



06.2015

Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Counting Coins for Christ *The Money Counters at St. Paul*

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, and see if I do not open the floodgates of heaven for you and pour down upon you blessing without measure” (Malachi 3:10).

We’ve learned repeatedly the importance of giving our first fruits to God – gifts of time, talent and treasure. And so, week after week, many of us faithfully drop our offering into the basket, trusting in the Lord’s unfailing generosity. Yet, have you ever considered where that money goes once it leaves your hands? Who is responsible for counting and recording these funds? How can you know that your hard-earned money truly is going to God’s work?

St. Paul Parish takes your trust and your donations seriously. Without these funds, it would be impossible for parish life to run smoothly. For this reason, St. Paul relies heavily upon the good men and women of the community who generously give of their time each Monday in order to meticulously count, recount, deposit, and record all funds received during weekly parish collections.

Counting money each week may seem like a simple task, but is vitally important to parish life. Andrea Montenegro, St. Paul’s Business Manager, feels that this ministry is essential because it helps ensure a financially secure environment for the parish.

“Good stewardship of parish funds will optimize the ability to better serve the people by promoting and maintaining the fi-



St. Paul Money Counters (Back row, from left) Andrea Montenegro (Business Manager), Richard Downnik, Charles Green, Brent Watson, David Morgan. (Front row, from left) Annette Barth, Helen Cannava, Sharon Hunt, Vangie Wilda.

“nancial health of our parish,” Andrea says. “Money Counter volunteers are important members that help us accomplish our financial responsibility. The handling of collections at a parish is the single most important cash management task facing a pastor and the one most fraught with risks. The Church is not immune to financial malfeasance – therefore, choosing the proper people and continuously seeking measures and procedures which better ensure that the monies and resources entrusted to it are prudently safeguarded is essential.”

Volunteers for this ministry take their jobs seriously, adhering to systems and procedures implemented by the parish. For example, the pastor must first approve each

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STEWARDSHIP

== *Giving During the* ==

SUMMER SEASON

“**W**e’ve stopped delivery of the newspaper and mail. We’ve taken the dog to the kennel. The iron is unplugged, and the stove is turned off. Is there anything else we need to do before we leave on vacation?”

Aren’t you forgetting something? Did you remember to write a check to your parish for the Sundays you’ll be gone?

“But I won’t be at Mass at home those Sundays. Can’t I skip those envelopes when I’m away? After all, I’ll put a dollar or two, or maybe even five, in the collection at the church where we visit. Isn’t that enough?”

Many Americans, whether we have school-aged children at home or not, mentally operate on a school year calendar. We assume our organizations operate September through May and then take it easy during June, July and August. And to some extent, many parish activities do function on such a schedule. Our parish may not hold religious education classes during the summer. Our choirs frequently take a break. Even many of the parish staff members take summer vacations! Can’t our giving take a vacation during the summer, too?

Even as we form the question in our mind, we know the answer. The prime reason for keeping up our pledge all summer long is that God doesn’t go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass wherever we travel. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are

called to be faithful in our commitments to Him and our parish family, even during our vacation time.

God’s steadfastness in giving to us is the primary reason for us to respond by being faithful in our stewardship toward Him. But there is a practical reason also why we need to keep up our pledges of time, talent and treasure throughout the summer — the Church needs our involvement year-round.

Even though some parish activities are reduced during the summer months, the parish’s expenses are not. After all, there are still Sunday Masses and weekday Masses, too. The parish staff members still need their salaries. And of course, we need to run the air conditioning in our church during the hot summer months. Despite the fact that some parish functions are suspended, other activities may take place, such as Vacation Bible School. And although the regular parish Religious Education program may be suspended, the summer expenses are often the highest as textbooks and other supplies are bought for the upcoming school year. Our parish has to pay its bills on a year-round basis, just like your family.

Our parish plans a budget for the year, taking into account the commitments that you, the members, have made. If parishioners do not live out their financial commitments to the parish, the budget will not balance.

Our giving needs to be maintained throughout the summer, just as God maintains His generosity to us. Our stewardship is a response to God’s gifts. And God pours out His gifts and His grace upon us all year long.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Our Lives are Filled With
Examples of Good Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

We do not have to look very hard to find examples of stewardship in our lives. It starts right here in our own parish. Think of the people who serve us in so many ways. There is a group of wonderful people who are here at the parish, sometimes every day, helping to make our faith community operate effectively, especially in terms of worship and liturgy. Then, of course, there are those who serve tirelessly and selflessly with our many parish ministries, which reach out to those in need around us.

This kind of service — discipleship — is exactly what Christ was saying when He told us to “Love your neighbor.” Think of others in our Church, our communities and our lives who show us what it means to be a good steward. One of the first who comes to mind is our Holy Father, Pope Francis. His very life is a testament to what it means to serve — to be a good steward. In one of his recent homilies, the pope said, “Real power is service. Jesus reminded us ‘He came not to be served, but to serve,’ and His service was the service of the Cross. For the Christian, getting ahead and making progress means humbling oneself. If we do not learn this Christian rule, we will never, ever be able to understand Jesus’ true message.” That is my message for both you and me — we must be willing, at times, to put our own comfort and desires aside for the needs of others. That is what true stewardship is really all about.

Summer is upon us — we are entering that time of year when things slow down a bit, and we tend to live life at a more relaxed pace. Nevertheless, it is not a time to let our faith lives slow



down. In fact, it is a great time to enrich and focus on our faith and our God. God’s creation is all around us. As we enjoy the summer season and bask in the sun, I hope you will take time to remember the wonders of His creation and His glorious gifts. We also must strive to renew our efforts to be good stewards every day by continuing to serve others, and to be thankful for the many living examples of stewardship we see at our parish and in our daily lives.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Handwritten signature of Rev. Doug Halsema in black ink.

Fr. Doug Halsema
Pastor

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“Open up Y St. Paul’s Ste

When his wife passed away after 53 years of marriage, Al Jablonski felt as if his world was ending. His daughter reached out for him to the Stephen Ministry, and as he was once comforted, Al now ministers to the suffering.

“Reach out, and it will make all the difference when you open up your heart,” Al says. “People have problems, and keep them in. Give us a call. You will be compassionately heard.”

The Stephen Ministry consists of members of our community who are waiting and praying that those who are hurting will reach out to them.

“I would encourage men and women to reach out so they know God loves them, and they are not alone,” says Kathy Gehler, a Stephen Minister. “They have someone they can trust and someone who will be there just for them – someone who will pray with them and for them.”

Suffering does not look the same for any two people. Members of our faith community have called upon the Stephen Ministry for many reasons, whether they’re experiencing the loss of a loved one or a sickness, or are losing a job, going through a divorce, encountering problems at home, or simply needing to connect with someone.

“Loneliness is a big reason people reach out to the ministry, because many people don’t have anyone,” says Terry

Kellen. “I know people are reticent to come forward or maybe ashamed. But it is a wonderful feeling to connect with someone who is on your side.”

Each individual is connected with a minister – men minister to men, and women minister to women – who has received months of training. The minister and the “care receiver” determine when and where to meet.

“When we meet our care receivers, we do a lot of listening with our ears, eyes, our body, but mostly with our hearts,” Kathy says. “If they want to talk, that is great. If they don’t, that’s okay, too. The important thing is we are there with them and they know they can count on us and trust us.”

Meetings can take place wherever the care receiver is most comfortable.

“I go to the homes of most people, so they feel relaxed and private,” Terry says. “It’s all about having someone listen and not be judgmental. We’re not going to ‘fix problems.’ We’re just there for you.”

Sometimes, the care receiver and the minister will pray together, if the care receiver is comfortable doing so. Through supporting the suffering, many ministers have found that their own prayer lives evolve.

“I have become more comfortable praying out loud from



Stephen Ministers at St. Paul (from left) Al Jablonski, Denise Rosenbloum, Christi Eadler, Helen Vulevich, Terry Kellen and Nick Thorpe

Your Heart”

Stephen Ministry

the heart with other people,” Kathy says. “My care receivers have done so much more for me than I could ever do for them! Being a minister has taught me to love my brothers and sisters in Christ. It has brought me closer to God.”

Like many other ministers, Al meets with individuals on a weekly basis, talking and praying with them. He is devoted to gaining their trust week after week. Al has found that as trust is gained, they open up more and more.

“As they open up and tell their story, each time they release some of that pain,” Al says. “I see people differently because of the Stephen Ministry. I have a little more love for everyone. Talk to us. Anything you tell us stays with us.”

“I would encourage men and women to reach out so they know God loves them, and they are not alone. They have someone they can trust and someone who will be there just for them – someone who will pray with them and for them.” – Kathy Gebler

If you or someone you care for is suffering, reach out to the Stephen Ministry. Please contact Angel Chirco at 850-586-5162 or Nick Thorpe at 850-484-4854. For more information, please visit www.stpaulcatholic.net/church/stephen.



Stephen Minister training class with Stephen Leader Kathy Gebler. (From left) Steve Selby, Kathy Gebler, Deeana Yeager and Naomi Duffy. Class is led by Phil Peterson (not pictured), a Stephen Leader at Grace Lutheran Church. We are grateful to Grace Lutheran Church for their help in training many Stephen Ministers for our parish.

The Money Counters at St. Paul *continued from front cover*

member. Additionally, all volunteers undergo a credit check and sign a confidentiality form, which states that they will keep all parish contributions confidential.

“There are two teams that rotate on a scheduled basis,” Andrea says. “Each team currently has six members. At a minimum, at least two unrelated people must perform the count. The pastor and parish employees are not to be involved in the money counting process as counters. Another team of at least two people review the money counting processing by double-checking every single step that the money counters have recorded.”

Volunteers joyfully follow all of these procedures – in turn, this helps ensure the security of parish funds.

“Being able to coordinate these teams has been a fruitful and happy mission,” Andrea says. “People involved on the teams are so driven for achieving their best. They are reliable, responsible, happy, and dedicated volunteers. They are extremely effective and accurate, and they truly express their gratitude to God through their work.”

If you are interested in joining this committed group of

volunteers, please consider signing up through the Stewardship Renewal Commitment Card, or by contacting Andrea Montenegro at 850-434-2551, ext. 101.



Celebrating the *Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is probably the most widely recognized representation of Christ's divine love and unwavering compassion for all of humanity. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been practiced for centuries, and this devotion continues to play an important role in today's Catholic faith. As we celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 12, we have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about this essential Catholic devotion and its role in Church history.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart extends as far back as the 11th or 12th centuries. While there are no definitive texts or histories that verify initial devotees, it is understood that the devotion grew out of the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries of the time. By the 16th century, documented devotional prayers and exercises had been formulated, and the ascetic writers began making more extensive reference to the Sacred Heart. But it was not until the 17th century that devotion to the Sacred Heart moved beyond being practiced on a private, individual basis. St. Jean Eudes established the first feast of the Sacred Heart, and this was shared with devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was then that the devotional feast of the Sacred Heart began to spread to other dioceses and religious communities.

However, the devotion as we know and understand it today largely stems from the visions of Jesus Christ to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. While these visions were numerous, the most remarkable revelation, known as "the great apparition," occurred during the octave of Corpus Christi in 1675. As Jesus said to Margaret Mary, "Behold the Heart that has so loved men... instead of gratitude I receive from the

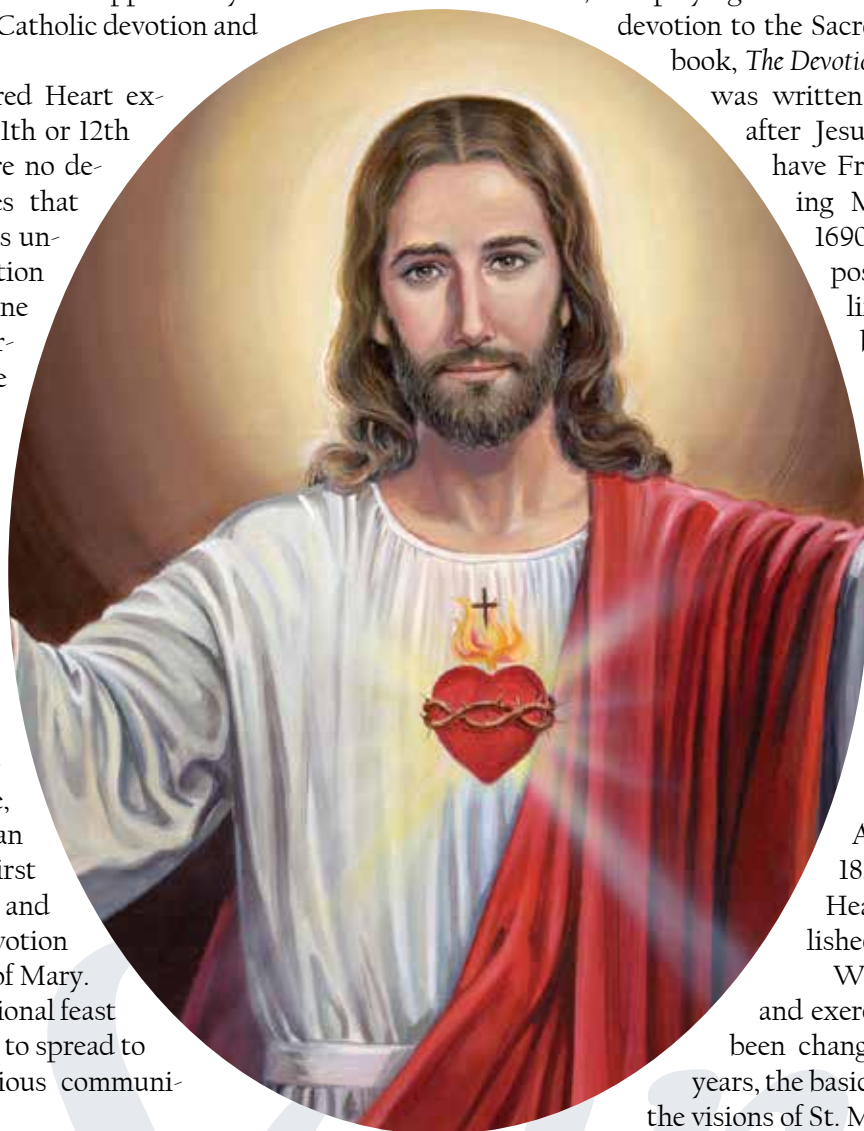
greater part (of mankind) only ingratitude."

Reporting her vision to Fr. Claude de la Colombière, Margaret Mary was then directed to write an account of the apparition. Despite her initial reluctance to do so, as well as her misgivings upon its completion, this written account would soon be published and widely read among both clergy and laymen, thus playing an instrumental role in spreading the

devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Another book, *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, was written by Jesuit Father Croiset after Jesus told Margaret Mary to have Fr. Croiset write it. Following Margaret Mary's death in 1690, Fr. Croiset would compose a short biography of her life that was amended to his book, which served to further increase interest and practice of the devotion.

Over the course of the next century, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus would continue to spread. By the latter half of the 18th century, a Mass of the Sacred Heart was given papal approval for Poland and Portugal, followed two decades later by Venice, Austria and Spain. Then, in 1856, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was officially established by Pope Pius IX.

While the specific readings and exercises for the feast day have been changed and replaced over the years, the basic tenets that extend back to the visions of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque remain the same — the acknowledgement of and devotion to Christ's unending compassion and love for all of us. Indeed, the Catholic Church maintains and continues to build on this wonderful devotion. A key tradition was established in 2002, when Saint John Paul II decreed a world day of prayer for the sanctification of priests — World Priest Day — to be observed annually on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



“I am the Bread of Life”

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world...Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.” (John 6:51, 54).

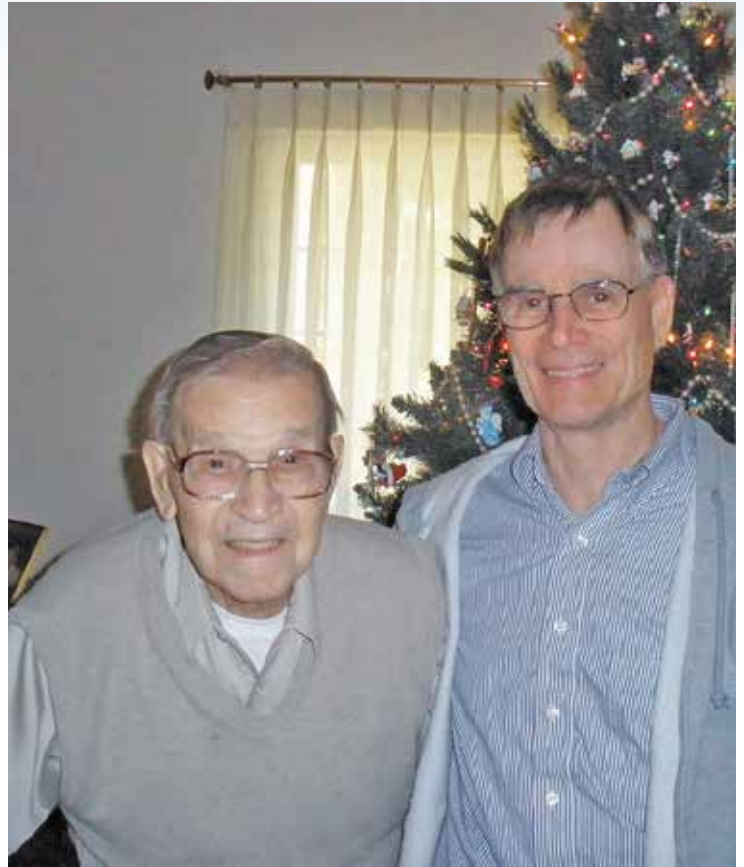
“Having been part of this ministry for quite a few years now, I’m continually humbled and honored to share Jesus – in the Eucharist and from my heart – with those that I visit. They are evangelizing me and encouraging me.” – Deacon Richard Lurton

The bread and the wine, for some denominations, remain a mere symbol of Jesus Christ. But as Catholics, we recognize that the bread and wine transcend the symbolic nature and actually become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. What a truly awesome gift that Jesus has given us of Himself in the Eucharist – that we are privileged to receive our God and be in communion with Him. He has humbled Himself to a piece of bread in order that we might physically experience Him here on Earth, only to one day see Him face to face for all eternity in Heaven.

Now, imagine being one of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion that distributes this priceless and invaluable gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. What a privilege and an honor to share this gift with others – even more with those who are homebound or sick and are not able to be present at Mass. These men and women bring Christ to those in need and provide a bridge for them to the parish community.

“Distributing Holy Communion to the homebound is an opportunity to carry Jesus in your heart AND in the Eucharist to the parishioners,” shares Deacon Richard Lurton, Coordinator of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. “We pray WITH them and FOR them, and share news of what is going on in the parish to keep them engaged and feel included.”

There are about 65 parishioners of St. Paul’s who are brought Holy Communion and visited on a weekly basis – anywhere from private homes, to nursing homes/assisted living facilities or hospitals. However, this ministry is about



Deacon Richard Lurton (right) with parishioner Andrew Velkey, shortly before Andrew’s passing. Andrew was homebound for 14 years, and Deacon Richard faithfully visited and brought Holy Communion to Andrew during that time.

more than simply distributing the Eucharist. It is about spending time with the sick or homebound, seeing how the parish can continue to assist in their time of need, and showing them the care and concern that the parish community has for them – to know they are not forgotten. Those who are visited respond with immense joy at being able to receive their Lord and Savior in the Eucharist and are elated to know that they are being remembered and prayed for by the parish.

“Having been part of this ministry for quite a few years now, I’m continually humbled and honored to share Jesus – in the Eucharist and from my heart – with those that I visit,” Deacon Richard says. “They are evangelizing me and encouraging me. I see the faith and the courage of those facing the end of their life on earth and getting ready to embrace eternal life. I meet people who do not fear death because of

Address Service Requested

“I Am The Bread of Life” *continued from page 7*

their faith, and this has helped me change my outlook about life and death. I could never repay these people for what they have given me.”

By distributing Jesus in the Eucharist to the sick and the homebound, we are offering them the hope of eternal life spent with Him in Heaven. We are offering them the life-giving bread “that came down from heaven” (John 6:51) and the opportunity to be “raised up on the last day” (John 6:54). What greater gift is there to give someone?

If you know of someone who could benefit from having the Eucharist brought to him or her, please contact the parish office at 850-434-2551 or Deacon Richard Lurton at 850-291-0481. Any short-term illness/recoveries or long-term needs can be met. If you are interested in becoming an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the homebound, please call Deacon Richard Lurton.



Pyxes on the altar with Holy Communion to be consecrated and brought to the homebound parishioners

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 9:00, 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. | **Daily Mass:** Monday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Confessions: Saturdays, 9:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.,

most Sundays during 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Mass, 1st Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., and by appointment

Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday 9:00 a.m. until Friday 7:30 a.m.