

THE GRRAPEVINE

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

Number 79

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 15, 2009

GREEN YOUR BABY

The biggest and stickiest issue with raising a green baby is what to do about diapers—disposable or cloth. Canadians throw away about 4,000,000 disposable diapers... a day!!! They make up about 2% of the garbage in our landfills and take 100s of years to decompose. Cloth diapers cost less but thanks to the water and detergent used to clean them, are not necessarily better on the environment. If you do opt for cloth, be sure to use biodegradable, phosphate free detergent. If you opt for disposable, consider these eco-friendly options. Chose Nature Boy & Girl diapers which are made with cornstarch instead of plastic (www.natureboyandgirl.net). Or try Seventh Generation's, made without chlorine (www.seventhgeneration.com). Or, check out gDiapers website (www.gdiapers.com). gDiapers are a blend of cloth and disposable diapers. They combine a cotton outer-pant with a waterproof liner that can both be washed and reused. Then you slide a disposable pad into the liner, which can be flushed, composed or thrown away.

Another cost-saving baby idea is to make your own food instead of buying all those little glass jars. Pureeing vegetables is quick, simple, healthy an cost-effective.

LEPERS AND SUCH

Lepers did not have an easy time of it in Jesus' time; they were required to remain apart from the community and had to warn others of their presence, for fear of contaminating those who were well. The requirements set down in the Book of Leviticus came about out of concern for the well being of the larger community. However, the requirements quickly became a punishment, and leprosy was regarded as punishment from God for one's sinfulness.

While we may not have the same need to segregate those who are sick, we do often segregate, ostracize and alienate others out of pride, discrimination, selfishness, greed or a number of other reasons. Jesus gives us a model in the gospel story today, reminding us that all are created in God's image and likeness and are deserving of our respect and of human dignity. In physically touching the leper, Jesus makes himself ritually unclean and affirms the basic human dignity of the leper at the same time. He shows us how we are to welcome each person; he teaches us the basic attitude by which we are called to live as his disciples. Our mission is the same as Jesus': to proclaim the good news of God's love and to share the gift of that love with each person that we meet. Nothing more, nothing less.

Are we willing to reach out and embrace the lepers in our society today?

ATHABASCA TAR SANDS

Bishop Luc Bouchard of St. Paul Diocese in Alberta has written a pastoral letter on *The Integrity of Creation and the Athabasca Oil Sands*. The letter is available on the Diocese of St. Paul website.

www.dioceseofstpaul.ca/

Click on Chancery, then Pastoral Letters and then the document. It came out Jan 25, 2009.



The best way to predict the future... is to invent it. Alan Kay

UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH

Feb 20-22—SECOND ANNUAL ART SHOW

Friday evening—Wine and Cheese Reception

Saturday evening—Wedding Anniversary Reception

Sunday—Brunch after both Masses

This was a load of fun last year and a wonderful opportunity to meet some new people in the parish. If you are interested in exhibiting at the art show, contact the parish office and leave your name and a description of the kind of art you will exhibit.

Feb 21—WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

For couples married in Jan/Feb/Mar. Celebrate at the 7 pm Mass and join in a reception in conjunction with the Art Show.

Feb 24—SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER—6:30 pm

Come together for a social the evening before Lent—a great time to enjoy a simple meal and share fellowship with other parishioners.

LENTEN RECONCILIATION SERVICES

March 3—Sacred Heart

March 24—IC

March 26—St. Mary's

All services start at 7 pm.

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: I am away from the parish until February 18, on a short visit home to see my family. Hopefully, there will be good enough weather that I can spend time outside doing chores and enjoying the great outdoors. Someone asked why I would do a winter holiday on the prairies - the answer is obvious, I would think... to have winter on the prairies!

Giselle: I've been busy with Returning to Spirit the last little while and more of that coming up in the next few weeks... Last week I was in Cold Lake, AB with the First Nations team for Returning to Spirit.

Jude: Jude is feeling a bit under the weather at the moment and didn't have a chance to write anything for this little column... She's busily involved in RCIA, Religious Education and Marriage Preparation.

Roger: Our lives revolve around a lot of communal prayer activity. We also nourish our private prayer life with God, which ordinarily prompts us to come together to pray with others. As we pray together our faith community is being strengthened, sometimes in ways we don't see. Sometimes we experience resurrection activity. It takes patience and perseverance to implement activities and plans. With a variety of opinions and ideas good things come forth from the community. It is interesting to continually discover ways of building the Kingdom. Lets keep it up.

TRAPS, NETS & SNARES

The arrogant have hidden a trap for me, and with cords they have spread a net, along the road they have set snares for me. Ps 140:5

The Catechism of the Catholic Church condemns the abuse and mistreatment of animals. It denounces cruelty to them under the seventh commandment, which suggests that not everything is ours simply because we have power over it. Possession (of a pet, of zoo animals, of something raised in a laboratory) is not license to mutilate or inflict pain. The condemnation is there for a reason, of course. The church would not have to enounce cruelty to animals if there were not so much of it around. Cock or dog-fighting, fox hunts, pigeon shoots, cosmetic testing, and the harvesting of musk for human scents can be bloody and disabling. Raising veal for the tender palate requires the confinement of calves in narrow stalls (to thwart muscle development) and diets planned with anaemia in mind. The market for ivory, we're told, has resulted in shoot-to-kill legislation against poachers. The poacher, a person, can be killed for what he or she does to elephants.

One of the reason the church has long condemned cruelty to animals (back to the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, at least) is its sense that violence against one species easily opens the way to violence against others. Inflicting needless pain on a pet or otherwise "owned" animal—or one in the wild—is sadistic and, thus, a prediction of more sadism to come.

Those of us who have lived in rural areas or large houses know, however, that mice like peanut butter as much as cheese, that bats cannot always be induced to follow air currents out open windows, and that groundhogs and moles can overrun and undermine our yards. Traps, nets, poisons, and gunshots are often what we resort to. They're efficient and solve our animal problems.

Dealing with "varmints" and "pests" puts us in an area of moral ambiguity, it seems, even those of us who love our household Bichons, canaries and cottontail rabbits. The question for us is when and how we apply standards requiring us to minimize pain to renounce anything that smacks of cruelty, taunting, crazing animals.

We're invited to think again about how casual attitudes towards the pain of animals, about how our haste to dispatch them, can predispose us to casual attitudes toward fighting, toward crime. We may find ourselves sliding easily from the shrug over the for-profit gamelands that offer up trophy boars, zebras and ibis to shrugs over acts of war.

We may find ourselves caught in traps, nets and snares of our own senselessness.

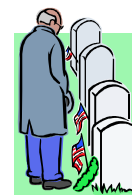
RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is divided into four stages: Pre-Catechumenate, Catechumenate, Purification and Enlightenment and Postbaptismal Catechesis. The usual time for the Purification and Enlightenment is the season of Lent, when those who are part of the RCIA begin their final preparations for reception into the Church and the sacraments of Initiation. It is a time when we, the members of the Christian community, are called to journey in solidarity and prayer with the elect. As we move toward Lent, we accompany our candidates as they continue to explore their call to follow Jesus as members of our community

REJOICING & REMEMBERING

In the sure hope of the resurrection, we bid farewell to:

Joe Hamelin
Jerome Denis



*Whatever God does,
the first outburst
is always compassion.*

Meister Eckhart

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTIONS

The fate of a leper is a great tragedy at any time and place. In Jesus' time, lepers were considered condemned, part of the plagues God sent as punishment. They were cast out of society and abandoned. St. Mark's Gospel reveals the unthinkable. Jesus reaches out and touches a leper. He risks catching the contagious disease and heals the man. As the gospel story teaches, no one is abandoned

in Christ. Are there those in our society or in our personal lives for whom we ascribe no hope, who we have abandoned, treated like lepers? Or as Christ's stewards of our sisters and brothers, do we risk reaching out and touching those who may seem to be "unclean" or not worthy of our time or attention?

15 KEYS TO A FABULOUS LIFE

1. Enjoy What You Do Spend your time and your energy engaged in activity you find rewarding. Give your natural talents an opportunity to express themselves so you can fulfill your unique potential. Be passionate!

2. Be Positive Consciously choose to see things from a positive perspective and use language that reflects a positive outlook. Focus on what can be done, rather than on what can't. Be grateful for what you do have, rather than resentful about what you don't. Be an energy giver, infusing others with your positive spirit.

3. Set Your Bar High One thing you can always count on in life is that you will get what you tolerate. Don't settle for less than the best of yourself, of others, or of life. Don't "put up" with unnecessary and avoidable energy drainers.

4. Be Persistent Hurdles in life are for jumping! Don't give up when you experience setbacks. It is the challenges you overcome that make your successes meaningful.

5. Have A Clear Vision Create an inspiring and compelling vision for your future which allows you to focus your energy and time without distraction (to say 'no' to those things which aren't aligned with your vision and values).

6. Nurture Your Relationships Ensure the importance of those you care about most is reflected in your words and actions. Spend time with them, listen to them; encourage them; love them! And remember, professional success at the expense of one's relationships isn't true success.

7. Help Others Succeed You cannot help another succeed without also helping yourself. Give generously of your time and talents and it will come back to you tenfold.

8. Express Yourself Fully Speak your truth and don't leave important things unsaid. Ask for what you want and address the issues that are concerning you with a focus on the solution, not on blame. Practice being a good listener. Doing so will reap rich rewards in your personal and professional life. Most importantly, be who you are!

9. Don't Resist Your Problems Mastery of life is not absence of problems, but mastery of problems. Complaining only wastes time and energy and doesn't solve your problems. Only deliberate action makes a difference to the challenges you face. In overcoming your challenges you discover new strengths, build on your old ones and develop stronger muscles for life.

10. Honor Your Commitments Don't over-commit and fulfill on what you do commit to. Failing to do so diminishes your own sense of integrity, undermines your reputation and damages trust in relationships. Likewise, ensure others respect you and value your time as you do by holding them accountable to the commitments they make to you.

11. Take Risks Courage isn't absence of fear, but action despite of it. Unless you're prepared to step out of your 'comfort zone', and put something at risk (including making a mistake) you won't be able to achieve the goals that really inspire you. You possess all the courage you need to do great things. Give it an opportunity to express itself!

12. Let Go of Perfection Doing your best doesn't mean doggedly pursuing some arbitrary and illusive standard of perfection. Doing so will prevent you from being able to enjoy where you are, and who you are, right now. Life's perfection exists in its imperfection. So let go a little, lighten up, forgive yourself and decide to be your own greatest friend, rather than your greatest critic.

13. Get A Support Team As smart or creative or efficient as you may be, you can't do it all and you don't know everything. Enlist support of people you respect to help you succeed in achieving your goals; to encourage you; and to challenge you to being the best person you can be.

14. Take Regular 'Time Out' You need 'downtime' to be fully effective in your 'uptime'. You can only accomplish your goals and enjoy the journey along the way if you have the clarity of vision, plan, enthusiasm and energy required to achieve them. "Time out" provides an opportunity to nurture your body and mind; to reconnect with your spirit and restore your sense of balance. It is not an indulgence, it is a necessity for a truly great life!

15. Take Complete Responsibility It's not what happens to you in life that matters, but how you respond to it. Take complete responsibility for where you are now. Don't give other people or circumstances the power to determine who you will be, what you will do with your talents or your life! Your ability to accomplish what you want is determined by the choices, big and small, you make every day.

It's your life, own it fully, make it truly fabulous!

**50 THINGS YOU CAN DO
TO SAVE
THE ENVIRONMENT**

11. Urge grocery stores to stock organic produce, then buy it.
12. Ask the produce manager to find out which pesticides have been used on the produce and which country they're from.
13. Beware of sales gimmicks used to make you believe products or services are safe for the environment. Be sure. Read labels. Ask questions.
14. Support and patronize businesses and companies that are proving they are committed to a safe, clean environment.
15. Pack lunches in reusable containers and lunchkits.
16. Use environmentally friendly cleaners.
17. Avoid products in aerosol cans. Even cans that claim no CFC's have potentially harmful propellants.
18. Avoid using anything toxic, chlorine bleach.
19. Use rechargeable batteries and recycle old ones!
20. Never throw batteries in the garbage! Check for recycling options! (con't later!)

UNSUNG HEROINES: SYRO-PHOENICIAN WOMAN

If there is any interaction in the bible I would have loved to be present for, it is the interaction between Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24-30). This is the only place in Mark's Gospel where anyone bests Jesus in an argument!



Jesus is travelling around Tyre, which is on the Mediterranean coast, in a region called Syro-Phoenicia, north and west of Galilee. Although this was not part of Palestine, it was populated mostly by Jews. Jesus is trying to avoid the crowds and takes refuge in a house. A woman with a demon-possessed daughter (could be a variety of physical ills attributed to demon possession), hears of his arrival and goes to see him. Nothing unusual in that, except for the fact that she is not Jewish, but rather a *Gentile*, a pagan, one of "those" people. There is no mention of a male (husband, brother, father, etc), with whom she is associated. Maybe she was a widow, or maybe she was just so desperate to see Jesus that she didn't wait for the man of the house to come home. Whatever the case, she approaches Jesus (women didn't approach strange men) and throws herself at his feet. She begs Jesus to cure her daughter. Her faith is obviously strong...

And now the strange part... Jesus refuses her request and actually insults her by using the metaphor that it is not right to give the children's food to the dogs. Scripture scholars are as befuddled as we are by Jesus' abrupt refusal. He's healed foreigners before (Mark 5:1-20). Is it because she is a woman approaching a strange man? We're not sure. Whatever the case, the woman does not take "no" for an answer. She is not going to give up... her faith is that strong. Deep down she knows that she is worthy. She agrees with Jesus' metaphor, but then turns it upside down and challenges him that even the dogs get the scraps that fall from the master's table. God's love is big enough for all!!! And Jesus acknowledges her clever and daring retort and the daughter is healed. This woman changed Jesus' mind... amazing don't you think? She blew apart religious and social conventions of the day...

So, what does the Syro-Phoenician woman have to teach us today? Good question... How many rules and social/religious conventions do we hold up as written in stone? How many people do we exclude from participation in our community, either explicitly or implicitly? Are we really so sure and solid in our interpretation of who God loves? Are we so sure of the "truth" of our rules? Who would engage Jesus in a discussion today? And who would best him in an argument? Who would open wide the doors of divine mercy and compassion and love? We should be careful whom we sideline... they can often be the ones who disrupt our applecart... and for the greater good...

LIVING ROOM DIALOGUES

A Lenten opportunity to deepen and strengthen our faith by meeting (4 times) with other members of St. Mary's and discussing four topics from Vatican II.

	The Church	Sacred Scripture	The Mass	The Sacraments
Evening		At the Home of:		Facilitators
Monday at 7 pm		Janice and Joe Haddock		Donna Dolan, RSCJ
Tuesday at 7 pm		Henri and Bernardine LeFebvre		Susan Campbell
Wednesday at 7 pm		Paul and Fran Laliberte		Mary-Ann Jamin
Thursday - 8pm		Colleen and David Mahoney		Barbara Marwood
Friday - 7pm		Erin Beardwood		Rose Palfy
Morning		At the Home of:		Facilitators
Wednesday - 11am		Dorothy Reimer		Pat Finn
Thursday - 10:30am		Doris Da Silva		Ann and Brian Walsh

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

We have some information on Human Trafficking in Canada available at the back of the Church. Remember the article from a few months ago on Prostitution in Sweden? Well, this gives us an idea of the presence of human trafficking in Canada. This is an extremely timely topic as we approach the 2010 Olympics and prostitution trafficking.