



## FAMILIES in Faith



# LANDSCAPING AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY WORKING WITH THE “NEW”

**T**here are plenty of new things happening throughout our Families in Faith community. And with these exciting developments in mind, our Landscape and Environment Ministry members are working to make sure our parish facilities are welcoming for all, parishioners and visitors alike.

Rob Ita is leading the work at St. Theresa with the construction of a new parish hall adjacent to the church.

“They asked if I can do it, and I said, ‘We’ll figure out how to get it done,’” Rob says. “It really gives you a good feeling. The older people in church that were active – it’s nice to give them a break, and try to move forward.”

The new fellowship hall is being built because the hall in the church basement has only a staircase to access it, which causes problems for those with limited mobility. The high water table in the area also makes the basement uninviting. Currently, dirt is being hauled in to raise the new building site.

“We want to get it done, and hopefully, we can move forward with making it look better,” Rob says. “This is a new ministry, and it’s kind of unique. But we’re working our way through it. [The site] is kind of a mess now. After it is finished, we’ll get the whole committee together and develop opinions



*The placement of the new fellowship hall at St. Theresa is visible here, as site preparation began.*

about the architecture and what we want to do from there. The new parish hall will be a place for fellowship. Access will be made better. If we have a nicer atmosphere, it will encourage more people to stay.”

With the variety of farm-related machinery available among parishioners, there will be no problem getting the site preparation work done.

“We have a lot of machinery,” Rob says. “We’re looking for the person with flair to tell us how to put it all together.”

“We’re pretty proud of our little parish at St. Theresa,” Rob adds. “There may not be many

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# THE TRAITS OF THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD

Each day, we strive to live stewardship in our lives, recognizing our roles as “God’s co-workers” in His creative, redemptive and sanctifying work. But in our quest to live as disciples of Christ, many obstacles often arise.

One of the most prevalent roadblocks in living stewardship is understanding the traits that make up a good Christian steward. Surely, it would be much more convenient if we had some sort of “stewardship profiler” who could lay out the necessary steps to becoming a good steward, like on one of those television crime dramas. Unfortunately, it more often feels like living stewardship is a lifelong journey that we will never fully comprehend.

Fortunately, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, gives some insight into the characteristics that make up a good Christian steward. It may not have the powers of a stewardship “profiler” or “mentalist,” but it certainly gives us some tangible things to think about.

The Christian steward should display some of the following traits:

**INSIGHT** – Before the disciples could live what we know as the stewardship way of life, they needed a flash of insight, or a certain way of viewing the world and their relationship to it in a fresh light. This “divine grandeur,” more than anything else, is often what sets people on the path to Christian stewardship (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 39).

**CONSCIENTIOUSNESS** – Stewards are fully conscious of their accountability in sharing of their time, talent and treasure. As caretakers of the gifts that God has given them, they have the opportunity and responsibility to use them to their fullest potential to spread God’s Kingdom on Earth (40).

**GENEROSITY** – Christian stewards are generous out of love as well as duty. They should display a desire to share with and care for others based on the sacramental graces they have received. And they are also cognizant of the many warnings that the New Testament presents to those who fail in charity and authentic love (40).

**JOY** – Christian stewards are often presented with difficult obstacles, but they should remain joyful in the face of challenges to their lives of stewardship. Like Paul, the good steward is able to say, “I am filled with encouragement, I am overflowing with joy all the more because of all our affliction” (2 Cor. 7:4). Only by serving with a joyful spirit will stewards fully reap the rewards of their service, both in this life and the next.

Indeed, living as a Christian steward is a lifelong journey with many ups and downs along the way. But if we strive to consciously incorporate each of these characteristics into our giving of time, talent and treasure, we will find that the profile of a good Christian steward will become much clearer with each experience of service.

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# WE ARE BLESSED AS A CHURCH AND A NATION

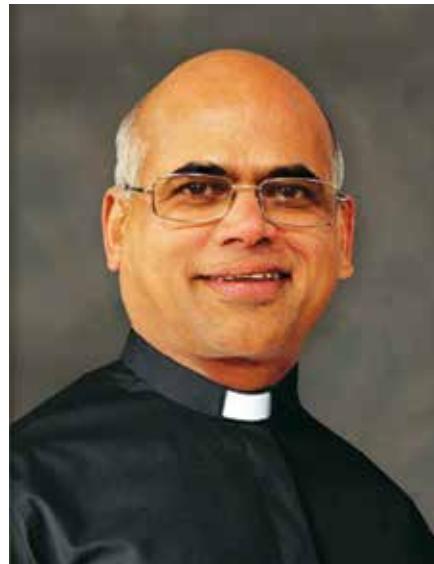
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The month of July may seem like a bit of an “in-between” month. Of course, it sits in the middle of summer. During this last month of June, we shared in a number of solemnities and celebrations – these served to remind us of the incredible gifts we have received as Catholics, from the Holy Trinity to the Body and Blood of Christ.

Now, a look at the calendar shows us that all of the Sundays this month are in Ordinary Time. We know that Ordinary Time is anything but “ordinary,” even though it might seem that way – especially after a month of celebrations.

However, one thing happens this month that is certainly unique to us as Americans – Independence Day. We are Catholics, but we also are Americans, and we should be proud to be both – grateful for the gift of faith, and equally grateful for the gift of liberty we receive as American citizens.

Yet, to be Catholic and American should not mean choosing one over the other. These allegiances should be complementary. Our Catholic faith states that we need to work together as fellow citizens for the common good of everyone in this great country. Through the Constitution, our Founding Fathers guaranteed us of religious rights to contribute to our common life together.



Freedom is a special inheritance we have received, fought for by many at a great price, and it is a heritage that must be guarded – we are truly stewards of the gifts of freedom.

In 1886, just over 130 years ago, Bishop James Gibbons of Baltimore was made the second American Cardinal. He attributed the progress of the Church in America to the “civil liberty we enjoy in our enlightened republic.”

He continued to say that “in the genial atmosphere of liberty, the Church blossoms like a rose.”

July is not just a time for us to celebrate – it is also a time for us to blossom. It is not a time to cease praying or working to build the Kingdom of Christ. Rather, it is a time to work even more diligently to express our appreciation for our many gifts, and to share them with others. We are blessed – by the gifts of our faith and the gifts of freedom – and we must always remember to thank God for that.

Sincerely yours in Christ and His Mother,

Fr. Antony  
Pastor



# THE ALTAR SOCIETY: DOING SM

One of St. Teresa of Calcutta's most famous statements reminds us that "we cannot all do great things, but we can all do small things, with great love." For those who serve as part of the Altar Societies at St. Michael's and Sacred Heart parish, this is their theme and mission.

While both Altar Societies have things that set them apart, it is serving the members of their parish families that is the heart of their work. Quite often, they serve in ways that go unnoticed, but when done in great love, they truly make a world of difference.

Keri Carraher has been involved with the Altar Society at St. Michael's — known as the St. Anne's Altar Society — for the past 17 years, since she first joined the parish. She has served as the group's president the past three years.

"My whole thought of stewardship has changed — I've realized that this is what God wants us to do, these little things," she says. "We can make a difference by doing little things."

Kristi Poss has served as an active member of the Altar Society at Sacred Heart for the past four years, since becoming a member of the Parish Council, which coordinates the ministry. For her, it's been an opportunity to feel more connected with her parish family.

"If you're not a part of the Altar Society, you can miss out on truly knowing what people are going through, and it's easy just to be a parishioner and not be a part of something bigger, coming together and taking the time to really help someone in need," she says.

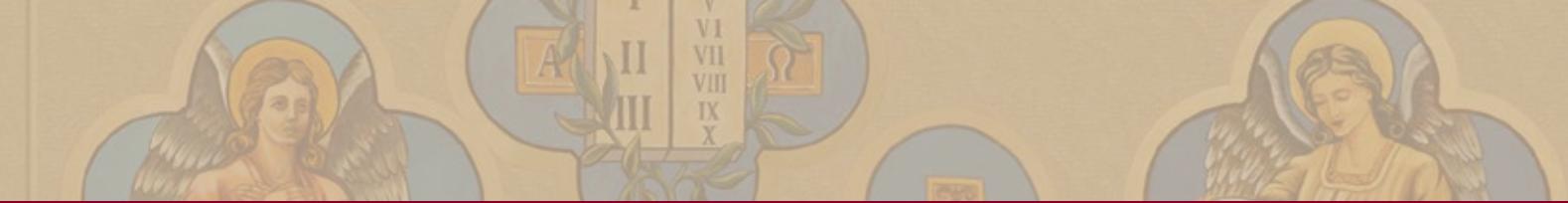
At both parishes, hosting lunches following parish funerals is one of the main ways the Altar Society serves. From the setup and cleanup, to bringing salad and desserts and serving during the meals, the members do everything they can to ensure that those grieving the loss of a friend or loved one are met with a sense of welcome and support.



*The members of the Altar Society serve the parish in many ways, including preparing for and serving at parish funeral lunches.*

"We come together as a community to take care of people in times of need," says Kristi, who was inspired to serve in this way after being on the receiving end, after experiencing the loss of a loved one. "People are just so grateful that we're willing to do it. There is a huge amount of gratitude, and it makes me want to turn around and do that for those families in their times of need."

St. Anne's Altar Society at St. Michael Parish also helps to clean the church and holds several fundraisers throughout the year, including selling pies and BBQ at the county fair concession stand and hosting the fall dinner and auction in



# SMALL THINGS WITH GREAT LOVE



*The members of the Altar Society at St. Michael's also bake pies to sell at the county fair each year, to raise funds for the church.*

order to raise money to supply missals, candles, and other needs in the parish. They also serve by cleaning the rectory and hosting dinners for the priests, special events, and parish receptions.

A bit different from St. Michael's, all Sacred Heart parishioners — both men and women — are members of the Altar Society simply by virtue of being members of the parish. People do, however, choose how active in service they would like to be. In addition to the funeral

dinners, the Altar Society also hosts Coffee and Rolls after Sunday Mass, and does a deep cleaning of the school over the summer.

For Keri, being part of the Altar Society has been an opportunity to get to know other members of the parish, as well as share the vision of stewardship with her children.

"When we get together, we have so much fun — I love it," she says. "We encourage people to bring their kids along to clean, to help them learn about stewardship. I like showing my kids that this is part of life, this is what we're supposed to do for God."

"We all grow together and come closer to God and make our parish stronger when we're doing these tasks in community with one another," Kristi agrees.

Both women encourage their fellow parishioners to consider joining the Altar Society, or in the case of Sacred Heart, becoming a more active member.

"There are so many different ways that you can get involved, you don't have to do all of the things," Keri says. "It feels so good, knowing you made a difference, even by doing something simple."

"You can help out in so many different ways," Kristi adds. "It's not hard work — it's a blessing to be able to do it. It doesn't take much time, and the blessings you get back are much more than the time you have given."

*If you would like more information on joining the Altar Society at St. Michael's, please contact Keri Carraher at 308-750-5193; to become active at Sacred Heart, please contact Kristi Poss at 308-571-0434, Teresa Wood at 308-223-0031, or Julia Wood at 402-202-9971.*



# MAKING TIME FOR THE JOY OF EUCARISTIC ADORATION

**W**hen it comes to the three elements of stewardship, time often seems the most difficult to come by. Our lives are so busy and action-packed, making it hard for us to step away and give quality time to the Lord. Yet, this is precisely what makes Eucharistic Adoration so invaluable, in that it provides each one of us with a distraction-free atmosphere to spend focused time with our Lord.

"You are there, face-to-face with God," says Sacred Heart parishioner Louis Bauer. "It allows you to be much closer to Him, like a one-on-one visit with someone you love and care for. The presence of Christ is just truly overwhelming – something you don't get by simply praying at home."

For Louis, time spent with our Eucharistic Lord is the absolute best way to spend his time. It calms his spirit, rejuvenating his soul each week and strengthening him for the tasks and trials of daily living.

"It is such a relaxing environment and just

makes me feel so good spiritually, taking care of all my needs," Louis says. "And through it, I feel much closer to Christ and the Church as a whole. Eucharistic Adoration gives me this calming feeling deep inside, taking away all of the hassles of daily life."

Similarly, St. Michael parishioners Cindy and Ron Glaser feel that Eucharistic Adoration has made a tremendous impact in their lives. For, says Cindy, it's impossible to out give the Lord in love or generosity.

"The world keeps us so busy, making us feel oftentimes like we can't commit," she says. "But the Lord calls us to Him, and compared to all that He has done for us, giving Him back that one hour is such a small thing. And He gives us so many graces in return. The Lord can't be outdone in giving."

The Glasers have seen this firsthand in their own family, most recently through the religious vocation of their daughter, who entered the



*Sacred Heart's Chapel, where our Eucharistic Lord awaits parishioners' visits on the first Tuesday of each month.*



Missionaries of Charity this June. For them, adoration continues to be a source of peace and joy – a beautiful way to “grow in their relationship with the Lord.”

Because our Eucharistic Lord is fully exposed during adoration, one of our commitments as a faith community is to never leave Him unattended. This is a way for us to perpetually keep our Lord company, while also ensuring His safety during exposition. For some, the idea of getting up at 2 a.m. to attend a holy hour can seem daunting. Yet, explains Ron, this is just part of showing our love for Christ, much like we do with the people who are important to us.

“When my parents were dying, we wanted at least one of us to be there in their room at all times,” Ron says. “I have eight brothers and sisters, and so we were able to spread it out, each taking turns. But this wasn’t a burden, because it was our parents and we love them. I think of perpetual adoration in much the same way. Jesus is the Eternal Sacrifice who gave His very life for us. So, if enough people truly love Him, it should be easy to fill up that time.”

Currently, Eucharistic Adoration is available at Sacred Heart parish the first Tuesday of every month. It starts directly after the 8:30 a.m. Mass and concludes the following Wednesday at 9 a.m. Meanwhile, St. Michael parishioners are blessed to have Eucharistic Adoration available to them each first Friday following the 8:15 a.m. Mass and lasting until 9 a.m. on Saturday. Parishioners are encouraged to sign up for committed hours, working to ensure that each slot is



*For Sacred Heart’s Eucharistic Adoration coordinators Louis and Mary Bauer, time in adoration is the absolute best way to spend one’s time, filling their hearts with peace and joy.*

filled. Yet, even in months when busy schedules prevent commitment, parishioners are welcome to make impromptu visits, enjoying quality time with our Lord in the peaceful atmosphere of the chapel.

“We encourage parishioners to stop in and see for themselves the great value of spending time in adoration,” Louis says. “Once they experience the peace, we hope they’ll want to sign up in the future.”

*To sign up for an hour or to learn more about Eucharistic Adoration in general, Sacred Heart parishioners can contact Louis or Mary Bauer at 308-428-5105 or 308-750-9046, while St. Michael parishioners can contact the Glasers at 308-223-0328 or 308-497-2476.*



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## LANDSCAPING AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY

*continued from front cover*

people in the parish, but we seem to get things done. The ladies have their Mary groups, Bible studies, and such. All have to travel 10 to 30 miles to get to church, yet they find the time. Faith is important. We're glad to serve the parish. We really enjoy Fr. Murphy, a retired priest, and Fr. Antony comes over for Mass. He's brought a lot to the table with his organizational skills."

Meanwhile, at St. Michael's, Rick and Nancy Esch have been helping with landscaping the grotto at the church.

Tom Foster at Sacred Heart is chair of the parish council and was nominated to the Landscape and Environment Ministry.

"Father volunteered me!" he laughs. "I oversee any kind of maintenance and renovation that goes on at the church and school. We have a small group in the ministry that is fairly new. I'm just trying to care for the facilities we are fortunate enough to have, keeping it all in good working order."

Landscaping and new sidewalks are in the works, and Tom says help will be welcomed from the parishioners.

"There will be some lawn work, seeding for grass, watering, things like that," he says. "It's always nice to get more parishioners involved."

*Do you feel called to help with the landscaping and environment in our parish communities? If so, anyone wishing to help at St. Theresa may contact Rob Ita at 308-750-3043; those wanting to help at Sacred Heart may call Tom Foster at 308-440-8604.*

## MASS SCHEDULE:

**7 p.m. Saturday** - St. Michael in Spalding | **7 a.m. Sunday** - St. Michael in Spalding  
**9 a.m. Sunday** - Sacred Heart in Greeley | **11 a.m. Sunday** - St. Theresa in Ericson