



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL'S PARISH NEWSLETTER

AN INTRODUCTION...

Welcome to our new parish newsletter, "Seasons." We have a few very simple objectives for this endeavor—a project that owes its inception to both the parish staff and the Pastoral Council. Every week the mission statement of the parish is printed across the top of our Bulletin: "St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic parish that is called to know, love and serve God through worship, education, social justice, pastoral care and community life."

This sentence should be more than a mere slogan; rather it should be both a stimulus and a guide to all of our activities and programs.

Parishioners intimately connected to the life of our parish work toward making the statement both authentic and tangible. There is a lot of good going on here and a lot more that can be done in the service of God by this little corner of his Church. This newsletter seeks to inform our total parish membership of the good that is presently being accomplished by the components of our parish ministry: pastoral care, education on all levels from pre-school to adult programs, parish community building events, outreach to the poor and in some cases the powerless.

However, all the good works accomplished by a parish need to be measured against the growth of the faith life of every individual who is counted on our census cards. As important as a meaningful liturgy, as vital as a strong Religious Education program or the effort to provide charitable outreach - is the necessity that each person grow spiritually. The newsletter will run regular features that we truly hope will help each of you live your faith with greater understanding and renewed commitment.

So as you page through this very first issue, take note not only of the parish events both past and forthcoming but pay special attention to the features on Catholic tradition and practice, on prayer, and on personal spiritual development.

This is the Parish Newsletter! It is not the intention of the staff, the administration of the parish or the Pastoral Council to make it a forum for any of those groups. This issue has a few invitations for you, the parishioner to participate, and more will be forthcoming. The newsletter is a tool for all of us to learn more about each other, about the wonderful gift of our faith and the wonderful gift that is the Parish of St. Vincent DePaul.

— Sr. Nora Klewicki, Staff Member

HONDURAS YOUTH MISSION TRIP

Memories of a Young Participant

On July 31, 2005, twenty-one youth, five chaperones, and one priest left as a family to Honduras in Central America. We all went on this mission trip for one reason, and that was to serve others and spread God's love. It was a task getting through the airports with a big group, but once we arrived in Honduras it was time to play hard, work



harder, and pray hardest. We stayed at a ranch just outside of Tegucigalpa. There, over five hundred children lived as one big family. With the help of adult volunteers, teachers, and leaders, these kids of all ages live a well-structured, enjoyable life.

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Seasons

A PUBLICATION OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

RENAME THIS NEWSLETTER CONTEST!

Do you have a great idea for a name for this new quarterly newsletter? For now, we're going with "Seasons," but we're wondering if one of you parishioners might have an "inspired" idea for a better name!

We'll make it worth your while - the winner of the contest will receive a \$25.00 Gift Certificate to Northwestern Book Store. You can submit your idea(s) in one of two ways:

1. E-mail your name(s) to: editor@saintvdp.org
2. Write down your suggested name(s) and drop them in the "Newsletter Names" box that will be in the Gathering Area until Sunday, Dec. 11th.

Whichever way you choose to submit your suggestions, be sure to include your name and number so that we can contact you if you're our winner!

The winning name will be announced in our next issue.

Check out these Christian radio stations in the Twin Cities;

Relevant Radio: AM 1330 or www.relevantradio.com

KTIS: AM 900 or FM 98.5 or www.ktis.org

ASK FATHER

Fr. Jack or Fr. Williams Answer Parishioner's Questions



Q. What exactly does it mean when we say that we are part of the "Communion of Saints" on All Saints' Day and in the Apostles' Creed?

A. The Church lived the Communion of Saints long before it started using the expression—around the fifth century. It was put into the Apostles' Creed as an emphatic statement that the Church is a community, not a loose gathering of people seeking private salvation. The phrase expresses the truth that God sent Jesus to put his arms around all God's children, to draw them into one large family. Those of us still here in this world are united with church members in heaven. In other words, we belong to a community that includes the Blessed Mother, St. Peter, Sts. Francis and Clare. We are also united in the same community with those in Purgatory—a term that needs some explanation. Let's not think of purgatory as some flaming concentration camp just north of hell. Let's think of it as a process whereby persons not fully reconciled with God and each other remain until God exercises his prerogative to say when that reconciliation is complete.

In our Church calendar, the Church here on earth celebrates the feasts of All Saints and All Souls on November 1 and 2 respectively. These two days serve as a reminder to us that the Kingdom of God is not just of this world but encompasses both the living and the dead. It is interesting that the secular holiday of Halloween precedes these two special days. In one sense this celebration is a vigil (an "eve") for both these days. While the kids are excited about the parties and treats, perhaps the adults can accept the silliness of Halloween as a way to come to grips with both the reality of death and the promise of eternal life.

Q. Since it's near Thanksgiving, I was wondering about the ideas of Stewardship and Thankfulness. Besides money, what are other ways for us as Catholics to show Stewardship?

A. Though many people associate stewardship with only the giving of money, the spirituality of stewardship is much more significant.

Stewardship for us as Catholics is our response in gratitude to our realization of what God has given us. As faith increases, stewardship increases, and is apparent by our actions. The attraction and mystery of stewardship is tied up in the concept: "In giving, we receive." We do not know how this works. But giving tends to manifest itself in a well cared for and, yes, spiritually abundant life. It so happens that when we see God as an infinite source of abundance in His blessings, we open our own heart, lay open ourselves in trust and giving, and open the flow of grace in our lives.

Given the state of the world today, we are pulled back constantly from this gift of understanding and the desire to enter into a trusting relationship with God. It is hard, day-to-day, when we confront time crunch, our own doubts and fears and those of others, greediness, insecurities, rawness, envy, ego, material and carnal desires...you name it. Each of us should know what these mean to ourselves. Living in our world, then, it is not easy to always carry on as though our lives are blessed, and to open our hearts.

However, God is good and He is always there. Our obligation is to come to Him and bring our lives into an enriched perspective with the world as it is.

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Submit Your Questions!

If you have a question for Fr. Jack or Fr. Williams, please e-mail it to editor@saintvdp.org or mail it to Attn: Seasons Editor at the church.

Please title it, "Ask Father."

Although we cannot accept anonymous questions, you can request that your name not be published in the newsletter.

HONDURAS MISSION TRIP REMEMBERED

(continued from page 1)



During our stay, we accomplished seven service projects in about five days. One of them was to clean out their water filtration system to make their drinking water cleaner - we had to empty out the old sand and scrub the water tanks. It was quite a messy job! Some other projects were helping cook in the kitchen to prepare meals for the whole ranch and make tortillas in the tortilla house. We spent a little time cleaning up the playgrounds and making them safe for the kids. Then on Saturday, our group along with everyone else from the ranch hiked up a mountain to where they had built a cemetery. For the first half of the day, we helped gather rocks along the mountain to add to what they had started. Everyone did his or her share in helping and we got to see what working together could really do. Every day we worked very hard, but we knew it was for a good cause.

After dinner every night the girls and guys spread throughout the orphanage to play with the kids and help them with their homework before they went to bed. This

was the most rewarding part of our day. We would sit down with them and not even be able to speak Spanish to them, yet they had the biggest smiles on their faces. The kids were happy that they made a new friend. Even though most of us didn't understand Spanish, we used the universal language of smiles and love.

Once the kids in the orphanage went to bed at night, the mission group would go to Mass in the chapel led by our very own Father Peter, a nice and peaceful way to end our nights. Every day was a new adventure and everyone learned something new. The joy of helping others and getting those glowing smiles in return was the most amazing experience ever. After seven days of being at the orphanage in Honduras, it was hard for any of us to leave that wonderful place and all of the friends we made.

We all went into this mission trip thinking that we were going to be the ones giving the time, work, and inspiration. When really in the end, all those kids gave more hope, encouragement, knowledge, and love to us than we could ever have given to them.

— Tara Boos, Parishioner (Graduated in 2005)

PREPARING FOR ADVENT

Fr. Williams Reflects on the Meaning of the Season

I am told that Christmas decorations go on sale in early October. I am also told it is not unusual for one to hear Christmas carols as one shops for grocery or clothing at the beginning of November. And so it is that advertising succeeds in getting us to think about Christmas months before the 25th of December. But what precisely does all this commercialization get us to think about? Certainly it attempts to market that warmth and joy

that makes Christmas so unique – a season with no rival. The actual effect, however, is often quite different.

Doesn't all this hype and attention rather seem to stir up within us a certain disquiet? "Do I have a gift for everybody? When will we have time to get the tree?"



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Do YOU have an article or pictures to share?

If so, please send them to: Attn. Seasons Editor, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 9100 93rd Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

(All photos will be returned.)

Newsletter Committee Members Needed!

We hope you enjoy this first edition of our new parish newsletter — a step forward in faith that assumes all parishioners will benefit from a forum where we can read, react, discuss & write about topics relevant to our walk with Christ.

When the project was first considered at our Pastoral Council, several of us felt compelled to help with the first edition. We worked on everything from content to color. Many questions flew around those meetings, and one kept coming back. It's really a question that we need you, the parishioners, to answer... **Who should serve on the committee that is responsible for this publication?** The easy answer is to keep the present group, which includes Staff Member Sr. Nora Klewicki, Parish Council Members Rose Kahnke, Marci Siers, and Janice Gabrick, and Editor/Designer Nikelle Morris. However, we hope a few people out there may feel a passion about this project and would like to volunteer.

The job description is vague — some qualities that may contribute to success include: patience, the ability to work well with a team, some knowledge of writing, willingness to read and critique articles, a love of brainstorming for new ideas, and finally a network with other parish members.

And so, we would like to extend to you, the members of our parish community, an invitation to discern if you have the time, talent and interest to be part of our volunteer editorial team. If so, please call Sr. Nora at (763) 425-2210 for more information about this opportunity.

— Rose Kahnke,

Parish Council Member

REMEMBERING...

HARVEST FESTIVAL



Many strapping young men conquered the rock wall!



Parishioners young and old value the Harvest Fest as an opportunity to make new friends and enjoy time with old friends.

Pieces of Chicken Served: 1,200



Kevin Oehlers plays with one of the children under the tent. Who knew a roll of tickets could be so much fun?!

of Pull Tabs Pulled: 4,866



The BINGO games were a big hit as usual. These two look ready to win big!

Scoops of Ice Cream Licked: 1,198



Fr. Williams poses with the lucky \$1,000 hourly drawing winner, MaryLou Ingman (boy, was she excited!)

of Raffle Tickets Purchased: 35,406



Business Manager Norm Olafson and parishioner Rebecca Keran share a laugh as they watch the festivities.



As always, we were able to count on many young parishioners to help out when it was needed - and have fun doing it!

of Children's Games enjoyed: 7,169



The bubbles at the dance were a big hit with all the children.



These young men were hoping Fr. Jack might bring a little of his Irish luck to the table.



The inflatable slides and jumps kept the youngest parishioners happy and sweaty for hours on end!

of Beers Downed: 1,195

of Volunteer Hours to make it happen: 2,627

It looks as though Fr. Williams is staring longingly at the big inflatable slides as the children play. We wonder if Fr. Jack ever did let him try them out after dinner?

Amt. the Youth Program made from inflatables: \$1,781

Inflatable slides, climbs, jousts, trips, and rebounds: 11,872



ASK FATHER

(continued from page 2)

It is our obligation to make our lives and the world around us better than we found them. **If you feel a need to start on a road to conversion to an attitude of gratitude in your life, try this. Start your day with a prayer of thanks. Think of your blessings. During the day, make your best effort to see the good in others as Christ reflected. End your day with a prayer of thanks. Do this every day.**

Catholic Stewardship comes from the fact that, from the beginning, God entrusted humankind with all of creation. God is the source of our life and everything we have. As in the story of the good steward, God expects that we receive our own world and our lives, add time, labor and care, and in the end show an accounting of increase back to Him. It is not how important or rich we

became. **Our homecoming as good stewards is in what we did with what we were given.**

Thanksgiving is coming again. It is the practice of St. Vincent de Paul Church, and of churches in general, that the Stewardship Renewal should come near Thanksgiving time. The Stewardship Renewal asks us to reflect on the blessings of God in our lives and to consider these blessings in the context of what we are giving back to the Lord – time, talent, and treasure. The spirituality of stewardship, however, calls us to gratitude and reflection, not annually, but every day. It is a conversion to a new way of life. Eucharist is the word in Greek for thanksgiving. It is the greatest Thanksgiving. Celebrate the Eucharist in thankfulness for Christ and His gift of our eternal salvation.

PREPARING FOR ADVENT

(continued from page 3)

Is it going to be warm enough to put up the lights?" These are the questions we ask ourselves...for time seems to be the enemy. Before we know it, anxiety has consumed us and we find ourselves exhausted on the other side of another Christmas "celebration."

The problem is plain enough to see and is perhaps verified to a greater or lesser degree by our own individual experience. The "celebration" of Christmas seems superficial and empty – a cause for worry rather than what it is truly supposed to be: the cause of the deepest and most authentic joy. So in contrast to the message we hear from the world, the Church speaks to us a different message. It is actually a prayer offered at the greatest of all celebrations (i.e. the Holy Mass): *"Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and give us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ."*

In this prayer is summarized perhaps the most overlooked of seasons in the Church: the Season of Advent. The very word, *Advent*, means "coming." So, to talk about Advent implies that someone has come, is coming or will come. It also implies that we are waiting, vigilantly so, for this coming. In preparing for Christmas we must realize that we are being trained in the art of waiting. But



waiting for whom? Certainly we are not attempting to be surprised by something that has already happened, as if Christ's coming in Bethlehem could possibly be replicated.

The purpose of Advent is to see how that unprecedented event on a cold night in an obscure cave became the greatest source of our hope. In other words, since Christ has come in history he now is able to come in mystery and in majesty. And so Christ's coming is not relegated to the past, but bursts forth in the present and in the future. Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." In order for us to be able to fully appreciate Christ's first coming, to be prepared for his Second Coming, and to authentically celebrate Christmas, we must adopt the spirituality of waiting. Where is Christ present and active in my life today? To begin to discover this more fully I encourage you to spend at least 15 minutes in silent meditation each day during Advent. To this end, I recommend an excellent resource: **[BEHOLD, HE COMES: Meditations on the Incarnation: Daily Readings from Advent to Epiphany](#)**, by Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R.

May this time of Advent prepare your hearts to experience the joy of Christmas!

— Fr. Peter Williams, Staff Member

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Volunteer Your Time: St. Joseph's Home for Children, a division of Catholic Charities of St. Paul/Mpls., cares for children in crisis by addressing immediate needs for shelter and stability and offering long-term solutions to emotional and behavioral issues. Volunteer roles range from driving children to doctor's visits to becoming a "Volunteer Grandparent" for a child. For more information, call 612-644-8500 or visit: www.ccsmpm.org

Operation Christmas Child: fill a shoe box with small gift items for needy children around the world. Your child will enjoy picking gifts for a child of the same age and sex - knowing exactly what they would like to receive as gifts. Along with shoe box gifts, millions of children are given Gospel booklets in their own language. Local drop-off is at Northwestern Book Store in Maple Grove during the week of Nov. 14-21. For more information, visit: www.samaritanspurse.org/OCC_Index.asp

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Nov. 1:
All Saints Day
- Nov. 2:
All Souls Day
- Nov. 3:
The Spirituality of
Grandparenting
Guest Speaker
- Nov. 5:
Giving Tree Set Up
- Nov. 5:
Last Will &
Testament Seminar
- Nov. 5:
C.R.O.S.S. Food
Drive Begins
- Nov. 20:
Parish Memorial
Service
- Nov. 22:
Fr. Jack's Birthday
- Nov. 24:
Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 27:
First Sunday of
Advent
- Dec. 3-4:
Christmas Bazaar
- Dec. 8:
Feast of the
Immaculate
Conception of Mary
- Dec. 24:
Christmas Eve
- Dec. 25:
Christmas Day
- Jan. 1, 2006:
New Year's Day

FAMILY CORNER

Creating a Jesse Tree for Advent

This Advent, consider creating a Jesse Tree as a family. **Why a Jesse Tree?** Preparing for the Christmas season is so hectic these days. We spend so much time preparing our homes (shopping, baking, decorating, cleaning, etc.) that we forget to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Lord. That is why we have Advent. It is a time when we look at our hearts to make sure we are ready to welcome the baby Jesus into our lives.

The Jesse Tree is a study of Bible stories from the creation of the world to the birth of Jesus. The Jesse Tree idea was inspired by God's promise that 'there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse' (IS 11:1). Jesse was King David's father and, thus, an ancestor on Jesus' family tree. Each story you read from the Bible (one for

THE JESSE TREE

An Advent Journey through the Old Testament

Put Christ back into your
Christmas preparations...
Experience the
"True Meaning of Advent"
by celebrating the waiting!

each day of Advent) will reveal to you and your children how God made promises and how His faithful people waited and prepared a long time for the coming of the Messiah. Each ornament (or symbol) you place on the Jesse Tree tells the story of Jesus' heritage.

The Jesse Tree is a beautiful way to share the scriptures with children. Since they love to 'touch-and-feel-to-make-things-real', the symbols are a tangible interpretation of each day's reading.

It is recommended that the reading be done as a family at the same time each day (during a family meal, at bedtime, etc.). Create your own tradition of reading, placing the symbols on the tree, reviewing previous symbols, etc. Feel free to modify your Jesse Tree to fit your family (use a wire tree and hang up the ornaments instead of a felt tree).



Decorating the Jesse Tree is an excellent way to help prepare your hearts—as a family—for the coming of Jesus on Christmas Day.

If you'd like to create your own Jesse Tree this Advent, you can download the patterns at the following web site:

www.catholicculture.org/lit/activities/view.cfm?id=545

Or purchase a kit at the following web site:

www.pauline.org/store/moreinfo/081983968X.html

— *Janice Gabrick, Parish Council Member*

STORY OF A SOUL

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Church had a body composed of different members, the most necessary and most noble of all could not be lacking to it, and so I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart was BURNING WITH LOVE. I understood it was Love alone that made the Church's members act, that if Love ever became extinct, apostles would not preach the Gospel and martyrs would not shed their blood. I understood that LOVE COMPRISED ALL VOCATIONS, THAT LOVE WAS EVERYTHING, THAT IT EMBRACED ALL TIMES AND PLACES...IN A WORD, THAT IT WAS ETERNAL! Then in the excess of my delirious joy, I cried out: O Jesus, my LOVE...my vocation, at last I have found it...MY VOCATION IS LOVE!"

St. Therese recognized her life's journey as a journey toward God. St. Therese describes in this book how she deepened her relationship with God every day by learning and growing with every joy, trial and suffering. I highly recommend this book for anyone who is actively pursuing a closer relationship with God.

— *Marci Siers, Parish Council Member*

Interested in some other great Catholic books? Check out these recommendations from one of our Committee members:

The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth (available at Hennepin Co. Libraries) and A Father Who Keeps his Promises: God's Covenant Love In Scripture, both by Scott Hahn.

MEET OUR NEW YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERS:

Tara Brooke and Matt Reiswig



Full Name: Tara Jean Brooke, (but recently it was Tara Jean Marback).

Age: 28

Hometown: Bismarck, ND

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

University, MA Pastoral Ministry

Exciting Moments: I just got married on Sept. 30th, I've been very excited about that!!! Dan is my new husband, he is originally from Crosby, ND. However, it's also been exciting moving to a new state and beginning a new job.

Why did I choose Youth Ministry: God called, I answered, now I'm stuck. No really, I love young people and I love being an agent that helps them know God more and love God more. I learn more from young people than I could ever teach them...They are the church!

Highlights of my five years of ministry: I worked with awesome young people who really got what it meant to be a Christian in their everyday lives...they always made me proud. I've also enjoyed the great trips I've taken to the different NFCYM functions.

Favorite Food: Although I'm not a cookie and coffee nut, like Matt, I do love Mexican Fried Ice-Cream.

Favorite Movie: The Cutting Edge

Favorite Color: Orange

Favorite Leisure Activities: Shopping, playing card games, hanging out at the lake, and working out.

If I could go anywhere where would I go: Without a doubt...IRELAND

If I had to name a goat it would be: Goaty Goaterson



Matt Reiswig: The Facts

■ Matt is from Hughson, California, a small farm town in the central valley.

■ Matt lived on a dairy until he was 7 years old.

■ Although he is from sunny California, he has never surfed.

- Matt has one sister, her name is Heather and she is 18 years old.
- Matt moved to Minnesota to work with NET Ministries.
- After deciding to stay in Minnesota, Matt met his new wife Jill.
- Jill is from Houston, TX.
- Matt and Jill were just married on October 7, 2005.
- Matt ran in the Twin Cities Marathon on October 2, 2005.
- Matt is currently recording his first CD.
- Matt loves Starbucks, especially the Mocha Light Frappuccino.
- Matt loves Mexican food and cookies.
- Matt plays guitar, and enjoys most types of music.
- Matt's favorite candy is Peanut Butter M&M's.
- Matt currently lives in sunny and beautiful St. Paul, MN
- One of Matt's best friends is an independent filmmaker, and Matt has starred in many of his movies.
- Matt once dropped a \$400 camera into a Port-A-Potty.
- In High School, Matt played Football, Baseball, and ran Track.
- Matt was an FFA (Future Farmers of America) officer his Junior year of High School.

Please give us some feedback on this first edition of the Seasons newsletter. We want 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?

Other comments:

Please cut out and return this form to: Attn. Seasons Editor, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 9100 93rd Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

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



Seasons

A Publication of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

9100 93rd Avenue North
Brooklyn Park, MN 55455

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A BOOK THAT BROUGHT ME CLOSER TO GOD...

One Parishioner's Point of View on the classic Catholic book Story of a Soul

"For me, prayer is an inspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally, it is something great, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus." page 242

Story of a Soul, The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux.

Third edition translated from the original manuscripts by John Clarke, O.C.D.

A few years before her death, St. Therese was asked by her older sister Pauline, who was Prioress of Carmel at the time, to write down her childhood memories. The outcome of St. Therese's efforts became this book.

St. Therese was born on January 2, 1873 in Alencon, France. She died at the age of 24 on September 30, 1897. She was beatified by Pius XI on April 29, 1923.

St. Therese begins her story by recalling her earliest family memories. Her family was headed up by parents with a solid faith in God. Her family attended Mass regularly. Catholic feast days were always observed. The family prayed daily together and centered their entire lives around God. St. Therese attended a boarding

school that was run by Benedictine nuns for several years.

At the age of 15 years, St. Therese decided to enter the cloistered Carmelite community. Because of her young age she was required to obtain permission from the Pope. So, at the age of 15, she traveled from France to Rome with her father to personally ask for this permission. It was granted and she entered Carmel on April 9, 1888.

Throughout this entire book St. Therese described her life experiences in terms of her relationship with God. When she was three years of age she states " I began to refuse nothing of what God asked of me." She continues to describe her life's experiences from a very personal and detailed point of view.

Towards the end of this book, St. Therese arrives at the conclusion that her vocation is love. She says "Charity gave me the key to my vocation. I understood that if the



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