



ST. JAMES BASILICA of Jamestown

Parish Newsletter

AUGUST 2014



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Finding the Face of God in Prison Ministry

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." - Matthew 25:35-36

When Fr. Joe Barrett and the other Prison Ministry volunteers visit those in need, they mean business – the business of sharing the love of Jesus.

"Just like the Gospels say, when you visit those in prison, you are visiting Jesus," Fr. Joe says. "Mother Teresa knew the truth of this, and that is why her sisters do prison ministry today. I definitely believe that when I visit the imprisoned, I am not only seeing Christ in them, but I am also being Christ to them. I develop friendships with the men and women I visit, and I get as much out of the experience as I put into it!"

Our parish Prison Ministry includes outreach efforts to James River Correctional Center, Stutsman County Correctional Center and the State Hospital. Fr. Joe



Barrett is the main person who practices ministry at these institutions, but there are a number of dedicated volunteers who also give their time, talent and treasure to the Prison Ministry. At James River, Fr. Joe offers Mass and the Sacrament of Confession, while volunteers offer Bible studies and a catechism class. At Stutsman County, Fr. Joe offers Mass three times

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Stewardship's "Supreme Teacher"

Following Christ's Example

Former President and Five-Star General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "You don't lead by hitting people over the head – that's assault, not leadership." President Eisenhower's words are both blunt and humorous, but he makes a great point. Almost any successful endeavor in life requires the benefit of strong leadership. And a truly effective leader does not lead by simply telling others what to do, but by providing a strong example of how to carry oneself on a daily basis.

This is no different for us in our lives as Catholic Christians. As individuals who face a myriad of difficult choices every day, we require a leader who, through word and example, can show us the path to living according to God's will. For us, Jesus is the supreme teacher of every aspect of Christian life, and His life as documented in the Gospels is a model that we should strive to imitate in living as good Christians. And as we have learned, stewardship – the sharing of the gifts that God has given to us – is a big part of Christian life, and one for which Jesus left many examples of successful living.

Jesus' nature of selfless service, documented many times throughout the New Testament and culminating with His death for our sins, is an underlying aspect of living the stewardship way of life. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops points out in its pastoral document *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "In Jesus'

teaching and life self-emptying is fundamental. Now, it might seem that self-emptying has little to do with stewardship, but in Jesus' case that is not so. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, he is filled with the Father's will, and he is fulfilled in just this way" (19).

Jesus points out to Peter in Mark's Gospel that this "self-emptying" requires sacrifice, but ultimately leads to "eternal life in the age to come" (Mk 10:30). But the Christian steward's ultimate reward is not his or her only benefit from living the stewardship way of life. By sharing of our time, talents and treasure and living in imitation of Christ, we can relate more closely to Him in sharing, in a small way, in His sacrifice. "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).

The next time you are frustrated or unsure of how to best respond to God's gifts in stewardship, take a moment to open up the Bible. Jesus may not "hit us over the head" in His leadership, but He does provide numerous examples through His actions and teachings of how to live as one of His disciples.

Christ's life as documented in the Gospels is a model that we should strive to imitate in living as good Christians. And as we have learned, stewardship – the sharing of the gifts that God has given to us – is a big part of Christian life, and one for which Jesus left many examples of successful living.

A Letter from Our Pastor

The Mass is a Gift, to God and Our Parish Community

Dear Parishioners,

It is hard to believe that August is upon us. It seems as if we were just looking forward to summer and all the pleasures associated with that time – and now, we are approaching the returns to school, the completion of summer vacations, and the time when things here at our parish get busier again.

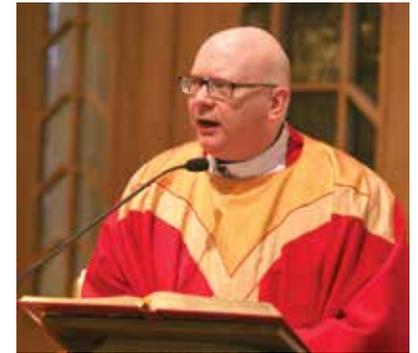
We call them vacations, but the British call them “holidays.” It does not take a genius to see that the words “holiday” and “holy day” share the same roots. You may anticipate where I am going with this train of thought. There was a time when the only “holidays” people experienced were indeed “holy days.” That included Sunday, to be sure, but the reason people had these “holy days” was to celebrate religious times and occasions.

An important facet of the concept of stewardship is our practice of the faith – our commitment to fulfill what the Church views as our duties related to our beliefs. Most of us, as Catholics, are very familiar with the term “Holy Day of Obligation.” In fact, there is one this month – Friday, Aug. 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A solemnity is a Feast Day of the highest rank in the Church. According to the Church’s *Code of Canon Law* (1247), “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.”

Note that what this actually says is that Sunday – just like the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, Christmas, Immaculate Conception and other holy days – is in fact a Holy Day of Obligation. Do we really think of our weekly attendance at Mass in that way? Certainly, our parents and grandparents (and many of us as well) understood that we were supposed to go to Mass each Sunday, and there were other times during the Church year when we were expected to go to Mass – the Holy Days of Obligation.

Sometimes in our busy lives, we lose sight of how important this is. As I indicated earlier in this letter, these are holy days – these are days (yes, including every

Sunday) when we need to make the effort and commitment to participate in the Mass. The *Code of Canon Law* that I quoted earlier continues as follows: “Moreover, they [that means you and me] are to abstain from



those works and affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body” (1247).

“Rendered to God” means that our Mass attendance is a gift to God. Stewardship, of course, is how we take the gifts God has given us, use those gifts responsibly, and then return them and share them with the Lord and those around us. Although going to Mass is a gift to the Lord, it is also a gift to our community and to ourselves as well. We need that time to step back from our daily worries and concerns, and to look deeper into the meaning of living and of the importance of our relationship with God.

I would like each of us to consider just how important it is to attend Mass. If we are really going to be committed to this concept of stewardship, we need to realize the significance of setting aside time each week, and on those other designated holy days (Aug. 15, for example) to be with the Lord and with our parish community at Mass. We must be committed to living out our Catholic faith properly and completely.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Jeffrey L. Wald
Pastor



Looking forward to the New School Year at St. John's Academy

A new school year begins this month, and as always, students will be getting much more than an academic education at St. John's Academy.

"It's the opportunity for our students to be able to serve God each day in school and have the power to pray and talk about God in school," says Principal Mark Wiest. "We visit with parents and discuss what their beliefs are about Catholic education, and that's what the majority of them share. They can talk about God each day, they can pray and they have religion classes each day. That Catholic component to the school is so important to the parents, the staff, the kids. The students can grow in ways that a lot of other kids can't, and they come to know God more."

The beginning of a new school year is a busy time. The first day of the school year is on Monday, Aug. 25,

but there are a few events taking place the week before. Teacher inservice will be on Aug. 20, 21 and 22, and there will be a Back to School Night from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 21.

On Saturday, Oct. 4, the school will have its 24th Annual HOPE Dinner and Auction, the largest school fundraiser of the year.

"It's a neat event in which the whole community seems to participate in some way, whether it's by attending or sponsoring," Mr. Wiest says. "People all over North Dakota donate items to it."

This school year also brings several changes. Last year, Marlys Fix, who was formerly a second grade teacher, became the part-time IT coordinator for the school, and she will continue in that role this year, while also taking over a new role as the assistant principal.

"Half of her day will be devoted to IT, and the other half will be devoted to professional development of our staff on the academic side of things with curriculum, and then she'll be dedicating professional development towards the spiritual side with our staff," Mr. Wiest says. "We want to improve our curriculum, but we also want our teachers to continue to improve on the spiritual side. We feel it's really important that they're mentored in both those areas, spiritual and academic."

One of the school's longtime early education teachers, Pamela Hansen, retired this year. Mrs. Hansen taught at St. John's Academy for more than 30 years.

"She was so influential with so many things that took place at our school, especially in early childhood," Mr. Wiest says. "She was so active in the public and really pointed people in this direction. We will really miss her. She had so much experience that she could share with everyone."

There are also several new teachers and staff members this year. Morgan Dale will be the new kindergarten



continued on next page



New School Year

teacher, and Kara Wahl will teach second grade. The school also has a new cafeteria manager, Kayla Kachel, and a new assistant cook, Kirstie Dobson.

One thing that isn't changing is the curriculum.

"We really feel our curriculum is very solid," Mr. Wiest says. "We feel it's very rigorous and we challenge our students in the classroom. When we test the students, we see really big strides. You can see the amount of growth that they make on that test from fall to spring. That tells us we're doing a lot of things right. We also participate in the North Dakota State Assessment, and we always score

significantly higher than the state average. We're really proud of our academics and the work our teachers do in the classroom."

With all the upcoming events and changes coming to the school, this is shaping up to be an exciting year at St. John's Academy.

"It's an exciting time of the year, the beginning of school," Mr. Wiest says.

For more information about St. John's Academy or the upcoming school year, please call the school office at 701-252-3397.



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– Principal Mark Wiest



THE FAITH JOURNEY OF *St. Genesis*

Being a performer and a comedian may sound like a fun way to make a living.

St. Genesis, an outstanding actor, playwright and comedian in late Imperial Rome, certainly did have some fun for a while. But his career and life came to an abrupt end when his work ultimately led him to Christ.

Genesis was a comedian of some renown, but in the fourth century, Christians were often discouraged from becoming actors because ancient Roman comedy was highly sexual, crude and offensive.

In the year 303, Emperor Diocletian launched what would be the last great Roman persecution against the Christian Church. So, Genesis used the persecution as an opportunity to write a comedy about Christianity. He thought it might attract the attention of the Emperor, increase his fame, and make him some money in the process.

Genesis approached leaders of the Christian community in Rome and presented himself as a catechumen seeking baptism. He was then invited into a period of instruction in the faith, in order to learn the beliefs of the Christians. He was particularly taken by the idea of baptism. But at the time, he had no plans to convert to the faith – it was all just a part of his plan to research new material to use for his comedy.

But a strange thing happened to Genesis as he began to work on his play, which was to be a comedy on

baptism. As Genesis began teaching the other actors about baptism, he began to believe, and a desire to be baptized grew within his heart.

The opening night of the play was a great success, with Emperor Diocletian in attendance. But at some point during the play, the Holy Spirit touched Genesis. He was no longer acting.

“You fools, I wish to die a Christian,” Genesis said. When the

other actors asked him why, he said, “All my life I have been a fugitive, and only today have I found God.”

Everyone, especially Emperor Diocletian, laughed as Genesis spoke. Genesis, standing in a pulpit designed to look like the goddess Venus, began to preach to the audience. He told the crowd how he once hated Christians and enjoyed insulting them. He told the crowd how he deserted his own family as a child because they were Christians.

From there, Genesis addressed Diocletian, stating that he wrote the play to mock Christians, but had been converted on the spot during the course of the play, by the power of Holy Spirit. “I now know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, the Light, the Truth and the Mercy of all who have received his gift of baptism,” Genesis said. “O great Emperor, believe in these mysteries! I will teach you, and you will know the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God.”

Diocletian was furious and stopped the play, having the troupe arrested and beaten, while Genesis was condemned to torture. Through all of his sufferings, he continued to confess that Jesus was God. When this failed to break his spirit, Diocletian ordered Genesis be beheaded. His final words were, “Our Lord Jesus Christ is God and we shall have life in His name.”

St. Genesis is the patron of comedians and actors. His feast day is Aug. 25.



AUG. 25

SAINT
GENESIUS

Youth Ministries Provide for Continued Growth in Faith During Formative Years

For parishioners who grew up in the era of CCD – Confraternity of Christian Doctrine – talk of “youth ministry” can sometimes be confusing. But according to Parochial Vicar Fr. Sean Mulligan, the mission of youth ministry is quite simple – spreading the love of Christ.

“Jesus loves our youth,” Fr. Mulligan says. “They are the future – the future of the Church and the future of the world. Jesus loves them and is seeking after them, no matter how old or how young they are. Our Youth Ministry programs offer them an opportunity to grow closer to the Lord and to continue growing in and learning about their faith. This is extremely important for them, both now and for the rest of their lives.”

Here at St. James, we have two age-specific Youth Ministry programs during the school year. Both groups meet on Wednesday nights in the Youth Ministry Room – the seventh and eighth-graders at 6:30 p.m., and the high-schoolers at 8 p.m. Last year, the younger group was led by Fr. Mulligan and Yvette Yatskis, while Fr. Joe Barrett, Lori Graves and Corene Lee directed the high school group.

For both groups, a typical Wednesday night begins with gathering time and an opening prayer. Then, one of the leaders teaches a lesson and breaks the teens into small groups to do an activity or a project to go along with the lesson. Before dismissal, the whole group gathers together again for group discussion, a question and answer session, and a closing prayer.

“For me, the highlight of the year was hearing the teens’ questions and seeing their great desire to know more about the faith, and just the depth of their questions as well,” Fr. Mulligan says. “They are really seeking it out. Sometimes it

might seem like they weren’t really paying attention, but then you get a question and see that they were listening and they are getting it and they are trying to understand and go deeper.”

That effort to enter deeper into the faith is exactly what youth ministry is all about.

“Faith formation is a lifelong pursuit,” says Shirley Wallace, director of Faith Formation. “Middle and high school kids learn at very different levels than they did in grade school, so to offer them opportunities to continue learning the faith as they grow is so important. And that is why youth ministry is so important.”

Throughout the school year and even into the summer, the Youth Ministry program provides other opportunities to achieve this growth, through activities such as ecumenical concerts and other youth events here in Jamestown, as well as retreats, rallies and other youth gatherings with the Diocese of Fargo. Many of the teens are also actively serving the parish in a variety of other ways, including with liturgical ministries and helping out with the grade-schoolers’ summer Bible School.

If you have children or grandchildren in seventh through 12th grade, please register them at the Faith Formation Office or online at stjamesbasilica.org and make sure that they take advantage of the awesome faith-building experiences that await them in our Youth Ministry at St. James Basilica!

For more information about our Youth Ministry programs, please contact Shirley Wallace at 701-252-0478 or ffdirector@stjamesbasilica.org.



Middle school girls playing a game during a recent gathering



Middle school boys engaging in a small group conversation



High-schoolers playing a mixer game at a recent youth event



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Weekend Eucharist

Saturday Vigil

4:30 p.m. Eucharist

Sunday

8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Eucharist

Daily Eucharist

Monday thru Friday - 12:10 p.m. Eucharist

Saturday - 8:00 a.m. Eucharist

Reconciliation

Monday thru Friday - 11:40 a.m. - 12 noon

Saturday - 3:30 p.m.

Address Service Requested

Prison Ministry *continued from front cover*

per month and spends quality time with the residents afterward. Furthermore, Fr. Joe is employed 20 hours per week as chaplain at the State Hospital. He provides one-on-one talks with residents, formal group meetings, Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) classes and worship services.

"The ministry we do is very rewarding, especially when someone you are working with really experiences a change of life," Fr. Joe says. "Even if our actions don't seem life-changing at the time, a lot of times they prove to be later. You need to be a light in their lives. For example, one of the guys who I ministered to is now in religious life. It is wonderful to know that I have been a small part of getting God into his life. Another man I worked with once told me that the chaplain program was a bright spot in his life. I have found that a lot of inmates are very open and humble towards religion. For example, they meet on their own for Bible studies."

Another life-changing outreach that is offered through the Prison Ministry includes the Residents Encounter

Christ, or REC, weekends. These highly moving, two-day retreats are tailored for prison ministry. Director of Faith Formation Shirley Wallace helped to get the retreats started about eight years ago, and they are now being run by various Prison Ministry volunteers.

"I have witnessed the power of God working in the men that are ministered to," Shirley says. "And our lives are changed when we go in to minister, as well. There are a number of young men who have continued their ministry efforts after leaving the prison. Through our work, hearts are changed, and those we serve turn around and serve others."

In the past, Shirley played music for Masses offered at the prisons. Currently, she supports the Prison Ministry Committee as a resource and support person.

More volunteers are always needed to help out with the Prison Ministry. Come, meet Christ in the prisons, and be rewarded, in this life and in the next! For more information, please contact Shirley Wallace at 701-252-0478 or Fr. Joe Barrett at 701-252-0119.