



# THE GRRRAPEVINE

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5)

Number 16

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 7, 2006

## PASTORAL TEAM TIDBITS

Richard: The time since Easter has passed very quickly. I can hardly believe that we are moving into the Fourth Sunday of Easter. I spent three days in Winnipeg for the Western Regional Meeting of the National Federation of Presbyteral Councils, and the rest of the time was spent in the parish office and the diocesan office. This Sunday I am in McBride for Eucharist with the community there, and then I will be going to Kitimat on May 14 to celebrate Rectorino's diaconal ordination. I intend to take a couple of days off before returning to Prince George. It is great to have Giselle back from her holiday - I look forward to lots of new things around the parish.

Giselle: I'm back!! I took a couple of weeks off after Easter and went on a little holiday to Rome. It was a good trip although Rome was VERY busy, with tonnes of tourists. Saw the Sistine Chapel (briefly), along with hordes of others. Didn't see the Pope! Now, it's back into the thick of things. Touch home base here (Thursday) and off this weekend to Terrace for Lay Formation. Back again, briefly, next week for a few days and then it's off to Kitimat for Rector's ordination to the diaconate. After that... I think I'm around for a few weeks... please God!

## WELCOME TO THE GRRRAPEVINE!

As we move into spring, we continue to reflect on the call to Stewardship and what that means in our daily living.

We continue to invite your feedback, suggestions, etc. You can respond on the website, through email, in writing or in person. Our parish website address is:

<http://www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg/>

## OUR FIRST EVER—PLANT SALE

Saturday May 20  
9:00 a.m. to Noon



In previous issues of the GRRRAPEVINE, we announced a spring plant sale, with proceeds to St. Vincent de Paul. The date and time is now set. We invite everyone to contribute plants to the sale - bedding plants - flowers and vegetable, houseplants that you have divided or started from the cuttings you just couldn't throw out, perennials that you have divided or new little volunteers that you cannot bear to destroy.

If you are looking for plants for your garden or house, check us out! We just might have what you need.

Hopefully, this will become an annual event, so come out and support this one and let's see if we can make this grow!

## PENTECOST VIGIL

Come and celebrate the close of the Easter Season with a vigil celebration for Pentecost on Saturday, June 3. We will begin at the regular Mass time of 7:00 p.m., but it will be a longer celebration than usual. The Vigil for Pentecost follows the pattern of the Easter Vigil, with seven readings which continue the story of God's love for the people created in God's image and likeness. The readings for the Pentecost Vigil focus on the work of the Spirit in the world. We do not have a service of light at this Vigil, nor do we normally cele-

## SEMINARIAN TIDBITS

Rector has left Prince George to spend some time in Fraser Lake with Fr. Vince James, OMI visiting the First Nations communities and getting a little taste of ministry with First Nations people. He will go on to Kitimat to prepare for his ordination to the diaconate, which will be celebrated on May 15 in the evening. Please keep Rector in your prayers as he prepares for this important step in his journey to priesthood.

Vener continues to minister at St. Mary's Parish, spending time at the hospital, Hospice House and Shepherd's Corner, as well as being involved with RCIA, presiding at Vespers and other services and preaching. He will go to Kitimat on May 8 to help Rector with the final preparations for diaconate.

Both Vener and Rector will be leaving on May 21 for Manila to complete their studies and will be returning to Prince George at the end of December. We wish them well in all they do, and will keep up with the news about them as they continue their journey towards priesthood.

brate sacraments of initiation. The Vigil is a fitting close to the most important feast and season of our liturgical year. Come and celebrate!

## GOOD SHEPHERD/VOCATION SUNDAY

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father." These words from John's gospel set the tone for our celebration this weekend. We reflect on the many ways in which Jesus guides us and provides for us, just as a shepherd does for the sheep. There has to be a constant care and concern on the part of the shepherd, as sheep are defenceless and vulnerable. Jesus laid down his life for us, that we might have abundant life.

In turn, Jesus calls us to be shepherds to one another and to all people. As disciples of Jesus, we share in his ministry and mission of sharing the Father's love with all. What does it mean for us to shepherd one another? How does that look in our daily living? Where do we need to show concern for the welfare of others, and how are we called to respond to the



needs of those around us?

On another level, we are reminded that within the Church, Christ calls individuals to minister, to shepherd God's people. How aware are we of the importance of vocations in our community? Are we only aware of the need for vocations when we experience a lay-led liturgy instead of Eucharist, or do we have an appreciation of the need for and value of vocations in our community at all times? What do we do, as individuals and as a community, to promote vocations, to encourage members of our community to consider serving the Church as priests or religious?

Do we recognize the value of the vocation of married and single people, and encourage them in their vocations? Do we recognize that the faithful living out of these vocations is also ministry to the community and the world? All of us are called to serve the world as disciples of Jesus. What are we doing about that call?

## EASTER SEASON

*The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one "great Sunday".*

*(General Norms for the liturgical Year and the Calendar, 22)*

The Church in her wisdom gives us forty days of fasting, but fifty days of feasting. This tells us something important about the Christian faith: it is more about joy than about sorrow. The victory of the Resurrection surpasses the power of sin. Christ has not just won the battle. He has vanquished the foe. The gift of Christ outweighs the offense of Adam, and overflows so much that the scales henceforth are always tipped in favour of humanity. A sense of paschal abundance is at the heart of the Eucharistic sacrifice at all times, but especially at Easter. Like the feast that welcomes home the prodigal son, the Eucharistic banquet is more than we deserve, yet it is freely offered by our loving Father, who is ecstatic at his children's return. Christ's Passion, death and Resurrection have won us back. A new life opens before us. Fifty days of feasting is hardly enough time to celebrate this overwhelming gift.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to ask whether we will actually experience the joy of Easter in our community, and keep it going for a full fifty days. Is the risen Christ real for us each day, or does the joy of Easter fade as the paschal Sunday comes to an end. Are we in touch with the well-spring of new life within us; that is, the gift of Baptism? Do fifty days of feasting come naturally? Or do they feel like an unrealistic demand?

*(Continued on page 3)*

## STEWARDSHIP

At the beginning of John's Gospel, we hear the call of the first disciples. Andrew and John hear the words of John the Baptist in reference to Jesus who is passing by: "Behold the Lamb of God". On hearing these words, they respond by following Jesus. They stay with him that day, listening to his words, getting to know him a little. In turn they go and call others - Andrew tells his brother Peter about Jesus and brings him to Jesus. Philip brings his friend Nathanael, and slowly the band of disciples grows. There are two powerful lessons for us in this passage:

1. Jesus does not call faceless crowds. The call is personal and unique. Jesus calls individuals to follow him. Jesus knows us personally and individually, knows our weaknesses and foibles as well as our strengths and gifts. Our vocations are unique, but we are called as part of a community of faith to follow Jesus, to be his disciples. We are each challenged to reflect on our individual vocations, on our strengths and gifts and then to respond to the Lord's call.
2. We do not hear the Lord's call in isolation from one another. We help each other hear our own call to discipleship - we become the lord's voice calling others. Vocations are communicated, discerned, accepted and lived out in the Christian community. As we hear, recognize and respond to our own call, we in turn are invited by the Lord to call others into relationship with him.

How did you hear your call to be a disciple? Who called you in a concrete way?

Have you ever invited anyone else to become a disciple of Jesus?

(Continued from page 2)

Most of us need help in sustaining the spirit of Easter of the "one great Sunday" of the fifty days. We are called to keep alive the joy of the Resurrection during this "week of weeks", the seven Sundays of Eastertime, or the spirit of the season will fade as the lilies droop. Each of us must do what we can to call forth and sustain the joy of the community by keeping the reason for joy front and centre in all we do. We have heard the Good News: Christ is risen! He is with us now. We must be in touch with the risen Christ and the gift of our Baptism, so that we can invite others into the spirit of this season. The Easter season is a time for joyful praying, singing and celebrating the sacraments of new life.

Just as the Easter season begins with a big celebration, so it ends on a high note, with the great feast of Pentecost. In the Jewish tradition, Pentecost was a celebration fifty days after Passover. Originally a harvest festival, it later became associated with the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. The Christian celebration of Pentecost, by highlighting the giving of the Holy Spirit, brings together the entire harvest of the Easter season and celebrates the new covenant made by Jesus Christ. The work of Christ would be incomplete without the sending of the Spirit and the birth of the Church. Thus, Pentecost rounds out the celebration of the whole fifty days.

*adapted from "Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons"*

### BAPTISM PREPARATION FOR INFANTS

Do you have a newborn you want baptized? Are you expecting a baby and want to have the baby baptized? We periodically have a baptism preparation session in the parish to help parents prepare for the baptism of their children. Our next session will be on Tuesday, May 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. If you want to have a baptism in the next two or three months, please attend this session, as we may not have another until sometime in August.

### BAPTISM PREPARATION FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Do you have an older child (5 to 10) who would like to be baptized? Beginning Tuesday, May 23, we will be offering a 5 session baptism preparation programme for older children. The sessions are usually about an hour long and extend over 5 weeks. The sessions will be held May 23, 30, 6, 13, and 20, in the Conference Room. If you are interested, please phone Giselle at the parish office, 564-4097. Our next series of sessions will begin in the Fall.

### RCIA

We have entered the period of mystagogia after the Easter Vigil, and our sessions will be ending on June 5. Come the fall, we will begin again. If you know of anyone who might be interested in becoming Catholic, please let us know. Maybe it's somebody you met during the Parish Mission last November... or maybe it's a family member... Just give us a call!!

### LISTENING CENTRES

Several of the Listening Centres that began with the OMI Mission in November are still meeting on a regular basis. They would welcome interested participants! Listed below are the active Listening Centres for St. Mary's Parish:

Suzanne Lefebvre	964-9580	College Hts.
Terry Bopp	564-2635	Westwood
Janice Haddock	563-0159	Ospika & Massey
Tom Makowsky	564-3838	Spruceland
Paul Laliberte	563-8465	Tabor & 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave
Angie Hoksbergen	562-9844	10 <sup>th</sup> & Freeman
Dorothy Reimer	562-3749	Central
Tony Cue	962-8680	Hart Hwy.

### INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Please remember the sick and suffering in our community and families, especially:



- Marvin Lane
- Joseph & Frances Glosser  
(Kathy Labonte's parents)
- Judy Nelson  
(Ann Robertson's sister)
- Chuck Robertson
- Anne Beaudette  
(Fr. Richard's mother)
- Ugo Marotta

### REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We welcomed the following members in the sacrament of Baptism:



- Braiden Bopp van Grootel
- Katarina Ratkaj
- Beau Dennis
- Blythe Dennis
- Lee MacFarlane

We also welcomed, through profession of faith and Confirmation:



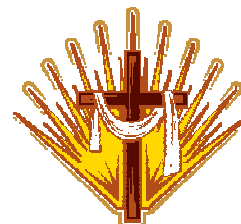
Ginny Jenkins

No marriages lately - but keep watching!

In the hope of the resurrection, we bid farewell to:



Concha Pastoral  
Jennifer Thomas



ROMAN ROCKS

Maybe it's my geological background... but the thing that really impressed me the most in Rome, was the rocks. The area around Rome is basically composed of volcanic rocks and limestone. Pretty boring you would think... but in reality quite fascinating.

When you walk into any of the large churches, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran, St. Peter's... the thing that first strikes you, is the amazing display of colours on the walls and the floors. Pillars and columns of different colours. And none of it painted! It's all made up of intricate patterns of different types of volcanic rock (purple, green, black, yellow, orange, red, white). For me, an image of the Body of Christ. Taking us as we are, whatever our colour, and making an object of beauty.

We also visited the Appian Way, the ancient Roman road running from the south to the north of Italy. The paving stones of the Appian Way are made of large (more than a foot in diameter) pieces of black volcanic rock, worn smooth by millennia of travel. In some areas you could actually see the chariot wheel ruts where millions of wheels had worn the rock down. Reaching back into history... walking where the Roman legions walked, where emperors trod and where Peter and Paul may have walked.

One church, Scala Santa, near St. John Lateran, has 28 marble steps, supposedly from Pilate's residence in Jerusalem. Legend has it that these steps were brought to

Rome in the 4th century, by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine. Legend also has it that these are the steps that Jesus himself walked up when he stood before Pilate. Pilgrims come from all over the world to "walk" up these stairs on their knees. Whether the legend is true or not, it was amazing to watch people perform this devotion.

We also visited the catacombs, a series of burial chambers cut out of volcanic tuff in the south of Rome. Even though the place was overrun by tourists and we were herded through the catacombs like wayward sheep, there was a strong sense of the ancient faith in this place. One of the people I went with sings and plays music in her home parish, and was deeply moved by the tomb of St. Cecilia, patron saint of musicians. Awesome to think that the early Christians walked here, buried their dead here, and even celebrated Eucharist here during the periods of persecution.

At the same time, although all of the rocks have been around for a long time, it was interesting to see how they had been worn and weathered by the touch of human hands and feet. Nothing lasts forever, not even the stones around us. The only one that lasts is Jesus, the cornerstone. And although we might be tempted to place our faith and hope and trust in things that we think will last... we need to realize that all earthly realities eventually pass away.

APRIL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Below is the synopsis of the April financial statement. The detailed financial statement is posted on the bulletin boards for your information.

Bank Balance	3913.16
DDF Balance:	171818.32
<u>Accts Receivable:</u>	<u>964.05</u>
Total Assets	176695.53

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Donations	23510.44		
Fees	150.00	Admin	2008.24
Programs	987.00	Programs	1625.48
Other	1364.15	Operation/Maint.	1843.89
<u>Rentals</u>	<u>3725.00</u>	<u>Rental Operation</u>	<u>1480.55</u>
Total Income	29736.59		
Total Expense	24958.16		
		Net Income	4778.43

FINANCES, MAINTENANCE, ETC.

Once again this month, donations were very high, due to a major contribution from a parishioner and the Easter collection, which is normally larger than a regular Sunday collection. Our administration expenses were not as high this month, and we also posted our interest income for the past couple of months. All in all, we are in a very healthy financial position at month end.



We had some work done on the sound system during the past month, and hopefully the work will be completed soon. We will have to pay that bill when it comes in, but we did get a donation to help cover most of the cost of the system, so we should continue to have the funds for the other maintenance projects that are scheduled for the next couple of months. Major capital costs, like roof replacements, will likely have to be paid out of our savings account in the Diocesan Development Fund.

The financial health of the parish is totally dependent on the members of the parish, and you are to be commended for responding so generously to that responsibility. The Finance Council, Pastoral Council and parish staff try to manage the resources you give as well as possible to provide for all our needs and not overspend those resources.