



02.2013

Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Serving with Humility in the Altar Linen Group

The Altar Linen Group at St. Paul is responsible for an important mission — to lovingly clean and care for all the linens used during all Masses, funerals, weddings and baptisms. Indeed, this ministry provides a wonderful example of stewardship in a simple and unseen way. Since the ministry's duties are performed in the private sphere of the volunteers' homes, many parishioners may not realize just how much work truly takes place "behind the scenes."

Founded in 2002 by Alicia Teed, parishioner Judi Ward assumed the chair of the Altar Linen Group in April 2009. Judi creates a calendar at the beginning of the year, assigning responsibilities to each of the various members — including five regular members and four substitutes — for every week of the year. The assigned member then cleans the purificators and corporals used during that



*Judi Ward, chair of the
Altar Linen Ministry*

week's Masses. The altar server robes are laundered by Susan Louey, and the altar cloths are cleaned separately whenever needed by Betty Ann Lurton. Betty Ann has also produced and embroidered dozens of new purificators with white crosses, which allows the members of the Altar Linen Group to use bleach when needed.

"The care is special because Our Lord's Precious Blood is on them, and they must be treated with respect and the utmost care," Judi says. "I

am very blessed to have such dedicated and reliable ladies to assist me."

The volunteers pick up the linens on Mondays and return them to the church on Thursday, or no later than Friday. To clean the linens, the members follow procedures as prescribed by the Church. Judi leads an informal training session for new ministry members so that they may understand these

continued on back page

How Can We Model the Faith for Our Children?

The Church has made it clear that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual and cognitive development of their children in matters of the faith. As the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium* states, “Husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children” (Chapter 4, Section 34). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* further emphasizes this vocation by pointing out that the moral education and spiritual formation of children are not only the right, but the responsibility, of their parents: “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. ‘The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.’ The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable” (2221, 2223).

But how can we as parents create an environment in the home conducive to spiritual and moral development? As busy adults, how are we to disseminate the knowledge and understanding of the tenets of the faith to our children in the way that a trained and experienced catechist can? Furthermore, how do we strike a balance between teaching our children in the home and not interfering with the faith formation and sacramental preparation they are currently receiving through their parish school or religious education program?

The answer to all of these questions is stewardship.

Indeed, it is important that we reinforce the lessons that our children learn in school and at religious education classes in the home by talking to them about the faith, reading Sacred Scripture with them, and spending time in family



prayer. And there are several authoritative resources online that can help parents in this task, including Catholic Parents Online — www.catholicparents.org — which links parents to numerous websites and documents that can help them in talking to their children about the faith.

But the best way that we can teach our children is by serving as a living example to them of how to live as disciples of Christ. If we want our children to grow up as strong Catholics and to display a lifelong commitment to their faith, then it is important that we ourselves live a committed faith life. This includes an ongoing commitment to our own faith formation as adults, and active participation in the sacraments, especially the sacrifice of the Mass. And it also includes the giving back of our time, talent and treasure in service of

our community in thanksgiving for the gifts that God has given us.

Parenting can be a tough vocation, and children deal with many influences in their lives that exist in stark contrast to the values that their parents hope to instill within them. Fortunately for parents, the stewardship way of life provides a simple and effective model for teaching our children in matters of the Faith. By living as stewards of God's gifts and reaping the spiritual rewards that accompany this lifestyle, we are tangibly showing our children that sharing of our gifts and talents leads to a life of happiness and spiritual fulfillment. In doing this, we give them a good opportunity to follow in our footsteps and make their faith a top priority for the rest of their lives.

A Letter From Our Pastor

A Few Thoughts on Lent 2013

Dear Parishioners,

Before Jesus began His public ministry, He spent 40 days in the desert. He prayed, fasted, confronted temptation, and prepared for His journey to the cross. During the season of Lent, we try to imitate Jesus in self-denial. We turn to God's Word and centuries of spiritual practices and devotions so that we can learn how to set aside what distracts and harms us. We also learn how to open our lives to deep conversion to the Lord. Our focus is on Easter so that we may be ready to enter into the lasting joy of life with the Risen Christ.

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls on Feb. 13 this year. For many of us, we anticipate this important day with trepidation, for we know it signals the beginning of our 40-day journey of self-sacrifice. But Lent does not have to be dreadful, especially if you approach it in the right way. The idea is to help us get spiritually prepared to celebrate Easter.

And, so, as we prepare ourselves spiritually, let us remember the three main practices on which our Lenten journeys are centered:

Prayer. Prayer is our turning to God. Lent is a wonderful time to go beyond Sunday Mass and deepen our spiritual lives. You might consider the following prayer opportunities: celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, attend daily Mass, practice Morning Prayer, take part in a spiritual retreat, pray the Stations of the Cross, pray the Rosary, spend time in Eucharistic Adoration, or do some extra spiritual reading.

Fasting. We fast and abstain from meat on certain days. We also fast by the common practice of "giving something up for Lent." This sacrifice teaches us that we don't need these



things to be happy. We can do without them and depend, as Jesus teaches us, on God alone for our happiness. It also teaches us spiritual self-discipline so that we will be prepared for the greater sacrifices we will be called on to make in our lives. Fasting also allows us to express solidarity with the poor in this world.

Almsgiving. Being mindful of the poor is not an option for Christians. Jesus tells us that when we feed the hungry or clothe the naked we are encountering Him. Almsgiving is our taking extra steps to make sure that you are being generous with your time, talent and treasure. Some acts of almsgiving could include: donate clothes to the St. Vincent de Paul Society or food to the local food bank, visiting the homebound or lonely, praying for those imprisoned, or simply being more welcoming to all those you meet.

When you think about it, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are closely aligned with our three ways of entering into stewardship as a way of life. Our everyday commitment to share our time, talent, and treasure are directly related to prayer, fasting and almsgiving. So as we begin our Lenten journey, may we all keep that spirit of conversion alive by fulfilling our stewardship commitments throughout the year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Doug Halsema
Pastor

Confirmation Empowerment Live the Gifts of the Holy Spirit



A class of 55 ninth-graders were confirmed last year at St. Paul

This March, 35 ninth-graders will celebrate their Confirmation in the Catholic Church here at St. Paul. The confirmandi undergo a one-year formation program at the parish, led by Fr. Michael Nixon. The program is currently in its second year, and it builds on the religious education taught both through the school and the middle school Edge youth group program. Classes are held three times a month, from September up until Confirmation takes place the following spring.

Since Confirmation in this diocese occurs in ninth grade, preparation for the sacraments is a way for the confirmandi to actively choose to live out their faith.

“The main goal is to get them more knowledgeable about their Catholic faith,” Fr. Michael says. “We try to get them to engage with their faith on a deeper level, with their own personal life of prayer, prayer with the Church, receiving the sacraments, being serviceable members of the parish and giving back to the parish. It’s not really a ‘coming of age’ sacra-

ment, but at the age we do it, it helps them to figure out what their faith means to them now. It strengthens and seals the kids to the Holy Spirit, and empowers them to live the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

Sponsors are an important part of the Confirmation preparation process, since they are meant to serve as an example to the confirmandi. The sponsors should be both a Catholic in good standing, as well as someone with which confirmandi feel comfortable discussing important matters and questions of faith.

“Sponsors should be someone who is a good role model of the faith, and faith is something we receive by someone sharing their struggles and triumphs and insights with them,” says Fr. Michael. “This year, we already had a special class with the sponsors to introduce them to the process, and there is a series of four meetings they’re going to and working through together. For some of the kids, their sponsors live close by, but some

Answers Confirmandi to of the Holy Spirit



Fr. Michael teaches a class at the Confirmation retreat



Confirmandi eat lunch at last year's Confirmation retreat

are a little further away. There's a sort of workbook so they can do that whether they're in the same city, or via Skype."

Fr. Michael also believes that family is integral to the Confirmation preparation process.

"The involvement of families is essential for it to run smoothly," he says. "Just living out the faith in their own homes — going to weekly Mass, praying together as a family — all of that is a really important part of what we're trying to do. Without their involvement, it's just me, and that's pretty limited."

The confirmandi will also attend a Confirmation retreat on Feb. 24. Last year's retreat was held for only a day, but because of the positive response, this year's retreat will be weekend-long.

"It's a more extended reflection of a lot of the topics we've been talking about," says Fr. Michael. "We discuss things like the role the Holy Spirit has in their lives, and how they can

prepare the way for receiving the seal of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation. It is really just getting them out of the world for a little bit so they can have some time to be quiet and reflective."

Fr. Michael hopes that this preparation process, as well as the celebration of the sacrament on March 3, will inspire these kids to live out their faith and to share it with others.

"For me, when it starts to click with them, it's when they realize they have what they need to be able to share the faith," says Fr. Michael. "I think a lot of people hold back and are looking for something extra, or like they feel they need to be a priest in order to evangelize. But when they realize and take it seriously, then they are able to share their faith with others. It's neat to see when they actually start to take advantage of that."

Valentine's Day

The Feast of a Christian Martyr

Candy, flowers, romantic dinners, and excuses for wooing are the common traditions we associate with the once pagan holiday known as Valentine's Day.

Dangling cupids, candy "message" hearts, and faux long-stemmed roses clutter every card store, waiting for last-minute purchase.

The question is — how did this over-commercialized holiday really begin?

There are a few stories surrounding the history of Feb. 14 and St. Valentine himself, all dating back to the Roman Empire. The 14th day of February was a day set aside to honor the goddess Juno, queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. The following day, Feb. 15, began the feast of Lupercalia — a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

As part of the festival traditions, there was a name drawing among the young people. The names of young Roman women were written on slips of paper and placed into a jar. Each young man would draw a young woman's name from the jar, and the two would be partners for the duration of the festival. Sometimes the pairing lasted an entire year, and often, the couple would fall in love and later marry.

At the time, Emperor Claudius II was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns, and he was having a difficult time recruiting soldiers to join his military leagues. Claudius



believed that soldiers were reluctant to join because they did not want to leave their loves or families.

With this in mind, Claudius decreed all marriages and engagements cancelled in Rome. During this time, St. Valentine was a priest in Rome, and he and St. Marius secretly married young couples. For this, St. Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who sentenced him to be beaten and then executed by beheading. He suffered this martyrdom on Feb. 14, around the year 270 AD.

Before his death, it is said that St. Valentine left a note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From

Your Valentine." Although the truth behind the St. Valentine's legend is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and, most importantly, romantic figure. It is no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Over time, Feb. 14 became a time for lovers to exchange sweet messages, making St. Valentine the patron saint of lovers. The date was often commemorated with the sending of poems and simple gifts. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that Feb. 14 was the beginning of the avian mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February – Valentine's Day – should be a day for romance.

St. Paul Lenten Schedule

Monthly Penance Service
(prior to Lent)

February 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Mass times

6:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 7 p.m.

Lenten Penance Service

March 19

School Penance Service

March 20

Religious Education Penance Service

March 20

Stations of the Cross

every Friday at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

School Stations of the Cross

2 p.m. on all dates

February 19

February 27

March 7

March 18

March 27

Fish Fry

date to be announced

Parish Mission

February 18 to 22

Other Events During Lent:

Confirmation — March 3

Men's ACTS Retreat — March 14 to 17

Christmas 2012 at St. Paul

This past Christmas season was a wonderful time at our parish, when the church was specially decorated for the Christmas Masses. We also held various outreach projects like the Angel Tree, as well as social events like the ACTS Gathering. Thanks to all of those who made this past Christmas season so special!



Address Service Requested

Altar Linen Group continued from cover

instructions, as well as the specific linen pick-up and return procedures.

Since the Precious Blood may be on the purificators, they are first rinsed in clear water. Sometimes, certain linens must be pre-treated after rinsing if, for example, there are lipstick stains on any of the linens. The linens are then washed in the washing machine on a gentle cycle. The rinsing water, which has become Holy Water, is then disposed of in the yard, directly into the earth. After washing, the linens are ironed and folded according to Church procedures. Upon their return to

the parish, the linens are then taken to the sacristy and placed in a drawer.

Since this work is done out of the public eye, serving in the Altar Linen Group is a great way to serve the entire parish community in a quiet and respectful way.

“We all feel it is a privilege and a blessing to serve our Lord in this simple task,” says Judi.

For more information, or to get involved with the Altar Linen Group, please contact Judi Ward at 850-432-3647.

“The care is special because Our Lord’s Precious Blood is on the purificators, and they must be treated with respect and the utmost care. I am very blessed to have such dedicated and reliable ladies to assist me.” — Judi Ward

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.