



# THE GRRAPEVINE

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

Number 53

31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 4, 2007

## BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

When we reflect on the story of Zacchaeus which we hear this weekend, it is very easy to come to the conclusion that Zacchaeus is "done" when we get to the end of the reading. In fact, he is just beginning.

In response to the gift of Jesus' welcome and love, Zacchaeus makes a wonderful declaration: "...half of my possessions I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Under the Jewish Law, a tax collector only had to give twice what had been taken by fraud in order to be 'redeemed' and welcomed back into the community. Zacchaeus goes much further because he instinctively recognizes and understands the wonder of God's love for him. Jesus' response to Zacchaeus' gesture is to declare that "today salvation has come to this house".

Having responded to Jesus' invitation and made this declaration (his repentance), the challenge for Zacchaeus now is to live this day by day (conversion). In his declaration to Jesus, Zacchaeus has taken the first step in his journey of discipleship, and is called by the Lord to continue this journey for the rest of his life. It will mean many things for Zacchaeus - a change of career, lifestyle, circle of friends, attitudes. It will mean seeking to live the love of God in all his relationships. It will mean seeking to live honestly and justly in all his dealings with others. It will mean, above all, acknowledging his weakness and his need of God's help to live this new life.

For each of us, the call is the same. When we were baptized, we were called into a new relationship with God, and called to live that relationship for the rest of our lives. Along the way, we may wander away from that relationship, we may fall into patterns of living or attitudes that are contrary to the Gospel. We are called to repentance when that happens. But repentance is not the end for us. Our repentance should lead us into a renewed effort to continue to live the Gospel - we are on a journey that requires constant effort and dedication. We cannot stop our efforts along the way, for when we do, we also interrupt or stop the journey. Jesus invites us to journey with him through this life as his disciples, and in so doing, to share the Good News and the gift of the Father's love with the people we meet along this journey. Like Jesus encountering Zacchaeus and inviting him to enter the journey, we too encounter people each day whom we invite to enter the journey. We do that by living faithfully the life to which we are called, being instruments and signs of God's love for all people. As we invite others, we also must be aware of the invitation that is given to us to continue the journey in faithfulness to the Gospel.



## POSITION POSTING

We are looking for people at each of our weekend celebrations who are willing to take on the ministry of Ushers.

Ushers would:

- Help people find seats, especially after the celebration has started
- Be responsible for finding helpers to take the collection
- Be available to assist with information when needed
- Greet people as they enter the church
- Distribute or collect materials as needed
- Help provide a hospitable environment

Applicants should apply to the parish office - guidelines and "training" will be provided.

## REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We welcomed the following in the Sacrament of Baptism:

Cash Parker MacFarlane  
Kaylee Sophia Ratkaj

We celebrated the sacrament of matrimony with:

Tony Randall &  
Lindy Correia

## THEO-TIDBITS—HARRY POTTER: FRIEND OR FIEND

Coming up on Tuesday, November 20 at 7 pm, we'll take a look at the much maligned Harry Potter. Is he really a bad influence on children today, or are there elements of good within the books? Come and join us in our discussion!

## PARABLES

We start again on Wednesday, November 7 and continue to Nov 21.

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: A lot has happened since our last publication – I have been involved in the Oblate Parish Mission, the Returning to Spirit Workshop, a Lay Formation weekend as well as the usual parish and diocesan activities. It has gone quickly, and I'm sure time will go quickly in the coming weeks with diocesan council meetings, visits to the various regions of the diocese, Theo-Tidbits, ministries workshops and various celebrations. There certainly is never time to sit around and be bored! Now, to get into the woodworking shop once in a while to get ready for a few things coming up.

Giselle: Is October already over?? It was certainly a busy month. My mom visited for a week, then my dad, then other guests from out of town. And to top it all off there was the Returning to Spirit Workshop for a whole week. That was a very good experience, although a very draining one as well. In amongst all of the extra stuff, there was the usual round of RCI A, Religious Education classes, Parables, Theo-Tidbits and the occasional Parish Pastoral Council meeting.

November is shaping up to be similarly busy! Parables is still running, and there is a Theo-Tidbits on Harry Potter coming up. In addition, there are a few ministry workshops and of course a Liturgy Committee meeting, Parish Pastoral Council meeting, Central Region meeting, Finance Council meeting, etc, etc etc.

ANNUAL DIOCESAN COLLECTION

In the past, there were several special collections during the year for specific diocesan needs. As new needs arose, there was always the question of adding more special collections to the list. A decision was made at the Diocesan Council of Priests not to add any new collections, but rather to combine all the diocesan special collections into one collection, to be taken up in November, near the end of the liturgical year. The rationale for the decision was that we could change the uses of the collection, adding or subtracting various needs according to the diocesan needs each year without changing the name of the collection or having to continually change the envelopes in the set.

In the past, the special collections for the diocesan needs were: Religious Education and Pastoral Development (January), Education of Priests (June) and Pro-Life Support (November). When the collections were combined into one last year, a fourth need was added – Diocesan Priests' Pension Fund. The collection was divided among those four as follows: Religious Education and Education of Priests – 25% each, Pro-Life Support – 20% and Priests' Pension – 30%. Pro-Life got a smaller share because there was still some money left from the previous year's collection in the fund, and the Priests' Pension got a larger share as this was the first year that a contribution was made from the Diocesan Collection and the Diocese is trying to build up the pension fund so that it will be able to provide for the diocesan priests when they retire.

Each year, many other needs come up – there was a request to support the Rose Prince Pilgrimage, and we did take a special collection for that project in July. The Diocese subsidizes several ministries within the diocese; missions, camp, renewal centre. Formation programs, etc. It is the hope that as time goes on, this diocesan collection will help to support more and more of these ministries.

There are special collection envelopes for this collection in your set if you are currently using envelopes. If you do not use envelopes but wish to contribute to this collection, please take one of the special collection envelopes from the box that is sitting on top of the cabinet at the door of the church (the one that has the St. Vincent de Paul food bin in it), and mark it "Diocesan Collection". That way, anything that you wish to contribute to this collection will be sent in to the diocese. Please be generous in supporting this collection, as the diocese relies heavily on our contributions for the support of these ministries.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Below is the synopsis of the October financial statement.

		INCOME		EXPENSES	
Bank Balance	7096.32	Donations	16451.38	Administration	25733.26
DDF Balance	152256.85	Fees	50.00	Programs	799.57
<u>Accts Receivable</u>	<u>3540.10</u>	Programs	201.00	Operation/Maint.	6517.06
Total Assets	162893.27	Other	1485.61		
		Rentals	3835.00	Rental Operation	2452.22
		Total Income	17959.11	Total Expense	35502.11
		Net Income	-11595.02		

Good news and bad news. The good is that we have paid all our bills, the bad is that we needed to take money out of our savings to do it. On the other hand, looking at the work that was done this summer, we could say that the maintenance and repairs should have come out of the savings account in the first place, but we had tried to pay for everything out of the current income. We will need to address the income side of our financial state, as we are using our savings for maintenance, but not putting anything back into our savings account for future use. Thank you to all for your continued generous support of the work and mission of the parish.

## PRI SON MI NIS TRY

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.

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## ANNIVERSARY MASS

Every couple of months we celebrate an Anniversary Mass for all those couples whose anniversary falls within a certain time frame. On Saturday, November 10 at the 7 pm Mass, we will celebrate with all those couples who have anniversaries in the months of October, November & December. Come and join us!

We'll have a reception in the Conference Room following Mass.

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## 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.



## HOW DO YOU PRAY??

### VERBAL-LINGUISTIC INTELLIGENCE—WORD SMART

In our last issue of the Grrapevine (a few weeks ago), we introduced the idea that different prayer forms may be more comfortable for us based on our giftedness in the areas of multiple intelligence. If you missed that issue, visit our website and find Grrapevine 52! We were also invited to take a Multiple Intelligence Survey (link on our website) to discover where our intelligence strengths lie (verbal, numeric, images, music, movement, nature, etc). Over the next few issues of the Grrapevine, we'll take a look at the different multiple intelligences and draw connections with different prayer styles.

Those who have a strong verbal-linguistic intelligence (word smart) are good with words and languages. They enjoy reading, writing and telling stories. They tend to learn best by reading, taking notes, listening to lectures and engaging in discussion and debate.

Those who have a strong verbal-linguistic intelligence, will enjoy prayer forms that focus on the written or spoken word. Devotional Bible Study or Lectio Divina, in which a text is read, reflected upon and then discussed would appeal to those who are "word smart". Others might enjoy writing a statement of faith, similar to our own Apostle's Creed. Another prayer form that might appeal to people who have a strong verbal-linguistic intelligence is the art of journaling on a specific scripture passage. Others might enjoy spiritual reading, perhaps books by Henri Nouwen or Ron Rolheiser. Still others might enjoy composing spiritual poetry as a way in which they can express their prayer.

Those of us who are not strong in the verbal-linguistic intelligence, might find such prayer forms tedious and difficult. It's all a matter of finding out what works best for us. We just need to try some of them!

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## PRAYER VS. SUPERSTITION

As Catholics, we all know that prayer is an integral part of who we are. Prayer is our communication with God, a two-way dialogue in which we listen to God, praise God, thank God, adore God and petition God. We also know that God always hears our prayers and answers them... perhaps not in a way that we expect! God's answer to our prayers may be "no" or "not yet" or "wait" or "my grace is enough for you" (2 Cor 12:8-9). Prayer often changes us more than it changes God. God knows what we really need, but often we don't! Prayer is a way in which we can become more attuned to the will of God for our lives and more sensitive to how we are called to live out our lives. Prayer is an expression of our faith in God, and at the same time prayer deepens our faith in God.

Unfortunately, prayer can slide very quickly into a dangerous superstition. "If only I pray long enough, and say the right words, in the right way, at the right time, for the right number of times... God will give me whatever I wish". God is not Aladdin's Lamp! We cannot force God to do what we want, to give us what we want. God is always free to grant our prayers in the way that God chooses. The 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2111) states "to attribute the efficacy of prayers or of sacramental signs to their mere external performance, apart from the interior dispositions that they may demand, is to fall into superstition".

One form of Catholic prayer that runs a greater risk of sliding into superstition is the Novena. Yes, we pray a Novena for nine days, but there is nothing magical about the number. It is simply a spiritual exercise that challenges us to stick with it. The nine days changes us... not God.

## WE ARE NOT SPECTATORS

In a recent article, Jerome Overbeck, SJ, wrote the following: "I had a vision. The 600 to 800 worshippers returned to the regularly scheduled Mass and actively participated in the spoken and sung prayer. They experienced prayer in common. Once again, more than a third of the assembly took leadership roles, such as preparing the liturgy during the previous week, welcoming arriving worshippers, playing and leading the music of the assembly, proclaiming the scriptures, distributing Communion and taking the inspiring prayer out to serve the needy beyond the wall of the church building. ...This post-conciliar vision of liturgy seems to wane currently in the face of a more solitary vision of Sunday Mass. More and more, the assembly seems to prefer to attend "Father's Mass", allowing him and the choir to do the work. The prevailing attitude of many would identify more closely with an attitude of "leave me alone to pray my own way, to pray my devotions, and to centre myself."

Forty years ago, the Second Vatican Council called us to a full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy and prayer of the Church. Liturgy is literally "the work of the people". It is not the work only of the ordained, or of a few select members of the community, or the commissioned ministers, it is the work of the whole assembly that has gathered together. In his Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist, Pope Benedict XIII reiterated that principle many times, and in various ways. The challenge of course, comes when we realize that this participation to which we are called goes beyond the mere speaking of the words and going through the motions together. The depth of our participation in the Eucharist, or indeed, in any liturgical celebration, is intimately linked to our spiritual life. As we become more attuned to the presence and action of God in our lives, as we grow in our relationships with God, self and others, then we find ourselves drawn more deeply into participation in the liturgy that we are celebrating. In any relationship, as the relationship grows and deepens, as it becomes more intimate, we give ourselves more completely to the relationship and to the communication that is part of the relationship. So too, with our participation in liturgy.

We are challenged by the Church to reflect on our attitudes and actions as we come together as a community of faith to celebrate, to be nurtured and nourished by the Word, the Eucharist and the community. Do we come to celebrate our faith together and grow in that faith, or do we come to be isolated individuals engaged in private devotion to God?

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### WEBSITE

Check out our website! We have photos of past events!

[www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg](http://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. The weekend preparation session at the end of November is pretty full, but we are offering a 6 week session starting Jan 24 (Thursday evenings). Phone Fr. Richard for more info.

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## LIVING THE LITURGY AT HOME

### #1 - Faith Talk

Discuss in your household or small group:

Share about a time you met someone special or important.

Zacchaeus was desperate to see Jesus when he came to Jericho. What about Jesus is attractive to you?

How and when does Jesus come to your house? In what ways do you welcome him into your home and your life?

### #2 - Devotional Practices

It is said that "judicious praise is the children what sun is to flowers". The apostle Paul began his second letter to the Thessalonians by strongly encouraging them in their lives of faith (2 Thessalonians 1:3). As part of your family devotional times this week encourage one another by completing these statements:

*"One way I see you growing as a child of God is ..."*

*"One way I see you showing love for others is ..."*

Say prayers of thanks to God for one another.

### #3 - Rituals and Traditions

Jesus came as a guest to the house of Zacchaeus and brought salvation to his home (Luke 19:5-9). As a sign and reminder of Christ's presence in your home, set an extra place at your meal table this week. When you gather for meals, share when and where you have seen the presence and activity of Jesus during the day. Talk about what it means for Jesus to be part of your lives.

### #4 - Service

Jesus' visit to Zacchaeus' home changed the life of Zacchaeus. He committed to giving half of possessions away to the poor. Commit this week to making a donation towards the needs of the poor in your community or elsewhere in the world. Here are some suggestions:

Donate unused items that are still in good condition to a local charity store.

Forgo a family activity or non-essential food/drink and donate the savings to an aid organization.

Purchase or prepare food to donate to a local food