



THE GRRRAPEVINE

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

Number 37

4th SUNDAY of LENT

March 18, 2007

BRING YOUR BROWN BAGS NEXT SUNDAY!!!

Next Sunday, March 25, we are all invited to bring our Brown Bags full of groceries to Mass. During the offertory procession, we will be invited to bring our bags up and place them in the sanctuary (near the Tabernacle). All of the Brown Bags will then be delivered to St. Vincent de Paul on Monday, March 26.

Pasta	Pasta Sauce	Rice	Dry Stew	Canned Beans
Canned Peas	Flour	Dry Beans/Peas	Dry Soup	Canned Fish
Canned Veggies	Canned Fruit	Canned Meat	Canned Soup	Peanut Butter
Canned Milk	Powdered Milk	Canned Stew	Crackers	100% Fruit Juice
Cereal bars	Tea	Hot Chocolate	Baby Food	Infant Formula
Breakfast cereal				



CREATION HIKERS

Believe it or not, spring is just around the corner!! In fact, the first day of spring is this coming Wednesday! Which means we have a whole new spring, summer, fall season of hiking in front of us! Our first hike is coming up in April and will probably be a fairly easy one as we try to work the winter legs back into shape.

Do you have a favourite hiking trail that you'd like to share with us? Maybe you're familiar with the trails on Tabor Mountain! Or you've hiked the Cranbrook Hill/Otway trail. Let us know! We're always looking for new and exciting trails to share with people.



SPIRITUALITY OF STEWARDSHIP

The spirituality of Stewardship challenges us in our everyday life. Once an "attitude of gratitude" is in place, we are called to take the next step on our spiritual journey: become generous givers and receivers. When was the last time you were generous with your many talents and skills? What did you share?

Being generous feels good. Recall a time when you gave generously of yourself. Who was the person or group receiving your generosity? What was given? Was your motivation simply to give or to get something back?

True generosity is freely given, no strings attached. Would it be okay with you if the person you were generous to did not say 'thank you'? Would you be generous to that person again? Examine your motive for generosity and giving.

Try this during the week: when you feel down or discouraged or out of sorts, find something good to give away. Give, not because there is a need out there, but because there is a need in you.

Observing the generosity of others inspires us to be generous in turn. Look around your family, church community, and neighbourhood this week to discover examples of generosity. Imitate the ones that you can and think of ways of your own to act generously. Help your family participate in your actions especially children or grandchildren.

OUR 3rd TABLE FOR TWO

Our third Table for Two took place this past Friday, March 16.



It was another roaring success, and we have a fourth one planned for April 13..

SPRING IS ALMOST HERE!

How does your garden grow? Or in this case, how are your seedlings and cuttings coming along? Our Second Annual Plant Sale in support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society is coming up on May 19. We will accept any contributions of greenery—house plants, perennials, bedding plants, vegetable seedlings, etc. Anything you can contribute will add to the success of the sale. Thanks for your help!



PASTORAL TEAM

Giselle: The Religious Education Congress in Los Angeles was awesome!! It was wonderful to hear some well known speakers like Richard Rohr give some very thought-provoking talks. It was a little intimidating being at a conference with 40,000 other people, but I did manage to bump into 5 people that I knew, including Jane Ethier (who is doing well).

Back here in Prince George, things are ticking along with the usual meetings and parish events. I am looking forward to the spring when we can get the hiking group going again. And of course, spring also means gardening in a yard that is still emerging from the snow. Cabin fever is definitely setting in and the snow can't melt quickly enough!

Richard: The week in California was a delightful break from some of our dreary winter weather, not that I mind winter! However, it was good to have a little holiday and the Religious Education Congress was truly a feast for the mind. The workshops were most enjoyable, educational and thought-provoking. Don't worry, I won't be standing everything upside down! It is good to be back and with the spring-like weather, even the trip to McBride on Sunday was a breeze. I will be traveling to McBride several times in the next few weeks - March 31 for the Palm Sunday celebration, Good Friday and the afternoon of Easter Sunday. The babies for the plant sale are all coming along nicely, and should be in great shape by the middle of May.

HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD: PROPHETIC VOICES FOR GOD

"Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel: for the Lord has a dispute with the inhabitants of the land." Hosea 4:1

Watching a society rife with greed and injustice 2700 years ago, the prophet Hosea warns the people of Israel that divine judgment is imminent unless drastic changes are made. The people pay no attention and Israel is overthrown by the Assyrians.

We often assume that the work of the prophet is to predict the future, and there are certainly passages in scripture where this seems to be the case. But the prophet's responsibility is to deliver God's message for the present time, while warning of future consequences if the people do not hear. Sometimes the message is one of hope and deliverance; at other times it is divine judgment.

Often quoted, especially at Christmas time, are verses from the seventh chapter of Isaiah, a message of hope for the king of Judah and a promise for all people in the years to come. The prophet speaks to King Ahaz and, pointing to a young woman, remarks, "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a child". Isaiah seems to be saying that by the time her child is born and weaned (a period of about three years), Judah's principal enemies will have ceased to be a threat. That did come to pass, yet many Christians interpret the words "young woman" to mean "virgin" and see this passage a prediction that one day a virgin would give birth to a child, Immanuel, God with us: Jesus, born of a virgin mother in Bethlehem.

Similarly, the songs of the suffering servant in Isaiah are seen by many Jewish readers as referring to the community as a whole and not to one individual. The same passages are considered by Christians on Good Friday to be direct prophecies of the events surrounding the suffering of Jesus. Many Christians are drawn to passages in the Book of Revelation and some have identified its names, numbers, people and places with current events. While there is much in such writing to inspire us in our devotional life, it is a mistake to see every verse as if it were a prediction of coming events. The principal task of the prophet, in ancient times as well as in our own day, is to address the present, having heard God's word.

Today, many prophets speak God's word to our generation, as did John-Paul II and others, like Billy Graham or Desmond Tutu. Some have challenged society's ills, as did Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr., prophets who led the drive for civil rights in the United States. Others, like the author Rachel Carson and animal conservationist Jane Goodall, have addressed the fragile state of our environment and the constant threat to God's creatures. Still more, like Romeo D'Allaire, are committed to the struggle for peace in our troubled, and frequently violent, world. Jean Vanier reminds us of God's love for every woman, man and child regardless of mental ability. Passionate calls for action come to us from Stephen Lewis and others seeking to combat HIV-AIDS, especially in Africa.

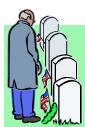
Many today would claim to be prophets and there will always be false prophets around us. We are called to discern among the voices we hear, to pray for guidance and to remember that the voice of God has been proclaimed and heard in every age from ancient times to ours today. Some prophets are named in scripture; others speak from our own generation. "Hear the word of the Lord" said Hosea 2700 years ago. What was spoken then, and what faithful women and men speak today, must awaken our consciences and challenge us to respond.

GROWING TOGETHER is a series of five Sunday bulletin inserts for the ecumenical education of Christ's faithful. Prairie Centre for Ecumenism 600 - 45th Street West Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9 CANADA © 2007

REJOICING & REMEMBERING

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

Rob Marwood
(nephew of Ron Marwood)



NEW TO THE PARISH??



Are you new to the parish? We'd love to hear from you!!

We've noticed a fair number of new faces at Mass, and we're never quite sure if those are visitors just passing through, pilgrims from other city parishes, or perhaps new parishioners. We invite you to introduce yourself to one of us after Mass. Fr. Richard is usually hanging around the back doors, and Giselle is usually hanging around the Freeman St. entrance. We also have parish registration forms on the bulletin boards.

THEO-TIDBITS



Our next series is entitled: Sin and Grace and will take place on three successive Tuesdays in 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...

MINISTRIES IN OUR COMMUNITY: CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD



Have you ever wondered why children seem restless and bored at church? It really shouldn't come as any big surprise to us. Quite often they can't see what's happening. They really don't understand what all the words mean. And when they ask questions, they get hushed into silence again! Our Sunday services really aren't designed with children in mind!

And yet, children are the church of today, not just the church of tomorrow. They have every right to come to Mass and to express their praise and thanksgiving to God along with us. For children, that often means singing, talking and moving, things that aren't always encouraged during a regular Sunday Eucharist! But there are ways in which we can encourage the participation of children in the liturgy and help them to understand it better.

One of these ways is to encourage younger children to participate in the Children's Liturgy of the Word. Quite often, the Liturgy of the Word is the most "boring" part for children. There's a lot of speaking and not a lot of action, and oftentimes the speaking is directed over the heads of children, at the adults. The Children's Liturgy of the Word is a chance for the children to hear the readings proclaimed in a way that is more meaningful to them. After listening to the readings, the leaders of the Children's Liturgy of the Word engage the children in a dialogue about the readings. What did the children hear in the readings? What does Jesus mean when he says such and such? How can we do what Jesus asks us to do in our everyday lives? After a time of dialogue, the children are led in a simplified Profession of Faith and are then encouraged to offer up prayer intentions. If there is time, they might conclude with a song.

The Children's Liturgy of the Word is not "Sunday School" nor is it Religious Education. It is a celebration of liturgy, in which the children listen to God's word, reflect on it and respond to it. We are very thankful to our leaders for their dedication in helping the children to deepen their understanding of the Gospel and to apply it to their lives.

SIMPLE FARE

When we forget about the nourishment received in simple fare, lovingly prepared and shared, the heart, crying out, serves up alternatives. Compulsive consumption. Addictions. Eating disorders. While the first world gorges, the third world forages in dumps. And more, while the third world starves, the first world must perpetually diet.

Examine your diet and resolve to make the necessary changes if it is not healthy. Try vegetarian meals. If we eat the grains instead of feeding them to cattle, we can save the beasts caught in the middle — and also save the forests that are cut down to make grasslands for the cattle!

Learn to cook and serve the foods that the poor eat. Tasty and healthful meals can be made from lentils, rice, grains and legumes, which when eaten together offer the protein that we need. You may want to invest in a simple Indian or Mexican cookbook.

Make a collection box to set on the table. Label it: The Fasts of the Rich are the Feasts of the Poor. The money that you save by eating sparingly, not dining out and forgoing meat can be graphically transferred into alms. Do this especially during Lent. But why not every Friday as well?

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PARISH PHOTO
DIRECTORY UPDATE

We have received our proof copy of the parish photo directory. After we make a few spelling corrections, it will get mailed back to the company and we should receive our final copies in 4 to 8 weeks. We hope.

CONFIRMATION & FIRST
COMMUNION

Confirmation & First Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, April 22 at 2:00 p.m. The preparation sessions are on the following Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the school gym: Mar 20 & 27, Apr 17 & 24.

ANNIVERSARY MASS

Our first Wedding Anniversary Mass is on Saturday, March 24 @ 7 pm. We invite all couples who have a wedding anniversary in January, February or March to attend. We'll serve refreshments after Mass!

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

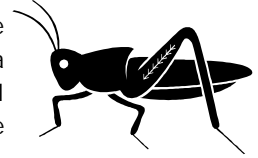
Please call 964-2805 to register for the following Engaged Encounter weekends.
Option 1—Mar 23-26
Option 2—May 11-13

LENTEN RECONCILIATION
SERVICES

Reconciliation services in the city will take place on the following dates and at the following places, all at 7:00 p.m.

Thurs Mar 22	COS
Wed Mar 28	IC
Tues Apr 3	SHC

DAILY PROPHET: JOEL



Joel is one of the last Hebrew prophets. We know very little about him, although some scholars have suggested that he was a cultic priest of the Temple in Jerusalem. Based on the material in his writings, most scholars believe that he wrote after the Jews returned from Exile, probably around the year 400 BCE. Beyond that, we have very little information to help us place Joel within a historical context.

The book itself can be divided into 2 main sections: Chapters 1-2 and Chapters 3-4 (it's not a very long book)! In the first part, the prophet paints a picture of Israel in the throes of a famine, a drought and a plague of locusts. Locust plagues are fairly common in the Middle East, and occur even today. Hordes of the insects would descend upon the land and eat everything in sight, leaving a denuded landscape in their wake. Here in Joel, the prophet compares them to a rampaging army that lays waste to the landscape. Joel concludes the first part on a positive note as the drought breaks and the rain appears. Having seen the plague and drought as a sign of God's displeasure, this return of the rains is seen as God's positive response to the repentance of the people. God does still care about the people of Israel!

Joel then links current events with future events. In the same way that God has mercy on his people in the present situation of drought and plague, Joel foresees a time when God will have mercy on Israel and will vindicate the nation in the sight of all peoples. Thus, Joel moves from the concrete here and now, to a future end time, when the Day of the Lord shall come, and the righteous shall be vindicated.

One of the most well known passages from Joel is the one in which God says: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit". For the early Church, this was seen as a direct reference to the events of Pentecost, when God's spirit was poured out on the disciples.

Joel challenges us to look at the events of our lives and to find meaning in them. We believe that God is at work in our world, the trick is to recognize God's hand at work.

FEBRUARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME		EXPENSES		TOTAL ASSETS	
Donations	19932.91	Administration	18668.11	Bank Balance	2327.04
Fees	000.00	Programs	72.93	DDF Balance	172670.12
Programs	250.00	Operation/Maint.	2598.14	Accts Receivable	1972.66
Other	3542.48				
<u>Rentals</u>	<u>3725.00</u>	<u>Rental Operation</u>	<u>1662.79</u>		
Total Income	27450.39	Total Expense	23001.97	Total Assets	176969.82
		Net Income	448.42		

We continue to maintain a fairly healthy financial situation in the parish. Compared to last year at this time, our total expenses have decreased and our operating income has increased. You will note that our numbers do not change significantly from one month to the next. Our donations were up by \$3000 over the previous month, but that included a \$5000 donation from the Knights of Columbus so that means our Sunday collections were down somewhat. Several months of DDF interest means the income in the Other category is high as well. This income stays in our savings account, and is not used for regular operation of the parish. With most of the programs up and functioning for some time, the major expenses in that area have been taken care of, and there are only minor expenses, as you see from the synopsis. Thank you to all for your continued generous support of the work and mission of the parish.