



THE GRRRAPEVINE

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

Number 33

3rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 21, 2007

THEO-TIDBITS

Our new season of Theo-Tidbits has started!

Unfortunately, due to lack of interest, we have cancelled the series on World Religions.

Our next series is entitled: Pastoral Care to the Sick and the Dying. It will take place on Tuesday February 6 and Thursday February 8. Both evenings begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Our guest presenter is Bishop Gerry. Be sure to mark your calendars!

In March, our own Fr. Richard will lead three sessions on Sin and Grace: Tuesdays, March 13/20/27.

In April, Susan Campbell will tackle the Paschal Mystery and in May, Sr. Hazel will look at annulments & divorce.

Check out the schedule on the bulletin boards for times and dates and places. We have business cards in a pocket on the posters...

If you have any ideas on other topics that you would like to see covered, give us a call or drop us a line. We'd love to hear from you!



SPRING IS COMING!!!

It is not too early to start thinking ahead and putting some plans into action. Remember last year's plant sale for St. Vincent de Paul? Well, we are planning another one this spring, and we are hoping that it will be bigger and better than last year. Last year, if you remember, we raised a little over \$1000 for the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and we would like to help again this year.



Everyone is invited to contribute to the sale. If you have a green thumb, now is the time to put it to work. Start those cuttings rooting, get some of the seedlings started, plan ahead on ways that you can contribute to the sale. There are already at least 75 geranium plants started, with maybe about 60 new geranium seedlings popping up out of the ground. The geraniums, of all varieties, were a big hit last year. If your plants need a haircut to get them bushing out, don't throw the clippings away. Put them in a glass of water! If you are into seeding perennials and want to contribute some seedlings, they would be more than welcome. Houseplants are an item that was in short supply last year, so if you want to start some houseplant cuttings, now is the time. Anything you can contribute will add to the success of the sale. We plan to make it more of a fair atmosphere this year, with some lawn chairs, coffee and perhaps a doughnut or two and lots of opportunity to browse, schmooze and get some plant material for your summer enjoyment.

DO YOU KNOW...?

Have you seen the poster on the bulletin board? Do you know the Hawkes Family a bit better now? That's the whole point of the Do You Know...? initiative!



We should have a new poster up fairly soon, with a brief introduction to another family or couple or individual. If you are asked to prepare a poster, please say "yes"! It's a great way to build community. It doesn't have to be fancy, just a photo and a short introduction to yourself or your family. Your poster could include information such as:

- How long you've been in the parish
- Year you got married (if a married couple)
- Years of children's birth, if applicable
- Kind of work you do
- Where you were born and grew up
- What you like about the parish, or what you hope for the parish

UNLIKELY HEROES & HEROINES OF THE BIBLE

We've finished our foray into the Book of Jonah. It was very enlightening to see how deep this short little book is. Much more than a "big fish" story! In the new year, we'll take a look at Judith & Tobit. Book of Judith Jan 24/31 & Feb 7/14 at 7:00 p.m.



Book of Tobit Mar 14/21/28 & Apr 4 at 7:30 p.m.

We'll continue to meet in the Parish Office Meeting Room.

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: It seems like a lot has happened in the past couple of weeks, since the last edition. I was in Dawson Creek to celebrate the Diaconal Ordination of Venerando Sabacan. The snow fell with a mighty rush just after our arrival on Sunday night. The ordination was truly a joyful celebration, and then it was off through the falling snow the next morning for St. Joseph's Seminary in St. Albert. Some adventures along the way, especially when the engine suddenly quit. Six hours later we were on the road again, but that put me into the teeth of the blizzard halfway between St. Albert and the farm. Another adventure! All's well that ends well, and I made it safely home to Prince George again. Spent a couple of evenings with my mother in the hospital, and had some time on the farm with my brother, so I enjoyed the time off and really appreciate being able to take the time. Back to meetings in the parish and at the diocese and the usual routines of life! It is good to be home.

Giselle: I'm more or less moved into the new house, but don't ask about the unpacking! A few little renos are still waiting to be done: mouldings, painting, etc. You know how it goes. Meanwhile, at the parish, there is the usual round of RCIA, Religious Education, Theo Tidbits and the upcoming Bible Study on Judith. And then there are the meetings: Parish Pastoral Council, Liturgy Committee and Finance Council.

STEWARDSHIP

In the last issue, we looked at Mary as a model of Stewardship; she exercised stewardship in giving of herself, her life, to God out of love and gratitude, to do God's work.

In Jesus, we have the supreme teacher of stewardship, which he accomplished through his self-emptying and doing the will of the Father. His mission was to restore to its original state the created household of God which sin had disrupted. Jesus not only fulfills the task given him by the Father, but then he calls disciples and empowers them to collaborate with him in the work of redemption for themselves and on behalf of others.

In describing the way of life of the disciples, Jesus gives very concrete examples and expectations; the Beatitudes and the rest of the Sermon on the Mount beautifully describe the life-style of the Christian disciple (Mat. 5:3 - 7:27)

Jesus sometimes describes the life of the disciple in terms of stewardship because this role sheds a certain light on discipleship. A steward is one to whom the owner of the household turns over responsibility for caring for the property, managing affairs, making resources yield as much as possible and sharing the resources with others. The position involves trust and accountability. A parable near the end of Matthew's gospel gives us insight into Jesus' message (Matt. 25:14-20; the man who goes on a journey and gives silver talents to three of his servants). In the parable, the silver talents represent all temporal and spiritual goods, which are created by and come from God. Everything we have, spiritual gifts like faith, hope and love, talents of body and brain, cherished relationships with family and friends, material goods, the achievements of human intellect and skill, all of creation. All of these are entrusted to us, for our own good and for the good of the created world and all of humanity. The question for us is this: how do we use these gifts, have we shared them with others, have we used them to assist those around us, have we been faithful disciples of Jesus and used the gifts to collaborate with Jesus in the work of redemption, of building the kingdom. For Jesus, the right use of our gifts includes and requires that they be used to serve others. Our vocation as disciples requires us to use the "talents" God gives us for ourselves and for others, following the example of Jesus.

CONGRATULATIONS, REV. MR. VENERANDO SABACAN

On Monday, January 8, 2007, the parish community of Notre Dame in Dawson Creek welcomed visitors as we gathered to celebrate the ordination of Venerando Sabacan to the Order of Deacons. Bishop Gerald Wiesner led us in the celebration, and in his homily reminded us that a cleric is like a fisherman - called to be patient, to know the habits, to read the environment and conditions and to know what approach to use. It was indeed a joyful celebration of the parish community and the diocesan church, and we give thanks to God for the generous response of Vener to God's call to serve our community of faith. We at St. Mary's, where Vener spent several months last year, extend our congratulations to Vener and pray that God will bless him abundantly in his ministry. (*visit www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg for photos of his ordination*)

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.

Feb 1 to Mar 8: Five Thursday evening sessions at St. Mary's

Mar 23-26: Engaged Encounter Weekend

May 11-13: Engaged Encounter Weekend

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

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



Joseph Glasser
(Kathy Labonte's father)

Beverly Teegee
Margaret George
Teddy French
Becca Kennedy
Judy Nelson
Nick Palfy
Anne Whyte
Kai Peterson
Peter Alexander
Suzanne LeFebvre

Mary Pfliger
Ann Beaudette
(Fr. Richard's mother)

Valerie Kabai
Cyril Abreau
Sr. Margaret Quinn
Detta Quinn
(Sr. Margaret's sister)

REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We welcomed the following members in the sacrament of baptism:



Kyle Obranovic

LENTEN PARISH MISSION

Just to let you know... that we'll be having a Parish Mission from March 4-7. Bishop Gerry will lead us and give us presentations on the Eucharist. Mark your calendars ahead of time!!! And plan to come and join us!

OUR WEBSITE

Check out our website for information on the parish.
www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg

MINISTRIES IN OUR COMMUNITY: PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council is an institution that was developed after the Second Vatican Council. While it was strongly suggested that each diocese should have a pastoral council, composed of lay and clerical members, to assist the bishop in the pastoral governance of the diocese, nothing was mentioned directly about pastoral councils for parishes. The idea of the Parish Pastoral Council was developed by various conferences of bishops after the Vatican Council in response to many of the ideals and ideas put forth by the Council documents on Church, faith, the role of the laity and of the clergy. As such, Parish Pastoral Councils are a relatively new institution in the church. In the past, parishes were encouraged to have some advisory groups, but their function and role was very narrow and they were not often implemented.

The Pastoral Council, as envisioned by the bishops of Canada, is composed of lay members of the parish, selected from the parish, and representative of the parish. It is suggested that the group be kept fairly small, 6 to 10 members, in order that it can function smoothly and efficiently. The Council is not a gathering of representatives of various interest groups in the parish (for example, the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women's League, Altar Guild, Religious communities, Third Order groups, etc.) Rather, the members are selected from the parish at large and represent the parish as a whole.



The role of the Parish Pastoral Council is to collaborate with the pastor and pastoral ministers in the ministry to the parish. The Council, along with the pastor and any pastoral staff, takes the time to listen to the needs of the members of the community, to reflect on the life and pastoral needs of the community, plans appropriate pastoral action to respond to the needs identified, seeks the assistance of others in putting the pastoral plan into action,

evaluates the programs and initiatives and continues the whole process of reflection and planning. The Council in many ways, models what it means to be a community of faith. Part of the ministry of the Council is to build community among the members, to pray together, to study and learn together, to develop bonds and relationships and to grow together in faith. The reflection and planning are done in a spirit of collegiality and collaboration, by consensus rather than making motions and voting. In this way, all members are involved in shaping the final decisions and can thus take ownership of the decisions and plans that are made. No one is forced to be on the outside, the losing side, but all contribute to the work that is done. While this may seem a bit more cumbersome, in the end it is what community is all about, and teaches us how to work together for the building of the kingdom. To be part of the Parish Pastoral Council is to use one's gifts for the benefit of all the members of the community, to help build a strong and vibrant community that is able to witness to the faith in our daily living.

REMEMBER THE LISTENING CENTRES?

The Listening Centres are small, neighbourhood faith-sharing groups that were set up during the Oblate Parish Mission in the Fall of 2005. It was hoped that these groups would continue to function after the Mission, but most have not.



There is a small group of people in the parish who would like to get a listening centre going on a bi-weekly basis, but they would like more members to be involved. The plan is that the group would meet at the rectory in one of the meeting rooms. If you are interested in exploring this possibility, you can contact Terry Bopp 564-2635, Paul Laliberte 563-8465 or Dorothy Reimer 562-3749.

GREETINGS FROM VENER

To our Parishioners:

Greetings from Edmonton!
I would like to express my sincere thanks for your prayers and concern during the few months that I have stayed with you. Last January 8, I was ordained a Deacon in Dawson Creek. It was a simple and a solemn celebration of my commitment to serve in our Diocese. At present, I am staying at St. Joseph's Seminary-Newman Theological College auditing some pastoral courses that would help me in my future ministry as a priest. I hope to see you again in the Spring. Once again, thank you very much and God bless!

TABLE FOR TWO

Our first Table for Two is this coming Friday, January 26. Six people in the parish have been given invitations to dinner. They can bring a dinner companion of their choice. This is another way in which we can build community and get to know one another a bit better. For those of you who received an invitation, RSVP was this past Friday, January 19...

In the next issue, we'll let you know how it went, hopefully with some feedback quotes from the participants. This is a great chance to taste the awesome culinary cuisine of Fr. Richard!



DAILY PROPHET: HAGGAI

Can you imagine the joy and enthusiasm of the Jews as they were finally released from their Exile in Babylon?? They had been languishing there for almost 50 years, and finally they were allowed to return home! There must have been a run on camels and donkeys, as everybody tried to pack up and head out the door as quick as possible. Well...



it might not have gone quite like that! Let's face it, most of the Jews who were going back to Judah had been born in Babylon. They didn't know anything else. Babylon was a bustling city, with a vibrant cultural scene. The best of the best imports came here. You could get silk and spices for next to nothing. And now, they were finally allowed to go "home". A home that very few of them could remember, or had even seen. A home that was one of the rural backwaters of the Persian Empire. A home that had been thrashed quite soundly when they left in 589. Despite these obstacles, some Jews did return home to Judah, in dribs and drabs. The first group to return found a land that was in ruins. There was no Temple. There were no city walls around Jerusalem. There were also inhabitants living in the land. Not everyone had been hauled off into Exile, and the ones that had been left behind had helped themselves to the best plots of land and the best hovels and huts that remained standing. And these people were not exactly overjoyed to see the plump Exiles returning to "their" land.

But the returning Exiles buckled down. They began to rebuild the Temple and tried to rebuild their lives. The foundation of the Temple was laid, but then other things got in the way... like eking out a living in land that is harsh at the best of times. They had to deal with droughts and imminent famine. They really didn't have time to build a Temple, when they were barely living hand to mouth. Not to mention dealing with the locals who were questioning everything that was being done. And then there were the Samaritans up north who weren't exactly helping matters.

By the year 520, they had been in the land for almost two decades, and they hadn't done a heck of a lot. Another group of exiles, led by the Davidic prince Zerubbabel came back from Exile around this time, and things began to pick up a little bit. The prophet Haggai stirred the pot as well. His ministry only lasted about 4 months, but he certainly lit a fire under the Jews! The Jews were complaining that things were going badly for them: famine, drought, squabbling. They didn't have time to worry about the Temple. But Haggai tells them that it is because they have neglected the re-building of the Temple that they are suffering now. He reassures them that the promises of Yahweh will come to pass, but that they need to do their part! He also encourages them to anoint Zerubbabel as their king to lead them. With this encouragement, and under Zerubbabel's leadership, the Jews manage to re-build the Temple by the year 515 BCE. And they managed this despite the grumbles of the old-timers who compared it with the majesty of Solomon's Temple. "Now, when I was a boy, we had a "real" temple. It wasn't a shack like this new-fangled thing. We really knew how to build them big back then. The younger generation just can't do anything right. We did it better." Apparently nay-sayers exist in every time and place!

PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY UPDATE

The material for the Parish Photo Directory was sent off on January 12. This included the parish roster (list of names & addresses), pastoral letter, editorial pages and extra photographs from parishioners who weren't photographed by the company photographer. We should have a proof version within a month, which will be corrected and then sent back. From there it's about 8 to 12 weeks until they arrive...