

THE STEWARDSHIP "GIFT T.A.G" THANKFUL, ACCOUNTABLE, GENEROUS

ST. MARY'S PARISH
SUMMER 2008

IOWA CITY, IOWA
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Dear Parishioners,

Every fall we invite you to take a look at how you live out your baptism call to follow Jesus. We invite you to examine your stewardship commitment and renew it. It is at this time that you can sign up for our commissions and ministries. You may wish to participate in a ministry new to you.

Our Commissions are listed in this newsletter. Please take a few minutes to think about how you wish to share your talents with our parish this year. In September you will have the opportunity to sign up for a commission. Active participation in our parish community is an important part of our faith life at St. Mary's.

In the meantime, let us pray for one another and for our parish family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Ken Kuntz
pastor

The Liturgy Commission coordinates the celebration of our parish's liturgies. It is also responsible for the music ministers: The St. Mary's Choir, Contemporary Group, Cantors, and for decorating the church and training liturgical ministers.

The Evangelization and Stewardship Commission creates and implements a plan for the parish to become an evangelizing and stewardship parish. Evangelization is proclaiming the message

of Christ by word and the testimony of one's life. Stewardship is a way of life in which we recognize God as the giver of all gifts and we must share these gifts with one another and return in fullness to God.

The Christian Formation Commission serves St. Mary's Parish by developing, promoting, and evaluating programs which enrich the faith life of the parish community. The ministries and committees of the Commission include:
St. Mary's Parish involvement with the Regina Inter-Parish Catholic Education Center, Sacramental preparation for Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Eucharist, coordination of the Children's Liturgy of the Word, Youth ministry (grades 6-12) and Confirmation preparation, Adult Formation, including evangelization; formation of adults - those confirmed and older; formation in the Catholic faith for catechumens and candidates and Vocations Committee, providing opportunities and encouragement for men and women of high school and college age and beyond who may have interest in the priesthood and /or religious life.

The Property Management Commission keeps a watchful eye on the church grounds and buildings. Members meet to discuss actions to be taken to maintain and improve church properties.

The Fellowship Commission develops ways for the parish community to meet socially. Coffee hours, receptions, and special dinners are just some of the ways fellowship is promoted. Developing brochures, bulletin board displays, and other informational materials help keep people informed about St. Mary's.

The Family Life Commission promotes the Christ-centered growth and well-being of the family in all stages of life. Some of the areas this commission assists with are: the Sponsor Couple marriage preparation program, opportunities for families with young children, ministry to the homebound, and grief support.

The Peace and Justice Commission attempts to promote parish members' efforts to work for peace and justice on the local, regional, national, and world-wide levels. The commission allocates funds representing 5% of the tithes of St. Mary's parishioners. These allocations are made in response to applications sponsored by parishioners.

WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

As we strive to live as faithful and generous stewards, it is important that we understand all of the facets of stewardship. Here are just a few key aspects of stewardship.

Stewardship is:

- **Scripture Based** -All of the teachings of stewardship come directly from the Gospels, the Old Testament and the letters of the New Testament. Stewardship is not a new fad, or environmental word. Stewardship is the way God has expected His people to live since the beginning of time.

- **Dependence on God** - Stewardship is recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God. We can take credit for nothing. Everything we have and everything we do is a result of some gift that God has placed into our hands.
- **Gratitude** - Stewardship is living a life of gratitude – taking the time every day to recognize the gifts that God has given and to be grateful for them.
- **Spending Time with God** - Stewardship involves spending time with God. Recognizing that every day is a gift from God, we strive to spend some of each day with God, through prayer, Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, scripture reading, quiet, meditation and other spiritual activities.
- **Sharing Talent** - Stewardship involves sharing talent. Recognizing that God has given each individual unique skills and talents so that together we can do the work of Our Lord, we strive to share our own talents and to encourage and welcome others to also use their talents to carry out the mission and ministry of the Church.
- **Giving Treasure** - Stewardship involves giving treasure. Giving time and talent does not excuse us from giving treasure. We know that throughout the Gospels, Jesus challenged us to give as it has been given to us. Recognizing the tremendous financial blessings that abound in our country, we strive to give at least 10% of our resources back to God, to support the building up of God's kingdom. Although this level of giving may not be immediately possible, we are aware of what percentage we are giving back and regularly strive to increase the amount, taking small incremental steps toward giving a full tithe.

ST. MARY'S NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON PROJECT UPDATE

The Neighborhood Liaison Program is moving along nicely. We have enough neighborhood liaisons now to visit about 100 households. In the next few weeks, these liaisons will be contacting their neighbors, to bring them a copy of our parish newsletter.

If you do not hear from a neighborhood liaison, please be patient, it's not because we don't want to visit you. We still need a large number of new liaisons to allow us to communicate with all 1700 homes and families in our parish. If you would like to be the liaison for your neighborhood, we would love to have you! Keep us in your prayers as we strive to put a friendly liaison in touch with each family in our parish!

For more information, contact Natalie Robinson (351-5630, nrobinson@mchsi.com)

WE WELCOME OUR NEW PARISHIONERS

The following households have registered in our parish in May, June and July. We welcome them.

Dunya Atisha
Gustavo and Karine Barizon
Greg and Yuch Chen Belback
Donald and Jill Biscupski
Andrew Burke
Scott Corry
Fern Durband
Stephanie Gilmour
Jeff and Myrissa Gingerich
Michael (and Sherri) Glackin
Hallie (and Justin) Hamilton
Trina (and Brian) Hartin
Danielle Hess
Matt and Sarah Hillyer
Taften Kuhl
Andrew and Katie Lancia
Jonathan and Samantha Manatt
Katie McDowell
Edward McKinley
Benjamin Munoz
Victor Neff
Renee Penney
Barbara Richmond

Zeke Rozich
Rachel and Cesar Santos
Eric Schnedler
Sinan Sousan
Connie Welday
Lucas and Amanda Wendel
Bert Zupek
Jessica Zupek

WHY CATHOLIC?

The Why Catholic Program? Is a small group faith sharing program based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This is being held six weeks in the fall starting in mid October and six weeks during Lent. These sessions are 60 to 90 minutes in length. You need not have participated in the past in order to be a part of the program this year.

Please consider joining this fall. Look for a registration form in the parish bulletin soon.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The sacrament of Reconciliation, known to many of us as the sacrament of Penance, is an often neglected sacrament. **Our life is a continual call to conversion.** Oh, that we would be perfect! We sin out of human weakness. We need to change. The call to conversion and penance is a gift from God. God reminds us so often: Come back to me. I am here. I love you. I want to be with you. (Book of Hosea)

This sacrament is a unique opportunity to be reconciled with God and God's People, the Church. Every sin is social. It is not only a sin against God, but also a sin against other people. We cannot change unless we recognize where it is in our lives that we have sinned. As we prepare to go to confession, we **review our lives** with complete honesty. As we **confess our sins** to a priest, we feel the mercy and love of God. We **express our sorrow** to God and ask for forgiveness.

This personal review, saying our sins out loud to the priest and asking for forgiveness is a conversion for us. For some of us it is a small step, for others it is a big one. Going to confession several times a year can be a series of small conversions. All of us need this to become a better person.

Schedule for the Iowa City parishes:

All are on Saturdays.

St. Mary's, 10:00-11:30 am

St. Patrick's, 3:00-4:00 pm

St. Thomas More, 4:30-5:00 pm

St. Wenceslaus, 2:30-3:30 pm

Anyone is welcome to call any parish office and make an appointment with a priest. **Just give yourself the gift of experiencing the mercy and love of God in this important sacrament!**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

It is time to register for religious education classes for this school year. Classes at Regina are being held Wednesday night. This is a change from last year. Call the R.E. office at 319-351-7638 for information.

Classes in the north corridor are being held on Monday night at The Education Station on Penn St near 1-380 in North Liberty. Call Deacon Ed for information at 319-337-4231. Note the change of location since last year.

NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! COMMUNITY-WIDE YOUTH MINISTRY

Parents and high school youth, please watch for more information in our parish bulletin. A group of parents from the four Iowa City parishes is organizing youth ministry for all high schoolers from City, West, Regina and home schoolers and from all four parishes to come together for a regular program called Connections. This is youth formation that bridges the gap between faith and everyday life through belief in, and the love of Jesus present in the Eucharist, the source and summit of our Faith. **We invite all youth to join us September 7 at 6:30 pm St. Wenceslaus Parish Hall!**