



For the Heart

Vol. 4 Issue 2

A publication for the people of Sacred Heart Church

March 2011

In Community is Strength

Fr. Ron Weyrens

A pastor heard that one of his parishioners was going about announcing that he would no longer attend church services. One winter evening, the pastor called on this reluctant member of his flock for a friendly visit. The two men sat before the fireplace making small talk, but studiously avoiding the issue of church attendance. After a while, the pastor took the tongs from the rack next to the fireplace and pulled a single coal from the fire. He placed the glowing ember on the hearth. As the two watched in silence, the coal quickly ceased burning and turned an ashen gray, while the other coals in the fire continued to burn brightly. The pastor's silent message was not lost on the parishioner. After a long pause, he turned to the pastor and said, "I'll be back at services next Sunday." (In *Community Is Strength*. From *The Sower's Seeds*, copyright 1990 by Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R., p. 72. Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ 07430.)

Christians are to be a community of believers that mirrors the Blessed Trinity. The Trinity is a community of three persons in one God, united in unconditional love, which reaches out beyond itself in life-giving love. The fruits of this love are witnessed in creation, the salvation that rises from Christ's self surrender, and the animating presence of the Holy Spirit.

One's ability to follow Christ, surrendering to God's will, is possible through prayer and living in community with other believers. Life in community can be exhilarating, as well as frustrating and hurtful. Solutions to issues facing a community can be as many as there are community members. Since the time of the apostles, believers have disagreed with each other. The various Christian denominations today testify to the tensions in community life that lead to separation.

Our parish is not immune to disagreements. Over the years, anger, frustration, and hurt have arisen among parishioners for a variety of reasons --- the building of our current church, the merger of our school, disagreements with pastors, staff members, or fellow parishioners.

The challenge we face is to move beyond the hurts. The questions to be faced: How does reconciliation occur so we can be strong as a community? Am I willing to forgive or apologize?

The Gospel writer Matthew sets before us a key for communal life: "Jesus said, 'If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that another has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first and be reconciled with the person, and then...offer your gift.'" (Matthew 5:23-24)

***Called, forgiven, empowered
We are showered with God's promise of grace
"Know I abide with you evermore!"
Sent forth with courage, held in compassion,
Blessed by the Spirit of Jesus.***

Peace and Progress

Maureen Otremba

“Peace and Progress.” That’s how school principal Erin Hatlestad ends each of her monthly newsletters for families at St. Katharine Drexel School. It’s also something of a motto for the ongoing unification process that began last year with the joining of the two legacy schools of Sacred Heart in Sauk Rapids and St. Augustine/St. Mary’s Cathedral in St. Cloud. Currently operating on both campuses, the school will occupy only the St. Cloud building beginning this summer.

Stemming from Bishop John Kinney’s 2008 initiative to examine the future of Catholic education, both in our diocesan schools and in parish faith formation programs, St. Katharine Drexel School is a creative and positive response to the challenges that face us. These challenges include declining enrollment, escalating costs, being good stewards of our resources, and seeking to ensure that quality Catholic education will be available to all.

Not surprisingly, the process has involved pain, sadness, and loss. The necessity of evaluating buildings, locations, programs, personnel, and resources has required some difficult decisions. But in order to maintain a constructive atmosphere for learning and community, Erin Hatlestad has chosen to focus on the positive: a school that will be stronger in many ways than the legacy schools that comprise it.

For example, because of the larger number of students at the unified school, certain programs like band, sports, and activities will be available. Students will benefit from a larger peer group (more friends!) and more teachers, including Spanish, physical education, and media teachers. The unified school offers pre-school options, currently not possible in the Sauk Rapids campus. And the coming together of our parishes in support of Catholic education is an endeavor that builds up the Body of Christ for the local church.

Erin and the staff at both campuses have dedicated much creativity to foster a sense of unity among staff and students. The children have pen-pals between campuses, come together for school-wide liturgies once each month (at alternating campuses), and recently capped the celebration of Catholic Schools Week by hosting a well-attended family dance. What a fun occasion for families to mix and mingle and celebrate one another!

Yes, there are still details to see to, such as staffing, transportation, and other day-to-day necessities. But when undertaken in the spirit of cooperation and charity, each task becomes an occasion for peace and progress...for St. Katharine Drexel School—OUR school.

To read more, visit our school website:
www.ourcatholicschool.org.



Students, parents and staff from both campuses join in celebrating Catholic Schools Week at the Family Dance on Friday, February 4, 2011.



The two campuses come together to celebrate Mass for Catholic Schools week at St. Augustine's Church on Friday, February 4, 2011.

SPOT-LIGHT ON... Joe Kresky

Connie Lewandowski

"I strive to engage youth wherever they're at, affirm and support them and try to walk with them," related Joe Kresky in regard to his focus as the new director of youth ministry at Sacred Heart. A native of Superior, Wisconsin, Joe received his undergraduate degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse and Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from St. John's University School of Theology in Collegeville.

He has been involved in youth ministry in one form or another for the past eighteen years with previous ministry service in Pierz, Little Falls and Becker. Joe most recently served in pastoral ministry, faith formation and youth ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Waite Park.

"My own personal challenges as a youth gave rise to a real drive for those that struggle," Joe noted as he explained how he became interested in youth ministry. He recalls that his parents were strong role models as were priests and nuns who were influential in his life providing a foundation for his drive for social justice, ministry and theology.

Increasing participation in parish youth activities is a goal that Joe and his leadership team would like to accomplish. The youth leadership team is a core group that meets monthly to help plan events and offer creative ideas. Among other activities, an



upcoming five day mission trip to Louisiana at the end of July is being planned for high school students. Students and parents are encouraged to watch the bulletin and check the Sacred Heart Parish website for more information regarding this and other activities.

Some of his favorite activities such as camping, hunting and enjoying nature are also a source of connecting to God in the wilderness and are usually shared with Joe's family which includes his wife Brenda and their four children. His leisure reading often focuses on theology and history.

In reflecting on what youth ministry has meant to him, Joe responded, "It has transformed me and helped me experience more peace in my life enabling me to be sensitive to the needs of others and understand the "Big Picture" in life, bringing people to be one in the Body of Christ."

(Welcome and thanks for sharing your spiritual gifts with Sacred Heart Parish, Joe!)

Amazing Prayer Blankets

Annette Jesh

Prayer Blankets are sewn with love and prayers for those who receive the blanket. Each Prayer Blanket is a symbol of our faith sharing community, covering with prayer the individual who receives it.

The Sacred Heart Widow & Widowers Support Group make the Prayer Blankets at their meeting the 1st Wednesday of each month at church. The process involves shopping for fabric, cutting, sewing, and tagging. Then the blankets are blessed by our pastor, Fr. Ron. These beautiful acts truly transform the blanket into a “Prayer Blanket” whose very threads become interwoven with pleas for healing on behalf of the recipient.

This gift of prayer originated at the M. D. Anderson Hospital in Houston, Texas where the chaplain who gave the blankets to the sick found that they so uplifted the patients that she began to deliver them on a regular basis.

The soft fleece Prayer Blanket brings comfort and peace. When one sees and touches these blankets, they

know they are not alone—that they are covered in prayer and there are those who do care about them.

God has used this beautiful ministry to touch the lives of countless people who have received the Prayer Blankets while they are going through difficult times in their lives, and of those involved in the ministry. We are blessed to have people who give abundantly of their time, talents and treasures, making Prayer Blankets possible.

In 2003 we began giving Prayer Blankets to families with new babies. Extending this special Prayer Blanket to babies and their families was a way to welcome them into our parish community and include them in our parish’s prayers. Our desire is that this will encourage prayer for unconditional love and health of mind, body and spirit for those beginning new life in their family and our family here at Sacred Heart Church.

Father Ron blesses the Prayer Blankets several times a year. Blankets are distributed by our priest, pastoral minister, and outreach ministers who visit the hospitals and nursing homes, and parish nurses.

What can a parishioner do to help this ministry?

- Call the Parish Office if you would like a prayer blanket to give to someone (the person need not be a member of Sacred Heart)
- Help with supplying materials
- Say the prayers to fulfill our mission “as our promise to blanket all who receive them with our prayers.”



(Above) Marilyn Kaschmitter, Laura Benoit, and Irene Smelter sew prayer blankets during a recent meeting.

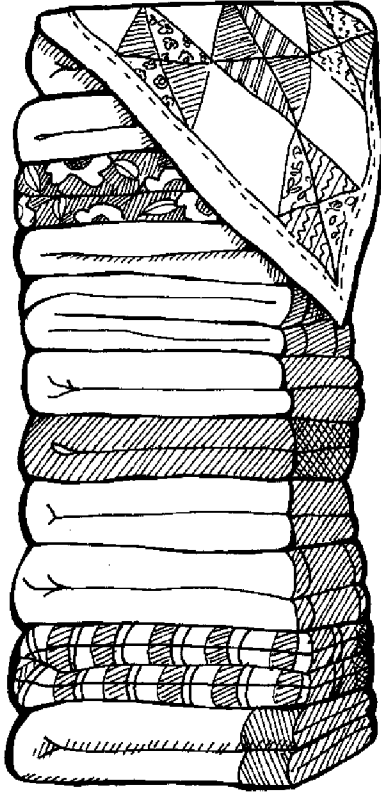


(Above) Rita Reimann and Martha Kirchner put the finishing touches on another batch of blankets.



(Right) LaVern Reischl and Vicky Kuefler share stories and supplies.

Prayer of Blessing



God of love and compassion,
send forth your blessings upon
those who have created these blankets with love
and upon these blankets which will be given
in the name of our parish, as a sign of our love and support.

O God, may the warmth of these blankets
be a constant reminder of your presence.

Give your strength, courage, love, and healing
to those who in body, mind, and spirit,
are suffering and in pain.

Give your strength, courage, love, and guidance,
to your newly born son or daughter,
and to their family.

O God, take away all fear and worries,
fill all who receive a blanket with a deep peace.

Let all who are near them
be a source of love, hope and encouragement.

Embrace those who receive a blanket
in the arms of your unconditional and unlimited love.

We pray this in your name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God for ages unending.

Amen



Monday, April 18

Tuesday, April 19

Wednesday, April 20

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Holy Thursday, April 21

Good Friday, April 22

Holy Saturday, April 23

Easter Sunday, April 24

Easter Sunday

• 6:00 pm Mass

• 6:00 pm Mass

• 6:00 pm Mass

• 8:00 am Morning Prayer

• 6:30 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

• 12:15 pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion

• 6:05 pm Prayer Service

• 8:00 pm Tenebrae (at St. Mary's Cathedral)

• 8:30 pm Easter Vigil Mass

• Masses at 7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 am

• 4:00 pm Evening Prayer



Sacred Heart PARISH

2875 10th Avenue NE Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
Parish Office: 320.251.8115
www.sacredheartsaukrapids.org
www.ourcatholicschool.org

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
St. Cloud, MN
Permit No. 47



The Road to Conversion

*Parish Mission at Sacred Heart Church
with Father Charlie Smiech, O.F.M.*



Sunday, March 13
11:15 am Lunch
12:00 - 1:00 pm Presentation
Starting Out

Monday, March 14
5:15 Supper
6:30 - 7:30 Presentation
Before the Cross of Victory

Tuesday, March 15
5:15 Supper
6:30 - 7:30 Presentation
Life's Liberating Moments

Wednesday, March 16
5:15 Supper
6:30 - 7:30 Presentation
*The Garden of Life
Praying for Inner Strength*

Thursday, March 17
5:15 Supper
6:30 - 7:30 Presentation
*Celebrating our Diversity
And our Unity*

