In 1882, Fr. Michael J. McGivney, a priest in New Haven, Conn., noticed a need. In a world where immigrants often struggled and dangerous working conditions left many families without a father, more and more men turned to join fraternal organizations, seeking to find support, as well as stability and provision for their families, should they pass suddenly. Fr. McGivney hoped to create a place where men could gather in faith and Catholic brotherhood —thus, the Knights of Columbus was born. From the very beginning, the Knights prioritized bringing aid to those in need and caring for those who were sick and disabled, and their families. In 1997, the cause for Fr. McGivney’s canonization as a Catholic saint was opened.

Today, there are over two million men in over a dozen countries who are members of the Knights of Columbus, including our own Knights Council here at Blessed Sacrament. Parishioner and former Grand Knight Mike Jarosz joined the organization 33 years ago and currently serves as the Financial Secretary for our council.

“We’re a fraternal organization that is here to serve the parish, the family and the youth,” Mike says. “I feel that the Knights have many worthy projects, and we try to help anyone we can help, in various ways.”

The Knights meet monthly, and are involved in a variety of different ways in the parish and community throughout the year. Mike has found that his appreciation for his faith has grown since becoming involved with the Knights.

“It used to be I would just go to church on Sunday and call it good,” he says. “But now I’m involved in these other activities, and it broadens my horizons and my picture of the Church itself, and all the things

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the Church can do to help people.”

Following their founding principles, the Knights continue to be involved in charitable works in a variety of different ways, from volunteering in service, to raising funds for a variety of different organizations — ranging from pro-life ministries, to organizations serving those with developmental disabilities, to food pantries and disaster relief. The Knights are involved in supporting Catholic youth, through scholarship contests, as well as helping with the food booths at our Catholic high school’s events. They also offer support to our seminarians, and sponsor the recording of the televised Mass for our local station.

“Every dime we collect is going to help someone else,” Mike says. “We don’t use any of the money for us — all the money we collect goes out.”

The Knights of Columbus are also known for their insurance program, including life, disability and long-term care insurance, which is available to members.

“The Knights have one of the strongest insurance programs in the country,” Mike says. “Anyone I’ve ever talked to has said, ‘Don’t ever get rid of that insurance, you’re never going to find anything better.’”

In addition to finding ways to give back to the community, Mike has found a sense of community and fellowship among his brother Knights. From not knowing many people when he first moved to Grand Island and joined the parish, to now having many lifelong friendships, he appreciates how the Knights create a place where men can grow in faith and service alongside others of like mind.

“Working with the Knights in our parish and in other parishes, I’ve gotten to know a lot of good people and made a lot of very good, close friends,” Mike says. “I enjoy the camaraderie with other members.”

Mike encourages the men of the parish — especially younger men — to consider joining the Knights of Columbus at Blessed Sacrament. The only requirements are to be at least 18 years of age, and a practicing Catholic.

“I would like to see more young men get involved in the Knights,” Mike says. “I think they could benefit. Your faith becomes deeper, you get to know people better, and you can discover friends; it just enhances your faith and your life.”

If you would like more information about the Knights of Columbus at Blessed Sacrament, please contact the parish office at 308-384-0532.
Dear Parishioners,

During a visit to Croatia when he was pope, St. John Paul II proclaimed, “Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people, and Alleluia is our song.” Are we really the Easter people? I think we should be.

This is still the Easter season and it continues throughout this month until Pentecost Sunday, May 31. What does that mean to be Easter people? Being an Easter person has much to do with how we view our faith and how we live it out. Stewardship people are Easter people.

Jesus is so alive for us on Easter Sunday morning. He needs to be alive for us and in us every day, and certainly in these days that follow Easter. At the time of His Resurrection, His followers did not whisper, “He is risen” — they shouted it and rejoiced! That is how we need to approach our faith as well.

During Lent leading up to Easter, we did not use Alleluia in our liturgies. We put it away until Easter, and I missed it. But then, it made it even better when it came back over and over on Easter and throughout this Easter season. St. John Paul II was telling us all that we are not just an Easter people, but we are also an Alleluia people. We are called to exemplify Alleluia in everything we do. Think about it. Who is an Alleluia person? Certainly, it’s someone who seems to just brim over with the Good News, constantly reflecting the joy of being a Christian and a Catholic. It is also possible to be an Alleluia person in quiet ways, but others do need to see that God is alive in us in everything we do.

Easter began with the Easter Vigil, but it does not end on Easter. That was the beginning. One indication to us that Easter is going on right now is a change in how we identify the Sundays throughout May. For many years, the Sundays that followed Easter during the Easter season were called the “Sunday after Easter.” When the Church adopted the new liturgical calendar, that was changed to “Sunday of Easter.” Thus, we are not winding down from Easter — we are in the midst of it.

We became Easter people at our Baptisms. We should be Easter people every day and every week and during every season. Being an Easter person is acknowledging our call to discipleship and stewardship. We should begin and end everything with Alleluia. Alleluia means, quite simple, “Praise to God.” It is not just something we sing, chant or say. It is something we live. By living our lives in praise of God — stewardship is, after all, a way of life — we can be and are an Easter people.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Martin Egging
Pastor
It brings Mary Picthall so much joy to see couples taking photos in the courtyard on their wedding day, or to see families who are grieving a loved one, spending a sunny day visiting with each other on the courtyard benches.

Mary has been keeping track of all the flowers, bushes and trees in our courtyard for about 20 years. After the Jubilee Center was built, a courtyard was added.

“We've always tried to keep the courtyard as pretty as we can,” Mary says.

Having led this work since the courtyard was added, Mary has had help from various parishioners through the years. Her work begins in February, when she takes the geraniums out of garage storage each day, adds them to pots with potting soil and makes sure they get sun and water each day. The geraniums are planted in the courtyard in May.

Mary takes great care to make sure there is a variety of perennials and annuals each year. She also includes a variety of flower colors and flower types. All of this has added to the vibrancy and color in the courtyard.

Throughout the summer, Mary makes sure to remove dead parts of the flowers and get rid of the weeds.

“Nature is always around us,” Mary says. “To just go sit and enjoy God’s nature is wonderful. The quiet just brings you a sense of peace when you sit there.”

Mary will often take a break from her work to sit and enjoy the beauty around her. She also has the statue of the Annunciation and the chirping birds to enjoy.

Flower gardening is something Mary has always continued on page 5
loved. She has always maintained flower gardens at home — the same as her mother did while she was growing up. What a better way to give glory to God, than with adding to the beauty of our church’s surroundings.

“It’s a way of life,” Mary says. “If you have something beautiful, you want to keep it beautiful. Some church courtyards start beautiful, but eventually they get weedy and overgrown.”

Each year, she says, there is some trial and error. Crabapple trees were removed a few years ago, so there is less shade — this means she had to try some different flowers.

Mary would love to see more parishioners involved in the courtyard gardening, whether that be helping with planting, weeding or fall clean-up. She laughs when mentioning it is good exercise — she has logged 10,000 steps on some days.

While no one would want to see the courtyard turned to grass, Mary fears this could happen in the next few years without more helping hands.

“If we had more help, maybe from whole families, we could divide the courtyard into different areas to work on for weeding,” Mary says. “It’s quite a bit of work for one person.”

If you would like to get involved in the Courtyard Gardening Ministry, please contact Mary Picthall at 308-379-1323 or quiltski@hotmail.com.
Keeping the Faith During a Crisis

Adversity is a part of life. We may face family strife or financial issues. We may experience a personal or family medical crisis. We may suffer the loss of a loved one.

The thought of not being able to attend Mass to receive the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord as a result of a crisis — such as the one we are experiencing today with the COVID-19 pandemic — is devastating.

Right now, it may seem challenging to remain a faithful steward. We may even question our faith and wonder how to find God during these turbulent times.

Where do we turn?

First and foremost, we must pray without ceasing. During a difficult time, you can always turn to the Church’s treasury of prayer. Take time each day to read the daily Scripture readings — they can be found at USCCB.org, and then by selecting the date on the calendar on the home page. You can also use the many rich resources of our faith to engage in spiritual reflections each day as an individual and with your family. This can include simple prayers like an Our Father and Hail Mary a few times a day, as well as praying the Rosary, the Liturgy of the Hours, and Stations of the Cross, among others. Many resources for these are easily found online.

It is also important to remember that at times when you cannot physically attend Mass, Sunday remains a holy day, and you are encouraged to pray. You can participate in prayer by way of televised or live-streamed Mass. One option for viewing daily Mass online can be found at www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass.

During times of crisis, we must also find ways to use our talents to serve God. If you are unable to participate in ministries and serve your parish community, you can still use your talents to serve your family and those closest to you. Something as simple as calling to check on family and friends — or even doing a video call — can go a long way.

Finally, we must try to remain good stewards of our treasure. You may have lost your job or have seen a reduction in work hours and pay. But despite your hardships, a faithful steward must faithfully try his or her best to return a portion of your treasure to God in whatever way God is calling you to do so. Check the parish website for online giving opportunities and do what you can to return a portion of your treasure to God.

No matter the situation, God always remains faithful to us. Don’t forget that everything God gives us is a gift, and the way in which we share our gifts with God and our neighbor is ultimately how we give God glory.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

AMEN.
T
he members of our Welcome Committee carry simple gift bags to parish newcomers — and simple though they are, those bags are filled with warmth and fellowship that says “we’re so glad you’re here!”

Sister Bernadette coordinates the Welcome Committee that has five couples and one single woman as members. Although the group does not have meetings, Sr. Bernadette is able to keep in touch by text or email.

When someone registers at the parish office, Sr. Bernadette contacts the newcomer, offers a welcome to the parish, and tells them the parish has a gift bag for them with information about the parish, along with a quilted table topper made by our Quilting Ladies. Would they welcome a visitor with the bag?

“I’d say about two-thirds say ‘yes,’” Sr. Bernadette says. “Others don’t respond or indicate they don’t need the information. If they don’t respond, I don’t push.”

Once Sr. Bernadette gets the go-ahead for a visit, she contacts one of the Welcome Committee members.

The prepared gift bags contain information about the parish...staff contact information, religious formation programs, contacts for pastoral care, social activities, social outreach, pre-school programs, information on Knights...along with meal prayer.

“Sometimes, the folks who have received the bags will say they had such a nice visit,” Sr. Bernadette says. “One response I treasure is a note that said the newcomer told her sister in another parish about the welcome. The sister responded that she wants to start the ministry in her parish as a way of saying ‘welcome.’”

On more than one occasion, Sr. Bernadette has encountered newcomers to Grand Island who “church shopped” before registering at Blessed Sacrament. They found the welcome so warm on their first visit that they chose our parish.

The Welcoming Committee undoubtedly is a true example of stewardship.

“They really do a good job using their talents,”

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Anyone who would like to join the ministry is invited to contact Sr. Bernadette at 308-384-0532, Ext. 202.
she says. “They are friendly and warm, and this invites people to feel at home in the parish. This is important — really important. The ministry gives the newcomers a chance to ask questions about anything they might want to know more about.”

Although the welcome bags are one way to make newcomers feel at home, one area that Sr. Bernadette would like to see developed is having all parishioners begin to invite newcomers to enjoy coffee and donuts after the Sunday Masses while getting to know people of the parish. In addition, she encourages parishioners to reach out to newcomers as everyone is enjoying the refreshments, to add to the welcome.

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— Sr. Bernadette