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ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
CATHOLIC CHURCH

The St. Vincent Voice

A PUBLICATION OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

A SPIRIT OF COMPASSION

It wasn't planned this way but as this issue of *The St. Vincent Voice* came together, we found the word compassion showing up throughout many of the articles. It is also a word that we often find in scripture. A definition of compassion is to have sorrow for the sufferings or trouble of others, accompanied by an urge to help.

Our patron saint, St. Vincent de Paul once said, "We should strive to keep our hearts open to the sufferings and wretchedness of other people, and pray continually that

God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the spirit of God."

In this issue's articles, we find examples of how our parish takes that spirit and uses it to help others. Through education, works of mercy, leadership, prayer, service and support, our parish truly strives to do all that we can to show human kindness and do good works. We are blessed to be part of a compassionate parish that works to help others in so many ways.

—Tammy Peterburs, Editor and Parishioner

JUSTFAITH

Parishioners Growing Their Awareness

Have you heard about JustFaith? This is our third year of holding the JustFaith program at St. Vincent's! JustFaith starts each year in September and meets weekly for a total of 30 times ending in May. Each meeting is scheduled for 2 1/2 hours to allow plenty of time for learning, discussion and reflection. JustFaith uses several books as resources regarding compassion and poverty for weekly reading assignments. Each meeting follows the prescribed agendas provided by the JustFaith program. Meetings generally consist of an assigned reading discussion and sometimes a movie or a speaker. We also take field trips called Border Crossings. The Border Crossing destinations are decided upon by the participants so we can attend places that fit our interests. This year, some of our Border Crossings have included attending mass at St. Peter Claver for a cultural diversity experience, attending dinner with the Archbishop to kick off the annual appeal, and we have future plans to visit homeless shelters in our Twin Cities area. We also make our JustFaith meetings fun with snacks and social times!

I had thought and prayed about JustFaith for two years before I joined. I knew this would broaden my knowledge about Social Justice through reading, discussion and Border Crossing experiences but I wondered how all this would actually change me. I have learned that Just Faith increases your awareness of compassion and poverty in the world. I am more greatly aware of the needy and homeless. Hearing the news or seeing people in everyday life

looks very different now. I now spend time thinking about how I can help change things. JustFaith is also a good way to meet and get to know other parishioners. I always look forward to attending JustFaith every week!

There are no registration fees for JustFaith. The cost of the books and materials is approximately \$125 which is paid for by each participant however, scholarships are available at St. Vincent's. JustFaith is for people who have a desire to grow in their relationship with God by the transformation this program provides. Participants will grow deeply in their awareness of compassion and poverty in the world and will leave the program wanting to do more to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Thinking about joining JustFaith? If you have questions or want more information, please contact Okey Anyanwu at the church office at 763-425-2210 or okey@saintvdp.org. You can also contact participant, Marci Siers at 763-420-9460.

—Marci Siers, Outreach Commission Chair



What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?

— James 2:14-16

(Continued on page 2)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- May 8
Mother's Day
- May 30
Memorial Day
- June 5
Ascension of the Lord
- June 7
SVPD School 8th
Grade Graduation
- June 9
Last Day of School for
SVPD Students
- June 11
Parish-Wide Heritage
Celebration
- June 12
Pentecost Sunday
- June 16-18
Annual Parish
Rummage Sale
- June 19
Father's Day
- June 19-25
Christpower Mission
Trip
- June 20-24
Vacation Bible School
- June 26
Most Holy Body &
Blood of Christ
- July 4
Independence Day
- July 29-31
Steubenville Youth
Conference



ASK FATHER

Fr. Jack Answers Parishioner Questions

Q. Could you please explain the corporal and spiritual works of mercy?
— Submitted by Tammy Peterburs

We as Catholics regard the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as important in our relationship with God and all. Mercy, as it is contemplated here, is said to be a virtue influencing one's will to have compassion for, and, if possible, to alleviate another's misfortune. The root of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are found in Matthew 25:31-46: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." The works of mercy are as follows:

Corporal Works of Mercy:

- ◆ Feed the hungry
- ◆ Give drink to the thirsty
- ◆ Clothe the naked
- ◆ Shelter the homeless
- ◆ Visit the sick
- ◆ Visit the imprisoned
- ◆ Bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy:

- ◆ Instruct the ignorant
- ◆ Counsel the doubtful
- ◆ Admonish the sinner
- ◆ Comfort the sorrowful
- ◆ Forgive willingly
- ◆ Comfort the afflicted
- ◆ Pray for the living and the dead

Since we are called into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, we too are called to relate to our brothers and sisters. We are effective in this when we reach out to those in need. Over the years these works have changed in meaning. For example, when we are told to bury the dead, that is what it called us to do—dig the grave and bury them. However, at St. Vincent's we use it to encourage the faithful to come to the funeral and support the bereaved family with your presence as you sing and pray the prayers. We always need help and guidance in relating to God and our neighbor so the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are a great map as we journey to the fulfilled Kingdom of God.

Submit Your Question!

If you have a question for Fr. Jack, please mail it to:

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

JUSTFAITH

(Continued from page 1)

What is JustFaith?

JustFaith Ministries (www.justfaith.org) provides programs that transform people and expand their commitment to social ministry. Through these life-changing opportunities, members of a church or parish can study, explore and experience Christ's call to care for the poor and vulnerable in a lively, challenging, multifaceted process in the context of a small faith community.

The original JustFaith Program was introduced in 1989 with immediate and dramatic success. Since then, over 20,000 people have participated in various JustFaith programs in over 1,000 churches across the country. JustFaith Ministries, in conjunction with its partners, makes available introductory workshops, curriculum, resources, a website, and support services.

JustFaith has changed our lives.

We never thought with four small children that we would be able to find the time to do this program together. How blessed we are that the Lord led us to participate in JustFaith. The connection to God that we have experienced through this program is undeniable. Not only have we grown closer to one another on this journey, we have grown closer to God! JustFaith has helped us take our blinders off and increase our awareness of others in need and how we can help. Not only have we met great friends through this process, but we also have a better understanding of what God is calling us to do with the blessings he has given us. It also gave us a clear understanding of the church's definition of social justice. We are truly grateful we took this opportunity and feel very blessed to be parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul.

— Angie & Andrew Sipple, Parishioners

PARISH LEADERSHIP

A Busy First Year for the New Commissions

Saint Vincent de Paul's new commission leadership structure kicked off this past August. In addition to the Pastoral Council, our parish leadership structure also includes our five new commissions; Formation and Education, Outreach, Parish Life, Worship, and Finance and Administration. Commission positions were filled after a discernment period that began in February 2010 and ended at the Discernment Prayer Service last May. Each commission has six members, one of whom is also a representative on the Pastoral Council.

Our first year has been a busy one. Each commission developed a vision statement specific to their commission. They then worked to develop an annual plan based on a united Overarching Goal of Communication with a sub-goal of Active Involvement. These goals were selected by the Pastoral Council from the five Overarching Goals established by the Strategic Planning Committee. Each year the Pastoral Council will select one of the five Overarching Goals to guide the parish toward achieving its Mission and Vision. The Pas-

toral Council along with the five commissions will then focus on the selected goal in the following year. With their annual plans in hand, commissions will now begin moving forward in implementing those plans.

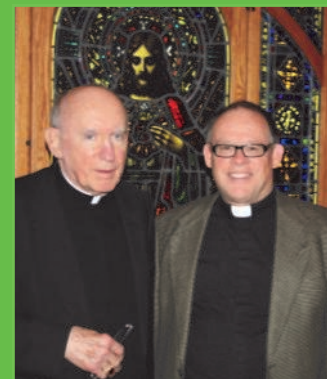
With the foundation set, we are excited about the many wonderful nominees that are now discerning to fill open positions on the commissions and Pastoral Council. This year's discernment period will culminate April 10th during the Discernment Prayer Service. Once this process is complete, the commissions will be ready to put their individual plans into action beginning in August. Please keep our nominees in your prayers as they discern.

For more information on our new leadership structure and to review the commission annual plans, we invite you to visit our parish website at www.saintvdp.org and click on Annual Leadership Discernment Process on the homepage.

— Andrew Rem, Pastoral Council Chair

St. Vincent De Paul
Mission Statement

Know and celebrate
our Catholic faith,
Love God and our neighbor,
Serve as disciples of
Jesus Christ.



Archbishop Emeritus Harry Flynn and Fr. Jack Long

St. Vincent's was blessed to have Archbishop Emeritus Harry Flynn lead us in a **Lenten Evening of Reflection** on Tuesday, April 5th. Archbishop Flynn gave an inspiring talk about forgiveness. This evening of prayer and reflection was a highpoint of our parish Lenten journey to Easter.

We invite you to sign up for e-mail communications from the parish. Visit www.saintvdp.org for more information.

REMEMBERING...



Approximately 270 people attended this year's Auction for Education. Regan Hall and the school gym were decked out with black and silver and included a limousine and red carpet! Many attendees dressed in theme including the Hollywood sign, the Oscar statue, American Idol, paparazzi, and dressed in Hollywood "glam." It made for a fun night!

The Auction for Education is held every spring and has become one of the major fundraising events at St. Vincent de Paul. It consists of a live and silent auction with a fabulous dinner centered around a specific theme. Each year the proceeds are shared between St. Vincent's Faith Formation and Catholic School. This year's auction Co-Chairs Jen Vettel & Mary Cheasick were assisted by over 100 volunteers! Thank you to all who participated!

The St. Vincent Voice Newsletter Committee

- Marie Henrichs, Parishioner
- Rebecca Keran, Parishioner
- Lisa Price, Parishioner
- Marci Siers, Outreach Commission Chair
- Chuck Pratt, Staff Member
- Tammy Peterburs, Editor/Designer, Parishioner

For information on joining the committee, contact Chuck Pratt at 763-425-2210.

CONTAGIOUS TEENS

Opportunities for Teens to Serve Others and Have Fun This Summer

Did you know that for the last two summers nearly 200 of our teens volunteered in the Twin Cities? By participating in Summer Stretch and Christpower, our teens at St. Vincent de Paul bring the Good News of God's love to the greater Metro area. They are also showing the community how the power of their Catholic faith and their participation in the Eucharist calls us all to be Christ for others.

Why are Summer Stretch and Christpower so important? Generosity is contagious. Enthusiasm is contagious. Joy is contagious. Selfless service can become contagious, too. And even if it doesn't become contagious in their home, parish or community right away - give it time, it will. By sharing their gifts with the world, the teens are spending their days glorifying God by giving back to God what was God's to begin with...their very self. If only we could always remember to look at the example given by our teens at Summer Stretch and Christpower and learn to do the same. In the first book of Peter, he says, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

The experiences at Summer Stretch and Christpower make the teens aware of the needs, hurts, pains and hopelessness in situations right here in their own backyard. The teens' eyes are opened and their hearts are moved to make a change. If you haven't already done so, ask the teens why they serve, and what they learn from their service. You just might get an "itch" to follow in their example and serve others yourself.

Summer Stretch

For six Wednesdays this summer 70 junior high teens will gather at St. Vincent de Paul for Summer Stretch. These teens have the unique opportunity to do multiple service activities in the morning and have an afternoon of fun! All of the different service activities are in the metro area. They will work on service projects like cleaning up a local park, sorting donations at the ARC center, working with the residents of local nursing homes and even



helping at the homes of some of our very own parishioners. These activities give the teens a sense of what it means to serve others and to follow the teachings of Jesus.

Don't forget the fun though. In the afternoon, these teens will go to the Science Museum, a water park and so much more. These afternoons of fun allow the teens to grow together as a community and share about the amazing tasks they had accomplished that morning. Plus on the last day, we will head off to Valleyfair to celebrate the work that we will have accomplished over the past weeks.

Another aspect of Summer Stretch is the Teen Leaders. The high school teen leaders lead a short prayer session in the morning, help with lunch time prayer, and generally take charge of the junior high teens throughout the day. The role of the Teen Leader helps these high school teens learn about what it means to be a Servant Leader and follow in the leadership steps of Jesus!

Christpower 2011

What happens when five churches from the Twin Cities suburbs get together? Christpower 2011 happens! High school teens and adults from five different Catholic churches will gather this summer and help serve the people of Ascension Parish in North Minneapolis and St. Bernard's Parish in St. Paul. The teens and adults will help with painting, yard work, indoor/outdoor clean up, home maintenance and repair on existing homes, neighborhood revitalization, and even helping to build a wheel chair ramp for a family. We will celebrate Mass every day as well as Adoration two times, and get to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Christpower is just one of the many ways teens get to understand the ministry of Jesus and how with many blessings, come many responsibilities.

— Molly Schorr, Director of Youth Ministry

This year's Harvest Festival will feature:

⇒ 1st Annual Faster than the Pastor 5K

⇒ 2nd Annual St. Vincent's Got Talent

⇒ All of the great food, fun, games, and live music that make this the great parish get-together every year

Watch for more details in parish bulletins later this summer. Join in on the fun!

Save the Date:
Aug. 13-14, 2011



GRIEF MINISTRY

“Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.” - Matthew 5:12



No one among us can lose a loved one and remain the same. The pain of mourning is a powerful journey and our parish continues to strive to be a place of comfort for the bereaved of our community; providing support through *Journeys* newsletters, cards and special notes, the Remembrance Service in the fall and the Seasons of Hope support groups offered throughout the year. Below are more specific descriptions of our Grief Ministry services here at St. Vincent's.

Journeys newsletters are published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America and are sent out to those families in our parish community who have lost a loved one through death. It is a helpful companion during the first year of the grieving process. Each month there are many articles that may be helpful to families who are going through this difficult experience. Most families who receive this newsletter are those who celebrated the funeral Mass of their loved one here at St. Vincent de Paul.

Our grief ministry is conscientious about sending special notes and cards remembering the death or anniversary of a death to families who have experienced a loss here in our parish. We send “care notes” to help aid in the questions that arise after the funeral or at the anniversary date. This can be comforting to families. It adds significance to their loss and reminds them that the parish community is praying for them.

November is a special time in our Catholic Tradition when we remember our deceased loved ones. We provide a special prayer service and fellowship to honor those who have died in our families and spend time with other parishioners who are experiencing the loss of a loved one.

The Seasons of Hope support groups make up the main portion of our ministry. We understand that each grief

journey is unique and feel fortunate to provide support groups for our parish and surrounding parishes in the fall and spring of each year. Kindred feelings flow among those of us who know the devastating loss firsthand. When we entrust our brokenness to Jesus, the healer of our souls, untold grace unfolds. Seasons of Hope grief support developed out of our need to be with others who are also grieving and to share our grief stories. Healing can begin through the support of others.

Through the unique six week support group of Seasons of Hope, the bereaved are linked to the Church, other parishioners of faith who are experiencing loss and God in a most remarkable way. They have an opportunity to support each other and build up the faith community through their grief journey. Whether participants are seeking a deeper meaning of their grief or simply need consolation, Seasons of Hope will provide a fresh way to cope with sorrow. For those in the group who are weary of feeling alone, it comforts beyond measure. Seasons of Hope explores mourning with a comforting blend of scripture, prayer, group exercises, reflection, faith sharing and Catholic Tradition.

The Seasons of Hope support groups as well as the *Journeys* newsletters, special notes and cards, and the Remembrance Service provide a way to walk with hurting families beyond the Mass of Christian Burial and luncheon. Please keep all those families in our parish who are bereaved in your prayers. Consider coming to parish funerals not only to do a corporal work of mercy, but to support the families. Our parish community can become a blessing to those who mourn just by our presence and compassionate hearts.

— Margaret Schauer, Pastoral Minister

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN & ST. VINCENT'S

Working Together To Help Others

The past year was a good one for St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church (SVDP) and Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). A few of the highlights include:

- ☑ A second SVDP collection in January 2010 raised \$6,393 for FMSC.
- ☑ A second SVDP collection in February 2011 raised \$7,153 for FMSC.
- ☑ SVDP parishioners volunteered 1,085 times during 2010 averaging 90 volunteers per month.
- ☑ SVDP volunteers have packed 459,000 meals since 2007. This number does not include the meals packed by our junior and senior high students.



- ☑ Ten SVDP parishioners attended the annual FMSC November Gala Dinner.
- ☑ 94% of all donations to FMSC go to the “Feeding Program”; 6% goes to overhead.
- ☑ FMSC moved from Brooklyn Park to Coon Rapids to accommodate future growth. This doubled FMSC's ability to pack food from 60 to 120 volunteers.
- ☑ A new volunteer registration system was implemented in August 2010 greatly enhancing sign-up capabilities.

SVDP packs food the 3rd Friday evening and 4th Tuesday morning of every month. Between the Tuesday morning and Friday evening sessions, there are 171 “families” on the volunteer list. If interested in joining our team, contact Duane Crosland at dcrosland@aol.com or 763-441-8683.

— Duane Crosland, Parishioner

ST. VINCENT'S ROYAL KIDS

After School Program

It all started with a question. In order to be competitive for increased enrollment and to provide a service that parents had been asking for, should St. Vincent's School offer an after school program? A survey was conducted to find out just how many would actually enroll. The result came in with a solid 30-40 participants. After much deliberation and many meetings to decide just how to implement such a program, the leap was made. At the end of May 2010, St. Vincent's School announced there would be an after school program for the 2010-2011 school year. A staff of three was hired to take care of the 30-40 anticipated enrollees. Then the registrations started coming in...and coming in...and coming in. On the first day of school, we had approximately 70 participants enrolled in the St. Vincent After School Program. Today we have 85 full-time, part-time and drop-in participants. Our attendance ranges from 40 to 55 participants per day, depending on the day of the week. Our staff now includes a coordinator, assistant coordinator, and four program assistants. We offer three components to families; grades K-5 care, Homework Club for grades 6-8, and a drop-in service for all grade level participants. A contest among participants gave our program the official name of St. Vincent's Royal Kids After School Program.

The school cafeteria is our home base. If you're in there, you will notice three large cabinets against the back wall



by the pop machine. They contain our supplies... everything from snacks to medical supplies to arts and crafts items. The main focus of the program is homework. But once homework is done, the fun be-

gins. We play outside or in the gym and offer enrichment activities, as well as the usual games, Legos, and

arts and crafts. Some favorite activities include dodge ball, kick ball, and recycling art (making art from a variety of things normally destined for the trash can).

We have had Amanda, the Hula Hooper, come in and teach the fine art of Hula Hooping. The Animal Humane Society has taught animal safety and urban wildlife. Our participants have learned the basics of Tae-Kwon-Do from the World Tae-Kwon-Do Academy. The Yellowtree Theatre has provided workshops for our aspiring actors and actresses. We also have an artist scheduled to come during May and do some creative arts.

We plan to expand the program next school year by offering care on school release days, in addition to after school. We are proud to have created an environment where participants have fun, parents are happy knowing their children are safe and well cared for, homework is completed, and the staff are enjoying their work of caring for these remarkable Royal Kids. At the end of the day, it is very gratifying to hear a child say to a parent, "Aw, you came too early!" That's how we can tell the program has been a huge success!

For more information about St. Vincent's Royal Kids After School Program you may contact Dorothy Malone at 763-420-5104 or email dorothymalone@saintvdp.org.

— Dorothy Malone, After School Program Coordinator



Dorothy Malone with some of the Royal Kids

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FREE THROW CONTEST

Congratulations Winners!

KC Council 9139 Free Throw Contest Winners were: Back row (L to R); Matt Hagen (replaced Bennett Otto for 10-year-old in the District championship), Jerome Gooley (11), Michael Volk (12), Niko Agnes (13) and Jayden Spehn (14). Front row (L to R); Katelyn Gasperlin (10), Abby Loegering (11), Anna Gallagher (12), Brianna Murphy (13) and Emily Carman (14). Not pictured is Bennett Otto.

Winners in the District competition were: Jerome Gooley (10), Niko Agnes (13), Jayden Spehn (14), Katelyn Gasperlin (10) and Emily Carman (14). There was one winner in the Region, Jerome Gooley. He participated in the state competition on March 26.

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all who participated in this year's free throw contest!



ST. RITA OF CASCIA

(1381-1457) Feast Day - May 22

Rita of Cascia was a wife, mother, widow and member of a religious community. Her holiness was reflected in each phase of her life.



Rita wanted to become a nun but was pressured at a young age into marrying a harsh and cruel man. During her 18-year marriage, she bore and raised two sons. After her husband was killed in a brawl and her sons had died, Rita joined the Augustinian nuns in Cascia, Italy.

Over the years, her austerity, prayerfulness and charity became legendary. When she developed wounds on her forehead, people quickly associated them with the wounds from Christ's crown of thorns. She meditated frequently on Christ's passion. Her care for the sick nuns was especially loving. She also counseled lay people who came to her monastery.

Beatified in 1626, Rita was not canonized until 1900. She has acquired the reputation, together with St. Jude, as a saint of impossible cases. Many people visit her tomb in Cascia, Italy each year.

Excerpts taken from americancatholic.org.

— Lisa Price, Parishioner

A Prayer To St. Rita of Cascia:

Holy Patroness of those in need, St. Rita, you were humble, pure and patient. Your pleadings with your divine Spouse are irresistible, so please obtain for me from our risen Jesus the request I make of you: (mention your petition). Be kind to me for the greater glory of God, and I shall honor you and sing your praise forever. Glorious St. Rita, you miraculously participated in the sorrowful passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Obtain for me now the grace to suffer with resignation the troubles of this life, and protect me in all my needs. Amen.

✠ *Patron Saint of:*
Difficult marriages
Impossible causes
Infertility
Parenthood

ANNUAL SVDP RUMMAGE SALE

June 16th, 17th, & 18th

Mark your calendars for the Annual SVDP Rummage Sale to be held June 16-18, 2011 in the school gym. All proceeds from the sale benefit St. Vincent de Paul School.

DONATION COLLECTION DATES:

- ♦ Saturdays: May 14th and June 4th (9:00 a.m.–noon); Drop off behind the church office (west side of church).
- ♦ Saturday, June 11th (9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.); Drop off on the north side of the school at the gym back door.
- ♦ Monday, June 13th and Tuesday, June 14th (9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. at the school).

When putting things aside for donations, remember that clothing must be clean, unstained and in good repair. Items that will NOT be ACCEPTED include non-working: electronics, computer equipment, microwave ovens, etc. Also NOT ACCEPTED are:

- ♦ large exercise equipment
- ♦ Christmas trees
- ♦ mattresses
- ♦ car seats
- ♦ cribs
- ♦ tires
- ♦ computer equipment over three years old
- ♦ encyclopedia sets
- ♦ magazines over two years old



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!! JUNE 12-18TH

Please consider volunteering to help at the rummage sale. It's a great way to meet and enjoy fellowship with other parishioners AND volunteers that work at least four hours, regardless of the day they work, are given the opportunity to pre-shop.

If you are interested in helping or have any questions, contact the Lyngen (763-498-7291) or Spanier (762-425- 9762) families.

Catholic Quiz:

1. In what four ways is Christ present at Mass?
2. Catholics believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus. *True or False*
3. The two principal parts of the Mass are the Liturgy of the _____ and the Liturgy of the _____.
4. The word Eucharist means _____?
5. How many readings from the Scriptures (The Bible) are read at a Sunday Mass?
6. Why do we use unleavened bread?
7. What is the glass-sided, removable receptacle for the host in the monstrance called?
8. What is the vessel for burning incense called?
9. A lay person who reads the Scripture readings at Mass is called a _____.
10. The word sacrifice as in the "Sacrifice of the Mass" means to make _____.

Answers: 1. The consecrated Bread and Wine, the Scriptures, the priest and the assembly; 2. True; 3. Word and Eucharist; 4. Thanksgiving; 5. Three; 6. Because the Last Supper was a Passover meal; 7. Luna; 8. Censer or thurible; 9. Lector; 10. Holy



The St. Vincent Voice

A Publication of
 St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church
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 www.saintvdp.org

The mission of our newsletter is to provide all registered parishioners of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church 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.

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SYMBOLS OF FAITH

The Holy Spirit and Pentecost



Pentecost occurs 50 days after Easter and commemorates the Descent of the Holy Spirit onto the Apostles. Referred to as the birth of the Church, it is a date of celebration. "On the day of Pentecost when the seven weeks of Easter had come to an end, Christ's Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given and communicated as a divine person: of his fullness, Christ, the Lord, pours out the Spirit in abundance." *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC 731) Churches throughout the world use special decorations to celebrate this date and St. Vincent de Paul is no exception. In the past, brightly colored banners and images of doves have been placed prominently throughout St. Vincent's during Pentecost.

But what do doves and brightly colored banners have to do with Pentecost? These decorations are not simply for appearance. They symbolize the Holy Spirit and the teachings the Spirit provides. The banner is a bright red color and symbolizes the fire that is synonymous with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is at once illuminating and transforming, much as fire may be. When we learn about our Father through the teachings of the Church, we as individuals may be illuminated with the knowledge the Holy Spirit provides. The dove is also a symbol for the Holy Spirit. From Scripture, we learn that the Holy Spirit came down onto Christ during His baptism in the form of

a dove. The Holy Spirit is fundamental to Baptism as it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we may know Jesus Christ and God. "By virtue of our Baptism, the first sacrament of the faith, the Holy Spirit in the Church communicates to us, intimately and personally, the life that originates in the Father and is offered to us in the Son." (CCC 683)

These symbols are a way for us to view our shared beliefs and the gifts from the Holy Spirit. It is through the actions of the Holy Spirit and the connection with the Church that we are filled with the holiness of God's love. "The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 737) These decorations only depict a few of the symbols used to describe the Holy Spirit. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* lists them as: water, anointing, fire, cloud and light, the seal, the hand, the finger, and the dove. (CCC 694-701) Although these symbols may seem conflicting at times, they seem to encompass all the actions of the Holy Spirit and the ways in which the Spirit brings us closer to God.



— Marie Henrichs, Parishioner