

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH

Homebound Visitation Ministry

*Bringing Christ to Parishioners
Unable to Come to Him*

Before St. Vincent de Paul parishioner Ray Brett retired, he dreamed of being able to attend daily Mass. He was eager to spend that time in prayer each morning, receiving and drawing strength from our Eucharistic Lord. Yet, just as work prevents many of us from the privilege of attending daily Mass, there are others who cannot even make it to Sunday Mass due to health or mobility issues. That's why shortly after his retirement, Ray was happy to lend a hand with the Homebound Visitation Ministry.



Some of the committed men and women responsible for bringing Holy Communion to the sick and homebound

“They were asking for volunteers and I felt that this was something that I could do to help those in need,” Ray says. “Through this ministry, we visit Catholics in the hospital, nursing home, or in their actual home in order to bring Holy Communion to those unable to attend Sunday Mass.”

Typically bringing the Eucharist during a weekday following morning Mass, Homebound Visitation ministers travel to visit their assigned individuals. Together, they are responsible for bringing Holy Communion to two different local hospitals, several nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and the actual home of any homebound parishioner.

“In the hospital setting, there is always a question as to whether or not they are a practicing Catholic, whereas in the home ministry that's already established, and we walk right in almost as a friend of the family,” Ray says. “In the hospital,

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“Right from the start, it's been extremely rewarding. I'd come back from the hospital and just be eager to share about the experience. They are so grateful not just for the visit, but more importantly, for the spiritual act of receiving Jesus. Being a part of that is an extremely fulfilling experience.” – Ray Brett

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STEWARDSHIP

THE FOUR PILLARS

You've heard about the three Ts of stewardship, but what about the four Ps?

The three Ts — time, talent and treasure — describe the personal gifts we offer to the Church. The four Ps are the “four pillars” of parish stewardship described by the renowned pastor Msgr. Thomas McGread. They are the hallmark of a stewardship parish — hospitality, prayer, formation and service. Let's take a look at each of them to understand how we can improve in each area.

HOSPITALITY CHRISTIAN KINDNESS

“When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Gospel teaches that whenever we welcome the least of our brothers or sisters, we welcome Christ himself. That is why the first mark of a stewardship parish is hospitality. Being friendly is one of the first ways we can be Christ-like toward others.

Modern Catholic parishes are often so large and have so many Masses that many parishioners don't know one another. To create a sense of community, be sure to smile and greet others as you enter and exit the Church. Let's try harder than ever to be a welcoming community.

PRAYER HEART-TO-HEART WITH GOD

“Do not become so involved in the work of the Lord that you forget the Lord of the work,” a seminary professor once taught. In other words, don't get so caught up with parish projects and outreach efforts that you forget to draw aside to spend time with God in prayer. Every great saint has taught that prayer is the most essential component in the life of the Christian. Through prayer, we nurture our most important relationship — the one that will last for all eternity.

A healthy prayer life should include communal prayer such as Mass, as well as personal prayer and family prayer. The two biggest obstacles to prayer are lack of time and lack of understanding of how to pray. We have to schedule time for prayer just as we would for an important appointment. And we have to learn how to pray from other people. Many saints have written spiritual books that describe different methods of prayer.

FORMATION CONTINUOUS CONVERSION

Pope John Paul II always emphasized ongoing conversion. From childhood through adulthood, our whole life must be a process of drawing closer to God. He never stops calling us forward to learn more and to examine ourselves more deeply.

Very often our society values material things more than interior virtues. But as personal experience shows, when we finally acquire the car or house or “toy” that we wanted so badly, it doesn't really satisfy. On the other hand, we don't tend to desire spiritual virtues with the same kind of longing, but when we actually have them, we find them far more rewarding than material things.

SERVICE LOVE IN ACTION

“Amen I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). This Scripture was one of Mother Teresa's favorites. Each time she picked up a poor and hungry child, she knew she was ministering to Christ. While we may not view ourselves as saints, we too are called to such heroic service right within our own community. As Mother Teresa said, “To be a saint is not the privilege of a few, but the duty of everyone.”

We have many service opportunities right here within our own parish. If you have the willingness to serve and take the initiative to find where you are needed, you'll find that there is no end to the families and individuals who truly need help. How can you reach out to them in love?

A Letter From Our Pastor

Save Room on Your Busy Schedules for Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

I don't know about you, but I still get a surge of adrenalin as the beginning of September approaches. Even though I'm no longer in school, I feel a sense of anticipation when I see the shelves filled with brand-new notebooks, composition books, and all the assorted items students use. I'm aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds.

Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the unofficial end of the summer vacation season, and our calendars may reflect that. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine — they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.

Nevertheless, I have a request for you as you fill up your fall schedules. First thing, please put in some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples — as stewards — we are called to return to God a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure He has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer Him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.

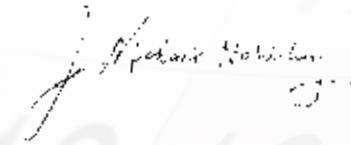
Make this September the month you make a commitment to sing in the choir, including attending rehearsals. Or begin working with our parish religious education in one way or another. Or decide to launder altar linens once a month. Or volunteer to help in the parish office one morning a week. Or

help care for the parish grounds. Or join the Women's Guild. Or join a social service ministry. Or... well, you get the idea.

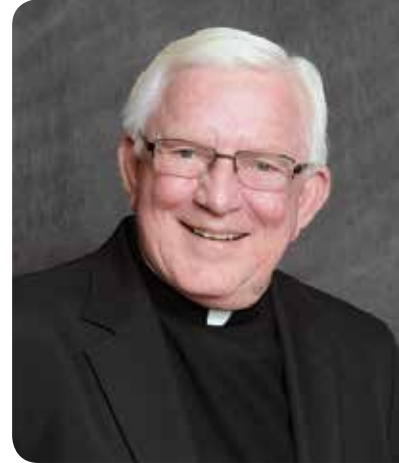
There are many ministries and groups within the parish where you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. Hardly anyone in the parish can't find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If **you** aren't involved, make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, some people say they don't have Time for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge any one of you to demonstrate to me that you can't pray at least one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be during the course of the day. That's at least a beginning.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. J. Michael Holmberg
Pastor



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Fun for the Whole



You may have heard the saying, “The family that plays together, stays together.” And as the family of God, at St. Vincent de Paul, we provide an opportunity for our whole parish family to come together and have some fun, at our annual Parish Picnic.

While this picnic has all the typical makings of fall fun – food, games and awesome music – it also has something more. Our annual Parish Picnic provides St. Vincent de Paul parishioners with an opportunity to grow in their relationships with other members of God’s family, the Church.

“It’s a parish celebration and everyone gets to come out and have some fun,” says Keith Leino, who serves as the Picnic Chair. “The Picnic gives people a day to come out and spend time with other parishioners in a family-friendly environment, supporting a good cause.

“You’re building community outside of the sanctuary, outside of Mass,” he continues. “This gives people a chance to interact and spend time with each other. You can put a name with a face, someone you’ve seen for quite a while, but maybe never spoken to.”

The Parish Picnic began nearly 40 years ago as a parish potluck, and has grown over the years. This year’s Picnic, which will take place on Sunday, Sept. 24, from 12:30 p.m. until 6 p.m., on the parish grounds, offers fun for everyone. From the youngest to the oldest parishioners, activities include game booths, Bingo, auctions, inflatables, live music and absolutely delicious food – there’s something for everyone!

“It’s a mini-carnival!” Keith says.

Opportunities like the Parish Picnic also serve as a reminder of the importance of hospitality. Whether it’s

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e (Parish) Family!

meeting a new parishioner, or getting to know someone you've seen at Mass for years, the Picnic gives people the chance to be the face of Christ, welcoming others.

"It's a chance to get out there and meet and greet people," Keith says. "It's building community, making it a stronger parish. You either grow or you shrink. A parish that has connections will get stronger and grow as a result."

Keith is grateful for the numerous volunteers who work hard, bringing together all the different aspects of the day, from those who are up all night preparing and smoking meat, to those who put together the auction baskets, parish organizations that run booths, and more.

"Hundred of people come to help in different areas," says Keith, who has been involved with the Picnic for the past nine years, since he joined St. Vincent de Paul. "The picnic is a way to volunteer and get involved in the parish. When you give, when you volunteer, it's hard work but you benefit from it. It's great to see the picnic coming together and it's nice to see people enjoying themselves, having fun."

Keith hopes that all parishioners will join the celebration at this year's event.

"Come out and enjoy the fun!" he says. "If you've been looking to get involved, now is a great time."

If you would like more information on the Parish Picnic, please contact Keith Leino at 817-874-4776. Tickets for the Picnic will be available for purchase after weekend Masses, beginning the first weekend in September. Raffle tickets are \$5 for six, and meal tickets are \$7.

Bringing Christ to the Sick and Homebound

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we don't know anything about them, and so we always begin by asking questions about their faith background and if they wish to receive Holy Communion. We also give out a prayer card for spiritual communion, and if an individual doesn't want to receive Holy Communion but indicates that they would like prayer, we stay and pray with them."

Calling himself "just the donkey that Christ is riding on," Ray feels deeply privileged to be able to bring our Eucharistic Lord to individuals who are often deeply hungry for His Presence. And by seeing their reverence and enthusiasm for the Eucharist, one can't help but have his or her own faith life deepened.

"Right from the start, it's been extremely rewarding," Ray says. "I'd come back from the hospital and just be eager to share about the experience. They are so grateful not just for the visit,

but more importantly, for the spiritual act of receiving Jesus. Being a part of that is an extremely fulfilling experience."

It's particularly moving, shares Ray, when he has the opportunity to bring Holy Communion to a religious or ordained minister. These are people who have dedicated their lives in service to God and His Church, and it is truly humbling to now bring our Eucharistic Lord to them later in their lives.

"Three or so times, I've actually walked into a room and it's been one of the local Carmelite nuns in the hospital room," Ray says. "That has been an incredibly moving experience each time. These are people who have dedicated their lives to God in a way that I never have or ever will. They are always the most peaceful looking, no matter their experiences, and they look the youngest, too."

Because the numbers of those needing to receive Holy Communion are constantly changing, there is always a need of additional volunteers for this ministry. Please contact the parish office at 817-478-8206 if you are interested in joining this ministry, or if you know someone who would like to begin receiving Holy Communion.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

A Significant Moment in Our Prayer *The Presentation of the Gifts*

Occasionally, you might hear someone jokingly refer to “halftime” during Mass – the interval following the Prayers of the Faithful, as the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. It can be easy, even tempting, to zone out as you sit, waiting for the collection basket to make its way to your pew.

But if you pay attention, you’ll have the opportunity to enter into something deeper – a significant moment in our prayer.

It’s mentioned by St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, when describing the Mass in the second century, “Bread is brought up and wine and water...”

This practice, of people bringing up the gifts, has been part of our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. Although we might think of this action as being merely practical, in reality, it serves a much deeper spiritual purpose.

Each Sunday Mass, someone is chosen, whether an usher, or another member of the parish, to bring forward “the gifts” – bread, wine, and in many cases, the collection of money that has been gathered moments before, from the generosity of the congregation. These gifts not only symbolize, but also in reality, are the work of human hands. The bread and wine are fruit of God’s creation, which, through the effort of human hands, are made into the gifts that we present to the Lord.

Certainly, the collection that is presented to the priest also serves to represent the work and sacrifices of the previous week. Sharing our



monetary “treasures” is one of the ways that we embrace stewardship. It’s an opportunity to generously give back to the Lord, from the fruit of our work.

In his book *What Happens At Mass*, Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB explains, “...We should not think of the collection of money at this point as some sort of banal, dirty but necessary affair. Money is our work. Money is hours of our lives. And now we give it away, we sacrifice it, for the work of the Church.”

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul instructs Christians to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1).

The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents,

the struggles and victories of the past week – as an offering and gift to God.

Those who bring forward the gifts each week have the privilege and responsibility of remembering what their action represents – that we are called to give generously of our time, talent and treasure to God, who gives us His very self, at Mass. And for those sitting in the pews, tempted to “check out” for a few minutes, seeing the gifts being brought forward should serve as a powerful reminder to offer our lives back to God, through serving and honoring Him.

So next week, don’t just sit back and wait for the “halftime show.” Come to Mass a few minutes early and approach an usher to ask if you and/or your family may bring up the gifts that week. Don’t be surprised if you start to notice a change in your heart and a desire to be even more generous with God in the coming week!

The Galvan Family

Puts Emphasis on Raising Children in the Faith

Parishioners Jennifer and Manuel Galvan were both raised in Catholic families, and they knew from the time they were married that they wanted to bring their children up in the same way. Now the couple has three sons – Jonas, 9; Thomas, 4; and Lucas, 1 – and they have made it a point to give them an active faith life. In addition to passing the faith down to her own boys, Jennifer also enjoys bringing the Good News of the Gospel to countless other children as a minister with the children’s ministry, and working with the preschool Sunday School class and Vacation Bible School.

Jennifer, who is an elementary school music teacher, loves having the opportunity to be involved in the faith formation of St. Vincent de Paul’s youngest parishioners.

“They just have so much joy and you can just really nurture that,” she says. “There is the innocence of childhood – they’re not being weighed down by problems of this world, so you can see the light of God so strong in them. Being able to nurture them and teach them is so rewarding, and being around that awesome vibe reminds us all to stay young at heart.”

St. Vincent de Paul is the parish in which Manuel was raised, so attending Sunday Mass here has always been a family affair for the Galvans. Manuel and Jennifer were married here, their children were all baptized here, and their oldest, Jonas, recently received his First Communion. Their youngest son, Lucas, who is hearing impaired, is a particularly beloved little fellow around the parish, receiving lots of extra love and cuddles from our nursery volunteers!

While Jennifer keeps the family active in parish life, Manuel tends to the family’s faith life at home.

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The Galvan family (from left) Jennifer, Thomas, Lucas, Jonas, and Manuel



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

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MASSES

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Weekdays: (M/Th/Fr) 8:45 a.m. in the chapel
(Wed) 6:00 p.m. in the chapel

Holy Days: 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Tuesday Morning Prayer: 8:45 p.m. in the chapel

Confessions: Saturday: 4-5 p.m. in the chapel

The Galvan Family Puts Emphasis on Raising Children in the Faith continued from page 7

“My husband does a lot during the week with keeping the family focused on reading the Bible, praying, and listening to Christian radio,” Jennifer says. “These are the things in the home that he’s very involved in and he keeps on it all. He’s kind of the motivating force at home, and I’m kind of the motivating force in the parish.”

For the Galvans, keeping a focus on their faith life both in the home and in the parish is a top priority as they raise their three children.

“We want to make sure that we instill those values in our children – those religious values that call us to be children of God,” Jennifer says. “We definitely want to teach them that way of living and learning the Word of God and living in His likeness. It’s important for them to be around other people that feel the same way and to have a support group of family and friends that also worship the Lord.”

We are truly blessed here at St. Vincent de Paul to witness many young families, like the Galvans, passing the treasure of our Catholic faith down to the next generation!

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