



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

December 2014

"I Feel Very Proud of My Parish" Jeannine Day

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Though she is a lifelong parishioner of Sacred Heart, Jeannine Day realized the great responsibility of tending to the material and spiritual needs of the parish when she began serving on the Parish Council this past year.

"I am one of the newest members of the council," Jeannine says. "By being on the council, I got to know the huge responsibilities of the pastor and the parish council in trying to meet the needs of the parishioners and the buildings, both of which need to be maintained."

Jeannine was baptized at Sacred Heart, and was married at the parish on Oct. 16, 1954. Her parents were always active in the community and led by example – a model that Jeannine and her husband, Bob, followed when they began their own family.

"Much of our social life revolved around the parish," Jeannine says. "We went to well-attended dances and social events for young people and couples at Sacred Heart. We were in the Christian Family Movement and met our friends through that organization, and all worked on different fundraising drives together for the parish."

Through the parish, Bob and Jeannine's two children, Donavon and Deanne, attended Religious Education. Jeannine



Jeannine Day, Sacred Heart parishioner and Parish Council member

served on the Liturgy Committee, and recently, Jeannine began volunteering at the Blessings Gift Shop once a month.

"I have met so many nice people and formed so many friendships by working there," Jeannine says. "I try to help out if someone is gone. It is very rewarding."

Another ministry that Jeannine finds personally rewarding is her work with the elderly and the homebound members of the parish community. Along, with the Pastoral Care Committee, Jeannine writes to and visits those who are homebound. She also visits two local nursing homes to say the Rosary and to share the Body of Christ with the residents.

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CHRISTMASTIME STEWARDSHIP

To Be a Christ-Bearer

It is not uncommon to give gifts during Advent and Christmas, but it is never enough just to leave it at that. True, Jesus gave Himself to us at the first Christmas. And, as always, we should strive to imitate Him by giving of ourselves in some way as we celebrate the anniversary of His birth. But there is a way to give even more than just ourselves – by giving the gift of Christ to others. The seasons of Advent and Christmas are perfect opportunities to share the love and message of Jesus with others in a beautiful way.

Of course, giving of ourselves in imitation of Jesus is a beautiful thing. But it is just as important to remember that, as human beings, we bear the likeness of God. As Christians, Jesus Himself inhabits our very souls. As Catholics, our Lord literally dwells within us when we receive Him in the Eucharist. Based upon this logic, we do so much more than imitate Jesus when we selflessly give of ourselves to others. Indeed, just as Mary carried Christ in her womb when she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, that first Advent, and just as she brought Him in her arms to Simeon as a newborn child that first Christmas season, we can also literally bring Jesus Christ to the world.

What a profound task Our Lord has laid out for us this season! As He grew in Mary's womb during that first Advent,

Jesus could only go where Mary chose to take Him. Of course, He couldn't do anything – He couldn't even speak. Mary became His hands and feet, and even His voice. Mary could have stayed at home during her pregnancy, resting and preparing for life with a newborn, as most mothers do. But instead, the Blessed Mother helped her Son begin His mission by bringing Him to her cousin, Elizabeth. Today, in much the same way, Christ invites us to share Him with the rest of the world. He chooses to make His presence known through us. And so, as the spiritual writer Caryl Houselander beautifully states, "We must carry Jesus in our hearts wherever He wants us to go, and there are many places to which He may never go unless we take Him to them."

How do we bring Jesus to those in our parish and community? There are many ways. We might visit with a sick parishioner over the holidays, providing fellowship and support in their time of need. We may consider serving a local soup kitchen or food bank, and doing our part to make sure that the hungry are fed. We can sing Christmas carols for our neighbors, bringing true joy and love to their homes. Perhaps we could help a tired friend clean her house, making her life a little bit easier during this busy season. Or we can share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

We might even try going to work with a cheery disposition, or donating money so that a starving child in a poor country can have something to eat. These are just a few examples of how we can practice stewardship.

We may sometimes feel as if our efforts are in vain – especially when it is hard to see the effects of our evangelization. This temptation is particularly strong when we offer our treasure as a gift to God. The positive effects of monetary gifts aren't always as visible as gifts of time or talent. But when we give of our treasure, the love of Jesus can travel to places we could never go. While our gift may not directly affect someone in a positive way, it very well may enable someone else to do it for us. Sometimes God doesn't just ask us to be His hands and feet, but to enable someone else to be them, as well.

Advent and Christmas give us the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' call to live as stewards and disciples of His Word. God has put us in a particular place, given us a certain amount of time, asked us to perform particular tasks, and to selflessly share a portion of our gifts. This is all for a singular purpose – to bring His Son into the world, and make Christ's presence just as real as when He first became man more than 2,000 years ago.



A Letter From Our Pastor

What Has Been Given to Us, What We Can Give Back

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Yesterday, I had a parishioner stop me after Mass because they needed time to talk. Another person stopped by my office with a personal problem. Our Communion ministers went out to the hospital. People came to adoration all day. There was a Bible study this morning. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is taking place this afternoon. A funeral Mass is being planned for tomorrow.

The pace of things here at Sacred Heart never seems to slow down. My reason for bringing all this up is to point out that each day, dozens of people are touched by the ministry of our parish. There is probably no other charitable organization that impacts you and those that you know on so many levels the way Sacred Heart Parish does. There are many other worthy charities that you support, but hopefully your parish family and its work of building the Kingdom comes to mind very quickly when you think of organizations from which you benefit.

We are now moving toward Christmas. We celebrate Son of God becoming flesh. The church is the presence of Jesus in the world today. We are His hands lifting up the fallen. We are His feet taking assistance to the poor. We are His voice proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel to others. The universal church and our parish

face many challenges, but the Catholic Church has been around 2,000 years and we believe it will be in existence until Jesus comes a second time.

I would encourage you once again to pray about how you share your time, talent and treasures as the year draws to a close. This is the season when we think about what has been given to us by God and what we can give back.

I hope to see many of you during the Advent and Christmas seasons at our liturgies. The schedules are available online and in our Sunday bulletin. Now is the time for us to rededicate ourselves to our faith. Jesus has come among us, let us rejoice and be glad!



Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Mark DeSutter". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Mark DeSutter



Coffee Café Fosters Fellowship in Our Sacred Heart Community



Coffee Café provides a wonderful opportunity for our parish community to gather for fellowship and become better acquainted with one another in a setting outside of Sunday Mass. According to Mike and Marcia Starr, Co-Chairs of Coffee Café, it is important to get to know other members of the parish community in a comfortable, relaxed setting.

“People in Mass are familiar, but it seems like you never really talk to each other except to say ‘hello’ or ‘goodbye,’” Mike says. “This setting makes it easier to visit and learn more about those you attend Mass with.”

Formerly known as Coffee and Donuts, Coffee Café became an official parish ministry in 2008 at the request of Msgr. Wellman and the parish staff. This is not your average coffee and donuts menu – the proffered fare has expanded to include fresh fruit, yogurt, bagels, pastries, breads, cereals, and

sometimes an egg CrockPot dish. Gluten-free options are available for those who have restricted diets.

“We are always interested in any other ideas parishioners have to add to the menu,” Marcia says. “Every so often, we make a cherry coffee cake, which many of the parishioners love. It has been a big hit!”

Coffee Café is held after the 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. Sunday Masses on the second Sunday of the month. It meets in Culemans Memorial Hall Cafeteria during the months of September through May, and in Culemans Fellowship Hall during June, July and August. This is to accommodate CCD classes that meet from September through May. The breakfast is funded by freewill donations.

Between 60 and 100 people attend each month, and about a dozen volunteers purchase, prepare and serve food, as well as clean following the

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Coffee Café Fosters Fellowship *continued from page 4*

event. Mike, Marcia and other volunteers create a pleasant atmosphere to encourage relaxed, enjoyable conversation.

If you have never attended Coffee Café, please consider becoming a part of this ministry. Many parishioners attend every time, while others attend every once in a while. This is a unique opportunity to share good food while enjoying time with brothers and sisters in faith with little commitment.

“It has been very enjoyable being able to put names to many different faces that we see weekly at Sunday Mass, and may not have been able to do so otherwise,” Marcia says. “It is a lot of work preparing and working it, but it is nice to see everyone enjoying the food and talking to each other.”

If you would like to get involved, simply show up and be ready for good food and good conversation! For more information or to volunteer with set-up and clean-up, please contact Mike and Marcia Starr at 788-6128 or starr2801@gmail.com.



Jeannine Day *continued from front cover*

“My parents used to visit people in nursing homes, so I think this is another thing I learned from them by example,” Jeannine says. “The people I visit with are so grateful. You always hear that you get back so much more than you give, and it is really true. It’s so nice to visit with these wonderful people.”

By following the example of her parents and becoming involved in the parish and community, Jeannine has not only created lasting friendships through Sacred Heart, but has also found that her involvement augments her own spiritual life and relationships with Christ.

“I feel closer to God,” Jeannine says. “I find myself praying far more often and going to Mass more. Sometimes

when I am going to visit people, especially those I know feel depressed or helpless, I find myself praying on the way there to give them hope.”

As she reaps the benefits of stewardship, Jeannine is encouraged by the selfless members of Sacred Heart who all support the ongoing care and upkeep of the parish.

“Through being a steward, I have met so many priceless people – unselfish and spiritual people – who give of their time and talent, and I wouldn’t have met them if I wasn’t involved,” Jeannine says. “I feel very proud of my parish and my fellow parishioners and our beautiful church.”

Our Lady of Guadalupe

On Dec. 9, 1531, while on his way to Mass, a humble 55-year-old man named Juan Diego climbed a hill just outside Mexico City. On this hill, a woman of incredible beauty and grandeur appeared before him, requesting that a temple be built in her honor. She asked Juan to speak to the bishop on her behalf, and identified herself as the ever-virgin Mary, Mother of the True God.

The bishop, in turn, asked Juan Diego to request a sign from the Lady to be sure that the vision was authentic. The Lady commanded Juan to pick roses he found nearby, and arranged them in his tilma – a cloak made of poor quality cactus cloth. She then instructed him to take the roses to the bishop. Upon unfolding the cloak before the bishop, the fresh wet roses fell out, leaving a life size figure of the Virgin Mother just as Juan had described her! Without hesitation, the bishop built a shrine in her honor, and it remains the most frequently visited Catholic church in the world, aside from the Vatican.

Take a moment to admire the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It mirrors the woman spoken of in Revelation 12:1, “A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet...” Yet, the image can only be properly understood when investigated against its historical backdrop.



Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to the predominately polytheistic Aztec Indians, who still practiced human sacrifice. The woman on the tilma is depicted as Indian in ethnicity, with dark complexion, hair and eyes. Contrasting with Aztec iconography, in which gods were always portrayed with open eyes staring straight ahead, Our Lady looks down in humility, identifying her humanity. Yet, her royalty is simultaneously revealed, as she is carried on the shoulders of an angel – for in the Aztec Empire, kings, queens and dignitaries were carried on the shoulders of servants.

Our Lady also stands on the moon, eclipsing the sun. This reveals her power over the Aztec gods of the sun and of the night. Although she is not

a god, this glorious Lady has come to announce a God who is most powerful. The bow that is visible around her waist is an Indian symbol of new life and fecundity, and its high placement just above her stomach reveals that she is with child.

Although the rough cactus cloth on which this image is found should have deteriorated within 20 years, no signs of decay can be seen even today – nearly 500 years later. The image is scientifically inexplicable. The stars on the mantle were found to be exactly as the stars of the winter solstice appeared before the dawn on Dec. 12, 1531. Infrared studies have revealed that the image was not painted, because the paint did not penetrate the cloth fibers.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, within 10 years of her apparition, over 9 million polytheistic Indians became Christian. Although a devotion to her is commonly associated with the Hispanic ethnicity, she was declared by St. John Paul II to be the Empress of the Americas, or the patroness of the entire continent. In the words of St. John Paul II: “To you, O Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, belong all the love, honor, glory and endless praise of your American sons and daughters!”

Take a moment to admire the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It mirrors the woman spoken of in Revelation 12:1, “A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet...”

A Favorite Annual Treat *The Cookie Walk*

The Annual Cookie Walk has been an important event for our parish since 2005. As the Social Committee's only fundraiser, this event provides the resources the committee needs to fund all their other events and activities throughout the year.

"If it were not for the Cookie Walk, we would not be able to do any of the other events over the year, and make it affordable so everyone can come," says Connie Morris, Chair of the Social Committee. "Our events in the past have included the Mardi Gras, our Spring Breakfast and Ice Cream Social, just to name a few."

However, it's not just a fundraiser. The Cookie walk not only gives life to the Social Committee's fun activities, but it is also one of their fun activities.

"Although the Social Committee sponsors this as their fundraiser, the entire parish is involved," Connie says. "Many, many parishioners bake their favorite cookies or candies. Then many people volunteer to help out, telling me this is their favorite activity all year. Everyone seems to have a good time."

The Cookie Walk will be held in Culemans Fellowship Hall on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m., or until all the cookies are gone. Parishioners can drop off their baked goods on Friday, Dec. 12, between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

When people arrive at Culemans Fellowship Hall that Saturday morning, they receive a box and a glove as they walk through the door. They can then walk around the hall and choose from different types of cookies and candies, and select how much they want of each type. Then, the boxes are weighed.

"Many people fill multiple boxes, but you don't have to," Connie says. "What is great about this is you can get just a few things to satisfy your sweet tooth, or get enough to give as gifts. Or you might put a nice plate out when you have company at your home during the Christmas season."

Another feature of the Cookie Walk is the Coffee Corner, a relaxation spot with coffee, hot chocolate and apple cider.

"We invite parishioners to stop and sit a spell," Connie says. "Enjoy some of the treats you just purchased if you



(from left) Alice Impens, Mary Schoeve and Linda Burau



Michelle Stoneking

would like, or just have a cup of something warm and visit with others."

The volunteers for the Cookie Walk seem to get as much or more from it as do the participants.

"For those that bake, it makes your house smell wonderful," Connie says. "For those that help set up on Friday, we have fun and share quite a bit of laughter. Plus, those crumbs that can't be sold have to be eaten by someone, don't they? On Saturday, it is a fast-paced morning that makes everyone appreciate the Coffee Corner for relaxation. But we are able to help the parish with their events for an entire year, and the morning really does go fast."

For more information or to volunteer for the Cookie Walk, please contact Connie Morris at sixverybusypeople@mchsi.com or 309-799-5865.



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Mass Times

Sundays: 7, 9, 11 a.m.
Saturday Vigil: 4 p.m.
Daily Masses (M-F): 6:30, 8:30 a.m.
Saturday Morning: 8:30 a.m.

Confessions

Saturday: 3 to 4 p.m.
and by appointment, call 762-2362

Eucharistic Adoration (St. Francis Chapel)

Wednesday: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
First Friday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Christmas Mass Schedule

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Daily Mass — 8:30 a.m.
Christmas Eve Masses — 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day Masses — 7 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Mass Schedule for Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Wednesday, Dec. 31

Daily Mass — 8:30 a.m.
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God Vigil Mass — 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 1

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God Masses — 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.