

St Matt's Memos



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Bellevue, NE 68123
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Mass Schedule
Saturday: 5pm
Sunday: 8:30am & 10:30am
Tuesday to Friday: 9am

Reconciliation
Saturday: 4 :15pm

From the Pastor — Father Leo Rigatuso



This time last year we were on hold for the winter. A year later, the fruit of the Lord's blessings are taking shape in our new church! It has been a very busy spring, summer & fall for the construction crews; as we pray daily for the work entrusted to them and for their safety. Our latest completion goal is August 1, 2020. With the immediate goal of completing most of the roof by January 1, which will allow the interior work to

continue through our most wintery months.

I always find it amazing to reflect on how the Lord unfolds his plans. Our parish is blest with lots of talented people with different gifts to share. As St. Paul informs us in 1 Corinthians 12:

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord;

there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as we wishes."

It is an honor and a privilege to work with all of you on this beautiful Church.

My prayers for all of you as we move forward with what the Lord has asked of us.

Fr Leo

Parish Council—President Rick Holdcroft



First, let me thank all those who contributed to the highly successful Parish Picnic, particularly Sue Mailhot & her team and the Knights. The "Plop Drop" competition was of special interest and essentially paid for the event.

Your Parish Council has been busy looking toward the future. Significant time and effort has been given to the development of a Strategic Plan. Please take a little time to review the current status of the plan on page 6 of this newsletter. As you will see, we have five "super" committees which are made up by both parish and school personnel to coordinate our way ahead for the St Matthew Catholic Community. We

really need help with the Program Development and Marketing Committees. If you are interested, please contact me.

One of the major Strategic Goals is the development of a Campus-wide Master Plan. This will be tackled by the Campus Steering Super Committee. We have solicited proposals from three architecture/planning firms to help us identify the future use of our entire campus over the next several decades. All three have the same approach which is to solicit from the parishioners what the future should look like for the school, maintenance buildings, community center, parking lots, etc. We want your inputs. Watch for progress updates in the bulletin.

While it is still a ways off, our major fundraiser of the year will be coming on 21 February. Titled "Marti Gras" it will be a time of Food, Fun, Raffles and Auctions. Watch for more info to come.

Rick

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School Update—Principal Angie Palmer



As we begin to bundle up more for our recesses, we feel warmth and pride from all the hard work being done in the classrooms. Our 3rd-8th graders finished taking their Terra Nova Standardized tests in early October. We are looking forward to getting our results back and analyzing them so we can continue to use data to drive our instruction.



We had a lot of major events occur in the last few months. On September 20 we celebrated our feast day and invited our grandparents to attend. The day was filled with great company at mass, eating delicious donuts, playing some competitive games of bingo, shopping at the book fair, and just enjoying being together. Our hearts were filled with happiness just seeing everyone come together.

October brought a lot of events, as well. The third-fifth graders went to the Lewis and Clark Discovery Center in Nebraska City to learn about the first Americans. They also went to Arbor Day Lodge where students learned about trees and the life cycle and got to enjoy some apple treats as well. Students and teachers had a great time. We also celebrated Halloween at our PTO Halloween Carnival on October 25 and at the classroom parties on Oct. 31. The Veterans were excited to see us at the Eastern Nebraska Veteran's home as students trick-or-treated in their costumes.

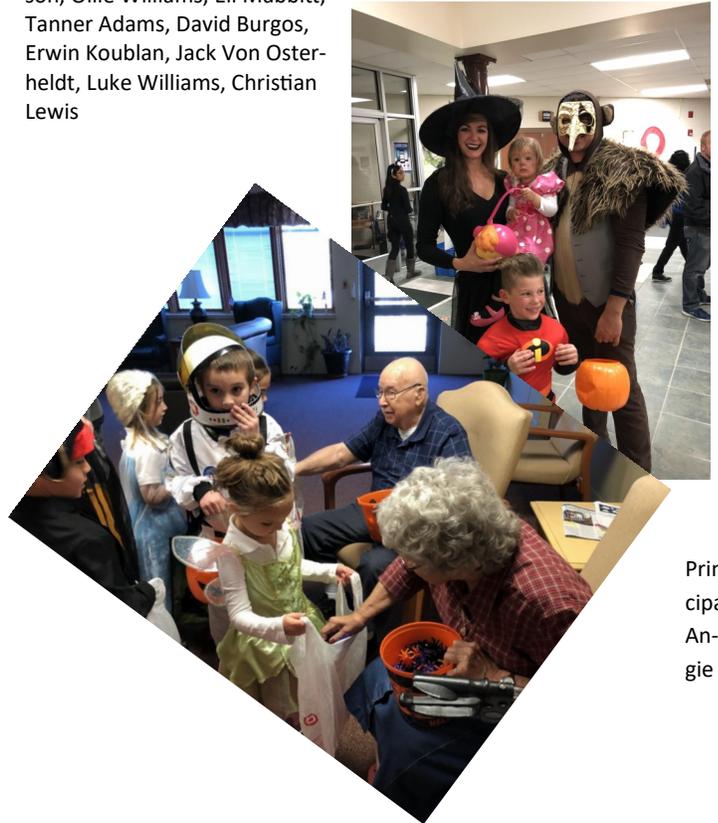


November 8 marked the end of our 1st trimester and we also honored our Veterans at mass. We couldn't be more thankful for all



our service men and women do for our country.

Lastly, many of our middle school students were recognized on Nov.15 for making Honor Roll. Students receiving High Honors (All A's in all their classes): Missa Bersabe, Ethan Mabbitt, Gabe Weber, Lexi Martin, Arnie Nash, Hunter Wynne, Patrick McFall, Jonathan Sevick. Students receiving Honors (All A's and B's in all subjects): Erin Cassoutt, Sean Larson, Ollie Williams, Eli Mabbitt, Tanner Adams, David Burgos, Erwin Koublan, Jack Von Osterheldt, Luke Williams, Christian Lewis



Principal Angie

Women Working for God — Sherry Trupp



As we begin the new year, let's review 2019. WWG awarded two \$500 scholarships, provided the women's shelter with food for Thanksgiving and Christmas and many Christmas gifts. We gathered during the summer for lunches and again in December for our Christmas brunch. We

enjoyed a beautiful fall day with a visit to the Cloisters on the Platte. We had a very successful bake and craft sale! We look forward to sharing the new year with new and old friends. We extend an invitation to ALL the women of the parish to join us. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month, 6:30 pm in the commons.

Sherry Trupp
WWG President

Why we are parishioners—the Rolfzen Family



Russ and Edna
Rolfzen

(Founding Mem-
bers – June 1996)

We came to Belle-
vue in 1981 after a
four year Air Force
assignment in
Wiesbaden, Ger-
many. As we were
still active Air

Force members, we became members of the Offutt AFB Chapel, attending Mass and religious activities at either the SAC or Capehart Chapel. After we retired in 1989, we remained with the Offutt Chapel until June 1996, when we were informed that a new Parish was being formed in Bellevue (St Matthews) . We immediately became members,

attending the first Mass at Ft Crook School on 25th Street. Russ, along with several new members set up the gym at the school for the first Mass. We got our first introduction to Fr Stolinski after the first weekends Mass, when he informed us that he did not want the altar under a “basketball hoop”. Needless to say, we changed the setting. As many of our friends from the Offutt Chapel were also becoming members of St Matthews, it was a easy decision. In addition, we were looking for stability that a Parish like St Matthews offers. As we look south of St Matthews school, and see the construction of our new church, we most definitely made the right decision. We are both Eucharistic Ministers, assisting with Prayer Services at Mable Rose, and the Vets Home. Russ is 4th Degree Knight, member of the “Minuteman Group”, and on the newly formed Security Team.

Our family includes one Daughter (Patricia – living in Des Moines) and one Son (Mark – living in Papillion). We have four grandchildren; 2 grandsons and 2 granddaughters. Our oldest grandson, was recently married

The Rolfzen Family

Parent Teacher Organization —

Vice President Alisha Olson



It has been a busy year so far! In September we had our Scholastic Book Fair where we raised money to purchase several books for our classrooms and libraries. We were even able to donate \$1000.00 to the library so Mrs. Chou could spend the money on supplies and items she needs for the library. On September 20th we invited grandparents to celebrate St. Matthew Feast Day at Mass and then enjoy a donut and play

bingo with their grandchildren. We had our annual Otis Spunkmeyer fundraiser where we raised money for the PTO to continue to support the school and students. In October we invited Moms to the school to enjoy a muffin before we all went on with our day. We also had our annual Halloween Carnival which was a big hit. There was “Trick or Treat Street”, a bounce house, a pumpkin carving contest, a family costume contest and a whole lot of fun! Moving into November, we honored our Veterans at Mass and then celebrated with them with a treat after. November continued to be busy with our annual Craft Fair which showcased all different kinds of talents! To round out the month of November we gave thanks at our Thanksgiving Dessert where students, family and friends shared laughs and goodies. We look forward to the rest of the semester with St. Nicholas Day, Our Christmas Program and Reception, Santa’s Secret Shop, Christmas parties and then a much anticipated break!

Alisha Olson



Save the date & plan to join us!

Food, Fun, Raffles & Auctions

This event, which is the major fundraiser for the school and parish, will include a casual dinner with some favorite New Orleans food, maybe some dancing, a few live auction items, some silent auction items, and a raffle. This Mardi Gras party will be held in the parish multi-purpose room (gym). But don't you worry, you will think you are in New Orleans. Mardi Gras costumes are encouraged.

Dinner registration information is coming soon.

If you are interested in donating items for the auction or raffles, contact Shannon Abboud at shannonabboud@cox.net or 402-689-5587.

Knights of Columbus — Dave Boone



Amidst all of the ongoing Pathway to our Church activities, the Knights continue to be a very busy organization; especially given the involvement of Knights in several of the key roles as we move forward with the construction of our new church.

EVENTS and ACTIVITIES:

Campaign for Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities:

October began with our annual “Tootsie Roll Drive”. Thanks to the generosity of the Bellevue community, we were able to take in more donations than the previous year; and also thanks in part to the additional post-mass collections within St Matthew itself. Thank you all for your support. October also kicked off the Keep Christ in Christmas card sales. The pre and post mass sales will continue through November 17th. Our monthly Spaghetti Dinner was held to raise funds for Gabriel’s Corner, a Christ-centered ministry serving young women and men who are facing an unplanned pregnancy. We also put on a Pancake Breakfast raising money for our Saint Vincent de Paul Chapter.

CRAFT FAIR: With the annual craft fair in November... Knights were present to facilitate the moving in and moving out of the craft vendors. Our help in this regard is greatly appreciated by the vendors and keeps St Matthew as one of their favorite venues.

40 Days of Life: The 40 day campaign against abortion terminated in November with St Matthew manning the prayer line for 12 hours. The Culture of Life Chairman of the Knights and his family, spear-headed the operation and ensured that all of the hours were filled by St Matthew parishioners.

RECURRING EVENTS:

With the Family based Catechisi program in full swing, the Knights provide much needed child safety by staffing the parking lot traffic control crew on each first Wednesday of the month.

AWARDS: Winners of the Knight of the Month awards for our council were Zac Cote (August), Greg Stoiber (September) and Shaun Richter (October). Our Family of the month awards went to George and Barbara Bolter, Rob and Lynn Green and Paul Gallo-way Jr (aka “Senior”) and Margaret for the respective months. Each of these winners made, and continue to make, substantial contributions to the council as well as the parish as a whole. Congratulations to each.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

November will close out with another Pancake Breakfast for religious education and to help buy bibles for the confirmation class. The Knights will also set up the Nativity Scene in front of the church at the end of the month. This will lead us into the Light Up for Christ ceremony in the commons on December 3rd.... with cookies, carols and an appearance by a special visitor from the north.

Faithfully in Christ,
Dave Boone
Grand Knight, Council 11879



Upcoming 1st Friday’s

24 hours of Eucharist Adoration of Jesus in the Chapel

December 6th—A good way to start the season of Adventure

January 3rd—A good way to start the New Year

February 7th—A good way to prepare for the start of Lent (Ash Wednesday is February 26th)

March 6th—A good way to continue in your Lenten practice of giving something up (in this case a little time)



Exposition starts at 8:00 a.m. on Friday and ends at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday

The doors are locked at 10:00 p.m. for security/safety concerns, if you would like access to the building after this time contact Phil McEvoy @ PRMCEVOY@GMAIL.COM.

Other times of Eucharist Adoration are every Friday from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. and every Sunday from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. ending with Vespers.

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of our Lord. Although the planning of dinners, parties and shopping can seem to others to be important we as Christians know otherwise. Most Important is the preparations of our heart and Soul for the baby Jesus.

The Sisters of Mercy taught me in the early 60’s that our Soul could be likened to a white sheet and our sins are stains on the sheet. We know how to clean up both, soap and water for the former and Confession for the latter. We would not put a baby on a dirty sheet and we should not try to put the baby Jesus into stained Soul. Father Leo will have many opportunities for us to cleanse our Soul in the next month. With that said if someone asks you “are you ready for Christmas” we can say “YES, I just went to Confession”!

If there are any Parishioners that are unable to attend weekend Mass and would like to receive Holy Communion we have a number of people that go out each weekend to visit the homebound. If you, a neighbor or friend is in need of this please contact the office or Phil McEvoy at the above email address.

Farwell in the Lord,

Philip McEvoy

Adult Faith Formation — Kevin & Janice Todd and Sue Tracy



Join us as we continue the Hearts Afire Parish-based program with the book *The 'One Thing' Is Three: How the Most Holy Trinity Explains Everything* by Fr. Michael Gaitley. "The One Thing Is Three is written for everyone. The conversational tone has an appeal that invites the reader into the journey of life. I highly recommend this book for anyone who loves the Church and seeks a deeper understanding of her teachings. Filled with references to Vatican II and Pope John Paul II, this book will enrich your belief in God's plan of salvation, and your love of the Most Holy Trinity." It is "written simply and clearly and brings the profound truths of the faith from head to heart to life in a way that makes deep theology easy to understand and even easier to live. This is a 10-week program beginning on Jan 9. Classes will be on Thurs, 6:30 – 8:00pm, in the school library (Bldg 2). Cost for the

book is \$15. Please contact Janice Todd at 402-871-4699 or janicetoddcmc@msn.com to register by Mon, Jan 6, or if you have any questions. Visit www.allheartsafire.org. No prior Bible Study experience necessary. All are welcome!

New Bible Study: The Gospel According to Matthew



Join us in January for a 10-week study of the **Gospel According to Matthew**. This Gospel is being read on Sundays during the current church year, and was traditionally the Church's favorite faith portrait of Jesus. In this version of the Good News, we will encounter Jesus the Master Teacher, who gives us the Sermon on the Mount, memorable parables and miracles, the Great Commission and much more. Considered the most "Jewish" of the four gospels, Jesus tells us that he has come not to abolish but to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. We are assured that Jesus is *Emmanuel*, God-with-us.

We use the new Little Rock Scripture Study series, which includes commentary, study and reflection questions, and access to recorded lectures. Cost of the books will be approximately \$20.

Evening study begins **Tuesday, January 14, 2020, from 7-8:30 PM** in the St. Matthew library. Morning study begins **Wednesday, January 15, 2020, from 9:30-11 AM** at Thanksgiving! Church on the corner of Hwy. 370 and 36th Street. Babysitting is available in the morning class only for a small fee. Please contact Susan Tracy (402-292-4986 or email srtracy2@icloud.com) if you are interested in attending so that books may be ordered.

Remember: prior Bible Study experience is not necessary! We welcome new and experienced members. Join us and see how Scripture study can enrich your faith.

HAVEN'T SIGNED UP FOR YOUR FREE FORMED ACCOUNT?

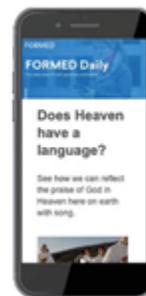
Visit FORMED.org, click "Sign Up", click "I belong to a Parish or Organization", type in "St. Matthew The Evangelist" (12210 S. 36th St., Ste A Bellevue, NE), click "next", create your FREE New Account. Enjoy the Catholic faith On Demand. Thousands of movies, programs, audio talks and books instantly. FREE App also available.

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The Strategic Plan

Mission Statement

“As members of St. Matthew Parish in Bellevue, Nebraska, we join in the mission of Jesus through our Baptism, and so commit ourselves to live the values expressed in the gospel message.”

Vision Statement (3 - 5 Years)

“A united community moving in one direction to spread the gospel message to an evangelized next generation, in modernized facilities and supported by a strong financial foundation.”

Strategic Priorities

- 1) Create an atmosphere of mutual support for school and parish moving in the same direction**
- 2) Evangelize and catechize parishioners and community members**
- 3) Provide a nurturing and sustainable environment**
- 4) Bring existing facilities in line with new facilities**
- 5) Ensure a sound financial plan for sustainability**

The Super Committees

These committees include both Parish and School personnel to provide a coordinated effort across the St Matthew Catholic Community. They are tasked to accomplish specific Strategic Goals which support our Strategic Priorities. There are openings on most of these committees (marked with an *). Contact Rick Holdcroft, (rtholdcroft@cox.net), if you are interested in becoming a member.

The Strategic Planning Committee*

Program Development Committee*

Campus Steering Committee

Marketing Committee*

Disciple Formation Committee*

Opportunities for Memorials and Dedications in our new Church

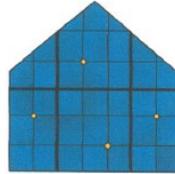
The items listed below are available for parishioners to purchase for memorials or dedications in our new church. They are available on a first come, first serve basis but full payment must be made at time of commitment. Payments cannot be made from already committed pledges. Recognition of the memorial or dedication will depend on the size of the item. For large items the recognition will be on a local label on the item and in a display in the narthex. Smaller items will be listed in the display in the narthex. Contact Paula Banks (402-292-7418 or plbanks@archomaha.org) in the Parish Office if interested.



6' Rose Window (East)
\$22,000



6' Rose Window (West)
\$19,000



Clerestory
Windows (5 remaining)
\$6,000



Consecration
Candles (4)
\$1,672 ea



Pascal Candle
Holder
\$3,286



Sunday/Holy Day Vestments
Chasuble with Stole (set of 4 colors)
2 Sets
\$1330.00



Sunday/Holy Day Vestments
Dalmatic with stole (set of 4 colors)
2 Sets
\$1188



Server Garments
Youth Cassock and Surplices
12 Sets
\$1164



Week Day Vestments
Chasuble with Stole (set of 4 colors)
1 Set
\$356.00

Special/"Archdiocese" Beige Vestments & Accessories



With Matching

Dalmatic (2) - \$740

Cope - \$655

Humeral Veil - \$345

Funeral Pall - \$460

1 Cross Chasuble
\$370

3 Cross Chasuble
\$535



Week Day Vestments
Dalmatic with Stole (set of 4 colors)
1 Set
\$356.00



Server Garments
Adult Albs
3 Sets
\$705

Stained Glass

Our Artists at Lambrecht Studios have made great progress on the Saints we selected for our 14' Stained Glass Windows as you can see below. These windows may be purchased for memorials and dedications for the cost of \$36,000. St Michael has been purchased but the other five are still available. Note the dedication/memorial will be inscribed in the glass. Obviously, there is a limitation to the length of the inscription.



December 2019

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|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>1</p> <p>11:30am Take Down 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</p> | <p>2</p> <p>6:30pm Hearts Afire 7pm Knights of Columbus</p> | <p>3</p> <p>7:30am Prayer Club 5:30pm SVDP – Office 6pm Light Up for Christ 6:30pm Bible Study</p> | <p>4</p> <p>5:30pm RE Gym Setup 6:30pm Bible Study CSR 6:30pm RE/FBC</p> | <p>5</p> <p>6pm Adult Formation 6pm Mardi Gras Planning</p> | <p>6</p> <p>No School Eucharistic Adoration—24 hrs</p> | <p>7</p> <p>8am Setup 5:30pm Spaghetti Feed</p> |
| <p>8</p> <p>Santa's Workshop 11:30am Take Down 2pm Prayer Shawl 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</p> | <p>9</p> <p>6:30pm Hearts Afire</p> | <p>10</p> <p>7:30am Prayer Club 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Christmas Concert 7pm Campus Steering Committee</p> | <p>11</p> <p>6:30pm Bible Study CSR 6:30pm RE/FBC 1st Penance & Reconciliation</p> | <p>12</p> <p>2pm Construction Meeting 6pm Adult Formation</p> | <p>13</p> <p>9:30am 1st Penance & Reconciliation 2nd Grade</p> | <p>14</p> <p>8am Setup WWG Brunch</p> |
| <p>15</p> <p>11:30am Take Down 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</p> | <p>16</p> <p>6:30pm Hearts Afire 7pm Knights of Columbus</p> | <p>17</p> <p>7:30am Prayer Club 6pm SMAT 6:30pm Bible Study</p> | <p>18</p> <p>6:30pm Bible Study 7pm Finance Mtg</p> | <p>19</p> <p>5:30pm Staff Christmas Party 6pm Adult Formation</p> | <p>20</p> <p>5pm Setup</p> | <p>21</p> <p>Olive Art 8am Setup</p> |
| <p>22</p> <p>Olive Art Christmas Tree Setup 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</p> | <p>23</p> <p>No School 6:30 Hearts Afire 7pm Baptism Class</p> | <p>24</p> <p>4pm Mass 6pm Mass</p> | <p>25</p> <p>10am Mass</p> | <p>26</p> <p>6pm Adult Formation</p> | <p>27</p> | <p>28</p> |
| <p>29</p> <p>No School 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</p> | <p>30</p> <p>6:30 Hearts Afire</p> | <p>31</p> <p>5pm Vigil Mass 6:30pm Bible Study</p> | | | | |

January 2020

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|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | | 1 <i>10am Mass</i> | 2 <i>6pm Adult Formation</i> | 3 <i>Eucharistic Adoration—24 hrs</i> | 4 |
| 5 <i>11:30am Take Down 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</i> | 6 <i>6:30pm Hearts Afire 7pm Knights of Columbus</i> | 7 <i>7:30am Prayer Club 5:30pm SVDP 6pm PTO Meeting 6:30pm Bible Study</i> | 8 <i>5:30pm RE Gym Set-up 6:30pm Bible Study CSR 6:30pm RE/FNC 1st Wednesday</i> | 9 <i>2pm Construction Meeting 6pm Adult Formation</i> | 10 | 11 <i>8am Setup</i> |
| 12 <i>11:30am Take Down 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</i> | 13 <i>6:30pm Hearts Afire</i> | 14 <i>7:30am Prayer Club 6:30pm Bible Study 7pm Campus Steering Committee</i> | 15 <i>6:30pm Bible Study 7pm Finance Mtg</i> | 16 <i>6pm Adult Formation 6pm SPSSC Meeting</i> | 17 | 18 <i>8am Setup 5pm Knight's Mass</i> |
| 19 <i>11:30am Take Down 2pm Prayer Shawl 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</i> | 20 <i>No School 6:30 Hearts Afire 7pm Knights of Columbus</i> | 21 <i>7:30am Prayer Club 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm WWG</i> | 22 <i>6:30pm Bible Study</i> | 23 <i>2pm Construction Meeting 6pm Adult Formation</i> | 24 | 25 <i>8am Setup</i> |
| 26 <i>7:30am Pancake Breakfast 11:30am Take Down 2pm Prayer Shawl 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour</i> | 27 <i>6:30 Hearts Afire 7pm Baptism Class</i> | 28 <i>7:30am Prayer Club 6pm Parish Council 6:30pm Bible Study</i> | 29 <i>6:30pm Bible Study</i> | 30 <i>6pm Adult Formation</i> | 31 | |

February 2020

Sun

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 8am Setup |
| 2 11:30am Take Down 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour | 3 6:30pm Hearts Afire 7pm Knights of Columbus | 4 7:30am Prayer Club 5:30pm SVDP 6pm PTO Meeting 6:30pm Bible Study | 5 5:30pm RE Gym Setup 6:30pm Bible Study CSR 6:30 RE/FBC 1st Wednesday | 6 2pm Construction Project Review 6pm Adult Formation | 7 Eucharistic Adoration—24 hrs | 8 8am Setup |
| 9 7:30am Pancake Feed 11:30am Take Down 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour | 10 6:30pm Hearts Afire | 11 7:30am Prayer Club 6:30pm Bible Study 7pm Campus Steering Committee | 12 6:30pm Bible Study | 13 No School 6pm Adult Formation | 14 | 15 8am Setup |
| 16 11:30am Take Down 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour | 17 6:30 Hearts Afire 7pm Knights of Columbus | 18 7:30am Prayer Club 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm WWG | 19 6:30pm Bible Study 7pm Finance Mtg | 20 2pm Construction Project Review 6pm Adult Formation | 21 Mardi Gras Party | 22 8am Setup |
| 23 10am Welcome Reception 11:30am Take Down 2pm Prayer Shawl 2:30pm RCIA 5pm Holy Hour | 24 6:30 Hearts Afire 7pm Baptism Class | 25 7:30am Prayer Club 6pm Parish Council 6:30pm Bible Study 9:30pm Setup | 26 Ash Wednesday 12pm Mass 6pm Mass 6:30pm Bible Study 7pm Take Down | 27 6pm Adult Formation | 28 Fish Fry Friday | 29 8am Setup |

Religious Education — Deacon Mark White



“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.” This is the angel’s message proclaimed in St. Luke’s Gospel. Like the angel, we are called to be the heralds of the “good news of great joy” of God’s plan of salvation for “all the people.” But, how comfortable are we with being God’s messengers of this good news—

to our friends, our fellow students, our coworkers, perhaps even our spouse and let alone the stranger? In all likelihood, probably not as comfortable as our consciences tell us we should. And, society can certainly make it difficult for the herald, the evangelizer, to proclaim the good news. It may appear to us that society has grown increasingly indifferent, if not outright hostile, to discussing God. As well, many seem to have a certain mentality of “No thanks God, I’ve got this, I’ll let you know when I need your help.” This isn’t new to our world today. The Old Testament book, Judges, has story after story of societies that started with little, but as they grew richer became disconnected from the God who was the very source of all their wealth and success. They separated themselves from God. Throughout history, society certainly has made it difficult for God’s prophets to proclaim the good news. But, we’re still called to do so.

Perhaps we can use our Advent journey to better prepare ourselves to be heralds of the “good news.” The Anglo words for “good” and “news” are the source for the current word “gospel.” I offer the mnemonic below that it might be useful to pray over during this Advent—helping us better understand our God, and then being better prepared to evangelize God’s “good news” or “G-O-S-P-E-L.”

G – God is love. St. John the Evangelist beautifully sums up this truth about God. While we might become confused or discouraged by something that we read in the Bible, a Church teaching, or a tragedy; understanding that God is the perfection of love gives us hope of an eternity with Him.

O – Omni (“All”). God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent—all powerful, knowing, and present. These three attributes commonly associated with God help us better understand that we are victorious because we are in communion with the Victor. At times it may seem that sin and wickedness have the upper hand, however we know the great “I Am” is in control and lovingly calls each one of us.

S – Suffering has meaning. We know from the first chapters of Genesis that all that God creates is good. Pain, suffering, and death entered into God’s plan because of man’s use of his freedom to disobey God. But since God desires for us to be with Him in eternal goodness, and not separated, He also planned for our salvation. That plan involved painful sacrifice. We see that in Jesus’ passion and He upon His crucifix. Jesus’ suffering had meaning—it redeemed mankind. In our suffering, we bind ourselves to Jesus’ suffering that He might say to us “...today you will be with me in paradise.”

P – Prayer is an encounter with the Divine. When we invoke God’s name in prayer, it’s intimate and personal. Jesus assures us that the Father always hears our prayers. And when we listen intently, He answers us, in “a still small voice.” We see repeatedly in Sacred Scripture that Jesus loved to go off by Himself in quiet, contemplative prayer. We need to do likewise.

E – Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This is what our Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us. The Eucharist configures us and it is a share in the Divine life. When we worthily receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, we become that of which we consume. By receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and all of the sacraments of the Church, we are supernaturally transformed according to the mysterious plan of God.

L – Life is opportunity to grow in holiness. Our goal should be to die a Saint. Daily, God presents us with opportunities to grow in perfection in our love of God and love of neighbor...and even love of our enemies, yikes! “You therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (MT 5:48) Saint=Perfection. Yet even when we mess up, God immediately presents us with another path to holiness. Even if that path includes the Sacrament of Reconciliation, don’t despair. Reconcile with a contrite heart and forge ahead. God created us, God only creates good, God is love.

“Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good? But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear...”

1 Peter 3:13+

Peace, Deacon Mark

Help Always Needed

Every Thursday Father has Mass (1:00 pm) at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home and EMHC's visit the rooms of residents that are unable to make it to the Chapel.

Every Sunday at both the Veteran Home (10:45 a.m.) and at Mable Rose (10:00 a.m.) we conduct a Communion Service for the residents.

All of the above does not take more than 1-1/2 hours. A person is never alone during the time and training is provided. If you are not an EMHC, see Father and inform him of your intentions and he will advise you. Please contact the Parish Office and Paula or Patsy will put you in contact with the coordinators.

