

BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH



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PRIME TIME GROUP:

Building Friendships in Faith

Our Prime Time Group for parishioners 50 years of age and older has returned to its regular gathering schedule, meaning that new and old friendships can once again form, and bonds may be forged within the welcoming Blessed Sacrament faith community.

The Prime Time Group, coordinated by Sister Bernadette Engelhaupt, meets the third Wednesday of the month for lunch after the daily 12:05 p.m. Mass. The group enjoys a good meal with a freewill donation, followed by entertainment or an educational speaker. Usually, between 60 to 70 members attend.

"It's not a 'meeting,' it's a social event," Sr. Bernadette says.

The group provides a social gathering where the members can learn about opportunities for involvement in various organizations through the speakers visiting each month.

"We had speakers from the Multicultural Coalition, and we had a student who was mentored speak about the mentoring program in the schools," Sr. Bernadette says. "We had someone from Hospice speak, and someone from Memory Care, as well as the Literary Council."



Sr. Bernadette chooses the program topics from ideas that flow across her desk and that would be appealing to the group.

"Our maintenance man suggested a dulcimer group, so we had them come," she says. "One of the seniors is a guide for the Sandhill Crane Trust, so we had someone from Crane Trust speak both about Sandhill and Whooping Cranes and the organization's activities. Another parishioner who works at a local museum shared some of the styles and practices of earlier times. Then she got the folk to share some of their own stories from childhood by asking questions such as: Who went to a one-room

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STEWARDSHIP

A Need to Give

When the church needs a new roof or the local food bank needs donations, we jump at the chance to give for the sake of the need. It's part of our human nature — we identify a need, and we want to give of our time, talent and treasure to help.

But as a stewardship people, we are called to give of ourselves not simply because the Church has needs, but because each of us has *a need to give*. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "We need to give our money to individuals and families in need, to the Church, and to other worthwhile charitable organizations because giving money is good for the soul and because we need to return thanks to a loving God for all of the many blessings each of us has received" (67).

As fellow members of the Body of Christ, created in God's image, we should strive to go beyond simply co-existing with one another on earth. The life we live should be fueled by love for each other. This love should dictate how we live — by giving of ourselves.

Jesus Christ showed us the perfect example of this self-giving love when He died on the cross. His death was a completely selfless act. He gave of

Himself for our sake, offering us — through that gift — life everlasting.

As Christ's disciples, we follow His example, and we give of ourselves for the sake of others, out of love and an inherent need to give.

That's not to say that we gain nothing through our gifts. In fact, in His goodness, God sees to it that we do. Most of us have experienced what happens when we give of our time, talent or treasure. We feel as though we get more out of it than we give. If you speak to someone who serves at the soup kitchen or someone who has made it a regular practice to tithe to the Church, you are likely to find that he or she feels blessed to be able to give. As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops points out, "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 21).

Find out for yourself. Get involved in a ministry. Make a commitment to put some money in the collection basket next Sunday. Don't wait to find out if there is a need — give of yourself right now. You will be richly blessed for doing so.



*A Letter From Our Pastor***WHAT IS THE REAL PURPOSE OF OUR LIVES?**

Dear Parishioners,

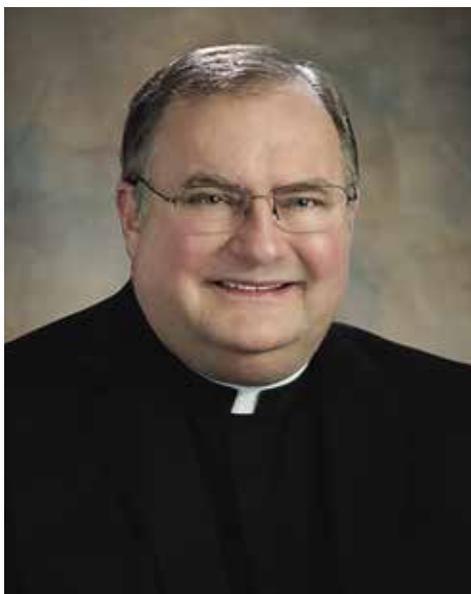
Do you ever think about your purpose in life? Even as a priest, I certainly do. There are days and times of frustration when I think, “What am I really supposed to do? What does God want me to do? Why am I here?” For eons, philosophers have considered these very questions and written about them.

But the truth is that we, as Catholics, already know the answers.

When we consider the many facets of life in our parish community, there are numerous activities and endeavors that go beyond attending Mass. From fundraising efforts, to social outreach/service, childcare and more, there are many ways in which we serve our community.

Yet, as we undertake these important pursuits — both within and outside of the parish — we must always remember that our ultimate goal is salvation. After all, the only reason we exist, the only reason our Church exists, is the same as the reason Jesus joined us and became a part of us here on earth — He came to save humanity.

We use the term the “Body of Christ” to describe the Church with Christ as the head. We are all parts of that body, and the parts of the body must move in the same direction as the body itself — it simply won’t function if the parts are moving in different directions. We are all in this together.



When our lives are complete, we do not base our success or failure on how much money we have, or whether or not we are famous. Nor does our success or failure depend upon the difference between health and sickness, or pleasure and pain, or even being nice or nasty. Rather, it is the difference between being saved and not being saved.

I often think of my family members who have passed away, and as a priest, I deal with that issue with others on a very regular basis. Sometimes, I wonder if they ever fully realized that salvation was the answer to

so many of our questions in life.

I am surrounded by memories of those who have gone before, as are almost all of you. We are apt to use the term “the communion of saints” in many ways in our Church. Someday, we will know more about the “communion of saints” and how it all works. In the meantime, we pray for everyone who has gone before us, hoping they have made it home.

Pray for me as I pray for you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Martin Egging
Pastor

THE SHAVLIK FAMILY KEEPS *“Plan Ahead and*

Growing up Lutheran, Tiffany Shavlik and her family didn’t visit other Lutheran churches, and on vacation, they wouldn’t go to church. This experience made Tiffany value the universality of the Catholic Church even more.

“One of the things I really love about the Catholic Church is that you can pretty much go anywhere, and the Mass will be familiar to you,” Tiffany says. “Some things vary a little, even from diocese to diocese, but I always feel welcome in other communities and parishes, especially when I partake in Communion.”

Tiffany and Justin Shavlik were married at Blessed Sacrament, and Tiffany participated in the RCIA process at the parish.

“They were very welcoming,” Tiffany says. “We were away for six years, and when we came back to Grand Island, we visited all the parishes in the community, and we just felt like Blessed Sacrament was home. We needed to be here.”

Today, Tiffany and her family make a point of doing their best to keep the faith and attend Mass even when they’re traveling. It takes some

foresight and intentionality.

“Even if we’re on a vacation or out of town for a weekend, it’s important to keep that structure when things get hectic,” Tiffany says. “When you’re having fun, you can put things off, so you have to consciously make that choice to put God first.”

When they prepare for vacation, Tiffany and Justin plan out their weeks, and if they are going to be gone for the weekend, they plan to attend Mass on either Saturday evening or Sunday.

“I search for Mass times before and decide which parish we’ll go to,” Tiffany says. “A lot of times when we travel, we go to visit family and are familiar with the churches in that area anyway.”

Tiffany admits that sometimes it’s difficult to get their children — Aidan, 15; Porter, 14; Ivy, 7 — excited about going to Mass during vacation. Sometimes it’s difficult for Tiffany, too.

“I struggle, and even when we’re home, the kids can feel like it’s a chore,” Tiffany says. “I talk to them about how we have so many hours during the week, and we can use at least one hour to focus on



The Shavlik family — (from left) Aidan, Tiffany, Justin, beloved family dog Murphy, and Porter



The Shavlik family ski trip — (from left) Porter, Justin, Ivy, Aidan, and Tiffany

FAITH AT THE FOREFRONT

Put God First

God. We need to give God time and respect.”

This summer, we could reframe going to Mass during vacation as a time to be still together in the midst of activities and general busyness.

“Take a break and let yourself and your family be in the moment at Mass,” Tiffany says. “Really, the most important thing is just to plan ahead. Then this one hour together can help you reset and appreciate that time you have as a family.”

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Some things vary a little, even from diocese to diocese, but I always feel welcome in other communities and parishes, especially when I partake in Communion.” — TIFFANY SHAVLIK



The Shavlik children — (from left) Aidan, Ivy, and Porter

PRIME TIME GROUP

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school? or “Did anyone farm with horses?”

As the Prime Time members build their bonds in their church community, they are deepening their faith as they see each other in church being a model others can imitate.

Joining the group is easy. A signup sheet is placed in the church gathering area before each social. The signup is necessary to have a headcount for the lunch.

The lunch is prepared by volunteers, and anyone wanting to help is most welcome. In addition, volunteers are needed to decorate the tables each month. Suggestions for programs are also welcome.

“These are the primary ways to get involved,” Sr. Bernadette says.



Members of our Prime Time Group gather for a meal. The group offers an opportunity for senior members of the parish to socialize and make new friends.

***If you would like to join, or to volunteer,
please call Sister Bernadette Engelhaupt at 308-384-0532, ext. 202.***

WHAT DOES “RED, WHITE, AND BLUE” MEAN TO YOU?

Although our nation’s real independence began at the end of the Revolutionary War on Sept. 3, 1783, President John Adams originally thought that the anniversary would be marked on July 2, the day in 1776 when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence from Great Britain. Ultimately, Americans chose to commemorate the birthday of the United States on July 4, the day on which the Declaration of Independence was adopted and approved.

What does this mean for us as Roman Catholics? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, “The love and service of one’s country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity” (2239).

As a parish community, we are called by God to respond to this duty to the best of our ability. So, where do we start?

The Second Vatican Council document, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, states that “In their patriotism and in their fidelity to their civic duties, Catholics will feel themselves bound to promote the true common good: they will make the weight of their convictions so influential that, as a result, civil authority will be justly exercised and laws will accord with moral precepts and the common good” (14).

By living our lay vocation and permeating the secular world with Catholic values, we genuinely honor God and neighbor. As “lamps shining before men,” we need to let our moral convictions – no matter the courage it may take – shine forth to be a guiding light for the world, often left vulnerable in the darkness.

Our commitment to a rightly ordered Catholic patriotism begins with our commitment to the formation of our Christian conscience. We must enrich ourselves with the Church’s teachings on the value of human life, the sacred institution of family, Catholic social and moral teachings, Catholic civil duties, and anything that further pertains to the living out of our Catholic faith in our nation today.

Once we have done this, we will be able to act upon it. As St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Today, more than ever, we need to pray for the light to know the will of God, for the love to accept the will of God, for the way to do the will of God.”

This year, let us give our hearts to carrying out this mission of an authentic Catholic patriotism under God. Our nation was founded under God. Let us not allow this precious heritage, this source of true life and liberty, to be lost. Its preservation relies on each one of us.



OUR MULTIMEDIA MINISTRY BRINGS MASS LIVESTREAM TO MANY

Last year, the global pandemic that began changing the way Americans live — and worship — was an entirely unprecedented event. Blessed Sacrament, like all Catholic churches across the world, had to adapt to new ways of serving God’s people. Parishioner Clay Pfeifer quickly sprang into action to get our Masses online last March. Since then, Clay, Darin Jacobsen, Sheridan Puncochar, and Sandra Bermudez have been volunteering their time to ensure that our Mass livestreams go off without a hitch. Now, this group is hoping to expand and find more parishioners interested in serving with the Multimedia Ministry!

For each livestreamed Mass at Blessed Sacrament, a member of the Multimedia Ministry monitors the sound settings and controls the cameras for the recording. The cameras zoom in and out and move on a swivel to follow the parts of the Mass as they unfold. Clay is hopeful that the parish might soon receive the funding necessary to purchase a third livestream camera.

“Someone who has been viewing Mass knows that we have to do the zooming and watch the camera movement,” Clay says. “We have it fine-tuned to a slow swivel now, but a third



High school student and parishioner Sheridan Puncochar monitors the video and audio feeds during a Mass livestream.

camera would pretty much eliminate that process because you could stay one step ahead in the Mass and make a quick cut.”

Over the past year, Clay has heard many stories about how people have felt blessed by the opportunity to watch the livestream Mass in their homes. One homebound parishioner is a faithful viewer of the Saturday night Mass. This is the Mass that her husband and mother attend each week, and she is thankful to now be able to participate in the Mass “with” her loved ones for the first time

in years.

Hearing about parishioners like this one makes this special ministry even more worthwhile for Clay.

“It’s a rewarding experience,” he says. “It’s also a selfish one, too, because I enjoy this kind of work and there is personal satisfaction in doing something I’m able to do. It’s great knowing that this is a long-term ministry enabling our homebound parishioners to participate in the Mass from the nursing home or their living room because they’re not able to attend physically.”

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518 W. State Street
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 384-0532
www.blsachurch.net

OUR MULTIMEDIA MINISTRY *continued from page 7*

As he checks the viewer metrics of our livestreamed Masses each week, Clay is always pleased to see that people from outside our immediate area are also reaping the benefits of our online liturgies. In addition to attracting viewers from Fr. Marty Egging's hometown and former faith communities, each week typically shows a sprinkling of views from around

the country—from Chicago to Texas to Florida!

The opportunity to reach people in various places and walks of life is a truly precious gift for our parish. It is our prayer that all those who participate in one of our livestreamed Masses will experience Christ, His Church, and His love in a powerful way.

"It's part of growing the Body

of Christ and meeting the needs of all the souls that belong to Blessed Sacrament, not just those able to get themselves to church," Clay says. "The online Mass is not a substitute — if you can be there in person, you need to be. That's the ultimate experience of the Mass and the highest form of prayer there is. But for those who aren't able to be there, this is the next best thing."

Are you interested in learning more about the Multimedia Ministry? All parishioners are welcome to share their talents with us! No specific technical experience is required — training and support is provided. This is a particularly great opportunity for high school students to become more involved in parish life. For more information, please contact Teri Puncochar in the parish office at 308-384-0532 or bscc_1@msn.com.