



(Continued from page 2)

Malia also purchased a few Easter lilies to plant near the cross.

Did the students balk at doing the labor?

“Initially I anticipated some resistance but I was really quite surprised. They were working together. Some naturally paired up with others and invented methods and used the tools to dig up the grass and tons of weeds,” Malia said.

Most difficult were roots that clogged the garden area.

“They continued to hack and pull and finally break through whatever it was,” she said. “They were filled with pride for all their good work. Their enthusiasm was sparked.”

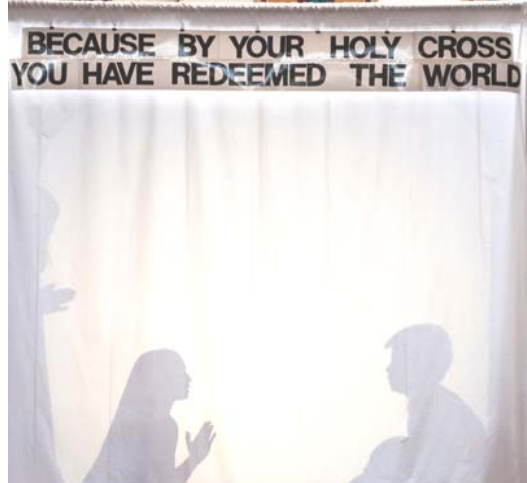
Later, she intends to have the students stand on the stones and pray the Rosary, each student leading the others in the prayer.

“Many hands made light work, and the end result is fantastic,” Malia said. “Students reflected on this as a very rewarding experience, and enjoyed working together outside. Parishioners are welcome to come and walk along (the Rosary) path to pray the Rosary anytime.”

The students got the lesson.

As another sixth grader reflected, “I definitely want to do more service projects. It wasn’t easy but it was worth it.”

“Parishioners are welcome to come and walk along the path to pray the Rosary anytime,” said Malia.



Scenes from Lent, from the top:
Easter baskets (photo by Norbert Hertl)
Lenten Family Morning (photo by John Peters)
Gr. 6 Stations of the CROSS (photo by John Peters)
Easter Egg Hunt (Photo by Norbert Hertl)
Easter Vigil (Photo by Maria de los Reyes)

Above at the auction: Principal Sue Venable and Fr. Haydock present Dorothy Sittauer with a plaque commemorating her and Ray’s support of our school from its inception. (Photo by Norbert Hertl)

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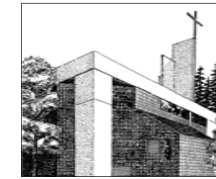
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Holy Rosary Parish

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GIFTS & BLESSINGS

Syria: It’s Not as Far Away as You Think By Jim Haley

Holy Rosary parishioner Illeya Hamwi is a vibrant bundle of energy, sporting white hair and a sparkling personality. He spent 22 years as an engineer for the Boeing Co. and now is retired.

Syrian born, Illeya, 70, lives comfortably in Edmonds.

He’s an artist, a painter. He’s not married and is prone to engage in a lively conversation about Mediterranean food and area restaurants.

He arrived in the U.S. 46 years ago under a student visa and attended the University of Florida.

His focus recently has been less about his own comfort, paint and canvas and more about how a war halfway around the world is causing suffering for his family in Syria.

The family members remain in his native country and have been victimized by the ongoing civil war to oust the regime of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

His family members – a sibling, her children, their spouses and offspring age 10 and up – are just a few of the many who lost their homes in the four-year Middle-Eastern struggle that had its beginning with the Arab Spring and shows no signs of ending soon.

The strife has allowed the radical Islamic terrorist sect ISIS to influence parts of Syria, Iraq and other Middle East countries. Illeya believes that no Christians are safe from ISIS.

His family hails from the west-central Syrian city of Homs, which became an opposition stronghold during the ongoing war. Government forces launched a huge military assault on the city beginning in 2011. Shelling and bombing left much of the city in rubble and thousands died by 2014 when the government took full control of the city.

He has lost other family members during the conflict, but Illeya is not sure of the circumstances.

Communication has been difficult, but he tries weekly to connect with his family via the Internet or phone. For a long time he funneled money to his relatives through individuals he knows, but that conduit has dried up.

Illeya is not sure exactly where the family members are. “I don’t know a lot of details but they’re homeless,” he said. Some are in the mountains and others are in small villages around Homs.

Christians are a minority in Syria, and Illeya doesn’t know if the church or anyone else can help him get his family out of that war-torn country on religious, humanitarian or any other grounds.

He’s been searching for answers to that question for years, particularly in the last few months because he believes that conditions are deteriorating for his family.

Along his search path, Illeya reached out to Fr. Haydock, and shared an icon from Syria with Father. “I need to find an avenue to do something,” he says.

He doesn’t know if the church can help or not and has not yet been able to reach out to federal politicians who might be able to help him.

For now, Illeya is in good shape, but he continues to worry about his family, and whether or not he can help get them out of Syria.

“I trust in God that one day I will find the answer, how to get them out of Syria to the USA.”



Fr. Haydock with Illeya Photo by John Russell

OUR
MISSION
*Led by the
Holy Spirit and
nourished by the
Eucharist,
Holy Rosary Roman
Catholic Parish
strives to be a
welcoming servant
community.*
*We celebrate the
goodness of God’s
unconditional love
through worship,
education and
service.*

*The Pastoral Council
October 17, 2007*

Save the Date!
**4th Annual
Multicultural
Celebration!**
May 31, 11:00 Mass
Reception follows

The Rosary Garden Renewed

by Jim Haley



Photo by Gary McConaghy

For one Holy Rosary sixth grader, the task was like “practicing stewardship and being a disciple of Christ who serves the community,”

Another thought it was “fun and exciting with all the people helping.”

These were just a few of the comments Malia Santucci’s students jotted down after the class pulled together for a restoration of the Rosary Garden located against the south wall of the school gym facing the upper parking lot.

It consists of round stepping stones representing the Hail Mary decade beads meandering around rhododendrons and other plants. There are square concrete stones representing the “Our Fathers” and a beautiful cross that was draped with a white sheet at Easter – a representation of the resurrection, said the sixth-grade teacher.

The refurbished garden itself is a resurrection.

Malia said that the Rosary Garden originated with 1999 Holy Rosary graduate Matthew Santi who established the garden as a tribute to the school’s namesake and as a Boy Scout Eagle project. It was meant to be an outside place to meditate and pray.

Over several years, the garden had been attended by various parishioners, but in time the weeds took over the prayerful place, and the stepping stones broke and cracked.

Many of her students, and probably many parishioners, didn’t know that this contemplative place existed, Malia said.

On a crisp fall day last year, the students came to school in work clothes, and they were armed with gardening tools. All 27 in her class pitched in to remove the grass and weeds, pull up the roots and haul some 30 carts full of debris across the parking lot to the compost dumpster.

The rhododendrons were left and some of the decorative flowers were trimmed back. The original “bead” stones were removed and new ones were purchased from the students’ donations and with the help of the Women’s Association.

In March this year, the students returned to the garden to complete their work, installing new bead stepping stones amid some new mulch brought in by parish facilities manager Gary McConaghy.

Many of the old concrete stones were left as a border between the grass and mulch on the east side of the Rosary Garden.

Topping things off, John Santucci made the cross that stands proudly at the beginning of the “Rosary”.

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Confirmation

by Jim Haley

Photos by Greg Hatch

Some 30 young men and women, mostly high school sophomores in Holy Rosary Parish, have entered a new phase in their spiritual life.

The young people completed a 12-session learning and praying regimen geared to prepare them for confirmation. They were confirmed March 12 when Auxiliary Bishop Eusebio Elizondo laid hands on and anointed each of them. A reception with their parents and sponsors was held in the Pastoral Center after the ceremony.

Getting the candidates ready to plunge into full participation in the Church went smoothly and effectively, one newly confirmed student said. “I like the program. It was easy to follow and covered many important things about the faith, giving us all the tools we needed to get through confirmation,” said Mercedes Richard, a student at Archbishop Murphy High School.

And the study was interesting,

“Angus made the classes interesting by going more in depth with each of the videos which gave us a chance to put these new aspects that we are learning about into our own lives,” added Cecelia O’Leary, a student at Bishop Blanchet High School.

Youth Minister Angus McDonnel, who was hired last summer and arrived here in August, said “The challenge is to respect (the youths’ time) while providing a meaningful, effective program.”

“Being able to learn from someone who is so deeply rooted in his faith is an enlightening experience,” said Cecelia.

He used the text “Decision Point” by the publisher Dynamic Catholic, which he said he will use again. It features 12 lessons, each accompanied by a video. The program included prayer and scripture readings as well as the videos. The class met twice monthly starting in October. “The material is all available online so if a candidate missed a session he or she could look it up,” Angus said.

The course was both theological and practical, showing that there are “tangible ways to grow in your faith, and it tackles some cultural errors such as the error of relativism.”

After class and the videos, the class broke up into smaller discussion groups to talk about what they had heard. Some of the candidates were a little shy about discussing their faith in front of the entire group, but “they got into it more in the small groups,” Angus said.



Some students were inspired by their peers and the instructor. “I feel very lucky that I had the opportunity to go through this process with some very close friends who I was able to grow in my faith with,” said Cecelia. “Being able to learn from someone who is so deeply rooted in his faith is an enlightening experience as we got to see how we can continue on in our own faith lives by completing this process.”

Mercedes said she places a high value on her faith, and the 12-lesson program only increased her fervor for it.

The youth minister is no stranger to preparing young people for confirmation. Before coming to Holy Rosary, he served as a youth minister in Bellingham and led confirmation preparation there for six years.

As well as things went this time, he hopes to make things even better next year. “I’m looking forward to having a little more time to plan the process as well as increase the formational opportunities,” Angus said. He plans to add a liturgical component, including student participation in the parish choir, doing readings at mass or ushering. Also, the candidates may be asked to participate in a parish service or ministry as well as a youth ministry activity. In addition, there could be a confirmation retreat or a day of reflection added to the curriculum.

Sponsors may be asked to do more in future years, such as joining in some of the candidate classes or in some of the required extracurricular components of the program.

“The kids were great,” Angus said. “I really enjoyed being a part of it and getting to know them.”