

From the Deacon's Desk

Parish Picture Directory:

After six years since our last Picture Directory, it's time for a new one! Judi Degruise has agreed to coordinate this project with the help of Mary Lou Willoughby, Joyce and Larry Noyes, Pat Daniels, Dave Spindler, Pat Trudell, and Louanna Burch.

Look for weekly information in the gathering area of St. Vincent church and in the bulletin. There are a number of flyers you can pick up in the back of church and we will start scheduling people for photos in mid-July. Photos will be taken at the parish on Monday August 28, Tuesday August 29, Tuesday September 5, Wednesday September 6, Thursday September 7, Friday September 8, and Saturday September 9. We are also looking at having people visit the homebound to take in-home pictures.

Scripture Today:

Last Sunday we returned to Ordinary Time in our Liturgical Calendar. The Sacred Scripture readings we have been hearing since last Advent are primarily from the Year A cycle of St. Matthew. Rev. Paul Turner once said this while reflecting on the need to *HEAR* the readings as they are proclaimed. "Imagine you're with a group of friends swapping stories about recent trips. But each of you brings a written copy for everyone else. When it's your turn, you don't tell the story while everyone listens. Instead, everybody pulls out your written account and reads along with you while you speak. Sound like fun? Sorry, that's not how we tell stories.

Listening is an art as rich as reading. We still do it in classrooms, seminars, phone conversations and the living room. Lively interaction between speaker and listener means the speaker proclaims ideas and the listener gives attention. In that low-tech communication, human beings connect. The proclamation of Scripture recaptures the age-old art of speaking and listening. God's presence appears in the assembly as word. In actively listening to the word of God, as we naturally do in conversation, we open our hearts to wonder.

Technology has made the mass production of written materials more available now than ever. With little effort, Scripture readings can be placed in the hands of every worshiper. Advocates of this practice say it permits the worshiper to use sight, not just hearing. However, it's like having everyone read your trip story while you tell it. It can let the air out. The event requires both the proclamation of the reader and the eagerness of listeners. Hearing the word together bonds and expresses our community. If everyone reads the text silently, we become individuals again, with noses in our laps and faces turned down from one another.

We'll hear the word of God with better attention if we prepare. Worshipers can read the texts prior to coming to Mass and pray over them throughout the week before. We may also discuss them with family and friends. Then our ears will be open to listen attentively to the Word of God. All eyes will be fixed on the one who reads. And our hearts will be joined as one body of believers. When the divine word resounds in our assembly --- heads up! And listen."

Whole community Catechesis:

In the Church's educational mission, many parishes are moving away from the term "religious education" to more appropriately "faith formation" or "catechesis." The purpose of faith formation or

catechesis is very similar to evangelization, and its purpose is to *inform, form, and transform Christian persons and communities as apprentices to Jesus for God's reign in the world*. The reason for the change in terminology from "religious education" to "catechesis/faith formation" is the shift away from a schooling model of education to a model of how faith is caught through life experience, mentoring, socialization, and apprenticing. As apprentices to Jesus, Christian faith means living, thinking, and behaving the way Jesus lived, thought, and behaved. Apprenticeship to Jesus demands a whole faith, one that permeates every aspect of our humanity and how we live it.

Arts & Environment:

I would like to revitalize an important ministry for the parish, an Arts & Environment Committee. This committee would focus on creating beautiful environments in our church as we worship God throughout our liturgical seasons. This group would strive to come up with creative and beautiful ways to decorate our worship space. They would design the plan and acquire the necessary items, plants, material, and more, for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time. Other parishioners would continue to help the committee place and arrange decorations and take down decorations at the conclusion of a season. So far, Diane Courter has agreed to help, but we need a few more artistic and creative imaginations. Please see me for more information... many hands make for light loads.

On a side note, thank you to Carol Gall, Jennifer Austin, and Donna Lefever who are working on creating a Parish Meditation and Spiritual Reflection Garden on the northwest side of the church. The garden will be installed in the fall, so more information will be following.

RCIA – Becoming Catholic – An Invitation:

Perhaps you or someone you know has been wondering about becoming Catholic. Perhaps this pondering has occurred over some time, or is a recent thought. Perhaps your thinking is energized by the Spirit, prompting you to investigate further.

Know that the Church offers a way of discernment, a process called the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). The process involves learning more about the Christian way, and following an apprenticeship of prayer, worship and Catholic practices. If you would like to know more, please contact the Parish Office, 989-828-5720, or talk to Deacon Jerry Green. Your call will be returned, and or, questions answered.

CSA 2017:

Our annual Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) campaign has begun. Our quota is about \$45,000. As of this writing, we have collected about \$31,200 in pledges, or about 69% of our goal. I know we can make our quota as we have for the past several years. If you don't have a pledge card for CSA, there are some at the doors of the church. CSA serves the bigger world church and our local diocese. It is worth your support.

I hope you will consider a gift of 1% of your annual income, and any money that comes back to the parish will be used for future evangelization, youth ministry, and whole community catechesis programs.