

August–October 2008



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

The St. Vincent Voice

A PUBLICATION OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH



Welcome to our next edition of the St. Vincent de Paul parish newsletter. Several articles included in this edition will reflect on living our faith—from following the commandments, to participating in political elections, to tithing, to growing in our faith through Faith Formation, to vigorously pursuing a spiritual journey, to being with God through prayer, to celebrating our parish by attending the Harvest Festival this year. There are, of course, many ways beyond these examples to live our faith. You yourself probably have many examples in your own life.

Jesus taught us to live our faith so that we may have a deeper relationship with God. He said, "Follow me."

How we do this... depends on us.

—*Marci Siers, Pastoral Council Member*

Editor's Note: several articles in this edition were inspired by questions and feedback we've received from parishioners. Our thanks to all of you who've contacted us. We hope to continue to hear from parishioners with your questions about our faith, our parish events, and our parish family. Thank you!!

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

How Becoming a Catholic Has Transformed My Life



Parishioner
Christy Gruba

One Saturday afternoon, my grandma called to see if I wanted to go shopping with her. I was 19...it was Saturday afternoon...and I had plans with friends—there was no way I was going shopping with Grandma. I told her no, so she decided to take her dog for a walk instead.

About 15 minutes after we hung up, I received a phone call from my best friend's mother, who lived across the street from my grandparents. She said there had been an accident and that I should get to my grandparents' house right away. My grandparents only lived three blocks away. I ran the whole way, but by the time that I got there, the ambulance was already on its way to the hospital. When I arrived at the hospital, my grandpa was waiting there. He said, "They won't let me see her." They brought us to a small room, where a doctor came in and told us that she was dead. She had been crushed between two cars, and there was nothing that could be done to save her. The damage was too extensive and she had died on the way to the hospital. It was less than one hour since she had called to ask if I wanted to go shopping.

My father was killed when I was really too young to know what was going on, or for it to have a huge effect on me, the way my grandmother's death would. For the first time in my life, I realized that I, too, would die, and possibly just as suddenly. I had to acknowledge that life is short and uncertain, but I was not ready to face my own mortality, or what happens after we die. The first nine days after my grandmother died, I didn't sleep at all. I finally reached a point where I had to sleep, and found that I could sleep during the day, but I had to stay awake all night long. I wasn't afraid of the dark, or a car accident, or being physically hurt, I was afraid of "being" dead. I was afraid of what happens next.

I didn't grow up in a religious home; my mother's family is Lutheran, but they were not practicing Lutherans. My father's family was Catholic; my grandma went to Mass every weekend, without fail. She was in the choir and very involved with the church. She would take me to Mass with her on the weekends when I stayed with her. I also had a little friend down the street who was Baptist, and I would sometimes go to bible study with her on Wednesdays. At one point, my mom decided that I should be confirmed, so I did attend a few Lutheran confirmation

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The
St. Vincent Voice
Newsletter
Committee

- **Tim Huston,**
Parishioner
- **Eric O'Link,**
Parishioner
- **Renee Paske,**
Staff Member
- **Marci Siers,**
Pastoral Council Member
- **Nikelle Morris,**
*Editor/Designer,
Parishioner*

For information on joining the committee, contact Renee Paske at 763-425-2210.

**WE WOULD LOVE TO ADD
A FEW MORE MEMBERS!**

WE
NEED
YOU!



We are still looking for a few parishioners to join the committee that puts together this newsletter. We have lost a couple of our members recently, due to time conflicts and other responsibilities.

The time commitment is relatively small—about 6-10 hours per issue. (We publish 4 issues/year.) We generally meet in the early evenings at the church and also share ideas and articles via e-mail. We want our committee to represent the parish. Do you have the time, talent and interest to be part of our volunteer editorial team? If so, please call Renee Paske at (763) 425-2210 for more information about this opportunity!



ASK FATHER

Fr. Tom Answers a Parishioner Question

Q. The Apostle's Creed says that Jesus committed his spirit to the father and died. So his body was in a tomb and his spirit went to hell. Jesus went to hell for us, he paid for our sins. Jesus spent 3 days in hell where he took the keys of hell and death. He preached to the prisoners held captive there about paradise, he led them out victorious. On the third day, he rose from the dead and entered heaven. Why doesn't the Catholic Church mention that in the Mass?

—Thank you, Andreia Hemerick

A: Great question, Andreia! The idea that Jesus went to hell is actually a translation problem. A better way of saying this is that Jesus died on the cross and descended to the dead. Jesus actually opens up the gates of heaven to all who have died before Him: from Adam...all the way down through history...to the good thief who had just died next to Jesus on the cross.

For a fuller understanding of where this article of faith comes from ("descended into hell"), you can read the Catechism of the Catholic Church under the second section where the Creed is broken down into parts. It states that "He Descended into Hell, On the Third Day He Rose Again," meaning that Jesus descended to the realm of the dead prior to His resurrection. Traditionally, scripture called the abode of the dead "hell" ("Sheol" in Hebrew, or "Hades" in Greek) because the inhabitants were deprived of the vision of God. This is the case for all of the dead who are to be redeemed by Jesus. Jesus did not, nor does He, redeem those condemned to the hell of damnation, those who have rejected God. Rather, these were the souls that died before Jesus was born. When Jesus lived and died, and rose from the dead, he freed them from waiting, to then enter into heaven. Jesus freed the just who had died before Him. This reveals to us that Christ's redemptive mission is for all of humanity, in all times, in all places, for all who are saved.

On Good Friday Jesus was crucified on the cross and opened up heaven for all of us redeemed sinners past, present, and future. When He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, He brought all of those who were waiting for Him, all of the prisoners who had died since Adam, into eternal life (paradise). And so, Jesus was in the realm of the dead from his death on Good Friday until He rose on Easter Sunday. We must also remember that (and this can get a little complicated) God exists outside of time and place. Heaven and Hell are not what we would call places but rather states of being. One is either in the presence of God or in the absence of God (although the language we often use to describe these 'places' is not entirely accurate).

All of this is not mentioned in the Mass because the Mass is not the time for catechetics (not a teaching moment). Rather, Mass is actually the time to be in God's presence or prayer, to be living this reality, making it present in our lives, from that which we believe. I hope this is helpful. Thank you for your question.

Submit Your Question!

If you have a question, mail it to:
**The St. Vincent
Voice Editor** at the
church, or e-mail it to:
editor@saintvdp.org.

**Please give us your
opinion on
The St. Vincent Voice.
We strive to create a
publication that will serve
the needs of our
parishioners.**

⇒ *What topics would you like to see addressed in this newsletter?*

⇒ *How can this newsletter most benefit you as a parishioner?*

⇒ *What questions do you have about the Catholic faith that we might address?*

Thank you! Please send your feedback to: Attn. St. Vincent Voice Editor, St. Vincent de Paul, 9100 93rd Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Or e-mail your feedback to: editor@saintvdp.org



Christy's Grandmother

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

(continued from page 1)

classes, but I never followed it through to the end. I had a very skewed idea of God and religion. According to what I “thought to be true”, there was no way I was ever going to be good enough to get into heaven. According to what I thought, no one could ever be good enough to get into heaven. As time went on, I developed extreme anxiety. I would try to pray, but I didn’t really know how to pray. So, I would plead for any sign that there was something more after we die.

Finally, after many years of suffering from almost crippling anxiety, I made an appointment with a psychologist. I told him what was going on and why. He made a recommendation to my regular doctor for medication, but he also told me that I needed to find something in which I could have faith. Four years before this, I went in search of the church for me. I tried everything and every church out there. The only place I ever felt truly comfortable, that I kept going back to time after time, was the Catholic Church. When I used to go with my grandmother, I learned all of the motions—the Sign of the Cross, when to stand, when to kneel. I didn’t understand it, but I did it, and you never forget those things once you learn them. I wanted to join the church, but I still feared that I would never be—and could never be—good enough to be accepted by any church. That fear kept me away.

As I said, my doctor had told me that I needed to find something to have faith in, so again I started to pray, not really knowing what I was doing. That night the anxiety was unbearable. I was so tired, I just wanted to sleep, needed to sleep, but I would fall asleep and hear a whisper in my head, “If you fall asleep you will die.” Then I would wake up, so tired, so very tired, and I would fall asleep, and worry, “You’ll never wake up.” This went on for about a week; finally, I called a church in my neighborhood. The person that I needed to talk to was not available, but I left a message. Some time passed. I had looked into it, so I knew that RCIA would be starting soon. Part of me was certain that the reason the church never returned my call was because I wasn’t good enough for the Church, but I knew that I had to do something. So I went online, found the next closest church, and called to talk to Chuck Pratt at St. Vincent de Paul. I

found out that I would need a sponsor, which I didn’t have, but Chuck told me that people volunteer, so I would have one. He told me to be there Sept. 13, 2007 at 7 pm.

Father Tom led the first class. One of the first things that he said was “We are put on earth to die and go to heaven!” It was so simple and it made so much sense to me. For the first time in many years, I felt a calm that I never thought I would feel again. As classes continued, I learned so much—God’s love for his people on earth, Mary’s commitment to God. I learned about the Holy Spirit and how it works for all of us all the time and that you have to be willing to see it as the Holy Spirit rather than chalk things up to coincidence. These were all things that I knew, but now they held more meaning for me. I had found something in which I could have faith. I knew of Jesus’ love and capacity for forgiveness, but I still didn’t know if I was worthy of it. First Reconciliation was hard, and this is where I really tested my newly developed faith in Jesus. Right up to the moment that I sat in the chair in the reconciliation room I didn’t know if I could do it—if I really had enough faith to say my sins out

“It was so simple and it made so much sense to me. For the first time in many years, I felt a calm that I never thought I would feel again.”

loud, ask for forgiveness and be forgiven. But I did. I made my first confession, and I was forgiven! I really had faith in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Now I knew that I was good enough. There were many more things that we did to prepare for our initiation into the Roman Catholic Church: the Rite of Welcoming, the Rite of Acceptance, the First, Second, and Third Scrutiny, volunteer work, examination of self, and awareness of how our actions can have a far-reaching effect on many more people than we realize. All of these things were leading us toward one common goal—conversion of heart and our Easter Vigil. I thought that I would be nervous, and I was a little, but as the Vigil proceeded, I felt a growing sense of peace and calm come over me. While we were all standing up front, I looked around the half circle of us that were being confirmed and saw a smile on every face. There are not words that can describe the feelings that I was experiencing. The Mass was beautiful enough, but add to it the baptism of Chad and Matthew (a father and his son), and our confirmation, and I was trying to hold onto every little piece of it and savor every moment. When I received my First Communion, the body and blood of our Savior, I felt truly blessed and so happy to be a fully initiated member of the Catholic Community. See ya Sunday!

— *Christy Gruba, Parishioner*

Share Your Story with Us!

What a blessing it is when parishioners are willing to write about their experiences for our newsletter. Would you be willing to be a newsletter contributor, too? If you have a story to share, please e-mail it to editor@saintvdp.org, or send it to the parish office to Attn: St. Vincent Voice Editor so that we can consider it for an upcoming issue.

We hope to hear from you!



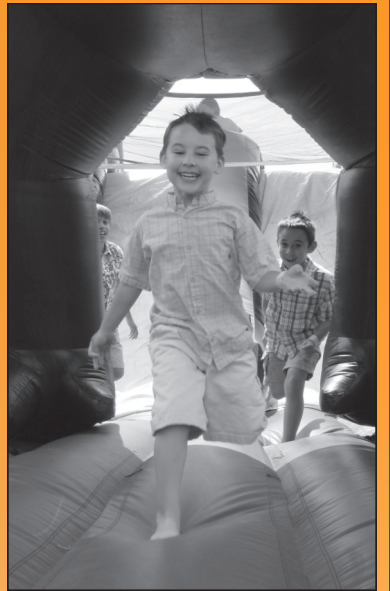
FAMILY CORNER:

Our Own Harvest Festival is a Great Place for Family Fun!

Aug. 9th & 10th
Starting at Noon

Join your parish family for our yearly "reunion party" at the St. Vincent de Paul Harvest Festival! Featuring...

- Pull Tabs
- Paddle Wheel
- Bingo & Kids' Bingo
- Kids' Games, featuring an awesome grand prize drawing on Sunday
- Inflatable Rides (tickets and wristbands available for pre-sale on 8/2 & 8/3)
- Petting Zoo (Sunday 1-4)
- Bike Helmet Safety Clinic, sponsored by Farmer's Insurance
- Silent Auction
- Craft Vendors
- TV Raffle
- \$1000 Gas Card Raffle
- Main Raffle - Grand Prize \$6000!



Live Music:

- Saturday 6-10: The Rockin' Hollywoods
- Sunday 1-3: The Dixie Cats

Great Food featuring:

- BBQ Rib Dinner on Saturday
- Chicken Dinner on Sunday
- The Lookout
- The Hopkins Lions
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Bridgeman's Ice Cream



Come and join in the fun!



PASTORAL COUNCIL WANTS INPUT

The Members Want to Hear from St. Vincent de Paul Parishioners

Did you know that the Pastoral Council at St. Vincent's is a good way for your parish-related concerns to be heard? The council functions as representatives of our parish to our pastor. We want to hear your thoughts and concerns. The Council's current main discussion topic has been strategic planning for our parish, which is something that you will be hearing more about over the next several months.

Council members wear maroon-colored nametags at Mass and other church functions, so we are easily identifiable to others. If you have concerns or questions, please feel free to stop a council member at any time when we are wearing a name-tag. You can also call the following council members with questions and concerns: Tom McMullen at 763-425-0227 or Marci Siers at 763-420-9460. Each parishioner's question or concern will be given thoughtful consideration, and you will receive a response in a timely manner.

The Council meets at 7 PM every 3rd Tuesday of each month for 1 1/2 hours (excluding the months of December and July). The Council consists of nine parishioner-voting members and two non-voting members, which are our pastor and our



*Back Row (from left): Marci Siers, Tom McMullen, Don Ritter
Middle Row: Rose Kahnke, Fr. Tom, Jeff Bjstrom, Ann Bergman
Front Row: Norm Olafson, Fr. Jack, Adrianna Matzke, Janice Gabrick*

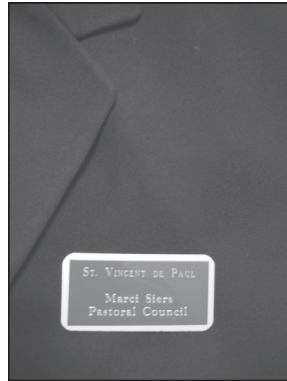
business manager. Each member serves a term of three years and may serve up to a limit of two full terms.

The current parishioner members are: Ann Bergman, Jeff Bjstrom, David Duffy, Janice Gabrick, Rose Kahnke, Tom McMullen, Adrianna Matzke, Marci Siers, and Don Ritter.

New members may join in the springtime. Every March, we offer two evening Pastoral Council information nights. Any parishioner may attend, and learn more about the Council. Start thinking now about joining the Council, and plan to attend an information night next spring. After the first of the year, check the church bulletin for details about the

dates and times of the information nights. Final decisions about new members are made in May, as the terms for current members expire in June. Every year approximately 1-3 terms expire for current council members.

— Marci Siers, Pastoral Council Member



These maroon nametags identify Pastoral Council Members at parish functions.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- August 9 & 10: Harvest Festival
- August 15: Feast of the Assumption
- September 1: Labor Day
- September 2: First Day of School at SVDP
- November 1: All Saint's Day

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Since our first issue in November 2005, the Newsletter Committee has always worked to create a publication that will be fun, educational, and relevant for all parishioners. Now that the Newsletter has become an established part of the parish culture, we are pleased to find that some parishioners and parish groups have begun to suggest ideas for articles in upcoming issues. We encourage this, because it helps us to address the issues, questions, and events that most interest our readers. You can submit your ideas to our committee by e-mailing them to: editor@saintvdp.org, or by mailing them to the church, to the attention of "The St. Vincent Voice Editor." Please note the following deadlines to submit ideas, so that the Newsletter Committee can consider them at our planning meetings:

Submit by Nov. 15 for the Feb. 1—Apr. 31 issue; by Feb. 15 for the May 1—July 31 issue; by May 15 for the Aug. 1—Oct. 31 issue; by Aug. 15 for the Nov. 1—Jan. 31 issue. We don't need the full article by the deadline—just the basic idea for the article to be developed. The Newsletter Committee will determine the final content of each issue.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: GET INVOLVED ON ELECTION DAY

Three years ago, our oldest was turning 18 and was looking forward to voting for the first time. She started asking us questions on how the voting process worked, how she might be able to better understand it, and be more involved with it.

My wife and I have always exercised our right to vote and have taken every opportunity afforded us to educate ourselves on the candidates and issues up for election. It was a different story when one of our kids came to us and started asking questions. We were then faced with how we could direct her to sources that she could use to educate herself on the whole voting process.

Through our search for educational sources, we came across the opportunity to be an election judge. My wife, being the good parent that she is, talked to my daughter about what an election judge does and after their conversation, the two of them decided to sign up and be election judges that year.

My daughter got into the whole election process and used her newfound education and experience as an election judge to make the best informed decisions

YOUR CATHOLIC VALUES AND THE 2008 ELECTION

It's impossible to miss: Just hit the "on" button on a television and turn the channel to any news source, and the media coverage serves as a reminder that the 2008 November elections are quickly approaching. News programming these days is dominated by political ads, political speeches, and constant media coverage of numerous political issues and debates among political candidates.

As Election Day nears, people are inclined to be so caught up with the issues in response to political ideology that they forget what should be a very important factor in our decision: our Catholic faith.

A Duty to Vote as Catholics

As members of the Catholic faith, we "understand that voting is part of our duty as Christians called by Christ to transform the world into a realm in which the Gospel values are operative in the laws of the land" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). As citizens of the United States, we participate in the political process and vote. Thus, "we are bearing witness to the Christian values we hold dear because of our deep relationship with Christ" (Archdiocese of Detroit Michigan Campus and Young Adult Ministry).

With this, it is necessary to understand the importance of those Christian values, how they play out in the issues, and how they are reflected in the candidates' positions. By acknowledging the time needed to know and understand these issues with respect to our Catholic faith, we are fully able to "embody our call as Christians to build up the Kingdom of God."

But the question remains: How would one vote as a Catholic or a Christian? The United Council of Catholic Bishops has noted that this remains a challenging topic to define: "Our Catholic moral framework does not easily fit the categories of right or left, Democrat or Republican. Our responsibility is to measure every party and plat-

form by how its agenda touches human life and dignity." This means it is our responsibility as members of the Catholic faith to vote and to be actively involved in the political process to bring the teachings of Jesus into the values of our government. Each of us should use our moral conscience to choose the candidate that best represents our Catholic faith and the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church. The United Council of Bishops has stated that "decisions about candidates and choices about public policies require clear commitment to moral principles, careful discernment and prudential

science to choose the candidate that best represents our Catholic faith and the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church. The United Council of Bishops has stated that "decisions about candidates and choices about public policies require clear commitment to moral principles, careful discernment and prudential

judgments based on the values of our faith" (Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility).

Following Faith and Morals

The Church's position is clear: "A well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals" (Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life, 4). In other words, as Catholic citizens of the United States, it is our moral responsibility to be involved in the acts of our government. In doing so, we each should follow our moral conscience as Christians to decide who our faith motivates us to choose as the right candidate to represent us.

That is not to say taking one side over another is easy. A party's platforms *and* a candidate's positions should be evaluated thoroughly. In the end, as Catholics, we must elect the leader that will justify our Christian morals and provide a direction of Christian responsibility—a leader we believe will demonstrate good conscience with respect to Catholic social teachings.



CATHOLIC VALUES & THE ELECTION

(continued from previous page)

Prayer Before an Election

Lord God,

As the election approaches,
we seek to better understand
the issues and concerns that confront
our city/state/country, and how
the gospel compels us to respond
as faithful citizens in our community.

We ask for eyes that are free
from blindness so that we might
see each other as brothers and sisters,
one and equal in dignity,
especially those who are victims of
abuse, violence, deceit and poverty.

We ask for ears that will hear
the cries of children unborn
and those abandoned,
men and women oppressed because of
race or creed, religion or gender.

We ask for minds and hearts that are
open to hearing the voice
of leaders who will bring us
closer to your Kingdom.

We pray for discernment so that we
may choose leaders
who hear your Word, live your love,
and keep in the ways of your truth
as they follow in the steps of Jesus
and his apostles and guide us
to your Kingdom of justice and peace.

We ask this in the name of your son,
Jesus Christ,
and through the power
of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

— From "Catholic Update", a publication of St.
Anthony Messenger Press, June 2008

In the Catholic tradition, it is a virtue to be a responsible citizen; actively participating in the political process is a moral obligation. This obligation is "rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do." As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, "It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. ... As far as possible, citizens should take an active part in public life" (nos. 1913-1915).

Christian Response to Disagreements

Being active in public life—especially in the final months before Election Day—is likely to expose us to good-natured, even vigorous debate about the hot-topic issues of this election. We approach the election from the perspective of our Catholic faith, but certainly not everyone will share those views. Political disagreements may be inevitable, but they should be handled with a Christian response. We are all neighbors, all brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus' greatest commandment was to love one another as he has loved us. Peter, in his First Epistle, expands on this example with specific instructions:

"In summary, then, all of you should be like-minded, sympathetic, loving toward one another, kindly disposed and humble. Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult. Return a blessing instead. This you have been called to do that you may receive a blessing as your inheritance. He who cares for life and wants to see prosperous days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from uttering deceit. He must turn from evil and do good, seek peace and follow after it, because the Lord has eyes for the just and ears for their cry; but against evildoers the Lord sets his face" (Peter 3: 8-12).

Peter may not have been writing about an election season 2,000 years in the future, but nonetheless, in 2008 his words are as poignant as ever. His is a message to live by.

— Gregory Siers, Parishioner
(a 20 yr-old junior at Hamline University)

MAKE A DIFFERENCE (CONTINUED)

for her when it came time to vote.

Two years later, our son was faced with the same situation as his sister and again like his sister, came to us and asked us how he could be more involved with the impending elections. This time, it was I who took the lead and steered him in the same direction. He and I attended our one and only training session on how to be an election judge and two weeks later, we were at the polls and working in various capacities that election day. This is when our son had just turned 18, but you can be as young as 16 and still be involved as an election judge. Now, both of our kids will be voting in their first presidential election and are excited to be making their vote count.

If you've been looking for a way to be more involved in the election process, volunteering to be an election judge is a great experience.

To be an election judge, contact your city hall and request an application form and inquire as to when and where training will occur.

—Tim Huston, Parishioner

Brooklyn Park City Hall:
763-569-3300

Osseo City Hall:
763-425-2624

Maple Grove City Hall:
763-494-6000

Champlin City Hall:
763-421-8100

RESOURCES FOR CATHOLIC VOTERS:

"Every voice matters in the public forum. Every vote counts... We encourage all citizens, particularly Catholics, to embrace their citizenship not merely as a duty and privilege, but as an opportunity meaningfully to participate in building the culture of life."

— United States Bishops, "Living the Gospel of Life," n.34

Our bishops and the Holy Father have urged us to be faithful and active citizens. Listed below are some web sites where you can educate yourself on Catholic teachings and moral voting.

(PLEASE NOTE: We have done our best to find web sites with no political affiliation, but only affiliation to the teachings of the Church.)

- **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:**
www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/introduction.html
- **Catholic Citizenship**
(a national organization seeking to promote both education and involvement in the political process for Catholics):
www.catholicvote.com
- **Priests for Life** has prepared resources to evaluate candidates & issues in the light of the moral law:
www.priestsforlife.org/elections
- **EWTN's Guide for Moral Voting:**
www.ewtn.com/vote/index.htm

TITHING IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Inspired by a Parishioner Question



Q. A couple of days ago, I started questioning my husband about tithing and giving 10% of our income to the church. I feel like I need more information in the subject to show him the need for us as Christians on doing it. Could you let me know

where in the Bible it mentions about tithing and the correct percentage? Do you have any material explaining the rules of tithing?

A. The idea of a tithe—meaning literally 1/10th or a tenth part—is a Jewish practice from the Old Testament. It was a tenet of Mosaic Law (laws passed down from Moses). It was a tax on Israelites paid from the produce of the land to support the priestly tribe (the Levites), to fund religious festivals, and to help the poor. For Christians, the teachings of Christ brought an end to many of the traditional practices. Tithing was one of these. Tithing is not a teaching of Christ, and is not in the New Testament.

There is, therefore, no biblical or stated obligation for us to contribute a specific percentage of our income. However, the 1/10th of the Old Testament has held on as a durable and practical standard for people to gauge their own response. (Whether this today means 10% of gross income, or income after taxes, seems open to individual interpretations.)

The New Testament goes beyond percentages and more toward the personal commitment that is a by-product of conversion, or the "abandonment of self" in the Lord.

Stories such as the widow's mite (Mark 12 and Luke 20 & 21), or those verses where Christ directs would-be disciples to give up all possessions and 'follow me' (Luke 14, Matthew 19), serve to make the idea of percentages as an objective gauge somewhat beside the point, and more a personal reflection of one's own journey of faith, trust and gratitude.



— Norm Olafson, Staff Member

FAITH FORMATION FOR ALL AGES

Some Staff Changes and Exciting New Programs for the Upcoming Year

The biggest news in St. Vincent's Faith Formation department are some **personnel changes**. Sue Geise, who had coordinated levels 4-6, retired from her ministry at St. Vincent de Paul after nine years. Renee Paske, who has served as part-time coordinator for levels 1-3 will now minister in a full time capacity for levels 1-6. Tracy Patil, who has been a part time faith formation administrative assistant for the past 3.5 years will serve as an assistant to Renee as well as keep her current role. Our new Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Molly Goers, will start at St. Vincent de Paul on August 11. She comes to us highly recommended with a new Master's degree from St. John's in Collegeville and with six years of parish experience. She is not starting here earlier because she is leading a group from St. Odilia's, Shoreview, to World Youth Day in Australia in July.

Registration forms for our parish Faith Formation program for children/youth, pre-school through high school, were mailed in late July. Please note that the form has been redone, so you will hopefully find it more user friendly. Please note the early bird fee and registration deadline information on the registration form. Get your forms in early.

It requires over 200 volunteers to staff our Faith Formation program that serves around 1300 children and youth in an average year. Please consider serving God and God's children as a catechist/teacher. It is the responsibility of each and every member of the parish to pass on our Catholic faith. Easy to use lesson plans, on-going training, and support are provided.

Learning isn't just for children. As adults, we need to strive to have a living faith on

(Continued on page 9)

FAITH FORMATION FOR ALL AGES

(continued from previous page)

an adult level and not simply rely on what we were taught when we were children. The knowledge and understanding of our faith should be deepening and growing as we mature into full stature in Christ.

As this newsletter goes to press, the Adult Faith Formation calendar is still being finalized. Listed at right are some of the tentative offerings:

We Are Always in Need of Volunteers for our Faith Formation Programs.

What is a catechist? A catechist is a friend, mentor, listener, and someone who shapes the minds, hearts, and spirits of children. It is the role of a catechist to help a young person to learn Catholic traditions and scripture, the liturgy, community life, social justice and prayer. A catechist offers choices, asks questions, and offers encouragement. **At Saint Vincent's we offer a support system of lessons, materials, and training to our catechists. We are all called to share the faith. Please consider volunteering in Faith Formation this fall.** Please call Gloria at 763-425-2210 to volunteer.

- *The Great Adventure* Bible study continues with *Adventures in 1 Corinthians* with Dr. Tim Gray presenting on DVD. A ten-week, Monday afternoon and evening study will be offered. Note that this study features half hour DVD presentations instead of the usual one-hour presentations, plus one-hour small group discussions.
- A return of *The Encounter the Spirit Retreat* with Fr. Jim Livingston, Teresa Ecker and team will hopefully happen in January of 2009.
- Other tentative offerings include: a Fall Women's Retreat, continuation of the Men's Spirituality Breakfasts/Group, top-notch guest speakers, monthly Book Club, and MOMS (Ministry of Mother's Sharing) groups.

Please watch the bulletin for details on these and other upcoming opportunities.

— Chuck Pratt, Dir. of Faith Formation



Why not fill your car or home with discussion and education about your faith?

Tune in to these local Christian radio stations!

Relevant Radio:

AM 1330
or
www.relevantradio.com

KTIS:

AM 900 or FM 98.5
or www.ktis.org

FACES OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Meet Our New Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Molly Goers

Full Name: Molly Marie Goers

Age: 28

Hometown: Chanhassen, MN

Education: Undergraduate - College of St. Benedict, BA Pastoral Ministry; Graduate - St. John's University, MA Pastoral Ministry

Exciting Moments: Going to two World Youth Days in Germany and Australia were amazing moments for me. It was absolutely thrilling to receive the Eucharist with millions of other Catholics and even the Pope. I am also anticipating a very exciting moment as I will be getting married in April.

Why did I choose Youth Ministry: I was on a retreat my freshman year at St. Ben's and I truly felt the Holy Spirit calling me to do Youth Ministry. This was a really good thing, because I was a pre-med major who tended to pass out at the sight of blood! Since I made the decision to do Youth Ministry, the doors have opened and I am constantly blown away by how much God has blessed me. I get to wake up every day and go to a job that I really love. There are not too many people that can say that! I also work with these amazing teens that challenge, inspire and "wow" me.

Highlights of my six years of ministry: Retreats, Mission Trips, seeing the "a-ha" moment with teens, working with some incredible Youth Ministers, attending some great conferences and eating pizza every week!

Fun Fact about Me: I once had a run-in between my bicycle and a big yellow school bus (Ask me about it sometime. It really is a funny story)

Favorite Food: I really love cheesecake!

Favorite Color: Purple

Favorite Leisure Activities: Skiing (water and snow), singing, hanging out with family and friends, watching movies, and of course cheering on the VIKINGS (even when they are not so good)!

If I could go anywhere where would I go: Rome. I am such a nerd when it comes to Church things, I think I would spend the entire time just in the Vatican libraries.

Editor's Note: Molly will be joining the staff at St. Vincent de Paul on Aug. 11th. Please join us in making her feel welcome at our parish.





View previous issues online:

To view past issues of The St. Vincent Voice, visit our parish web site at: www.saintvdp.org/parish/parish_newsletters

LIVING THE COMMANDMENTS

A Continuing Series on Living the Commandments in Modern Life

This continuing series reviews the 10 Commandments revealed to the Israelites (as well as the 2 Great Commandments given to us by Jesus) in the context of the life of a modern-day Catholic. With this series, we seek to provide a few basic ideas and challenges in hopes of inspiring readers to reflect anew on God's Commandments—and how to live in a way that honors them.

#5: You shall not kill.

Scientifically and morally, we know that, “every embryo from the moment of conception has the entire genetic makeup of a unique human life. The growing child must be recognized and treated as completely and fully human. He or she needs only time to grow and develop.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults) However, from the moment of conception to the end of life, God’s creation faces many threats.

In many countries—including our own—these humans are threatened by the possibility of abortion or the possible results of in-vitro fertilization practices (being discarded or used for cloning or stem cell research). We Catholics cannot condone these practices, however: “Some argue that the good obtained by healing serious diseases justifies the destruction of some human embryos. But this reduces a human being to a mere object for use. It assumes there are no moral absolutes that must be held in all circumstances. It violates the moral principle that the end does not justify the means. Embryonic stem-cell research is an immoral means to a good end. It is morally unacceptable.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults) As Catholics, we are obligated to fight for the protection of all humans from the moment of conception.

Once outside the womb, the child faces a world where war, terrorism, and poverty continue to threaten human life and dignity. The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults tells us, “The best way to avoid war is to safeguard peace by letting go of the anger and hatred that breed war and by eliminating the poverty, injustice, and deprivation of human rights that lead to war.” It is not enough for all of us to sit in

the comfort of our homes and concern ourselves only with the well-being of our own families. We must not ignore the suffering of others, and we must take action to be generous with the gifts we have received.

There are also end-of-life issues to consider. Although we recognize that there are situations where the taking of another life may be necessary in self-defense, we cannot justify the use of the death penalty for prisoners in the modern state, since we have the means to protect society from these criminals in a non-lethal manner. “When dwelling on legal and moral arguments concerning the death penalty, we should do so not with vengeance and anger in our hearts, but with the compassion and mercy of our lord in mind. It is also important to remember that penalties imposed on criminals always need to allow

for the possibility of the criminal to show regret for the evil committed and to change his or her life for the better.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults) We must also stand against suicide and euthanasia. Even when the intention is to alleviate suffering of the body, the

health of the soul must take precedence.

Finally, in addition to guarding the sanctity of the physical life, this commandment also has another important aspect—the prohibition against scandal. “In its focus on the preservation of life, the Fifth Commandment also is concerned with the care we show for each other’s moral life. A person whose words or actions lead others to believe that evil or sinful behavior is acceptable and not morally wrong is guilty of the sin of scandal.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults)

So, not only are we prohibited from engaging in sinful behaviors ourselves—we are also prohibited from making others feel comfortable in their own sinful behaviors. This can be very challenging when the person is someone you care about, or whose approval you seek. Nevertheless, if you accept or minimize their sin—you make it more likely that they will continue in their immoral behaviors.

(Continued on page 11)

LIVING THE COMMANDMENTS

(continued from previous page)

#6: You shall not commit adultery.

Marital fidelity is a virtue that benefits not only the man and woman in the marriage, but also their families, communities, and society as a whole. The sacramental nature of a Catholic marriage provides a couple with the additional grace and strength from God that will be required in the inevitable difficulties that will arise. *“God established marriage as a reflection of his fidelity to us. The vows made by the spouses at their wedding to be faithful to one another forever should witness the very covenant God has made with us.”* (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults) Imagine if all married couples in today’s world actually treated each other with the love, forgiveness, and faithfulness that God shows to us! It is a lofty goal, but if we even attempt it—our marriages will be examples to the world.

This commandment not only deals with the fidelity of married couples, but also with the idea that we are all called to chastity—married single, religious, and or-

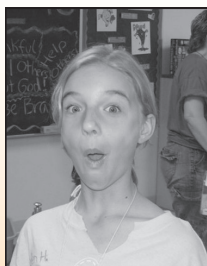
dained. *“Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being”* (CCC, no. 2337) Sins against chastity include lust, masturbation, fornication, incest, sexual abuse, pornography, prostitution, rape, and homosexual acts. The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults makes the distinction that, *“Having homosexual inclinations is not immoral. It is homosexual acts that are immoral ... The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.”* We are always obligated to act with both chastity and charity, if we are to imitate Jesus.

These two commandments instruct us to honor the sanctity of the human body and the human soul. Every person is a unique creation, and a reflection of God.

—Nikelle Morris, Parishioner & Editor

REMEMBERING ...

Vacation Bible School

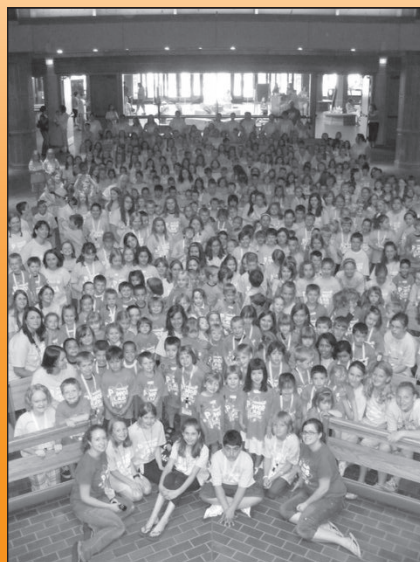


Power Lab:

Discovering Jesus' Miraculous Power!

Each day over 300 kids sang songs, played team-work-building games, nibbled Test Tube Treats, took on Daily Challenges to share Jesus' amazing

power in their lives, enjoyed “electrifying” Bible adventures, collected Bible Memory Buddies to remind them of God’s Word, and created Bible Point Crafts to take home! Thanks to all the hard-working volunteers who made this great week possible—**you are priceless!**





The St. Vincent Voice

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9100 93rd Avenue North
Brooklyn Park, MN 55455
(763) 425-2210
www.saintvdp.org

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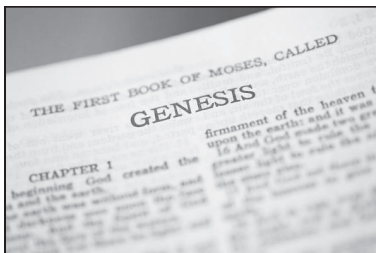
HOW DID THE CATHOLIC BIBLE COME TO BE?

Inspired by Questions Submitted by Parishioner John J. Smith

The period when the **Old Testament books** were written differs from book to book, but scripture scholars say that some of the earliest individual books were written down probably beginning near the end of the 13th century B.C., perhaps around 1200 B.C. The last book to be written of all the old Testament books is 1 Maccabees, which is thought to have been written around 100 B.C.

The word Bible comes from the Greek “ta biblia,” meaning books. At the end of first century A.D., Jews in Palestine declared a list of 39 books completed. About this same time, Jews in Egypt put together a separate list, adding several books written in Greek. Today, Protestant Christians use the books from the Old Testament compiled by the Palestine Jews. Roman Catholics use the Egyptian extended version of the Old Testament. The extended version includes these seven books; Judith, Tobit, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach and Barauch. Roman Catholics call these book deuterocanonical. Protestants call them Apocrypha.

The **New Testament books** were all written within a shorter period of time, between 50 A.D. to 100 A.D. The early Christians (A.D. c.30) would gather and orally pass on their beliefs in life, death and promises of Jesus Christ. They would teach their children and converts. Over time,



it made sense to write down the sayings and stories of Jesus Christ.

By the middle of the 2nd century, it became evident that many variations were circulating. After much debate among church leaders it was decided, by the end of the 2nd century, that four Gospels, the Epistles of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles are authentic, thus establishing the New Testament.

In 367 Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria finally authorized the New Testament.

The compilation of the books of the Bible is credited to the Catholic Bishops around the end of the 4th century. Of all the different councils that worked on this compilation, three prominent ones were: the Synods of Hippo, 393 A.D., Carthage, 397 A.D. and later, Carthage 419 A.D. These councils/synods gave us the canon of Sacred Scripture as Catholics know it today. (Note: there are some additional passages in Daniel and Esther not found in Protestant Bibles.)

Over and above these historical facts, it is important to keep in mind that the Catholic Church affirms that all texts of the Bible are divinely inspired and teach, “solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.” (Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, 11)

— Okey Anyanwu & Sue Geise, Staff Members