

JESUS CHRIST,

PRINCE OF PEACE CATHOLIC CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2012

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Finding God in Silence *Centering Prayer*

Prayer is a powerful thing. When we pray, we deepen our relationship with God, and there are a number of different types of prayer that help us do so. Centering Prayer is one such way, and our parish's Centering Prayer group is designed to help parishioners grow closer to the Lord through this specific method of prayer.

"Centering is the term used for the method of quieting our minds and opening ourselves to God's presence amidst the distractions and busyness of today's world," says Martha Hayes, the group's coordinator. "It does not negate other types of prayer at all, but adds to our prayer lives by quieting our own agendas and opening to God."

Centering Prayer is a way for parishioners to develop their relationship with God through contemplative prayer, and is a way of finding God in the interior silence.

"In my own life, I was drawn to the idea of silence and attended an Introduction to Centering Prayer held in Davenport," Martha says. "Going it alone was

difficult to sustain, and it was suggested by Marie Howard, Coordinator for Contemplative Outreach in our Diocese at the time, that we begin a group in Clinton, which has been active since 1994."

The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 3 to 4 p.m. at Prince of Peace, and all are welcome to join them.

During the meetings, the members of the group start with 20 minutes of contemplative prayer, then watch an informative video or pray with the scriptures, which is a form of prayer known as *Lectio Divina* practiced in the early Church.

"The purpose of the group is to give each other support, information, and to bond with others in the quiet," Martha says.



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Service

The Fourth Pillar of Parish Stewardship

Throughout Sacred Scripture, there are numerous references to service. There is the parable of the vigilant and faithful servants who await their master's return from a wedding, "ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks" (Lk 12: 35-40). There is the story of the good Samaritan who was moved with compassion to help the victim of a violent robbery (Lk 10: 25-37). And there are several examples of Christ serving those around Him: feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, and even turning water into wine at a wedding banquet.

Why is service a running theme throughout the gospels? Because service is at the root of living in imitation of Christ. Christ served others throughout His life on Earth, and His death on the cross was the ultimate act of service to mankind. And when we serve others, we are not only following in Christ's footsteps, we are also serving Christ Himself: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

As a stewardship parish, service must be at the heart of everything we do. The parish community is the bastion of service within the Catholic Church, as we serve one another and are also served by our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the Diocese of Wichita's document, *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*, states, "Like a blood family, the parish family stands ready and eager collectively to wrap their arms around their brothers and sisters when they suffer in trial and/or celebrate special events in their lives."



It is good to recognize the parish community as a place where service is appreciated and can be utilized for the good of the Church. However, it is not enough for us to simply serve other members of our parish family. As disciples of Christ, it is our obligation to serve people in need everywhere they exist — in our families, our greater community, our country, and throughout the world. This can be a challenging concept, as it is often much more comfortable and convenient to serve those who are close to us than it is to reach out to "outsiders." But, as *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* eloquently points out, "Failure to have this understanding leads to a selfish parochialism, which is life draining to a parish stewardship way of life."

Think of ways that you can serve others around you, both within our parish family and in the greater community. Our many parish ministries offer a great place to begin offering your time and talents, but the opportunities for service don't end there. There are many civic and non-profit organizations that do an immense amount to serve others across the globe and are always looking for volunteers.

Once you serve, you will find that you will reap numerous rewards in return, much like the faithful servants who doubled the talents their master had entrusted to them: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy" (Mt 25:21).

A Letter From Our Pastor

Preparing for Lent as Good Stewards

Dear Parishioners,

Sometimes I get questions along the lines of “Do I have to go to Mass every Sunday?” or “Do we really still have to abstain from meat on every Friday during Lent?” or even “Are we required to tithe our income to the Church?” You may have been asked those questions by other Catholics. Perhaps you’ve even asked similar questions yourself.

By the way, the simple answers to those questions are “Yes;” “Yes;” and “No.” However, the tithe (10 percent) is the biblical guideline for giving. In some places in past times it was required, and even today many Catholics find following that practice to be a great spiritual blessing.

But my major concern when I hear such questions goes beyond the correct answer to the specific inquiry. The more important matter to my mind is, why do people want to do as little as possible in their Christian lives?

Certainly we need the laws of the Church to teach us what our duties are to God, to other Christians in the Body of Christ, and to ourselves. But as we grow in our understanding of the Faith and develop a more mature spiritual life, we should go beyond, “How little can I do and still avoid hell?” But, rather, let’s begin asking, “How much can I do for God, who created me, who redeemed me, who pours blessings out every day? How much do I love God, who loves me enough to die for me?” The psalmist asked, “How can I repay the LORD for all the good done for me?” (Ps 116:12) Let’s make that question our own and make it our goal to live maximum Christianity!



Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which comes on Feb. 22. As you plan your Lenten rule of life, why not be as generous toward God as you can be? I’m not suggesting that you shed all your other obligations and spend all day every day in the Church. What I am suggesting is that you respond to God’s blessings, with gratitude, as fully as possible rather than as grudgingly as possible.

After all, Lent is the season when we especially strive to combat sin in our lives. And as the American bishops reminded us in their pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, “Sin causes people to turn in on themselves; to become grasping and exploitative toward

possessions and other people; to grow accustomed to conducting relationships not by the standards of generous stewardship but by the calculus of self-interest: ‘What’s in it for me?’ Constantly, Christians must beg God for the grace of conversion: the grace to know who they are, to whom they belong, how they are to live—the grace to repent and change and grow, the grace to become good disciples and stewards.”

Let’s use this Lent to ask God to remove our attitude of “What’s the least I can do?” and to replace it with the grace to become good disciples and stewards.

Have a blessed and holy Lent.

Fr. Ken Kuntz

Fr. Ken Kuntz
Pastor



A Lifetime of Love for Each Other *Mac and Tooty McDevitt*

When parishioners Cleo (who goes by “Mac”) and Irene (who goes by “Tooty”) McDevitt first met at a dance in Calamus, Iowa, the world was a slightly different place. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was serving his second term as President of the United States, gas was 10 cents a gallon, and a fledgling anthology series called Action Comics had just introduced a new character called Superman.

“It was in 1938 that we first met, because Mac graduated in 1938,” Tooty recalls. “We were married at St. James Catholic Church in Toronto, Iowa, on June 6, 1940, with Rev. Paul Wetzstein celebrating.”

Mac and Tooty have been attending church in Clinton since their wedding – first at St. Irenaeus Parish, and later at Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace when, in 1990, the five parishes in Clinton were merged to form our present parish community. During their time at St. Irenaeus, Mac and Tooty were very active in helping out at the church.

“We just did things like help clean the church and the school, washing the floors and washing the windows to help get them ready,” Mac says.



“We went to dinners and stuff like that,” Tooty adds. “We went one night to a party where they had an orchestra, and they even had liquor.”

“It was a good party!” Mac says, laughing.

For much of their adult lives, Mac spent his time on the road working for Carstensen Truck Lines, while Tooty worked in accounting. They raised their two sons, Ron and Patrick, and since have welcomed 3 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren to their family. Later, when Ron grew into adulthood and ran a travel agency, Cleo and Tooty worked for him as travel consultants, which gave them an opportunity to travel to countries around the world.

“We were in England, and we were at Buckingham Palace during the Changing of the Guard ceremony,” Tooty recalls. “We actually thought it was a statue, and Mac said, ‘Get over there, I’ll take your picture.’ I went over, and the guy never moved and hardly opened his lips, but he said, ‘Get away from me!’ So we’ve always laughed about that.”

Today, Mac and Tooty remain active in their faith and social lives. They have coffee with friends, enjoy going out to eat, and even exercise three times a week.

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Managing Our Financial Gifts *The Finance Council*

For parishioner Ed Kross, helping to wisely manage Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace's parish financial contributions is truly a family legacy. Ed's father, Ralph, served as a lay director of the parish Finance Council for many years before Ed took over the role in 1981.

"I just always learned from my parents that it was important to become involved and give back to the community, and I've modeled their behavior," Ed says. "It has been rewarding to me to be involved with the parish finances over this period of time. We have overcome a lot of obstacles, and consolidated five parishes into our current parish, which was not easy, but it was absolutely necessary for the future of the Church in Clinton. I've also always been a strong supporter of Catholic education, and working on parish finances allowed me to assist in determining the financial support of the parish to the school."

Every Catholic parish has a Finance Council. In fact, the Finance Council is the only parish organization mandated by Canon Law. At Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, our Finance Council establishes a parish budget and serves as a sounding board for the pastor, conveying to him the sentiments of the parish regarding a wide variety of financial issues.



"Our role is to be good stewards of the contributions that the parish community makes," Ed says. "We have a very generous community and I think it's important to use that money wisely. There has always been a prayerful, thankful component to the Finance Council, and we take our responsibility very seriously."

The six lay members of the Finance Council fulfill this responsibility by meeting with Fr. Ken and parish Business Administrator David Schnier on a monthly basis to discuss parish finances and plan for the future. They also make a

concerted effort to be as open and transparent as possible with the parish community at-large regarding the use of parish finances, and they are always open to answering any questions parishioners may have.

"We publish weekly financial reports in the bulletin, so while people may have questions from time to time, we really work hard at trying to keep the parish informed regarding parish financial issues," Ed says. "Over the last 15 years, the parish has built a new education center and a new church, so there have been a lot of financial issues

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Valentine's Day *The Feast of a Christian Martyr*

Candy, flowers, romantic dinners, and excuses for wooing are the common traditions we associate with the once pagan holiday known as Valentine's Day.

Dangling cupids, silly conversation hearts, and faux long-stemmed roses clutter every card store, waiting for a last-minute purchase.

The question is: how did this over-commercialized holiday really begin?

There are a few stories surrounding the history of Feb. 14 and St. Valentine himself, all dating back to the Roman Empire. The fourteenth day of February was a day set aside to honor the goddess Juno, queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. The following day, Feb. 15, began the feast of Lupercalia; the feast was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

As part of the festival traditions, there was a name drawing among the young people. The names of young Roman women were written on slips of paper and placed into a jar. Each young man would draw a young woman's name from the jar and the two would be partners for the duration of the festival. Sometimes the pairing lasted an entire year, and often, the couple would fall in love and later marry.

At the time, Emperor Claudius II was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns, and he was having a difficult time recruiting soldiers to join his military leagues. Claudius believed that soldiers were



reluctant to join because they did not want to leave their loves or families.

With this in mind, Claudius decreed all marriages and engagements cancelled in Rome. During this time, St. Valentine was a priest in Rome, and he and St. Marius secretly married young couples. For this, St. Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who sentenced him to be beaten and then executed by beheading. He suffered this martyrdom on Feb. 14 around the year 270 AD.

Before his death, it is said that St. Valentine left a note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine." Although the truth behind the St. Valentine's legend is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his ap-

peal as a sympathetic, heroic and, most importantly, romantic figure. It is no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Over time, Feb. 14 became a time for lovers to exchange sweet messages, making St. Valentine the patron saint of lovers. The date was often commemorated with the sending of poems and/or simple gifts. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that Feb. 14 was the beginning of the avian mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February – Valentine's Day – should be a day for romance.

The Finance Council *continued from page 5*

involved in construction, financing, and all of those things that go along with them.”

And while the parish has placed a renewed emphasis on the stewardship way of life over the last two years, Ed says that the Finance Council has operated under the principles of stewardship for many years in making sure that the financial contributions of parishioners are best used to help support the mission of the parish.

“Stewardship has been a way of life for the people who have volunteered their talents on the Finance Council over the past decades,” he says. “And I think the thing I like most about the new stewardship emphasis is its focus on involvement among parishioners in all of the ministries the parish offers, and its focus on prayer.”

If you have any questions regarding parish finances, or would like to learn more about the parish Finance Council, please contact Ed Kross at 563-242-6683, or Dave Schnier at 563-242-3311.



The Parish Finance Council

(l - r) David Schnier (Parish Business Administrator)

Odelia Schrunk

Fr. Ken Kuntz (Parish Pastor)

Ed Kross (Lay Director)

Joel Kaczinski

Mike Rastrelli (Lay Director)

Mike Pittman

Lenny Weih (not pictured)

Mac and Tooty McDevitt *continued from page 4*

“We’ve got treadmills and arm exercises,” Mac says. “I used to do a lot of heavier weights, but I’ve given them up. It’s more or less leg and arm exercises we do with the machines.”

As they prepare to celebrate their 72nd Wedding Anniversary in June, Mac and Tooty say that their marriage stayed strong throughout the years because they participated in many activities as a family, and they always kept a lot of love in their home.

“Our faith has held us together, and another thing is you have to have a good time when you’re married,”

Tooty says. “Wherever we went, Mac and I always had a good time.”

“The thing that made our lives so great is our children loved to have friends in our home, so we had a lot of kids here, and they still come back and visit us. Our boys are good; they call us maybe two or three times a week. We’ve had wonderful, wonderful lives, and I wish everyone could have it as well as we have, with the family standing behind you. We’ve had a lot of laughs with the boys.”



Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace Catholic Church

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Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Centering Prayer *continued from front cover*

The group has studied the works and teachings of mystics and contemplatives like Thomas Merton, St. Catherine of Siena and St. John of the Cross. They recently began watching a DVD series called *Creating Sabbath Space in our Lives*. The group also attends day retreats hosted by Contemplative Outreach of Eastern Iowa. There also is a monthly event held at Sisters of Humility in Davenport called "Silent Saturdays." Although the members of our parish Centering Prayer group have not yet attended a Silent Saturday retreat, these retreats offer an opportunity to get together with other contemplative groups in our area, especially for those who are unable to attend similar events during the week because of work schedules..

For the members of the Centering Prayer group, their participation has led to significant changes in their spiritual lives.

"We don't always see or feel the benefits of our prayer as we pray," Martha says. "However, after a time it is apparent, and even at times to others, that something in us is changing and that we are managing our lives differently, perhaps more peacefully, more compassionately, or more gratefully. Personally, I am grateful that Centering Prayer has been part of my spiritual journey and that God has led me to share this with others."

For more information about Centering Prayer, call Martha Hayes at 563-243-4440.