



THE GRRRAPEVINE

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

Number 51

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 30, 2007

TABLE FOR YOU... AND YOUR FRIENDS

The dinner held for UNBC and CNC students was a great success. Thirty-five students showed up to share a meal with each other. We had a small army of volunteers to help cook and serve the meal. Unfortunately, in all of the excitement and business, no-one remembered to take any pictures!!! So... we'll just have to have another dinner next year... or maybe after the Christmas break...

A great big thank you goes out to all of our volunteers who helped with the dinner, particularly to Mike & Kathy Labonte for cooking up such a wonderful meal!

FINANCE COUNCIL

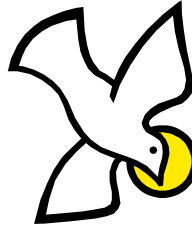
We would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Finance Council members: Richard LeFebvre and Terry Fedorkiw. They have served the parish for many years on Council and we are grateful for their gifts and talents.

We'd also like to welcome the following new members to Council: Mike Correale, Joe Ferreira and Phyllis Sarrazin. We thank them for saying "yes" when asked to serve!!

We'd also like to thank our continuing Council Member, Joan Craig who is providing some continuity.

A CALL TO MINISTRY

Each year, as we get underway, we know that there are people in the congregation who wish to share their gifts and talents with the larger community. We welcome you as you choose to give of your time and talents for the building up of the body of Christ, the Church. St. Paul reminds us that the Spirit gives many and varied gifts to the members of the body, but that all the gifts are for the good of the whole body.



When you offer to share your gifts and talents with the community, we don't expect you to just jump in and get started. We do offer training workshops for the various ministries - the times and dates will be listed in the GRRRAPEVINE and the Sunday bulletin..

So, now that you are eager to share your gifts, you might wonder where your gifts can be put to use! Here are some of the ways that you can share with the community:

- Lectors
- Eucharistic Ministers
- Altar Servers
- Greeters
- Children's Liturgy of the Word—Catechists & Helpers
- Liturgy Committee
- Art and Environment
- Music Ministry

If you are interested in serving in any of these ways, please contact the Parish Office and leave your name and phone number. If you would like to nominate someone to fill any of these ministries, please call the Parish Office and leave their name and phone number. We will contact those who have been nominated to see if they would consider serving.

To all who are now ministering, a heartfelt thank you. If you wish to continue, please contact us and let us know. It is okay to retire from a ministry, but please let us know that you wish to do so to help us as we schedule people.

THEO-TIDBITS GOD IS LOVE

Bishop Gerry will tease out some of the highlights of Pope Benedict's first encyclical—God is Love. The second session is Thursday Oct 4 from 7 to 8:30 pm in the Parish Office.

MAKING ROOM FOR GOD BOOK DISCUSSION

If you're interested in participating in the book discussion, Making Room for God, please phone Giselle at the Parish Office to register and reserve/purchase your copy of the book. The book discussion will take place over six sessions: Oct 4, 11, 18 & Nov 1, 8, 15. All sessions take place at 10 am in the Parish Office,

BROWN BAG IT

Don't forget to bring your brown bag full of non-perishable groceries (see the list on the brown bag) next weekend: Oct 6/7. We will bring the bags up during the Collection, just as we did in Lent.

Fall is a time when the St. Vincent de Paul Society could really use some assistance, and we are encouraging all St. Mary's parishioners to contribute what they can!



PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: Last week was a bit of a blur, with all the meetings and the study days, but the sessions on RCIA were incredible, and once again, I learned lots of new things. Look out! After catching up, I left Thursday morning for Alberta to spend a couple of days with my family, and on Sunday early morning I am off to Cape Breton for a week of meetings. There will not be much time for sight-seeing, but I hope that at least flying over the region I will get an eyeful of colour.

The Table for You for UNBC and CNC students went well, with about 35 in attendance. It was great to watch the folks at the various tables enjoying food and conversation. Thanks to all who helped make this a success. See you Thanksgiving Day.

Giselle: Last week was quite jam-packed with the RCIA Workshop and the Diocesan Study Days. It was a very tiring but also enlightening experience.

Our first session of the Parables bible study got off the ground and it looks like it will be a great experience. There were many wonderful insights shared and I look forward to more in the future.

The coming week will add another event to the schedule, the Making Room for God book discussion.

Other than that, I've spent a few weeks helping a friend pack and move.

Hopefully, I'll have time for a couple more hikes before the winter weather sets in. The fall colours are calling me!

ON BEING AN INITIATING COMMUNITY

One of the basic principles of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is that it is the assembly, the community of faith that is the primary initiator of new members. This notion is brought to the fore in many different ways: the major rites are celebrated with the community gathered, the catechumens and elect gather with the community for the Liturgy of the Word, the catechumens and elect are dismissed to continue breaking open the Word, but they gather for this with a member or members of the community, the sponsors and catechists are chosen from the community and represent the community, the Scrutinies are celebrated with the community during the season of Lent and these celebrations call everyone, elect and members of the community, to continue the Lenten journey.

We might, therefore, ask ourselves what qualities are necessary for us to be the kind of initiating community called for in the Rite. What does it mean for us, in practical terms, to attract, welcome and retain new members. One of the great questions is why newly initiated members of the Church rarely remain members for long. One of the answers often given by those who were initiated and who did not continue to participate in the life of the community, is that they did not have a sense of belonging or of welcome.



To be an initiating community, the community first of all must have life and enthusiasm for its faith. It is not enough to state that we are a faith community. That faith has to be evident in our lives, in our gatherings, in our participation in the life of the community and in the broader community. We cannot be introverted, isolated, aloof, judgmental of other communities or of the world. We need to be engaged wholeheartedly in building the kingdom of God in our world, caring for the needs of all and joyfully proclaiming God's love and compassion by our words and actions.

Hospitality has to be a hallmark of the community when we gather. Hospitality does not mean just having someone at the door to welcome people, or having a cup of coffee after Mass. Hospitality is an attitude of the whole community that expresses welcome, joy, enthusiasm, inclusiveness, openness, and a willingness to embrace anyone who comes through the door. Hospitality is a recognition that we are all created by God, loved by God and welcomed by God and the community; all of this is expressed in our attitudes and actions when we gather.

If we are an initiating community, then all of us take responsibility for the journey of those we are welcoming, and we all take part in the process. That means that the catechists, sponsors, prayer partners, hospitality ministers, leaders for breaking open the Word and any other people needed for the process come from within the community. It means that each member of the community takes time for an honest assessment of his or her gifts and talents and then takes the steps (which may include some training) to use those talents within the RCIA process. It also means that all the other members of the community recognize that their presence at the Eucharist and participation in the celebrations of the Rites is also ministry within the process, and that they participate fully, actively and consciously in those Rites. It also means that after being initiated, the new members of the community are integrated into the life of the community and are invited to be involved in the community's service and mission to the world.

Initiation is not the 'job' of a few, or of the priest and pastoral workers, or of a few experts from somewhere - initiation is the ministry of the whole community, and we are all challenged to take our role within the process. That means knowing something about the process and actively participating. Are we ready to be an initiating community?

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.

TABLE FOR TWO

Table for Two is an event that had great success last year. We welcome anyone who would like to share their talents for cooking, serving or cleaning.

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 and the dining room! Our next Table for Two is Fri Oct 12.

NEW TO THE PARISH??

Are you new to the parish? Have you filled out a parish registration form yet?

They're available on the bulletin boards at the entrances of the Church. Better

yet, introduce yourself to Fr. Richard or Giselle after Mass. We'd love to meet you and get the chance to know you.



IMAGINE DOING THE CHURCH THE JESUS WAY

Jesus moved about. Most churches stay stubbornly in place.

Jesus talked about wealth and power. We talk about sex and ordination.

Jesus formed radically open circles of friends. We erect intricate and inflexible institutional barriers that admit only those whom we deem worthy.

Jesus dodged calls for laws and doctrines. We rush to codify and dogmatize.

Jesus fed the multitudes without conditions. We marginalize those who fail our moral litmus tests.

Jesus stood up to the religious establishment. We are the religious establishment.

Jesus took a subtle and nuanced view of the Law, embracing it in some ways and abandoning it in others, based on emerging needs. We quote the Law and think nothing further need be said.

Jesus told stories that engaged people in the open-ended mystery of God's kingdom.

We quote chapter and verse to declare certainty.

Jesus ventured outside the approved realm and touched the untouchable. We stay close to home, adopt lofty goals for spending small amounts of money on high-profile needs, and applaud ourselves for being mission-minded.

Jesus endured rejection, suffered for all to see, and sent his Spirit to give disciples courage to do the same. We crave acceptance, build large crowds by pleasing people, and proclaim the promise of prosperity and tribal superiority.

Jesus owned nothing. We, at various times, have insisted on owning everything.

Could we possibly be getting it more wrong? It's no wonder that church participation rates have fallen to single digits in Europe and are dwindling steadily in North America. No wonder politicians see us not as a bold counter voice calling them to repentance and mercy, but as tepid whiners or as allies in mean-spirited campaigns to scapegoat minorities, to take away personal freedoms and to foment fear.

Imagine, though, what could happen if we tried doing church Jesus' way. We can't rewrite our history. But we can make fresh and better decisions today.

This isn't a time for grandiose master plans, but for a determination to rethink the basics and to do small things more effectively and more graciously. Here are five basics that we could tackle today:



First, it is time for congregations to focus on people, especially on their joys and sorrows, their wounds and yearnings. Not by blaming and leading a war party against some imagined enemy, but by doing the more difficult work of listening to people, touching their wounds, learning their stories, and conveying hope and meaning.

Second, it is time for us to move about, to place less importance on stability and more importance on being present to humanity.

Third, it is time for us to abandon our prideful barriers and restrictions, to stop worshipping at the altar of right-opinion, and to hear what God needs from us today in the actual fields of hunger and heartache.

Fourth, it is time for us to stop fighting about the Bible and our claims to holiness. We render ourselves impotent by our divisions and absurd in our hubris.

Fifth, it is time for us to stand and sing, kneel and pray together, not because we like or approve of each other, but because Jesus called us to be one.

Until we show a capacity to love one another, our neighbours will rightly see us as hypocrites. Until we can join hands and plow facing forward, our neighbours will rightly see us as mired in a safe and self-serving past and frightened by a challenging future.

Reprinted from an article by Tom Ehrich in the Prairie Messenger, Sept 12, 2007.

DON'T TAKE IT FOR GRANTED

When we hear the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we know that somehow this is a wake-up call to us, to look beyond the things that we have and to share it with others. We just have a hard time putting it into practice. Like the rich man in the parable, we probably think, deep down inside of us, that those who are down-and-out in this world have somehow done something to deserve their state. Maybe they do/did drugs. Or drank too much alcohol. Or abused their physical and emotional self in other ways.

To a large extent, we take our good fortune for granted. We think that somehow we have earned everything good that has happened to us. Our house. Our job. Our university degrees. Our family. We pride ourselves on the good choices and good decisions that we have made throughout our life. And yet what we really forget to remember is that everything that we have is gift. None of our possessions, none of our talents, none of our physical abilities are "ours". They are a pure gift from God. A gift that we take for granted. We need to remember that our giftedness is not just for us, but for everyone that we meet. Our smile. Our good humour. Our patience. Our wealth. Our political freedom. Our religious freedom. Our physical health. All of it should be used and shared with those who have been gifted with less.

We need to look around us and see each encounter with another person as a chance to share our gifts. But first we need to recognize our gifts. Do you know what your gifts are? Do you recognize how God has graciously gifted you? How are you called to share those gifts with others? The gifts that we have aren't meant to be hoarded and stored away, as if they will earn interest for us later. Use them... NOW!

WEBSITE

Check out our website! We have recently added an online parish calendar!

www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Are you planning to get married in 2008? Check out the poster on the bulletin board for the different marriage preparation options offered in the Diocese.

WHAT DO YOU NEED... OR WANT??

One of the roles of the parish pastoral council is to help the pastoral team address the needs of the parish. The question is... what exactly are the needs of the parish?? We really can't interview each and every member of the parish, so we'll try something else.

The Parish Pastoral Council decided that we could try a needs assessment survey. We want to know what YOU want or need!! Maybe you don't want to attend a bible study, but you'd love to come to an evening of Taize prayer? Maybe you don't "do" small groups, but you love it when the parish has a potluck dinner? Only you know what you want and need. And we, as the parish pastoral council, want to hear about it!! We plan to have a survey in a couple of weeks. Keep your eyes peeled for it!

LIVING THE LITURGY AT HOME

#1 - Faith Talk

Discuss in your household or small group:
Share about a time when you were in need and someone helped you.

Jesus told a story about a rich man who didn't help a poor man called Lazarus who lived at his gate.

What needs are you aware of in people you know?
What could you do to help?

The rich man in the parable was sure that if someone rose from the dead and went to his brothers, they would change their lives.

Do you know someone who rose from the dead?
How has he changed your life?

#2 - Devotional Practices

Collect news stories about people who are suffering from poverty or sickness. Talk about these situations in your

family devotion times this week. Take time to pray for the people affected.

#3 - Rituals and Traditions

The change of seasons is a good time to go through our wardrobes and identify clothes that we rarely wear or no longer require.

Make time as a family this week to sort through your clothes and set aside items to give away to a local charity or to a family that would appreciate them.

#4 - Service

The prophet Amos tells us that we should care not only about ourselves but also about others. Take a family shopping expedition to buy canned goods and non-perishable food items to give away to a food pantry or a family in need.