May turned out to be a very busy month for the Children’s Religious Education students and their families. We saw fifteen children receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion and seven receive Confirmation. We also had an end-of-the year pageant that involved over 150 people counting the catechist, children and families.Reconciliation took place on Saturday, May 5. Father Schreck and Monsignor O’Neill conveyed the sacrament in a kind and caring manner that put the children at ease. First Communion took place on Saturday, May 12. It was the second time we had First Communion on Saturday instead of Sunday because of the large number of communicants. We had plenty of time for family pictures after our First Communion Mass and before the daily Mass at noon. The smiles were everywhere. We sincerely thank Kristin Ensley and Caroline Whalen for ensuring that these young Catholics were ready to receive the body and blood of Jesus.

Confirmation was conveyed by Bishop Hartmayer on Tuesday, May 8 in the Cathedral. The intimate group of family and friends meant everyone got an up close view of the Bishop sealing the Holy Spirit on these seven newly confirmed Catholics. They worked diligently while making sure they learned the principles of our faith, completed acts of mercy for those in need and wrote a letter to the bishop asking to be confirmed in the Holy Spirit. We thank Amy Schuler for preparing our students for Confirmation. The CCW and the Knights of Columbus presented a delicious three course meal for the newly confirmed and their families. Once again they exceeded expectations. Thank you so much!

What an end-of-the year pageant. The theme was Bible Stories. We heard about the angels at Jesus’ tomb, the deep faith of Job, the Last Supper, the ten plagues of Egypt and the Good Samaritan. The children acted out each story and thrilled their parents with their biblical knowledge. Thank you to all the catechists who taught the children this year and made life-long memories from bible stories. We would also like to thank Father Schreck for his

Sacraments, Pageantry and Thanksgiving
By Janee Przybyl
Photos by Wes Ensley
strong support of the CRE program. He never hesitates to help whenever asked, visits the children in their classrooms to show that our priest is not just up at the altar, provides advice on how to improve the program and provides financial support when needed. We are blessed and grateful.

To the parents, thank you for bringing your children to us on Sunday. Remember to keep our Catholic faith alive all summer long. See you in September.
Recently some of you may have heard that we preparing an application for the Title of Minor Basilica and you may have wondered what that means.

A minor basilica is the formal designation of a church that is more notable than regular churches. The purpose of such a designation is to recognize the historic, artistic and spiritual importance of a church. It must “stand out as a center of active and pastoral liturgy,” as the Vatican document, Domus ecclesiae, explains.

To gain this designation, the church must demonstrate its notability or magnificence to the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments within the Holy See. A cathedral may be elevated to a minor basilica, a title bestowed, only by the pope, on churches of historical and spiritual importance.

There are 268 Minor Basilicas in the USA but only 18 of them are Cathedral Basilicas. In the southern region they include:

- Cathedral-Basilica of Saint Louis King of France, New Orleans, LA
- Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Mobile, AL
- Cathedral-Basilica of St. Augustine, St. Augustine, FL

In Georgia, the church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Atlanta, GA is also a Basilica.

How does a church become a Minor Basilica?, you might be wondering.

Churches wishing to petition the Holy See for the granting of the title Minor Basilica must contact the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship to obtain the questionnaire regarding the Norms for the Granting of the Title of Minor Basilica which contains 119 questions in Latin.

In its application, a church must demonstrate that it is ancient, at least in a relative sense. Or if it has not the dignity of age, it must at least be truly "basilican," that is, "regal" in character. It must, of course, be a permanent church, and solemnly consecrated; and it must be large, spacious, and rich in its appointments.

From a devotional standpoint, it must be in some way be a notable religious center and should be distinguished for its paintings, images, etc.

Those of you who love this church may read all of that and say yes, but it is not for us to say. We are preparing an application for this designation which will be submitted to the USCCB later this summer and if we get their approval, our application will be sent to the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments at the Vatican in Rome, where the final decision resides.

In a recent meeting with Fr. Schreck he commented, "We are asking the Holy Father to recognize and affirm the grace and the charisms which are received by those who visit and worship in our Cathedral.

“We seek to elevate the national and international profile of our Cathedral, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit more men and women may be attracted to Jesus Christ and come to know Him and love Him more. We do this for the glory of God.

“The Holy Father’s designation of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist as a Minor Basilica, if granted, would highlight the liturgical, pastoral and historical significance of the Church, but also the faith which it has nurtured for over one hundred and forty years.

“Honoring this beloved Church is also a way of honoring those who have gone before us, who sacrificed for its construction and maintenance over the course of decades."
The following email from Head Tour Guide John Pryor suggested that it might be an interesting article for Twin Spire and so it was:

"Yesterday, we had some visitors to the Cathedral who were related to Benjamin Keiley, the Bishop of Savannah during the reconstruction of the Cathedral after the fire. They planned to come back to visit hoping to see Monsignor O'Neill if he was available. They claimed to have lots of pictures of Bishop Keiley and took a picture of themselves standing in front of one of the lancet windows in the south transept, with their family name on it."

As it turned out, all of them did not come back but Rick Ciaccio, Bishop Keiley’s great great nephew and his wife Alice did. Rick said the woman who did not return was Liza Burdett, his cousin from London, whose great grandmother was Helen Keiley, Bishop Keiley’s niece.

Monsignor O’Neill came down to meet them and provided many details about Bishop Keiley’s tenure as the Bishop of Savannah.

When Bishop Becker came down from Wilmington, Delaware to take over as Bishop of Savannah in 1886, he obtained permission from Rome to bring young Father Keiley with him and appointed him vicar general of the diocese. He became rector of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in 1896 and after Bishop Becker’s death in 1899, Father Benjamin Keiley was appointed the seventh Bishop of Savannah. Bishop Keiley presided over the first Mass celebrated in the Undercroft of the rebuilt Cathedral on December 24, 1899. The Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist was dedicated on October 28, 1900, by Archbishop Sebastian Martinelli, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, representing His Holiness Pope Leo XIII.

It was determined that the new Cathedral should far surpass the old in beauty and the universal verdict of those who saw it confirmed that it did indeed do just that. The magnificent stained glass windows, executed by the Innsbruck Glass Makers in the Austrian Tyrol, and the exquisite, three dimensional, hand painted, wooden Stations of the Cross, carved in Munich, Germany, were greatly admired by all.

Although the rebuilding of the Cathedral was completed, its décor lacked several elements present today. Bishop Keiley and Reverend G.F.X. Schadewell, the Cathedral’s rector from 1907-1918, sought the guidance of a noted Savannah artist and parishioner, Christopher P. H. Murphy, in developing murals to adorn the Cathedral’s walls. Mr. Murphy planned the mural program and directed Paul Gutsche and his team in the painting of the murals to deliver depictions of scripture stories and portray almost fifty saints in a celestial procession. Once completed, the murals, painted in oil on canvas, were shipped from Gutsche’s...
New York studio and installed on the Cathedral’s walls just below the ceiling. The refurbished Cathedral was formally re-opened with the new artwork on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 1912. Bishop Keiley ultimately achieved a long-desired wish when he presided over the solemn consecration of the Cathedral in 1920, after it was debt-free.

Rick had many family photos of Bishop Keiley. In one of them he was pictured with Bishop Gibbons of Baltimore, a close friend, who consecrated him as Bishop of Savannah in 1900. Rick was very excited to see Bishop Keiley’s name on the St. Elizabeth of Hungary stained-glass lancet window in the south transept.

Originally he thought that the Mater Admirabilis window might have been in memory of John D. Keiley, Bishop Keiley’s brother, but subsequent documentation confirmed it was dedicated to John O. Reiley.

Monsignor O’Neill related that he had met another relative of Bishop Keiley’s a few years ago, Chris Kinsella who lives in West Virginia. Bishop Keiley was her grandfather’s uncle, Stephen Keiley, on her father’s side. He was also Rick’s grandmother’s brother. Chris donated a prayer book and a lace altar cloth that belonged to the Bishop which he gave to the Diocesan Archives.

Afterwards, Monsignor graciously took Rick and Alice over to the Catholic Cemetery to see Bishop Keiley’s grave. Rick later mentioned that it was a fun trip as Monsignor O’Neill kept them smiling and laughing the entire time.

Editor’s Note: When I met Rick and Alice Ciacco, I learned they live in the Memorial area of Houston, Texas, where Barbara and I resided for more than 20 years before moving to Savannah. It turns out we lived near each other, were both members of St. Cecelia’s Parish and their children like ours, attended Memorial High School. It is indeed a small world.
June 2018

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