



THE GRRRAPEVINE

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

Number 29

1st Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2006

PARI SH PHOTO DI RECTORY THIS WEEK!!!!

Finally, it's here!! This week, the photographer from IPC will be in the Conference Room taking photographs of all the parishioners who booked an appointment. You should receive a phone call this week, reminding you of your appointment time. Please try to be prompt in keeping your appointment. If you need to cancel your appointment, phone the parish office, but be sure to leave your full name, the date of your appointment and the time slot of your appointment (e.g. Monday, December 4 at 11:00 a.m.). If you indicated to your phone contact that you needed a ride, someone will call you prior to your appointment with the taxi account number and information. If you are housebound, someone will visit you during the next week to take your photograph.



PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: Last weekend, I was involved in directing a marriage preparation weekend with nine couples from the city parishes. A wonderful weekend, getting to know the couples who are preparing to celebrate weddings this summer.

Tuesday to Thursday were spent in Fort Ware - it was cold! However, the weather did moderate a bit by the end. As usual, the trip was a bit too short, but it was a good visit.

As we move into Advent, there is a busy three weeks ahead, with Reconciliation Services and all the rest that goes with preparing for Christmas.

I had planned to be in McBride this weekend, but instead will be in Vegreville visiting my family.

Giselle: My trip to Vancouver was very good. I was able to visit my sister and her husband who are expecting their first child in March or April. I also spent a few hours at UBC madly photocopying material on Tobit & Judith. We began our bible study on Jonah this past Wednesday, and 6 eager and enthusiastic folk have come out to learn a bit more about this rather eccentric and comical prophet.

RCIA, Religious Education, Children's Liturgy of the Word and Sacramental Preparation are taking up some of the rest of my time. Advent is going to be a busy few weeks!! And this coming week, is the long-awaited parish photo directory...

YEAR C: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

If asked to name their favorite story from the Bible, most Christians would probably choose something from the Gospel of Luke. These stories are indeed unforgettable, and the Christian tradition is graced by this gospel from Luke's hand. It is the only one of the four gospels to describe the angel's annunciation of the coming birth of Jesus to Mary, and the visit of the shepherds at his birth; it is the only one to tell the parables of the Good Samaritan, of the prodigal son, and of the rich man and Lazarus; it is the only gospel to relate the story of Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection. In addition to that, Luke's Christmas story is proclaimed by Linus on the Charlie Brown Christmas special!

Archeologists and textual experts usually date the writing of the Gospel of Luke to around 80 CE. One piece of evidence that helps with the dating is that the gospel contains nearly all of Mark, and from this we know that it was composed after 70 CE (about when Mark was written). In addition to having Mark as a source, the Gospel of Luke shares a large chunk of material with Matthew, material that appears neither in Mark nor in John. From this we assume that there was another source for Luke, one that he and the writer of Matthew used together. Luke also had a source of information that only he used.

The evangelist Luke is also the author of the Acts of the Apostles, which is, in a sense, the second part to the gospel. This is evident from the very polished Greek of these two books, but more specifically, from the fact that both books are addressed to Theophilus, a fellow believer. (See Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1.) Luke's contribution, therefore, makes up more than one-quarter of the second testament.

The portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke is of an itinerant prophet who is attracted to the poor and the outcast. He explains that his ministry is to them, and he envisions the heavenly banquet as filled with the poor and disenfranchised. The evangelist draws powerful portraits of despised members of the society, and much of the wonder of this compelling gospel is in its address to sinners.

The Gospel of Luke is proclaimed in Year C, the years 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and so on.

In art, the evangelist Luke is portrayed with a bull by his side. The feast of Saint Luke is October 18.

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UNLIKELY HEROES & HEROINES OF THE BIBLE

We had our first meeting to look at our friend Jonah this past Wednesday. We'll meet over the next 3 weeks to study this comical prophet and learn a bit more about human nature (we're all Jonah's to a certain extent) and about our loving and compassionate God.

Wednesdays—Dec 6/13/20—7:30 p.m.
Parish Office Meeting Room



THEOTIDBITS

Thank you!! For coming out to Theo-Tidbits! We had our four series' this past fall and they were a great success. We are going to continue with our next set of series from January to May. Keep your eyes on the bulletin boards for more information and schedule cards. If you have any suggestions for other topics, give us a call or send an email. We'd love to receive some feedback! Thanks for helping to make St. Mary's a vibrant parish!

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

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

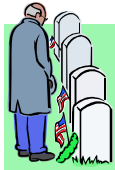


- Ann Beaudette
(Fr. Richard's mother)
- Kay McEwen
- Joseph Glasser
(Kathy Labonte's father)
- Beverly Teegee
- Judy Nelson
- Nick Palfy
- Sheila Livingstone
- Don Binnie
- Anne Whyte
- Josephine Nykoluk
- Kai Peterson
- Peter Alexander
- Suzanne LeFebvre
- Sr. Margaret Quinn

REJOICING & REMEMBERING

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

- Andrew Kenway
- Cecil Lebel
- Paul Castonguay



MARRIAGE PREPARATION

There are several different options for marriage preparation:

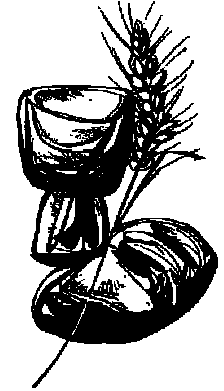


For those sessions offered at St. Mary's, please contact the parish office to register. For the Engaged Encounter weekends, please call 964-2805 to register.

- Jan 24 to Mar 7
- Six Wednesday evening sessions at St. Mary's
- Mar 23-26
- Engaged Encounter Weekend
- May 11-13
- Engaged Encounter Weekend

MINISTRIES IN OUR COMMUNITY: COMMUNION MINISTERS

Each Sunday, as we gather to celebrate Eucharist, we recognize that there are a great many people involved in the liturgy. In this part of our series on parish ministries, we will look at those men and women who assist us as Communion Ministers.



Normally the minister of communion is the priest. With the larger communities, fewer priests and the change in understanding about receiving communion after Vatican II, it quickly became obvious that the priest could not distribute communion alone on a Sunday. Prior to Vatican II, the majority of people did not receive communion every Sunday; communion was only received after Confession, and that happened usually at the special seasons like Christmas and Easter. Especially when communion from the cup was encouraged, a single priest obviously could not fulfill this ministry alone.

Communion ministers, like all ministers, act first of all on behalf of the community, for the good of the community and for their own good. Communion ministers assist the presider in sharing the Body and Blood of Christ with all the members of the community. This ministry combines many aspects of ministry: service, hospitality, leadership. The communion ministers serve the community as the community gathers to celebrate and pray. The service involves the obvious - distributing communion to the community. Hospitality perhaps is not something that comes to mind when we think of communion ministers. One of the most profound acts of hospitality we offer to one another in our daily living is to share food, our food, with one another. In distributing communion, the ministers share Jesus, who gives himself to us as food and drink for our journey of faith. In a very real sense, they welcome each one who comes in line for communion and share this unimaginable gift with each one. Through their ministry, although it may seem to be one of short duration in the whole celebration, the ministers also assist in leading the community in prayer and celebration. By their example, generosity and service, they lead and give example of what it means to follow Christ and serve the community.

Sometimes when people are asked to serve in this ministry, their response is "I am not worthy". In a very real sense, none of us is worthy to share the Body and Blood of Christ, not even the priest. Yet, Jesus gave us this gift and commanded us to share in this gift. We have all been called to discipleship and to service, and this is one way we can serve. We are all worthy in the sense that Christ has called us into life with him, and invites us to share fully in that life.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—NOVEMBER

Below is the synopsis of the November financial statement.

Bank Balance:	38.52
DDF Balance:	170075.64
<u>Accts Receivable:</u>	<u>1347.05</u>
Total Assets	171461.21



INCOME		EXPENSES	
Donations	18585.24	Admin.	18647.22
Fees	300.00	Programs	695.70
Programs	0	Oper./Maint.	2431.51
Other	855.00		
<u>Rentals</u>	<u>4155.00</u>	<u>Rental Op.</u>	<u>1680.62</u>
Total Income	23895.24	Total Expense	23455.05
Net Income	440.19		

STEWARDSHIP

The Gospel passage for last Monday's liturgy was the widow who put the two small coins in the temple treasury. The woman's act teaches us much about stewardship; she is a model of a true steward.

First of all, the woman must have had a deep sense of trust in God's love for her. She knew that God was always blessing her with many gifts - she was aware of God's generosity toward her. She trusted that God would never abandon her, but would always be there and provide for her needs. She relied on God's help and realized in a deep way that everything she had was a gift from God - her life, her assets, her talents, the world around her.

Recognizing God's generosity toward her, she was deeply grateful for that generosity. Her way of expressing her thanks was to give what she had to the temple treasury. She was not generous - she gave everything. One can be generous and give much, but still keep back something for oneself; this woman expressed her gratitude by giving everything, once again trusting in God's generosity and the gifts that God continually gave her. In her gratitude, she was willing to risk letting go of everything she had in order to be open to receive whatever God wanted to give.

In our call to follow Jesus as disciples, we need to recognize that everything we have and are is gift from God, and we express our gratitude for those gifts by using them for our good and sharing them with others.

DAILY PROPHET: HABBAKUK

Last issue we learned about gleeful Nahum, who rejoiced in imminent the destruction of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. The city did fall to the Babylonians in 612 BC and everybody in the old Assyrian empire rejoiced, because they were pretty much all nations that had been under the harsh thumb of the Assyrians. Now, the triumphant Babylonians didn't assume immediate control of the entire Near East. It takes a while to conquer an empire and transfer the harsh thumb of control. In Judah, around this same time (625-610 BC), things were looking pretty rosy. The Assyrians were more concerned with the Babylonians than they were about some tiny upstart kingdom. Into this tiny bit of breathing space, steps King Josiah of Judah, a good king who came from a long line of bad kings. Josiah came to the throne when he was only 8 years old, but as he matured he implemented sweeping religious reforms, trying to call the Hebrew people back to the worship of Yahweh. When Nineveh fell in 612, the Hebrews rejoiced and must have felt that God was on their side, for their hated oppressors had finally been conquered. Unfortunately, it was a very short-lived rejoicing. The Egyptians were coming to the aid of the Assyrians and King Josiah of Judah was killed in battle with them in 609 BC. The Egyptians installed their own puppet king on Judah's throne but were quickly sent packing by the Babylonians who defeated them in battle and sent them home with their tail between their legs. Judah then fell under the shadow of the Babylonian empire, forced to pay tribute and acknowledge the Babylonians as their new masters.

Now, that's a pretty hard-luck story, and you have to admit, the poor Judeans didn't have a lot of luck with peace and harmony. And they began to question, "how could this happen"? They had been trying to reform their religious practices, they had been trying to return to Yahweh... and now this... a new oppressor had stepped onto the world stage and once again they were under somebody's thumb. This wasn't the way it was supposed to work!!! God was supposed to allow the king and the nation to prosper. But it didn't happen. Why should the wicked Babylonians be allowed to triumph while good Judah was trampled in the dust?

These are the questions that the prophet Habbakuk raises in his book (you knew we'd get to Habbakuk eventually!!). We don't know a lot about the man, but he may have been a prophet attached to the Temple in Jerusalem. Habbakuk sums up the complaint of the Hebrews in Hab 1:2—"O Yahweh, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?". Yahweh's answer, in a nutshell, is to say that although evil seems to have the upper hand, God is in control of the events of this world. God does not wish evil on anyone, but God is the Lord of history, and can claim even evil persons and evil events to bring about eventual loving purposes. God never abandons us. We may not always see the big picture or glimpse the overall plan, but we have to believe that there is a purpose and a plan to everything that happens in the world. If we have this faith in God's plan, then, although we may not be able to explain world events logically, we can at least have faith that they are part of a bigger picture and somehow, are bringing about God's plan for the world.



BAPTISM PREPARATION FOR INFANTS

Our next baptism preparation session for parents who wish their infants or young children (under 5 years old) to be baptized, will be held on January 17 & 18, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. Parents are expected to attend both sessions. Please phone the parish office to register—564-4097.

OUR WEBSITE

Check out our website for information on the latest happenings in the parish. We'll have our Advent stuff up pretty soon!
www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg