



St. Alexius



Our Lady of the Angels



St. Paul's



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You’ve probably experienced the feeling – you walk into a room and know that you are welcome and loved. To be greeted and cared about by those around you, and to have a deep sense that this is where you belong is a special gift. Even more special when your parish becomes that place, like another home. And your fellow parishioners become those people – another family.

For Allan Hendricks, a parishioner at St. Alexius for the past three years, that’s exactly what happened. Allan grew up in Osakis and now lives in Alexandria. He remembers the first time he attended St. Alexius a few years ago.

“I went there for Christmas Eve Mass; that’s when I decided to join,” he says. “The church is beautiful inside at Christmas.”

It didn’t take long before Allan fell in love with the community, and found ways to get involved. He regularly attends the 8:30 a.m. Mass on Sundays and is an adult altar server and a lector. He is also involved with leading the Rosary before Mass begins.

“I love going to church,” Allan says. “I enjoy being involved in the church and doing things in the church.”

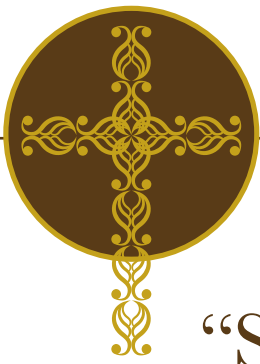


Allan Hendricks has been a member of St. Alexius for the past three years.

Although Allan was raised Catholic, it wasn’t until he joined St. Alexius that he found ways to truly become active. He says he has found being an active steward has made a tremendous impact in his life.

“My life has become better since becoming involved,” he says.

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Stewardship's "Supreme Teacher"

Following Christ's Example

Former President and Five-Star General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "You don't lead by hitting people over the head – that's assault, not leadership." President Eisenhower's words are both blunt and humorous, but he makes a great point. Almost any successful endeavor in life requires the benefit of strong leadership. And a truly effective leader does not lead by simply telling others what to do, but by providing a strong example of how to carry oneself on a daily basis.

This is no different for us in our lives as Catholic Christians. As individuals who face numerous difficult choices every day, we require a leader who, through word and example, can show us the path to living according to God's will. For us, Jesus is the supreme teacher of every aspect of Christian life, and His life as documented in the Gospels is a model that we should strive to imitate in living as good Christians. And as we have learned, stewardship – the sharing of the gifts that God has given to us – is a big part of Christian life, and one for which Jesus left many examples of successful living.

Jesus' nature of selfless service, documented many times throughout the New Testament and culminating with His death for our sins, is an underlying aspect of living the stewardship way of life. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops points out in its pastoral docu-

ment *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "In Jesus' teaching and life self-emptying is fundamental. Now, it might seem that self-emptying has little to do with stewardship, but in Jesus' case that is not so. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, he is filled with the Father's will, and he is fulfilled in just this way" (19).

Jesus points out to Peter in Mark's Gospel that this "self-emptying" requires sacrifice, but ultimately leads to "eternal life in the age to come" (Mk 10:30). But the Christian steward's ultimate reward is not his or her only benefit from living the stewardship way of life. By sharing of our time, talent, and treasure, and living in imitation of Christ, we can relate more closely to Him in sharing, in a small way, in His sacrifice. "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 21).

The next time you are frustrated or unsure of how to best respond to God's gifts in stewardship, take a moment to open up the Bible. Jesus may not "hit us over the head" in His leadership, but He does provide numerous examples through His actions and teachings of how to live as one of His disciples.



A Letter From Our Pastor

Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... *Now What?*

Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think



of stewardship as a question: “What is mine and what is God's?” The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

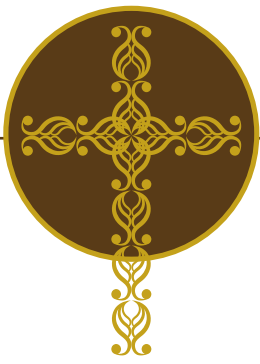
We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts.

Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

In our Father's hands,

Fr. Greg Paffel



Feeding the B

Irene Henry Reflects on Her Nearly 50

“He said to him a third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ ... and he said to him, ‘Lord,’

In the well-known Bible passage cited above, Jesus has revealed Himself to the disciples following His death and resurrection and, before leaving them once more, asks Simon Peter to feed His sheep. What He is asking of Peter does not involve a physical nourishment alone, but rather a spiritual one – Jesus is entrusting His disciple with the spiritual care of His people. Still today, when we give of our time and talent to provide someone with a meal in a time of spiritual need, we are following Christ’s call to help tend His sheep in a special way.

Here at St. Paul, Irene Henry has long tended to her fellow parishioners by acting as the Dinner Coordinator for the Christian Mothers funeral group and guild.

“I started my position as Dinner Coordinator in 1971,” Irene recalls. “I had been asked by the previous Coordinator, Elaine Meyer. I was very young and felt intimidated telling the older ladies what to do, but with the guidance of Elaine, Mary Minnette, and Mrs. Doege, I was able to learn the trade.”

At that time, the Dinner Ministry provided meals not only for funerals, but weddings and fundraisers as well, keeping Irene and the other women in the group very busy indeed!

“Coordinating the dinners entailed meeting with the families,



Irene Henry

deciding on a menu, ordering the groceries, setting the fee, and lining up ladies to cook and serve,” Irene says. “Sometimes, we had to cook for weddings at the city hall so they could serve liquor, and we would have to transport dishes and utensils that weren’t available there. So, it was really a three-day job.”

The group also cooked and served for the annual bazaar and the annual Opus Dei dinner, which raised funds for retiring priests in the diocese. One year, they served all the meals for a three-day Daughters of Isabella convention, and another year, they

provided food for the three-day Centennial celebration at the fairgrounds. Regular breakfast fundraisers were coordinated for the Religious Education program and the men’s St. Joseph Society.

While Irene was certainly quite busy in the role of Dinner Coordinator – in addition to the role of mother to four children at home! – she enjoyed giving back to the parish so much that she also continued to serve the parish in other ways, as well. These included volunteering in the Holy Family School library, working with the Confirmation

Body and Soul

Years as Dinner Coordinator at St. Paul

you know everything; you know that I love you.' [Jesus] said to him, 'Feed my sheep'” (Jn 21:17).

program, and helping to get the Prayer Chain Ministry started. Currently, she serves as a Rosary Leader in addition to continuing in the role of Dinner Coordinator.

Making service to the Church a priority is a value that has been a part of Irene's life since childhood.

“I grew up in a small town, and the church was the whole meaning of life, including your social world and everything,” she explains. “So, we automatically consider church the

center of our lives. We just grew up knowing it's our duty to serve.”

Today, the Dinner Ministry is smaller and has narrowed its focus to serving meals for funerals and parish-sponsored events, such as last month's Parish Mission. According to Irene, there is always a great need for more parishioners to get involved with this ministry, as many of the older members are no longer able to help out.

Having served as Dinner Coordinator for nearly fifty years, Irene knows

firsthand the rewards of giving of her time and talent in this special way.

“It's kind of a social event to get together with the ladies to prepare and serve the food,” she says. “And the people we serve are so thankful and grateful that we do this. It is very rewarding.”

What a beautiful way to give back to the Lord for all of our blessings received – by feeding His sheep with both the physical and spiritual nourishment of a meal prepared and served with love and care!

Allan Hendricks *continued from front cover*

“I enjoy the Mass more. I really love being at St. Alexius.”

He hopes to become an usher one day, as well.

Allan is grateful for the community that he's found in the parishioners, who welcome and accept him.

“The people at St. Alexius are very friendly people, we all get along well,” Allan says. “I know everybody in the church. I like all the people there, we all get along as a family.”

For Allan, becoming more involved in the parish has also helped him prioritize his relationship with God.

“I've got to have God in my life all the time, because he helps me make it through the week, from day to day,” says Allan, who works as a dishwasher at two restaurants in Alexandria. “I pray at night, I usually say a couple of Our Fathers and Hail Marys. Going to church has helped me be a better person.”

He encourages his fellow parishioners to become involved and find ways to serve and give back to the community.

“I like to do my stewardship as much as possible,” he says. “I like being with my people and going to church. It makes me feel good.”

“I've got to have God in my life all the time, because he helps me make it through the week, from day to day. I pray at night, I usually say a couple of Our Fathers and Hail Marys. Going to church has helped me be a better person.” – Allan Hendricks



Pope St. Pius X: A Modern Traditionalist

On Aug. 21, the Church commemorates the feast of a great saint – St. Pius X, the peasant boy who became the Vicar of Christ. St. Pius X is a wonderful saint for our times because he effectively and definitively worked for a balance between upholding the Tradition and Faith of the Church and adapting to the Modern Age.

St. Pius X – Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto – was born as one of eight children into an impoverished peasant family. He pursued God’s call on him to the priesthood from an early age. Even as a young priest, he possessed great personal and pastoral skills. In addition to his deep holiness and virtue, St. Pius had a passion for defending and preserving the truth of the faith, which he carried with him into his pontificate.

As pope, he gave as his motto: “*Instaurare Omnia in Christo*” – “to restore all things in Christ” – a mission proclaimed not a moment too soon.

Already in Europe, secular governments, social institutions, and the mass media were driving the faith out of public life and education, all the while upholding individual freedom – understood as unlimited license – as the ultimate good. Worst of all, these philosophies had made their way into the minds of many clergy and Catholic laity, who claimed that modern science had discredited many dogmas of the Church. They proposed a new Christianity based what they called the “religious experience,” a continually changing and evolving human experience that would in turn continually transform the meaning of Catholic teachings. The problem was that the new teachings proposed by these modernists contradicted the very foundations of the faith established by Jesus Christ.

Fortunately, the Holy Father saw through the modern theories immediately and exposed the false doctrines, all the while acting with extreme discretion and pastoral charity. Pope Pius X reminded us that God, the Author of



both faith and reason, and in Whom there is no contradiction, cannot allow science and true religion to contradict. Moreover, he declared that all the essential teachings of the Catholic faith and of Scripture could be defended rationally, and he encouraged the faithful to study the faith and read the Scriptures daily.

While Pius X spent much of his pontificate defending Catholic dogma from the threat of Modernism, he recognized the need for legitimate modern reforms within the Church. For instance, he initiated the codification of Canon Law, because the laws of the Church had little organization up to that time. He reformed the administrative offices of the Church. He also reformed the liturgical calendar, giving precedence back to the Sunday liturgies, which were too often being trumped by celebration of the daily saint’s feast. Pius X initiated a renewal in liturgical music, as well, bringing back Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony to their primary place within the liturgy.

Two of this saint’s most noted acts are reassigning the time of First Communion of children to the age of reason (about 7 years), and of advising and promoting daily Communion, saying, “Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to Heaven.”

“My hope is in Christ, Who strengthens the weakest by His Divine help. I can do all in Him who strengthens me. His Power is infinite, and if I lean on Him, it will be mine. His Wisdom is infinite, and if I look to Him for counsel, I shall not be deceived. His Goodness is infinite, and if my trust is stayed in Him, I shall not be abandoned.”

– Pope St. Pius X

Our Lady of the Angels' Alex Kowski Brought Closer to God Through Confirmation

A group of young people from Our Lady of the Angels Parish recently took a major step as young Catholics. With this step, Alex Kowski and his companions publicly committed to their Catholic faith with a renewed sense of Spirit-filled agency.

"Confirmation brought me closer to God, and now it is my job to carry on the teachings of the Church," Alex says. "I feel like God has higher expectations for me now."

On May 18, Alex took a pivotal step in his discipleship journey by receiving this Sacrament of Initiation.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Confirmation is the "completion of baptismal grace," for by Confirmation the baptized "are more perfectly bound to the Church...as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by work and deed" (1285).

Alex, a lifelong member of Our Lady of the Angels, will begin his senior year at Sauk Centre Secondary Schools this fall. Throughout his junior year, he prepared for Confirmation through prayer and faith formation classes with his peers.

"I asked God to help guide me through the journey," Alex says. "We had a religion class that met once a month. Through small-group discussions, I learned a lot about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and why Confirmation is so important."

An additional source of support for Alex was his Confirmation sponsor. Each individual preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation journeys alongside a sponsor who serves as an example for the confirmand and prays for him or her.

"My Confirmation sponsor, Jody Schirmers, was awesome!" Alex says. "She had so much knowledge and wisdom, and that helped me become more involved in the group."

Another way to prepare for Confirmation is through fostering a devotion to your patron saint. For Alex, his chosen Confirmation saint also brought him closer to his sponsor and her family, for he chose St. Timothy, after Jody's husband.



Alex Kowski at his Confirmation with Bishop Kettler

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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

Our Lady of the Angels' Alex Kowski *continued from page 7*

"Timothy is Jody's husband's name," Alex says. "Their family is like my second family. They are all loving and caring, and I wanted to tie them into the Confirmation experience, too."

As a newly confirmed Catholic, Alex feels convicted to share the teachings of the Church with others and to continue going faithfully to Mass, particularly to partake in the Liturgy of the Word.

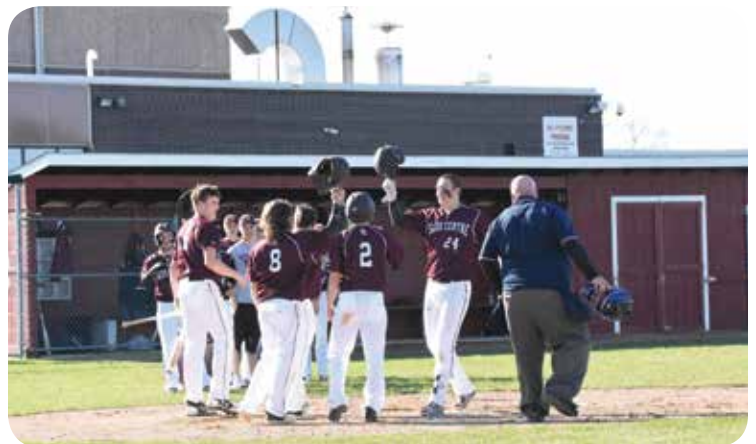
"It is important to listen to the readings because they give us lots of good information," Alex says.

After high school, Alex looks forward to attending college to study finance and to continue playing baseball, a talent that gives him an opportunity to be a role model for young athletes.

If he could offer any advice to other high school students preparing for Confirmation, for this essential discipleship step, Alex would tell them to "be not afraid."

"Don't be afraid of the unknown," Alex says. "Also don't be afraid of people who disagree with you. Not everyone will believe what you do, but it doesn't hurt to try and help them become closer to God."

"Don't be afraid of the unknown. Also don't be afraid of people who disagree with you. Not everyone will believe what you do, but it doesn't hurt to try and help them become closer to God." – Alex Kowski



Alex Kowski (24) with the Sauk Centre baseball team