

Our Pastor Shares Thoughts On . . .

Establishing And Reestablishing Ties

This year is filled with a lot of "firsts" for me: the first days, weeks, months, and year at St. Patrick's parish, first acquaintances, first experiences of the way things are done here, first celebrations of holidays and feasts. You have to get used to only one person, but I have to get used to more than 1100 households and some 3000 people. That can include a lot of expectations, hopes, and needs. I want to do my best for you, and I hope that I do not fail you often.

Through our interactions we are beginning to establish relationships. In my role as your pastor, I may touch your life as leader of prayer, proclaimer of God's word, homilist, confessor, counselor, sharer of times of joy such as marriage, baptism, and anniversaries, and times of crisis such as illness, family troubles, and death. I may challenge your complacency, support you in trouble, organize you to accomplish common tasks — and sometimes I may let you down by my weakness, inadvertence, forgetfulness, and neglect. All this is a part of the process of establishing ties, the bonds of relationship.

One of the signs that identified Christians in the early days of the Church was the love they showed to one another: "See those Christians, how they love one another." I hope that I have begun to show you that I love you. I have certainly felt the warmth and love of your acceptance.

As we approach our first lenten season together, I trust that we can be an example and support to one another in faith, in prayer, in penance, and in doing good. When we receive the mark of the ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday, let us do so as a commitment to make a journey of faith together.

Lent developed from the desire of catechumens and penitents to be fully united with the Christian community. In earlier years of the Church catechumens, candidates for Easter baptism, entered the final stages of preparation for the sacrament during the lenten season, and sinners publically enrolled as penitents and were sprinkled with ashes as a sign of their repentance. Both groups of people recognized the importance of being united to God and his Church, to establish and reestablish these ties of relationship. Thus Baptism and Penance, sacraments that overcome sin and separation, are central to our understanding and celebration of Lent. They are signs of identity and belonging. They make us one in this relationship with God and his people which we call Church.

Lenten practices that further the goal of unity, that overcome isolation and alienation, are especially in line with this outlook. Begin with your family. What one thing would help you to open channels of communica-

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Recharge Yourself This Lent

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 — traditionally includes a program of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, for the individual and for the community. At St. Patrick's the Meager Meals and Evening Prayer on the Wednesdays of Lent take up all three disciplines.

Fasting. 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.

Almsgiving. 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 in our own community and around the world.

Prayer. 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, our parish has traditionally celebrated a modified *Seder* — 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*, in keeping with the restraint of Lent and our growing anticipation of redemption and the joy of Easter, has itself been a meager meal, with the traditional foods of the *Seder* and with its focus on recalling our Jewish heritage.

You are encouraged to participate in this program of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as a means of renewing and reaffirming your commitment, as an individual and as a member of the faith community of St. Patrick's, to walk with the Lord.

We Confirm Them . . . They Challenge Us

At 7:30 p.m. on May 9, St. Patrick's community will recall and acknowledge the initiation and fulfillment of our life in Christ by Baptism and Confirmation.

We will present to Bishop Edward O'Rourke the young men and women who, by prayer and study, have reopened themselves to the Spirit. It is the Spirit who brings the life of Christ, given in the waters of Baptism, to full maturity and development through the laying on of hands in the sacrament of Confirmation.

In anticipation of the celebration of this final rite of initiation into God's family, let us consider what these fully initiated members can expect of our parish community. They can expect that each of us, as best we can, will be conscious of our shared life in Christ. Looking to our actions and listening to our words, they can expect to see and hear Christ's Spirit at work in us. They challenge us to live that commitment made when we, too, were "sealed with the Holy Spirit."

The Parish Council Serves Us All

The Parish Council is the governing body of St. Patrick's Parish. It determines how we spend our parish funds, what parish-wide activities will be scheduled, what programs are to be offered, and, in general, how we carry out Christ's work as a community.

The Council acts on suggestions from the bishop, the pastor, the standing committees of the Council, and members of the parish. It takes action on very broad issues, such as entire programs or policy affecting the entire parish, leaving the parish staff and committees to take care of the details.

The Parish Council is made up of 13 voting members, including the pastor and both parish trustees as well as ten men and women elected from the parish at large. Honorary members Deacon Rodger Adams, Sister Rosemarie, and Father Paul Kinder also serve, giving freely of their time, counsel, and the wisdom born of experience.

Elected members serve three-year terms on a rotating basis, with roughly a third elected each year. In April 1987 the parish will be asked to elect three new members to the Council.

A parishioner may become a candidate for Council membership through nomination by the election committee, which begins its work in January, or by petition to the election committee at least two weeks before the date of the election; the petition must be signed by at least 20 parishioners and accompanied by the candidate's written acceptance of nomination.

The Parish Council meets in open session on the third Thursday of each month in the Parish Center. The agenda for the meeting and minutes of the previous meeting are posted in the church vestibule on the Sunday before the meeting. All members of the parish are welcome to attend.



George Fahey



Bob Haessly

Parish Council Vacancies Filled

The makeup of the Parish Council is undergoing some major changes with the resignations of Jerry Barrett and Morris Stoops and the expiration of the terms of three members.

As stipulated in the Council's bylaws, the resignation vacancies have been filled by the first two runners-up in last April's election of new Council members. Bob Haessly and George Fahey will serve out Morris Stoops' and Jerry Barrett's terms, respectively.

This spring, election of new members to the Parish Council will be held to fill vacancies created by the expiring terms of Anne Britsky, Leon Mayer, and David Riddle. At the Parish Council meeting in May the three newly elected members will be seated and new officers elected.

We Are Learning, Bit By Byte

Sophisticated telecommunications equipment won't improve our link with the Lord, but it definitely can improve the efficiency of St. Patrick's parish.

In 1975 the parish purchased a Compaq personal computer, with a 30-megabyte hard disk, but its usefulness was limited until Carol Subick, a parishioner whose computer programming skills are presently at the service of the U.S. government, offered her assistance last summer. Since then several programs have been written and data entered that enable the parish to function more efficiently.

A second computer was obtained in an arrangement with Diocesan Publications, the printer of our weekly bulletin, that required no outlay of parish funds.

Software programs that came with the computers are now being put to good use. An accounting program and Lotus 1-2-3 keep track of parish finances, and two word-processing programs, Volkswriter and WordStar, are used for correspondence and preparation of the parish bulletin. Since last fall our weekly bulletin has been sent to the Grand Rapids printer via telephone lines instead of by mail — at a considerable savings.

A program written by Tom Hayes, a former resident of Champaign-Urbana, has been used for the scheduling of servers, lec-

tors, and Eucharistic ministers. A graphics package allows for the creation of banners, signs, and letterheads.

Carol Subick has been adapting R-Base 5000, a sophisticated data-management program, to help the parish secretaries maintain census information about parishioners. An existing database that now contains only minimal information can be expanded to include occupations, special talents, interests, and the like. It was recently used to speed the generation of letters to parish families in which one spouse is not Catholic. The nearly 100 letters, invitations to the parish mission week of prayer and renewal, were addressed and printed out in a fraction of the time it would have taken otherwise.

One computer is located in the parish office, and the other in the multi-staff room. The Parish Council has authorized use of the computers by committees in their work on behalf of the parish.

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tion and sharing? What do you have to give up to accomplish this?

Broaden your vision to the larger human family. Can your penance, self-denial, almsgiving help others? Who may need the benefit of your doing good?

How will your prayer life unite you to the larger community of faith? Can you pray

with an expanding concern for the needs of others?

Lent must never turn us merely inward, separate us from others. It is a time for establishing and reestablishing ties. That is what life and Church are all about. When we discover that, we will know why Jesus came and lives among us.

St. Patrick's Guild Plans for 1987

St. Patrick's Guild continues to be active in the parish in a variety of ways. Members visit the residents of Champaign County Nursing Home on Tuesdays to pray the rosary with them and on Fridays to celebrate the Eucharist. They roll bandages and make hospital gowns for the missions. For two weeks twice each year they participate in the Meals-on-Wheels program, delivering meals to shut-ins. Although they have, regrettably, discontinued serving wedding receptions because of the long and late hours involved, they continue to prepare and serve meals following funeral services at St. Patrick's.

The Guild's cosponsorship of the annual Cellar-to-Garret Sale typically involves long and hard work that is willingly and generously given. This major fund-raiser produces revenue that is shared with the parish; the Guild donates half the net proceeds to the parish's General Fund and uses the remaining funds on behalf of the parish. Purchases for the parish center have included furniture for the Bride's Room, new tables and blinds for the main hall, and the commercial refrigerator in the kitchen. Members also voted funds to furnish our pastor's apartment and, in consultation with Fr. Remm, purchased what was needed.

Who Are These Young Adults?

The Young Adults of St. Patrick's parish is a hodgepodge of individuals bound together by a common desire to grow closer to God. The community built from these individuals exists to support and affirm its members in their spiritual growth during the difficult transition from high-school age into adulthood.

"Young Adults" was the monicker given to the group eight years ago. Parishioners observed a need for more input and involvement from the younger single and married members of the parish. Questionnaires were sent out, a room in the former rectory was reserved, and the first meeting of the Young Adults was held. Enough interest, sharing, and love were present at that meeting for the group to gain a secure base for further advancement.

Since then members of Young Adults have continued to gather, on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m., now in the parish center lounge. The evening's program is fairly simple: members chat until all have arrived, newcomers are introduced, and the structured part of the meeting begins. The focus is on a spiritual

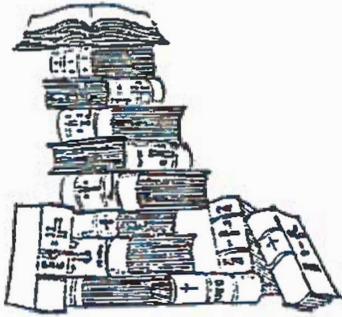
topic, a service project, a social event, or an educational discussion. Activities range from Bible study to birthday parties, from nursing-home visits to book and movie reviews. All are designed to give members a better understanding of humanity in general while encouraging their own faith development. Evenings are often closed with group prayer, and socializing follows.

The friendships formed are a highly prized outcome of the Young Adult experience. In the transient, hectic, and impersonal years following high school, members find it wonderful to belong to a caring, sensitive, and stable community. Young Adults is a place to be needed, just as it is a place to bring one's needs. It is a group in which one grows by helping others to grow. It is a community marked by a very visible sign of love, a place from which members can look forward to the future with hope.

Be it shampooing carpets at the Catholic Worker House, hosting a retreat weekend, or celebrating the glory of God in Mass, the Young Adults is a vital part of St. Patrick's parish community.

Between The Bookends

Lenten Journey



Since about the third century, Lent has had a special place in the Church's liturgical year. It is a time of preparation for the central mysteries of Christ's death and resurrection. This preparation parallels not only the forty days of Jesus' fasting in the desert, but also his journey to Jerusalem. At the start of another Lent, we might consider how to make our own lenten journey a time of inner, spiritual growth.

A helpful suggestion comes from books on prayer that recommend keeping a journal in which to trace the road covered in a day or a week. Jotting notes on feelings (however transitory), on thoughts (however provisional), on insights (however tentative) helps us to become more aware of our own inner movements, to recognize the ruts and stalling places in our lives, to discover points for new departures (however modest). A little time spent in this way can help deepen our faith and provide insights for practicing this faith in the day-to-day routine of our lives.

The following books provide suggestions on keeping a journal:

- Joan Chittister, OSB: *Psalm Journal* (Sheed & Ward, 1985)
- Ronald Klug: *Spiritual Journal* (Nelson, 1982)
- George F. Simons: *Journal for Life* (Acta, 1979)

Each of these books includes a chapter on "journaling" as a way to move into prayer (but be aware that each author provides compelling reading, and you may not get by with a single chapter, once begun):

- Edward Farrell: *Prayer Is a Hunger* (Dimensions, 1972)
- Mark Link: *You* (Argus, 1976)

Volunteers Needed

The following jobs are in need of doing around the parish buildings. If you can help, please call the parish office (367-2665).

- Repair church kneelers, west side
- Tuckpoint church exterior
- Caulk windows in church and parish center
- Clean out church basement, install shelving
- Wash church pews
- Clean out and organize garage
- Shovel snow
- Install fire alarm
- Install telephone in church sacristy
- Do flashing work on roof
- Paint exterior trim

I wondered why somebody didn't do something, and then I realized that I was somebody.

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