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Frame Works

A NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

Welcome to Our New Stewardship Newsletter!

Welcome to the first issue of our new monthly stewardship newsletter!

As our parish community continues to grow and develop stewardship as a way of life, we recognize the need for increased communication with you. This communication should help us to better understand who we are and what we are doing collectively and as individual members of Christ's family. Through this monthly newsletter, we hope to open new doors of communication and introduce you, in a much more intimate way, to the various ministries and organizations at St. John the Baptist.

It is our hope that this publication will give us all a better sense of our common identity as members of the parish. We pray that it will be a



vehicle through which you are kept informed, your spiritual growth is challenged, and you are encouraged to become more actively involved in parish life. Ultimately, with the newsletter – and with all of our other efforts – the primary goal is to lead parishioners into a deeper relationship with our Lord

Stewardship is not a foreign concept to the people of St. John. It is a path that we have traveled for many years, and that we plan to continue to travel for the years

to come. Moving forward, we plan to increase our stewardship efforts in the parish, striving to become better disciples of Christ in every aspect of our lives.

In addition to this new monthly newsletter, parishioners will be asked to participate in an annual Stewardship Renewal, during which we will all be

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31 Life-Changing Hours

The year was 1969, the location, Toledo, Ohio. The very first Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) began with a retreat, which was designed to unite parish members through evangelization and renewal. Thirty-eight years, 1,000 parishes, 94 dioceses, and approximately 750,000 participants later, and CHRP continues to flourish, particularly throughout the Eastern United States.

“Christ Renews His Parish is a nationwide parish program designed to encourage and grow the parish involvement of all adults,” says parishioner LaVega West, a retreat team leader and CRHP organizer for St. John. “There are separate retreats held for men and women. Each retreat is made up of witnesses, talks, discussions, food, and a lot of bonding. The retreat is put on for you and it really gets you out of your norm so you can focus on what’s really important.”

Over the years, CRHP has withstood the test of time. Its mission today is the same as it was in the beginning: personal conversion and spiritual renewal. The retreat weekends are given for parishioners by a team of people who have previously attended a CRHP weekend. Each retreat is a two-day, one-night, 31-hour process that is centered on witnesses by team members, small group discussions, and other activities. One year ago, St. John the Baptist became a part of this amazing and unifying ministry.

LaVega first attended CRHP in the mid-1990s at another parish in West Virginia, where he was living at the time.

“It changed my faith, impacted my life, and shifted my focus,” he says. “It helped to give my life perspective, and helped me to get to know the men in my parish.”

Here at St. John, four groups of parishioners have participated in CRHP weekends thus far. For the first retreat, individuals from nearby parishes provided the

leadership team. After attending the first retreat, some of our own parishioners formed a leadership retreat for the next CRHP. There are a number of ways to volunteer for CRHP, from giving a personal witness to being a discussion leader or assisting with meal preparation.

LaVega first became involved with CRHP at St. John through his involvement with Parish Council. When the

possibility of bringing CRHP to the parish was discussed at a Parish Council meeting, he volunteered to participate in the initiative. Today, LaVega and his wife, Juliene, both lead CRHP weekends.

“Not only does the weekend allow you to meet men or women of the parish, it also encourages stewardship, encourages people to reach out and to do things, and for

you to make an action list of what Christ does and can do in your life,” LaVega says. “Its pretty awesome. I’ve had very few people say anything but that they’re glad they slowed down and took time out of their schedules and lives to do it.”

Juliene agrees: “I would recommend the CRHP weekend to everyone. It is good to see that we, as a church, are a community following God. Our hopes and dreams for our families, brothers and sisters, parents and friends are similar. We may be walking on different paths, but we are all going toward the same goal. We want to not just be attendees to the Catholic faith, but to be participants.”

There is no registration fee or cost to attend CRHP. All adult men and women of the parish are welcome to participate in the renewal experience. The next men’s retreat is planned for Sept. 11-12, and the next women’s retreat is Sept. 18-19. Check the announcements in the bulletin, sign up in the Narthex after Sunday Mass as the dates draw closer, or contact the parish office at 812-490-1000 for more information.



A recent men’s CRHP group.

What Does Stewardship Mean at St. John the Baptist?

What do you think of when you hear the word “stewardship”?

Do you think it is another way to talk about money? Do you quickly dismiss it as something “un-Catholic”?

Actually, stewardship is a concept that is scripturally based and absolutely vital to our life as Catholics. In the very first book of the Old Testament, Genesis 1:28, God says, “Be fertile and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and all the living things that move on the earth.”

What does that mean to us today? It simply means that God is telling us, “This is yours; take care of it.” One of the first things God tells us to do is to be good stewards of the gifts He has entrusted to us!

The Old Testament is not the only place where references to stewardship are found. In fact, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half of them deal with time, talent, possessions or money. If Jesus spoke of stewardship that much, it should be a very important part of our lives!

As Catholics, we refer to the three facets of stewardship as **Time**, **Talent** and **Treasure**. Although these are three concrete ways to speak of and measure stewardship, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has told us that stewardship is part of discipleship. Stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call in every aspect of our lives.

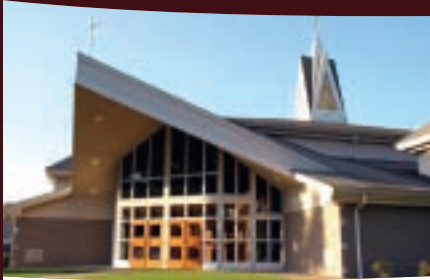
One point cannot be over-emphasized: We are taught by the scriptures and Church traditions that stewardship is primarily based on our need to give in gratitude, not on the Church’s need to receive. Of course, the Church at-large and our parish specifically will always need money. However, we are not asked to give simply to defray costs and fund charitable programs – instead, we are asked to remember our need to gratefully return a portion of our



time, talent, and treasure to God in recognition of all that He has given to us.

It is important to remember that stewardship is a way of life, not a program. True Catholic stewardship involves an ongoing call to live as followers of Christ. It takes time to find and define personal goals. You can begin by examining your personal commitments to the parish. In what way do you live your faith in your daily life with your family and friends? How much time do you spend in daily prayer, going to Mass or being involved in parish ministries and activities? What percentage of your income should you give back to God every week? What talents do you have that could be used to strengthen our parish family?

In the coming months, we will be increasing and intensifying our education and communication on stewardship. We will be coming to a better understanding of how stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call to discipleship. With God’s help, changes will occur in each of our hearts as we devote ourselves to a Stewardship Renewal within our parish. Examine how you are currently responding to God’s call to stewardship. If God called you home tomorrow, would He proclaim, “Well done, my good and faithful servant”?



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Follow My Lead Character Education at St. John Catholic School

Compassion. Dedication. Honesty. Humility. What, exactly, do these words mean? This year, through a brand new campaign called “Character Education,” students at St. John the Baptist Catholic School will be learning not only the meaning of these words, but how to make them a part of everyday life.

Social Worker Jayme Walters, who has been assigned through Youth First, Inc., to lead the Character Education Campaign at St. John School, explains that its purpose is to build character in both the students and the staff by introducing a character trait each month and incorporating that trait into various aspects of student and school life.

“As a Catholic school, St. John already has a moral-based education,” Jayme explains. “But with this campaign, we hope to make character building a little more mainstream and bring it a little more to the forefront.”

Using the overall theme Follow My Lead, a different character trait such as self-discipline, cooperation, generosity, or spirituality will be introduced each month. Either Jayme or another teacher will visit the classrooms to provide an overview of the trait, introduce a hands-on activity using team-building and cooperation to practice using the trait, and then have a reflection time on the word. As a follow up, the students will also participate in a service project pertaining to the character trait, partnering each month with a different non-profit organization.



One of the most important components of the program is to make Character Education an integral part of the culture; in other words, it shouldn't be a once a month feature, but something to practice on a daily basis. Through education, student recognition, direct promotion, action, and the help of the 31 students in Teen Power, the idea is to have the campaign permeate all areas of student life.

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Follow My Lead *continued from page 4*



For example, to encourage personal development and the idea of leading by example, the campaign will use the school mascot to feature a system of “roars” and “purrs.”

Roars are given by the teachers to any student who is a good example of the character trait featured for the month. In getting a roar, the student’s name will be placed in a collage that will be hung in one of the school’s hallways; in addition, the student will be recognized at Mass and have his or her photo in the school newsletter.

With purrs, acknowledgement is given from one student to another, with a slip of paper placed in a “tiger house” that is set up to provide a visible accumulation of character.

In addition to making character-building part of the school’s culture, the campaign also hopes to involve the family and entire community by



offering a monthly Parent Book Club, parenting classes, and preventative education for parents.

The Character Education Campaign will have its official kick-off Aug. 13 with a pep rally and assembly that will include our school mascot, cheers, and a school spirit competition. And with all the behind-the-scenes planning

and organization, this new program promises to be an exciting addition to a brand new school year.

“I look forward to witnessing the personal achievements of the students,” explains Jayme.

“This is a wonderful

opportunity to counteract the negative influence of the media and society, and to get excited about something that is lost in our culture.”

Anyone interested in volunteering or sharing ideas for the Character Education Campaign, please contact Jayme Walters at jwalters@youthfirstinc.org.

Character Education Committee

Katie Whetstine – Kindergarten

Jennifer Sakel – Kindergarten

Christy Schulz – Second grade

Susan Davis – Fourth grade

Mary Rogers – Fourth grade

Katie Dunn – Fourth grade

Emily Wannemuehler – Middle School Math

Jayme Walters – Youth First School Social Worker



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From Funnyman to Sainthood The Faith Journey of St. Genesius

Being a performer and a comedian may sound like a fun way to make a living.

But for St. Genesius, an outstanding actor, playwright and comedian in late Imperial Rome, certainly did have some fun for a while. But his career and life came to an abrupt end when his work ultimately led him to Christ.

Genesius was a comedian of some renown, but in the fourth century, Christians were often discouraged from becoming actors because ancient Roman comedy was highly sexual, crude and offensive.

In the year 303, the Emperor Diocletian launched what would be the last great Roman persecution against the Christian Church. So, Genesius used the persecution as an opportunity to write a comedy about Christianity. He thought it might attract the attention of the Emperor, increase his fame, and make him some money in the process.

Genesius approached leaders of the Christian community in Rome and presented himself as a catechumen seeking baptism. He was then invited into a period of instruction in the Faith, in order to learn the beliefs of the Christians. He was particularly taken by the idea of baptism. But at the time, he had no plans to convert to the Faith. It was all just a part of his plan to research new material to use for his comedy.

But a strange thing happened to Genesius as he began to work on his play, which was to be a comedy on baptism. As Genesius began teaching the other actors about baptism, he began to believe, and a desire to be baptized grew within his heart.

The opening night of the play was a great success, with the Emperor Diocletian in attendance.



But at some point during the play, the Holy Spirit touched Genesius. He was no longer acting. "You fools, I wish to die a Christian," Genesius said. "When the other actors asked him why, he said, "All my life I have been a fugitive, and only today have I found God."

Everyone, especially the Emperor, laughed as Genesius spoke. Genesius, standing in a pulpit designed to look like the goddess Venus, began to preach to the audience. He told the crowd how he once hated Christians and enjoyed insulting them. He told the

crowd how he deserted his own family as a child because they were Christians.

From there, Genesius addressed the emperor, stating that he wrote the play to mock Christians, but had been converted on the spot during the course of the play, by the power of Holy Spirit. "I now know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, the Light, the Truth and the Mercy of all who have received his gift of baptism," Genesius said. "O great Emperor, believe in these mysteries! I will teach you, and you will know the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God."

Diocletian was furious and stopped the play, having the troupe arrested and beaten. Genesius was condemned to torture until he sacrificed to the gods. Through all of his sufferings, he continued to confess that Jesus was God. When this failed to break his spirit, Diocletian ordered Genesius beheaded. His final words were, "Our Lord Jesus Christ is God and we shall have life in His name."

St. Genesius is the patron of comedians and actors. His feast day is Aug. 25.

Music Ministry

Making Music Unto the Lord

*“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, Most High.”
– Psalm 92:2*

There is something in Kelly Wilson’s life that fills her soul with a divine peace, penetrates into the depths of her heart, and resonates with the beauty of God. This “something” is music and the grace she has of being able to share it with the world around her through the St. John Music Ministry.

“Throughout my whole life, I have always fallen back on music,” Kelly says. “Music has always been there for me, through good times and bad. It focuses me more towards prayer than anything else. Being involved with the Music Ministry at our parish tends to bring me closer towards what God wants me to do with my life. I am not a public speaker, or the type to go out and do various kinds of volunteer work, but God has given me the gift of music.”

These days, Kelly keeps busy sharing her gift for music with her family members, friends, and the parishioners of St. John. She and her husband, Tod, view music as an important part of their family life: the Wilson home is often filled with the sounds of voices in harmony. The Wilson children – Harrison, 13, and Madeleine, 11 – share in their parents’ gift for music. The siblings are developing their musical skills by taking piano lessons.

“By Tod and I being involved with the Music Ministry, we have shown our children what stewardship means,” Kelly says. “By witnessing us, stewardship has become second nature to them – they know that if you have a gift, you need to share it with God and others.”

As our Adult Choir Director, Kelly directs and leads the choir (which includes her husband and daughter) in worship each Sunday morning at 8:45 a.m. In ad-

dition to vocalists, the Adult Choir includes cantors, instrumentalists, drummers and guitarists.

“Our mission is to add to the prayerfulness of the liturgy,” Kelly says. “We hope to inspire people to sing along, and to pray through music. I get a lot of comments that people love the music at our parish, and feel that it is uplifting, spiritual and prayerful. They don’t feel the choir is on stage or on ‘show,’ but that we are truly leading the congregation in song.”

The Adult Choir sings a mixture of classic hymns, older Catholic songs, and contemporary Christian music. The group rehearses every Tuesday during the school year at 7 p.m. in the church.

New members are always needed to help “storm heaven” with praise.

“We always welcome anyone who has the joy of music in their heart,” Kelly says. “You don’t have to be a trained singer or musician; just come and lift your voice up to the Lord! I would encourage anyone

who really wants to be a part of something that leads to better worship and great community to join us. We are great friends, and have a wonderful time together. We pray for each other, support each other, and act as a unified group.”

If you are interested in jumping on board with the Music Ministry, contact Kelly at 812-573-1940.

The Adult Choir has released four fantastic CDs over the years. Their Christmas album would make a perfect addition to anyone’s stocking! CDs can be purchased at the Parish Office. Visit the parish’s Web site, www.sjbnewburgh.org, to hear selections from the CDs.





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New Stewardship Newsletter! *continued from front cover*

called to commit a portion of our time, talents and treasure back to God and His Church. Our first Stewardship Renewal will take place this November, and all registered households will receive an informational packet in the mail detailing the renewal and our plan as a parish. Looking forward, the parish will also conduct a comprehensive survey in 2011. This instrument will allow parishioners to give us their honest opinions about parish life, liturgy and stewardship. The answers will help us to identify areas that are in need of improvement as well as those that are meeting parishioners' needs.

Many signs of accomplishment and potential are evident in our parish, and I am very grateful to all of you who have helped us become what we are today. As we continue to grow, the support and involvement of each individual parishioner is necessary to sustain the life of our parish. All of you have a place here, and all of you have a role to fill in the life of the parish as we live our lives as disciples of Christ.

May the Holy Spirit renew and refresh all of us as we work together and continue to build our parish family through the use of our time, talent and treasure.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Joseph L. Ziliak
Pastor