

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH

The Sacrament of Holy Orders: *A Call To Serve and a Joyful Way of Life*



Fr. Philip Brembah enjoys serving Christ and the Church in his vocation as a priest.

Everyone's vocation story is different, with different paths and routes that lead us to faithfully serving the Lord and our Church. And for Fr. Philip Brembah, our new pastor, you might say his vocation story started pretty early!

"I was named after a priest," Fr. Philip says. "He was the priest who married my parents, and when I was born, he was the first to visit my mom in the hospital, so my dad decided to name me after him.

"Growing up, they used to call me 'Father' because he was a priest," he continues, reflecting on his childhood in Ghana, West Africa. "But I had no intention of becoming a priest."

When given the choice as a young teen between two different high schools, Father Philip chose to go to the minor seminary, however, still with no plans to be ordained a priest. After high school, he planned to attend a university, rather than continue with seminary formation. Yet, again, he found himself in a situation he hadn't quite expected.

"I had other plans, I wanted to go to the university," Fr. Philip says. "But I told myself, 'I will just go [to seminary] for a year and then I'll quit. But deep within me, I felt like staying on.'"

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“And I stayed on year after year after year, for seven years,” he adds, with a smile. “Then I became a deacon, and then I became a priest.”

This past July, Fr. Philip celebrated 18 years of serving the Church as a priest, including the past 10 in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

“They wanted someone to come to attend to the Ghanaian Catholic immigrants who were here and they chose me to come,” says Fr. Philip of what originally brought him to the United States. “It’s always very difficult to bid your people farewell, but in my mind, I knew it was part of my vocation, that I could be sent out on mission at any time.”

His favorite parts of being a priest include celebrating the Mass and the sacraments with people.

“It’s always a great joy to be able to celebrate the sacraments,” Fr. Philip says. “A priest is a minister, somebody who has dedicated his entire life in service to God’s people, to let God’s love and mercy be known to other people by reaching out and touching the lives of other people.

“I’ve been blessed so much,” he adds. “I think it is out of His grace that I’m still here today, and as long as I have breath I want to extend [His grace] to other people as well.”

Fr. Philip encourages people to consider God’s calling in their lives and be open to where He leads. In turn, as he points out, prayer is a very important part of discernment.

“As a Church, we always pray for vocations,” Fr. Philip says. “And personally, I believe that prayer can do a lot for an individual. As we talk to Him, we should allow Him to talk to us in the silence of our hearts. We

“God can use anything to call an individual. It doesn’t have to be anything extraordinary — it can be something simple. Maybe you see a priest and you’re drawn to that. Maybe the way you see a priest or religious living their life draws you. God can call through many means — even through an accident or something that’s not a good experience, but God could call somebody out of it. Deep within you, if you feel a call, just give it a try.”

— FR. PHILIP BREMBAH, PASTOR

should open our minds, and hearts, and ears to hear Him speak to us.

“God can use anything to call an individual,” he adds. “It doesn’t have to be anything extraordinary — it can be something simple. Maybe you see a priest and you’re drawn to that. Maybe the way you see a priest or religious living their life draws you. God can call through many means — even through an accident or something that’s not a good experience, but God could call somebody out of it. Deep within you, if you feel a call, just give it a try. Being a priest is a blessing and it’s a joy to live this way of life.”



If you would like more information on discerning a vocation to the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life, please contact one of our Vocations Liaisons, found at www.fwdioc.org/priesthood-seminarians.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Christ Becomes One With Us Through *the Eucharist*

Dear Parishioners,

Any of us who are old enough to remember the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, had to have been marked by that experience. As I reflect on this solemn date in this country's history, I also faithfully reflect upon our celebration of the Eucharist. As Catholics, we are offered the Eucharist to keep it alive by consciously being bread broken and wine poured out for others each day of our lives. We are called to become what we receive.

Throughout the calendar year, certain dates are commemorated to inspire us to remember and honor those who may have been lost. These kinds of days — like 9/11 — are testimony to the reality that we, as human beings, are consciously connected to one another. There are unfortunately some who would have us believe that we are independent, separated from those around us.

For us as Catholics, the reception of the Eucharist is the most intimate union with God Himself on this earth. It is through the Body of Christ that we are unified to God and one another, and reminds us that we are invited to be bread broken and wine poured out for our world.

We gather as a community around the table of the Eucharist. We receive the gift of Christ's Body and Blood so that we may become the embodiment of God's love among us. As we receive Christ, we should recommit ourselves to following in Jesus' footsteps and reaching out to those around us

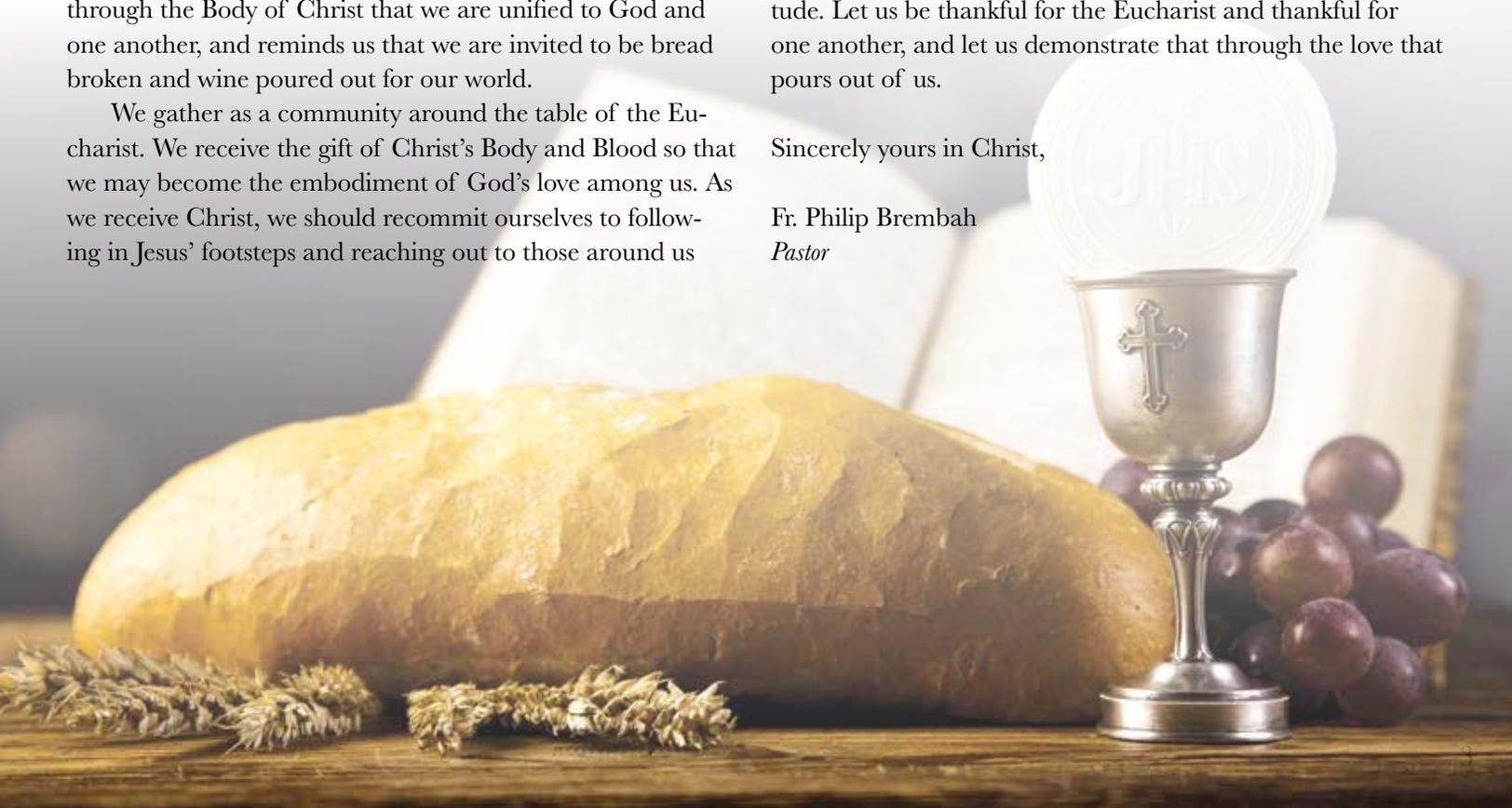
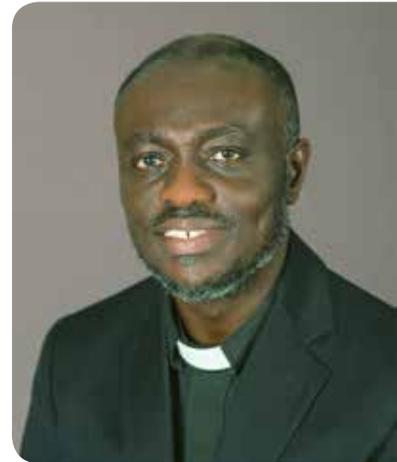
with mercy, encouragement and compassion. By doing that, we reaffirm our identity as disciples and our Baptismal commitment to be His Body and Blood given for others.

Unfortunately to some, the Eucharist has been diluted to the point that it is viewed as merely a ritual or a symbol. As Catholics, we know that it is Christ's real presence among us — we are to accept that gift and personally become Christ's presence everywhere we go and in everything we do.

The very word "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving." When we live a Eucharistic life, it has everything to do with gratitude. Let us be thankful for the Eucharist and thankful for one another, and let us demonstrate that through the love that pours out of us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Philip Brembah
Pastor



A Life Built on the Pillars of Hope and Faith:

“Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20)

When Jesus appeared to His disciples following the resurrection, He gave them a clear message before leaving their presence once more: to keep the faith and go forth into the broken world with a new sense of hope. In the midst of the immense sorrow of His friends, Christ called upon them to take what they had learned from Him and continue to live out His Word.

In raising their three sons, parishioner Valerie Bindel and her late husband, Danny, had very much the same goal, striving to provide their children — Ryan, 21; Spencer, 19; and Nicolas, 14 — with a strong foundation in the faith that would one day help them to weather life’s storms with strength and courage.

“It was a top priority for my husband and I to foster a strong faith [in our boys],” Valerie says. “To us, faith is

an expression of hope for something better in the world, and we felt it was important for our children to know faith and love and positivity. We wanted them to have faith in themselves, faith in other people, and faith in God, and church was somewhere that provided that and was a place they could always go.”

About five years ago, the Bindels would find this faith tested in a way they could never have imagined when Danny was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer and passed away just a year later.

As Valerie and her sons grappled with this tremendous loss, it was the faith that the Bindels had woven into their everyday lives that helped them pull through.

“While the event was an absolute tragedy in our lives, I was so blessed to learn just how strong we had raised our children to be through faith,” Valerie says.

“I was very afraid as to which way they were going to go, because you question God, you question your faith, you don’t understand why something like that would happen. My personal faith and the strength of my children were the only things that got me through that chapter of my life.”

Today, Valerie and her youngest son, Nicolas, remain active in parish life here at St. Vincent de Paul, while older sons Ryan and Spencer have found many ways to participate in the faith while away at college. Here in our parish, the family helps out with Noreen’s Nourishment, Mission Arlington, Spirit of Hope and the Fall Festival. The three boys have served as altar servers and Eucharistic Ministers, and have assisted with Vacation Bible School and Camp Ft. Worth.

For Valerie, who had a difficult childhood herself — she was



The Bindel family, Easter 2014 — (from left) Danny, Ryan, Nicolas, Spencer and Valerie

The Bindel Family

raised by a sickly father and extended relatives following the passing of her mother when she was just an infant — helping with Spirit of Hope is always at the top of her ‘to-do’ list at Christmastime.

“I’ve just always been very soft-hearted towards children,” she says. “One of my passions is I’ve always wanted to see little kids — especially those who are at more of a disadvantage — to forget their reality and to be happy, even it’s only for a short while.”

Having grown up in a family that prioritized parish life, the Bindels’ two oldest sons found it natural to continue participating in church activities when they went off to college. Spencer, who just started his sophomore year at Notre Dame University, serves as a Eucharistic Minister on Sundays and attends daily Mass regularly. Ryan just graduated from Texas A&M, where he attended Mass at St. Mary’s Catholic Center in College Station and belonged to a faith-building group called John 15. His fiancée, Natalie, was also active in the church, and the two are looking forward to their December wedding at St. Mary’s.

Since so many young people who leave for college drift away from the Church, Valerie encourages parents to make faith life a priority during the college search process.

“I believe parents need to treat faith as a foundation of life for their children, and not just an extracurricular activity,” she says. “Parents should really research and consider the faith-based activities and communities a college offers to be just as important as the academics and other considerations.

“College is a trying and formative time for young adults, and may actually be the time where faith is most critical,” Valerie adds. “Just like anything else good in our lives, it needs to be nurtured and cultivated through regular activity, prayer and interaction.”

Reflecting on the faith that has pulled her family through the most difficult of times, Valerie feels blessed to be a part of a strong parish that has been there for her and her sons every step of the way.

“St. Vincent de Paul was definitely a place I could go where everybody cared,” she says. “It’s been four years now [since Danny’s passing], and I still have close

friendships and people who care and still ask how I’m doing. We happily help out with the activities the church sponsors because we greatly enjoy the camaraderie, the lifelong friendships, and the sense of family that have developed over the years.”

Despite the hardships she has faced, Valerie remains thankful for all of the blessings life offers, and for the hope that comes with a firm faith in the goodness of the Lord.

“I have been so blessed throughout my life with the love and kindness and strength provided to me from my family, friends and community,” Valerie says. “Being able to give back that love and kindness and strength to my children and others is its own reward.”



The Bindel brothers — (from left) Spencer, Nicolas and Ryan

SERVICE

The Fourth Pillar of Parish Stewardship

Throughout Sacred Scripture, there are numerous references to service. There is the parable of the vigilant and faithful servants who await their master's return from a wedding, "ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks" (Lk 12:35-40). There is the story of the good Samaritan who was moved with compassion to help the victim of a violent robbery (Lk 10:25-37). And there are several examples of Christ serving those around Him – feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, and even turning water into wine at a wedding banquet.

Why is service a running theme throughout the Gospels? Because service is at the root of living in imitation of Christ. Christ served others throughout His life on Earth, and His death on the cross was the ultimate act of service to mankind. And when we serve others, we are not only following in Christ's footsteps, we are also serving Christ Himself: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

As a stewardship parish, service must be at the heart of everything we do. The parish community is the bastion of service within the Catholic Church, as we serve one another and are also served by our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the Diocese of Wichita's document, *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*, states, "Like a blood family, the parish family stands ready and eager collectively to wrap their arms around their brothers and sisters when they suffer in trial and/or celebrate special events in their lives."

It is good to recognize the parish community as a place where service is appreciated and can be utilized for the good of the Church. However, it is not enough for us to simply serve other members of our parish family. As disciples of Christ, it is our obligation to serve people in need everywhere they exist – in our families, our greater community, our country, and throughout the world. This can be a challenging concept, as it is often much more comfortable and convenient to serve those who are close to us than it is to reach out to "outsiders." But, as *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* eloquently points out, "Failure to have this understanding leads to a selfish parochialism, which is life draining to a parish stewardship way of life."

Think of ways that you can serve others around you, both within our parish family and in the greater community. Our many parish ministries offer a great place to begin offering your time and talents, but the opportunities for service don't end there. There are many civic and nonprofit organizations that do an immense amount to serve others across the globe and are always looking for helpers.

Once you serve, you will find that you will reap numerous rewards in return, much like the faithful servants who doubled the talents their master had entrusted to them: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy" (Mt 25:21).

SERVICE

Parish Picnic Promises Great Food and Fun for All

This month, we are celebrating a decades-long parish tradition here at St. Vincent de Paul — so if you haven't already, make plans to stay after Mass on Sunday, Sept. 30, for the annual St. Vincent de Paul Parish Picnic! Starting at 12:30 p.m., the picnic promises great food, entertainment, and fellowship for all!

“The church picnic started about 40 years ago and it really was a time for the church to come together in a big way and share a meal,” says Picnic Chair and Men's Club member Mike Portillo. “Over the years, different things have been added to enhance the fellowship and just have a fun time.”

The Parish Picnic is the result of the efforts of the Men's Club, Women's Guild and other parish ministries. Proceeds from the event go to support the parish outreach and other local charities. Mike says the date of Sept. 30 was chosen to commemorate the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, which is just a few days earlier.



As part of the festivities during the annual St. Vincent de Paul Parish Picnic, families can visit a petting zoo like the one pictured here. The picnic is the result of efforts by several parish ministries and all proceeds go to benefit charitable causes.

“It's got a little something for everybody, I think,” Mike says. “We'll have a live band, silent auction — we will have games for the kids, various booths, and we'll have inflatable rides that the kids can participate in. We'll have a petting zoo and we're planning a small Washers tournament.”

Events will also include hourly door prizes, bingo, a dunk tank, and a “jail” where visitors can have their

friends “arrested” and then bailed out for a small fee. Silent auction items will include gift certificates and items donated by local businesses. Cowboys fans can rest assured that they won't need to choose between the game and the picnic as the game will be shown on a television in Hank's Hut.

Mike says one of the largest draws for the yearly picnic is the

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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

Parish Picnic Promises Great Food and Fun for All

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food, especially the barbecue dinner. Members of the Men's Club, known as the "Holy Smokers," volunteer to help smoke the beef used in the barbecue over several hours.

"They smoke overnight on two or three gigantic smokers on a trailer," Mike says. "They prepare all the food and then our slice and dice crew comes in and cuts all the barbecue up. There's probably 20 or 25 guys, plus wives and children who come and help."

Helpers play a critical role in making the parish picnic a success. In addition to serving food, helpers are also needed for each aspect of the picnic.

"We're always looking for helpers," Mike says. "All are welcomed to get involved, age does not matter. We really would like to see our youth step up and serve at a booth or one of the other activities. It doesn't have to be all day – it can just be for an hour or two"



Families enjoy a "train" ride around the festival grounds during a past Parish Picnic. This year's event, slated for Sept. 30, will feature plenty of children's activities including inflatable rides and games.

Parishioners who are interested in helping can contact Mike Portillo directly at mikeportillo@sbcglobal.net or 817-253-7932.