



AMEN!



St. John the Baptist Parish Newsletter

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

In this newsletter I'd like to take issue with the statement that describes the Maytag repairman being the loneliest person in the world. I believe the priest in the confessional has now surpassed him. Not that I mind that much—I do a lot of reading and meditating.

As we come into another season of Lent, a time in the church year that is set aside as a time for reconciling ourselves to God and one another, I'd like to make a few comments on the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

One of the reasons I believe Catholics do not use this Sacrament as a means to grow closer to God is because of the lack of understanding. Reconciliation is a process, often a long, sometimes a painful process. The human process of reconciliation which we ritualize in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a journey, a round-trip journey away from our home with God and back again. This journey can be summed in terms of three C's: Conversion, Confession and Celebration. This issue we will concentrate only on the conversion aspect of the Sacrament.

Using the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) as our Scripture background, we are told that when the son exhausts all his resources on his ego-centered life-style, he finally comes to his senses. The conversion process begins with a "coming to one's senses" with a realization that all is not right with our values and style of life. Prompted by a faith response to God's call, conversion initiates a desire for change.

The most important part of the conversion process is the experience of being loved by God unconditionally, realizing that God's love saves us — we do not save ourselves. Our part in this saving action is to be open to the gift of God's love—to be open to grace. God will do the work of changing us, but we have to be open and want to change.

Most of us will not have to do a 180° turn from our life-style. So conversion is not a once in a lifetime moment, but rather a continuous, ongoing, lifelong process which brings us ever closer to the holiness and love of God.

Once we realize that we want to change our

behavior in a certain area of our life and leave this behind, we then come to what is called contrition. The prodigal son acknowledges his sin and says to himself, "I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you...Treat me like one of your hired hands'."

So it is with us. Contrition means examining our present relationships, in the light of the Gospel imperative of love, and taking the necessary steps to repair those relationships with others, ourselves and God. The repentance step in the conversion process is what is commonly called "making satisfaction for our sins" or "doing penance".

In the past we were told to do penance as temporal punishment of our sins. But penance is for growth, not for punishment. The best penance we can do is to try to do just the opposite of what our behavior has been. e.g. be kind to the neighbor that we have talked badly about.

In the next issue of AMEN! we will talk about the "confession" part of the Sacrament.

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Editor's Notes—The Buck Stops Here

by: *Cindy Griffin –cgriffin@coax.net*

Can you believe that it's the middle of February already? Spring is just around the corner. Hip Hip Hurray! As I write this it is snowing outside and it's hard to fathom that soon the trees will be budding and the daffodils in bloom. It occurs to me that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is just like that.

We realize that our hearts have grown cold but our loving God gives us a glimpse of what our relationship with Him and with others can and should be like. A reminder, a tugging at our hearts, a call to conversion, to change. A chance to get "back on track".

How appropriate that we celebrate the Lenten season during the last of the winter! As we look ahead to spring and to Easter, we are filled with hope. Hope of warmer weather, better relationships, new starts — new hearts.

Don't miss Fr. Gene's article on the front page regarding the Sacra-

ment of Reconciliation. And while you're at it, think about taking advantage of the many opportunities for receiving the Sacrament during the Lenten season. Times and dates are listed on page 8 in this issue. If you, like MANY Catholics, haven't experienced the Sacrament of Reconciliation since the "black box days", please don't let that stop you. Just walk right in and say, "Hey, Father, It's been a long time since I've been here and I'm not sure where to start." and you have my personal guarantee that you'll be welcomed with open arms and no funny looks. Furthermore, you'll be glad you went. You've got my word on that. Geez, now I sound like a TV commercial!

While I'm doing commercials, let me put in a word about the Holy Week services. It isn't too early to mark your calendars and plan to participate with your family in the wonderful goodies that our parish offers. Never been to an Easter Vigil? Well, if a bonfire, exciting stories, water

play, happy faces, and great refreshments don't tempt you, nothing will! Schedules for all of the Holy Week services can also be found on page 8.

Well, I guess I'd better get up from my desk and go fetch the snow shovel. It's starting to pile up. Here's hoping that your Lenten season is one blessed with hope!

Cindy

P.S. Thanks to those who have already submitted their email addresses to me. It is helping us to save money on postage.

If you would like to read the AMEN! Newsletter online instead of having it snail-mailed to you, please send me your e-mail address. You will receive a notification each time a new issue is posted to the website. These e-mail addresses will not be shared, sold or spammed and your privacy will be respected. To view the current issue of the AMEN!, go to <http://www.stjohnthebaptist/amen.htm> and click on 'February 2004'. Back issues are also archived there.

MATTHEW KELLY COMING TO ST. JOHN'S PARISH

What's in a name? What's in a voice? Matthew Kelly is a 30-something Catholic speaker/author who is originally from Australia and still has the accent--very distinctive. Just like his messages.

In one talk, Matthew challenges his listeners to get answers to their problems from the One who is with us all the time, knows our every need, and is able to help us with our every concern. He tells us to enter into the classroom of silence ten minutes a day to listen to what God is telling us to do or to know what God wants us to do with our day. He explains that we talk with our spouses, our friends, our children, our parents, our co-workers about our problems and most often forget to talk to God, the one who is always there, waiting to listen to our every concern.

How inspiring is Matthew Kelly to listen to? Enough to want to hear more. One teenager who heard him speak at St. Patrick's in Troy attended one night, and could not go the next night because of a choir concert, but insisted the parents miss the choir concert to go and bring back notes about Matthew's talk. Not often does a speaker have such a positive impact on a teenager! And Matthew does just that. He is gifted to inspire young people as well as older people by his presence and his example.

St. John the Baptist parishioners will get the opportunity to hear Kelly speak on February 29, March 1 and 2, as part of the Lenten series this year. He will talk at the Hyatt Church at 7:00 pm. If you have a chance to hear him, please make time for it. You won't be disappointed.

"THE GOOD WE DO IS NEVER LOST, IT NEVER DIES. IN OTHER PEOPLE, IN OTHER PLACES, IN OTHER TIMES--THE GOOD WE DO LIVES ON FOREVER." MATTHEW KELLY

WOMEN OF SPIRIT WINTER WEEKEND GET-AWAY!

By Amy Puthoff



As the song goes... "and they'll know we are Christians by our fun!" Well those may not be the original words to the song but it definitely applied to all who attended the Women of Spirit Winter Weekend Get Away at Deer Creek State Park in Mt. Sterling, Ohio on January 24 and 25. The weather may have been chilly but we didn't mind. We enjoyed the warm and cozy atmosphere of the beautiful Deer Creek Lodge. The weekend was spent swimming, laughing, hiking, laughing, relaxing by the fire, laughing, making new friends, eating, laughing, shared prayer, reading, knitting and did I say laughing? And if that wasn't enough, everyone went home with some lovely parting gifts (the white elephant kind). Each woman left with the knowledge that

they now have 17 new friends!

Our next event will be held on Tuesday, May 4 from 7 pm – 9 pm at the Transfiguration Center for Spiritual Renewal in Ludlow Falls. The Women of Spirit welcome Sr. Carol Bauer S.C. who is the Vice President of Mission Effectiveness at Good Samaritan Hospital in Dayton. Sr. Carol will talk about how she is able to manage her spirituality and function effectively in an executive position in the business world. If you are experiencing the same balancing act in your life, come and hear what Sr. Carol has to say! Watch the bulletin for more information.

The Women of Spirit would like to remind all the women of St. John's parish that we want to know what you think!

Please feel free to join us at any time for as little or as long as you can. The group has a revolving membership and open to any woman in the parish who enjoys fun, fellowship, and an opportunity to learn more about themselves and their faith. Please contact Kathy McGrath at 667-4932 or the parish office at 667-3419 for information on our next meeting. Our mission statement is to support, encourage and empower one another as we travel the spiritual journey, nurturing and celebrating our relationships with God.



RAISING OUR ROOF

Preliminary Design Plans Are Underway!

As we have reported, the Archbishop has officially approved our request to hire Michael Schuster Associates (MSA) as architects for the Phase 2 building project!

Michael Schuster Associates was chosen after carefully interviewing and evaluating several architectural firms. They bring a vast array of experience on similar projects and have some exciting design concepts for our project.

The Building Steering Committee has been meeting with MSA since the beginning of the year and is working on a new detailed design for the Phase 2 building project. We are trying to incorporate parishioners' comments to keep parking as close as possible to the church, to make the rooms multi-purpose, and to meet everyone's needs. We look forward to sharing Michael Schuster's design concepts with the parish as soon as possible. In the meantime, representatives from some of the commissions and the parish staff are participating in the design meetings to provide feedback on the design and make sure the design will meet the needs of the parish.

We hope to have the preliminary design work completed by this spring, so detailed construction drawings and bidding can be completed and ground breaking can take place this summer. Construction would then be completed by the spring of 2005.

In regards to the Broadway Church and Center, the potential buyer indicates that he is still interested in the property but has not yet signed the lease/sale agreement. In the meantime, our listing agreement with Irongate Realtors for the sale of the church and center has expired. A subcommittee has interviewed and recommended Carol Gaeke and Tim Farron from RE/Max Realty to handle the sale, the Building Steering Committee has approved their recommendation, and Father Gene has signed a listing agreement with Carol and Tim. They will begin marketing the properties immediately.

Our pledge drive statistics as of January 1, 2004, are as follows:

Paid without a pledge	\$56,624
Paid against pledges	\$482,058
Pledge Balance	<u>\$446,733</u>
Grand Total	\$985,415

We ask for your continued prayers and support for the completion of this building project.

Phase 2 Building Steering Committee

Father Gene Vonderhaar /Chris Coleman/Steve McCrillis, Chairman
Bruce Batty/Karen Beagle/Joy Blaul/Mike Droesch/Mike Stucke/Viv Wyen/Dottie Zimmerman

WHASSUP WITH OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?

JUNIORS & SENIORS

On behalf of the 11th and 12th grade students at St. John's; we would like to thank the parishioners for their support on our two holiday projects. First was the luminary project for the Lessons and Carols service. Your donations for luminaries in the name of loved ones helped us raise \$265. All of the money went towards gifts for the family we adopted through Tipp Monroe Community Services. Because of your generosity, a mother and her infant son had many gifts to open Christmas morning.

We also were able to deliver 15 suitcases to St. Aloysius in Cincinnati filled with \$100 worth of school supplies donated from Foodtown, Wal-mart and Staples. We also added donations from the parish in the form of games, books, and other school supplies. This "Luggage of Love" project helps put suitcases in the hands of kids who are in foster care. It's sad, but most of these kids carry their belongings from home to home in garbage bags. The school supplies also help St. Aloysius school- which is privately run.

Future activities include a prayer service that is being prepared for the Jr. High and High School. It will be a faith-filled worship full of scripture, Christian music; ranging from rap to rock. They're also planning an unforgettable confirmation retreat for the sophomore class this March.

At the beginning of the school year, we were excited, and also anxious about what the year would bring. Along the way, we've been blessed to receive guidance from Fr. Gene, Erma Hagen, Denise Mealy, Nelda Schwab, Jeanne Fairbanks, and Chris Coleman. With their help, we've been given the help we needed to undertake such an important task.

Last but certainly not least, we want to publicly thank the juniors and seniors who've touched our lives. At almost every session, we've had the opportunity to get to know new students who've dropped in to check out what's happening. We've spent many hours between classes talking about how amazed we are at the deep faith, and love for Jesus that each of the students possess. Your enthusiasm and desire to contribute to the community of St. John's inspires us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts- we've been blessed to have your 'light' in our lives.

Submitted by Jennifer Weir & Kathy Trent

SECOND GRADERS

On Saturday, January 10, St. John's second graders attended "Peace Day". Peace Day is a day planned for second graders and their families to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The children and their parents modeled "hurts" with clay, made masks of sin, "muddied" water (our hearts) with sin, and witnessed how being forgiven makes us new and whole again.

Father Gene shared with us wonderful examples of how to "bring the Sacraments ALIVE in our day-to-day living". All of these activities brought to life the spirit of God's greatest gift to us: mercy - his loving forgiveness. It was a beautiful day of sharing and fellowship for our second grade family!

Please continue to pray for our second graders as they continue to grow in their faith and love of God and his Son, Jesus Christ!

Submitted by Deena Weiler

YOUNG NEIGHBORS IN ACTION

Seeking 9th thru 12th graders

Again this summer the youth of St. Johns will be participating in a mission project called Young Neighbors in Action (YNIA). We have chosen Buffalo, New York as the work sight. The dates are July 11-17, 2004. Any youth completing 9th through 12th grade in 2004 is eligible to participate. We have openings for 10 youth and 2 adults. The first 10 students that turns in the \$75.00 deposit (non-refundable) to the Religious Education Office will get to participate. We have one adult willing to participate and we need one more.

- Q. What is Young Neighbors in Action?
 A. Young Neighbors in Action is a week-long service experience for teams of youth and adults. Thirty-nine Young Neighbors events are being offered in fifteen sites around the United States, and along the Mexican border during the summer of 2004. The program will involve an expected 2500+ participants. Young Neighbors brings a strong, Catholic perspective to the work of assisting children and families in need.
- Q. Who sponsors the program?
 A. Young Neighbors in Action is sponsored and directed by the Center of Ministry Development, a national, non-profit agency that works each year with 100+ diocese in the United States and Canada. CMD specializes in providing quality leadership training programs and resources for ministry leaders. Among the programs developed by CMD are the National Certificate Program in Youth Ministry Studies (for adults) and Youth Leader and Christian Leadership Institute (for youth).
- Q. Where will young people stay and work while taking part in the program?
 A. Lodging and meal facilities will vary from one site to the next. These "home site" accommodations will range from retreat centers and college campuses to camp dorms and parish schools. Sites have been selected to provide easy access to work sites. Buffalo sites stay at a parish school and sleep on carpeted classroom floors with shower facilities at the school.
- B. Job sites, sponsored by church and social service agencies, will likewise differ from place to place. Work opportunities include: working with children and families in need in homeless shelters and soup kitchens, summer recreation and tutoring programs, painting and minor repairs to family homes and agencies. Teams that come together will work and travel together throughout the experience. Jobs and sites are selected with safety in mind; all work and travel takes place during the daylight hours.
- Q. What will team members do when they're not involved in service?
 A. Back at the "home site," participants take part in a mix of recreational, cultural, educational and worship activities. Structured group activities are planned for each evening - even Wednesday when the group recreates together at a local Y, athletic center, state park or beach. The event is a very much a "team experience," providing participants with the opportunity to learn, serve, relax, enjoy and grow together.

The total cost for the week is \$320.00 per participant. The Fundraising Fund is paying half of the cost and each youth is asked to pay \$160.00. **Contact Erma Hagan in the Religious Education Office at 667-6092 for more information or registration form.**

One more adult male or female is needed to go with the youth. The adults participate fully in the program and work and play along side the youth.

The following note was receiving following the November, 2003 National Youth Conference held in Houston Texas.

Hi, my name is Leann Palsgrove. My friend, Katherine Batty and I attended the National Catholic Youth Conference on November 13-16. The whole weekend was filled with very inspirational, motivating and spiritual events. There were many people of the religious life that attended the conference and we were able to talk to them and share our religious beliefs. It was neat to see how many priest and bishops attended the conference with their church youth groups. Both Katherine and I would like to thank the church for sending us on such a religious journey. Not only did both of us grow in our faith, but we also were able to bring back stories and ideas for our fellow youth group members. Thank you St. John's Parish!



RCIA NEWS

On February 29th, at the 10:30 Mass, our parish family will celebrate the Rite of Enrollment/Sending Forth with fifteen candidates and catechumens. These folks are beginning their final preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. They will be called forward to sign the Book of the Elect and will be presented to the bishop by their sponsors and team members at the Rite of Election later that afternoon. We ask for your continued prayers and support as they walk this journey of faith. The family of St. John the Baptist sends:

Scott Bloom, Lisa Bolton, Ashley Forrest, Jon Pearson, Lynnette Pearson, Amy Hitch, George Lovett, Nicole Seger, Ashley Smith, Joshua Smith, Samantha Smith, Kebeda Yadete, Abeba Yadete, Ermias Yadete, and Yameta Yadete.

St. John's Finance Commission

In the November issue of the AMEN!, we introduced you to the members of the Pastoral Council. Now meet the Finance Folks.

Norm Shearer –I have been a member of St. Johns since moving to Tipp City eleven years ago with my wife, Elaine, and three kids. I have served on the Finance Council for eleven years. One of my responsibilities as a member of the Finance Commission is to represent Finance on Pastoral Council. We provide monthly feedback to PC on parish finances and other administrative issues. Additionally, we are responsible for developing the annual budget with input from the various ministries. I can be reached at 667-0205.

Bruce Batty –I can't remember how long I have been serving on the Finance Committee ... close to ten years. My wife, Barb, and I both hail from Versailles and have been members of St. John's since 1988. We have three daughters. I have a B.S. in mechanical engineering and a MBA, both from the University of Cincinnati. I am affiliated with the Northwestern

Mutual Financial Network as a Financial Representative and offer insurance and investment planning services for individuals and small business owners.

In addition to my role on the Finance Committee, I am a lector at St. Johns and also serve on the Building Steering Committee. In the past, I have also served on the Religious Education Committee. I can be reached by phone at 698-7155 (home) or 667-6655 (work) or by e-mail at BBatty5887@aol.com.

Laura Moore -I joined St John's parish 15 years ago when I moved to Tipp City from Gettysburg Ohio (near Greenville). During this time I have worked at Copeland Corporation in Sidney and completed my MBA at the University of Dayton. My husband Bob and I have been married for 13 years and we currently reside near Ludlow Falls with our 4 year old twins Maggie and Ryan and our sheltie Murphy. My e-mail address is blmoore4@earthlink.net if you'd like to contact me.

Ron Sowder –We've lived in Tipp City

seven years and have been members of St. John's since then. I am a District Manager with American Family Insurance and my wife, Nancy, teaches 1st Grade at Broadway Elementary. We have three daughters, Megan, age 20 and a sophomore at Miami University, Sara, age 16 and a sophomore at Tiptecanoe High School and Mary Kate, age 12 and a 7th Grader at LT Ball. I believe I have been on the Finance Committee 4 yrs. I have been in the insurance business for almost 30 years. You may contact me by e-mail at RSOWDER@amfam.com.

Kimberly Donald –I have been a member of the St. John community since 1998. I reside in Tipp City with my husband of 16 years, George. We have two children, Philip (9) and Allyssa (6) who attend Troy Christian Elementary. I currently hold the position of Manager-Financial Operations for a Sidney based manufacturer. I am a Certified Management Accountant and alumni of Purdue University.

AMY'S ANECDOTES FROM THE PARISH OFFICE



Happy belated New Year to all! First, I would like to thank everyone for the beautiful Christmas cards and gifts. Your thoughtfulness was very touching and meant a lot to me. Special thanks to Chris and Father Gene for their dedication, compassion, commitment, and support given to us all.

We have been busy in the office working on reports for the end of month, end of quarter, and end of the year. We are also working on the budget for 2004/2005. Never a dull moment here!

Every year I find myself amazed at the generosity displayed by the people of this parish. I am fortunate to be in a position where I can witness grace in action on a daily basis and it is awesome! Your involvement, dedication, and generosity are what enables St. John's to exist and is the reason that I believe in this parish. The events of the past few months have really challenged us to look at ourselves and question what is truly important to us. It is my hope that we have become even stronger and have a clearer vision of what we want and can achieve together. Please continue to pray for each other and for our parish as we prepare the changes that lie ahead.

Peace and love, Amy

\$ RUMINATIONS FROM RON \$

By: Ron Martin, Business Manager

The Summer Festival Committee donated \$20,000 to our Building Fund and purchased the two new 12-foot trees that were used at Christmas. We appreciate their wonderful work, as well as their generous donations. This committee will be meeting again in February to plan for this summer's festival. Your help and ideas are requested!

Our general operation, based on the actual income, is doing the best that it can. Income is substantially less than what was projected. For example: October showed the lowest Sunday collections in over 18 months! Cuts have been made and supplies and materials kept to a minimum. However, if the trend of lower than expected income continues, many of our expenses will need to be re-evaluated. When income goes down, and expenses are fixed, some items must be deleted from the budget.

We are in the middle of our most expensive months in terms of utilities usage and the many religious activities. Many thanks are to be given to those who are holding the line on expenses and still doing a marvelous job. Thanks to all who also help to conserve heat and electrical costs.

The Finance Commission is starting to develop a budget for July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005. All budget figures are based upon a "guestimate" of what will be contributed to the parish. The budget is anticipated, a pay-as-you-go budget, that must change as actual income changes.

Money is extremely tight; but so far we are still in the black, if not by much!

Mid-year Financial Report

Actual Sunday Collections	\$147,415
Anticipated Sunday Collections	<u>\$158,599</u>
deficit	<\$ 11,184>
Actual Christmas Collection	\$10,346
Anticipated Christmas Collection	<u>\$11,254</u>
deficit	<\$ 908>
Special Collections Total	\$7751
Total Income	\$189,501
Total Expenses	\$187,889
Net to Date	\$ 1612

COLOR? WHAT COLOR?

Yes, we did say that the AMEN! Newsletter would begin being printed in color. No, it is not a figment of your imagination that there is NO COLOR on these pages. In an effort to save the parish money, we are going to continue to print the newsletter in black and white (and sometimes shades of gray!). We hope you aren't too disappointed.

Fast and Abstinence

All Catholics from their 18th birthday until and including their 59th birthday are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. One full meal is allowed on the days of fast. Two other meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, are allowed. Together the two meals should not exceed the full meal. Drinking of ordinary liquids does not break the fast. Catholics over the age of 14 are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the Fridays of Lent.

CHRIS'S CORNER

By: Chris Coleman, Seminarian

Lent: A Time of Opportunities

As a chemical sales representative working in the paper industry for many years, I learned that there is much more to making the "sale" than just presenting the product to the customer. A sales representative in most situations has to develop a level of trust with the customer. When you get the chance to showcase your product by a demonstration or by using it in a trial period there are many opportunities that arise.

Chemical trials in the paper industry usually involve a long period of time to try out the product. Equipment is brought in to apply the product and a typical trial period could go for a week or maybe a month. Throughout my years in chemical sales, there was one engineer at a paper mill in Northern Kentucky that was most enjoyable to work with. Whenever one of my chemical pumps or chemical feed lines would malfunction, he would not hesitate to call me up at any time of the day or night. Instead of saying "Chris, we have a problem!!!!" he would say, "Chris, we have an opportunity."

He was right. I had an opportunity to make things better. I had an opportunity to show the level of technical service that the company offered, I had an opportunity to make the papermaking process better, and I had an opportunity to save a potentially lost sale due to malfunctions. Most of my other customers would call in a very negative tone and tell me that I better get something straight. They would tell me that I had an obligation to make things right. Can you tell which customer I preferred to work with?

Many people view Lent as a time of obligations instead of opportunities. Yes, we are obliged as Catholics to abstain from eating meat on Fridays and we are called to do some type of penance during this period. Yes, we are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday. But if we always look at this from the viewpoint of an obligation, we become narrow focused. We are motivated by the attitude to "just get it over with."

From the viewpoint of opportunities, we are able to approach Lent with a relaxed feeling and we can open our minds and hearts for growth. We can grow and

deepen our relationship with the Lord and with each other. We can grow in holiness.

So what types of opportunities are there for Lent?

We have the opportunity to try "other" foods by abstaining from meat on Fridays. Have you considered trying your hand at cooking? Have you tried making a nice pot of soup (potato, vegetable, corn chowder, etc?) or some comfort foods such as spaghetti or macaroni and cheese (please don't use the box kind!!)? I am not a fish lover so I look for other meatless choices. I have always enjoyed having pancakes on Fridays of Lent and leaving the bacon for another day.

Our parish community will celebrate the Eucharist on Wednesday evenings instead of the normal morning Mass. So, we will have the opportunity to gather in the evening for Mass at 7 pm followed by the opportunity to walk the Stations of the Cross following the Mass. How many of you have considered making daily Eucharist a part of your day? During the week we have 20-25 people who gather to pray together. They take about 30 minutes out of their schedule to make time to be with the Lord in the Eucharist. All leave refreshed and ready "to love and serve the Lord." You may also consider joining us in the mornings at 8 am for the rosary, Morning Prayer, and Mass. When was the last time you walked the Stations of the Cross? We sit next to these stations each week-

end at mass.

We have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Through this sacrament, we reconcile with God and our community for our failing to live out a life of holiness by simply stating that we are sorry for all that we have done. Through the grace of God we are forgiven for all that we have done and are charged with the task to go and sin no more. This sacrament is made available each weekend before the Saturday vigil mass and before the 10:30 am Sunday mass. We will also have a parish communal reconciliation service during Lent. One may also call and schedule an appointment with Fr. Gene, if needed.

The list could go on and on about opportunities that are open to you not only during Lent but throughout the year to deepen your relationship with the Lord. The first major hurdle is tackled when you can honestly say **YES!** I want to take advantage of these opportunities to deepen my relationship with the Lord and then you **make the effort** to take time (give up some events - here is the giving up portion of Lent) to allow those opportunities to occur. God gives us opportunities and let's not view them only as obligations.

Next Issue: Top 10 questions our Pastoral Intern/Seminarian is asked on a regular basis!

NOTES FROM NELDA SCHWAB, DRE

- Our parish will participate in **Operation Rice Bowl** this Lent. **Operation Rice Bowl** is the official Lenten Program of Catholic Relief Services, and calls Catholics in the United States to promote human dignity and foster solidarity with the poor around the world through prayer, fasting, learning, and giving. Please join us and participate with your family. More information will be coming in the Sunday bulletin.
- **Morning of Reflection with Sr. Mattie Sterner**—Thursday, April 22, 9:30 am noon followed by lunch. All are invited to 'Praying Our Experiences Using the Rosary'. We will take a fresh look at the twenty mysteries of the Rosary seeing how the mysteries (experience) in our own lives are the same as those of Jesus and Mary in many ways. Praying our experiences, using the Rosary, and putting them into the categories of joyful, sorrowful, luminous and glorious mysteries helps us to see the different dimensions of our lives as sacred and life-giving. We'll take this ancient prayer form and look at it from a different perspective. Sr. Mattie, Associate Director of Religious Education in the Cincinnati Archdiocese, serves the Dayton Region.
- **'Celebrating Marriage'** - Saturday, April 17, 6:00 pm in the Center - Dinner followed by program. Prioritizing our marital relationship---a panel discussion of local married couples will interact on the many challenges facing marriages today. Jean Borgert, program coordinator from the Northern Area Family Life Office will lead the discussion. Watch the bulletin for more details.

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CLIP and SAVE These Important Upcoming Dates!

February 25 - Ash Wednesday Services –7am Mass, 10:00 am Ashes only at SpringMeade, 12:10 pm Mass, 7:00 pm Mass

Every Wednesday during Lent –7:00 pm Mass followed by Stations of the Cross

February 29, March 1 and 2 –7:00 pm -Parish Mission featuring Matthew Kelly

Thursday, March 11 -Parish Reconciliation Service –7:00 pm

Saturday March 20 –Answer the Call - Cincinnati Catholic Men's Conference. Call Nelda for details.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES— Check your weekly bulletin for more information concerning the following:

Thursday, April 8 –Holy Thursday –6:00 pm Agape Dinner followed by 7:30 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper.

Friday, April 9 –Good Friday –12:00 noon Rosary and Stations of the Cross
7:00 pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Saturday, April 10 –Holy Saturday –12:00 noon Traditional Blessing of Foods
8:45 pm Easter Vigil Mass

Thursday, April 22 -9:30 am-noon followed by lunch: Morning of Reflection with Sr. Mattie Sterner

Saturday, April 17 -6:00 -Celebrating Marriage facilitated Jean Borgert - Dinner followed by presentations and discussion.

Saturday, May 1 - 8:45 am-4:30 pm—9th Annual Catholic Women's Event -The Cintas Center, Xavier University, Cincinnati.
For more information: www.embracethechildren.org

Tuesday, May 4 –7-9 pm at the Transfiguration Center for Spiritual Renewal in Ludlow Falls. The Women of Spirit welcome Sr. Carol Bauer S.C., Vice President of Mission Effectiveness at Good Samaritan Hospital in Dayton.