

BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH

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MEET BRIAN AND CHRIS MCCARRAHER *FINDING HOME AND A FAITHFUL COMMUNITY BUILT ON SERVICE*

Chris and Brian McCarraher know that Blessed Sacrament in built on a strong faith community, and they do their part to contribute to that community. After all, this parish is home — a home they've been attending for the past 19 years.

The couple is involved because they believe their first duty in life is to the Lord.

"We want to make the Mass run as smoothly and seamlessly as possible for Fr. Marty Egging and the other parishioners," Chris says.

Chris is a past member of the Parish Council, has taught Religious Education, and was also part of the Godparent group. She is an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, along with Brian, and is a member of the Catholic



Brian and Chris McCarraher and family

Daughters of the Americas. Brian formerly assisted with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and is a member of the Knights of Columbus.

"We enjoy the camaraderie and friendships we have developed through the various areas we are involved in," Chris says.

The couple has three grown children — Alex, Caitlyn and Sara. When the McCarraher children were at home and active in the parish, they were altar servers, worked in sound ministry, assisted with Religious Education, and served as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion after being confirmed.

It was, and continues to be important to Chris and Brian that their family actively participates in the Mass.

"We enjoy serving people," Chris says. "We try to serve people as God intends for us to do."

When service opportunities arise at Blessed Sacrament, whether Habitat for Humanity or the parish festival, Chris and Brian help where they can.

"It is how we try to live out

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SETTING AN EXAMPLE OF STEWARDSHIP FOR OUR CHILDREN

As we strive to live as grateful stewards, we must remember that each of us has a responsibility to help our youngest parishioners learn what it means to live as a disciple of Christ. Jesus Himself told the disciples, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:14). Christ wants children to grow closer to Him and to become His disciples, and parents are responsible for helping to lead their children to this end. The Rite of Baptism reminds us that parents are “the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith.”

An important part of faith involves living a life of stewardship, as the proper response of a Christian disciple. So, it follows that parents bear a great responsibility that comes from Christ Himself to raise their children as grateful stewards. However, it may already be difficult for adults to grasp the concept of stewardship and put it into practice in their own lives. How can parents teach their children to do the same?

First and foremost, parents can teach stewardship by setting a good example. Indeed, the example of our lives is so powerful that it can and should be a witness to the Gospel. As parents live the life of stewardship, their children will see the beauty in the stewardship way of life, and they are bound to follow suit. If parents live in thanksgiving to God for all He has given them, their children will grow to see that all we have is a gift from God. And when parents offer gratitude to God, it will surely impact their children.

Eight-year-old Suzie has watched her dad serve Communion at Sunday Masses

throughout her young life. When asked why she thinks he does this, she responds, “We need to help the priest.”

Meanwhile, her older sister, Jane, responds to the same question by explaining, “We need to serve God. He does so much for us. We should appreciate it and give back to Him.”

It is clear that by witnessing their dad’s example, the girls are beginning to understand — each in her own way — that the life of a Christian disciple involves selfless service in gratitude to God. However, it is not just their father’s example that has helped them develop this understanding. Both their father and their mother emphasize stewardship as a family practice. They spend time in family prayer, serve at the soup kitchen together, bring up the offertory as a family, and participate in other acts of service. Such involved participation in the faithful life allows the girls to bear witness to the power of serving others in thanksgiving, even at their young ages.

“We need to help other people,” Suzie says. “Jesus wants us to put other people first, and if we want to listen to Him, we need to serve others.”

As Suzie’s statement demonstrates, the stewardship way of life is not only understood or lived out by adults — Jesus wants children to be His disciples, as well. So, it is essential that parents help their children develop a true understanding of stewardship, and encourage its practice through the example of an active faith life.

May all Christian parents be not only the first, but also the best teachers of faith to their children, in what they say and in what they do.

A Letter From Our Pastor

RENEW OUR EFFORTS AS GOOD STEWARDS TO GIVE OUT OF LOVE

Dear Parishioners,

If your calendar looks like mine, we all know everything is shifting back into high gear this month. Vacations are over. Schools are back in session. Clubs, organizations, and ministries are back at work full-time. Life is suddenly more hectic. As I looked at the calendar for September, I remembered some of the important feast days coming up this month and noticed several connections to living stewardship as a way of life.

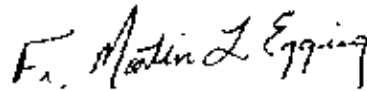
First, let's consider the Feast Day of St. Teresa of Calcutta on Sept. 5. Small in stature, but so very Catholic in everything she represented and did, Mother Teresa was an important part of my perception of what it means to be Catholic and Christian. It is difficult to believe that she will have been gone for 26 years. She was the absolute epitome of what it means to be Catholic, to love, and to serve. She represented a living example of stewardship in our lifetimes. What she had to say about our lives and how we should live them became some of the more quotable illustrations of living stewardship that we reflect upon today. For example, she said, "It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving." That is our challenge as we begin the busy part of our year, to do everything we do with love.

Then, on Sept. 14, we celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The Cross has enormous meaning to us as Catholics. How many times do we make the Sign of the Cross to signify the Holy Trinity and to remember that the Cross represents so much to us? It is a renewal of our Baptism every time we make the Sign of the Cross. More than 1,700 years ago, St. Helen discovered the true cross in Jerusalem. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was built on that spot, and it was dedicated in September 335, thus our veneration of the Cross on Sept. 14.

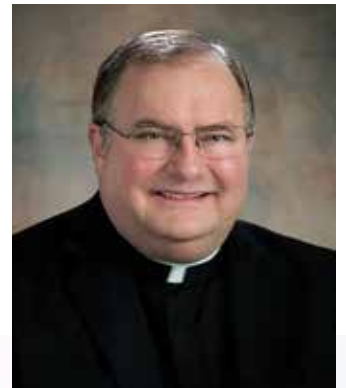
When we make the Sign of the Cross, we are also indicating our discipleship, our pledge to be

good stewards. Whether it is in our labors that we glorify God, in serving the Lord and others with love, or constantly reminding ourselves of Christ's salvation of us on the Cross, we need to continually rededicate ourselves to service and stewardship. This month — when we revive so much in our parish — is a good time to do that. St. Teresa of Calcutta also said, "The needs are great, and none of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful."

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Martin Egging
Pastor



FALL FEST OFFERS A TIME TO JOYFULLY



Can you believe it? Blessed Sacrament has hosted our parish Fall Fest for more than 30 years! The festival is always held on the third Sunday in October — so this year’s event takes place on Sunday, Oct. 15, in the Jubilee Center as well as some of the CCD classrooms.

The Fall Fest is an opportunity for everyone in the greater community, not just the parish family, to join together for a fun day focused on community building.

“It is a great way for our community to come together, have a great time, and meet new people,” says Teri Puncochar, Blessed Sacrament Office Manager.

This event is designed for all ages, so there will be something for everyone to enjoy. Activities will include dinner, drinks and dessert; a silent auction; a quilt raffle; a raffle drawing (cash prize and gift cards); kids games; and split-the-pot.

There are also two great additions for this year’s event. The first is a Raffle Ticket Challenge — the person or family who sells the most raffle tickets for the Fall Fest will win a \$100 prize! The second will be a Country Store, with plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, and canned goods available for purchase.



GATHER AND BUILD UP OUR COMMUNITY

Importantly, Fall Fest serves as a fundraiser, supporting the financial needs of Blessed Sacrament. Dinner tickets will be \$15 for adults and \$7 for children ages 3-12. Quilt tickets will be \$5 per ticket and Raffle Tickets will be \$2 per ticket.

This is a parish-wide event that relies on assistance and stewardship from parishioners. Participating in the Fall Fest provides an

opportunity to share your gifts and talents with the community, and is wonderful way to meet other parishioners.

“We need volunteers to bring salads and desserts,” Teri says. “We will need help serving the food and drinks; selling meal, raffle, quilt and game tickets; running the games and split-the-pot; setting up and cleaning up; and with the silent auction.”

If you have questions about Fall Fest, or to assist with the event, contact the parish office at 308-384-0532. Sign-up sheets will also be in the Gathering Area on Sept. 2.

MEET BRIAN AND CHRIS MCCARRAHER *continued from front cover*

our Christian duty as Catholics,” says Chris. “If we can make someone’s life better, even for just a little bit, it is such a deep feeling inside of you that is hard to explain. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it feels good to serve others.”

Blessed Sacrament is a special place for Chris and Brian. They leave Sunday Mass “rejuvenated” and ready to spread the love of Christ into the world.

“We love Blessed Sacrament because of the welcoming spirit we are greeted with,” Chris says. “It is nice to have people to call you by name, shake your hand and ask how you are, and know they genuinely care about you. It is how these people live their lives. We are inspired to be better people because of the people at Blessed Sacrament.”

To get involved in a ministry at Blessed Sacrament, take Chris and Brian’s advice — attend a meeting and see what it’s about.

“You will be amazed at the welcoming group you meet,” Chris says. “We always love new people to join our groups. We can always find something for you to do.”

The McCarrahers know the impact that being involved has had in their lives, and they want the same for others.

“Ministries have helped us better serve others, inside of the church walls, as well as outside of the church,” Chris says. “We are not perfect at it and probably have a long way to go, but we are trying to grow, personally and spiritually, and be the people God created us to be.”

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ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA'S MODERN MODEL OF SAINTHOOD

In the dark final years of the Cold War, a small woman — standing barely five feet tall — offered a living counternarrative to the inhibiting fear undergirding our daily lives and our foreign affairs. Instead of living in fear, Mother Teresa acted out of love. Instead of withdrawing and isolating herself, she gave tirelessly to others.

Many of us harbor a personal connection to this saint, for we lived during the height of the media coverage of Mother Teresa's work and her friendships with Pope St. John Paul II and the beloved Princess Diana.

Long before she received the name Mother Teresa and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born on Aug. 26, 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia, the crossroads of the Balkans. The youngest of three children, Mother Teresa was raised predominately by her mother after her father's death, when she was about 8 years old. Dranfile (Drana) Bojaxhiu, Mother Teresa's mother, undoubtedly became a strong influence on her daughter's vocation, since Drana herself was a devout Catholic and known for her prayer life and her charity.

Agnes attended a Catholic primary school and, following the example of her mother, became active in their parish and sang in Sacred Heart's choir. As a young person, Agnes enjoyed reading the lives of the saints — while immersing herself in the stories of these holy men and women, Agnes first felt the stirring call to become a missionary.

At the age of 18, Agnes traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to join the Sisters of Loreto. She became Sr. Mary Teresa, named after St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and began to learn English. Within a few months of arriving in Ireland, she left for India.

In India, Sr. Mary Teresa lived at the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta, where she served as an educator and taught at St. Mary's School. After her final profession, she became

Mother Teresa and, a few years later, began serving as the school's principal.

On an ordinary day, Mother Teresa received an extraordinary call. While on a train ride to her annual retreat, Mother Teresa felt what she would describe as Jesus' thirst for souls. Soon, Jesus called her to found the Missionaries of Charity, an order devoted to serving the "poorest of the poor."

The order formally began on Oct. 7, 1950, and has grown from one woman tending the sick and dying in the streets of Calcutta to over 4,500 religious sisters helping the poor in over 130 countries around the world. Additionally, the order grew to include the Missionaries of Charity Brothers, the Missionaries of Charity Fathers and the Lay Missionaries of Charity.

Though externally Mother Teresa joyfully and indefatigably served the poor for nearly 50 years, during the majority of this time, she experienced a "dark night of the soul," an extensive period of not feeling God's presence or hearing His voice. Other saints, notably St. John of the Cross, similarly experienced a dark night of the soul. Despite this spiritual struggle, Mother Teresa continued her work joyfully throughout her sickness and until her death on Sept. 5, 1997.

Pope St. John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa in 2003. Fittingly, a pontiff who has underscored the importance of social justice celebrated her canonization. On Sept. 4, 2016, Pope Francis canonized Mother Teresa, the "Saint of the Gutters," at the Vatican.

St. Teresa of Calcutta offers us an example of ceaseless prayer and selfless service. She is a modern model of sainthood that we can emulate in our daily lives starting with how we serve and treat the other members of our family, our faith community and all those with whom we interact on a daily basis.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, Pray for Us!



GODPARENT PROGRAM MENTORS HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH IN THE FAITH

A LOOK AT ONE COUPLE'S ROLE IN THIS VITAL MINISTRY

As one of several parish couples active in our Godparent Program, Mitch and Niki Messmer know firsthand the impact this ministry can have on the youth of the Blessed Sacrament faith community.

“Married adult couples of the parish sponsor — or ‘godparent’ — a group of freshman high schoolers by gathering Wednesday evenings throughout the school year and stay with them until they are confirmed in the fall of senior year,” Niki says. “This allows a connection to be built between the godparents and high schoolers which is essential since the program covers sensitive topics such as faith, sexuality, and finances.”

The Godparent Program is an opportunity for high school students to grow in their faith in a small group setting, with the guidance of adult mentor couples, or “Godparents.” Starting their freshman year, the students continue with the same group until they begin Confirmation preparation, halfway through their junior year.

The groups meet weekly, on Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 9 p.m., at the church. Most groups consist of 10 to 12 same-age peers, along with the adult mentors. The small groups cover a variety of topics over the two and a half years that they meet — from the importance of communication, relationships, and prayer during their freshman year, to Theology of the Body, Catholic social teaching, and leadership their sophomore year, to financial responsibility and stewardship their junior year. Occasionally, the groups also participate in social or service-



The Messmer family

oriented activities together.

The small group setting allows young people to learn about their faith, as well as hear about the journeys and experiences of others who are also committed to the same beliefs.

The Messmers became involved in the program in 2019 when their younger son, Mason, was a high school freshman. Deb Wetzel, the Religious Education Director at Blessed

Sacrament, contacted Niki and asked if they would be willing to become catechists for the program.

“My response was that I was really uncomfortable taking on that role, so I wasn’t really interested — but if she couldn’t find anyone else to volunteer, to call me back,” Niki says. “And guess what? She called me back. Mitch and I are not uncomfortable in our relationship with God, it’s that we are not teachers and felt uncomfortable with being in such an important position, which is helping impressionable youth make or strengthen their relationship with God, understand their faith through Jesus’ teachings, and apply Catholic principles to daily life.”

After discussing and praying about it, Niki and Mitch decided the service would help them grow and it would help Mason see them taking an active role in his journey towards Confirmation. The Messmers officially ended their Godparent group before Christmas 2021, but let the students know they would be available in the future if they need help, assistance, or guidance.

“I felt our role as Godparents was to help

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Godparent Program *continued from page 7*

connect the high schoolers to God by taking the program lessons and making them applicable to daily life,” Niki says. “I also felt our role was to be additional adult resources for the kids to go to for help, guidance, or just another set of ears to hear about their struggles or successes.”

“While our Godparent role responsibilities were to go through the lesson plans, we also tried to impress upon the kids to talk to their families about the topics we discussed in our weekly classes,” Mitch adds. “It’s important for parents and other adults in the kids’ lives to enforce Jesus’ teachings.”

Being involved in the program helped Niki and Mitch to grow alongside the students they were ministering to.

“We have grown close to God through participating in the Godparent program simply by learning with our high schoolers,” Niki says. “Some of the lessons we went through that were related to the Bible and Jesus’ teaching were not topics Mitch and I recall discussing when we went through religious education. This involvement also brought us closer as a family since we had group discussions at home about some of the topics.”

If you would like more information on our Godparent Program, or if you are interested in learning more about becoming a Godparent couple, please contact Director of Religious Education Debra Wetzel at 308-395-8521.