



*St. Alexius*



*Our Lady of the Angels*



*St. Paul's*



## The Odegards Reflect on a Lifetime of Faith and Stewardship

### This Issue:

2

Stewardship  
The Four Pillars

3

We Are Blessed as a  
Church and a Nation

4

Our Knights of Columbus  
Bishop Busch Council  
#4863 *The Fellowship of  
Good Christian Men*

6

A Significant Moment  
in Our Prayer *The  
Presentation of the Gifts*

7

In Times of Suffering and  
Tragedy, There is Faith  
and Love  
*Parishioner Lyn Beste  
Shares Her Story*

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To give unselfishly of one's time and talent while expecting nothing in return is a virtue that can take on many names. Some people call it altruism. We recognize it as stewardship. But Vic and Merina Odegard say it's just how they were raised.

The Odegards, who have been involved with many ministries at Our Lady of the Angels during their five decades as parishioners, say lending their time to the parish is "just what you do."

"I never put it into the term 'stewardship,'" Merina says thoughtfully. "We were taught from when we were little, that you just got out there and if anyone needed help, you helped them. Especially in the church, if you were asked, you just did it and you never made a big deal of it. So, I've been doing stewardship for 60-some years."

Among the ministries and roles the couple have taken on as part of the parish, Merina has been a past president of the Christian Mothers and helps with the Senior Adult Ministry. She currently serves as a Eucharistic Minister and a lector. Vic is an usher for both weekend Masses and at the funerals where he and Merina both

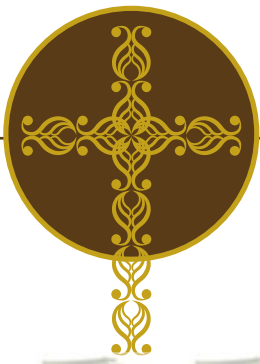


*While Vic and Merina Odegard didn't always refer to giving of their time and talents as "stewardship," it was how they were raised – and it has truly been a way of life!*

help when needed. In addition to taking Communion to homebound parishioners each weekend, the couple also makes sure a 101-year old friend makes it to Mass each Sunday.

"There's a lot of things you do that you don't stop to think, 'Oh, I'm doing something special,'" Merina explains. "It's a way of life that we were very fortunate having good parents that taught us the respect and obedience."

*continued on page 5*



# STEWARDSHIP

## THE FOUR PILLARS

### YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THE THREE TS OF STEWARDSHIP, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FOUR PS?

The three Ts — time, talent and treasure — describe the personal gifts we offer to the Church. The four Ps are the “four pillars” of parish stewardship described by the renowned pastor Msgr. Thomas McGread. They are the hallmark of a stewardship parish — hospitality, prayer, formation and service. Let’s take a look at each of them to understand how we can improve in each area.

#### **HOSPITALITY**

##### Christian Kindness

“When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Gospel teaches that whenever we welcome the least of our brothers or sisters, we welcome Christ himself. That is why the first mark of a stewardship parish is hospitality. Being friendly is one of the first ways we can be Christ-like toward others.

Modern Catholic parishes are often so large and have so many Masses that many parishioners don’t know one another. To create a sense of community, be sure to smile and greet others as you enter and exit the Church. Let’s try harder than ever to be a welcoming community.

#### **PRAYER**

##### Heart-to-Heart with God

“Do not become so involved in the work of the Lord that you forget the Lord of the work,” a seminary professor once taught. In other words, don’t get so caught up with parish projects and outreach efforts that you forget to draw aside to spend time with God in prayer. Every great saint has taught that prayer is the most essential component in the life of the Christian. Through prayer, we nurture our most important relationship — the one that will last for all eternity.

A healthy prayer life should include communal prayer such as Mass, as well as personal prayer and family prayer. The two biggest obstacles to prayer are lack of time and lack of understanding of how to pray. We have to schedule time for prayer just as we would for an important appointment. And we have to learn how to pray from other people. Many saints have written spiritual books that describe different methods of prayer.

#### **FORMATION**

##### Continuous Conversion

Pope John Paul II always emphasized ongoing conversion. From childhood through adulthood, our whole life must be a process of drawing closer to God. He never stops calling us forward to learn more and to examine ourselves more deeply.

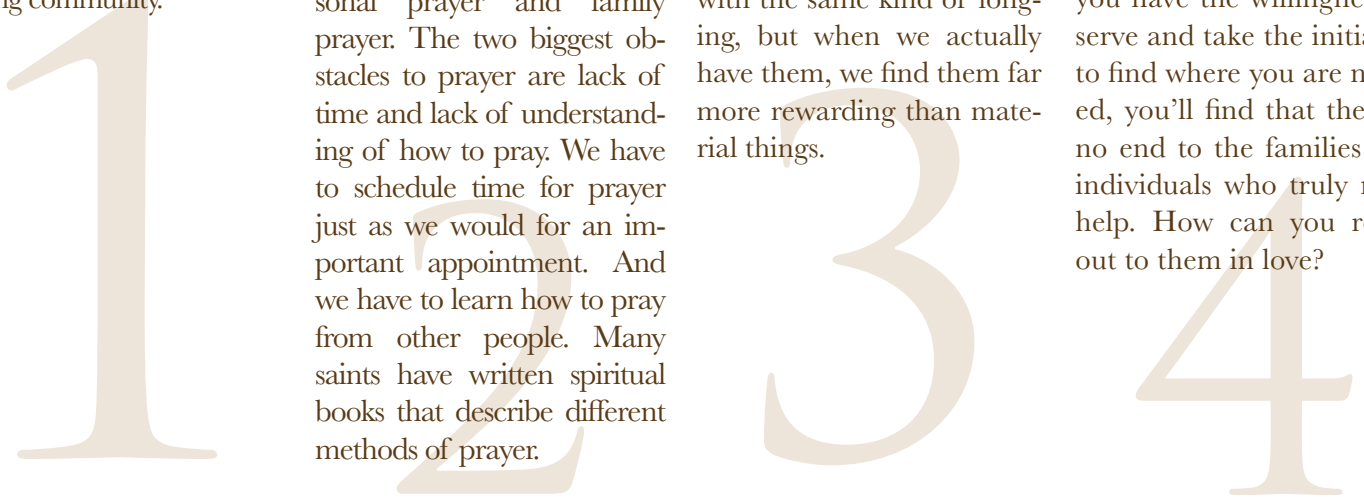
Very often our society values material things more than interior virtues. But as personal experience shows, when we finally acquire the car or house or “toy” that we wanted so badly, it doesn’t really satisfy. On the other hand, we don’t tend to desire spiritual virtues with the same kind of longing, but when we actually have them, we find them far more rewarding than material things.

#### **SERVICE**

##### LOVE IN ACTION

“Amen I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). This Scripture was one of Mother Teresa’s favorites. Each time she picked up a poor and hungry child, she knew she was ministering to Christ. While we may not view ourselves as saints, we too are called to such heroic service right within our own community. As Mother Teresa said, “To be a saint is not the privilege of a few, but the duty of everyone.”

We have many service opportunities right here within our own parish. If you have the willingness to serve and take the initiative to find where you are needed, you’ll find that there is no end to the families and individuals who truly need help. How can you reach out to them in love?



**A Letter From Our Pastor**

# We Are Blessed as a Church and a Nation

Dear Parishioners,

The month of July may seem like an “in-between” month. Why do I say that? It sits in the middle of summer. During this last month of June, we shared in a number of solemnities and celebrations – these served to remind us of the incredible truths we have received as Catholics, from the Holy Trinity to the Body and Blood of Christ.

A look at the calendar shows us that all of the Sundays this month are in Ordinary Time. But Ordinary Time is anything but “ordinary.” Even though it might seem that way, especially after a month of celebrations, Ordinary Time has its own advantages.

One thing happens this month that is certainly unique to us as Americans – Independence Day. We are Catholics, but we are also Americans. And we can be proud to be both – grateful for the gift of Godly faith and grateful for the gift of American liberty.

To be Catholic and American should not mean choosing one over the other. We can be both; they can be complementary. Our Catholic faith states that we need to work together as fellow citizens for the common good of everyone in this great country. This is affirmed in our country’s Constitution; there our Founding Fathers guaranteed us of religious rights to contribute to our common life together.

Freedom is a special inheritance we have received. It is a gift of God. That means freedom is a heritage that must be guarded. And we are grateful for the many who have paid a great price to preserve freedom in America. In other words, as both Christians and Americans we are “Stewards of Freedom.”

In 1886, just over 140 years ago, Bishop James Gibbons of Baltimore was made the second American Cardinal. He attributed the

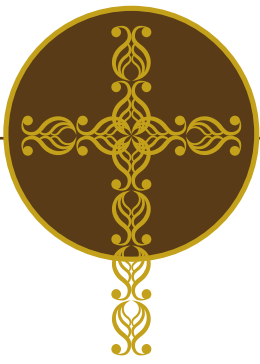


progress of the Church in America to the “civil liberty we enjoy in our enlightened republic.” He continued to say that “in the genial atmosphere of liberty, the Church blossoms like a rose.” It may be said, when people appreciate freedom, we blossom — when people attack freedom, we wilt.

July is not just a time for us to celebrate – like the flowers around us, it is also a time for us to blossom. It is not a time to cease praying or working to build up the Kingdom of Christ. Rather, it is a time to work even more diligently to express our appreciation for our many gifts and to share them with others. We are blessed! We are blessed by the gifts of our faith and the gifts of our freedom. So because they work best together, we must always remember to thank God for both faith and freedom.

In our Father’s hands,

Fr. Greg Paffel



# Our Knights of Columbus Fellowship

## *The Fellowship of Good Christian Men*

All the good works done by the Knights of Columbus are based upon their four core principles: Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. In describing what our local Council #4863 does, the Knights also state, “Our Catholic faith teaches us to ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself.’ Our members show love for their neighbors in many ways, both spiritually and materially. We recognize that our mission, our faith in God, compels us to action. There is no better way to experience love and compassion than by helping those in need, a call we answer every day. We promote social and intellectual fellowship among our members and their families.”

To be sure, charity and service are hallmarks of the Knights. In the past decade worldwide, the Knights have donated \$1.475 billion to charity and given almost 700 million hours in support of the Church and charitable works. At a recent audience, Pope Francis commended and thanked the Knights: “On this occasion, I wish to express

my gratitude for the unfailing support the Knights of Columbus have always provided to the Church, to the Holy See, and to me personally. This support is both financial and spiritual. It can be seen in the daily prayers, sacrifices, and the apostolic works of so many Knights in their local councils, in their parishes, and in their communities.”

Thanks to the efforts of Fr. Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, Connecticut, the Connecticut State Legislature chartered the first Knights of Columbus Council in 1882. From that one council, the Knights have grown from a few members to more than 15,000 councils and almost two million members in the United States and 16 other countries.

There are 282 councils in the State of Minnesota, serving 400 parishes – in addition to 30 Assemblies of 4th degree Knights. We are blessed here at St. Paul, Our Lady of Angels, and St. Alexius with K of C Council #4863, Bishop Busch Council. The council meets on the second Tuesday each month at 7 p.m. in the basement of St. Paul Church, and they also gather at 6:30 p.m. to pray the Rosary before each meeting.

“I suppose you could describe our Knights of Columbus Council as the fellowship of good Christian men,” says our Grand Knight, Bernie Herickhoff. “There are so many ways that we support our parishes, the diocese, the Church, and our local communities both financially and through service. I personally have been a Knight for more than 40 years, and that gives me great pride and satisfaction.

“You might say we are trying to make the world a little sweeter,” adds Bernie, a farmer who raises sugar beets.

Our Knights provide service and thousands of dollars to the parishes and local organizations each year. Some of the groups they support with funds are Dollars for Scholars, Graduation Mass, Pennies for Seminarians, Student Loan Fund, Sauk Centre Lock-In, St. Michael’s Nursing Home, Birthline, New Beginnings, Morality In Media, Relay for Life, Holy Family School, Christian Mothers, and parish Missions. Bernie refers to this as a “short list” because there is more.



# Bishop Busch Council #4863

## *Good Christian Men*

“We have a hog roast during Sinclair Lewis Days in July; we mow the cemetery; we clean ditches along Route 71; and basically respond to any needs and requests from the parishes and the pastor,” he says. “Each year, we provide somewhere around \$15,000 to Holy Family School alone, and in recent years we have helped our seminarians with more than \$25,000. We accomplish this with our Bingo games, our breakfasts, our Tootsie Roll sales, raffles, and numerous other events which provide service to the local area and especially our parishes.”

Council #4863 currently boasts almost 300 members, but Bernie says more men involved would mean

that more could be accomplished. The Knights are a valuable organization and men are encouraged to consider membership. Knights are givers, not receivers. They are dedicated to making a difference and building a better future for many.

***If you would like more information, or to become a member of our Knights of Columbus Council, please contact Grand Knight Bernie Herickhoff at 320-333-7129 or Financial Secretary Dennis Boeckers at 320-351-5065.***

## The Odegards Reflect on a Lifetime of Faith and Stewardship *continued from front cover*

Merina says now that they're retired from farming, daily Mass and prayer are part of their routine.

“We go to Mass every morning and it doesn't seem like the day is complete unless you go to Mass,” she says. “Then we pray the Rosary at Mass. It's a central part of the day.”

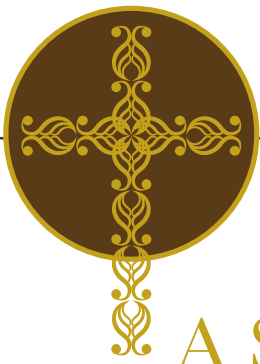
Married 60 years this past May, Vic and Merina raised nine children and have 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. In June, family members traveled from several states to help them celebrate. Central to their marriage has been a shared faith in God and a belief that communication with one another is highly important.

“I have not a clue how people who don't believe in God or have faith even keep going,” Merina says. “That has got to be your number-one staple.”

In thinking about the future at Our Lady of the Angels, Merina she hopes younger parishioners will step up to follow the example of their parents and older parishioners with one key idea always in mind.

“The center of it all is God,” she says. “Every time you call on Him, the answer comes pretty easy. So, we get it taken care of. It makes life a lot easier when you just relax and say ‘God will take care of it. It won't be in my time, it will be in His time.’”

***“There's a lot of things you do that you don't stop to think, ‘Oh, I'm doing something special.’ It's a way of life that we were very fortunate having good parents that taught us the respect and obedience.” – Merina Odegard***



## A Significant Moment in Our Prayer

### *The Presentation of the Gifts*

Occasionally, you might hear someone jokingly refer to “halftime” during Mass – the interval following the Prayers of the Faithful, as the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. It can be easy, even tempting, to zone out as you sit, waiting for the collection basket to make its way to your pew.

But if you pay attention, you’ll have the opportunity to enter into something deeper – a significant moment in our prayer.

It’s mentioned by St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, when describing the Mass in the second century, “Bread is brought up and wine and water...”

This practice, of people bringing up the gifts, has been part of our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. Although we might think of this action as being merely practical, in reality, it serves a much deeper spiritual purpose.

Each Sunday Mass, someone is chosen to bring forward “the gifts” – bread, wine, and in many cases, the collection of money that has been gathered moments before, from the generosity of the congregation. These gifts not only symbolize, but also in reality, are the work of human hands. The bread and wine are fruit of God’s creation, which, through the effort of human hands, are made into the gifts that we present to the Lord.

Certainly, the collection that is presented to the priest also serves to represent the work and sacrifices of the previous week. Sharing our monetary “treasures” is one of the ways that we embrace stewardship. It’s an opportunity to generously give back to the Lord, from the fruit of our work.

In his book *What Happens At Mass*, Jeremy Driscoll, OSB explains, “...We should not think of the collection of money at this point as some sort of banal, dirty but necessary affair. Money is our work. Money is hours of our lives. And now we give it away, we sacrifice it, for the work of the Church.”



In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul instructs Christians to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1).

The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the past week – as an offering and gift to God.

Those who bring forward the gifts each week have the privilege and responsibility of remembering what their action represents – that we are called to give generously of our time, talent and treasure to God, who gives us His very self, at Mass. And for those sitting in the pews, tempted to “check out” for a few minutes, seeing the gifts being brought forward should serve as a powerful reminder to offer our lives back to God, through serving and honoring Him.

So next week, don’t just sit back and wait for the “halftime show.” Come to Mass a few minutes early and approach an usher to ask if you and/or your family may bring up the gifts that week. Don’t be surprised if you start to notice a change in your heart and a desire to be even more generous with God in the coming week!

## In Times of Suffering and Tragedy, There is Faith and Love *Parishioner Lyn Beste Shares Her Story*

**“I** believe in the sun, even when it’s not shining. In love, even when I am alone. And in God, even when He is silent.”

Such reads the inscription, etched on a cell wall by a Jewish prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. The same words are framed on Lyn (Linda) Beste’s end table, serving as a reminder of God’s faithfulness in difficult times.

But Lyn didn’t always have that kind of faith. Born and raised Catholic, Lyn has always been a parishioner at St. Paul’s. And while she never doubted God’s existence, at one time, life circumstances began pulling her away from the faith. For a time, she and her husband, Jim, stopped attending Mass

“We had several tragedies in my husband’s family – and you start questioning your faith and God,” Lyn says. “Deep down inside in my soul, I always knew there was a God, but we were angry.”

Yet, one day, God started working on softening Lyn’s heart, as she met a friend who could also identify with the pain of family tragedy.

“We started talking about tragedies we’d been through and we started talking about God,” Lyn says. “It was like the grace of God opened these doors for me, and it was like, ‘I want to know God and I want to know my faith.’ All of a sudden, there was a desire and graces started coming. You always know God’s there, but now, I wanted to know him personally.”

From that time, something sparked in Lyn, and she couldn’t get enough. She and a group of friends



*Lyn Beste and her husband, Jim, recently celebrated the wedding of their son, Jamie (left) and daughter-in-law, Brandy, along with their son, Joshua (right).*

consecrated themselves to the Blessed Mother and she joined the Handmaids Ministry, supporting the priests and helping to encourage an awareness of the vocations of priesthood and religious life in our parish children. She also makes a priority of reading about her faith, learning about the lives of the saints, and discovering new things from watching EWTN.

“By learning more about your faith and understanding more about it, the closer you’ll get to God,” she says.

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***“I tell God, ‘It’s Your will and I accept it.’ I do have hard days. I have days when I get frightened and scared, thinking ahead, but I trust Him. I trust that He will take care of me, whether in this life or the next.” – Lyn Beste***



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## **Mass Schedule**

Saturday 4:00 p.m. - St. Paul's  
Saturday 5:00 p.m. - Our Lady of the Angels  
Saturday 8:00 p.m. - St. Paul's  
Sunday 8:00 a.m. - St. Paul's  
Sunday 8:30 a.m. - St. Alexius  
Sunday 10:00 a.m. - St. Paul's  
Sunday 10:30 a.m. - Our Lady of the Angels

## **Reconciliation Schedule**

Thursday 4:00 p.m. - St. Paul's  
Saturday 3:00 p.m. - St. Paul's  
Saturday 4:00 p.m. - Our Lady of the Angels  
Sunday 8:00 a.m. - St. Alexius

# Parishioner Lyn Beste

*continued from page 7*

In addition, Lyn and a group of friends gather each month to support each other in their faith, make short pilgrimages, and pray for one another.

"It's a wonderful group," she says. "We all love to talk about God. We share things that we've learned about our faith. God has become so important in my life now."

But tragedy would strike again, this time, even closer to home.

In January 2014, Lyn was diagnosed with breast cancer. But this suffering was different than the first. Not only had Lyn's faith and relationship with God grown, but she was also surrounded by friends who were walking alongside her.

"Prayer is so powerful," Lyn says. "I could feel the prayer."

Through a year of chemotherapy and 33 radiation treatments, Lyn's faith remained steadfast.

"My husband and I experienced these things that would happen, out of the blue – beautiful things that would happen and you knew it was from God," Lyn says. "It was like, God was saying, 'I am here, and I love you. Trust me.'"

"You think about your mortality," she adds. "You think, 'I may not make it through this and I have to prepare myself to go where I want to go, to be with God.'"

Lyn encourages others who may be going through difficult circumstances to remain close to God, rather than turn away from Him.

"We all have crosses to bear," she says. "I would just say prayer is powerful. Give your crosses to God, give them to Him and then trust. That's the start."

"I can't fathom going through the tragedies and illnesses without having God in my life," Lyn continues. "I can't imagine what it would be like for people who didn't have that faith."

That's not to say that it's always easy, but that, with God's help, Lyn is able to embrace, even the most difficult times.

"I tell God, 'It's Your will and I accept it,'" she says. "I do have hard days. I have days when I get frightened and scared, thinking ahead, but I trust Him. I trust that He will take care of me, whether in this life or the next."