

BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH

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MEET PARISHIONER **ELIZABETH PFEIFER:** *Embracing the Gifts of Catholic Motherhood*

Nowadays, being a faithful Catholic mother isn't an easy job. But according to Elizabeth Pfeifer, it's definitely a very important and inspiring one that draws one's heart and soul closer to Christ.

"I want to raise my children to be the best people they can be, and give them all the support that I can," she says. "Being a Catholic mother has helped me grow in my faith because it has brought me to understand the father role of God, and what it means for us to be His children. I have grown more dependent on Him, and have learned to rely on prayer more. Overall, I believe that motherhood has made me less selfish and more giving. When you really love your children, you just naturally give your time to them."

Elizabeth and her husband, Clay, have three children — Ava, 7; Leo, 5; and Eli, 3. Together, Elizabeth and Clay devote a lot of their time, talent, and treasure to making their home a "domestic church" where God's love reigns. As the saying goes, true stewardship "starts at home."



Elizabeth and Clay Pfeifer with their children, Leo (5), Eli (3) and Ava (7)

"We teach our children to be kind and apologize to one another if they have done something wrong," she says. "We also have them clean up their own dishes after meals, tidy up their rooms and take care of their things. We have a large children's Bible at home, and Leo has really been getting into it. It is amazing how much he has been learning!"

By communicating openly and honestly

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THE BIBLE THE TEXTBOOK OF STEWARDSHIP

Have you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there *is* such a manual — the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the “textbook of stewardship,” the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, conveyed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: “When you have come into the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have taken possession and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land the LORD, your God, is giving you; put them in a basket and go to the place which the LORD, your God, will choose as the dwelling place for his name... ‘Now, therefore, I have brought the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, LORD, have given me.’ You shall set them before the LORD, your God, and you shall bow down before the LORD, your God” (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he says, “In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we

must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefitted from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church — St. Paul — preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.

A Letter From Our Pastor

THE MONTH OF MARY: *A Time for Celebration and Joy*

Dear Parishioners,

In the Catholic Church, we designate a particular devotion for each month — and May is when we honor our Blessed Mother Mary. Thus, this is a good time for us to think about and concentrate on our devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps we can add a few more Marian prayers to our daily routine. Praying the Rosary might be even more important. Of course, that assumes that daily prayer is part of our daily routine — which it should be.

Our Blessed Mother is important to our faith and our Church. Her willingness to serve in a way that allowed the Lord to take human form made our salvation a possibility. Because of her complete trust in God, she lived her life free from sin, and after her life, she was assumed into heaven by the power of God and crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

She is, of course, not divine. We worship only our Lord Jesus Christ, but we honor Mary as a saint, and also in many other ways. We honor God when we remember the role of Mary in our salvation. Devotion to Mary always leads to Jesus Christ Himself.

Mary was joyous when she said “yes” to God. That is the kind of joy we need to seek — and we, too, must say “yes” to the Lord. Let us be grateful to Mary for bringing us her Son. This is why we crown her on our Catholic version of Mother’s Day. Through Mary, we are given an invitation into our Catholic faith. Her feminine presence and the safety of her motherhood may help us grow.

For most of us, this time of year is a month of growth in relation to nature. It is difficult not to have May as one of our favorite months for so many reasons. May is a beautiful time. We are called to make it even more beautiful, and we can do that as we serve and love one another.

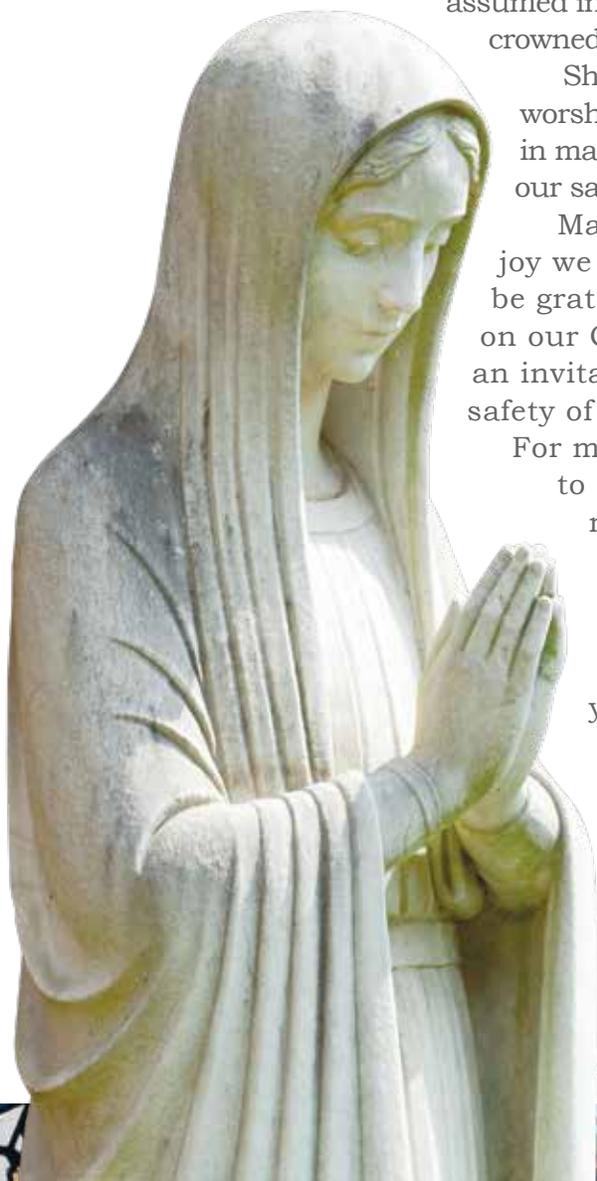
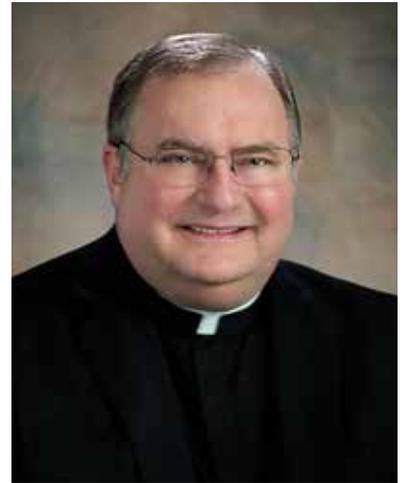
I am deeply blessed to be your pastor. I may say that often, but it is true. My priesthood has been a blessing and serving you all has made that blessing even more significant.

I pray for you daily. Please pray for me. God bless you and keep you always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Martin Egging
Pastor



MOVING FORWARD WITH OUR NEW *A VALUABLE TOOL*

Don't say you haven't been told! This year, at the end of 2022, we are hoping to have a new updated parish pictorial directory for everyone in the parish. Many people may raise the question, "Why do we even need a directory in this age of COVID and computers and everything else?" Quite simply, a pictorial directory of the parish is really a snapshot of our families and our parish that others may look back upon in the future and that we may use in the present.



Often, there are concerns that "I don't want a picture of myself," but the reality is that the picture in the pictorial directory is more for your friends and neighbors and the parish family than for you. The ones who use this the most often are volunteer leaders, the ministers of the parish, and the parish office. Too often, when a new priest or Sister or any other minister moves into the parish, it takes a long time to connect names and faces. New members of our parish also need a way to connect names and faces. I imagine that the same is true for you at home. How often have I heard people say, "Now who is that person who sits three pews behind me?" It is nice to have a complete pictorial directory with as many pictures as possible, that we can thumb through and can find your portrait. This is why, when a directory is done, we highly encourage everyone to have their picture taken. The more complete our directory, the more helpful it is to each person in the parish.

So, how much will this cost the parish to do this project? The entire project will be free to the parishioners unless you want to order pictures for your family and friends. And you need not order more than you actually want. So, if you do not want any, feel free not to order any. However, there are free gifts for everyone who has their picture taken. Each family will receive an 8 x 10 portrait at no charge, as well as a copy of the directory for each family. You also will be given a phone application that will assist you in looking up people and their addresses from the parish with your own personal password so that no private information can be shared. If you wish any of your personal information not to be in the

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

ROL AND KEEPSAKE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

directory, you can request this. A convenient benefit to the phone application is that it will give you directions to the address of the person you are trying to find. Remember, if you have never done this before, it will take some practice to get good at it.

Here is when we will make appointments for having our pictures taken. We will begin in the last week of July, from July 28 to July 31. The weekdays will be scheduled in the late afternoon and evenings. Saturdays will begin in the morning and end Saturday later afternoon; on Sunday, pictures will be taken from early afternoon to evening. Once the July dates are filled, then we will put the next appointments in the last week of August. We will not fill

August until July is full. And likewise, we will not fill September dates until August is full. We are hoping that this avoids, to the best of our ability, all the activities that our parish family is involved in, from sporting events to family events, etc. These dates will all be fine-tuned and you will receive a notice via the bulletin, Facebook, and our website.

This is not just a nice thing for our parish to do—it is a way that we can acknowledge that we are one in the Body of Christ. We look forward to your cooperation and participation in this project for the betterment of the entire parish community. Let us thank you prior to its completion, for we know you will do the best you can do!

MEET PARISHIONER ELIZABETH PFEIFER

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with their children, Clay and Elizabeth impart a love for Christ and others to their children in a way they will never forget.

“Every night we ask them how their day went and see if they had any issues with other children,” Elizabeth says. “If so, we talk about why they had that issue, and how they can best deal with it in the future. We encourage them not to imitate bad behavior, but instead try to help the other child behave better.”

Over the years, Elizabeth has found that by having heart-to-heart talks with her children, she can gently lead them to Jesus.

“I talk through their feelings with them,” she says. “For example, when any of my children struggle with anxiety, I have been teaching them how to stop and say a prayer asking God to help them. I want them to know that even

though their parents may not always be with them, God always is.”

Clay and Elizabeth also appreciate the opportunity to be good role models for their children by being generous servants and integral members of our parish family. Every Wednesday, their older two children attend Religious Education, and Clay and Elizabeth teach a high school Religious Education class. Elizabeth is in our parish choir, while Clay heads up the Livestreaming Ministry, serves on the Parish Council, and serves as Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus.

“We want to show our children how important it is to help out at your church and in your community,” Elizabeth says. “It makes a great impact on them to see us volunteering, and it inspires them to do so also.”



THE ROSARY: OUR LADY'S LASSO

There was a priest who once said, “It is no coincidence that rosaries look like lassos, as Our Lady wraps them around lost souls and pulls them out of the depths of hell.”

This thought is comforting but provokes inquiry — what exactly is the Rosary, how does one pray it, and why should one pray it?

Since May is the month of Mary, this is a great time to consider the theology behind this intense spiritual weapon.

There are two putative origins of the Rosary. For many centuries, it was believed that the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Dominic and exhorted him to encourage the use of the Angelic Salutation — or Hail Mary — for the conversion of souls and comfort of the afflicted. Modern scholarship traces the Rosary back to Irish monasticism of the ninth century. Monks would pray all 150 psalms or “psalters” every day, a form of prayer too complicated for uneducated laypeople without access to copies of Scripture. So, many began reciting the Lord’s Prayer or the Angelic Salutation in response to each psalm, keeping count with pebbles or a knotted rope. Through many centuries, the Rosary evolved into three sets of five mysteries, each mystery consisting of 10 Angelic Salutations and one Lord’s Prayer recited while meditating upon the life, death or glory of Jesus Christ.

In *The Secret of the Rosary*, St. Louis de Montfort expounds the dynamics of the Rosary. The prayer consists of both vocal or exterior prayer, and meditative or interior prayer. The first vocal component of the Rosary, the Creed, is important because faith is “the foundation of all Christian virtues, of all eternal virtues, and also of all prayers that are pleasing to Almighty God.” The



Lord’s Prayer is the “perfect prayer” to the God of heaven because it was authored by Christ, is free of all human limitations, and “contains all the duties we owe to God, the acts of all the virtues, and the petitions for all our spiritual and corporal needs.” The Hail Mary blesses the name of Mary and her Divine Son and implores her powerful

intercession as mediatrix of graces.

But the Rosary is not simply a physical incantation. Vocal prayer is accompanied by contemplation of the mysteries of Christ’s life and the virtues of the Virgin Mary. It is by lifting the incorporeal soul in prayer that one quiets the passions, tastes the peace of Christ, marvels at His loving plans and promises, and grows in the desire to emulate Him and His sinless mother. Because the soul animates the body, a strengthened soul means nobility of action and a will that is commensurate with the will of God. As St. Louis de Montfort says, “The Rosary is a blessed blending of mental and vocal prayer by which we honor and learn to imitate the mysteries and the virtues of the life, death, passion and glory of Jesus and Mary.” The Rosary’s emphasis on both vocal and meditative prayer caters to man’s nature as an embodied soul — one’s entire being, both physical and spiritual, cries out to God in praise, repentance, thanksgiving and supplication.

Thus, it is no surprise that the magisterium and countless saints have encouraged devotion to the Rosary. Pope St. John Paul II said of the prayer, “The Rosary is my favorite prayer, marvelous in its simplicity and its depth.” The late pontiff also added five more “luminous” mysteries to the Rosary to help the faithful meditate upon significant moments in Christ’s earthly ministry.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY:

A Valuable Way of Giving to Our Community

When Julie Markvicka first moved to Grand Island, she got involved with a Habitat for Humanity build. Julie connected with the work and the mission of Habitat for Humanity, and soon she was joining committees and, ultimately, the Habitat for Humanity board. While Habitat was where she felt connected, Julie was also searching for a Catholic Church to call home. As she got to know Blessed Sacrament, she found out that the parish was involved with Habitat for Humanity.

“It was great for me to get to meet people in the parish the first time I built with Blessed Sacrament,” Julie says. “At first I felt more

connected with Habitat than the church, but then I realized there were people I worked with as a teacher who built and also went to Blessed Sacrament.”

Building with Habitat for Humanity gave Julie valuable community and purpose. The mission of the organization resonated with her.

“When I met my husband, Marty, he saw how important this was and the heart I had by how I was involved in Habitat,” Julie says. “Ultimately, it’s how I built my life here in Grand Island.”

After the couple had their second son, Julie took a step back from being on the board and Marty stepped up to join the board and the building committee.

Through Habitat for Humanity, volunteers of all skill levels help build homes for families who have qualified for an interest-free loan. The family puts 500 hours of work into the home alongside the volunteers. There are always at least three professionals onsite to help guide the volunteers. Julie learned a lot from the construction manager that mentored her.

“He takes an educational approach,” Julie says. “He doesn’t do the work for you, but shows you how to do it.”

Volunteers with any skill capacity are needed. There is a job onsite for





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everyone and volunteers are needed to provide a meal for the workers. The work takes place on a Saturday and each volunteer group picks up where the last group left off. Many area churches work together to build a house.

“It’s good to keep this connection with the families that buy the Habitat homes,” Julie says. “Many of them already have churches and are strong in their faith, but it’s important for them to see how we share faith and are one community coming together to be stronger.”

Our parish’s next build day will be Saturday, June 11. Volunteers are needed to build and provide food for this full-day event.

“When you take something on that gives back to the community, the time goes by quickly and you don’t see it as lost because it’s returned tenfold,” Julie says. “Whether it’s Habitat for Humanity or one of our other amazing nonprofits, I think that reaching out and giving more of yourself to the community is important.”

There will be sign-up sheets for the June 11 build in the gathering area of the church. Please contact Julie Markvicka at 402-440-5254 with questions or to help with fundraising.