

From the PA's Desk

2017 Graduates:

All of those in the Parish who are graduating from high school or college this year are invited to join for a special Baccalaureate Mass in June. Please call the office or talk to Mary Moomey and let us know who you are, so we can send you a special invitation and recognize you in our parish bulletin.

Alpha this week: There will be **no Alpha on Monday** because of Memorial Day. We will gather for our last session on Monday June 5, the day after Pentecost, to address the topic: What about the church?

Today's Gospel:

Today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles begins with mentioning the person of Theophilus. A few years ago I lead a bible study on both Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles (both written by the same author as a two volume work), and the name Theophilus appears in both books, and means literally "lover of God." Some biblical experts believe that Luke is using that name to represent all of us in the faith community, who quite poetically are the "lovers of God."

In the Gospel the disciples return to Galilee as the place where Jesus' ministry began. This was to assure those who still harbored doubts that this mysterious person was indeed the same Jesus with whom they had previously walked. They see him on the mountain (reminiscent of his earlier transfiguration), and Jesus declares that all power in heaven and on earth has been given to him.

Next Sunday we will celebrate Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, and we will see how Jesus conferred this power, given to him, upon his disciples. Upon doing so, the God-with-us begun at the incarnation, will continue to be with us and the world until the end of time.

The great missionary commission is straightforward and all-encompassing, and the disciples are told to go out and make disciples of all nations. Christ, who ascended into heaven in his body, has also entered his new body the Church, in a new way here on earth. In the hearts of his disciples on earth, the body of Christ continues to be seen and revealed in ever newer ways. Christ continues to teach through his apostles and evangelists. He ministers through his prophets and pastors. In and through the Church Jesus continues to heal and to comfort; to forgive and to include. We have not been left alone; we have his power, the same power which worked in him during his earthly life. As we continue to discuss and talk about how we as a Church will respond to the need for a new evangelization, may we continue to model what Jesus showed us, and look for opportunities to give glory and honor to God, by revealing his presence to all those we meet.

Whole Community Catechesis:

Next year in addition to our ongoing evangelization programs, we will start something called **Whole Community Catechesis** once a month. Whole Community Catechesis is an opportunity for everyone in the parish to come together after the Sunday morning Mass to share in a breakfast together as a parish family, followed by an hour of faith formation for **everyone** in the parish. Children will go off with their age appropriate catechists, and I or another adult facilitator will lead an hour-long faith-sharing discussion on an aspect of our Catholic faith and practices. **Whole Community Catechesis is for everyone: Young and old, those with families and children and those without, middle-aged and empty nesters, the married and the single.**

When we gather at Mass, we are never segregated into various age groups because that is not what the church is, but we are one family who gathers to worship and praise our God together. **Whole Community Catechesis** is an opportunity for the same dynamic to happen in our faith formation and learning environment. One month we might discuss a particular liturgical season like Advent, Lent, or Easter, and another month we might discuss something like All Souls and All Saints Day. I've facilitated Whole Community Catechesis in other parishes, and I think it's one of the best models of faith formation in the church today. Look for more information in the weeks ahead.

Parish Picture Directory

It has been six years since our last Parish Picture Directory, and it's time for a new one. Judi Degruise has volunteered to act as coordinator, which she also did for the last one. She will need others to assist her, so she might be asking you for some help, or you can talk to her if you want more information. Unlike previous directories, since we are all one parish now, the family photos and photos of our two churches can appear in one section. We will kick this project off formally in late August or early September.

CSA:

May is here, and it's time for the annual **Catholic Services Appeal**. We began our campaign last weekend and if you didn't receive a letter from the diocese, there are pledge/gift envelopes with pamphlets in our entries. Funds collected from the C.S.A. provide for many valuable ministries and programs.

Who benefits from the C.S.A.? Let me share just a few examples: The C.S.A. subsidizes the education of future priests, deacons, and lay ministers for the Church through Seminaries and the Center for Ministry. The C.S.A. helps the needy and provides for outreach and evangelization. The C.S.A. aids Catholic education, R.C.I.A., and youth ministries. The C.S.A. funds diocesan offices that serve as resources for the parishes. If you or a loved one has received a marriage annulment, the costs were covered by the C.S.A. The Catholic Services Appeal does so much, and the diocese provides ministries and programs that are beyond the means of parishes.

Each parish has been assigned an annual target amount. Our 2017 St. Vincent de Paul Parish CSA goal is \$45,162. Every dollar that we raise above the target returns to our parish and we can use them to develop our future evangelization, whole community catechesis and youth ministry programs. Please be generous to the Catholic Services Appeal this year. Your annual pledge or gift is a blessing to the diocese, its parishes, and its people!

Remembering Those Who Have Died:

As Christians, we keep those who have passed onto the next life close to us by visiting their graves; their final resting place. The Catholic Church designates a special day to remember the dead: All Souls Day, November 2. Memorial Day is the day that our nation has selected to give honor to those who have died while in active duty in one of many military conflicts, or to honor veterans. Memorial day is also a day to remember anyone who has died, and parishes come together at "the parish cemetery" to pray for all those who have gone on to the next world which awaits us all. This year Geri Clark will lead the Memorial Services at St. Leo and St. Vincent Cemetery, and Zachary Lobsinger will lead it at St. Patrick Cemetery. Consult the bulletin for exact time, and thank you to Geri and Zack for leading the community in prayer.