

## CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS: PROMOTING JUSTICE, EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND DIGNITY FOR ALL

As Catholics, we are called to emulate Christ in serving our community members in need — the Catholic Daughters of the Americas faithfully answer this call. This nationwide group of Catholic women strives to lend a helping hand to those in pain, poverty, sorrow, and sickness. Court #2039 Our Lady of Good Counsel in Greeley, Neb., currently does a lot to help those in the local community.

“As a court, we provide spirituality and sharing among members, support charities, support local clergy, administer two scholarships to any Catholic senior of our parish, sit with sick members, attend state and nation conventions, and when possible we give to worthwhile causes,” says Teresa Kehler, regent of the court.

Some of the ways that the CDA raises money to help those in need include selling Irish stew meals at the Irish Festival in September, hosting a quilt raffle, and an iPad raffle. This past year, the members also hosted a last-minute bake sale with the Knights of Columbus Fish Fry — all of the proceeds went to help the people of Ukraine.



*The court's recent 50th anniversary celebration*

The Catholic Daughters are also active members in the parish, acting as stewards of Christ for their fellow parishioners. They serve coffee and rolls after First Communion Mass for the parish, present Confirmation students with a Christian keychain, say the Rosary for a deceased member at their visitation, have a memorial service for deceased members, and donate to the church's fuel fund.

“Participating in the Catholic Daughters

# THE IMPORTANCE OF CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION

*Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the 2022 book, Stewardship Starts at Home: Using God's Gifts To Grow As Disciples Of Christ In Our Domestic Church, written by stewardship expert Lisa McArdle and published by Catholic Stewardship Consultants. This excerpt is reprinted with permission from CSC.*

There are Four Pillars of a Stewardship Parish — Prayer, Hospitality, Formation, and Service. The third pillar — Formation — teaches us to know and love our God and our faith.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005, #20), there are six tasks of faith formation that constitute a unified whole by which faith formation seeks to achieve its objective. This primary objective is the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.

The six tasks of formation promote knowledge of the faith, promote knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, promote moral formation in Jesus Christ, teach us how to pray, prepare one to live in community, and participate actively in the life of the Church, and promote a missionary spirit that prepares one to be present as Christians in society.

Take a moment to consider how fully you are currently formed. When is the last time you read a book about the Catholic faith? When is the last time you participated in a Bible study? When is the last time you read and reflected on the readings before Mass? Or looked up something in the Catechism?

Frequently, the last faith formation parishioners receive dates back to when they completed their Confirmation preparation or attended their last religious formation class as a middle or high school student.

This means decades may have gone by since parishioners and family members have experienced formation.

If that is the last time that you have formed yourself or that members of your families have formed themselves, don't panic. You are not alone.

This realization is an opportunity for growth. A chance to dip your toe back in the water of faith formation and even to learn alongside the members



of your family, including the youngest members who are also learning. Don't ever feel embarrassed that you don't know an answer to the faith questions asked to you by your children or grandchildren. Instead, learn together!

Remember, the more fully you are formed, the better you will understand God's calling for your family. Furthermore, the more you are formed in the faith the easier it will be to answer the call of discipleship.

Being properly formed in our faith and listening to God's call allows us to understand if we are on the right path or if we need to redirect. Being prayerful and well-formed are key to our following His plan for our lives instead of our own wishes and desires. Remember, as stewards, we strive to listen to God and use the gifts He has given us to serve those he places in our paths. Thankfully, it is easier now more than ever to form ourselves and our families.

There is no need to search for faith-formation opportunities. These options can be sent directly to our smartphones and tablets. Bishop Barron's *Word on Fire* ministry sends free daily readings along with a brief gospel reflection straight to our inboxes. Matthew Kelly's *Dynamic Catholic* offers Lenten and Advent opportunities with free, reflective videos that also arrive via email. *Blessed is She* even provides an endearing female faith formation perspective — perfect for women young and old. Plus, if you want to form yourself specifically in Scripture, you can also opt for the free podcast, *The Bible in a Year* featuring the entertaining Fr. Mike Schmitz, from *Ascension Presents*. Honestly, the possibilities are endless.

Formation is the fuel that keeps your family moving forward as stewards and in becoming all that Christ is calling you to be. Have confidence as you incorporate this ongoing learning into your daily routines.

To find out more about the *Stewardship Starts at Home* book, visit [www.stewardship-starts-at-home.company.site](http://www.stewardship-starts-at-home.company.site)



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# PRAY, SMILE AND MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

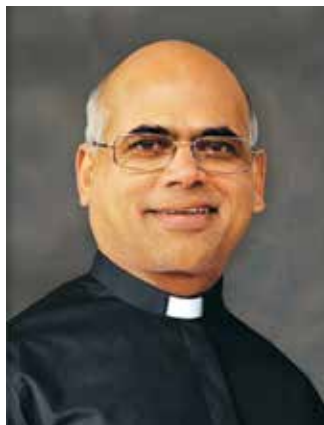
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

**I**n the Church, we often speak of “new beginnings.” Those two words can have almost endless meanings to us and to how we live our lives. Now that the fall season is in full swing, even though we tend to think more of spring as being a “new beginning,” now is equally so. Think of all the things in our lives and in those of our families that have begun or begun again in the past several weeks.

Two thoughts come to me as I ponder the significance of this time of year. It seems that there is never a time of year when starting over and renewing are not appropriate. We speak often of prayer — Jesus certainly provides for us both an example and encouragement to have rich prayer lives. Now would be a great time for a personal spiritual renewal, both for us individually and for our families, if appropriate.

There are prayer groups and spiritual studies beginning and ongoing at our parish. You might consider getting involved in one. No matter what you choose to do, it is always a good time to extend and formalize your prayer life. Schedule more time for personal prayer. Even better, if you have a family, try to formalize the prayer lives of your family as a group. That can enrich your life so much, and often it is something that stays with children forever.

My second thought goes back to the theme often stated by Jesus to “love one another.”



Were you aware that studies done by healthcare groups have shown that people who try to be kind to others have less pain, less depression, and less stress in their lives? That is exactly what the Lord tells us will happen if we do even small things to demonstrate our love for one another.

That can begin with something as simple as a smile. Smiles certainly make others feel better, and they tend to help us, as well. Another way to show kindness is to get involved in ministries and activities. By committing ourselves to ministry and to being volunteers in a variety of ways, we are actually making the idea of being kind routine and normal. Look for ways you can do things that match and fulfill your talents and interests.

Those two thoughts, although seemingly small, can make a huge difference in our lives, not to mention the lives of those around us. First, pray more on a fixed schedule. Second, smile and be kind. It is amazing how those two aspects of our lives can be fulfilled and fulfilling.

Sincerely yours in Christ and His Mother,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Antony Stehler". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Antony  
Pastor

# GENERATIONS OF FAITH

## CELEBRATING OUR OLDER PARISH

This past spring, a beautiful quote from St. Teresa of Calcutta was displayed at every table during the Generations of Faith Luncheon — “Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.” Open to seniors over 70 from all three parishes, the Generations of Faith Luncheon is held at St. Michael’s Parish. This year, about 35 people were in attendance.

Denise Spelic, Families in Faith Office Ministry, helped plan the event with a group of volunteers. She was especially happy to see the luncheon return, after cancellations during the pandemic.

“It was nice after COVID to see people come out and see each other,” Denise says. “It was a really nice day, and it was nice to see them get out of the house after being locked up for so long.”

Students from Spalding Academy also helped at the luncheon by setting the tables

and also helping serve the drinks. The school cooks made the meal, while volunteers made the sweets. In addition, students performed a short concert. Fr. Lawrence Vadakkan led opening and closing prayers.

“It’s an opportunity for youth at Spalding to show the elderly the kindness they all deserve and help this generation practice gratitude to the elderly,” Fr. Antony says.

Senior citizens receive a mailed invite, in which Fr. Lawrence wrote, “We are all drawn together in faith, and all our parishes have a unique history. We are blessed by God, and we are called to share our time, talent, and treasure to build up the kingdom. Join us in honoring your faith journey.”

The event was particularly special for some attendees because their grandchildren played or served.

“We received nice ‘thank you’ cards in the past from people who attended,” Denise says.







# FAITH LUNCHEON: PARISHIONERS IN LOVE AND GRATITUDE

“They really enjoyed it.”

Denise previously lived in Omaha and volunteered at a facility for senior citizens. She would often bring her kids along to visit the elderly there while she played the piano.

“It’s good for the youth to practice gratitude for those who have gone before us and learn from example,” she says. “We want them to understand that life and blessings are a gift from God and share that with others.”

Maureen Seamann also helped by decorating. Having recently retired, she felt this would

be a great way to get involved.

“I thought this was a neat way to celebrate older parishioners and make them feel special and remembered,” Maureen says. “People really enjoyed it — we got a lot of compliments.”

Maureen’s eighth-grade grandson, Matthias, played the guitar and sang in the choir.

“I think this is a great way to show kids that our elders are important to us,” Maureen says.

We thank all who attended and shared of their time and talents, making the Generations of Faith Luncheon such an enjoyable community event!

***“I thought this was a neat way to celebrate older parishioners and make them feel special and remembered. People really enjoyed it — we got a lot of compliments.” — MAUREEN SEAMANN***

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## CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS

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is important because there is so much uncertainty in this world today,” Teresa says. “Any of us can make a difference in this world by using Jesus’ examples and wisdom by coming together and working as one. He is the only certain person who is loving and caring enough for all of us.”

The Catholic Daughters would be a great way for any Catholic woman to get more involved in her faith life and the life of her community. Membership in the group offers a

valuable chance to serve those in need, while also being a fun and rewarding experience.

“If you enjoy helping others and having fun doing the things we do as a group, all you have to do is contact someone in our CDA family,” Teresa says. “We would greatly appreciate all new members to help continue our effort of charity that we have done for the past 50-plus years. We would love to have new members, new visions, new ideas that maybe they would bring into this organization to help keep it afloat.”

*If you are interested in joining Catholic Daughters of the Americas, please contact Teresa Kehler at 308-223-0361 or [terkehl@gmail.com](mailto:terkehl@gmail.com), Kitty Carlin at 308-497-2608 or [kittyc@gpcom.net](mailto:kittyc@gpcom.net), or Janet Klein at 308-497-2633 or [janetklein1969@gmail.com](mailto:janetklein1969@gmail.com).*

# UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF SACRAMENTALS IN OUR FAITH

Most Catholics are familiar with the idea of sacraments in the Church, of which there are seven. Sacraments are the foundation of the spiritual life for an individual and the Church. Sacraments are sources of grace — God’s very presence in our lives and unmerited favor from God. They are signs of God’s love, and these signs make present what they signify. Although a person benefits — receives the gift of grace — from the sacraments regardless of whether he or she is well disposed to them, one must cooperate with what the Spirit is doing in the sacrament to receive its full benefit.



Sacramentals are different. These are also sacred signs that can build holiness, but they do not work on their own. One must be aware and fully conscious of the sacred action. Sacramentals sanctify us to get the most benefit from the Sacraments (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1667). Sacramentals are given to us to make holy certain actions in life and life’s circumstances. There are many such sacred signs that are reminders to us of God.

The sign of the cross is perhaps one of the most fundamental of these signs, and for Catholics, this invocation is done at the start of every sacred action and prayer. Holy water is a sacramental, as it reminds us of our Baptism. By dipping our fingers into holy water and making the sign of the cross, we are combining two foundational symbols of the Christian life and the Paschal Mystery — the passion, dying, and rising of Christ — and bringing them to life in us.

The exchange of peace in the Mass — and at other Catholic rites — is another example of a sacramental. By making some kind of meaningful sign of peace, we are giving the peace of Christ to another person. The chalice and other sacred vessels at Mass also are sacramentals, as they

remind us of what they are to contain — the very Body and Blood of Christ.

It might be helpful to organize the types of sacramentals into categories, as author Michael Pennock lists in *This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*:

“Actions (blessings; genuflections; the sign of the cross; bowing one’s head at the name of Jesus; church processions); Objects (candles; holy water;

statues and icons; holy pictures; blessed ashes; palms; rosaries; relics; incense; vestments; scapulars; church buildings; crosses; religious medals); Places (the Holy Land; Rome; Fatima; Lourdes; the National Shrine in Washington, D.C.; and other places of pilgrimage; chapels, retreat centers, and even Catholic cemeteries); Prayers (short prayers we say throughout the day; grace before and after meals; prayers at rising and going to bed; praying the rosary, praying a host of other traditional Catholic prayers and devotions); Sacred Time (liturgy; holy days; feasts of saints; your saint’s name day; special days of prayer; fasting and abstinence; retreats, etc.)” (*This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 176-177).

“Sacramentals...prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it” (CCC 1670). In a word, sacramentals, through the prayer of the Church, bring us to holiness in Christ. All devotions of piety, including sacramentals, should point us toward the liturgy of the Church, a connection to a local parish community, and to the Eucharist (CCC 1675).

The Church, through Christ’s passion, death and resurrection, has given us these sacred signs to lead us in holiness, and to better recognize an authentic Christian life. How many sacramentals can you recognize in your life? Probably more than you think.

# SCRIP PROGRAM:

## OFFERING CONVENIENT WAY TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT TO OUR PARISH

With SCRIP, fundraising has never been easier! For the last 10 years, St. Michael's has been using the SCRIP program to raise essential funds. Historically, SCRIP has added more than \$10,000 to the parish's annual budget — more recently, this number has fallen to about \$5,000.

Parishioner Shannon Thome has been involved in the SCRIP program since the beginning. She has witnessed the positive impact that this program has on the parish and the local community.

"With this program, we give our local businesses some free advertisement while also selling gift cards that raise money for the parish," Shannon says. "It's a win-win for everyone."

The program is simple — the parish has purchased discounted gift certificates, or SCRIPs, that can be used at many partnering businesses, both local and national. The parish then sells these certificates at their face value price to you, the parishioner, who can use them like cash at participating businesses. The result is that St. Michael Parish makes money on the difference between the discounted rate at which they purchased the certificates, and the partnering businesses get to create a mutually beneficial relationship with you, their new customer.

The best part about this program is that much of what you already buy can be purchased with SCRIP.

"The reason for the effectiveness of the SCRIP program is simple — families produce revenue by making purchases they would make anyway," Shannon says. "Groceries, clothing, toys, gifts, and even gasoline can be



purchased with SCRIP. You redeem certificates at stores and restaurants that you already shop at, with no greater cost to you."

There are many partnering businesses here in the Spalding area that accept SCRIP, including local restaurants like Bottoms Up and Kealy's, and stores like Cenex, Garden Gate Health & Wellness, Peoples Service Sinclair, Petal & Stem, Spalding Pharmacy, and Spelic's Market & Meats.

You can also use your SCRIP online at nationwide businesses. To check out all the other businesses that have partnered with the SCRIP program, just visit [www.shopwithscrip.com](http://www.shopwithscrip.com).

By taking the small step in purchasing SCRIP gift cards, you can make a huge difference for our St. Michael Parish.

"We can all be better stewards by purchasing these gift cards and shopping at the partnering businesses," Shannon says.

Stewardship is about following Christ through intentionally offering your time, talent

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## SCRIP PROGRAM

and treasure back to God as spiritual worship. By taking the step to pay for your normal groceries and restaurant tabs with a SCRIP rather than your credit card or cash, you are making consistent offerings of your time and treasure to God through your everyday purchases. In turn, the funds raised through the SCRIP program help St. Michael Parish cover its operational costs.

“It is good to have this extra income,” Shannon says. “The SCRIP program has great potential to grow and allows us to dream big.”

*continued from page 7*

***“With this program, we give our local businesses some free advertisement while also selling gift cards that raise money for the parish. It’s a win-win for everyone.”***

— SHANNON THOME

*Buying SCRIP is easy — it is sold after Sunday Masses and online. If you would like more information about the program or would like to purchase some gift cards, please call the parish office at 308-497-2662. If you need help ordering SCRIP online, please call Kali Esch at 308-689-0523.*

## 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