



# THE GRRAPEVINE

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

Number 63

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 13, 2008

## DI OCESAN PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Heavenly Father,  
bless your church  
with an abundance  
of Christian disciples,  
whom you have chosen  
to serve  
as priests and religious,  
married and single.

Give each of us  
the special graces  
that our particular  
vocations require.

Form us in the image  
and likeness  
of Jesus your Son,  
so that through him,  
within him and in him,  
we may act justly,  
love tenderly  
and walk humbly  
in your presence,  
Now and forever.  
Amen.

## EVENING VESPERS

During this Easter Season,  
we continue to celebrate Vespers every Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm. We also celebrate Vespers on the Third Sunday of every month at 4:30 pm.

If you haven't come out yet to celebrate Evening Vespers with us, why not give it a try!?

It's a wonderful way to come together and pray in the middle of the week. We look forward to seeing you.

## YOU ARE CALLED!!

Today is Vocations Sunday. It is obvious that our Church today is in great need of good shepherds, totally committed to the Way of Jesus. We are asked to pray today especially that our Christian communities will be graced with good shepherds and pastors. It is a pity that we tend to narrow the term "vocation" to those who feel called to the priesthood or what we call 'religious' life, as when we ask, "Do you think you have a 'vocation'?" Or say, "There are very few 'vocations' in our diocese."

We need to emphasize very strongly that every single baptized person has a 'vocation'. Everyone is called by God to play a specific role in the Christian community and in the wider community. Unless we see that 'vocation' is something that we are all called to, it is not likely that there will be enough people to meet the service needs of our Christian communities. Our Christian communities can only grow and thrive when every member makes a contribution to the well-being of the whole.

Unfortunately, a large number, it seems, decide first on their 'career' and only then ask, "How can I be a good Catholic?" (that is, if they do ask the question). It is absolutely basic for us to ask ourselves at all times, "What does God want me to be? What are my particular gifts? How can I offer these gifts in service to the wider community and to my own Christian community?"

If I live my life as a morally good person, "keeping the Commandments" and saying my prayers and "fulfilling my religious obligations" but do not in fact play an active and constructive part in my community, I am not really a Christian in the proper sense. Yet, it seems that that is the way many people live their Catholic lives.

Unless we Christians see that 'vocation' as something that we are all called to respond to, it is not likely that there will be enough people to respond to the service needs of our Christian communities and, by extension, the needs of the wider community. There is still among many, what can be called a 'supermarket mentality' where our Christian practice is concerned. The Church is there to provide me with 'spiritual' or 'religious' 'goods' as I need them. But there is a danger that, like supermarkets in some former Communist countries, there may soon be no 'goods' available and, worse, no one to distribute them!

Our Christian communities can only grow and thrive when every member makes his or her contribution to the well-being of the whole. When all are giving, all will be receiving in abundance, the abundance that Jesus speaks about in today's Gospel.

Today we are asked to "pray" for vocations. There is a danger that, although many will fervently do so, they are praying for other people's vocations and not their own. To say this prayer with sincerity involves my reflecting on how God is asking me to make a meaningful contribution of myself (not just money) to the building up of our community, our parish.

In fact, one has to be deeply impressed by the number of people who do make a substantial contribution one way or the other to the running of our church communities. Nevertheless, today, Vocations Sunday, challenges each one of us to reflect on how we personally are responding to the call that Jesus is making to each of us right now. As a group or community, we respond to that call by seeing that all that is needed for the maintenance and growth of our community is being generously provided.

<http://www.sacredspace.ie/livingspace/index.php>

## PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: The past week has been a journey - McBride on Sunday for Eucharist, to the farm at Vegreville for Monday, then on to Lethbridge on Tuesday for meetings, back to the farm on Thursday and back to Prince George on Saturday. It was good to get home, shear the sheep, walk the fields (sort of, in the snow and mud), visit friends and just get in a little R&R. I know, where was the R&R? The change really made the difference, even if the pace was about the same as usual. The last week in Prince George was spent almost entirely at the Diocesan Centre at meetings and catching up on projects, with the parish things squeezed in evenings and the odd hour here and there. Now for a quieter week, I hope.

Giselle: I was in Saskatoon for a Returning to Spirit Reconciliation Workshop. It was a powerful experience. I spent a few extra days in Saskatoon visiting friends and enjoying some down time.

Getting back last Sunday was a bit of a shock to the system, and this past week has been a whirlwind of activity. Baptism preparation for older children, sacramental preparation, vespers, book discussion, theo-tidbits, preaching... I think it'll calm down again in a few weeks... maybe...

I am off to Terrace at the end of the month to visit my mother who will be turning... well... I guess I can't really say how old she will be... it's a big one though! So I'll be away for a weekend to celebrate that!

## 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.



## DEVELOPMENT & PEACE/SHARE LENT

We would like to invite you to view a video on the fantastic work that Development and Peace has been funding in the Tsunami-struck area of Indonesia. This video is a must see as it clearly demonstrates the culture and character of Development and Peace. Come and see exactly where your donated money is going. The video will be shown after all masses on the weekend of April 19 & 20. 20 minutes very well spent. Come enjoy some goodies and fair trade coffee.

## SISTERS OF MERCY

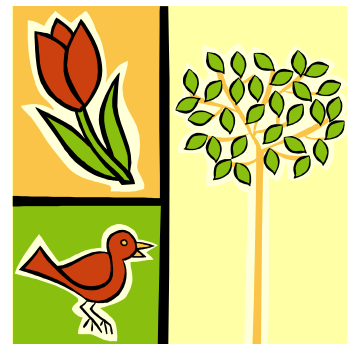
In appreciation of the Sisters of Mercy's 52 years of service to the Diocese of Prince George, there will be an Appreciation Dinner held Thurs June 12, 2008 at the Columbus Community Centre. Cocktails at 6:00 pm, with dinner to follow at 7:00 pm. For tickets and information, contact Noel at 564-4616.

## GREENING THE PARISH

A group of us are looking at forming a "Greening the Parish" group, a group that would look at ways in which we, as a parish community, could practice environmental awareness and stewardship. We are planning a first meeting on Monday, April 28 at 7 pm, here in the parish office (1088 Gillett Street), the little grey house next to the school gym. Come and join us! Phone Nadine at 563-4121 for more info.

## FAITH-BASED ECO JUSTICE

This is an invitation from Kairos to all churches to come to a meeting to look at ways we could be reducing our carbon footprint. Kairos is a network of churches offering a faithful response to God's call for respect of the earth and justice for its people. Kairos PG hopes to plan an educational campaign on eating locally, culminating in an ecumenical 100 mile meal this September. Everyone is welcome to attend our April 22 meeting 7 pm at St. Mary's Catholic Church 1088 Gillett St. in the conference room. Please enter from the Freeman side. Contact Nadine Hale for more info 563-4121 / [nadinematwell@yahoo.ca](mailto:nadinematwell@yahoo.ca)



**GREENING THE PARISH**

*Each part of nature is something precious to God. It follows readily that to honor God, one must honor the creation which God loves.*

Susan Armstrong & Richard Botzler, *Environmental Ethics*.

**MAKE COMPOST FROM KITCHEN SCRAPS**

Compost like a champ by throwing in your vegetable waste, instead of allowing it to be trucked off to the landfill. Known as "gardener's gold," compost enriches soil fertility by giving it a shot of high-powered, plant-loving nutrients. Aside from stimulating healthy root development, the addition of rich and earthy compost also improves soil texture, aeration, and water retention. Why waste your hard-earned cash on commercial products when the real deal is free for the taking? Speed up the process with the help of earthworms or go wriggle-free (if you're the squeamish sort).

**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.

Remember the brown bags you received in the bulletin last week? 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 encouraged 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.

**BRING YOUR FULL BAGS BACK THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 26/27**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Canned vegetables (green & yellow)                      | Single serving school snacks (pudding, canned fruit, etc.) |
| Breakfast cereals (any size, but the larger the better) | Canned/Tinned Tomatoes                                     |
| Sugar (brown or white)                                  | Rice (any size, but the larger the better)                 |
| Canned/Tinned meats                                     | Tea  |
| Skim Milk Powder  |  |

**MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Below is the synopsis of the March financial statement.

Bank Balance:	1396.61	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>EXPENSES</b>
DDF Balance:	159636.77	Donations	31027.46
Accts Receivable:	3133.99	Fees	250.00
Total Assets	164167.37	Programs	000.00
		Other	388.03
		Rentals	3750.00
		Total Income	35415.49
		Administration	23801.11
		Programs	122.03
		Operation/Maint.	6737.24
		Rental Operation	2656.27
		Total Expense	33316.65
		Net Income	2098.84

All is well in our financial world again! The income in March climbed appreciably, so we once again have a small cushion at the end of the month. Administration expenses were high, as there was almost \$9000 in special collections, which was remitted to the proper. Of course, since our parish income was higher, the cathedraticum (paid to the diocese) was higher as well. Right after Easter, we resealed the floor in the church, and that cost us almost \$2000, so the custodial and maintenance costs were higher this month. Also, we had our quarterly utility bill from the city, which also pushed expenses up a bit.

Once again, thank you to all the parishioners for your generous response in providing for our financial needs.

# WANTED: “Good Shepherds” for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!



On November 1, 2005, Cardinal Roger Mahoney, archbishop of Los Angeles, California, launched a Year of Prayer for Priestly Vocations. He did so to make a tangible link between the ordained priesthood and the “Year of the Eucharist” proclaimed by Pope John Paul II in October 2004.

On October 21, 2005, Cardinal Mahoney explained his reasons for implementing this year of prayer: “The Catholic Church is rightfully known as the Eucharistic Church since the Eucharist is the center, font, and source of our life in Christ. Essential to the regular celebration of the Eucharist are ordained priests - men

called by Christ to continue serving as a sign of ecclesial communion and as the presider at the Eucharistic table. While the Church properly calls forth the Baptismal gifts of the entire People of God, and places those remarkable gifts at the service of

the Body of Christ and of the community, we still need ordained priests to celebrate the Eucharist and the Sacramental life of the Church. The pastoral reality which Jesus noted in his own time is the same for all of us here, today, in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles: "At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest'" [Matthew 9:36-38]. There are so many people here in our own Local Church yearning to be nourished with the Bread of Life - and for this spiritual ministry, we need more priests” (excerpt from, Tidings – archdiocesan newspaper; bold print added).

This weekend, we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Easter or “Good Shepherd Sunday”. It is often given this title due to the scripture readings related to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. In turn, the Church designates this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, “World Day of Prayer for Vocations”, due to the need for courageous and compassionate shepherds throughout the world.

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, I encourage everyone to pray the “Prayer for Priestly Vocations” that was used in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles during their year of prayer. Please pray it in your homes and parishes each day as a spiritual preparation for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ to be celebrated on Sunday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. May the Good Shepherd enliven our local church in the Diocese of Prince George with more vocations to the ministerial (ordained) priesthood!

Sincerely in Christ,  
Fr. John Garden  
Vocations Director  
Email: vocations.pgdiocese@gmail.com

### Prayer for Priestly Vocations

Father, in every generation  
you provide ministers of Christ and the Church.  
We come before you now, asking that you call forth more men  
to serve our diocese in the Ministerial Priesthood.  
Give us priests who will lead and guide your holy people  
gathered by Word and Sacrament.  
Bless us with priestly vocations so that we can continue  
to be a truly Eucharistic Church,  
strengthened in our discipleship of Jesus Christ, your only Son.  
Raise up, we pray, men who are generous in their service,  
willing to offer their lives and  
all their gifts for your greater glory  
and for the good of your people.  
We make this prayer in the presence and power  
of the Holy Spirit, through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.