



07.2012

Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Spreading the Stewardship Message The Stewardship Committee



*(from left) Andy Chambers, Chris Orlowski, Jim Zettler, Jo Chambers, Neil Allen, Roger Moraski, Mike Burkhardt, Jaris McClean, and Shane Butler
(not pictured) Brett Aldridge, Stewardship Committee Chair, and Norbert Karczewski*

When Brett Aldridge first accepted Fr. Doug Halsema's invitation to help form a new Stewardship Committee at St. Paul Parish a few months back, he had a basic understanding of the stewardship way of life. But Brett says that his time on the committee has given him a whole new perspective on what it means to live as a disciple of Christ, even after just a few committee meetings.

"It's an opportunity to invest in others in the way that God invests in us," Brett says. "He's an unlimited resource for everything, whether that's time, talent, or treasure. He ultimately invests infinitely in us, and so I think this is an opportunity for us to take the talents, benefits, and fruits of His investment and transfer those to others. And I think that ultimately is what sums up stewardship."

Brett and his fellow committee members

work diligently to learn more about the stewardship way of life and educate fellow parishioners on stewardship, in the hopes that it will continue to grow as a fundamental aspect of parish life at St. Paul.

"The goal of our Stewardship Committee is to promote stewardship within the parish as a whole," Brett explains. "So we want our parishioners to be engaged and committed to the activities of the parish, and when they view stewardship, we want them to view it as a way of life – a sort of discipleship. If you live your life with stewardship being the focus, thanking God and giving back in thanksgiving for His gifts, the spirit of stewardship will hopefully make us more fulfilled and more tied together as parishioners."

The committee meets on a monthly basis for stewardship formation and discussion of ways that it can promote the fundamentals

continued on page 5

Stewardship

Living in Love

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him” (1 Jn 4:16). As Christ’s disciples, we are to live lives of love. In fact, when asked which commandment is the most important, Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might,” and He immediately followed this command with, “Love your neighbor as yourself. No commandment is greater than these” (Mk 12:29-31).

So, essentially, the life of a Christian is all about love! This doesn’t mean that Christ preached an abstract Gospel, or that we need to love, love, love, because “it feels good.” Actually, it is quite the opposite. Christ’s Gospel of love is one of dramatic action, and living in that love calls each of us to action.

What is this love, then, of which Christ speaks, and how are we to live it out today?

Christ, the God who, as John tells us, “is love” Himself, came to Earth out of pure love for us. In order that we might have everlasting life, Christ took the punishment for our sins. He, the Lord of all creation, was mocked, scourged, and ultimately murdered on the cross to atone for the sins that we, His creatures, have committed. Now, that’s love! And that’s the love that we are called to imitate throughout our lives.

Notice the selfless nature of Jesus’ act. He gained nothing in return for what He did, and He calls us to love in the same manner. How do we do that here and now? Do we die on our own personal crosses? The answer, in a way, is “Yes!” We don’t necessarily die on the wood of the literal cross as Christ did, but we must die to self for the sake of others. That is the love of Christ, and that is the love He calls us to every day. If we want to truly love God, we must love others. God Himself showed us the reality of this need when He coupled the command that we love God with the command that we love our neighbor. And then Christ explained, “Whatever you do to the least of those, you do to me” (Mt 25:40). If we are called to love God, we are called to love our neighbor, for Christ resides in each one of us, and it must be a love like



Christ has shown us – one of selflessness, wanting nothing more than the good of our neighbor.

There are many ways that we can show our love to others, particularly through prayer and service. Here at our parish, there are many ministries that offer us the opportunity to serve our neighbors. If we have a little bit of time to offer, we can help out in the parish office doing seemingly menial yet important tasks, such as stuffing inserts into the bulletins so that fellow parishioners are aware of what’s going on around the parish. Those of us with an aptitude for teaching may be called to serve others through RCIA or our religious education program. There is also always a need for more lectors and Eucharistic Ministers to aid the priest in bringing Christ to other parishioners at Mass.

These are but a few of the countless opportunities we have here at our parish and in our local community to serve. However we feel called to do so, one thing is for certain: The love of Christ calls us to action. How will we show our love for God this year? Remember, “Whatever you do for the least of those, you do for me” (Mt 25:40).

There are many ways that we can show our love to others, particularly through prayer and service. Here at our parish, there are many ministries that offer us the opportunity to serve our neighbors

A Letter from Our Pastor

Celebrate and Share the God-Given Gifts of American Independence

Dear Parishioners,

The month of July comes in with a bang with the sound of fireworks on the Fourth of July, as Independence Day celebrates the birth of our national life. It is also fitting to reflect and remember all the ways in which God has blessed the United States.

A Christian's ultimate loyalty must be to God, rather than to the nation. However, love of country is one of our duties as citizens. "The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity," according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§2239).

The ideals that shaped the United States – "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" – are among the noblest political statements ever made. While our people and our governments at the national, state, and local levels have not always lived up to those ideals expressed in the *Declaration of Independence*, we continue to hold them up as our goals and strive to reach them.

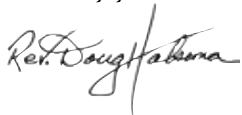
But while we celebrate our American independence, it is important as Catholics to rejoice in our role with all fellow Christians. As Catholics, we are especially aware that we are not alone on our journey to heaven. We depend upon others, and we have their support. The priests who administer the sacraments, fellow parishioners who reflect Christ's grace, even the saints in past generations who now pray for us in heaven – they all are part of the network of those who are helping us along our spiritual path.

As St. Paul puts it, "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19). As a result, what affects one part of the Body of Christ affects the whole Church. Elsewhere he wrote, "If (one) part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it" (1 Cor 26-27).

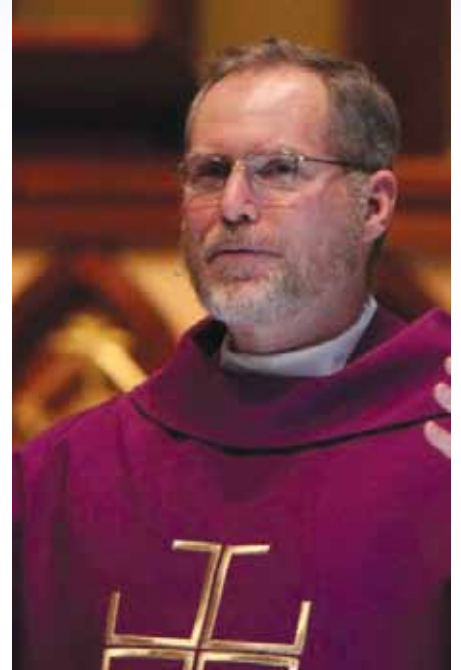
To summarize what St. Paul was saying, we not only receive from others, but we give to them, too. Think about the underlying stewardship message in that statement and consider the ways we are called to share our time, talent, and treasure as American Catholics. The concept of receiving gifts from God and sharing them with others and with the Church is one of the reasons why we need to worship at Mass every Sunday, even when we're on vacation. We build up the Church through our prayers and witness when we visit a new parish while we're on a trip, just as we receive from them.

What a wonderful month July is! We can celebrate our spiritual interdependence with others as we celebrate God's great gift of American independence. God bless you all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Doug Halsema
Pastor



*A Christian's
ultimate loyalty
must be to God,
rather than to the
nation. However,
love of country is
one of our duties as
citizens.*

St. Paul

Adoration: Spending Blessed S

*This is the wonderful truth, my dear friends: the Word, which became
- Pope John*

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks to the crowds and says, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). His words, spoken over 2,000 years ago, hold just as much meaning today as He invites each of us to come spend time with Him in Eucharistic Adoration.

Janet Summers, coordinator for Adoration at St. Paul, explains that spending time before the Blessed Sacrament offers the opportunity to be in the physical presence of Christ away from the cares and distractions of the world.

“When you attend Adoration, you are actually experiencing an extension of the Mass,” Janet explains. “But while Mass is a public prayer, Adoration is a private one – just you and Christ – and it is so important to nurture our private prayers while contemplating the reality of His presence.”

Janet believes so strongly in Adoration that she helped spearhead the effort to bring Adoration to St. Paul, believing that no parish should be without it. In fact, she personally witnessed the transformative power of Adoration in a parish she attended previously. Years earlier, she and her family had joined a parish in South Carolina that was falling apart. The pastor was ill, ministries had fallen by the wayside, and people were leaving. But when a replacement pastor finally arrived, the first thing he did was establish Eucharistic Adoration.

“The entire parish experienced a transformation,” Janet recalls. “It went from a tiny church that was failing, to a thriving parish. They even had to build a new church, and eventually even added a school. It was a wonderful thing to witness.”

When the time came for Janet and her family to move, the priest gave Janet a packet on Eucharistic Adoration and commissioned her to establish it in another parish. At the time, Janet didn’t think it was something she could do. Time passed, the Summers family eventually joined our parish, and during a Catechism class, Janet was speaking about Adoration and was challenged to begin a program in our parish. She joined forces with Chris and Diane Wilkinson, and within one month the three of them had all the details worked out.

“We felt God’s hand throughout the entire process,” Janet explains.

Adoration at St. Paul takes place each Thursday from 9 a.m. to Friday at 7:30 a.m. For most, Adoration requires



just one hour of their time per week, but what happens in the quiet of that hour carries through to the rest of the week. Chris Wilkinson, who works as a police officer investigating Internet crimes against children, says that sometimes he may not receive a special insight while in Adoration, but that it will often be revealed at other times during the week when he needs it most.

“Adoration has given me the grace and understanding to know that God is always with us,” Chris says. “He is intimately involved in our lives. He feels what we feel, which is what we learn through His Passion.”

For parishioner Nan Jones, Adoration has completely changed how she structures her life. When her daughter came through a lengthy and difficult labor and delivered a beautiful, healthy son, Nan made a promise to spend more

ing Time Before the Sacrament

me flesh two thousand years ago, is present today in the Eucharist.
in Paul II

time before the Blessed Sacrament. So she began attending Adoration with her best friend, Rose Molchan, who lived next door. That was 16 years ago. Today, the routine hasn't altered, and the two of them still go together to the Adoration Chapel every single Thursday.

"Our Thursdays are dedicated to God," she explains. "Not only that, but when my husband, Tom, converted at the age of 69, it wasn't long before he started going, too."

Sitting in a quiet chapel, away from the world's distractions, some may wonder how to fill the time. Chris likes to read literature, perform an examination of conscience, and contemplate the Stations of the Cross. For Nan, she finds that it works best for her to have some form of structure to her prayer time. She always begins with a Rosary which she dedicates to vocations. Next, she goes through a series of prayers for specific needs (such as for her 93-year-old mother who lives in South Dakota), and then spends the last 15 minutes reading or studying.

"It also helps to schedule Adoration into your week and actually write it on the calendar," Nan says. "This way it's



part of your life. It's a routine, just like grocery shopping or exercising."

The point of prayer is conversing with God, which means that we sometimes need to stop doing all the talking and just listen. With our busy lives it's sometimes hard to take time to listen, but Adoration gives us the opportunity to reclaim this time and hear Christ's invitation to come rest a while with Him, away from the cares of the world.

Stewardship Committee *continued from front cover*

of stewardship within the parish community. Recently, the committee spent several sessions viewing *The Spirituality of Stewardship*, a four-part DVD formation series produced by the Catholic Diocese of Wichita that serves as an introduction to the scriptural basis for, and spiritual call to, the stewardship way of life. In future meetings, the committee is planning to study and discuss *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship. Through their formation, the committee members will work toward implementing the concepts and teachings they've learned from the DVD series and pastoral letter on the parish level in a variety of ways.

"When it comes specifically to stewardship, we want to be one of the top stewardship parishes in the country – not just in our area, but in the country," Fr. Doug says. "My goal for the community is to do that, and the only way that we can do that is by having a really good, viable committee full of life,

energy, and enthusiasm that takes the time to form themselves spiritually so that they understand the spiritual dimension of stewardship, and can help the rest of the parish to understand that as well."

Fr. Doug says that he is already seeing the spiritual benefits that the members of the Stewardship Committee are gaining from their stewardship formation, particularly when it comes to their understanding of, and appreciation for, the celebration of the Mass.

"One of the things that our formation has emphasized is that the 'textbook of stewardship' is the Bible, and the 'school of stewardship' is the Mass," he says. "A lot of people have said that they never saw or understood Mass in that context before, and they are really excited about it, to realize that the Mass is a holy exchange of gifts between God and humanity."

For more information on St. Paul's Stewardship Committee, please contact Brett Aldridge at 850-430-4156.

What Does “Red, White, and Blue” Mean to You?



In 1777, our beloved country celebrated its first Fourth of July celebration in Bristol, Rhode Island, now named “America’s most patriotic town.” Thirteen guns fired morning and evening, celebrating the glory of our free nation. In 1778, General George Washington marked the second anniversary with a double ration of rum for his soldiers and an artillery salute.

Although our nation’s real independence began at the end of the Revolutionary War on Sept. 3, 1783, President John Adams originally thought that the anniversary would be marked on July 2, the day in 1776 when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence from Great Britain. Ultimately, Americans chose to commemorate the birthday of the United States on July 4, the day on which the *Declaration of Independence* was adopted and approved.

What does this mean for us as Roman Catholics? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, “The love and service of one’s country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity” (§2239).

As a parish community, we are called by God to respond to this duty to the best of our ability. So, where do we start?

The Second Vatican Council document, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, states that “In the patriotism and in their fidelity to their civic duties Catholics will feel themselves bound to promote the true common good; they will make the weight of their convictions so influential that as a result, civil authority will be justly exercised and laws will accord with moral precepts and the common good.”

By living our lay vocation and permeating the secular world with Catholic values, we genuinely honor God and

neighbor. As “lamps shining before men,” we need to let our moral convictions – no matter the courage it may take – shine forth to be a guiding light for the world, often left vulnerable in the darkness.

The sacred document continues, “In fulfilling this mission of the Church, the Christian laity exercise their apostolate... in both the spiritual and temporal orders... In both orders, the layman, being simultaneously a believer and a citizen, should be constantly led by the same Christian conscience.”

Our commitment to a rightly ordered Catholic patriotism begins with our commitment to the formation of our Christian conscience. We must enrich ourselves with the Church’s teachings on the value of human life, the sacred institution of family, Catholic social and moral teachings, Catholic civil duties, and anything that further pertains to the living out of our Catholic Faith in our nation today.

Once we have done this, we will be able to act upon it. As Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Today more than ever, we need to pray for the light to know the Will of God, the way to do the Will of God, and the will to carry it out.”

This year, let us give our hearts to carrying out this mission of an authentic Catholic patriotism under God. Our nation was founded under God. Let us not allow this precious heritage, this source of true life and liberty, to be lost. Its preservation relies on each one of us. Only then will we be able to truly sing, “My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.”

Our commitment to a rightly ordered Catholic patriotism begins with our commitment to the formation of our Christian conscience.

St. Augustine Circle Provides Opportunity for Continuing Spiritual Formation

As Catholics, we are sometimes guilty of writing off learning about the faith as something for children. But at St. Paul, there are a host of continuing religious education opportunities for adults.

One such opportunity is the St. Augustine Circle. Founded in 1993 by parishioner Elaine Shepard, who has since passed away, the St. Augustine Circle maintains a membership of around 15 ladies and meets monthly in the members' homes to read and discuss a spiritual or theological text and enjoy fellowship and refreshments.

"We're not entirely sure if Elaine started the group from scratch or if she was picking up something that had faded away, but the name certainly stems from the fact that St. Augustine was one of the greatest teachers of the faith of all time," says Marianne Beckman, a former parishioner at St. Paul who continues to meet with the group. "I was the volunteer in charge of adult education at St. Paul for a number of years, and I have always felt that it's so important to keep learning and growing in your faith."

Over the years, the group has gone through a variety of different resources, learning about theology, history, and the spiritual life. Its members are currently reading a book by Val Peter, *Rekindling the Fires*, which provides an insightful look at the relationship between behavioral psychology and our spiritual lives.

"All of us would like to be a little more Catholic — come to a deeper understanding of the faith and how to live it." - Martha Quina, Circle member

The St. Augustine Circle is currently on its summer break, but will resume its normal schedule in August, when it will begin meeting on the fourth Monday of each month. The meeting location varies, as the members take turns hosting the group month by month.

With 15 active members, the group is currently operating at maximum capacity.

"The fact that we meet in each other's homes is significant," Marianne says. "It does limit our ability to grow, but it also allows for a certain type of atmosphere that we just wouldn't have if we met somewhere else."

With many of the group's members having been active in it for several years, the St. Augustine Circle has become a circle of fast friends.

"It's a very close-knit group," Marianne says. "We've known each other for a long time now — some of us were friends even before this started — so it's a source of really good support for all of us. Meeting with people who want to share their faith, grow spiritually and to pray with each other is a beautiful way for friendships to grow."



(standing, from left) Jane Rollins, Martha Jo Mathews, Catherine Moore, Martha Quina, Rachel Maiellaro, Mary Williams, and Marianne Beckman
(seated, from left) Lois Guelpa, Jeanne Gedney, Ruth Cary, Trish Kouns, Mary Ellen Miller, and Veronica Greskovich
(not pictured) Shirley Lintz, Ulda Cartaya, and Sally Turner



3131 Hyde Park Road | Pensacola, FL 32503
(850) 434-2551 | www.stpaulcatholic.net

Non Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #420
Pensacola, FL

Address Service Requested

Please visit www.stpaulcatholic.net for information on how our parish will observe the “Fortnight for Freedom,” June 21-July 4, 2012.

WE STAND UP FOR AMERICA

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. | **Daily Mass:** Monday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Confessions: Saturdays, 9:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m., 1st Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., and by appointment

Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday 9:00 a.m. until Friday 7:30 a.m.