



AMEN!

St. John the Baptist Parish Newsletter

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Rev. Eugene Vonderhaar

In my previous article for the AMEN! Newsletter, I concentrated on the first requirement of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, that of conversion. Conversion implies a change of heart, a change of attitude toward my present behavior. In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) we are told that the son "comes to his senses" and realizes he cannot live his present lifestyle any longer. He must change.

Then what happens? He says to himself "I will go to my father and say to him, Father, I have sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son. Treat me like one of your hired hands." This was to be his confession of sins, the second requirement for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But when he approaches his father something different happens. Again we are told: "While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was deeply moved. He ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father I have sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.'" The father's reaction was not: "tell me everything you did that was wrong", but rather "let's celebrate because you have come back".

Prior to the Second Vatican Council and the revitalization of this Sacrament, the actual confession of sin was the central requirement and that is why the sacrament is referred so often as simply "confession". This aspect of the Sacrament is now seen as just one step in the total process—important, but not the central aspect of the Sacrament.

Our attitude toward the Sacrament of Reconciliation is intimately related to our image of God. We need to believe, really believe, that our God is not some big boogeyman waiting to trip us up, but a great Lord who is ever ready to reach out in forgiveness. That's what reconciliation is all about—reaching out and touching other people with forgiving love. God does not love us only when we are good or because we are good. God loves us all the time.

The new Rite of the Sacrament does concern itself with the confession of sins. But one's sinfulness

is not always the same as one's sins. And, as a sacrament of healing, Reconciliation addresses the disease (sinfulness) rather than the symptoms (sins). We are challenged to search deep into our hearts to discover the struggles, value conflicts and ambiguities (the disease) which cause the sinful acts (the symptoms) to appear. In other words, what is causing me to do the things I do?

In preparing for the sacrament, we have to do some soul-searching and discernment which is not always an easy task. But without it, confession becomes nothing more than the recitation of a grocery list of symptoms, and we never even approach the interior change necessary to be healed of our sinfulness. Without an interior healing, and without a firm belief we are forgiven by God, confession and absolution have no meaning, and indeed, no effect.

One final point, the role of the confessor has changed drastically in the New Rite. Whereas formerly the confessor was looked upon as judge and interrogator, now his role is to be a guide in our discernment. The confessor

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Editor's Notes—The Buck Stops Here

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

May—a time for celebrating culminations. It is a time for graduations and the end of another school year...a "moving on". It occurs to me that the messages Jesus sent his followers after Easter are messages to "move on!" The sending of the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the tools they needed to go out into the world and spread the Good News. They were not meant to hole away in the upper room forever, worrying about what people would think of them or grieving over the loss of Jesus. The Holy Spirit has given all of us gifts of listening, compassion, integrity, hospitality, generosity, courage, faithfulness,....the list is endless.

Our parish family here at St. John's has suffered losses in the last couple of years. Many folks have shared

per room, just waiting. Well, folks, it is time to move on.

In a few short weeks, we will celebrate the installation of a new pastor. Fr. Marc Sherlock will be moving into our parish and into our lives. How can each of us welcome him? How can each of us see to it that his ministry is one blessed with fruitfulness? I encourage each and every one of you to use the gifts that you have been given in ways that can work for the good of our parish.

And while we're working for the good of the parish, could I interest you in signing up for a shift or two at the upcoming parish festival? How does the saying go? Many hands make easy work? Come out and experience the fun, the camaraderie, the friendship that only a

that it feels that they've been in a holding pattern. Sitting in the up-

parish festival can produce.

Did you notice a difference in this newsletter? Our thanks go to DEE Printing in Columbus, Ohio. They print our weekly bulletin and are now printing the AMEN! Newsletter. You might also take the time to thank our sponsors on the back of the bulletin. Their ads pay for this effort.

In thanking people, I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank someone who has truly been there for all of us since last August...Fr. Gene Vonderhaar. When he took us on, he really didn't know that this would be a long-term deal. He has been a wonderful instrument of healing for our parish and has given quite unselfishly for all of us. We wish him the best in his retirement (for real, this time!) and hope that he will visit often. We wish him sunny days, just enough rain and bountiful harvests!

The Women of Spirit Celebrate What's Right with the World! By Amy Puthoff

Have you ever said to yourself, I feel like I'm in a prayer rut? I've been praying the same way for years and I'd like to explore new and challenging ways to connect with God. Well, we've got a day for you!

The St. John's Women of Spirit will be hosting a day retreat entitled "Exploring Prayer Styles...Celebrate What's Right with the World". This day of discovery will be held Saturday, August 7 at the Transfiguration Center for Spiritual Renewal in Ludlow Falls. Every woman is in a different place, praying is not about doing it right; it's about doing it real. Take an opportunity to combine your Heart, Soul, Mind, and Will and pledge to enhance your prayer life. As this day grows closer there will be more details in the bulletin. Mark you calendar now!

While you have your calendar handy, also reserve the weekend of October 30 & 31 for another Women of Spirit Weekend Getaway. If you missed out on our last trip, don't let this opportunity pass you by. Details will follow in the bulletin.

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.

RCIA... Is It For You?

Each fall, we gear up for a new group of RCIA candidates. We beat the bushes, put ads in the bulletin and messages in the AMEN, call people we think might be interested and make passionate pleas from the pulpit. Maybe you are one of those persons who has thought about joining the Catholic Church but just never pursued the idea further. Now you may be thinking...."Is the RCIA for me?" If you are asking yourself this question and you'd like more information on the process, please call Cindy at 698-5590.



Following Masses on April 17th and 18th, the Building Steering Committee presented detailed plans for the phase 2 building project. This presentation can be found at our parish web site at www.stjohnthebaptist.cc.

Our new facilities will consist of approximately 17,150 square feet of offices, classrooms, and fellowship hall space and will replace our current facilities on Broadway. The plans also include an additional 2,500 square foot storage facility and the option for a larger banquet facility should the actual bids come in favorably. Copies of drawings for the new facility are now on display on the bulletin board in the narthex and on St. John's website. We invite all parishioners to look at the plans and ask any questions. We hope to break ground this summer on the new facility with construction to be completed by the spring of 2005. In addition, if you would consider serving on a construction sub-committee to assist in reviewing the drawings & specifications and construction process, please contact the parish office or one of the building steering committee members.

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

Memorials and unpledged contributions	\$45,407
Pledge payments	<u>549,566</u>
Total money received	\$594,973
Balance due on pledges	<u>386,115</u>
Total money raised	\$981,088

Last, the deal announced last year to sell the Broadway Chapel and Parish Center has not been completed by the local buyer; so Carol Gaeke and Tim Farron from RE/Max Realty have begun marketing the properties to other potential buyers. We ask for your continued prayers and support for the sale of these properties and completion of this building project.

Questions & Answers from the April 17/18 BSC Presentations

Are we using the same architect who designed the church? No. The Building Steering Committee interviewed several architects for our phase 2 building project, including the architect who designed the church. However reviewing their design concepts and proposals, we selected Michael Schuster Associates (MSA) for the project.

Why isn't the Building Steering Committee going to the Archdiocese for approval of the plans before going to the various Tipp City planning boards? The Archdiocese's approval requires the prior approvals of the building plans by the local building authorities and the Pastoral Council.

How large is the current banquet facility? The Parish Center will seat 150 people while the new banquet hall will seat at least 240 people, which is 60% more. We have also designed an alternate banquet hall sized for 300, should we receive favorable bids (from open shop contractors/parishioners).

How many CCD classrooms are we building? We have sized the new facility for 9 concurrent CCD classes.

Why is the site work cost so high? A major part of our project is to replace the parking area on the west side and to re-grade the adjoining hill. We are planning to add another 54 parking spaces for a total of 211. We have some loose soil conditions that will need to be removed as well as we need to deepen the water retention area to meet the building code requirements for the expanded facility. We are looking at options to minimize the amount of dirt moved to minimize these costs.

Why can't we build a 600-seat banquet facility now and eliminate the need for a phase 3? In our planning surveys, there were many items identified for our new facility - from a day chapel to a portico to a 600 seat banquet facility. We concluded that we could not afford to build everything that was requested, so our committee was chartered to replace the five Broadway properties with new facilities to meet our current needs with consideration for our longer term growth. The plan we have provides about 20% more area at 17,150 square feet plus a 2,500 square feet storage building. We estimate that increasing the size of the banquet facility to 600 seats would add about \$800,000 to our \$2.4 million project. Thus the budget and charter that we have do not

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(From the Pastor's Desk—Continued from page 1)

is a sinful person who compassionately helps us experience and proclaim the mercy of God in our lives. The confessor helps to reveal to us the reality of God's love and the joy of returning home. The Introduction to the Rite describes the confessor as one who "fulfills a parental function...reveals the heart of the Father and shows the image of the Good Shepherd". The role of the confessor is to stand side by side with us, and like the father in our parable, to call us to celebrate.

The third and final element that helps us to focus in on the meaning of Reconciliation is that of celebration. We are not speaking of celebration in the sense of gathering for punch and cookies, although on occasion that may be a good idea. Rather celebration flows from a line experience. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the father says "Quick. Let us celebrate." They were celebrating the fact that the sinner has converted, repented, confessed, and returned. If we are used to looking at God as a bogeyman, as the big claw in the sky, just waiting to trounce on us when we sin, someone from whom we have to earn forgiveness, we will have difficulty with celebration in conjunction with this sacrament.

If we think we have to earn God's forgiveness, then we are in control of our forgiveness. If we don't repent, we are not forgiven. If we do repent, we are forgiven. Whereas if we think about God who loves us unconditionally, we are not in control of our forgiveness because it is always there. In the parable the older son was still in the courtroom image of forgiveness – you have to make amends before you can be forgiven. Therefore he could not celebrate his brother's return.

What do we celebrate? Because of God's unconditional forgiveness of us we can forgive others as we have been forgiven. We can also forgive ourselves, as well as work toward the healing of others. Because of this we have come one step closer to the peace, justice and reconciliation that makes us heralds of God's kingdom.



WELCOME IN!

On Saturday, April 10th at the Easter Vigil Mass, our parish family welcomed fifteen new members. Congratulations to **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.**

We are proud to have you!

PARTY!!

- ✔ The Second Annual Parish Gala was a huge success. Sincere thanks to:
- ✔ **Norm/Elaine Shearer- Chairpersons**
- ✔ **Phil/Lisa Ratermann- Drawings/ Computer**
- ✔ **Ron/Nancy Sowder- Silent Auction**
- ✔ **Mike/Kim Carter- Bar**
- ✔ **Bruce/ Patty Cahill- Decorations**
- ✔ **Jane Kiser/Mike Howell- Food**
- ✔ **Tom/Tina Miller- Facilities**
- ✔ **Bruce/Barb Batty- Ticket sales**
- ✔ **Brad/Patti Gross-Gaming/ Entertainment**
- ✔ Special Thanks to all the volunteers that helped make the night a success.



Thanks to Matt H.

07-20-2001

I HEARD THAT THIS IS OUR NEW PASTOR'S FIRST ACTUAL PREACHING GIG

(Raising Our Roof -Continued from page 3)

allow building a larger banquet facility at this time.

Why not extend the fund drive to raise more money or go back to the Archdiocese and ask for approval to spend more?

We have had numerous discussions with the Archdiocese concerning funding for this project. The Archdiocese requires that we borrow less than 50% of the project cost and that our average operating surplus over the last three years exceeds the first year's loan interest. We are limited by the weekly collections and ensuing operating surplus from the last several years, which have declined appreciably. If we were to resubmit our financial analysis to the Archdiocese today, we would have to reduce our loan amount by more than we'd expect from extending the pledge drive for another year.

Can we borrow money somewhere else? No, the Archdiocese only allows us to borrow from the Archdiocese.

Will we need a full-time maintenance person for the new facility? The design of our new facility does address maintenance concerns so that with modern facilities replacing the older ones on Broadway, we would expect fewer maintenance issues, not more. However the maintenance committee will need to address the requirements for the new facility.

What type of roof will be on the new facility and will we have the same problems with the shingles coming off? Our architect is aware of our issues with the current roof and will ensure these problems do not recur. The Finance Commission and Maintenance Committee are working with the Archdiocese and the Phase 1 architect, general contractor, and shingle supplier to implement a long-term solution.

Do the plans for phase 2 include a "cry room" or labyrinth? The plans do not include a "cry room" or labyrinth; however, the narthex is wired for sound and can be used as a "cry room". Also there will be a nursery in the new facility. There will also be "green space" available should the parish want to build a labyrinth.

Are there plans to involve new parishioners in the fund-raising campaign? It is hoped that all parishioners who have not contributed to the building fund, will make a pledge to the fund-raising campaign. Many parishioners have generously given without a pledge and others continue to donate after having fulfilled their pledge. Our goal is for 100% participation of our entire parish family. We hope that everyone will prayerfully reflect on their contribution to the building campaign as we build for the future. May God continue to bless our parish family.

Get To Know The Phase II Building Steering Committee

Bruce Batty -Bruce is the liaison with the Finance Commission where he has served for the past seven years. He has been a member of St. John's for fifteen years and has been a lector for most of that time. Bruce has over fifteen years experience in the financial services industry as a representative with the Northwestern Mutual Financial Network. He has a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering and an M.B.A from the University of Cincinnati. He may be reached at 667-6655 or Bbatty5887@aol.com.

Karen Beagle -Karen is a liaison with Pastoral Council. She and her husband, Bill, have lived in the parish for 13 years. They have three children: Morgan (9), Ryan (7), and Lauren (4). Karen was a member of the 1999 RCIA class and has been on Pastoral Council for four years. She is a CPA and president of DARE Electronics in Troy. She may be reached at 667-4016 or kbeagle@dareelectronics.com.

Joy Blaul -Joy is the liaison to the Fundraising Committee. She was raised in St. John's Parish and returned 13 years ago from the Chicago area. Joy has four children and six grandchildren. She is currently the chair of the parish festival and was a member of Pastoral Council for 6 years in-

cluding 3 years as president. She held the position of Building Coordinator and is responsible for fund redemption for the building of the new church. Joy is currently the Director of Religious Education at St. Peter's in Huber Heights. She may be reached at 667-4806 or jblaul@saintpeterparish.org.

Mike Droesch -Mike is a member of the maintenance committee and liaison to the Construction subcommittee. Mike has been a member of St. John's since 1987 and is also active with our parish festival. He and his wife Dolores, have three children: Tina (14), Dan (11), and Andy (7). He is employed as a Project Manager at Oberer Commercial Construction. He may be reached at 667-4983 or mikedroesch@juno.com

Steve McCrillis -Steve is the chairman of the Building Steering Committee. He and his wife, Kathleen, have been in the parish for 19 years and have three children: Scott (23), Elizabeth (19) and John (13). He was in the first RCIA class at St. John's in 1989 and has since been a Lector and a member of Pastoral Council for 6 years, including 2 years as president. He is a Director of Engineering at Goodrich in

Troy. He may be reached at 667-3710 or stevemccrillis@goodrich.com.

Viv Wyen -Viv is the liaison to the Education Commission, where she is starting her second three-year term. She has served for many years as a 6th Grade CCD teacher and is now a sub. She also is the current president of the Ladies of St. John's. Viv and her husband Gerry have been married for 34 years, with all those years here at St. John's. They have two children - Laura (27) and Mark (23). Both Viv and Gerry are Eucharistic Ministers and ushers, serving the 5:00 p.m. crowd. Viv may be reached at 667-8579 or gvwyen@earthlink.net.

Dottie Zimmerman -Dottie is the liaison to the Worship Commission. She has been a member of St. John's for 50 years and has four children and 11 grandchildren. She has been a member of almost every parish ministry, including the first Stephen Ministry and RCIA teams. She is now a lector and Eucharistic minister and on the bereavement committee. She may be reached at 667-6336 or rzimmerman2@woh.rr.com



AMY'S ANECDOTES FROM THE PARISH OFFICE

Happy Spring! I want to use this opportunity to update you on a few things that are happening in the parish offices. After much discussion, we have decided to move my office into the Religious Education Building. This will allow staff to have direct access to each other, improve communication, and allow Father Marc to have a private home. The diocese strongly recommends that priests are to have their living quarters separate from any parish office. Without renting or purchasing a home, this is our option.

Beginning the start of our new fiscal year, July 1, I will take over the position of Business Manager. Erma Hagan will function as the official Parish Secretary. Erma will remain in her current office and mine will be upstairs along with an office for Father Marc. He will also maintain an office in the Rectory for those who are unable to climb the stairs or for privacy reasons. Please feel free to visit me upstairs! I will miss seeing you!

Erma and I will be working closely together to handle the increasing demands of the secretarial duties. There may also come a point when an additional part-time person will be needed. This will certainly be a time of adjustment and somewhat of a "trial and error" period. I ask for your patience.

Ron Martin will be leaving us as well as Father Gene. I would like to thank them both for their dedication and friendship. Without their guidance and support, this past year would have been much more difficult for me and I believe, for us all. They will be missed much. (Chris has played a major part in this too, but he is not leaving yet so his kudos will come later!)

I am looking forward to starting my new position and am counting on continued support from the parish. Please know that I have nothing but the best intentions for our church and am ready for some positive changes. Father Marc has been in touch and I am excited about him joining us! It is my hope that he will feel acceptance and respect from St. John's.

I had been thinking a lot lately about all the changes we have endured and will be faced with again when I came across the following in *The Tappan City Herald* April 28th issue:
 "Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better."

- King Whitney, Jr.

Let us together, make things better.

Love, Amy

\$ RUMINATIONS FROM RON \$

By: Ron Martin, Business Manager

The third quarter of our fiscal year ended on March 31st. At this time, income for the year is down from what was projected, but expenses have also been down.

St. John's Parish made it through the winter months without any major breakdowns or repairs. Although the utility costs per building were up, they were still under budget.

Compared to the previous year, at this time, we are in the black and should finish the year in the black, barring any major breakdowns or repairs.

Everyone who helped keep costs to a minimum is to be commended. It has made a real difference in our budget.

On a personal note, this is my last report for the AMEN! As of June 30th, I will be retiring (Oh yes, AGAIN!) as Business Manager for St. John's Parish. It has been a pleasure to work with the wonderful people of St. John's over the past two years. I will be around to help with the transition of the new Business Manager for the first few months — then catch me if you can!!!

Sincerely,
 Ron

NOTES FROM NELDA SCHWAB, DRE

SURVEY OF CCD PARENTS

What times will classes be held for preschool - 6th next year? That is precisely what we are asking parents to tell us. The change in school times will mean that after school CCD classes will end at 5:15 pm. Some parents may feel that school after school at that hour is not the best choice for their child. A survey has been mailed to all families. If you did not receive one, call the Religious Education Office at 667-6092.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR 4th-12th GRADE YOUTH

My recommendation is that we design our St. John's version of the Walmart associate's jacket "How May I Help You?" It would be worn as a constant reminder that just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, He commanded us to do likewise: to serve one another. An ad hoc committee of a group of catechists and parents want their children/youth to be faithful to this command. They have been meeting to look again at the possibilities for service both within our church family and within the larger Tipp City Community. How can we get the word out to the youth? How can we motivate the youth and their families to become involved? If you . . . have ideas/dreams to share, would be willing to coordinate an activity, are the head of/involved in a ministry which needs/would welcome our youth's help, call Deena Weiler at 667-4946.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

The AFF Team will be meeting to evaluate last year and make plans for next year. We are seeking to expand our Team. If you would like to be part of this ministry or have suggestions about what you would like to see offered, call the Religious Education Office. Definitely, Matthew Kelly will be a hard act to follow. But we are making plans for an excellent speaker to preach a Parish Mission next lent. Meanwhile, a group continues to meet in the morning to discuss Matthew's books. Call for information.

A REFLECTION BY NELDA—Reconciliation Brings Forth New Life

RECONCILIATION GUARANTEES RESURRECTION:

"I am sorry" + "I forgive you" = Christ rises to New Life in us.

What does God ask of us when sin separates us from another?

"Leave your gift at the altar and first go and be reconciled."

"Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us."

Forgive as God forgives us: totally and unconditionally -
which we can do only with God's help;

What does God ask of us when we are sinned against?

To pray for those who persecute and calumniate us;

To forgive even if the other refuses to acknowledge his wrong doing;

To not seek revenge;

To not judge the other:

Yet there are times when we see our brothers/sisters doing wrong
that we are called to challenge them – so as not to enable them.

What does God ask of us when we have sinned against another?

To repent and repair the damage done

– which we can do only with God's help:

To return to our Father's embrace

and receive the cloak, the ring and join in the celebration.

We can choose instead to lie and deny –

To stay in the foreign country feeding pigs

And not return home to reconciliation and restored life.

It is our choice: to repent and repair or to lie and deny.

We choose Life or we choose death.

Our Native American forefathers have given us this very wise Great Spirit inspired advice: **"BURY THE HATCHET"** If we truly succeed in doing this, our attitude and our actions will say clearly "I am sorry" . . . "I forgive you". Of course, the "I am sorry" must include the effort to right the wrong. New life will emerge where the hatchet is buried.

AMEN!

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

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