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January 31, 2009



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

# The St. Vincent Voice

A PUBLICATION OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

## FINDING WAYS TO LIVE A PRAYERFUL LIFE

How do you pray? Do you pray enough? Most of us have challenged ourselves at some point by looking inward and asking these very questions. The desire to pray—to strengthen our personal relationship with God—is there, but sometimes it's hard to know how to begin, or where to set aside time amidst busy schedules.

In this issue of the St. Vincent Voice, you will read about Catholics, from saints to our fellow parishioners, who have found ways to live a prayerful life. For St. Gianna Molla, prayer was key in trusting God to save the life of her unborn child. For the

St. Vincent's Shepherds Flock Running Group, prayer is a way to begin a Saturday before a run that refreshes the body and the soul. And for many parishioners, prayer is a way to offer up hardships, ask God to bless others, give thanks, and, ultimately, fortify faith.

As a season of preparation and conversion in anticipation of Jesus' arrival, Advent is a poignant time to be thinking about prayer. It's an opportunity to open the line of communication to God—or call more often. Whatever your method, God is listening.

— Eric O'Leak,

Parishioner & Newsletter Committee Member

## ADVENT: A TIME OF CONVERSION

A Reflection from our New Parochial Vicar, Fr. Wehmann

Advent is a time of preparation and reflection, hope and anticipation. The coming of the eternal Son of God is celebrated in the three ways we experience time: past, present and future. He came for us in our flesh through the incarnation; he comes to us in the Church through grace; he will come at the end of time to judge us, living or dead. In order to prepare us for the coming of Christ, the Church calls us to conversion.

What is conversion? The *Catechism* states that conversion is "A radical reorientation of the whole life away from sin and evil, and toward God. This change of heart or conversion is a central element of Christ's preaching, of the Church's ministry of evangelization, and of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation" (*Glossary*).

Conversion is a reorientation. This means that many times our lives are oriented toward sin. We are orientated in the wrong direction, namely, away from God. Conversion means changing direction and orientating ourselves in the right direction, that is, toward God. Contrasting unconversion with conversion, Pope Benedict XVI writes, "[An] unconverted life is self-justification (I am not worse than the others); conversion is humility in entrusting oneself to the love of the Other [God], a



love that becomes the measure and the criteria of my own life."

Jesus Himself calls us to conversion. As the Gospels relate, "After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: 'This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'" (*Mark 1:14-15*).

Pope John Paul II highlighted the

importance of the conversion preached by Christ by including it as one of the new Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary: "The Proclamation of the Kingdom and the Call to Conversion."

Conversion is necessary for evangelization, that is, the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by what we say and do. If we are not converted to the Gospel, we will not be able to evangelize. There is an old saying: "We cannot give what we do not have." Therefore, if we do not "have" God by living a converted life, we cannot "give" God to others by what we say and do. What better gift to your family than a converted life centered on Christ?

Conversion can be planned or unplanned. Both types of conversion require the grace of God. In the life of St. Paul, conversion was unplanned. God struck Paul down on

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- **November 1:**  
All Saint's Day
- **November 4:**  
Election Day
- **November 30:**  
First Sunday of Advent
- **December 6 & 7:**  
Christmas Bazaar
- **Monday, Dec. 8:**  
Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation)
- **Saturday, Dec. 13:**  
Breakfast with Santa
- **Thur., Jan. 1, 2009:**  
Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation)
- **Sunday, Jan. 25:**  
School Open House

The veneration of saints, in Latin, *cultus*, or the "cult of the saints", describes a particular popular devotion to the saints. Although the term "worship" is often used, it is intended in the old sense meaning to honor or give respect (*dulia*). Divine Worship is properly reserved only for God (*latria*) and never to the Saints. As "special friends of God" they can be asked to intercede or pray for those still on earth. A saint may be designated as a patron saint of particular causes or professions, or invoked against specific illnesses or disasters. They are not thought to have power of their own, but only that granted by God.

—Excerpt from [www.answers.com/topic/saint](http://www.answers.com/topic/saint)



## ASK FATHER

Fr. Jack Answers Parishioner Questions

**Q. I really enjoyed the article in your publication titled, "Cultural Traditions of St. VDP". I was wondering what the proper response is to the release of incense. I noticed some people make the sign of the cross and others do nothing.**

—Submitted by parishioner Ann Litke

**A.** It is believed that we acquire our knowledge through our senses. We see, we touch, we taste, we hear, and we smell. In the liturgy, we try to enhance all of our senses so we can develop a deep knowledge of God. We hear a beautiful hymn and that draws us closer to God. We listen to the readings from Sacred Scripture and that brings us closer to God. We taste the presence of God in the Host at Communion time. We dip our fingers into the baptismal font as we enter the Church and feel the water. Likewise, with incense we activate our smell. Our prayers rise like incense to God. We use incense at various times during special Masses. For instance, we use it to incense the Gospel before it is proclaimed. We incense the altar and the gifts before the Eucharistic prayer. We also incense the people. After the gifts are incensed, the Priest is incensed then the people rise. The proper gesture is for the people to bow to the one who incenses them. Whether they make the sign of the cross or not is not important. It is the filling of our senses and knowing our prayer is going to God. We also use incense at a funeral when we incense the body during the final commendation.

**Q. Dear Father - A group of us were wondering what happened to St. Blaise feast day on February 3<sup>rd</sup>? We remember having the blessing of throats on that day. Why don't we have this any more? Could we have this again in our church?**

—Submitted by parishioner Jackie Hofhenke

**A.** This is an interesting question. We have always celebrated the feast of St. Blaise here at St. Vincent. Throughout the liturgical calendar we celebrate the lives of the saints. These are feast days. The majority of the Sundays are called solemnities. Solemnities always take precedence over feast days. Over the course of the liturgical year, we celebrate various saints. Some saints have cults attached to their celebration. St. Francis of Assisi has the cult of blessing animals on his day. Blaise has the cult of blessing throats. His feast day comes in the midst of flu and cold season, so what better way to address this problem than pray over those who are sick? As I said above, we have celebrated St. Blaise day with the blessing of throats on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> lands on Sunday, we have celebrated the Sunday and incorporated the blessing of throats in the final blessing at Mass. We can bless individually with two unlit candles or we can do a general blessing as we do when the feast lands on a Sunday.

*Thanks for the questions. It is fun doing the research on them. Please feel free to submit your questions and we will try to answer them to the best of our ability. —Fr. Jack*

## 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](mailto:editor@saintvdp.org).



Please share 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](mailto:editor@saintvdp.org)

# ADVENT: A TIME OF CONVERSION

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the road to Damascus and that woke him up to the truth of the Gospel and forged his relationship to God through Christ. Testifying before the King, St. Paul himself tells about his conversion: "After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance" (*Acts 26: 19-20*).

In union with grace, conversion can also be planned. This is the more common type of conversion. It does not involve being hit by a bus, going bankrupt, the death of a friend, or the sudden discovery of a fatal illness. Planned conversion is the reorientation of our lives away from sin and toward God, day by day by day. It involves prayer and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession. It involves living the moral life. What is your plan for this Advent for a true conversion toward God's loving gift of his only Son?

But, these activities cannot be done in a rote manner. Prayer, the sacraments, and the moral life, cannot be simply things that we do. There must be a motivation for them. These activities must be the outward expression of a profound inner act, an act of the will. Their motive must be love, the love of others and the love of "The Other," namely God Himself. Benedict XVI made this apparent in his first encyclical, *God is Love*. "We have come to believe in God's love: in these words the Christian can express the fundamental decision of his life. Being Chris-

tian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. Saint John's Gospel describes that event in these words: 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should...have eternal life' (3:16)."

We should not expect planned conversion to be painless. Both unplanned conversion and planned conversion demand a wrenching of ourselves from the grips of evil and sin. Evil and sin do not give up without a struggle. Alluding to this struggle, Pope Benedict said recently that most of us live "the martyrdom of ordinary life." Martyrdom involves pain. There will be pain when we live our vocations, we love within the family, we pray, and we do our work, even when we do not feel like it; even when we think that we can no longer go on; and even when temptation and sin do their best to beguile us. But, with God's grace, we do go on and as we follow the path of a planned conversion, our love for God is purified and refined, so that we will be ready to meet Christ when He comes.

Because it prepares us to meet Christ when He comes, conversion is at the very heart of Advent. As we live this short season, keep the words of Pope Benedict in mind: "Conversion is humility in entrusting oneself to the love of the Other [God], a love that becomes the measure and the criteria of my own life." Have a most blessed, *planned*, Advent!

— Fr. Wehmann, Parochial Vicar



## HOW DO YOU MAKE PRAYER A PART OF YOUR EVERY DAY LIFE?

In September, the following request was distributed by The St. Vincent Voice newsletter committee:

*Dear friends, family, & fellow parishioners,*

*In our upcoming issue, we plan to include an article highlighting the wide variety of ways that people integrate prayer into their daily lives. So often, we hear people say that they "don't have enough time" to pray, or "don't know how," they should pray. We are hoping to show—through your examples—that prayer can take many forms, and any type of prayer is beneficial when it deepens your relationship with God and your love of his creation.*

*We are writing to you in the hope that you will take a minute to write a sentence or two about your prayer life and send it to us... How do you integrate prayer into your life? We are interested in hearing about all different types of prayer—formal, informal, contemplative, communal, etc.*

*Thank you and God Bless!*

Following are some of the wonderful responses we received. We hope that one or more of these ideas will work to enhance your prayer life, as well.

- "I greatly dislike cleaning the floors and bathrooms. Rather than grudgingly get through it, I offer it up to God. I take a moment and say, 'Okay, God, I don't want to do this but it needs to be done. I'm washing this floor for you'. And I think about how much I'd rather be washing the floor than being scourged."
- "I like to say a prayer with my children each day before they leave for school."
- "I sit in a cross legged yoga position and look out the window, just being in God's presence. I don't think about anything, but I listen."
- "Besides the daily prayers of asking for things such as good health and guidance for myself, my husband and children and I always say a little prayer of thanks when I get a green light when I am in a hurry or a good parking spot. It is the little things that add up in life."

(Continued on page 5)

# REMEMBERING...



# Harvest Festival

2008



*Hundreds of volunteers came together to make this event a success...in fact, we think this may have been our biggest Harvest Festival ever! The weather was beautiful, the people were friendly, and we all had a great time!*

**# of Volunteer Hours to make it happen: 2,325**



**# of Raffle Tickets Purchased: 36,433**



**# of Beers Sold: 1,252**



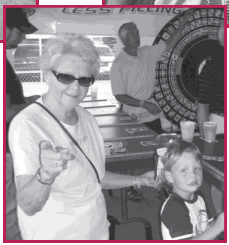
**Pieces of Chicken Served: 1,450**



**# of Pull Tabs Pulled: 5,161**



**Amt. the Youth Program made from inflatables: \$1,172**



**Scoops of Ice Cream Licked: 1,486**



**Inflatable slides, climbs, jousts, trips, and rebounds: 10,860**



**# of Children's Games Sold: 4,924**



# MAKING PRAYER A PART OF EVERY DAY LIFE

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- “This may seem a little silly but to keep my mind on Jesus and Mary throughout the day, I say a little prayer every time I wash my hands with water. It is: ‘I love Jesus this I know with all my heart and soul and I love Mother Mary this I know with all my heart and soul’.”
- “I receive an e-mail each day of the ‘Daily Three Minute Retreat’ offered by [www.FindingGod.org](http://www.FindingGod.org). It contains a photo, music, a passage from the Bible, a reflection on the reading, reflection questions, and a closing prayer.”
- “I pray when I see a parent or child dealing with a stressful situation. Often the child has a behavior because he or she may not have the language to communicate to the adult the stress or confusion that he is feeling. I pray that the parent gets the grace to deal with the situation in a patient and loving way.”
- “I try to use those things that I think keep me from prayer (my job, my kids, volunteering, housework, running errands, etc.) into a prayer. When I’m frustrated battling homework once again with my children, I pray, ‘Lord, I’ve prayed for patience and I see you are giving me the opportunity here to practice patience. Please open my heart to your grace.’ Instead of fuming at a driver that cuts me off, I pray, ‘Lord, please watch over and protect that person, and give them the grace to deal with whatever might be distracting them.’ When I get so tired of cleaning and picking up the house yet again, I pray, ‘Lord help me to appreciate this family you’ve entrusted to me and this home you have blessed us with. Help me to know that serving my family is doing Your work.’ In these moments, I can instantly feel God in my heart and the anger or frustration is gone.”
- “Instead of just writing in my journal, I make it a letter to God. I tell Him about my day, my worries, my joys, and then I end each entry with a prayer. Sometimes it is a prayer of thanksgiving, sometimes it is asking for help for me or someone else. But in any event, I found that this method of journaling not only helps me work through things, it also gives me some quality time with the Lord.”
- “I put myself on autopilot so that anytime I find a chance in my day, I start a new decade of the Rosary...running out to the mailbox, unloading the dishwasher, etc. It’s amazing how these ‘spurts of prayer’ have led me to contemplate how Jesus is alive in my everyday life.”
- “I pray the Stations of the Cross at home during Lent. All you need is one of the many booklets to guide you.”
- “If I have prayer scheduled into my day, I’ll do it. If I have a bible study group meeting with group sharing and questions to answer, I will get them done. Adoration in the chapel is another great opportunity. If I have committed to an hour of Adoration, I will get there.”
- “It’s been a tough couple of years and I have had to ‘remind’ myself to trust in God’s providence. When I catch myself questioning God’s plan, my inner prayer is ‘Cast your net...’ Almost daily (yes, daily) I am realizing that if I expect my net to be full up with fish, I need to trust God enough to cast it over the side of the boat.”
- “I find I can do some very hopeful and helpful prayer each week when I spend up to an hour watering flowers around the church. It is a very peaceful time and I can be in touch with God as I take care of His house.” ■



## A MODERN SAINT

St. Gianna Molla, Contemporary Catholic Woman

Gianna Beretta was born in Magenta (Milan) on October 4, 1922. Already as a youth she willingly accepted the gift of

faith... and was convinced of the necessity and effectiveness of prayer.

She diligently dedicated herself to studies during the years of her secondary and university education, while, at the same time, applying her faith through generous apostolic service among the youth of Catholic Action and charitable work among the elderly and needy as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. After earning degrees in Medicine and Surgery from the

University of Pavia in 1949, she opened a medical clinic in Mesero (near Magenta) in 1950. She specialized in Pediatrics at the University of Milan in 1952 and thereafter gave special attention to mothers, babies, the elderly and poor.

While working in the field of medicine (which she considered a “mission” and practiced as such), she increased her generous service to Catholic Action, especially among the “very young” and, at the same time, expressed her joie de vivre [joy of life] and love of creation through skiing and mountaineering. Through her prayers and those of others, she reflected upon her vocation, which she also considered a gift from God. Having chosen the vocation of

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**View previous issues online:**

To view past issues of [The St. Vincent Voice](http://www.saintvdp.org/parish/parish_newsletters), visit our parish web site at:  
[www.saintvdp.org/parish/parish\\_newsletters](http://www.saintvdp.org/parish/parish_newsletters)

# A MODERN-DAY SAINT

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marriage, she embraced it with complete enthusiasm and wholly dedicated herself “to forming a truly Christian family”...In 1956, to her great joy, she became the mother of Pierluigi, in 1957 of Mariolina; in 1959 of Laura. With simplicity and equilibrium she harmonized the demands of mother, wife, doctor and her passion for life.

In September 1961 towards the end of the second month of pregnancy, she was touched by suffering and the mystery of pain; she had developed a fibroma in her uterus. Before the required surgical operation, and conscious of the risk that her continued pregnancy brought, she pleaded with the surgeon to save the life of the child she was carrying, and entrusted herself to prayer and Providence. The life was saved, for which she thanked the Lord. She spent the seven months remaining until the birth of the child in incomparable strength of spirit and unrelenting dedication to her tasks as mother and doctor. She worried that the baby in her womb might be born in pain, and she asked God to prevent that.

A few days before the child was due, although trusting as always in Providence, she was ready to give her life in order to save that of her child: “If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the

child—I insist on it. Save him”. On the morning of April 21, 1962, Gianna Emanuela was born. Despite all efforts and treatments to save both of them, on the morning of April 28, amid unspeakable pain and after repeated exclamations of “Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you”, the mother died. She was 39 years old. Her funeral was an occasion of profound grief, faith and prayer. The Servant of God lies in the cemetery of Mesero (4 km from Magenta).

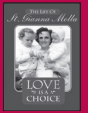
“Conscious immolation”, was the phrase used by Pope Paul VI to define the act of Blessed Gianna, remembering her at the Sunday Angelus of September 23, 1973, as: “A young mother from the diocese of Milan, who, to give life to her daughter, sacrificed her own, with conscious immolation”. The Holy Father in these words clearly refers to Christ on Calvary and in the Eucharist.

Gianna was beatified by Pope John Paul II on April 24, 1994, during the international Year of the Family.

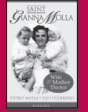
— Excerpts from [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

Want to learn more? Check out these books:

Love is a Choice: Life of St. Gianna Molla



St. Gianna Molla: Wife, Mother, Doctor



## FAMILY CORNER:

### CATHOLIC-THEMED GIFT IDEAS

With the holidays coming up, we thought we'd gather some gift suggestions for your family!

#### Gospel Champions:



Gospel Champions is a Catholic 3D action adventure PC video game containing 12-14 different Gospel stories. In each Gospel story level, children gameplay in the setting of the story by solving puzzles; avoiding adversaries; finding Gospel charac-

## SPIRITUALITY “RUNS STRONG” IN THE SHEPHERD’S FLOCK

*Following are the reflections of a few members of the running group organized by St. Vincent de Paul parishioners. They are a great example of one way to find God in your relationships with others, as well as in the beauty of God's creation.*

"Pam Baker (and her great family) started the Shepherd's Flock Running Group at St. Vincent de Paul a few years ago, and she and the group have been a blessing in motion ever since. Pam has encouraged old and young, fit and “not so fit”, fast and “not so fast”. We are encouraged to run for fun, for fitness of body and fitness of soul. I am not sure I will go to heaven because of Pam, but I think I may live longer in order to give me more time to reconcile with the Lord, so maybe if I make it to heaven, Pam may be the reason.

Every Saturday morning at 6 a.m., Pam has already set out the refreshment/rest stops for that morning's run. We all gather



together for a prayer before we run. What a peaceful start to a beautiful Saturday morning. The first mile or so are spent catching up with the other runners on how they are doing with their training schedules, or hearing injury reports about who couldn't make it that day. We are all concerned about the health of each other and everyone's families.

About this time of the morning, the sun is rising while the fog is laying softly on the marshes and wetlands, and the steam is rising off the runner's breath ahead of me. Frequently we see deer and turkey on these early morning runs. It is a spiritual, beautiful time to be running with people that make a difference in my faith life.

In my visits with these friends, I know that they and I frequently pray or say a rosary during our weekday solo runs. Sometimes

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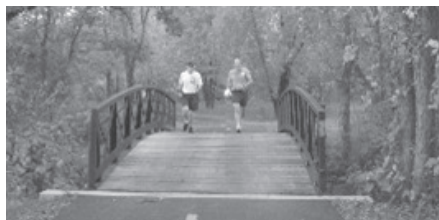
# SHEPHERD'S FLOCK RUNNING GROUP

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this is a good distraction from the long, tedious, solo runs, and a great time to reflect on your faith.

If you are looking to enhance your physical health and in concert, your spiritual health, I would recommend joining the Shepherd' Flock. What else do you have to do at 5:45 on Saturday mornings?"

— Lee Halbur, Parishioner



*Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

"When most people think of a runner's life, you think of a lone runner, like the Forrest Gump Character, who forges out by himself to face the elements. The singular, muddy, sweaty figure that struggles to take the next step and is engrossed in solitary soul searching, trying to form a better relationship with God.



There is a small, but growing group of runners that gather early Saturday mornings, who believe there is a better way. The group is led by St. Vincent de Paul's own Pam Baker and is called the "Shepherd's



Flock". Each member has his or her own running goal—some run for fun, while some are training for a 5K or 10K, or maybe even a ½ or

full marathon. The goals are individual, but the distance or speed does not seem to matter—the idea is to be part of a group that asks for God's guidance, protection and strength before each run.

When you run in a group, you do not need to wonder if God has heard your

prayers. When the hill seems too high, someone pushes you up with a gentle hand on your back. When you are thirsty, someone provides you with water. When you are tired, there is encouragement. When hungry, there is nourishment.

Unlike the movies, not all have happy endings. Not all reach their running goals or hear the cheering crowds. But that does not seem to matter. They have witnessed something greater. They have seen the face of God in their running partner."



— A Saturday Morning Runner

"Running is a process, not a destination, though it often starts with a definite goal in mind, as does Pam Baker's 10-miler and marathon training program.

The group meets once a week, starts with a prayer, and takes small steps that change you as a person. Becoming an athlete is not a difficult or complicated process. It starts with a single step repeated over again, a plan that's easy to follow and people who supply loads of inspiration.



If you've ever thought of becoming involved in the Twin Cities Marathon activities or just want to run with a group of good people, contact Pam."

— Gary Telega, Parishioner

**Editor's Note:** Our thanks to parishioner (and Shepherd's Flock member) **Inga Jahn** for suggesting this article to our Newsletter Committee.

To receive more information on the Shepherd's Flock, contact parishioner Pam Baker. E-mail: [runforlife@comcast.net](mailto:runforlife@comcast.net) or call Pam at 763-424-5042.

The group runs all seasons, weather permitting.

## FAMILY CORNER

(CONTINUED)

ters; seeing an animation of the Gospel Story; performing tasks related to the Gospel story; and finding Saints related to Catholic prayers and teachings. The game has three different skill settings for ages 6 and up. Help children memorize their Catholic prayers & teachings by scoring bonus points for finding and reciting age appropriate prayers and teachings including: Sign of the Cross, The Hail Mary, The Our Father, The Glory Be, Seven Sacraments, Beatitudes, Cardinal Virtues, Marks of the Church, Theological Virtues, Ten Commandments, Gifts of the Spirit, & Fruits of the Spirit. Each volume sells for \$19.95 and includes several bible stories. Order online at [www.thirddaygames.com/gospelChampions/retail/order.asp](http://www.thirddaygames.com/gospelChampions/retail/order.asp)

**Saints at the Dinner Table** by Amy Heyd: Heyd dedi-



cates each chapter to a saint who in some way inspired her to create original recipes for a complete meal—from salad to main course to dessert. Heyd combines a brief introduction to each saint, a reflection, an inspired menu, a dinner prayer and questions for meaningful dinner discussion. You won't want to wait to serve Saints at the Dinner Table for all your special occasions.

# A SAINT FOR CHRISTMAS (AND EVERY!) SEASON

St. Juan Diego, Feast Day—December 9; Our Lady of Guadalupe, Feast Day—December 12



**O**n December 9, 1531, a native Mexican named Juan Diego rose before dawn to walk fifteen miles to daily Mass in what is now Mexico City. Juan lived a simple life as a weaver, farmer, and laborer. That morning, as Juan passed Tepeyac Hill, he heard music and saw a glowing cloud encircled by a rainbow. A woman's voice called him to the top of the hill. There he saw a beautiful young woman dressed like an Aztec princess. She said she was the Virgin Mary and asked Juan to tell the bishop to build a church on that site. She said, "I vividly desire that a church be built on this site, so that in it I can be present and give my love, compassion, help, and defense, for I am your most devoted mother . . . to hear your laments and to remedy all your miseries, pains, and sufferings."

The bishop was kind but skeptical. He asked Juan to bring proof of the Lady's identity. Before Juan could go back to the Lady, he found out his uncle was dying. Hurrying to get a priest, Juan missed his meeting with the Lady. The Lady, however, met him on his path and told him that his uncle had been cured. She then told Juan to climb to the top of the hill where they first met. Juan was shocked to find flowers growing in the frozen soil. He gathered them in his cloak and took them at once to the bishop. Juan told the bishop what had happened and opened his cloak. The flowers that fell to the ground were

Castilian roses (which were not grown in Mexico). But the bishop's eyes were on the glowing image of the Lady imprinted inside Juan's cloak. Soon after, a church was built on the site where our Lady appeared, and thousands converted to Christianity. Our Lady of Guadalupe was declared the patroness of the Americas.

He died on May 30, 1548, at the age of 74. Juan Diego deeply loved the Holy Eucharist, and by special permission of the Bishop he received Holy Communion three times a week, a highly unusual occurrence in those times.

Pope John Paul II praised Juan Diego for his simple faith nourished by catechesis and pictured him (who said to the Blessed Virgin Mary: "I am a nobody, I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf") as a model of humility for all of us.

*Prayer: Blessed Juan, you faced the skepticism and rejection of a bishop and the crowds to bring Mary's message to Mexico. Pray for us that when we are faced with obstacles to our faith we may show that same courage and commitment.*

— Excerpts from Catholic Online, [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org)



*This is a photo of the actual image on Juan Diego's tilda (cloak).*

## THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN LITURGY TODAY

**W**hy do we sing? Fr. Michael Joncas, theological scholar, musician and composer who wrote the very popular song, "On Eagles' Wings", recently gave a presentation to Liturgical Musicians. He said, "Music is a divine gift mediating God's presence. It is a means by which any human being might encounter God's love and enable a response. The voice of the assembly in song should be the focus of music ministry. To involve the gathered people of God in this way should be the most beautiful sound of all which we as ministers should love and strive to bring out beyond all else that we do in this ministry. A common song sung by all in community draws us all into His Divine Presence."

The role of music in the church has come a very long way. In the Old Testament, King David is credited with writing the majority of the Psalms, which are poems that are set to music. He would be called on to soothe Saul with his music. He would bring his lyre and go to Saul, singing the Psalmody, which he would compose. There are Psalms of praise, lamentation, sorrow, and fear, to mention a few. We incorporate the Psalms into almost every liturgy we pray today.

*"One who sings prays twice."*

*~ St. Augustine*

Jesus and his followers would gather to pray and sing songs together. The Sacred Liturgy of the Mass as we know it today has developed over the centuries since its first institution by Christ, continued through his apostle, Peter.

Did you ever wonder what the music sounded like in Christ's time? Some scholars suggest that Gregorian chant as we know it today may be about as close as it gets to what the sung word was like back then. Compare the sound of music in the Jewish Synagogue today in the parts of the Torah that are intoned with Gregorian chant. It is very much like Gregorian chant. Much of our psalmody is still in Gregorian chant.

Throughout the history of the Roman Catholic Church, many important reforms took place. The reform of Vatican II took place in the 1960's. Part of this reform included Rome giving permission for the Mass to be prayed in the language of the vernacular of the people all over the world. Here in America, all of the texts of the Sacred Liturgy of the Eucharist were translated into English. The Mass was no longer a dialog between the Priest

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# THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN LITURGY TODAY

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and the Acolytes. The Vatican gave the assembly a very important and primary role. They were given the privilege of the "FULL, CONSCIOUS, AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE ASSEMBLY" and they were allowed to dialogue in the spoken and sung word. We could finally understand the scripture readings, respond to the spoken prayer in dialog with the Presider, and we could sing songs together in English. Musicians and composers got very busy composing music for the liturgy. The use of guitars, piano, percussion and other instruments were introduced as a means to accompany the "new song", where music had previously been accompanied by organ only. For many years, this ensemble of instruments was not always well received by some communities.

Much of the music composed back in the 60's did not take into consideration what is considered "good theology" today. A lot of the music composed during this era spoke to a "Me and God" focus. Over the last few decades, liturgical music has progressed to include the focus of "We, God and the Church", the community of the faithful. Composers today are very conscious of incorporating scripture into their musical compositions, making their works very relevant to the scripture of each liturgy. Musicians like me spend many hours researching the scripture readings for each liturgy and selecting songs with lyrics that are taken from those readings. We do this to make the liturgy work in concert with the spoken and sung word.

History in any field is an important consideration. There are parts of our musical heritage that we need to hold on to. Some of our "traditional" hymnody was written



with excellent theology in the text. Latin music is also part of our heritage and we are losing an entire generation in its lack of knowledge of our Latin/Greek heritage. We as musicians must try to incorporate some of the "gems" of our musical choices in our liturgies today. The sung Greek text "Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison" is an example of a piece of music from our heritage that we try to incorporate into our liturgies here at

St. Vincent's. We choose the seasons of Advent and Lent, which are more somber seasons of celebration, to use these choices of music. We also choose songs for use during Holy Week, such as "Pie Jesu", "Adoramus Te" and "Panis Angelicus" to mention a few.

Soon there will be another reform taking place in Catholic Worship. Rome will be coming out with a new document on Sacred Worship in the next few years. When the Latin texts were translated into English, some of the true translations were lost in the process. They are working on a more "pure" translation of the texts and this will affect how we respond to the spoken word as well as the texts for some of the acclamations that we sing.

And so, we journey through our days in the life of the church as history unfolds itself through the Sacred Liturgy. I am so fortunate to be serving this community as the Director of Music Ministry. I love what I do and I am indeed blessed here at Saint Vincent de Paul with so many talented musicians, supportive colleagues and a loving community.

May God bless you, the assembly, and all who serve the Church in Music Ministry!

— *Jacqueline Okoh, Dir. of Music Ministry*



## Breakfast with Santa

**Save the date:**  
our Breakfast with Santa is coming up on Saturday, Dec. 13 from 9 am until Noon.

Watch the bulletin in the next few weeks for information on how to buy your tickets, and more details about the event.

**HO- HO- HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

## JOIN US!

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 Chuck Pratt at (763) 425-2210 for more information about this opportunity!

### NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Please submit your ideas to our committee by e-mailing them to: [editor@saintvdp.org](mailto: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.

**Reading  
Recommendation/  
Gift Suggestion:**



Catholic Update is a practical, affordable 4-page monthly publication. Each issue explores one key aspect of our Catholic heritage or a current topic of importance to Catholics. An annual subscription is only \$13.00, and each issue carries the Imprimatur of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. To subscribe, call St. Anthony Messenger Press at 1-800-488-0488.



**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Mark your calendars for our Catholic Schools Week Kick-off Celebration and Open House, coming up on **Jan. 25, 2009**. All parishioners, current and prospective students and families will be invited to visit the school to learn more about St. Vincent de Paul's Catholic School, its students and staff, and their contributions to our parish and local communities.

## 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.*

### **#7: You shall not steal.**

Have you ever sat down with a group of friends or family to share a pizza? The way that pizza is divided can tell you a lot about those individuals, as well as the group dynamic. Some will only take slices as needed; others will load their plate with several pieces right away to ensure that they "get theirs". Some will take a quick mental count of the group and the number of slices, and then try to take what seems fair to all. Then, once the group is down to that last slice... it's interesting to watch what happens. Some people figure that any piece left in the box is "first come, first served". Others will watch the group to see if anyone else is interested before taking it, or even ask if anyone wants to split it. However... almost none of us would reach across to grab an uneaten piece off another's plate. The shame of such blatant theft in the full view of the group would keep most of us from even thinking of it!

But of course, that's not how most theft occurs in our society. Our opportunities for theft come in more subtle and anonymous forms: spending time on personal e-mails during company time; lying on our tax returns; going on a "spending spree" without telling our spouse or parents what we've spent; copying music, movies, or computer software from a friend or online instead of paying for it; and so on. Most people do these things with the expectation that they will never be caught, because the theft is small enough that nobody would pay attention. Others justify their actions because, "the government/my company/the insurance people can afford it." Or... "They take/have more than they need, so I'm just taking back what's rightfully mine."

However, we need to remember that although we may not expect to be caught, we have already been caught, because God knew the moment that we did it. In fact, He knew about it when you were only

considering it! (That voice in your head that told you that you probably shouldn't do it? Yes, that was God.)

When we find ourselves tempted to engage in these forms of theft, we each need to ask ourselves, "Is this worth it? Do I really want to push away God's voice so that I can have this song/movie/extra \$20 off my tax bill?" Most of us, when we stop to think about it, will know that the answer is, "No, it's not worth it."

Another important consideration when thinking about the 7th Commandment in our modern lives is our use and caretaking of the gifts we've been given. If the world's resources were one giant pizza... most of us are sitting in front of a plate loaded high with slices. And others, especially in many poor countries around the world, would beg for the crumbs from our plates.

The Catholic Catechism tells us, "Man is himself the author, center, and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity." (2459) It also says, "In economic matters, respect for human dignity requires the practice of the virtue of temperance, so as to moderate attachment to this world's goods; the practice of the virtue of justice, to preserve our neighbor's rights and render him what is his due; and the practice of solidarity, in accordance with the golden rule and in keeping with the generosity of the Lord, who 'though he was rich, yet for your sake...became poor so that by his poverty, you might become rich.' 2 Cor 8:9." (2407)

With this idea in mind, examine your life. Could you live with a little less, so that someone else could have more? Are you being a good steward of your money, your community, and our world? If not, take the steps that will bring your life more in line with the ideals of justice, moderation, and solidarity with God's other creations.

### **#8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

This Commandment can most easily be expressed by this imperative: "Know the truth, speak the truth, live the truth."

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# LIVING THE COMMANDMENTS

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**How do we know the truth?** We look to the life of Jesus, who said at the Last Supper, "I am the way and the truth and the life." John 14:6. **How do we speak the truth?** The Catechism says, "By its very nature, lying is to be condemned. It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity." (2485)

Must we always speak the truth, even when it may cause harm? The Catechism also guides us in these situations: "Charity and respect for the truth should dictate the response to every request for information or communication. The good and safety of

others, respect for privacy, and the common good are sufficient reasons for being silent about what ought not be known or for making use of a discreet language. The duty to avoid scandal often commands strict discretion. No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it." (2489)

**Finally, how are we to live the truth?** We must try to live as God created us: "Man tends by nature toward the truth. He is obliged to honor and bear witness to it... men are both impelled by their nature and bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth once they come to know it and direct their whole lives in accordance with the demands of truth." ■

## FAMILY TIME?

**A Reflection from Our Coordinator of Youth Ministry**

**W**hat does that mean? Family time? Growing up, Family Time usually meant some dumb way that my mom was trying to get us to hang out. Our family was so busy that even eating dinner together became a special family moment. In fact, they became so rare that my brother, sisters, and I nicknamed them "Super Family Fun Days" because they were separate planned events.

It is hard now for families to get together. Parents and kids alike are pulled in many different directions. No time is unplanned anymore; it is filled up with the "stuff" of our lives. Now, I am no different than most of the American public when it comes to the "stuff". I have lots of it in my life, and I am not saying that it is bad. It isn't. In fact, it is the "stuff" of life that keeps us going and allows us to interact with others. The "stuff" helps to form who we are.

However, sometimes the "stuff" keeps us from focusing on what is important. That is probably why Christmas is one my favorite times of year. Christmas was the one time of year that we had MANY "Super Family Fun Days"--usually a week off school, no sporting events, and plenty of family time.

Sometimes we are so hard on ourselves, because we are swept away with all of the Christmas "hoopla", that we do not focus on the significant part of our Christmas celebrations. We are spending quality time with those that we love. There are no quick business calls; there are not any phone solicitors, no soccer games, piano lessons, or meetings. For one entire day, we get to be families. We get to laugh, eat, and share our lives with those who mean the most to us. This is an awesome thing in today's world where we are often not in the same house with our families except when we are sleeping.

I would like to propose that you and your family plan a "Super Family Fun Day" at least once during this Advent season leading up to Christmas. I know it may sound lame, but the older I get, the more I look forward to this special time with just my family. It will connect your family to the true meaning of the season and it can actually be fun. Besides, you know who else spent Christmas with His family...Jesus.

— *Molly Goers, Staff Member*



## The St. Vincent Voice Newsletter Committee

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

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

*The mission of our newsletter is to provide all registered parishioners of St. Vincent de Paul with an interesting and engaging publication that includes detailed articles about the people and events of our parish, education about our Catholic faith, and inspiration to deepen their relationship with God and the Church.*



## The St. Vincent Voice

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 St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church  
 9100 93rd Avenue North  
 Brooklyn Park, MN 55455  
 (763) 425-2210  
 www.saintvdp.org

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Plan to Come to the St. Vincent de Paul

# Christmas

# Bazaar



*Come and have a cup of cheer!*



DECEMBER 6: 9 AM—5 PM  
 DECEMBER 7: 8:15 AM—12:30 PM

### Featuring...

- Santa
- Over 60 Crafters
- Saturday Kid's Corner
- Lunch
- A Slice of Heaven Bakery
- Gourmet Coffee at Java Joe's
- Raffle
- Live Musical Performances
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Parish Fellowship



The Christmas Bazaar is sponsored by the  
 St. Vincent de Paul  
 Council of Catholic Women (CCW.)

