

LIVING FOR CHRIST

ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH



STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL NEWSLETTER — NOVEMBER 2018

Come and Worship: Open Adoration at St. Michael Catholic Church

- What:** Open Adoration, a time of prayer, praise and worship before the Holy Eucharist, open to people of all faiths and backgrounds.
- When:** Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018, 7 to 9 p.m.
- Where:** St. Michael Catholic Church, 11300 Frankfort Parkway NE in St. Michael

Who to invite? Anyone who wants to pray or needs prayer for any reason. Come as you are and stay as long or as little as you like.

What is Adoration? The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus is truly and completely present in the Eucharist (the consecrated bread and wine from the Mass). In Adoration, the Eucharist is elevated on the altar for personal and communal prayer and worship. It is an opportunity to pray in the mysterious but *real* presence of Christ—body, blood, soul and divinity—in the holy sacrament of the altar.

Where is the “real presence” in the Bible? The Letter to the Hebrews tells us that “the word of God is living and effective,” and we see that is so from the Creation story onward—what God says, *is*. So at the Last Supper, when Jesus says, “This is my body...this is my blood,” we take Him at His word—in some mysterious way, He is truly present. Additionally, when He says, “Do this,” He speaks with authority and power, giving the

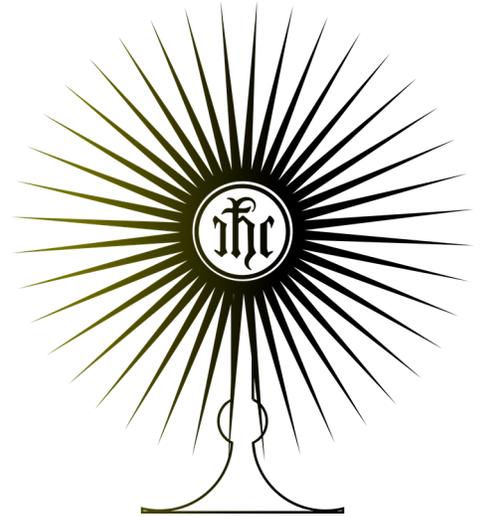
Apostles and their successors the grace to do what He commanded.

What do I do when I get there? The only expectation is reverence for God, who is present “where two or three are gathered” in His name, and respect for others who are praying. You may come to a front pew or stay in the back; kneel, sit, stand, or follow the lead of those around you.

How Catholic is this going to be? Will there be music? This time of open Adoration will include periods of silent and vocal prayer, contemporary praise and worship music, and more traditional hymns and prayers.

I’m a parishioner—what should I do? Come and worship. We also encourage you to ask your friends and neighbors for any prayer intentions or needs they may have. Bring those needs and intentions to the church that night—and invite them to join us for Adoration, too!

For more information on Open Adoration at St. Michael Catholic Church, call 763-497-2745.



The Stewardship Council is...

- Patty Washatka, chair
- Brian Bruner
- Lisa Bursey
- Lynne Caldwell
- Jane Hackenmueller
- Steve House
- Mike Lano
- Karen Nordgren
- Jim Thorp

Send your questions, concerns or article or profile ideas to stewardshipcouncil@stmccatholicchurch.org.

The Challenge of Christian Hospitality

BY JIM THORP

Recently, Fr. Richards implemented the practice of having parishioners stand and greet those around them just before Mass begins. Predictably, the reaction was split: Some people like it as a small gesture of warmth, welcome and connection, while others think it's unnecessary, corny or even disruptive to their preparations to worship God in the Divine Liturgy.

For several years now, Father has also challenged us to intentionally seek out and introduce ourselves to people we don't know in the parish, especially people who appear to be new to the community or otherwise disconnected. I have never taken this challenge seriously. Instead, I have a list of rationalizations, excuses and cop-outs that will show up rather poorly when I have to explain them to Jesus. These are just a few:

- Nobody new ever sits by us.
- Father also asked us to pray in silent thanksgiving after the Mass, and when I'm done, most of the new people have already left.
- Besides, I meet lots of new people working and volunteering at church.
- And because people know *me*, it's "inhospitable" (aka: embarrassing) to introduce myself and admit I don't remember all of them.

These reasons all have a common denominator: me. I have certain practices and expectations; I have a comfort zone in which I operate.

This self-centeredness is the antithesis of hospitality.

I know this. I know that Christ does not want me to act in this way. I do so from a lack of charity, justice and fortitude. So I must pray for and practice these virtues.

Bishop Robert Barron likes to remind the Catholic faithful that they need not travel overseas to evangelize—that as soon as they step outside the church doors, they are in mission territory. I respectfully disagree with the bishop. Even here in St. Michael—the Bubble, God's Country—we are in mission territory *in our pews*. Many of our parishioners are not regular Sunday Mass-goers. So any given Sunday, some of the people gathered with us for worship aren't entirely sure where they are or why they've come. They have heard a call, however faintly. They are seeking something. And they have come to the Mass, perhaps this one last time, to find it.

If we were evangelizing—if we were inviting people into our church and walking intentionally with them—we wouldn't see so many people and families wandering into Mass and out again, still lost and still alone.

So how does a forced greeting at the beginning of the Mass help matters? On the most fundamental level, those who say greeting each other before Mass won't make us more hospitable are right. Only a change of heart will do that, and conversion is hard, sometimes painful, work.

But there is an expression young people sometimes use these days: *Fake it until you make it.*

The truth is, you can only shake hands with the same people so many times before you make eye contact. And you can only make eye contact so many times before you start seeing the other person as a actual person—and then as an image of God. And when that happens, look out! As C.S. Lewis wrote, "Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses."

The point to all this is that we have a job to do, given to us by Jesus Himself, and most of us don't do it willingly. We need a nudge. If we protect our little hearts and just go through the motions, the conversion we are called to will take a long, long time—and frankly, souls that we could have invited into communion may be lost along the way.

But if we actually practice—if we look each other in the eye, take each other by the hand, and truly bless each other's worship and day—we will see ourselves changed immediately. Our hearts will soften and enlarge. Our smiles will broaden and reach our eyes, and our courage will begin to solidify. We will begin to reach others—but just as importantly, they will reach us.

This is a shortened version of a post entitled "Mass Hospitality: Welcoming Strangers to Worship" online at archangelstomp.com. To read and share the full-length version, go to archangelstomp.com and click "Blog" or visit the St. Michael Catholic Church Facebook page, [@stmcatholicchurch](https://www.facebook.com/stmcatholicchurch).