



# ST. JAMES BASILICA *of Jamestown*

Parish Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2014



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## Proclaimers: *More Than Reading, More Than Speaking*

When the proclaimers of St. James Basilica step up before the assembly at each celebration of Eucharist, their eyes are not merely reading words for their tongues to speak. They have studied and prayed so their hearts are prepared to faithfully proclaim the Word of God, as presented in the First and Second Readings of Scripture.

Sister Michaeleen Jantzer, OSB, prepares those who have committed to becoming proclaimers by encouraging them to study the messages of the Scripture and the context of the passages.

"I encourage proclaimers to start on the Monday before the Sunday they are scheduled to read the particular Scripture so it becomes a part of them," Sr. Michaeleen says. "When they read the words, it's more than reading.



*Sr. Michaeleen Jantzer*

I encourage them to find out more about it. They should get into the background so they understand the Word they are proclaiming. I encourage them to read it aloud because it is different when you hear the words aloud. They have to have a deep faith in the words they are proclaiming. The proclaimers have to believe that the words are, in fact, the Word of God."

Sr. Michaeleen makes sure each proclaimer understands

the focus in the passages.

"If you don't have the context of the Scripture, it is harder to proclaim it," she says. "You don't know the background. The proclaimer must have an appreciation for the Word. When the Word is said, its power is given by the person who utters it."

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## How Can We Model the Faith for Our Children?

The Church has made it clear that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual and cognitive development of their children in matters of the faith. As the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, states, “Husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children” (Chapter 4, Section 35). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* further emphasizes this vocation, by pointing out that the moral education and spiritual formation of children is not only the right, but the responsibility, of their parents: “The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable...Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children” (CCC 2221, 2223).

But how can we as parents create an environment in the home conducive to spiritual and moral development? As busy adults, how are we to disseminate the knowledge and understanding of the tenets of the faith to our children in the way that a trained and experienced catechist can? Furthermore, how do we strike a balance between teaching our children in the home and not interfering with the faith formation and sacramental preparation they are currently receiving through their parish school or religious education program?

The answer to all of these questions is stewardship.

Indeed, it is important that we reinforce the lessons that our children learn in school and at religious education classes in the home by talking to them about the faith, reading Sacred Scripture with them, and spending time in family prayer. And there are several authoritative resources online that can help parents in this task, including Catholic Parents OnLine — [www.catholicparents.org](http://www.catholicparents.org) — which links parents to numerous websites and documents that can help them in talking to their children about the faith.



But the best way that we can teach our children is by serving as a living example to them of how to live as disciples of Christ. If we want our children to grow up as strong Catholics and to display a lifelong commitment to their faith, then it is important that we ourselves live a committed faith life. This includes an ongoing commitment to our own faith formation as adults and active participation in the sacraments. It also includes the giving back of our time, talent and treasure in service of our community in thanksgiving for the gifts that God has given us.

Parenting can be a tough vocation, and children deal with many influences in their lives that exist in stark contrast to the values that their parents often hope to instill within them. Fortunately for parents, the stewardship way of life provides a simple and effective model for teaching our children in matters of the faith. By living as stewards of God’s gifts and reaping the spiritual rewards that accompany this lifestyle, we are tangibly showing our children that sharing of our gifts and talents leads to a life of happiness and spiritual fulfillment. In doing this, we give them a good opportunity to follow in our footsteps and make their faith a top priority for the rest of their lives.

A Letter from Our Pastor

# Don't Wait, Stewardship Starts Now

Dear Parishioners,

We begin this month of February with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Sunday, February 2. Until about 40 years ago, this feast was considered the “official” end of the Christmas season that is now, of course, the Baptism of the Lord, which we celebrated on January 12 this year. Our Catholic Church is rich in traditions, and we need to always remember these, as well as make them a part of our daily lives. Part of our stewardship as good Catholics is having an understanding of our Church and its customs.

This Feast of the Presentation, which commemorates the presentation of Jesus in the temple by Sts. Mary and Joseph as reported in the Gospel of Luke (*Luke 2:22-40*), occurs 40 days after the birth of Jesus. If 40 days sounds familiar, it should. Without even mentioning all the times “40” appears in the Bible, we know that it rained for 40 days during the Great Flood (*Genesis*); Moses spent 40 days on Mt. Sinai (*Exodus*); Jesus spent 40 days in the desert (*Matthew*); and there were 40 days between the Resurrection of the Lord and His Ascension (*Acts*). Of course, we all know that Lent is 40 days in length.

Lent this year does not begin until March. Yet, during this month of February, we have an opportunity



to leap ahead, to solidify our faith, and to especially live out our lives of stewardship. Scholars tend to view 40 days as a test period, based upon the ways it occurs in Holy Scripture. The truth is that our stewardship is tested constantly — not just for a short period of time, say 40 days, but for our entire lives.

The readings for the second weekend in February speak of us as Catholics and Christians providing “light.” The Book of Isaiah reminds us that “light shall arise for you from the darkness,” and the Gospel from Matthew prompts us that “You are the light of the world,” and then expands that to speak of that lamp we are called to be: “Nor do they light a lamp and then place it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it provides light to all in the house.” This is Jesus who is speaking to us, and He more or less brings it all together by pointing out, “...your light must shine before others.”

Blessed Mother Teresa once wrote, “There is a light in this world, a healing spirit more powerful than any darkness we may encounter. We sometimes lose sight of this force when there is suffering, too much pain. Then suddenly, the spirit will emerge through the lives of ordinary people who hear a call and answer in extraordinary ways.” Jesus has called us, both me and you. He has called us to be disciples, to be good stewards of all we have been given. We are ordinary people, but we have the ability to do extraordinary things.

I challenge you to respond to that call, to be a light to those around us, to live out our Baptismal call, and to be good stewards — not 40 days from now, but right now. If it seems that this call is the same as last month, and the same as next month, you are absolutely correct. It is never too late to begin living lives of stewardship, and for that matter, it is never too early either.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Al Bitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Al Bitz  
Pastor



# ST. JAMES BASILICA OF JAMESTOWN

## Meet the C

As parents, teaching our children the Catholic faith is a legacy that is passed down through the generations. Parents teach the faith to their children who, in turn, pass it along once they become parents. Such is the case with parishioners Cliff and Valeria Orr, who have very traditional ideas about faith and family and their Catholic identity.

And it is a big family. Cliff came from a family of 12 (eight boys and four girls), Valeria had nine in her family (four boys and five girls), together they had five children (Bernice, Robin, Gail, Darron, Troy), and over the years the numbers have grown to include sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, 17 grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

Both Cliff and Valeria were born and raised on neighboring farms in Stutsman County, Corwin Township, and while they knew each other growing up, it wasn't until they were older and began socializing at skating rinks and dances that they began dating. Although they were of different faiths, by the time Cliff and Valeria decided to marry on Sept. 6, 1958 at St. James Catholic Church – now St. James Basilica – they had made the decision to put faith front and center which, for Valeria, meant converting to Catholicism.

“My family have been members of St. James for three generations,” Cliff says. “So when we decided to marry, Valeria was in full agreement about starting our marriage as members of



*Valeria and Cliff Orr*

the same faith. We also knew that it would be best for our future children. And that decision has been the basis for a good marriage.”

Of course, part of the decision to live their faith included fully embracing Catholic education, and St. John's Academy has always been important to everyone in the Orr family. In fact, Cliff played football for St. John's Academy in 1954 and 1955, even cleaning the convent as a means of paying for his tuition.

Over the years, Cliff and Valeria have been involved in many areas. Cliff served for many years on the church board and has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for 56 years, and together they have been very involved with the school.

“Parish involvement is very important,” Cliff says. “You are part of a larger family which includes both the congregation and the community, so it's important to work together.”

In 1971, Cliff graduated from auction school and founded More From Orr Auctioneers. Over the years, the business has had a positive impact on his family, the parish, and the community. The business has not only become a family affair – sons Darron and Troy, along with their wives, help Cliff and Valeria run the company – but it has also allowed them to share their time and talent. They have hosted benefit auctions for St. James Basilica in the past and, after those stopped, they helped with the HOPE (Help Offer Private Education) Dinner and Auction for our parish school over the past 23 years.

“This annual HOPE fundraiser is always a great time for parishioners to get together to not only raise a little money, but to also enjoy each other's company,” Cliff says. “It is a community event with proceeds going to help support St. John's Academy.”

Today, Cliff and Valeria have retired from farming but still help out with the auction business. And when they're not working, they enjoy attending the National Bull Riding Finals in Las Vegas, and organizing the yearly Orr family reunion at the Medora Musical – where they went on their honeymoon in 1958. Another interesting tidbit about the Orrs that

# Orr Family

many don't know about them: shortly after they were married, Cliff and Valeria took flying lessons from Benny Meier at Jamestown Aviation.

Finally, when Cliff and Valeria made the conscious decision 55 years ago to enter into marriage as one faith, they knew it was the right choice for them. Not only has that decision of putting God front and center kept them grounded in their faith, but it has become a gift for future generations, a legacy to pass on.

"In marriage, in life, in business, it's important to seek guidance from God," Cliff says. "Faith has been an important part of our daily lives. It brings comfort, love and understanding. It gives us meaning."



*More From Orr Auctioneers  
(from left) Bev and Troy Orr, Cliff and Valeria Orr, and Darron and Barb Orr*

## *Our 2013 Parish Survey Was a Success!*

**W**e have recently conducted a parish survey for St. James to better understand attitudes and perceptions about various areas of parish life.

The primary aims of this survey were:

- To measure our parishioners' understanding of Catholic stewardship — if it is a clear concept, if it is accepted, and how well it is practiced — so we can determine how to continue to develop stewardship here at St. James.
- To collect parishioners' perceptions of certain parish programs and organizations so that parish life can continue to improve.
- To gather and analyze general demographic information such as age, marital status and income level to give leaders a better understanding of parishioners.

- To obtain general feedback from parishioners about parish life and make recommendations based on their responses.

Thanks to your response, our survey was a success! The parish office received 252 completed surveys. This is a 21 percent response rate. We thank you for your honesty, as well as the time and commitment you made to complete the survey and help our parish become even better and spiritually stronger. We are confident that the information we have gathered through the survey will help guide our parish leadership as we continue to grow our parish community and develop stewardship at St. James Basilica.

(Those who are interested in viewing the full survey percentage results may pick up a copy from the parish office.)



## Celebrating the Miracle of St. Blase *Feast Day, Feb. 3*

Every year on Feb. 3, we celebrate the Feast day of St. Blase, bishop and martyr. In remembrance of this great saint, priests at most parishes around the world bless the throats of the faithful at Masses on this feast day.

Year after year, many of us step into line to receive the blessing — yet how many of us know the reason why St. Blase is associated with the blessing of throats? What are the origins of this yearly ritual?

Though we do not know much about the life of St. Blase, tradition tells us that he was born to wealthy, saintly Catholic parents. Born in Armenia, he devoted his life to medicine and helping the sick. He was a physician, until he was begged by the people to become their bishop. He was appointed by the Church as bishop of the Diocese of Sebaste.

Around the year 313, when the Roman Emperor Licinius was persecuting the Church, Blase lived as a hermit in the woods among animals that he befriended. One day, a group of hunters found Blase and seized him. Upon their trip to the governor, they encountered a woman whose pig was being attacked by a wolf. Blase commanded the wolf to leave the pig alone and, upon his command, the pig was freed unharmed. Blase was then taken to prison, where he miraculously healed a boy who was choking to death on a fishbone. While Blase remained in prison, the woman whose pig he had freed brought him two candles to serve as his light so that he could read the Scripture.

It was from the miracle of saving the choking boy that the custom of praying to St. Blase to cure all ailments of the throat was born. And, so, after still refusing to recant



his Christian beliefs, he was suspended from a tree and his flesh was torn with iron combs or rakes.

Blase was then thrown into a lake to drown. To the surprise of his persecutors, he surfaced and walked upon the water, and he invited his persecutors to join him. They should do this, he said, to show the power of their gods. The pagans took him up on his invitation, and ultimately they were drowned. Blase was then told by an angel to return to dry land to receive martyrdom. He was beheaded on the shore and immediately went to heaven.

Because of his prison experience and his great reputation as a healer, St. Blase's intercession is invoked for the healing of diseases affecting the throat. The candles that the clergy place upon our throats while blessing them symbolize the candles that enlightened St. Blase's cell as he studied Sacred Scripture — connecting his spiritual life to the physical healing. Let us remember to invoke the intercession of this great healer upon any ailments that might be affecting us, either physical or spiritual — especially those pertaining to the throat.

The blessing of the throats is done by holding two blessed candles near the throat in the form of a cross and saying: "Through the merits and intercession of St. Blase, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from all diseases of the throat, and preserve you from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

## “Blessed to Have Depression”: A Network of Hope

Everyone who lives with depression has his or her own story. At St. James, one parishioner openly shares her journey of coping with the mental illness that she is “blessed to have.”

“Depression is isolation, depression is loneliness, depression is uncertainty, depression is pain, and depression is fear,” says Claudia Sharp, secretary of the Faith Formation Office. “All sorts of circumstances can cause depression like stress, family situations and death. Sometimes you can’t explain why you have depression because it is a chemical imbalance.”

Claudia explains that one of the main lies of depression is that there is no hope and that you are suffering alone. In her case, Claudia found hope through depression.

“I am *blessed* to have depression, and certainly that sounds strange — how can someone be blessed with depression?” Claudia says. “I am blessed because it gives me the understanding to help another with the rough times. I am blessed because it forced me to dig down deep within me and see what was going on. Once I was able to admit all the stress, the pain, the hurt and the sorrow, I was able to push it out and begin again.”

Through her struggles, Claudia found ways of coping and adapting to the demands of depression. These methods include medication, as well as attention to daily physical habits, such as certain types of breathing and exercising.

“I am blessed that the medication I use for anxiety and depression works for me,” Claudia says. “If the first med prescribed doesn’t work, keep trying. If that doesn’t work, keep searching for answers. The therapist taught me heart breathing. My first reaction to heart breathing was, ‘This is just like prayer.’”

In the past year, Claudia explains that she has seen so many in pain and frequently suffering alone. Recently, she began having conversations with others regarding how to help those struggling with depression.

“I want people to know that there is a hope through depression,” Claudia says. “I have witnessed parishioners who are in so much pain. Our parish is blessed with so many people who can help them. We have deacons, priests, lay people. We have professional people, we have the person sitting next to you in the pew.”

One such professional — and close friend of Claudia’s — is Rosie Dodson, a psychologist and mental health provider. Rosie is an example of being there for those dealing with depression, and she has provided support for Claudia throughout her struggles.

“Depression is an important issue because of the prevalence of depression in all classes of people,” Rosie says. “Claudia and I had a conversation and were struck by the reality that we all know people struggle silently so often. So why don’t we minister to them?”

Looking to the future, Claudia describes what could be a network of support and hope for others, like



*Claudia Sharp and the friends who supported her journey. (Standing, from left) Peggy Vandal, Gayle Nelson, Teresa Olson and Ann Haut. (Seated, from left) Maria Willer, Jeff Willer, Laura Weis, Paul Sharp, and Claudia Sharp.*

her, who live with depression. This network could include listening, encouraging, and doing small acts to create a support system. The modes of encouragement could include phone conversations, emails, or even text messages.

“If anyone has ideas of how to assist people, we definitely want to enter a conversation about this,” Claudia says. “The more people that the parish can support and help through times of anxiety and depression, the better.”

Ultimately, this network of hope begins with prayer and the willingness to reach out to one another.

If you feel called to join in a network of hope, please contact Claudia Sharp at 701-252-0478 or [faithformation@csicable.net](mailto:faithformation@csicable.net), or Rosie Dodson at 701-269-2979.



# ST. JAMES BASILICA OF JAMESTOWN

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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

## Proclaimers *continued from front cover*

Sister uses the example of the vows spoken by a couple during the marriage ceremony — their marriage is formed and given life when they proclaim the words of their vows.

“When the proclaimer reads God’s Word, he or she is creating the life of faith,” Sister says. “Reading or proclaiming aloud reveals the presence of Christ in the assembly and the faith in the listeners.

“I stress what a gift it is for them and how grateful we are for the people who will do it for the assembly,” she continues. “Many people find it hard to appear in front of a congregation or assembly.”

Parishioners take the step to becoming proclaimers either by being asked or referred by another to Sr. Michaelleen.

“I work with them to understand what is involved,” she says. “It really is an art. It is a responsibility and you need people to take it seriously. Then I have directions written out for what they do when they commit themselves to be a proclaimer.”

Sister also notes that she sees a change in those who become proclaimers.

“They share they have become more involved in living their faith as a result,” she says. “They are more committed to the Liturgy.”

Sister recalls a story from several years ago when she was preparing youth for proclaiming the readings at their Confirmation Eucharist with the bishop.

“I was really drilling them,” Sister recalls. “And one of the other teachers said, ‘You’re very hard on those young people.’ I said, ‘You’ll see what will happen during the readings. The more confidence they have, the better they’ll do it.’ They proclaimed very well at the Confirmation Eucharist.”

Five or six years later, the same teacher approached Sister.

“She said, ‘I’m begging on my knees for you to help me!’” Sister says. “She had been asked to read at a wedding in another state. We drilled. We worked, and she got the background of her reading. When she came back, she said, ‘I can’t believe what happened! The other person just got up and read the Scripture. After the reception, wedding guest after wedding guest approached me saying, ‘You did such a wonderful reading of the Scripture.’” She said to me, ‘I have you to thank — I was able to proclaim the Word and the people were aware of what I was doing.’”

Those who are interested in becoming a proclaimer may call the church office at 701-252-0119.