



# THE GRRRAPEVINE

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

Number 47

18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 5, 2007

## TO HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE

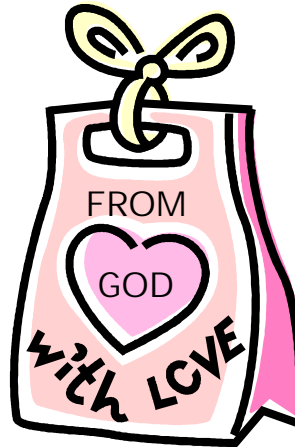
Jesus warns the crowd in today's gospel reading "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." The Teacher in the first reading reminds us that all human toil and striving is vanity (not a very positive outlook on life). Paul tells us that we have been raised with Christ and live a new life in God - cause for rejoicing and optimism. What are we to make of all this?

First of all, God's Word reminds us of our origin and purpose. We are created by God to live in love with God and each other. The life that we have and live is filled with hope and peace and joy, no matter what the circumstances. This mortal life is not all there is; we share even now in the eternal life that was God's plan for humanity from the beginning of creation. No matter our particular circumstances, we live on in hope and trust, believing that God is present to us at all times and in all things, that God is our support and strength, our life and joy.

Next the Word calls us to reflect on the gift of the world and all the other gifts we have been given. Everything that we have and are is gift from God and is given to us in order that we might have peace, joy, fulfillment and the fullness of life. God's plan for us is life, not death. If we recognize that all that we have and are is a gift, that changes our perspective considerably. Gifts evoke a certain response in us. First of all, gifts evoke a sense of gratitude. That sense of gratitude leads us to express our thanks to the giver of the gift and draws us into a closer relationship with the giver. Gifts, especially valuable or valued ones, are cherished and cared for; they are shared in some way, whether by being on display or being pointed out or sometimes even physically shared. Gifts also evoke the giving of gifts to others. There is a certain reciprocity to gift giving.

Having the sense that everything we have and are is gift from God changes our perspective, attitudes and actions. Rather than hoarding our gifts like the man in the parable, we share what we have out of gratitude for the generosity of God. We trust that God, who has been so generous toward us, will continue that same generosity, and we will not be in want or need. We also look at the world around us, and recognize that we are called to care for the gift of creation, because this gift is meant to be shared with others and with those who come after us. We are stewards of God's gifts, not the owners of those gifts. God gives them for our well-being, but we cherish those gifts, use them responsibly and share them with others, exercising good stewardship and expressing our thanksgiving for the gifts we have been given.

Jesus is not telling us that possessions are bad. What we have is neither bad nor good. It is our attitude toward our possessions that is important. Jesus is encouraging us to have a right attitude toward what we have been given. The attitude that he calls for is that of a good steward; an attitude marked by a sense of gratitude and generosity, a willingness to share with others and a care for the gifts received.



## CREATION HIKERS

Our next hike is this Sunday, August 5 and will take us to the Ancient



Cedar Forest about 100 km east of Prince George. These trees, part of a proposed cut-block, are absolutely amazing, one is 43 feet in circumference. The hike is relatively easy takes about 2 hours (that includes photo time!). We'll leave the St. Mary's parking lot at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoon.

## FRUITS OF THE HARVEST



Are there any pickers or processors out there who don't have access to fruit

but would like to pick some and make something out of it? Let us know. Apple season is coming up! And if you have any fruit to give away, let us know too!

## NEW TO THE PARISH??

Are you new to the parish? We'd love to hear from you! Please fill out a registration form on the bulletin boards or introduce yourself to Fr. Richard after Mass.

## WEBSITE

Check out our website!  
[www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg](http://www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg)

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: The week at home with family was a great break. Mom got home from the hospital for a few hours on Friday, and we celebrated her 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday, Dad's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, their 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary and my sister and brother-in-law's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary all in one fell swoop. Mom had not left the hospital since the middle of October, and she told me on Sunday during our conversation that "it was a great party".

The ordination celebration in Vancouver was a wonderful experience of Byzantine Liturgy and celebration - a time to be in touch with some of my roots again.

It is good to be home, where it is a little cooler (Alberta was in the mid-30's) and I can take a little time to relax and enjoy the gardening and other hobbies. Time also to prepare for the fall (sigh!).

Giselle: I've been trying to clear my desk of paper the last few weeks and trying to get a few "To Do" things off of my list. Slowly making progress!! My sister, mother and father are going to be up next weekend for the baptism of my little niece. I guess Prince George is the most central for people who live in Vancouver, Terrace & Edmonton. I think it'll be a full house!

And of course, there are berries to pick and process. Saskatoons have been taking up my energy the last few weeks, but it's now time to hunt out the huckleberries & blueberries. Although we still try to squeeze a hike or two in there as well.

LAY FORMATION WANTS YOU!!

The current session of the Lay Formation Program in Prince George is coming to an end, and a new session will be starting in September.

The Lay Formation Program is a two year program, held one weekend a month for ten months each year. The focus is on learning more about our faith, the teaching of the Church, Scripture, Theology, ministry, liturgy, etc. It is a rich and exciting journey discovering in a deeper way what it means to be a member of the Church and a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The object of the program is to help participants grow in their faith as well as in understanding of their faith. For some, this means a greater involvement in the ministry of the parish. For others, it means involvement in other areas of our broader community. In any case, ministry is not the main focus of the program; growth in faith is the main focus.

Is your curiosity piqued? Brochures available at the main entrance of the church in the brochure holders. You can also contact Susan Campbell at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre if you would like more information. Application forms are available from Fr. Richard. It is our hope that we can fill the upcoming session again—there is room for up to 20 participants in each program. So, if interested, register early.

As well... you might get a tap on the shoulder from a member of the pastoral team or perhaps from previous participants in the Lay Formation programme, inviting you to consider this grow experience. Give it some thought!



MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Below is the synopsis of the July financial statement.

Bank Balance:	553.91
DDF Balance:	172256.85
<u>Accts Receivable:</u>	<u>1531.34</u>
Total Assets	174342.10



INCOME		EXPENSES	
Donations	15986.50	Administration	16147.91
Fees	450.00	Programs	199.15
Programs	000.00	Operation/Maint.	4002.41
Other	890.41		
<u>Rentals</u>	<u>3725.00</u>	<u>Rental Operation</u>	<u>1051.46</u>
Total Income	21051.91	Total Expense	21400.93
		Net Income	-349.02

We begin another fiscal year, and on a positive note: our collections are about \$1000 more than last year in July, and our expenses were slightly less than last year, despite the fact that we paid three payroll invoices in the month (normally we only have two per month).

Normal summer maintenance has been proceeding - painting woodwork trim, repairing winter damage, grounds work and all the other odds and ends that are necessary to continue to keep our property in good shape.

Thank you to all for your continued generous support of the work and mission of the parish.

## PARABLES OF JESUS: BIBLE STUDY

Do Jesus' parables sometimes leave you more confused than when you started? This fall we are going to take a look at some of Jesus' parables. We start September 26 and are offering a morning session (10 am) and an evening session (7 pm). The parish has ordered a dozen of the resource books. More info on the bulletin boards. If you're interested, call Giselle at the parish office and reserve/purchase your copy!

## FANS OF FILM

For those of you who like to watch movies & documentaries... we're going to be offering a movie night once a month (more or less). We thought we could start around 6:30 pm or so and order some pizza and beer to munch while we watch... More info coming soon.



## TABLE FOR TWO

Table for Two is an event that had great success this past year. We would welcome any people who would share their talents for cooking, serving or cleaning up for the evenings coming up this year. There are usually 10-14 guests, and 4 or 5 people working, which means that one cooks for up to 20 people. The evenings are a lot of fun, and community is built in the kitchen as well as the dining room!

## SACRAMENTALS: INCENSE

Burning incense as a perfume was an ancient practice in the near East where Christianity originated. From there, its secular use crossed over into Jewish worship where it accompanied the burning of sacrifices. The use of incense has been part of the church's rituals since the beginning of Christianity, but it has seldom been used privately as a sacramental. Among Christians, it has been used to purify, to bless, and to symbolize the motion of prayer upwards to God.



Today, we still use incense during a funeral liturgy, when the casket containing the body, or the urn containing the cremated remains, are incensed. In this instance, incense is used as a sign of respect for the body of the deceased, which was a temple of the Holy Spirit.

We also use incense at certain points in our liturgical year, most notably during the Easter Triduum, when incense is used to bless the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle on Holy Thursday, and to bless the Easter Fire during the Easter Vigil. Incense is also used during the celebration of Evening Prayer as we sing, "Let my prayer rise before you, like incense in your sight".

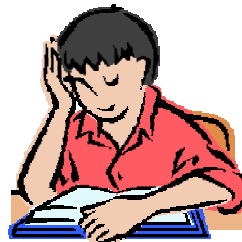
## THEO-TIDBITS

Our new season of Theo-Tidbits is in the works! If you check the bulletin boards, you'll see that we have our proposed schedule posted, along with some bookmark-schedules for you to take home. We are offering a wide range of topics, everything from a look at Pope Benedict's Encyclical—God is Love, to Harry Potter: Friend or Fiend, to a repeat of last Fall's session on Planning a Funeral. Grab a schedule off the bulletin board and keep your eye on the Grapevine for more information.



## MAKE ROOM FOR GOD—BOOK DISCUSSION

Does your life seem overly hectic and full? Are you having trouble making room for God? You're not alone!! This fall, we are offering a book discussion that will help us realize how we can make room for God in our busy lives. We'll start on October 4 and are offering a morning session (10 am). Sorry, no evening session...unless someone else would like to facilitate it! The parish has ordered about 10 of the books. More info on the bulletin boards. If you're interested, give Giselle a call at the parish office and reserve/purchase your copy today!



## SENIOR'S TEA & SOCIAL

One idea that has been germinating is a gathering, on a regular basis, for senior members of the community. It could take various forms: an afternoon tea and social, a soup and bun lunch, some prayer time, some teaching or information sessions, and anything that those gathered would like. It would be in the wheelchair accessible Conference Room during the daytime. We would try to organize car pooling and rides. This is meant to serve the needs of members of the parish and help build community, so if you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact us (phone or email Giselle or Richard, or write us a note and drop it in the collection basket.)



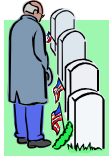
## REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We witnessed the marriages of:



Tony Tiani  
& Chrissy Harder  
Nick Fuchs  
& Sophia Raby

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



Sheila Kenway  
Karin Strong-Boag

## PRISON MINISTRY

Jesus told us that whenever we visit or care for those in prison, we are visiting or caring for him. While visiting prisoners may not be feasible for many people, there are ways in which we can still minister to those in prison.

Frank Jamin is the chaplain at the local correctional centre. He has expressed a need for bibles and other spiritual reading (e.g. prayer cards, Catholic Digest, etc). Perhaps you have some good reading material in your house, or maybe you've got too many bibles. There are people at the prison who hunger and thirst for the Good News. We have a basket on top of the Food Bank cabinet to collect material.

## OUR WORSHIP SPACE: THE BAPTISMAL FONT

Baptism is one of the most revered and significant actions of the church. It is clearly rooted in Jesus' own baptism by John and grounded in the theology of Paul: "Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:1-4)



The earliest evidence of special places for baptism is in a third-century house church in what is now Syria. In the fourth century, buildings called baptistries were provided for baptism. The container or font was large enough for an adult to be baptized by immersion. (To baptize means "to dip." "Immersion" means that the one being baptized stands or kneels in inches or feet of water while copious amounts of water are poured over his or her body.) It is unlikely that these early fonts were large enough for submersion, that is, the whole body going under the surface of the water. Eventually, as infant baptism became the norm, the font became smaller and moved from the baptistry into the church.

With the revised rites for the celebration of baptism for infants (1969) and adults (1972 and 1988), and the earlier reform and restoration of the Easter Vigil (1951), the font is regaining its place.

Baptism is celebrated at the threshold of the life of faith, so it is appropriate for the font to be near the entrance of the church in an atrium or chapel. This would provide ample space for funeral processions to pause beside the font for the blessing of the casket. The design and scale of the font must clearly reflect the significance that the church attaches to initiation, to the mystery of incorporation into the eternal life of Christ that it celebrates.

The sign of baptism, however, is not the font, but the water in it. The abundant water speaks of the generous, life-giving grace of Christ poured over and into those who are "called by name" to put on the new life of Christ. The church, acting in Jesus' name, must show by its gestures and symbols fullness of hospitality toward all those initiated.

The font is the place for memorable rituals marking births and deaths, and the blessings of many spiritual journeys. The water of this font calls all who enter it, or touch it or are blessed by it, into that transformation whereby "we are alive for God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

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## HOSPITALITY



We would like to set up a Hospitality Group - and no, we are not talking about greeting people at the door of the Church before Mass. This group would be people who would organize, set up and serve refreshments at our various gatherings (e.g. Anniversary Mass evenings). We need one or three people who would be the coordinator(s) - when there is a gathering planned the coordinator would be contacted and that person then would contact members of the larger group to make the gathering happen.

Ideally, any event would be served by a fairly large group of people who would each have only a small task to perform (someone would purchase food, another couple set up, others serve and others take down and clean up). If you would be interested in being part of this group, let us know. The more people we have, the less work for any particular person!