

Living for Christ

ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH



St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store *Meeting Community Needs*

The wintry weather may have delayed the planned opening of our St. Vincent de Paul Conference Thrift Store, but there will be a warm welcome for shoppers hunting for bargains or for those in need of household essentials once it is up and running by early April.

Deacon Greg Steele serves as manager of the store at 200 Central Ave. East, where he will be working with a volunteer team of 35 St. Michael parishioners. When the call was put out for volunteers during a recent Mass, the response “was overwhelming,” Deacon Greg says.

The idea for the Thrift Store came about when the Conference members looked at the \$350,000 in generous donations that were made by parishioners over the past five years, and realized with the level of financial help being given to the needy, a sustaining cash stream had to be found. The store was the answer.

“We only did one fundraiser, the Walk for the Poor, that raised \$10,000 in September,” Deacon Greg says.

Conference members realized in their visits to the poorest of the poor in the St. Michael area that there are many living in dire conditions.

“Sometimes we found people living in cars with their children,” Deacon Greg says. “We found out there were a lot more poor people than we realized. They’re everywhere, and there are a lot of them. One woman living in her car was forced to move from parking spot to parking spot by the police. These are people taking showers at rest areas. There are people with homes who have lost jobs or are experiencing illness who are in debt.”

The St. Vincent de Paul Conference does not give funds directly to those in need. “We make mortgage payments, and help out with utility bills,” Deacon Greg says.



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11300 Frankfort Pkwy NE
St. Michael, MN 55376
www.stm catholicchurch.org

FORMATION *Transformed Through Christ*

“Jesus not only calls people to him but also forms them and sends them out in his service.”

From Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response

This month, we are emphasizing the third pillar of parish stewardship — formation. Formation is the process of studying Christ’s teachings and incorporating them deeply into our lives. It is a lifelong effort by which we “put on Christ” (Rom 13:14) and are “transformed by the renewal of our minds” (Rom 12:2).

Above all, our formation should include studying Scripture and Church teaching. It should also include discussion with other Catholics and honest self-assessment. Its goal is to “discern the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

Because formation helps us understand God’s will, it therefore leads naturally to good stewardship. When our minds are transformed through Christ, we become like Him — as Christ gave His life for us, so we give our lives to others.

Formation is not just an individual task. Instead, it is a communal responsibility that, when applied, will further help St. Michael to grow as a stewardship parish. Each one of us has an inherent need to give — to move from “selfishness to selflessness,” as the Diocese of Wichita’s document *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* aptly states. Formation is a process of spiritual growth, and it leads to a deeper understanding of loving others as God loves us.

Naturally, then, our Catholic formation should not end upon celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation, or turning 18 years old. Formation is a formidable task that we as Catholics should participate in for the duration of our lives. It involves “education of the mind and conversion of the heart” (*The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*), and helps us to lead the stewardship way of life rather than just understand it.

This month, as we proceed toward Holy Week, why not make formation a part of your penitential renewal to Christ? Start off by reading 10 minutes of Sacred

Scripture a day, or by studying a chapter of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on a daily basis. Read a biography of your favorite saint for an example of an individual who lived as a disciple of Christ, and use this person as a role model when tending to your daily tasks. Keep an eye on our weekly parish bulletin for faith formation opportunities at the parish. Before long, your commitment to formation will lead you to naturally live the Catholic faith and understand stewardship in ways that you never imagined before.



Living for Christ



A Letter From Our Pastor

Celebrating Easter with Gratitude

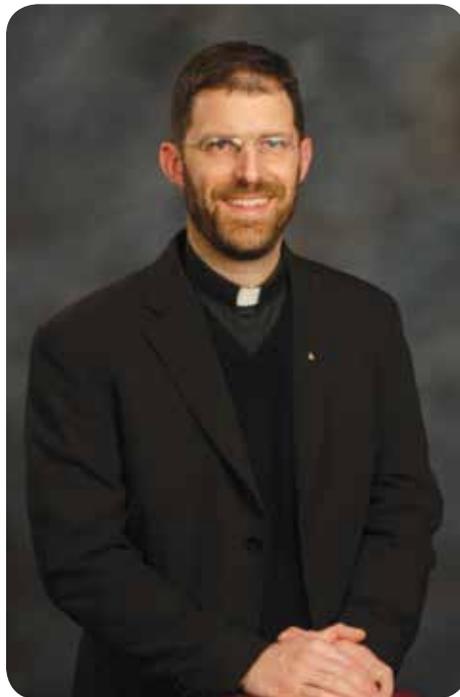
Dear Parishioners,

Easter Sunday arrives later this year — April 21. The method for determining the date of Easter was settled by the ancient Church according to a complicated formula that allows it to fall anywhere between March 22 and April 25. However, most of us are content simply to look it up on a liturgical calendar!

One feature at this year's Easter celebration will be a dramatic contrast from what we have experienced in the winter months — the days will be noticeably longer.

As a matter of fact, the English word “Lent” is related to the Anglo-Saxon word meaning “to lengthen,” for spring is the season when the days grow longer. Even though most Americans do not live in rural settings or agricultural environments like our ancestors did, we still find joy in the longer days that contrast with the early nightfall that we experienced at Christmas. So when Lent is over and Easter arrives, our spirits naturally delight as we leave the winter behind.

Don't get me wrong — I am not saying that Easter is some sort of spring festival. The central theme of the Christian festival of Easter is clear. It celebrates what happened



once for all over 2,000 years ago, when Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross and was raised back to life on the third day by God the Father. This event took place during the Jewish observance of Passover, which comes during the spring, which is why we celebrate Easter then.

So, then, we have two reasons to celebrate at Easter. Primary, of course, is our yearly remembrance of the victory of Jesus Christ over sin, Satan and death. But we can also rejoice in the coming of spring, which melts the snows of winter and brings us beautiful flowers in bloom.

In its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops gives a definition of who a Christian steward is. It has several parts, but the first noted aspect is that a Christian

steward is “one who receives God's gifts gratefully” (9). The bishops don't distinguish between gifts from God that are spiritual and ones that are material.

After all, “God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good” (Genesis 1:31). The first step in becoming a good steward is to receive what God gives, to recognize that these gifts come from God, and to be grateful for them.

So then, as we celebrate Easter with gratitude for what God continues to do for us in both the material and spiritual spheres, we can resolve to use all we have received — the time, the talent and the treasure entrusted to us, the beauty of the natural world, and the hope of eternal life — as stewards who use them for God's glory and the welfare of His people.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Peter Richards,
Pastor



Witnessing Stewardship in *Meet Bree*

This month, we spoke with parishioner Bree Holmstadt about the stewardship journey she shares with her husband, Joshua, and their daughters.

How long have you been a parishioner and in what ministries/groups at the parish are you involved?

My husband, Joshua, is a convert to Catholicism, discovering his faith during his college years. He later became a parishioner here at St. Michael in 2007, whereas I officially joined later following my own conversion through the RCIA program in 2011. Over the years we have felt called to get involved in many different ministries at the parish including Christ Renews His Parish (CHRP), the Men's Group, the St. Michael Prayer Ministry, the St. Gerard Prayer Group, and Eucharistic Adoration. We've also helped host and present for the Joy Filled Marriage Retreat for engaged couples and I'm currently finishing my fourth year with the Cana Family Institute Study, formerly known as Familia.



Bree and Joshua Holmstadt with their three daughters

What do you do as part of your life of prayer — individually, as a couple, or as a family? (Mass, prayer at meals, etc.)

We try to pray together as a couple every night, taking turns going through the acronym “ACTS,” standing for “Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Supplication.” We also try to make personal prayer a priority. Joshua always spends the first 15 minutes of his day in prayer, while I spend time with the daily Scripture readings each day, pray a daily Rosary, and attend Eucharistic Adoration weekly.

In terms of family life, we always pray with our children before bedtime, asking each child to share what they are grateful for and one thing they would like Jesus to help them with. Then we all conclude together with our goodnight prayer. We also attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation together as a family. And I'm blessed to attend daily Mass about once a week, sometimes more, accompanied by our 2-year-old daughter, Maggie.

Living for Christ



Our Parish Community: *Holmstad*

How do you live your life as a steward of God's gifts?

Besides our commitment to service, tithing has always been an important part of stewardship for us — remembering that it's not truly our money, but rather God makes giving a lot easier. Over the years, we feel blessed to have been able to support things like the Catholic Services Appeal, Extreme Faith Camp for our parish youth, FOCUS and NET missionaries, and local seminarians.

What are some ways you use to grow yourself and your family as disciples of Christ?

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has really helped Mass come alive for our daughters Olivia, age 7, and Scarlett, age 4. It's allowed them to tangibly learn about our faith at their actual level.

I find that I have experienced incredible growth by wearing a veil to Mass. It is such a special way for me to love, honor and humble myself before the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. At first, I felt nervous and even embarrassed to wear a veil, but even that experience became beautiful as I would purposefully offer those feelings up for the souls in purgatory, knowing their suffering is much greater than my small discomforts. Now after veiling for almost two years, I feel naked without it during Mass or adoration!

Meanwhile, my husband, Joshua, manages to make going to Confession a regular priority. He finds that it really helps him stay on track, ensuring that he continues growing in the right faith direction.

St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store *continued from front cover*

The Thrift Store will have clothing at low prices to help needy shoppers, and those in hardship situations will be able to receive items at no cost.

"When we visit their homes, we see what the people need and we will put them in contact with the store," Deacon Greg says. "When we help people, we don't bury them with paperwork. It's a very simple process."

Word about the Thrift Store is spreading quickly in the community. There also will be advertisements placed in the local newspaper.

And although the store is sponsored by St. Michael's St. Vincent de Paul Conference, the store will welcome all.

"We don't close the doors to anyone," Deacon Greg says. "It's not a Catholic thing — it's a community thing."

Monetary donations to the store are welcome and may be made through envelopes available at the church. Clothes and household goods can also be donated at the store.

"There is such a tremendous need," Deacon Greg says. "People don't realize how big the need is."

***"When we visit their homes,
we see what the people need
and we will put them in
contact with the store. When
we help people, we don't
bury them with paperwork.
It's a very simple process."***

— Deacon Greg Steele

Anyone wishing to volunteer at the St. Vincent de Paul Conference Thrift Store may contact Deacon Greg Steele at 763-263-2450.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: *Returning to the Father*

Those of us who have children know what it's like when they come to us apologetically after having done something they know is wrong. As parents, it melts our hearts, and we can't help but forgive them freely, and take them into our arms – sometimes squeezing them with tears in our eyes! At times, we may even feel closer to them than we did before the event occurred.

This, we can assume, is how God feels, being our most clement Father. In His magnanimous love, He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to redeem the world, freeing it from the haunting grips of sin and death. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation through His Church to offer sinners forgiveness for the offenses they committed against God.

As the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas writes so beautifully, “[The Sacrament of Confession is a] sacrament of healing and a sacrament of conversion, returning us to the Father after we have sinned. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs

medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

As far as the details for the reception of this sacrament are concerned, three conditions are necessary – contrition, which is genuine sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works. A priest is gravely bound to keeping total confidentiality for all confessions they hear.

Church law requires Catholics to confess mortal sins – the most serious kind of sins – to a priest at least once per year, and to confess them before ever receiving Holy Communion, as well. However, this is by far the minimum; Catholics are encouraged to receive the sacrament freely and frequently since it is so extremely beneficial to the health of the mind, soul and spiritual life in general.



This Month's Spotlight on Our Parish Ministries

CHURCH CLEANER

Various times and opportunities to help keep your church looking good! Volunteers meet at 5 a.m. on Monday mornings to clean the church. This includes sweeping, vacuuming, dusting pews, mopping, cleaning bathrooms, straightening up, shining up the glass/windows, etc. Volunteers may be scheduled on a rotating basis. Also, volunteers come in to help with deep cleaning or periodic projects, usually **during business hours, as it fits your schedule**. Some projects include wiping the blinds, dusting the stair rail, cleaning chairs and much more!

Eldon Martin — 763-497-4130

Alvin Zachman — 763-497-2732

LINEN CARE

Linen care is relatively simple but is an extremely important service to the parish. Weekly linen care includes the purifying and washing of linens used at Mass. After laundering the linens, they need to be ironed and folded. Volunteers must live in a smoke-free home. Training and instruction provided. Schedule is on a rotating basis.

Clara Inman — 763-441-2280 or gncinman@gmail.com

Living for Christ

A Spiritual House

Your Guide to Our Church



THE ART OF ST. MICHAEL: *The Rosary Windows*

By JIM THORP

Above the Roman arches and columns on either side of the altar and the baptismal font, the nave of our church is encircled in the mysteries of the Rosary, portrayed beautifully in stained glass. Windows like these have been dubbed the “poor man’s Bible” because they guide those who cannot afford a copy of the Holy Scriptures — or without the ability to read — through the Scriptures using pictures.

Similarly, the Rosary has been called the “poor man’s psalter.” Beginning many centuries ago, monks would gather regularly to recite all 150 psalms. Because some of the poor and uneducated brothers were ill-equipped to

learn and memorize the psalms, they would instead pray 150 *Pater Nosters* or *Ave Marias* (Our Fathers or Hail Marys). The use of prayer beads or a knotted rope to help count prayers was known even in the earliest days of the church, and later in the Middle Ages, devotion to the Rosary in its current form took shape.

Stained glass was largely unknown in the Church’s iconic tradition for the first 1,000 years of Christianity. It rose to prominence, particularly in the West, in the Middle Ages. In these early days, stained glass artisans were limited to a relative few jewel tones and used small pieces of colored glass to create images, since larger pieces would break in the kiln. The Minnesota artist who designed these windows, Nick Markell, sought to replicate the colors and composition of those ancient windows in our church today, but in a form that reflects and harmonizes with the iconography around them.

The Mysteries of the Rosary trace the lives of our Lord and Blessed Mother through Scripture and tradition. Beginning with the five windows at the back of the nave, between the baptismal font and the choir apse, and moving clockwise:

- **The Joyful Mysteries** portray the Incarnation and Jesus’ early life.
- **The Luminous Mysteries** portray Jesus’ life in public ministry.
- **The Sorrowful Mysteries** portray Jesus’ passion and death.
- **The Glorious Mysteries** portray Jesus’ rising from the dead and the events that followed.

The word “rosary” has its origins in the Latin word *rosarium*, or rose garden — this queen of flowers is associated with Mary, who is sometimes called the Mystical Rose. If you look closely, encircling each of these windows are five Greek crosses, with 10 red roses in between them — the shape and pattern of a rosary, created in symbols that call to mind both our Blessed Mother and our Lord.

In the coming months, we will explore all the Rosary windows, a few at a time.



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ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

**11300 Frankfort Parkway
St. Michael, MN 55376**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil, 5:00 p.m.

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

Daily Mass

Monday, 7:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, 7:30 a.m.

Friday, 7:45 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.,
3:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Sunday, 9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Tuesday, 5:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/stmcatholicchurch>

QUOTES FOR CATHOLIC LIVING

“Only after the Last Judgment will Mary get any rest; from now until then, she is much too busy with her children.”

— *St. John Vianney*

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Stations of the Cross

Fridays at 7 p.m.

April 5, 12

Tuesdays at 1 p.m. (with parish staff)

April 2, 9, 16

Lenten Penance Services

Tuesday, April 2 at 7 p.m. —

Mary, Queen of Peace, Rogers

Sunday, April 7 at 1 p.m. — St. John

the Baptist, Dayton (note time)

Sunday, April 14 at 7 p.m. —

St. Albert, Albertville

Monday, April 15 at 7 p.m. —

St. Michael, St. Michael

Individual confessions are also available on:

Tuesdays from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m.

Thursday from 8 to 8:30 a.m.

Fridays from 6 to 7 p.m. *prior to the
Stations of the Cross, during Lent only*

Saturdays from 7:30 to 9 a.m. and
from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

Sundays from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

*(Please note: There are no confessions
on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy
Saturday or Easter Sunday.)*

LIVING STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT CHURCH ON FRANKFORT PARKWAY

(Note: New location from previous years)

Sunday, April 14 and Friday,

April 19 at 8 p.m.

Holy Week

Holy Thursday, April 18 —

Mass at 7:30 p.m. followed with
adoration until midnight.

Good Friday, April 19 —

Service at 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 20 —

Easter Vigil Mass at 8:30

p.m. (NO 5 p.m. Mass)

Easter Sunday, April 21 —

Mass at 6:30, 8:30 and 10:30

a.m. (NO 6 p.m. Mass)