



Holy Family Area

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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St. Clara's Music Ministry Offers Parishioners Opportunity to Share Gifts for Good

Since she first began as a musical accompanist at Mass at age 15, St. Clara parishioner and current Music Ministry Coordinator Margie DeGrote has been struck by the tremendous beauty and power of liturgical music.

"Music is one of God's greatest gifts to us, and it has the unique ability to lift our minds and hearts to God," Margie says. "Through it, we are able to enter the liturgy more fully. It helps us more fully and actively participate in the liturgy."

Meant to enhance the sacred liturgy, this ministry provides musically gifted parishioners like Margie with the perfect opportunity to use their God-given talents for His glory. And in so doing, music ministers are able to bless the entire congregation.

"Ultimately, God gave us these talents and these gifts for a purpose — to do good," Margie says. "One of the highest forms that

we can do that is by assisting others and their worship of God."

Parishioners have the opportunity to use their musical talents in many different ways at St. Clara. The ministry is always looking for additional cantors, and for parishioners uncomfortable singing solo, says Margie, they can always partner with another singer. Parishioners can also join the church choir, which meets on an as-needed basis. And finally, the Music Ministry welcomes

additional instrumentalists, including piano players, organists, violinists, guitarists and brass instruments.

Oftentimes, people are under the impression that they need to be perfect or at an advanced level in order to play or sing for Mass. But in reality, says Margie, music ministry isn't about the musician at all but rather the liturgy itself. As such, there is room for everyone, no matter their skill level. And



Margie DeGrote, organist and Music Ministry Coordinator for St. Clara Parish.



*Our interests and abilities are varied,
and our volunteer options are endless,
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your heart and prayerfully discern
your gifts, then direct those gifts
towards serving the people of God.*

Got Talent? Bring It to the Spotlight!

The word “talent” often conjures up images of stage performers in the spotlight, captivating awestruck audiences with their impeccable musical or acting skills.

While these talented performers are certainly deserving of applause, the majority of the population sits hidden in the shadows, staring on in amazement while feeling overlooked — and perhaps wishing to possess such talents themselves. But even when we feel overlooked and untalented, God knows better. As Christians, we are all called to dig deep and trust that we are specially blessed with valuable talents and abilities, even if our talents aren’t so obvious or don’t garner applause and accolades.

Along with “time” and “treasure,” “talent” is one of the “three Ts” of stewardship. Exploring our natural inclinations and preferences, especially when guided by the intricacies of our unique personalities, can unearth God-given talents.

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit,” writes St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. “There are different forms of service, but the same Lord.”

Some people have the gift of working peacefully with children. Equipped with patience and gentleness, they are able to guide young souls to the Lord. Yet, others shudder at the thought of a classroom full of 5-year-

olds, and instead seek the quiet solace of behind-the-scenes tasks — cleaning the church, sewing altar cloths or stuffing envelopes.

Our interests and abilities are varied, and our volunteer options are endless, as we are called to give our talents back to God in loving service. Examine your heart and prayerfully discern your gifts, then direct those gifts towards serving the people of God.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr., author of *Life’s Little Instruction Book*, once said, “Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it is going to be forwards, backwards, or sideways.”

If our gifts of talent are not guided by the discipline of prayer, just like an octopus on roller skates, we will get nowhere fast! Yet, if we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven and serve the Lord with joyfulness, our efforts will produce a bountiful harvest. In the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.”

The next time you sit quietly in the shadows behind a glaring stage spotlight, rest assured that your talents are no less impressive in the eyes of God, and will always be “applauded” when directed to the service of His people.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Answering the Call for Lent



My Dear Friends in Christ,

This month, as we proceed on our Lenten journey to Easter, every one of us should ask ourselves, "What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ and how well am I living that out each day?"

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops addressed what it means to be a disciple when they wrote their pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. "Who is a Christian disciple?" the USCCB asked and, in turn, they also provided the answer, "One who responds to Christ's call, follows Jesus, and shapes his or her life in imitation of Christ's" (9). So, as disciples of Jesus Christ, it is essential that we consider the true meaning of that answer.

The first step in the Christian life is responding to Jesus' call. Jesus invites every person to develop a relationship with Him. But obviously, not every person is a Christian disciple. Some people are too busy to even hear that invitation or don't make the effort to recognize it. Others make a conscious decision to reject the call because it demands that they

can no longer place themselves at the center of their lives.

On the other hand, for those of us who make an affirmative response to Christ's call, the most meaningful life possible awaits us, both now and into eternity. However, saying "yes" to Jesus has consequences that affect the rest of our lives.

The first consequence of becoming a disciple is that we now follow Jesus. The Gospel accounts record that when He called His disciples, they left what they were doing and followed Him. The same is true for us today. Becoming a Christian disciple does not necessarily mean that all of us will leave our present job, or enter into the consecrated life, or serve as a missionary in another country — although that might be where the journey leads you. But it does mean that we offer our work — whether as a doctor, homemaker, mechanic, farmer or teacher — to build up the Kingdom of God.

In following Jesus as His disciples, we should strive to more fully absorb His teaching and then

apply it to our daily lives. As we do, we find that we attempt to imitate Him, treating others with the same welcoming and generous spirit. St. Peter was direct when he described how Jesus acted: "He went about doing good... for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). That's the model for how we must live.

Discipleship leads naturally to stewardship as a way of life. The time we offer in prayer and worship will give us the strength and guidance for serving Christ. Using the skills and gifts we have to build the Kingdom will direct our offering of talent. The support of all these endeavors with our treasure will ensure that our lives as disciples and stewards are genuine.

As a Christian steward this Lent, I encourage you to reflect on the changes you can make in growing as a disciple of Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Paul Timmerman".

Fr. Paul Timmerman,
Pastor

Embracing the Bless *Through our T*

If you arrive a little early for Mass at St. Andrew's, you may find a woman waiting there for you — that is, the most heavenly, holy woman that ever lived — the Blessed Mother.

"There aren't many people there when we first start praying the Rosary, but then more people come, and it just swells!" says JoAnn Masters, who coordinates St. Andrew's Parish Rosary. "The sound of the people joining in is so beautiful! I have a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother, which is why I love the Rosary so much. I pray it every day."

The Rosary is prayed at our parish during the half hour before Mass each weekend, as well as on Holy Days when possible. As parishioners gather to pray, they welcome God's sacred presence in our midst, so that He may dwell among us, filling us with the serene spirit of the Blessed Mother.

"I believe that the Rosary is such a soothing prayer," JoAnn says. "The repetitiousness of it has such a calming effect. I have always noticed that if I am upset about something, by the time I get to praying the fourth mystery of the Rosary, I am doing just fine! The Rosary is a wonderful way to dwell on the mysteries of the life of Christ. It is like a miniature version of the Bible."

Traditionally, praying the Rosary has always proved to be an ideal way to prepare oneself spiritually for the Sacrifice of the Mass.

"It is great to pray before Mass because it helps you focus," JoAnn says. "It gets you in a more contemplative mode. In one of his encyclicals on the Rosary, St. John Paul



By embracing this call to prayer, our parish family is drawing many divine graces down from heaven, and testifying to what Catholicism is all about.

II described it as the 'school of Mary.' I think this is very fitting. I really appreciate Fr. Paul encouraging us to pray the Rosary before our weekend Masses. Our recent popes have all had a special love for the Blessed Mother and it is good to see our priests following their example."

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Assumed Mother's Love Parish Rosary

By embracing this call to prayer, our parish family is drawing many divine graces down from heaven, and testifying to what Catholicism is all about.

"The Rosary is a very important prayer of the Church, and it needs to be passed on to our young people," JoAnn says. "It covers the most essential aspects of our faith. It is something I have enjoyed passing on to my children and grandchildren, and I hope others do the same."

More volunteers are needed to lead the Rosary, especially men from our parish, so that they may be an example of faith to others.

"I want young people to know that the Rosary is not just an 'old woman's pastime or prayer' but that real men pray the Rosary," JoAnn says.

If you would like more information about this powerful Marian ministry of prayer, please contact JoAnn Masters at 320-564-2366.

St. Clara's Music Ministry *continued from front cover*

by generously providing of their time and talent in this way musicians are given a unique opportunity to better their musical abilities.

"I don't want anyone to feel that they can't do it because they're not at a certain level," Margie says. "Sometimes getting to that level comes with time and experience. And you can't get that experience if you aren't given the opportunity. We welcome anyone willing to share their talent."

Though there are many blessings that come from this ministry, the greatest blessing by far, says Margie, is witnessing the "powerful and beautiful response" to the liturgical music, helping to bring about the "profound feeling of reverence and love for God" that so often accompanies sacred music.

"I've received a lot of grace through this ministry," Margie says. "I encourage anyone to get involved in it. You give a lot, but you also get a lot in return. It's a

form of service, but the gifts you receive in return are so important. It's a true blessing to be a part of and a real privilege."



Members of St. Clara's Youth Choir, which is for children in third through sixth grades.

If you would like to join St. Clara's Music Ministry, or to receive more information, please contact Margie DeGrote at either 320-212-1135 or mmdegrote@gmail.com.

The Blessings of the Catholic Mass

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally re-presented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to *receive* the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces to fill us. Think of

all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.



Lighthouse Catholic Media Kiosk Offers Opportunities for Spiritual Enrichment

"It has been a gift to be able to work with the Lighthouse Catholic Media program. It has opened up so many different areas of our faith, which has led me to question, search and learn on a deeper level. It is truly a blessing." — Connie Pauling

A love for reading and a desire to find new reading material led to Connie Pauling managing the Lighthouse Catholic Media kiosk at St. Joseph Church.

"I was always looking for new things and the opportunity came up for this," she says. "I mentioned it to Father, and he said, 'Yes, you should do that!'"

The Lighthouse Catholic Media

kiosk is located in the St. Joseph narthex next to the main door. The kiosk displays CDs and books written by Catholic authors. While Lighthouse Catholic Media is a nonprofit group, a donation is asked of \$4 for the CDs, and \$5 for the books.

Some of the writers featured include Dr. Tim Gray, Jason Evert, Jeff Cavins, Matthew Kelly, Karl Keating, and Fr. Larry Richards.

"I try to get a real variety of material," Connie says. "If someone has an idea of what they'd like, I also welcome suggestions."

Parents of younger children can find *Raising Amazing Catholics*, and *Cat.Chat*, a popular item, is also on hand for the younger set.

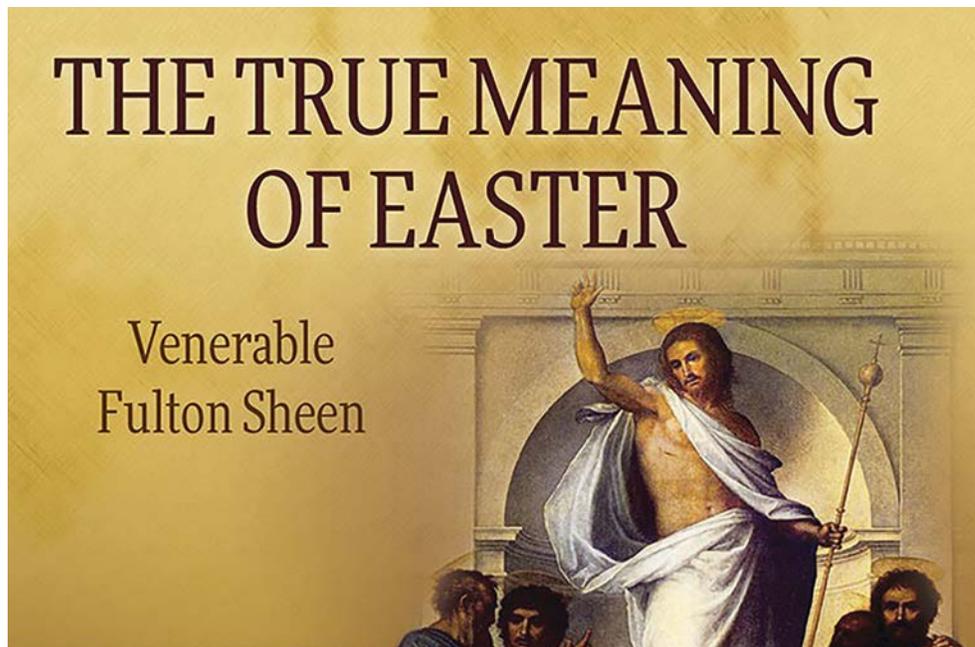
Having faith-based reading material available is important to Connie.

"It's very important to our Catholic education," she says. "We always have to be evangelizing and growing in our faith. These books help do that."

For Connie, working with the Lighthouse Media organization has been much more than a business relationship. Her work is enabling her to build her own faith, while making the same benefits available to fellow parishioners.

"It has been a gift to be able to work with the Lighthouse Catholic Media program," Connie says. "It has opened up so many different areas of our faith, which has led me to question, search and learn on a deeper level. It is truly a blessing."

A number of the materials would make appropriate gifts for someone making a First Communion or being confirmed. *The Lamb's Supper* is one



*Those who stop by the Lighthouse Catholic Media kiosk will find enlightening materials, such as *The True Meaning of Easter* by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen — a wonderful way to reflect on the coming of Easter during the solemn Lenten season.*

HOLY FAMILY AREA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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MASS TIMES:

Sunday

8:30 a.m. — St. Clara, Clara City
10:30 a.m. — St. Joseph, Montevideo

Tuesday

10:30 a.m. — Luther Haven, Montevideo

Wednesday

9:30 a.m. — Clara City Care Center, Clara City

Thursday

Noon — St. Joseph, Montevideo

Friday

10 a.m. — Granite Falls Manor, Granite Falls

Saturday

5 p.m. — St. Andrew, Granite Falls
7 p.m. — St. Joseph, Montevideo in Spanish

CONFESSION TIMES:

Sunday

8 a.m. — St. Clara, Clara City

Thursday

11:30 a.m. — St. Joseph, Montevideo

Saturday

9-10 a.m. — St. Joseph, Montevideo
4:15 p.m. — St. Andrew, Granite Falls

Lighthouse Catholic Media Kiosk *continued from page 7*

book Connie recommends for its writings about the Mass. During our current observance of Lent, the kiosk expects to offer the CD *Glimpses Along the Way of the Cross* by Msgr. James P. Shea to assist in our journey. She also has *The True Meaning of Easter* by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

Although Connie takes care of ordering materials and stocking the kiosk, purchases are handled on the honor system.

"There is a box at the kiosk for donation offerings," she says.

Anyone wanting more information on the Lighthouse Catholic Media offerings may visit its website at www.lighthousecatholicmedia.org. To make suggestions for material, please contact the St. Joseph office at 320-269-5954.