

# **The faithful answer the call to donate live-saving blood**

Marylanders are taken to hospital emergency rooms in need of care every day and doctors throughout the state are ready to help save their lives, but that task might be impossible without blood donors.

Parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore are calling on the faithful to pull up their sleeves and give of themselves to make sure the supply of blood is plentiful for those in need.

St. Ignatius, Hickory, hosts the Greater Chesapeake and Potomac chapter of the American Red Cross every January and September, times when the demand for blood is traditionally at its greatest, said Debbie Czawlytko, R.N., the pastoral associate and parish nurse.

“The January blood drive comes right after the holidays, and the September one follows Labor Day weekend,” said Ms. Czawlytko, who is also a parishioner of the church. “These are times when the blood banks are usually tapped out. That’s when we call on our parishioners and others in the community to fill the need.”

Though the Red Cross health professionals actually draw the blood from the 80 or so donors who present their veins for draining, the five or more volunteers from the parish make sure they are nourished and cared for after a pint of their precious fluids have filled the plastic containers, she said.

“Our volunteers also spend weeks signing people up to make sure we get a good turnout for the blood drives,” Ms. Czawlytko said. “They are very dedicated to come in and make sure it runs smoothly.

“They know how important their work is,” she said.

The organizers at St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Pasadena, are so driven in attracting donors during all three of their blood drives each year, that they feed them pancakes and sausage in the morning and crab cakes in the afternoon.

“We’re averaging more than 100 pints every blood drive,” said Joe Turchetta of Pasadena, a St. Jane Frances de Chantal parishioner who has organized the events for the past 10 years. “The Red Cross people tell me that we have one of the busiest blood drives in the region.”