

BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH

- 2 Living According to God's Will *Forming a Conscience and Moral Code*
- 3 We Provide the Gifts, God Performs the Miracles
- 4 Parish Community Celebrates as Students Receive First Holy Communion
- 6 Getting to Know the "Summertime" Saints
- 7 Pastoral Council: *Serving an Essential Role as the "Voice of Our Parish"*

FUNERAL DINNERS MINISTRY: PROVIDING COMFORT TO THOSE WHO MOURN

Since many of us have experienced the loss of a loved one, we recognize the importance of comforting those who mourn. This kindness of being with those who grieve can take many forms — for the Funeral Dinners Ministry, it's providing and serving a warm meal to those who attend the funerals at the parish. For the family who is mourning, the process of planning and being at the funeral are busy and difficult experiences. And for many, weddings and funerals may be the only time that they see extended family. So, the funeral meal allows them to gather with the friends and family who have also lost this special person.

This ministry consists of two groups that alternate serving each funeral. Each



One group's Funeral Dinner Ministry members include (back row) Ray Micek, Bob Markvicka, Rich Stobbe, Paulette Janulewicz, Dave Janulewicz, Ken Durand; (front row) Chris Durand, Arlene Schwaderer, Billie Klimek, Terry Markvicka, Josephine Cote and Joey Janulewicz

group has 10-12 people. Some help set up the tables and prepare the meals to be served at the church. They serve the meal and clean up afterward. The ministry also has a list of parishioners to call who provide the side salads or desserts for the meal.

Mary Micek and Peg Wirth

are the coordinators for the two groups within this ministry.

"We have a standard menu that the family chooses from," Mary says. "We set up the tables with nice decorations and use real dishes and silverware. We make an effort to provide a good meal and have it set up nicely. For our volunteers,

continued on page 5

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL FORMING A CONSCIENCE AND MORAL CODE

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong — both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As

the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid fear, selfishness and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of continually forming our own consciences, and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. In turn, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.



A Letter From Our Pastor


WE PROVIDE THE GIFTS, GOD PERFORMS THE MIRACLES

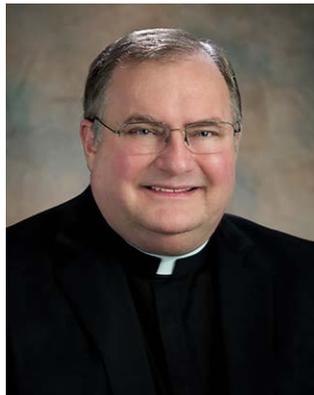
Dear Parishioners,

It is human nature to try to neatly place things into categories. If we categorize the miracles performed by Christ, the two largest groupings might fall under the headings “Healing” and “Feeding.”

This is exactly what we are about here at Blessed Sacrament. At the base of all our liturgies is the Eucharist, when we come together in communion with the Lord and with one another to be both fed and healed. Even one of Christ’s most famous miracles — the Feeding of the Multitude — involved both healing and feeding from a spiritual and a literal perspective.

The reason the large crowd gathered was because Jesus’ reputation as a healer had spread and grown. He felt compassion for that crowd, which is another way of saying He loved them and felt sorry that they were hungry due to their willingness to sit and be with Him for so long. Recognizing it was late in the day and that many of them had not eaten, Jesus literally fed them — but that day, He didn’t stop with physical nourishment. He also fed them spiritually with His words, and simultaneously, healed their wounded hearts by preaching a message of hope and forgiveness in the midst of a dark and hardened world.

The narrative of Christ taking a small amount of food and using it to feed thousands is familiar



to all of us. It is reported in all four Gospels. However, I would like to highlight one aspect of that miracle. It all started with one boy who was willing to share what little he had. Because the boy made the gift of his fishes and loaves, the Lord took it and multiplied it many times over, nourishing so many more people than what that little bit initially could.

Isn’t that what we as a parish are called to do? We make gifts of our time, our talent, and our treasure as good stewards — but nevertheless, it is God who takes those gifts and performs miracles with them. Our goal is to give what we have so that Christ might use it, multiplying it to feed, to heal and draw a multitude of people closer to Him.

The reality is that without the gifts, there can be no miracles, and without miracles, we are a hungry and broken people. Christ has come to renew, nourish, fulfill, and restore — and that, brothers and sisters, is what Christianity is all about.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Martin Egging
Pastor



PARISH COMMUNITY CELEBRATES FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Second grade is certainly an important year for the youth in Blessed Sacrament's Religious Education program, as they receive their First Holy Communion. This year on Laetare Sunday, dressed in their best, 28 second-graders received this most holy sacrament. The students received their First Reconciliation on Nov. 3. We celebrate these important occasions alongside the children and their families.

"First Communion is one of my favorite things," says Debra Wetzel, Director of Religious Formation. "I love celebrating the sacraments with youth and their families. It's so much fun working with them and their families and helping them to prepare."

Participants in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) adapted for children received their First Holy Communion at Easter Vigil. Debra worked with the students



along with several teachers and helpers to prepare the students for this sacrament.

"I want everyone to know how appreciated the catechists are," Debra says. "We couldn't do this without them."

Debra also extends heartfelt gratitude to her helper, Jean Wenzl.

As the students prepare in the classroom, Debra knows the

excitement for First Communion is building at home all year long.

"Young people are so excited about the sacraments," Debra says. "There children can't wait to receive Jesus' precious body."

Blessed Sacrament has the only local RCIA adapted for children program in the area. This year, 13 children and youth received First Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil. Debra loves

continued on page 5

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— DEBRA WETZEL, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION

ATES AS STUDENTS RECEIVE COMMUNION

helping the RCIA students form a community. The participants attend one class a week in the fall and two classes per week in the spring. The RCIA students are often receiving several sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Debra wants to make sure they are fully prepared.

“I want them to understand what they are doing,” she says. “We use the extra class to concentrate on the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Communion.”

Debra hopes parents will help get their children and youth to church each weekend to receive the Eucharist. This isn’t just a one-time sacrament — the children will hopefully receive it for the rest of their lives.

“It’s up to the parents to continue to come to Mass,” Debra says. “This should be the first of many, many times that these children and youth receive Communion.”

Debra looks forward to

continuing to work with the youth at Religious Education so they can build on what they have learned so far. She sends a big thanks to all the catechists and a big congratulations to all the first communicants.



Funeral Dinners Ministry *continued from front cover*

it doesn’t matter if they knew the person or not, everyone deserves to have a nice lunch for their family and friends to visit. And this is how we serve our parish family.”

These volunteers enjoy serving the parish together and also find the time spent together a good opportunity for fellowship.

“It gives us a stronger connection to the parish,” Mary says. “This group is just a faith-

filled group of people. Many of them are very involved in other ministries as well.”

This straightforward ministry is an important part of making the parish a caring and welcoming one. It also allows us to welcome and evangelize others who attend the funerals, but may not frequently come to church. Making them feel welcomed and provided for is a great witness to them.

Anyone who is interested in joining this ministry may contact Teri Puncochar at 308-384-0532.

GETTING TO KNOW THE “SUMMERTIME” SAINTS

School is out, and summer is now in full swing. The days are longer, warmer and filled with plenty of fun summertime activities.

This summer, as we take family vacations, gather with friends and loved ones for barbecues, spend time by the pool, and enjoy all of the usual summertime activities, we can also take the time to reflect on some of the saints who are associated with the summer.

Family vacations are perhaps the most iconic of all summertime activities. Although there is no patron saint of vacations, there are a number of saints associated with traveling. One of the most popular is St. Christopher. According to his story, St. Christopher was an extremely tall and strong man who served Christ by helping people cross an especially dangerous river. That is why many people wear St. Christopher medals while traveling — to ask for his blessing and protection.

For those of us who are taking road trips this summer, there is St. Frances of Rome, the patron saint of cars and drivers. While St. Frances died

well before cars were invented, her story says that her guardian angel went ahead of her when she traveled at night and lit the road with a lantern to keep St. Frances safe.

There are also saints we can look to when traveling by plane. St. Joseph of Cupertino was a Franciscan friar who is said to have frequently and miraculously levitated off the ground during intense prayer sessions. Because of this levitation, he is recognized as the patron saint of air travelers. St. Therese of Lisieux is also associated with aviators and flying.

If you are going on a cruise this summer, you can ask for the intercession of St. Brendan the Navigator, an Irish monk who founded the Clonfert monastery and monastic school, and is the patron saint of mariners and sailors. He and his brothers sailed the Atlantic Ocean and evangelized on a number of islands, and may have even reached the Americas.

Another favorite summer activity is swimming. Whether you choose a pool, a lake or the ocean, seek the intercession of St. Adjutor of Vernon, a knight

who was captured in the First Crusade. His captors tried to force him to give up his faith, but St. Adjutor escaped by swimming to his freedom. For this reason, he is the patron saint against drowning, and for drowning victims, sailors and swimmers.

The summer is also a time of amusement and enjoyment. One of the biggest national celebrations of the summer is the Fourth of July. For this type of summertime activity, we look to St. Barbara, the patron saint of fireworks.

There are also a number of saints with feast days during the summer. The feast day of St. Anne, the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus, is celebrated on July 26. July 31 is the feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who is also associated with stewardship. These are just two of the many saints whose feasts we celebrate this summer.

No matter what kinds of activities we choose to enjoy during the summertime, let us remember to honor the saints who have gone before us, and give their intercession for us as we walk through our own journeys of faith.



PASTORAL COUNCIL: SERVING AN ESSENTIAL ROLE AS THE “VOICE OF OUR PARISH”

For decades, Blessed Sacrament has owned a vacant lot of several acres. The Pastoral Council engaged in extensive conversation about what purpose the lot could have and unanimously decided to recommend to Fr. Marty Egging that the land is sold.

“This is an example of what the Pastoral Council does and how it functions,” says Clay Pfeifer, Pastoral Council Chair. “The ultimate decision about the land rests with the bishop, but Fr. Marty will be aided in his discussions with the bishop by our meeting minutes and input.”

The Pastoral Council exists to advise the pastor and provide insight from a cross-section of the parish that will aid him in making decisions.

“We are the voice of the parish to Fr. Marty so that he can use our knowledge to assess the pastoral needs of the parish through our ears and eyes,” Clay says. “I appreciate that our pastor listens to the Pastoral Council as he determines the best direction for the parish.”

The council holds eight meetings throughout the year in the Parish Hall, usually at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month. They discuss current parish needs and concerns and form subcommittees if needed to focus on particular topics.

“One example is the subcommittee considering the question of a parish columbarium,” Clay says. “We’re asking if there is a desire for one if it is feasible, and what the implications will

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— CLAY PFEIFER, PASTORAL COUNCIL CHAIR



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Pastoral Council *continued from page 7*

be. Another thing I appreciate about Father is that he acknowledges that he won't be at the parish forever and that if this is something the parish wants and there is a way forward, he'd be open."

Any registered parishioner, 18 or older, is welcome to join the Pastoral Council, which consists of nine members. Each year there are three open positions, and in May the council seeks nominees. If willing to serve the parish in this way, the nominees' names

go on a ballot for election.

Clay was baptized at Blessed Sacrament, and after college, he chose to return to the parish. He and his wife were married at Blessed Sacrament and are raising their family as part of the faith community.

"As the head of a young family, I have a unique perspective on parish life, and I am a critical and analytical thinker in my personal life, which I think are gifts that I bring to the council," Clay says. "I enjoy putting my gifts

and talents to work for the church and helping provide guidance is a way to put stewardship in practice."

All are welcome to discern joining the Pastoral Council, and Clay is available to share more information about what serving as part of this advisory body entails.

"There are many big churches where it might be easy to be another face in the crowd, but here at Blessed Sacrament, there is a need for us to serve, and it is truly appreciated when we do," Clay says.

If you would like more information about Blessed Sacrament's Pastoral Council, please reach out to the parish office at 308-384-0532.