means. Monsignor said last week that one never really "gets over" a parent's death. While I was going through her things, I found something that my mother

Those of you who still have them, treasure your parents.

wrote. Strangely, she wrote it on something that looked like matting board or that kind of board that serves as backing for a picture frame. Deep in my memory, I seem to recall her

writing this soon after her mother's death. It is simple, to the point, true and, to me, more beautiful and poignant than I could ever imagine. I would never be able to write something so profound and I end with it. In her own hand (and with her punctuation), my mother wrote: "A mother is like light or air or the ground you walk on. It's always been there, and you think it always will be. And then suddenly it isn't there. It's gone and you're alone"

I will celebrate a Sung/Solemn "Month's Mind" Mass next Thursday at 5:45 p.m. I invite you all and hope to see you all at that Mass.

God bless you, my children and my friends.

Fr. Michael Magiera

Comunicazioni

• There is a **second collection this weekend** for Catholic School Tuition Assistance. There will be a **second collection next weekend** for the Holy Places.

• **Spirituality for Children and Apologetics from A-Z** will meet today (Sunday) from 11:10 a.m. to 11:55 a.m. in our classrooms. Please remember that the children's class has been split into three levels: ages 3-5 will meet in the basement art room; ages 6-9 will meet in the first-floor classroom adjacent to the courtyard; ages 10-14 will meet in our second-floor classroom. The adult class will meet in the first-floor classroom closest to the CYO's front entrance.

• The **Palm Sunday Mass in the Extraordinary Form** (Latin Mass) will begin at 9 a.m. — that's one-half hour earlier than usual. This is to accommodate the blessing of palms, procession and singing of the Passion during the liturgy. Weather permitting, it — and all of the Masses next weekend — will begin in the courtyard.

• Msgr. Schaedel is in Rome for a few days. While there, he will offer **Masses for the following intentions**: Mary Jo Harper, +Dorothy Magiera, +Bernard J. Greene, +Joe and Ida Mae Mascari, and +Ann L. Walden.

• The **Way of the Cross** will be prayed here after the Masses at noon and 5:45 p.m. on all

BY THE NUMBERS

Collections for March 21-22

4:30 p.m. Saturday	\$	1,542.00
9:30 a.m. Sunday		5,084.00
Noon Sunday		1,732.00
Total	\$	8,358.00

Second Collections (combined)

Catholic Relief Services	\$	1,726.00
--------------------------	----	----------

Confessions week of March 15: 76

Attendance:

Daily Masses, week of March 15:	981
Sunday Masses, March 21-22:	627
40 Hours Services, March 16-18:	519

Fridays of Lent except Good Friday.

• There will be a **Men's Night of Reflection** here on Saturday, April 4. See the advertisement on Page 11 for more information.

• **First Friday** and **First Saturday** are this week. **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** will begin after the 5:45 p.m. Mass Friday and end just prior to the 9 a.m. Mass Saturday. A sign-up sheet is in the vestibule for those who can commit to a specific time. What better way to get to close to our Lord this Lent than to spend an hour with Him in Adoration?

• The **English Mass Choir** will be practic-



Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Holy Rosary

- **Wednesdays** between the Masses at noon and 5:45 p.m.
- **First Fridays** between the Masses at 5:45 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. Saturday. (Sign-up sheet will be in the back of church during the prior week.)

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis' Pro-Life Office asks our parishioners to remember in their Adoration prayers Affiliated Women's Services, the abortion mill at 2215 Distributors Drive, Indianapolis.

ing April 2 at 7:30 p.m. for Palm Sunday and Easter. New members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

- It's time for the men to put their best feet forward: **We need 12 men to let Fr. Magiera wash their feet** during the Extraordinary Form of Mass on Holy Thursday evening, April 9. Volunteers should contact David Walden in the parish office, 636-4478 or hrchurch@hotmail.com.

- Following the Easter Vigil Masses in both the Extraordinary and Ordinary forms, we would like to offer a light snack in Priori Hall. **Adult and teen volunteers are needed** to help set up the hall and to clean up after each reception. Volunteers should contact Sister Diane at 236-1521.

- **Please pray for our sick and shut-in friends:** Bridgett Allen, Ken Baxter, Natalie Bennett, Sophia Borzabadi, Roselyn Burrello, Irene Bussell, Steve Bussell, Mary Constantino, Don Decker, George Diehl, Laura Gatto, Vince Gatto, Nancy Gerth, Chris Harlett, Maria Aurora Hobbs, Lily Klee, Betty Latz, Katie Lynch, Gasper Madonia, Grace Madonia, Myrtle McGuire, Rosie Mitchel, Stephen Mitchel, Jo Ann Murello, Brian Murrey, Sue Parsons, Lena Peoni, Virginia Peoni-Kelly, James Rea, Brigitte Schutzman, Julie Shumard, Annie Ventura, Cathy Wells and Joann Wilson.

- **40 Days for Life Spring Vigil** at the Planned Parenthood abortion facility on 86th Street continues throughout Lent. Holy Rosary parishioners are taking part in the vigil every Saturday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. There are three ways to register for an hour or two (or more!): in Priori Hall between the 9:30 a.m. and noon Masses on Sunday; online at 40daysforlife.com/

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday, April 4-5

4:30 p.m. Saturday — Ordinary Form

9 a.m. Sunday — Extraordinary Form

Noon Sunday — Ordinary Form

Monday, April 6

Noon — Extraordinary Form

5:45 p.m. — Ordinary Form

Tuesday, April 7

Noon — Extraordinary Form

5:45 p.m. — NO MASS

(The Chrism Mass will be at the Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul at 7 p.m.)

Wednesday, April 8

Noon — Extraordinary Form

5:45 p.m. — Ordinary Form

7 p.m. — Tenebræ of Holy Thursday

Holy Thursday, April 9

Noon — NO MASS

5:45 p.m. — Ordinary Form

7 p.m. — Extraordinary Form

Good Friday, April 10

9 a.m. — Tenebræ of Good Friday

2 p.m. — Extraordinary Form

6 p.m. — Ordinary Form

Holy Saturday, April 11

9 a.m. — Tenebræ of Holy Saturday

4:30 p.m. — Extraordinary Form (Great Paschal Vigil and First Mass of Easter Sunday)

8 p.m. — Ordinary Form (Great Paschal Vigil and First Mass of Easter Sunday)

Easter Sunday, April 12

9:30 a.m. — Extraordinary Form

Noon — Ordinary Form

miss her. Every time in those last days when I told her I loved her, she always told me she loved me too. She said she loved me and would miss me. I told her that Diane, my sister, would be coming that evening. Then I left, having seen and kissed my mother, as it turned out, for the last time. We all know that such times will come, we just don't ever want them to get here.

I returned to Indy, went to the rectory and then came to the church. I had confessions and the 5:45 Mass. I had been in contact with my sister during the day. I celebrated that Mass for my mother.

I had just left the altar and returned to the vestry when my cell phone rang. Remembering that I told my mother that my sister would be coming up later that day, I really think

that my mother "held on" until my sister arrived. She was calling to tell me that, when she walked into my mother's room, she found her soiled, having vomited on herself, and alone. My sister was trying to find someone to see to my mother. After almost tackling a nurse, who then said that she'd find an aide to help, after waiting what seemed to be another eternity for said aide, she decided to call me. I exploded upon hearing the news. During our conversation, my sister told me that two aides had just come. She left the room, still talking to me, when a friend arrived to visit my mother. It was then that one aide came into the hall and told my sister and friend to come into the room. My sister then told me that my mother had just died as the aides were cleaning her up. I was surprisingly

calm and ended the conversation with my sister.

Shortly thereafter, as God planned it, Fr. Phillipson arrived at the church. I told him what happened and asked if he could extend his stay indefinitely. He made a call and, thank God, told me he could. I soon left the church, phoned Monsignor with the news, and informed a few others. A young man and parishioner whom I look upon as a trusted assistant — and who, I think, also has a priestly vocation — helped me make travel plans later that evening. I left the next day.

Then I left, having seen and kissed my mother, as it turned out, for the last time.

After I arrived home, Wednesday, Mar. 4, all arrangements were made gradually. The visitation and funeral/burial were planned for Sunday evening

and Monday morning respectively, Mar. 8-9. Friends rallied round for support. I was able to celebrate a beautiful Solemn High Requiem Mass at my mother's parish church. I had a schola and servers from Mater Ecclesiae, my former parish, in New Jersey. Many people came to the visitation and to the funeral. Two families from Holy Rosary were present. They have my thanks as do all of you for your prayers, support, sympathy cards, Mass cards, flowers. There was a beautiful bouquet from Holy Rosary and Lumen Christi School. There was also a beautiful bouquet from a group of parishioners and one from a single parishioner. I thank you all for the high regard in which you held my mother and for the love you have for me.

I mentioned milestones earlier. While my

her Holy Communion. Of course, every night, I gave her the General Absolution and Plenary Indulgence before I left. I started doing this when she had her heart attack back in November 2007 and continued the practice when I thought it necessary on other occasions when she wasn't doing well. I gave her Holy Communion again the following day, Sunday, Mar. 1. A few people came to visit. My faithful sister came often. Over the past 1.5 years, my sister has been a constant bulwark, consistently present at my mother's side and doing all the paper and logistics work I couldn't even begin to contemplate.

The reality of having to return to Indy started weighing on me. Should I return or should I stay? I resolved that I'd decide on Sunday or Monday. By Sunday, she seemed to fall into a pattern of sleeping and waking, if you can call it that. Sometimes I couldn't tell the difference. Every so often she would tell me how tired she was and that she wanted to "go home." This pattern persisted into Monday. Thank God I had long given in to my overwhelming desire to constantly touch her, kiss her and caress her, telling her over and over how much I loved her. You know by now what an emotional person I am. My sister's a bit more stoic. Our family life was always full of physical contact and affection, and though I try to hold this in check, you can still see this trait in me, I think.

The next day, Monday, Mar. 2, though hospice care had kicked in prior to this, I finally was able to talk to someone qualified

You know by now what an emotional person I am. My sister's a bit more stoic.

to give me an educated guess as to how much longer my mother had to live. I was told "one to two weeks at most." This knowledge made me decide to return to Indy, with an eye to going back to Philly as soon as possible. But, in justice, I couldn't delay my return any longer. You and Monsignor have been so patient and understanding and I didn't want to abuse that. I had resolved to leave on Tuesday, Mar. 3, as planned.

The rest of Monday, I stayed at the nursing home with her. She continued to decline, but was still minimally responsive. As I had done over the last few days, and many times over the last year, I talked to her about private things, memories, my grandparents, my father, our family life and, most importantly, asking for forgiveness for those many, many wrongs I'd committed against her. I told her that I was going back to Indy, but that I'd be back as soon as I could. This day, like most of the days when we were alone, also included much silence, where she lay in her bed and I sat next to her and prayed my Divine Office. Before I left that evening, and prior to giving her the Absolution and Indulgence again, I told her I'd be back early in the morning before taking the train to the airport.

That Tuesday morning, Mar. 3, I arrived at the nursing home at 7 a.m. I spent about 45 minutes with her. Telling her, once again, that I had to leave and asking her if she understood why I had to go, she said, "Yes." I kissed her again, told her that I'd be back as soon as I could, that I loved her and that I'd

Indianapolis; or call 213-4478.

• **Apartments in a prime location** — directly behind Holy Rosary Church — will soon be available after undergoing an extensive renovation: all new appliances, new flooring, new walls, etc. For more information or to schedule an appointment to see one of the apartments, call Vince and Linda Gatto at 638-7813.

• Enjoy an old-fashioned, family "**Hoe Down**" on Friday, April 17, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the CYO gymnasium adjacent to our church. This square dance is open to all parish families and their guests. Cost is \$2 per person or \$5 per family. You don't have to be an exceptional dancer — just exceptionally humble and willing to laugh at your mistakes (and everyone else's). Light refreshments will be served during a break. For more information contact Bob Evanich at 614-5744 or bevanich@indy.rr.com. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Santo Rosario Council.

• **Treasuring Womanhood**, the sixth annual Catholic Women's Conference, will be Saturday, April 18, from 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. at the Indiana Convention Center. Speakers include Johnette Benkovic, founder and president of Living His Life Abundantly; Elizabeth Ficocelli, award-winning author of nine books; and Fr. Christopher Crotty, C.P.M., educator and retreat master. Mass celebrant and homilist will be our own pastor, Msgr. Schaedel. For more information contact Kathy Denny at 888-0873.

• **Change We Can Believe In: The Office for Pro-Life Ministry is sponsoring a re-**

treat for youth 14 years and older at St. Bernadette Retreat Center, 4838 Fletcher Ave., May 15-16. Fr. James Heyd, a priest from Chicago and Cardinal George's liaison to the Pro-Life movement, will conduct the retreat. Personal and communal prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, conferences on spiritual life and opportunities for confession will be offered. Cost is \$25. Space is limited to 55 people on a first-come, first-served basis — register now if you want to participate. Registration sheets are in the back of church and may also be found online at www.archindy.org/prolife/index.html. For information call Sister Diane at 236-1521.

• **The Spring Bocce League** sponsored by the Italian Heritage Society of Indiana is sending applications to interested teams and individuals. The spring games will be played April 20-June 5 in Edna Balz Lacy Park. New players and teams are encouraged to participate. Fee is \$10 for IHSI members, \$25 for non-members. For more information or to request an application, contact Joe Giacoletti at 638-0374 or visit www.italianheritage.org.

• The Conventual Franciscans are offering a **vocation retreat** April 3-5 for single men, 16-40, who wish to learn more about priesthood and brotherhood. These men are invited to experience the order's fraternity, prayer life and mission as they live the Gospel in today's world. The retreat will be at Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality near Louisville, Ky. No fee will be charged to participants. For information contact Friar Paul Schloemer at 800-424-9955 or franvoc@aol.com.

Become a Radioactive Catholic: Tune in to Catholic Radio 89.1 FM

Appunti del Parroco Associato: (From the Associate Pastor's Notebook:) A Letter from Fr. Michael W. Magiera, F.S.S.P.

Dear Parishioners,

Last summer, if you remember, Monsignor Schaedel assigned the upcoming bulletin letter to me after a rather long absence. Being mindful that Monsignor jealously, and rightly, guards his bulletin letter prerogative, I realize the privilege I have in writing it this week. I also recall telling you what a pleasure it always is for me when Monsignor gives me this honor.

My last bulletin letter was in October. If memory serves, the previous one was in August after my return from a leave of absence with my mother. This present letter shares similarities with but also has differences from that August letter.

Last year in August, if you remember, I began this letter with the words, “he’s ba...aack.” Last year, the circumstances of my return were happy and joyous. This year, not so much. Last year I was happy on both “ends” of my return to you. I was happy leaving Philly knowing that my mother was doing well and that I could return here without worrying and I was glad to get back to you, my parishioners. To be sure, I’m happy now to be back with you. After all, I belong here. This is my home, my parish and you are my family. But, this year, I definitely was not happy leaving Philly. Taking off in

How glad I now am for all of those trips home, for all of that extra time I had to spend with her.

that plane was the last in a series of sad milestones in that whole, devastating microcosm known as my mother’s death.

Over the past year, my visits home became more frequent. I wanted to be with my mother as much as possible and I took advantage of every opportunity to do that. I knew that, one day, particularly following the last summer’s events, my mother’s uncanny fighting ability and will to live would give out. How glad I now am for all of those trips home, for all of that extra time I had to spend with her.

My last “trip” home was actually two trips with one day intervening. My mother underwent exploratory surgery in early February to see what the problem was with her stomach. That surgery revealed a tumor which turned out to be malignant. The tumor was most probably an “ancillary” cancer, resulting from her breast cancer detected and removed in late fall 2005. The tumor was too far gone to be removed, but could have been treated with chemotherapy. The problem was, due to her gradual weakening prior to and following the surgery, it would be necessary for her to build up her strength before beginning treatment. She was informed of this and subsequently went to a nursing home to begin this recovery. It was there and then, possibly triggered by a progno-

sis insensitively delivered by a brusque nursing home physician, that she saw the futility of continuing the fight. Nevertheless, we hoped that she would, in fact, continue the battle. I guess we were fooling ourselves. I, however, really didn’t know how bad things were because I was so far away. Trusting that, somewhere down the line, she would, in fact, build herself up and subsequently begin treatment, I went home Tuesday, Feb. 24, to take her out of the nursing home and back to her apartment. When I saw her, I realized that if I did that, I’d be making a big mistake. Nevertheless, because she wanted it so badly, I did it. Her two goals, at that time, were for me to come home to her and to get out of the nursing home. Those two goals having been achieved, I believe she simply gave up.

Still, I continued the charade the following day, Wednesday, Feb. 25, until the time I had to get her from the nursing home into her apartment. It was a slow, agonizing process. Once in bed, she could no longer move. She drank a little, but refused all food. The next day, Thursday, Feb. 26, a visiting nurse came, ostensibly to restart her “in home” care. When the nurse saw her and after talking with me for a bit, she counseled me to get her back into a nursing home and into hospice care. I realized that the nurse’s suggested course of action was, in reality, the only possibility. After a few hours of telephoning, later that day we got her into a nursing home with hospice care to begin soon thereafter. She spent only one day back in her apartment, and that for the last time.

That Thursday afternoon, she entered the nurs-

ing home. Of course, I had to tell her what we were doing and where she was going. She made it clear she understood. My sister and I knew that she would never leave, yet we went about doing those normal things we had done many times before, as if she were again in a hospital for a short stay. For the rest of that day, my mother was sluggish and minimally responsive. I said the rosary with her in her room that night. She made no sound and I trust she followed along mentally.

The next day, Friday, Feb. 27, I was amazed when I walked in to see her sitting up and almost “perky.” I didn’t realize at that time — not knowing about such things till a few days later — that this was her final “rallying point” or “last hurrah.” The dying often experience such final lively surges. This day, like those few subsequent days, many friends and a few relatives came to visit. She ate and drank a bit more that day. But she tired rather quickly and, after everyone left, she again just lay quiet.

I stayed, as I usually did, till late evening, leaving about 9 or 10 o’clock. When I told her I was going home, i.e., to her apartment, she said, “Not without me.”

The next day, Saturday, Feb. 28, she was not very lively. The day was mostly defined by her lying there and my sitting there. I’d talk to her every now and then. Some more people came to see her throughout the day. Late that afternoon, I went to Mass at her parish church. I retrieved the Oil of the Sick and a ritual (having stupidly forgotten to bring mine) and the Blessed Sacrament. I anointed her and gave

Nevertheless, we hoped that she would, in fact, continue the battle. I guess we were fooling ourselves.