

in focus

708 West Main Street

Urbana, Illinois 61801

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Learning To See With The Light Of Christ

*"You have been enlightened by Christ.
Walk always as a child of the light
and keep the flame of faith alive in
your heart.
When the Lord comes, may you go to meet
him with all the saints in the heavenly
kingdom."*

Rite of Baptism

In baptism we receive our Christian identity and our Christian mission. We are children of light, called to walk always as children of the light.

Between our baptism and the Lord's final coming his light, more accurately, our perception of and response to his light seems to flicker and falter at times. We sense a need to refocus, to sharpen our vision and our response to the light of Christ.

The Church invites us into the discipline of Lent with ashes, a sooty reminder that we are made for more than meets the eye. Those of us already baptized are urged to pray for conversion, those preparing for baptism to pray for enlightenment. All are invited to learn to see with the light of Christ.

"Learning to see with the light of Christ" is our parish theme for this Lent. In His light we see ourselves more clearly. We see our need for saving and redeeming grace. We also see the marvelous dignity and rich possibilities which God in His love gives each of us.

"Learning to see with the light of Christ" will mean more intense prayer and penance, more attention to God's light, shining from the Scripture, the sacraments, our neighbors and the world around us. Our Lenten agenda also calls for less busyness and less noise, less stuff and less self in our lives.

"Learning to see with the light of Christ" has special meaning for the adults preparing for baptism and/or confirmation into our Catholic Christian community, our catechumens.

It is the final period of preparation for their reception into the Church. Everyone in our community is invited to walk with them, renewing our baptismal commitments and supporting them with our prayers, hospitality and concern. You are especially welcome to join the catechumenate community on Wednesday evenings for a meager meal and evening prayer. If you can, stay to join in reflection on the Sunday gospels and preparation for Holy Week or another of the Wednesday night programs.

The goal for our Lenten observance is the Paschal Triduum, those most glorious three days in the Church's year. It begins with the liturgy of Holy Thursday, continues on Good Friday, culminates in the Easter Vigil liturgy of Saturday whose themes and joy resonate in the liturgy of Easter morning.

At the Easter Vigil we celebrate the light of the Risen Christ, shattering the chains of darkness, sin and death. We review the history of salvation in the light of Christ. We baptize and/or confirm the newest members of our community and welcome them to the Lord's Table. We renew and reappropriate our baptismal identity as children of the light.

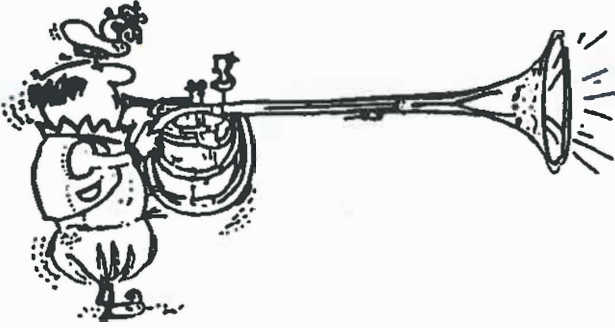
Let us pray that this Lent we will learn again to see with the light of Christ.

*"Awake, O sleeper,
arise from the dead,
Christ will give you light."**

*Ephesians 5:14
Second Reading for Fourth Sunday of Lent

Fr. Doug Hennessy





Mardi Gras

March 4

1pm-5pm

Helping Yourself By Helping Out

Who is it that makes Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Picnic, Advent celebration, New Year's Eve dance, holiday brunches, sacramental celebrations, and all those other special events happen? If you don't know the answer to this question, it's time to get acquainted with the Social Committee.

The Social Committee is a relatively new group formed because of the need to provide a central base from which social and sacramental celebrations could be organized and carried out. It is made up of a group of hard-working parishioners who plan and provide the opportunity for all of us to enjoy the fellowship of others in our parish.

Many of these celebrations have grown in popularity, evidenced by a consistent rise in participation. However, they require many hours of planning, telephoning, soliciting of contributions, serving and working on the day of the event, and (of course) cooking and baking. These are very important and necessary jobs, without which the events simply couldn't take place. Without a broad base of support, without those willing hands and dedicated hours and efforts, social and

sacramental celebrations may not continue to be the outstanding events we have all come to expect. There are, at last count 1,038 adults registered at St. Patrick's. Of that number, 200-300 regularly attend these events, with about 15 or 20 parishioners volunteering their help; and of these, at least 6 or 7 are members of the Social Committee.

Now that you are aware of this committee's responsibilities and the number of times and ways you have already enjoyed the fruits of their labor--a loving Christian atmosphere--members hope earnestly that others will share the burden as well as the joy. If you can help in any way at all, please call Maureen Newman (359-4801), chair of the Social Committee. Let her know you are interested in helping with a specific event or are willing to be called occasionally to assist with baking, serving, setting up, cleaning up or preparing posters and other artwork. By helping the committee, of course, you know that you will be helping yourself: working with other parishioners is a wonderful way to make new friends and to gain a new perspective of Church. So help yourself by helping out!

Meager Meals & Evening Prayer

The annual renewal process of Lent--recalling who we are, what we have affirmed about God and Christ and Spirit, about church and life together--has traditionally involved a planned program of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting for the individual and the community. The Meager Meals and Evening Prayer on Wednesdays during Lent involve all three disciplines:

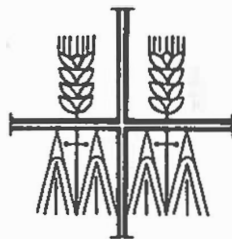
1. We are asked, as a community, to fast during the day and to come together in the main hall of the Parish Center, beginning at 5:45 p.m., to share a meager meal of soup and bread and water.

2. Our fast helps us to reflect upon the gifts we receive from God and to realize that the poor and hungry of the world share our table. At our meager meal we are invited to make a contribution to the charitable groups that help to feed the hungry around the world.



3. The community gathers in church for Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m. to give thanks to God for His gifts of the day.

On the final Wednesday of Lent, we have traditionally celebrated a modified Seder Supper, a gathering of the community at table to share bread and wine in the tradition of the Jewish Passover and in anticipation of the commemoration of Eucharist on Holy Thursday. In recent years our Seder has taken on the festive aspect of a potluck supper. This year, in keeping with the restraint of Lent and our growing anticipation of redemption and the joy of Easter, the Seder Supper on April 18 will itself be a meager meal, with the traditional foods of the Seder and the focus on recalling our Jewish heritage.



How About "Taking Up" Along With "Giving Up"?

Some of us approach Lent as the one special time of year when we give up something we'd rather not do without. By doing so we reach Easter feeling moderately pleased with ourselves for having had the willpower to skip desserts or cigarettes or beer or swearing. We have also lost a little weight or saved a little money or broken a bad habit--all of which we knew we ought to do when we made our New Year's resolutions. There's not a thing wrong with "give-ups," but there is a more constructive side to Lent, a side that might be called "take-ups."

One might consider taking up the routine of doing something regularly for someone else, whether family or friend, in the parish or in the community. Thinking about the needs of others and making the plans necessary to serve them could be a way to start "seeing with the light of Christ," which our Lenten theme urges.

The possibilities are many, not the least of which may be found right here at St. Patrick's. Almost every committee or activity could benefit from a few new members with different ideas, new perceptions of current ideas, and the enthusiasm that goes with being fresh in such work.

Participation in the celebration of Mass on weekdays or in some of the special programs offered during Lent may broaden and deepen awareness of God's action in our lives. The Wednesday evening programs offer a range of opportunities for parishioners of all ages and interests to open themselves a little more to the gentle light of Christ.

Why not make this Easter outstanding for yourself by taking up something new or special during Lent?

Since You Asked . . .

Q. Why don't we eat meat on Friday during Lent?

A. From the beginning of Christian history Fridays had a special character for Christian believers. Friday, the day of Jesus' death, was the day of the week marked by special effort at prayer and self-denial. Abstinence from meat became a widely observed and eventually obligatory form of Friday self-denial.

In 1966 Pope Paul VI discontinued the obligation of abstinence on every Friday, which had been in place for many generations. At that time the U.S. bishops chose to continue to call American Catholics to abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and on the Fridays of Lent.

Last spring the U.S. bishops in their "Pastoral Letter on War and Peace" wrote:

As a tangible sign of our need and desire to do penance we, for the cause of peace, commit ourselves to fast and abstinence on each Friday of the year. We call upon our people voluntarily to do penance on Friday by eating less food and by abstaining from meat. . . Every Friday should be a day significantly devoted to prayer, penance and almsgiving for peace.

The bishops thus invite us to observe throughout the year what we are obliged to observe by the discipline of Lent.

Father John Shea adds that this abstinence is a way of demonstrating we are in charge of the things in our life, not vice-versa. Bob Hutchison, writing in *U.S. Catholic* (February, 1983) notes that not eating meat on Friday is "a small reminder of how lucky Americans are to have meat when in other countries and places in America it is a once-a-year luxury."



Lenten Programs Offer Something For Everyone

In previous years the program *Ashes to Easter: The Lenten Journey* was more or less reserved for catechumens and their sponsors. This year, with ample space now available in our new building, any parishioners interested are invited to attend some or all of the sessions. These will be held on Wednesdays from March 14 through April 11, beginning immediately after Evening Prayer (at about 7:15 p.m.) in the multipurpose room. The format includes scripture sharing, prayer, and preparation for the liturgies of Holy Week.

The *Family Life Program* for parents and their children aged six and older is also slated for Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m., in five sessions that begin on March 7. Members of other parishes will also be invited to participate. Registration is \$25 per family.

A study and discussion program for parishioners of all ages and interests, *the Seekers*, will be given on Wednesday mornings.

Sunday bulletins will list all these and other events offered weekly as well as any presented on a one-time-only basis. Be sure to check for ways to make Lent a time of growth and enlightenment!

Parish Council Elections



Fr. Doug Hennessy, Cathy Rutledge, trustee



Mary Lou Menches, secretary



Nancy Riddle, president, Connie Shaw, vice-president



Martin Zeigler, trustee

St. Patrick's parishioners will elect three people this April to membership on the Parish Council. Those elected will serve three-year terms. In addition to attending the monthly council meetings, they will be appointed as liaison to one of the standing committees of the council, for example Building and Grounds.

The election will be held the fourth weekend in April, April 28-29, after all Masses.

Absentee votes will be accepted during the week prior to the election, April 23-27, in the parish office between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for election to the Parish Council or in nominating someone, please contact a member of the Election Committee, whose responsibility it is to prepare a slate of candidates: Kay Evans (344-5228), Pat Fonner (398-4178), Helene Kacich (344-6760), Bob Rettig (1/469-2063), and Joe Tobias (344-6521).

Bits & Pieces

It's not too late . . . to add your voice to the "joyful noise unto the Lord" raised at Easter. If you can join the regular choir or the folk choir, call Doug Salokar or leave a message for him at the parish office (367-2665).

Marriage Encounter . . . is one of the nicer things Catholic couples can do for themselves. The next one in this area is scheduled for March 16-18 at LaSalette Retreat Center, Olivet. Another will be held on March 23-25 at King's House, Henry.

Two extensions of the Marriage Encounter are the one-day *Marriage Encounter Renewal*, at St. Philomena's in Peoria on March 10 at 7:00 p.m., and the *Retorno weekend* at St. Augustine Manor in Peoria on March 23-25.

Complete information about all of these programs may be obtained from the Office of Family Life, 607 N.E. Madison Ave., Peoria, Illinois 61603 (309/673-6318).

Are you, or someone you love, finding it hard to cope with problems right now? . . . Maybe the knowledgeable help, understanding, and companionship offered by the GROW program is just what's needed. Two sections of GROW meet weekly at St. Patrick's, one on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. and the other on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. There's no charge for participation. More information can be obtained from the GROW office at 403 West Springfield, Champaign (359-3109).

The diocesan "winter regionals" workshop . . . for catechists and other interested adults will be held on March 8 at St. Matthew's School, Champaign, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Participants may choose from a number of workshop topics and speakers: "The Changing Direction of Contemporary Theology," by Fr. Michael Schaab; "Our Call to Be Prayers," by Sr. Marilyn Hettinger; "Contemporary Music and the Adolescent," by Jeanne Whelan; and "The Life and Ministry of St. Paul," by Fr. Ken Przybla.

A supper meeting for religious-education directors and coordinators preceding the workshop (4:00-6:30 p.m.) focuses on "'Everyday' Theology: A Model for Religion and Theological Education."

Preparation for First Communion begins on March 22 . . . for children aged seven or older and for their parents as well. Classes will be offered from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. on Thursdays--March 22 and 29, April 5 and 12, and May 3--culminating in First Communion on Sunday, May 6. Registrations should be made with Karen Meeks at the parish office (call 367-2665). Family registration and book fee is \$14.



Guild Members Make Twice Weekly Visits

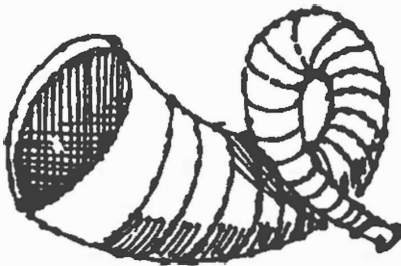
For many years members of St. Patrick's Guild have visited residents of the Champaign County Nursing Home on Tuesdays and Fridays. They pray the rosary with residents and bring news and good cheer to these shut-ins.

The visitors' committee is comprised of Florence Chevalier, Gladys Reinhart, and Kathryn Stubing. Standbys Mary Sleeter and Lucille Kocher have become regular substitutes in the absence of any of the three. On Tuesdays they visit from 1:00 to 2:45 p.m.; on Fridays, from 10:00 to 11:45 a.m.

Natalie Primeaux is chairperson for cookies. She telephones several parishioners each week to be sure there are enough cookies for all the residents. (About 200 cookies are needed, some of which are for diabetics. If you have never been called but are interested in baking once or twice a year, just give Natalie a ring at 344-7859.)

These women would happily welcome other volunteers to give the project broader representation. Prospective volunteers need not visit the Home twice each week or commit themselves to any part of the program that might become burdensome. However, the "regulars" would find it a joy to hear from volunteers who could lend a hand on Tuesday or Friday on a somewhat regular basis.

Please consider this invitation thoughtfully and call Florence Chevalier (367-5548) if you find that you can help. With more than 35 Catholic residents at the Champaign County Nursing Home, you might be just the person to encourage a nonparticipating resident to attend the service and to share in the Christian fellowship that is offered. Those who give do indeed receive, as any of our parish visitors can attest.



Moving Into Adulthood

As a part of the Confirmation program at St. Patrick's, the newly confirmed are provided with the opportunity to serve the parish in the areas of their choice. The goal is for these individuals to assert their role as adults in the Church, becoming useful and functioning parts of the community. Usually these young people work with older members of the parish, often resulting in improved communication and new understandings. Participants are provided with a wide variety of possibilities from which to choose. Some have chosen to be Eucharistic ministers, others help at the children's liturgy or work on committees. A few even become sponsors for new Confirmation candidates and by their example motivate others to follow in their footsteps.



Children's Corner

What To Do For Lent?

What special things are you going to do during Lent which will help you get ready for Easter? The children in the Sunday morning religious-education classes were asked this question. Here is a sampling of their responses.

- "Get my Easter basket out."
--Amanda Salisbury, age 6
- "If there are flowers growing, I might pick a few."
--Gian-Paolo Musumeci, age 5
- "Pray, help, maybe keep my room neat!"
--Julie Lewis, age 11
- "No candy."
--Gabe Gammache, age 10
- "I am fasting on Wednesday and giving that money to feed the hungry."
--Michael Evans, age 11

Isn't it encouraging to know most of our children have the proper Lenten attitude!

Revenue Reports On Stewardship

An open letter to all parishioners:

Thanks are due the members of the Revenue Committee: Shirley Splittstoesser, Paul Hackett, Lori Pilgrim, Carl Johnson and our liaison Karen Gammache. Thanks too to the members of the Stewardship Task Force: Bill Sanford (chair), Tom Delanty, Ellen Paul, Ed Bubnys, Jim Auten, and Margaret Vanderholm. All have given greatly of their time and energy during the last year and a half in planning and carrying out a stewardship campaign to increase substantially our parish income from weekly collections.

This has been a year of change at St. Patrick's in the area of Revenue and Stewardship. In the past we could rely on our financial reserves to pull us through any shortfall in weekly collections. Now we must take a hard and realistic look at how much income we can expect to receive to finance parish programs and needs, and how we can improve that aspect of the budgetary process. This was the first time in many years that an active stewardship campaign designed to increase weekly collections has been undertaken. As with anything new, there have been some growing pains and it has been an educational process for all.

So That's How We Stack Up!

Thanks to an in-depth study of parish registration records by the Education Committee, we've learned a number of things about ourselves. For instance . . .

This parish numbers 2,348 Catholics in 1,038 households. Married couples number 695, single adults 164, widowed persons 97, divorced or separated persons 54. The marital status of only 28 persons remains uncertain.

People 50 years old or older account for 15.8 percent of our community, 24.7 percent range from 30 to 49 years. Young adults aged 20-29 make up 13.2 percent, followed by 10.9 percent who are 13-19 years old. Children from infancy through 12 years make up 21.8 percent.



Speaking for these committees, I want to thank each parishioner for your generous response to this campaign. However, we must recognize the need to maintain a substantial level of income from weekly collections to keep St. Patrick's functioning the way we have come to expect. But awareness of our needs as a parish calls for an ongoing educational process. We will continue our stewardship efforts in these areas, therefore, to let you know where your dollars are needed and how they are being spent.

We have learned the hard lessons of "income" and "out-go." We have experienced generosity and self-sacrifice in meeting the diverse needs of our parish. We pray that each of us will continue to be guided by our individual conscience in maintaining our role as an ongoing and vital part of the community.

Yours in Christ

Dave Riddle
Dave Riddle, Chair
Revenue Committee

Urbana is home to 77.6 percent of our parishioners; 12.7 percent come from Campaign, 7.4 percent from St. Joseph, and the rest live in Ogden, Savoy, Pesotum, Mahomet, Sidney, Homer, Fithian, and even Mattoon.

Statistics on employment apparently were harder to come by, with 30 percent of heads of households and 60 percent of spouses giving no information about where they work. Of heads of households whose work areas were given, 16 percent are university related, 28.5 percent are in private business, 7.3 percent are public employees, 3.6 percent are self-employed, 3.9 percent are students, 0.8 percent belong to the military, 0.6 percent farm, and 7.8 percent are retired.

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