

The Vianney Vine

"I am the vine and you are the branches." John 15.5

Saint John Vianney Catholic Church

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FROM THE PASTOR

WELCOME!



Father Rich Adam welcomes the congregation before 8:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Sept. 26.

This sign was found on the front door of a church:

"May the door of this Church be wide enough to receive all who hunger for love, all who are lonely for fellowship. May it welcome all who have cares to unburden, thanks to express, hopes to nurture. May the doors of this Church be narrow enough to shut out pettiness and pride, envy and enmity. May this sanctuary welcome all who seek serenity, renewal, and truth; may it be, for all of us, the gateway to a richer and more meaningful life!"

To have a sense of belonging, a feeling of welcome – this is one of the most intimate and innate needs of a human being! And this is really the heart of all of Jesus' teaching in loving and caring for our neighbors. Through my years of ministry as a priest, one of the most important lessons I've learned is inviting people to belong, to be welcomed and be a part of a parish family! It touches my heart when I hear a new parishioner say, "I joined this parish because I really felt welcome here,



Father Rich

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Imagine how we can improve our welcome!

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the hospitality was/is amazing!" And that is a ministry that every person must grasp and realize the part we all play in our own parish hospitality.

I'm very pleased with the SJV ushers, readers and the Eucharistic ministers who gather in the vestibules and pass out bulletins before Mass. Yes, the masks make it harder to recognize the smiles, but the feelings of warmth and sincerity are evident in their "Good morning!" greetings. Yet, the question remains, "Can we do more? How else might we reach out and make people, especially newcomers, a part of our parish family?"

I think Catholics can learn a lot from the megachurch hospitality methods. A recent study has shown that one reason megachurches succeed is because they are more intentional about welcoming visitors. They are keenly attuned to newcomers and eager to embrace cutting-edge business practices, whether it's giving newcomers gifts or asking them to fill out customer satisfaction surveys!

There are, of course, many gimmicks (if I can use that word) that are used to bring people in and get their attention. However, I'm thinking the greatest attention grabber of a Catholic is **to be Catholic!** To be Eucharist! To be Christ from the moment you leave your car and as you're approaching the church to greet each other and be excited about the celebration we're all about to enter! We have the most awesome gift of the Eucharist, and we're called to be just that: Eucharist!

What I am imagining is what we may call a "Radical Welcome!"

Imagine your Thanksgiving celebration and the many invited guests to your house. Imagine how they are greeted at your door and welcomed in. Imagine the hospitality extended to each and every person as they are warmly accepted, embraced and made to feel special. Imagine the anticipation of eating that fine meal prepared out of love for one's family! My mother was so good at this with our large family. This is something I will always cherish and remember!

How often when attending Mass, we take for granted the people we know and the familiarity we have that we don't think of reaching out and making others feel welcome. Just something to think about! I'm praying that as we welcome more and more people to SJV, we may all hear newcomers say, "Yep, I joined this awesome parish because I was truly made to feel welcome and important here!"



Joey, Father Rich's Sheltie (center), welcomes dozens of canine friends as well as a turtle and two cats and their owners, to the Blessing of the Pets on October 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi.

Family Fest begins RE year

A beautiful late summer night on Sept. 15 kicked off the beginning of the SJV Religious Education year as families gathered on the church parking lot to play games, socialize, enjoy treats and meet other parishioners. Children were assisted by several dozen teen volunteers from the Youth Ministry program.

More than 500 children and teens are involved in various stages of religious formation programs at SJV – 225 in the Junior High Alive and Youth Ministry program headed by Jan Stevenson and 295 in the RE program for grades 1-6 led by Jeannie Moran.

Jan said it has been so special to gather again in the Activity Center with 7th and 8th graders.

"There was excitement with them and with the high school teens who showed up to help with the meeting," she said. "It has been a long time, and everyone was celebrating being together on holy ground."

Jeannie expressed similar feelings.

"I am just so happy to have the children back in person and to walk with them on their faith journey," Jeannie said. A recent assembly of the RE students in the church was particularly moving to her.

"Hearing all of the RE students and teachers pray the Hail Mary and Our Father together in unison reminded me about how it feels to be part of a church community – my heart was singing!" she said.

For information on:

Religious Education: Contact Jeannie Moran at re@sjvbett.org.

Youth Ministry: Contact Jan Stevenson at ym@sjvbett.org.



Allison and Ryan Eckhart and their children Patrick, Vincent, and Declan (sleeping in the stroller) enjoyed the night out at Family Fun Fest. They said the event was a good opportunity to meet other people in the parish.



There was a constant line at the Kona Ice truck as both kids and adults enjoyed the refreshing treats on a warm night.



Kruz Vallejo, 10, and Ezra Corrales, 3, had fun doing chalk drawings on the sidewalk.

Classes enrich faith experiences

The Adult Faith Formation classes at St. John Vianney promise no pop quizzes, no papers and no tests.

What they deliver on is a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Catholic faith.

Just ask Phil and Linda Redington, SJV parishioners who have been attending classes together for several years.

"Every class, I learn so much more," Linda said. "It's a good way to keep you reading about our faith."

This fall, the couple is taking a course based on the book, "Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone," by Father James Martin. It is offered on Tuesday or Wednesday mornings.

On a recent Tuesday, the Redingtons joined 11 other parishioners in the



Judy Benevento

Vianney Room for one of their weekly sessions. The class, led by Adult Faith Formation Director Judy Benevento, broke up into smaller groups for discussion purposes.

Fueled by breakfast pizza and coffee, the group first prayed together and offered up prayer requests before discussing that week's reading assignment.

"Think about your own experiences with prayer when you were growing up," Judy suggested.

Phil said he attended Catholic schools through ninth grade (before his Galesburg high school closed), graduated from a public high school, and then went to St. Ambrose University.

Still, he said, "I feel I don't know everything I should know about my faith. One advantage to the classes is that you get to hear a lot of different people from the parish and get different views. That, in itself, can be educational."

"You leave the sessions more aware of your Catholic faith."



Phil and Linda Redington, at left, discuss their reading assignment with George and Rita Sporer during the Adult Faith Formation class on the book, "Learning to Pray" by Father James Martin.

Linda, who first attended classes on her own before Phil retired, said she always felt she wanted to learn more about her faith.

The couple, who have three adult sons and have been active in a number of ministries at the parish, find it helpful to discuss the class afterward.

"It makes it easier as a married couple to discuss the Mass and homily," he said. "We can relate more to what the Mass is about." They agree the classes have enriched and strengthened their faith.

They both are appreciative of Judy's guidance in making the group feel at ease and in recommending other books and websites.

Course selections vary each semester. There have been Bible study classes, courses about the saints, and different aspects of the Mass. Some are book-based; other courses are via video. Classes are now meeting again in person after being on Zoom in 2020. Another course this semester is on "The Sacraments," a video series by Bishop Robert Barron.

"We try to get feedback on what people want to study," Judy said. "I love learning along with the group."

Work goes on to assist twin parish in Haiti

Despite continued turmoil in Haiti, including the assassination of the country's president, an earthquake, and gang violence in the streets, the work of the SJV Haiti Committee goes on to help improve the lives of those in our twin parish of Notre Dame du Rosaire in Jean Denis.

The committee, thanks to the generosity of SJV parishioners, is seeking to improve the economic outlook for farmers and small-business entrepreneurs through several programs. And monthly payments to the parish school for teacher salaries and food for a student lunch program go on.

In addition, parishioners at SJV met a challenge goal of raising \$25,000 in the past few months. That, along with \$25,000 from partner group Hands Together for Haitians, based in Florida, matches a \$50,000 grant from an anonymous donor. These funds will ensure long-term and ongoing support for teacher salaries at the school.

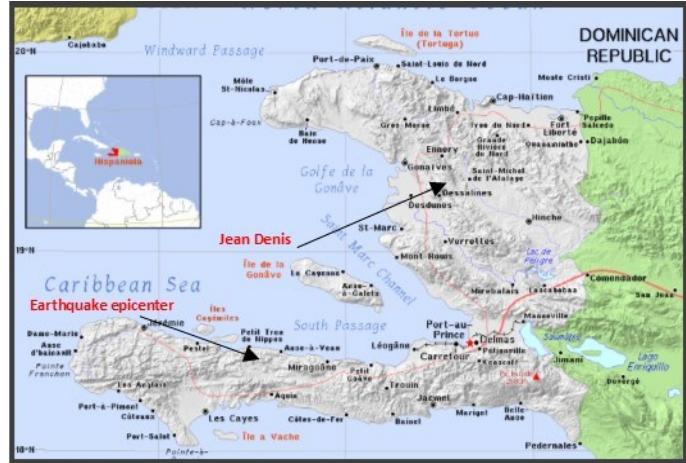
"I am personally touched that at this time of looming world problems, so many people responded to this fairly narrow project," said SJV Haiti Committee Chair Dr. Mark Blaser. "These funds will stabilize education finances for several years. The community we serve is truly too impoverished to fund teacher salaries without help."

Teachers at the school typically make about \$150 to \$200 a month, depending on their experience and the grade level at which they teach.

"We count on tax support to finance our school systems," Mark said. "For now, they count on us."

On the economic front, the SJV committee is supporting the work of an organization called Unlocking Communities, whose goal is to train Haitians in business practices so they can become their own entrepreneurs and bring dollars to their communities.

There also have been early discussions about involvement with Hands Together for Haitians on a program, Project Bon Grenn (which means "good seed" in Creole) to provide rice seed and agricultural advice to several dozen farmers. A local agronomist has been hired to oversee the program.



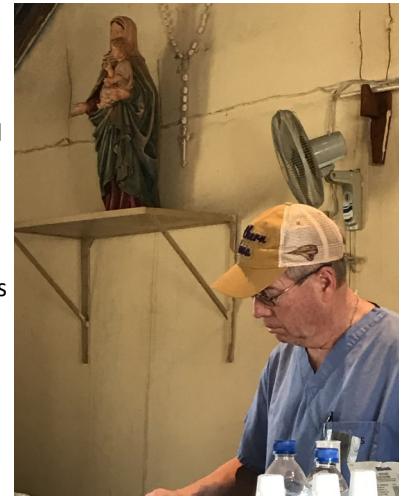
The August 14 earthquake's epicenter was 80 miles west of Port-au-Prince. Jean Denis's approximate location is indicated by the arrow.

The Jean Denis community was not markedly affected by the August 14 earthquake, which struck considerably south and west, though a cherished statue of the Blessed Mother in the chapel, where much of the medical mission work has taken place, tumbled from its location on a wall and was broken. Efforts are underway to replace it.

Father Jean Salomon Vincent, pastor of Notre Dame du Rosaire since 2007, has been

transferred to another parish. The new pastor is Father Fenel Exantus.

The threat of violence and inadvisability of travel have canceled the January 2022 medical mission trip, as they have in 2020 and 2021. Committee members hope the mission trip can resume in 2023.



This statue of the Blessed Mother fell from its shelf during the Aug. 14 earthquake in Haiti and was broken. Pictured here is Jim Wester of Muscatine during an earlier medical mission.

Building a future

Bill Pajunen knows it does not take much time to make someone's life better.

And that's one reason why he is looking for more volunteers from St. John Vianney to assist in building homes through the Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities program.

Bill and a crew of seven other parishioners from SJV joined in helping during the summer at the Habitat sites in Davenport which represented the 123rd, 124th and 125th homes built in the Quad-City area.

Habitat for Humanity's mission, according to its website, is to bring people together to build, rehabilitate and maintain safe and affordable homes.

The international organization has built homes in over 70 countries.

Bill started working on local Habitat crews from various organizations about 10 years ago, and specifically with volunteers from SJV about two years ago, taking the reins from parishioner Dick Kleine.

During Saturday work shifts, "you get to work with families and you see how appreciative they are," Bill said. "It's just uplifting."

He emphasizes that no special building skills are needed to volunteer on a site.



Volunteers from St. John Vianney gathered for this photo at one of the Davenport sites for Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities. From left, are Rodney Mills, Walt Zachmeyer, Bill Pajunen (kneeling), John Menard, Jim Wadle, Eleni Menard, Nicholas Broughton and Earl Gass. More volunteers are sought for spring projects.

"There are many jobs that need to be done," he said. "Doing three homes, there was a lot of mess. You can go around and pick up trash, sweep floors. You can even help supply lunch. We'll find work for you."

He recalls working on a home that was being built for a single mother with three children.

Speaking with her

and finding out how important the home would be to her was inspiring.

"Some (program participants) are immigrants. It's their dream to own a home and they're willing to work for it," he said. "They have to put in a certain number of hours working on homes before they can even get on a list to get a home."

"It goes to your heart that you can help these families get into a home."

Bill said it's important for people to reach out to help in their wider community.

Volunteers are needed for work that will be going on in the spring of 2022.

If you are interested in learning more, contact Bill Pajunen at wjpajunen@gmail.com or 563-650-3284. More information on the local Habitat for Humanity program can be found at www.habitatqc.org.

Mass on the links

Golfers from St. John Vianney and Our Lady of Lourdes parishes did more than join in fun and good-natured ribbing during the annual Men's Fellowship golf tournament Sept. 12.

At the conclusion of the 18-hole scramble format, the golfers, some joined by spouses, gathered under the gazebo in front of the clubhouse at Palmer Hills to attend Mass, celebrated by Lourdes pastor Father Jason Crossen. A participant in the tournament himself, Father Jason quickly made the change from golf apparel to vestments.

The Mass was a perfect ending to the tournament, said Dan Drescher, chairman of Men's Fellowship at SJV, which sponsored the tournament.

"It's great to have an event like this between two parishes," he said. The tournament took a year off in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

A total of 52 golfers participated .



ABOVE:
Golfers gather after the tournament to attend Mass.

AT LEFT:
Father Jason Crossen delivers his homily.

BOTTOM LEFT:
Maureen Conrad receives the Eucharist.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Steve Cox and Bill Dobbelaere participate in the Mass.

ST. JOHN VIANNEY

Ignite



LIGHT A FIRE

IN YOUR MARRIAGE & FAMILY

NOV. 28

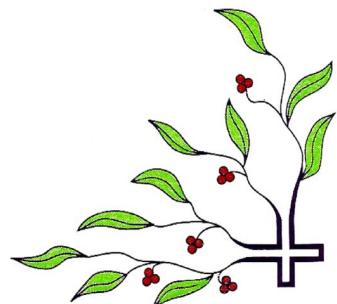
DEC. 5 & 19

AFTER THE 11AM MASS

CHILD CARE PROVIDED

COME AS YOU ARE!

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