

# BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## THE HOSPITALITY MINISTRY:

*Living out the Pillar of Hospitality  
by Welcoming Parishioners and Guests*

**A**s a stewardship community, we recognize the Pillars of Parish Stewardship as Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Here at Blessed Sacrament, the Liturgical Ministry of Hospitality works lovingly to fulfill that first pillar. When one arrives at Church, the first person one often encounters is a Hospitality Minister with a smiling face and a welcome greeting as he/she opens the door to make it easy for you. They answer questions and give any directions needed — such as where to find the closest restroom, or where to sit if one needs to have Communion brought to them because they cannot, or find it difficult to, walk in the Communion line.

During the Mass, the Hospitality Ministers keep an eye out for any crisis that might happen, like someone having a medical incident, and respond quickly with appropriate action.

Other responsibilities of the Hospitality Ministers include making sure bulletins are available at all the doors (and that means sometimes pulling an overabundance from one door to a door where they are running short), taking the collection to the safe, and picking up in the Church after Mass so it is ready for the next Mass.

Bob Markvicka started in this ministry 30 years ago when it was called being an usher. It has been a



*Bob Markvicka and his wife, Terry, both believe being involved at Blessed Sacrament is their duty.*

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## THE USHER MINISTRY *continued from front cover*

permanent ministry for him, ever since someone asked him to fill in all those years ago. In those 30 years of Bob's ministry, we have realized the ministry encompasses what the usher used to do, along with making the Church feel like a welcoming place.

"Once you volunteer, you get hooked," Bob says. "The camaraderie with the other Hospitality Ministers is really good."

Bob says the group he serves with at the 5:30 p.m. Saturday night Mass even gathers socially outside of Mass. Several of those Hospitality Ministers also serve on the same Funeral Ministry group.

At Blessed Sacrament, four hospitality ministers are needed at each Mass since we have two at each set of doors. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were two groups of hospitality ministers and they alternated months. Since the pandemic began, some of the ministers have stepped down, so now is a great time to step up to help make Blessed Sacrament Church a very welcoming place.

"It would be nice to see some younger people step up," Bob says. "Most of our Hospitality Ministers are older."

Bob and his wife, Terry, both believe being involved at Blessed Sacrament is their duty. They both serve in the Funeral Dinner Ministry and help with folding bulletins.

"If everybody would do their part, that would help get all the work done," Bob says.

Raised in Loup City, Neb., Bob regards hospitality ministry as something of a family affair — he had two uncles who were old-time ushers when he was a kid. Having been a member at Blessed Sacrament for about 50 years, Bob feels blessed to serve.

"Besides," he says, "this is a good way to meet parishioners and to get to know new people."

Hospitality Ministers are one of the reasons so many newcomers and visitors find Blessed Sacrament a welcoming place — a place where they can feel at home.



*At Blessed Sacrament, four Hospitality Ministers are needed at each Mass since we have two at each door.*



*Hospitality Ministers are one the reasons so many newcomers and visitors find Blessed Sacrament a welcoming place.*

*If you would like to get involved as an usher, call the parish office at 308-384-0532.*

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# SEPTEMBER

## An Ongoing Opportunity to Change the World

Dear Parishioners,

In his letters, St. Paul often began by greeting his “brothers and sisters.” Every time I read one of these letters, it reminds me that you and I truly are sisters and brothers in the Body of Christ, the Church, but especially here in our parish. We need to understand that we are indeed a family, and the way we see and treat one another is fundamental to the health and happiness of this family.

Our spiritual family doesn’t stop at the walls of our church, but rather, extends to include every man and woman created in God’s image and likeness. You may be familiar with the term “Catholic Social Teaching,” part of which is built on a commitment to the poor. These are the beliefs that guide Catholics on how to apply the faith to all aspects of life, and they lay the framework for the Church’s teachings on the dignity and sacredness of human life. Once we make a commitment to be disciples of Jesus and pursue stewardship as a way of life, the principles of Catholic Social Teaching become very easy to incorporate into our lives.

Catholic Social Teaching has been around since those first followers of Jesus tried to balance their new faith with the realities of living in a world of Roman oppression. Jesus reminded His disciples then, just as He reminds us now, that caring for and administering to the poor should be at the core of all we do. Recall when the Lord said in Matthew, “For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a



stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked and you gave me clothing; I was ill and you cared for me; I was in prison and you visited me.”

This is our foundation as we seek to embody mercy and justice to our brothers and sisters in the human family and should be one of our major goals as a faith community. Many of our parish ministries provide an opportunity for us to do just as Jesus asked — to serve those most in need. As we move into the fall season, with Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas soon to follow, now

is a good time for us to recommit ourselves to addressing the needs we see around us — both as a parish society and as individuals.

I am proud of our collective efforts in assisting and serving the poor, but I also know that we can do more. Many of us personally need to get involved in these efforts. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has a great love and regard for the poor and, like Jesus, he reminds us often of what we need to do. Pope Francis once said in a homily, “The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty.” Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Martin Egging  
Pastor

## OUR ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP

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**Y**ou have to take care of yourself before you can take care of those you love. This rationale is difficult for many of us to accept. Mothers and fathers routinely place the needs of their children before their own; soldiers at war often throw their own safety to the wind in the interest of protecting their fellow soldiers. The story of Jesus also focuses on giving to others. If Christ calls us to imitate Him – to become completely selfless – then it would seem that focusing on ourselves might counteract our efforts as Christians.

Nevertheless, as we enter into our annual Stewardship Renewal, Fr. Marty Egging is asking us all to focus a bit more on ourselves. No, he's not encouraging self-centeredness; he's asking us to examine our own lives and determine the areas that are in need of growth. Before the stewardship way of life can totally transform our parish, it must begin in each of our hearts. As each individual's spiritual life blossoms and grows, so will our parish as a whole. Will you plant the seed of stewardship in your own heart?

***Commitment Weekend is  
Sept. 25-26. Don't forget to bring  
your Commitment Card to Mass!***

### **How do I use my Commitment Card?**

Your commitment card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

**Time Section:** Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

**Talent Section:** You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to mark the correct number box so we know which member of the family is signing up for the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

**Treasure Section:** Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving five percent of your income to Blessed Sacrament.

### **Is your prayer life in need of a tune-up?**

Honestly ask yourself, "How much time do I spend in prayer each week?" The answer is probably a bit embarrassing. Everyone wants to spend more time in prayer, but there's just never enough time to do everything we want to do. Good intentions are just that: intentions. This year, as you're discerning how you will offer your time to God, resolve to follow through with your commitments. Consider each moment you spend in prayer as nourishment for your soul. The spiritual health of our parish is only as strong as the sum of its parts (individual parishioners).

### **Is your level of parish involvement in need of a boost?**

We give our talents back to God when we get involved in ministries at Blessed Sacrament. And, with a host of ministries to choose from, there's something for everyone. Sure, ministries give parishioners opportunities to serve others in the community, but they also benefit those in the ministry itself. Ask anyone who actively participates in a ministry at Blessed Sacrament, "Why do you enjoy serving in this way?" They'll probably say, "I get more out of the ministry than the people I serve." This year, as you're discerning how you will offer your talents to God, consider signing up for a ministry that may benefit you,



# RENEWAL

## *Thanking God for the Blessings He Has Bestowed on Us*

like a Bible study, prayer group, or retreat. Or, contribute to an outreach ministry where your good deeds not only help others in the community but also give you feelings of satisfaction and thankfulness.

### **Do you give a percentage of your income to the offertory?**

It may be hard to see offertory giving as a way to “help yourself,” but when we approach the subject from a spiritual viewpoint, it can lead to individual spiritual growth and an increase in faith. Even the savviest business person worries about his or her personal finances from time to time. Adding a weekly offertory check to the list of monthly bills may seem crazy but, ultimately, sacrificial giving forces us to cut unnecessary spending, create a budget, and have faith that God will help us make it through the month. All of these are good things for each of us, individually. After faithfully giving to the offertory for a few months, many Catholics find that it’s not only possible to give a weekly offering, but that the fruits of their gift far outweigh the expense.

At Blessed Sacrament, we ask that you give five percent to our parish, one percent to the diocese, and four percent to other charities. Why a percentage of income? First, because the tithe (10 percent) is a scriptural benchmark that the Church has honored for centuries (see Malachi 3:10). Secondly, we give a percentage of income because it is a common-sense standard by which everyone can equitably support the parish. Most of all, we give because we believe God comes first in everything, even finances.

TRANSFORMED THROUGH CHRIST

BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH  
2021 Commitment Card

#1. First & Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSFORMED THROUGH CHRIST

*“Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”*

BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH • 2021 Stewardship Renewal

#1. First & Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please bring this card to Mass on September 25/26,  
or mail using the envelope provided. Thank You.

*Every parish family receives a special “Stewardship Package” in the mail that further explains our parish’s vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your commitment card.*

## AN INSIDE LOOK AT OUR MEN'S EARLY MORNING GROUP

*Striving to Move Forward on the Faith Journey*

**F**or nearly 20 years, men from Blessed Sacrament have met early on Thursday mornings to pray together and read relevant books to help them be better fathers and better men.

"I don't know that anyone ever gets it all figured out, but we strive to move forward, not stand still," says Greg Rempe.

"You could tend to go backward if you stand still. This is a safe place and what gets said there stays there."

Greg Rempe moved to Grand Island with his family around 1993, and they went to one parish for Mass on Sunday and then another — they chose Blessed Sacrament. When Fr. Don Larmore was still Pastor, he decided to start a men's group that would meet Thursday mornings beginning at 6:30 a.m. and that was open to everybody.

"Four or five men and I were with the group when it started and are still with it — or were, until we shut it down during COVID," Greg says. "But it went for a long time. When we started it, it just clicked and worked, and we kept meeting."

On average, 10 men a week met for an hour in the North Breakout Room in the Parish Center, and then they ended up meeting in the Family Room in Blessed Sacrament.

"We would search for books that would help us grow spiritually and help us where we were in our lives," Greg says. "We were being truthful with each other and upfront. It was great camaraderie."

Some of the authors they read together were



Basil Pennington and Richard Rohr, founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation.

"It wasn't about reading the books quickly," Greg says. "The point was to go through the books and then discuss them and think about how we all interpreted them. Sometimes it would take us a year or longer to

get through a book."

Over the years, the group would grow and change with different people coming and going.

"It never got too big," Greg says. "Everybody could get a chance to share if they wanted to."

The group has yet to determine if and when it will begin to meet again. Greg wonders if other men from the parish have ideas about what the group would read or what the group would be structured around.

"I've been thinking about the fall and how we might open it back up," Greg says. "I wonder if there isn't another way that we can do this? It would be nice to have some young men in the group, but it's probably hard for young men to meet at that time."

If anyone from the faith community has ideas about how to restart this longstanding parish ministry for men, please reach out to Greg to have a conversation.

"I've been thinking about what will draw men in and help them participate," Greg says. "It's a great ministry. You can put spirituality on the back burner, but this helps us keep that front and center with each other."

*If you would like more information about the Men's Early Morning Group at Blessed Sacrament, please reach out to Greg Rempe at 308-390-4028.*

# THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

## *Invites Parishioners to Live their Faith Daily*

When the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops composed *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, their 1992 Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, they offered a wonderful description of why stewardship is such an important part of living as an intentional disciple of Jesus: "Stewardship is an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives. Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be." (5)

In order to reinforce our dedication to stewardship here at Blessed Sacrament, our parish has a Stewardship Committee. This group seeks to help the church reach out to parishioners and help make active stewardship a part of their everyday lives.

As our Stewardship Committee members encourage greater participation in parish life, they often find that their own commitment to discipleship is strengthened.

"I think they are coming to a better understanding of the parish and what's involved in a parish, and a better understanding of stewardship," says Stewardship Committee facilitator Sister Bernadette Engelhaupt. "And simply because they're involved in the parish, I think they feel a greater sense of ownership."

Recognizing the beauty of a full and active faith life, our Stewardship Committee seeks to promote discipleship among parishioners in various ways. Their biggest yearly undertaking takes place every fall when committee members lead our parishioners in making and renewing their commitments to participate in various parish events and ministries through the annual Stewardship Renewal.

"Basically, a lot of what we've been doing this year is looking at the ministry catalog and the commitment card and seeing how it fits our parish," Sr. Bernadette says. "What are the



*The Blessed Sacrament Stewardship Committee — (from left) Fr. Marty Egging, Andy Blake, Sr. Bernadette Engelhaupt, Jim Lehl, Matthew Farrell and Bobbie Gonzales*

ministries that we need to add to the catalog? Which ones, because of new staff handling them, can drop off? We're also looking at where we need to shore up ministries. Last year, we did some extra things with commitment Sunday and made a trifold. We're just trying to find some creative ways to encourage people to participate in the ministries, the signups, and the time, talent, and treasure."

Aiding Blessed Sacrament in this task is the broad cross-section of parishioners represented by our Stewardship Committee. The four parishioners currently serving on the committee alongside Sr. Bernadette and Fr. Marty Egging come from all walks of life. This helps the committee identify various needs in our faith community.

"We have one committee member who is retired, one in their 60s working full-time, one with kids in middle and high school, and one parent of toddlers," Sr. Bernadette says. "So we're getting their take on how things are perceived at different stages of life and busyness. We just work together to figure out the best way to get things

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## The Stewardship Committee *continued from page 7*

across to the parish and how to get people to participate.”

As we begin to gear up for another stewardship renewal next month, our Stewardship Committee looks forward to continuing to help the parish spread the message about the beauty and rewards found in the commitment to share our time, talent, and treasure in thanks for God’s abundant blessings.

“This is what the parish is about,” Sr. Bernadette says. “One of the reasons the church

is here is to be the presence of Christ in the world, and I think a part of that is to be a place of support to people growing in their faith and growing in relationship with God, which also means growing in relationship with the faith community, the parish and, ultimately, the universal Church. Unless people invest in it, nothing happens — within them or within the bigger faith community. It’s only where we invest ourselves that we are transformed and become who we are created to be.”

*Interested in learning more about serving on our Stewardship Committee? The committee is currently seeking additional members! The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month. For more information, please contact Sr. Bernadette Engelhaupt in the parish office at 308-384-0532, ext. 202, or by email at [blsachurchpa@yahoo.com](mailto:blsachurchpa@yahoo.com).*