



# THE GRRRAPEVINE

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

Number 62

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

March 23, 2008

## CONDOLENCES

The Diocese of Prince George extends sympathy and prayerful wishes to Sister Hazel Dalton, Sister Anne Sheridan and all the Ursulines of Jesus on the death of their Provincial-elect, Sister Geraldine Kelly, UJ. Sister Kelly passed away March 16<sup>th</sup> while preparing to return to Canada after international meetings of their religious order in Ireland. A funeral Mass was celebrated in Edmonton on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. Sisters Hazel and Anne will return to Prince George this weekend. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.

## EASTER GREETINGS

Since we did not have an edition of the GRRRAPEVINE for Easter Sunday, we are a little behind in our greetings. However, the Easter season lasts for fifty days, so there is always time!

May the Risen Lord fill your hearts with the peace and joy of the Resurrection, and may you truly rejoice in the gift of new life that we have been given.

Our prayer is that the Easter Season will be filled with many blessings and that you will be generous in sharing those blessings with our faith community and the wider community.

-Giselle, Jeannine, Roberta and Richard, OMI

## WHO WE ARE

The earliest Christian community was faithful to the Lord and devoted to living a communal life, praying and worshipping together, attending to the needs of each member, and living out the Beatitudes day-by-day. This is the picture presented in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles today. We must guard against idealizing this portrait and suggesting that this is the exact way we are to live, in terms of practical details. This picture, however, does present us with an ideal for community and for living the faith that we profess.

As we look at the community, we see four fundamental marks that distinguished the early Christian community from the rest of society and from Judaism: fidelity to the teaching of the apostles, fellowship, prayer and Eucharist (breaking bread). These are the marks that should distinguish any Christian community, regardless of the practical details of living.

As we reflect, we begin to see that involvement in each of these four areas calls us to particular kinds of action. We take the time to read, pray over, reflect on Scripture as well as the teaching of the Church's magisterium. These must become part of who we are as well as nourish our growth in faith. We also gather together for prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist, participating fully in these celebrations, praying for the world and ourselves, being nourished and supported by God's action in our lives as we gather. Fellowship, building community, reaching out to others are essential if the community is going to be faithful to its call.

We are called to participate as recipients, but also to participate as generous givers. Our prayer is not just for ourselves, it is for the whole community, for the whole world. The nourishment we receive, we are to share. The faith that we have is to be witnessed in the world. The community which supports us also needs our support. Those whose presence nurtures us also need to be nurtured by our presence. There is a mutuality to our involvement and participation. What we receive, we also give, and vice versa.

When we gather on Sunday, do we recognize ourselves in the description of the early Church that we find in Acts? Do we see those same four marks of the community of Christians in our gathering and celebration? What is missing? What is strong, what is weak? We need to take the time to reflect on the portrait of church that is presented and ask ourselves some very specific and particular questions. It is in entering into this reflection that we are invited and challenged to become who we are called to be. It has everything to do with our life as disciples of Jesus and fulfilling our mission.

A foundational model of stewardship and discipleship is found in the parish community; a place that reveals firsthand the redemptive activity of the Lord; a people who live the Beatitudes together in common. As stewards and disciples of the risen Christ it is a good time to reflect on how each of us participates in building the Body of Christ in our parish community. As we begin to recognize how we are called to use our gifts for this purpose, then we are challenged to action. Our life of faith can never be simply a matter of reflection or private action, but must be lived out in action—for our local community and for the entire world. As Jesus came to bring life, so we are sent to do the same.

## PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: Life has been a bit of a blur for the past few weeks, and continues at the same pace. I had a quick drive out to Smithers this past week, but will be able to remain home in the parish this week. There are several council and board meetings at the diocesan level, and then I have to prepare for meetings in Lethbridge the week after. I will be carrying on to Alberta when I am done with Sunday Mass in McBride next week, and return for the following weekend. Giselle and I will actually pass each other on Sunday—she in the air and me on the ground! Now that is team work—tag team. I'm enjoying some creative time getting plants started and pre-fabbing bird feeders.

Giselle: Well, it's been a busy couple of weeks with the Chrism Mass, the Great Pussy Willow Hunt and Easter. The bible study on Eucharist is now finished. I'm off to Saskatoon for two weeks, attending a Returning to Spirit Reconciliation Workshop. This is the third phase of the residential school healing process wherein Church and First Nations people come together for reconciliation. I'll be taking a few extra days off while in Saskatoon.

Once I get back, it's back into the thick of things!! There will be baptism preparation for older children, religious education classes, sacramental preparation classes, the Make Room for God: Book Discussion, Theo-Tidbits: Who will be Saved?... and that's only the first week I'm back!!!

## KIDS BUILD THINGS

Knowing that children like to putter and build and discover new things, we are planning a morning of bird feeder building. Join us on Saturday, April 19 at 9:00 am in the school gym for a morning of fun and community

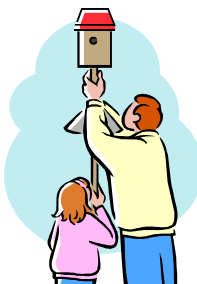
We will have pre-fabricated bird feeders available – the kids just need to pick up the kit which will include all the parts needed and instructions, then get to work putting it all together. We will also have paint and other finishes available, and so the finished project can be painted or decorated before leaving. We figure on closing the morning with a hot dog lunch or some other simple meal. There will be a small cost for the hardware that is needed for each project.

There is a large poster on the bulletin board at the main entrance of the Church.

If you want to be part of this fun day, choose the design(s) that you want to build then put your name and phone number on the list below the chosen design. We will have those kits that were ordered ready for you to assemble and finish. There will be a charge of \$2 per kit to help cover the cost of hardware.

We will have a few extra kits available, in case you get finished quickly and want to build another design, or in case you forgot to sign up ahead of time. In these cases, it will be first come, first served.

PLEASE SIGN UP THIS WEEKEND, OR CALL THE PARISH OFFICE BEFORE FRIDAY MORNING.



## STEWARDSHIP MOMENTS

The resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is the victory of life over death, light over darkness, good over evil. Without the resurrection, the cross and its sufferings make no sense. Easter reveals to us the power of God and the source of our faith and hope. Saying "yes" to the Lord's call means responding joyfully to a new life in Christ brought on by the resurrection.

Stewards are Easter people who live in the light of Christ's resurrection. Through their daily lives they experience the peace and strength of the risen Christ. During this Easter season, consider the ways you can proclaim Christ's victory as your own. Happy Easter!

## EASTER

Whereas in Lent we repented, in Eastertide we rejoice. Whereas we fasted, now we feast. Whereas we gave alms, now we give witness in all manner of ways to all people that Christ is truly risen, the old world order is passed away and the reign of God is begun. Begun in the newly baptized, newly oiled believers who have taken their place at Christ's table. Begun again in us who were baptized and chrismated long ago or last Easter.

In Central Europe, it's customary to spritz people with water on Easter Monday, to remember baptism, to make merry and in some cultures, even to choose a spouse! The bathed and anointed church is the risen Christ's spouse. Let the wedding feast begin!

Lent was 40 days, the season of sorrow and striving and training. But Eastertide is 50 days, the season of joy and celebrating and feasting! Fifty days for our delight! Fifty days to sing the song of saints and angels: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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## DOUBTING AND SEEING

Thomas is often held up as a model of how we are not to believe—that we are to believe even without the ability to 'see'. The real issue may be whether or not we have the openness to truly see what is present in our midst. How many of the disciples were unable to see the Lord even when he was present?

## EXULT!

At the Easter Vigil last week, all shared the light of the large Easter candle, and the deacon or cantor sang a long prayer. This was the paschal proclamation, called the *Exsultet*, after the first word of the prayer in Latin, meaning "Rejoice!" The prayer dates back to the seventh century. Before that, the deacon was expected to make one up and chant it! The *Exsultet's* music is the finest chant in the Latin liturgy.

As a prayer of thanks and praise, the *Exsultet* shows us that these are days to truly rejoice in all that God has done, in all that God is doing now. And not only us: The *Exsultet* calls upon all creation to join us in rejoicing: "Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Exult, all creation around God's throne!" Why? "Jesus Christ our King is risen!"

Make your plans now to plant your garden — even if it's a small flower bed or window box! Pick up litter as you come and go this week. Recycle as much of your garbage as possible. Do what you can to encourage the earth into exultation.

Light of Christ!  
Thanks be to God!

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## BROWN BAG IT

We were reminded during the season of Lent to practice almsgiving, i.e. giving to the less fortunate in our community. Almsgiving is not just for Lent, although that is when it is most brought to our consciousness. We are called to be people of compassion, justice, charity all the time. In the past we did our brown bag campaign during Lent, but felt that there were already many things doing on in Lent, so we decided to wait this spring and do this during the Easter Season. The St. Vincent de Paul Society seeks to respond to the needs of the poor in our community, but they rely on our help to do so.

Next weekend there will be brown bags in the bulleting, with a list attached to them. During the next few weeks, whenever you go shopping, you are encouraged to pick up a few things from the items listed below. Stuff your brown bag as full as it will go (without breaking). Then, on the weekend of April 26/27, we are all encouraged to bring our full brown bags to Mass. After the collection has been taken up, we will be encourage to bring our bags up in procession and deposit them in the sanctuary area.

The past two collections of food for St. Vincent de Paul have been wonderful—two truckloads of bags each time. The spring food collection is important as the food stocks are starting to get a little low after the winter, so this gives St. Vincent's a needed boost for their spring needs.

Check the lists below for the food items most needed right now.

Canned vegetables (green & yellow)

Breakfast cereals (any size, but the larger the better)

Sugar (brown or white)

Canned/Tinned meats

Skim Milk Powder

Single serving school snacks (pudding, canned fruit, etc.)

Canned/Tinned Tomatoes

Rice (any size, but the larger the better)

Tea



## HOSPITALITY

The dictionary definition of hospitality states: "generous and cordial reception of guests; being readily receptive". We understand clearly what it means to be hospitable at home when we welcome guests. We greet them at the door and lead them into our home. We know instinctively how to be hospitable at home.

What does it mean to be a hospitable parish community? Hospitality in the parish is not the ministry of a few, but is the ministry of the whole community. We are all called to be hospitality ministers in our parish. Each of us, as part of the parish, is called to be welcoming, warm, receptive, caring, cordial. That can be exercised in many ways. It can mean simply acknowledging the presence of someone who sits next to you in the pew. If visitors come in, and the community is dead, not responding, singing, participating, chances are they will not be back. Our celebrations should nourish each member gathered, but in order for that to happen, each one must consciously, fully and actively participate in the celebration. We truly minister to each other by the way that we participate. Hospitality consists of lots of small elements.

## CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

What is this organization known as the Catholic Women's League? Why is it a part of our parish? How do its members contribute to the life of our parish?

The Catholic Women's League was organized nationally on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1920 and it is officially recognized by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops as a lay association of women. The League is an affiliated group of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations which has more than 36 million members.

The Catholic Women's League started at St. Mary's in 1960 and its members have been involved in the parish and in the community for over 47 years.

At a recent meeting, members were asked to share their thoughts about why they joined the CWL or what it means to them. Perhaps the essence of the League is best stated through the personal responses of the members. "I joined the CWL because I felt the need to meet with ladies of my own faith;" "I like to share with other women and help where needed". "The CWL offers me the opportunity to meet like minded women, to build community, and to develop close personal relationships." "It is a wonderful source of camaraderie where women can share their Christian values, where we can help out in the community, and have fun doing it!"

The women put their words into action in the many varied activities they support as individuals or as a group at St. Mary's and in the community.

### Spiritual Development

- Lay Ministry
- Ecumenism (World Day of Prayer)
- Healing Masses

### Christian Family Life

- Pro-Life
- Crisis Pregnancy Centre

Community Life (promotes the spirit of Christian charity)

- Development and Peace
- Blood Donor Clinic
- White Ribbon Against Pornography Campaign
- Funeral Luncheons
- Habitat for Humanity Luncheons
- Golden Age Social
- Shepherd's Corner (financial support)
- Matercare (support for women in Third World countries)
- Foster child in Peru
- camp Morice (sponsor campers)
- St. Vincent de Paul (financial and volunteer support)
- Hidden Gems (donations of household supplies)

### Education and Health

- \$500 scholarship for a Grade 12 graduate to continue studies
- Provide media for parish use (T.V./DVD/VHS)
- Provide books for children's use during Mass

Proceeds from our annual ticket raffle and concession at the Craft Fair enable us to provide financial support for many of our projects. We thank St. Mary's parishioners for their support and encouragement.

We invite all women who want to share together, who are eager to build community, and who are willing to give and receive mutual support to consider joining the CWL at St. Mary's. Are you interested? For further information, please phone Carmen (564-8091), Barb (563-0846) or Kathy (563-5581). We welcome you to our Membership Tea which will be held in the Conference Room after the masses on Sunday, March 30. Come and meet us; we really are a fun loving, caring group.

## SPRING PLANT SALE

It is still early to start the tomatoes, but not too early to start thinking about our Spring Plant Sale for St. Vincent de Paul. The sales over the past two years have been wonderfully successful and have made a significant contribution to the work of the Society in the late spring and early summer. So, if you have a green thumb, it may be time to start warming-up exercises! You can contribute in other ways as well—last year we had coffee and goodies, so the morning became a time for relaxation and visiting as well as getting some plant material for the garden or house. So, we are looking for bakers, servers, cashiers and helpers of all sorts. The sale will be held on Saturday, May 17. Put it on your calendars and start planning your planting schedule.



## 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.

