



THE GRRRAPEVINE

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

Number 49

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 2, 2007

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. Pick one up today and see what interests you!! Our first series is coming up on Sept 11 & 13 and is titled "How to plan a Funeral".

TABLE FOR TWO

Table for Two is an event that had great success last year. We welcome any people who would like to 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 in the dining room!

FANS OF FILM

For those of you who like to watch movies & documentaries, we're offering a movie night once a month. We thought we could start around 6:30 pm or so and order some pizza and beer to munch while we watch... Our first movie night is September 14—Judas: Traitor or Friend.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

At the time of Jesus, meals weren't just casual affairs where people gathered around the barbecue and swapped big fish stories. They were social events in which one's status was always being assessed and measured. Who did you invite for dinner? Where did they sit? How much social status do you have in the community? Everybody had a little social status pigeon hole, and much of their time was spent maintaining or increasing their status in the eyes of the community.

And then along comes Jesus, and he blows their notions straight out of the water. He tries to get them to think outside the box of social status. Don't try to exalt yourselves and increase your status. Don't invite your rich neighbours, thereby increasing your status, but rather invite the ones who can't return the favour, the poor, the lame, the crippled, the blind.

How is Jesus calling us to "think outside the box"? Who do we try to exclude from our circle?

BLESSING FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

God of wisdom and might,
We praise you for the wonders of our being,
For mind, body, and spirit.
Be with our children as they begin
A new school year.
Bless them and their teachers and staff.

Give them strength and grace
As their bodies grow;
Wisdom and knowledge to their minds
As they search for understanding;
And peace and zeal to their spirits.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



CREATION HIKERS

Our next hike is Saturday, September 22. We're going to hike half of the Cranbrook Hill Greenway Trail, which extends from UNBC to the Otway Ski Centre. The whole trail is about 18 km, but we'll stop at the Takla Forest Road which makes our hike only about 9 km. It's mostly rolling with a few ups and downs. We'll meet at the St. Mary's School parking lot at 8:30 a.m. The hike should take anywhere from 2.5 to 3.5 hours. Bring a water bottle!! And pray for good weather!



REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We welcomed the following in the Sacrament of Baptism:



Sophie Gail Johnson

We witnessed the marriages of:



Chad Headrick &
Joanne Valerio
Kevin Santos
Melody Giene
Maurice Martin
Vera Earle

NEW TO THE PARISH??

We'd love to hear from you or meet you! Please introduce yourself to Fr. Richard or Giselle after Mass.

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: The past week was spent in Fort Ware and this Sunday I am celebrating with the community in McBride – I touch base with all three communities that I serve in one week, which is quite a feat, considering the distances involved!

The coming week's schedule is fairly light, which means that I will have some time to prepare for the Theo Tidbits, Study Day for Priests, the National Federation of Presbyterian Councils meeting and a few other things that are on the agenda for the next six weeks or so. It will be busy, but that just means that not much has changed in my lifestyle. I look forward to all the different activities in the parish and diocese this coming fall, and hope that there will be something to whet the appetites and fancy of many parishioners.

Giselle: I feel like this coming week is the calm before the storm! We have a lot of things planned for the fall, and it promises to be a busy season.

This Monday, Labour Day, I'll be helping Joe Glaab (one of the volunteer chaplains at UNBC) with student orientation at UNBC. It's a good way to make some connections!

On the home front, the garden shed is getting a new roof and the canning and jam-making is still going full force. Prince George has way too many apple trees!! But just a bit more crab jelly, and things should ease off a bit.

I'm looking forward to a break from all the preserving!

THERE'S STILL TIME!!

A new session of Lay Formation starts this month!! Lay Formation 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 are 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! Register now! It's not too late!!

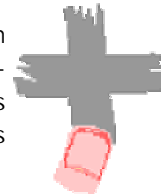


SACRAMENTALS: ASHES

Every year, a few days before Ash Wednesday, we burn the palms from the previous Passion (Palm) Sunday. Just as the palms remind us to rejoice at Jesus' coming, a coming that wiped away our sins, the ashes from last year's palms remind us to mourn the fact that it was our sins which he came to wipe away.

In the Jewish tradition, ashes have a long history of being used as a sign of repentance. In the Old Testament, the custom was to fast, wear sackcloth and sit in dust and ashes and to put ashes on one's head. Today, we don't sit in dust and ashes, but we continue the custom of fasting and receiving ashes of our foreheads as a mark of our repentance.

The ashes are also a sign of our death and mortality. They remind us that we are mortal and that we need to repent, while we still have time.



PRACTICE OF CHARITY

For most of us, work gives structure to our lives as it provides a sense of identity. On the first Monday of September, as a nation, we consider the rights and benefits we enjoy as a result of our labours and the blessings God has bestowed on us.

While you're celebrating what your blood, sweat and tears have made possible, don't forget that blood is a gift that can be shared. Canadian Blood Services estimates that someone in Canada needs blood every minute of every day, and on holidays the need is likely to be greater. Giving blood is fairly easy and painless and saves lives. Do you have it in you to give??



PRAYER OF WORKERS

Blessed are you, Lord God,
From eternity you have called us to be your people,
and to sing your praises
at all times.

Bless us in our work
and prayer,
and grant that our lives may
give you glory

Through our words,
our witness and our worship.

We give you praise,
creator God through Jesus
Christ our Lord,

In the communion
of the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.

PARENTS ARE LIVING ICONS OF BAPTISMAL FAITH

"What do you ask of God's church?" That was one of several questions we heard at the recent baptism of our first child. It was an awe-inspiring moment, for never were we more acutely aware of our duty as Christian parents. It was also a poignant reminder of the sheer gratuitousness of God's grace given to our little son in the sacrament of baptism.

"Faith" was our simple response to the question, and in the days that followed we were prompted to reflect on the gift and mystery of what we had done in bringing our infant child to the waters of baptism.

The practice of infant baptism takes us back in time to the earliest moments of the church. Entrusted with the mission of preaching the Gospel and of baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the early church welcomed with open arms the youngest of children into the Christian community. From the second century on there is explicit historical witness to infant baptism. As entire households came to accept faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, family members, including infants, were received into the church through sacraments of initiation.

In our age of individualism and self-determination, baptizing a child who has not reached the age of personal discernment might seem like a presumption on the part of parents. Since infants obviously cannot profess a personal faith, should parents presume to speak for them? Why does the church permit infant baptism and what does this sacramental practice say about the Christian faith of parents and children?

With infant baptism, the church puts the spotlight on the sheer gift of God's grace that is offered to human beings, infants and adults, in the sacrament of baptism. No one through personal merit earns the grace of friendship with God through the sacraments. God's grace is precisely that: a divine gift unexpected and unmerited.

Before faith can be something we choose, it is a gift we receive. God's generosity and love is the primary source and pre-eminent reason why anyone is invited into the community of believers.

What does the practice of infant baptism say about the nature of Christian faith? It tells us that the faith into which a child is baptized is not the private possession of any individual or family. Faith is the common treasure of the church as the community of believers. A child, therefore, is baptized into the faith of the church, a

faith proclaimed and lived for them by their parents and godparents who represent the whole believing community.

Rather than an act of presumption, bringing an infant to baptism is an act of faith and an act of love on the part of parents who exercise their role as nurturers of the life God has entrusted to them.

During the celebration of infant baptism, the mother and father of the child have a special role to play. In fact, it is said that they exercise a "genuine ministry" as they carry their infant to the baptismal font. Rather than simply fulfilling a family obligation or meeting social expectations, parents become living icons of the faith into which the child is being initiated.

When parents publicly ask that their child be baptized, when they sign their child with the sign of the cross after the celebrant does the same, as they renounce evil and recite the profession of faith, as they (particularly the mother) carry the child to the font, hold the lighted candle and are blessed with prayers for their roles as parents,

they represent the local church and the whole company of saints and believers. As St. Augustine once observed, "The whole church is the mother of all and the mother of each."

Baptizing an infant also affirms rather than denies the child's freedom to grow in the faith he or she received in infancy. In other words, to fulfill the true meaning of the sacrament, children are to be formed in an ongoing way in their baptismal faith.

Baptism, as the first sacrament of initiation, marks the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith. Christian formation through prayer, service, study and sharing, which is their baptismal right, leads a child to gradually learn God's loving plan in Jesus Christ and to grow in friendship with God. Such ongoing faith formation leads children to ultimately live and accept for themselves the faith into which they were baptized.

It has been said that every child born into this world is God's idea that the world should go on. Reflecting on the gift of infant baptism, we take that insight a step further. For every child washed in the waters of baptism, reconciled to God and welcomed into the community of believers is God's idea that the faith of the church will endure for all time.

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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, booklets, Catholic Digest, etc). We have a basket on top of the Food Bank cabinet to collect material.

WEBSITE

Check out our website! We have lots of neat stuff and you can view upcoming events. We also have an online parish calendar!

www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg

OUR WORSHIP SPACE: TABERNACLE

The word tabernacle derives from the Latin *tabernaculum* (tent), and recalls the Jewish "meeting tent," which housed the ark of the covenant and thus embodied the presence of God among the people. In Catholic churches today, the tabernacle houses communion bread that has been consecrated at the liturgy. The practice of reserving the eucharist dates back in some places to the earliest days. In the second century, a small amount of consecrated communion bread was placed in an ambry or a pyx, often shaped like a casket or a dove. This vessel was small enough to be carried to the homes of those who were unable to attend the community's eucharist. This was the only reason for reservation. Devotion to the reserved eucharist grew during the Middle Ages when the reception of communion declined. By the sixteenth century, the custom of a fixed container for the reserved eucharist—the tabernacle as part of the main altar—was in place; in 1614 it became prescribed practice for most places.

The normative guidelines of the church today indicate that the tabernacle be placed elsewhere than on an altar, and never on the altar used for the liturgy. An appropriate setting would be on a pillar, in a wall niche, or especially, in a chapel set apart from the main assembly area. (The chapel is the clear preference of Roman liturgical law.) Such a setting should also provide for the private devotion of the faithful. The tabernacle in its modern setting still recalls the ancient image of a house for the divine presence, and reminds the assembly of those in the parish who are confined to their households, waiting for the ministry of those who have celebrated the eucharist.

The tabernacle is made of noble materials, giving it a quiet dignity as the symbol of an ever-present God. A lamp burns nearby in silent witness of this mystery.

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LIVING THE LITURGY AT HOME

1. Faith Talk

Discuss these questions within your household:

What does it mean to be proud? What does it mean to be humble?

Jesus says that if we put ourselves above others, we will be humbled; but if we humble ourselves, we will be honored. What do you think he means?

How has Jesus been a humble servant to us? What is one act of humility you could do in response?

2. Devotional Practices

Hebrews 13:8 says "Don't forget about your leaders who taught you God's message. Remember what kind of lives they lived and try to have faith like theirs."

In your family devotion times this week pray for Christian leaders who teach you about God – pastors, teachers, Sunday school leaders, youth leaders etc.

Talk about what you see in them that you would like to imitate. Plan a way to express your thanks and appreciation to them.

3. Rituals and Traditions

Allocate days during this week when different family members will be "honored" by others.

Set a special place at your meal table for the honored person and talk about acts of service that can be undertaken in honor of each family member on their special day (e.g. make their bed, tidy their room, do chores on their behalf).

At the end of the week talk about what it was like to be served by others and to serve them.

4. Service

When eating at the house of an important Pharisee, Jesus said: "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward."

Make plans to invite someone you don't know to share a meal at your home. Think together about how you can work as a family unit to make them feel as welcome as possible.