



St. Alexius



Our Lady of the Angels



St. Paul's



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Sometimes, when we help others to grow in their faith, we find ourselves inspired in the process!

Such was the case for Cindy and Bill Bosl, who welcomed their great-nieces into their home. The community at Holy Family School came alongside the Bosls, opening its doors wide to Samantha, Tori and Cassandra Leitner.

The three sisters have been living in Sauk Centre with Aunt Cindy and Uncle Bill since February 2016. Since arriving, they’ve also found themselves becoming a part of another “family” at Holy Family School, and most importantly, the family of God.

Twelve-year-old Samantha is the oldest of the sisters, a science-loving and bracelet-making middle schooler whose favorite part of Holy Family is the teachers.

The second sister, Tori, is 11. She enjoys math and also “all the wonderful teachers” at Holy Family.

Kassandra is 9, and loves playing outside and seeing her friends at Holy Family School.

Aunt Cindy and Uncle Bill, along with Holy Family School, was the girls’ first exposure to the Catholic faith.

“Our faith is very important to us, so if they were to be part of our lives, they



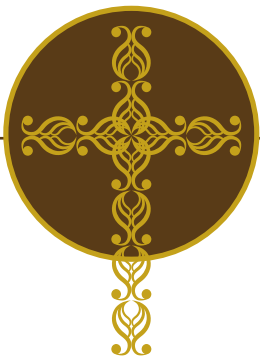
The three sisters first learned about the Catholic faith through their Aunt Cindy and Uncle Bill Bosl, and their experience at Holy Family School.



The girls are excited to be Catholic and to share God’s love with others.

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Getting to Know God: Meet the Leitner Sisters

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needed to learn about why we go to church and our actions in our church and our community,” Cindy says. “It’s not possible to live full, rich lives without God.”

“Before, I had no idea who God was,” says Samantha, who, along with her sisters, decided to be baptized, receive First Communion and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil, this past spring. “I wanted to be closer to God.”

“I didn’t have much faith because we really didn’t know who God was,” Tori says. “I’ve liked getting to know more about God, Jesus, Mary and the Bible.”

Kassandra feels “really good” about being part of the family of God.

“I like that I can receive Communion and that I know about God everyday,” she says.

The girls agree that the support of their guardians, along with the rest of the parish and school community, has made all the difference in the world for them.

“Aunt Cindy and Uncle Bill take us to church and taught us about God and helped us get ready to get baptized, First Communion and Confirmed,” Samantha says. “Thank you for helping me learn!”

“It makes me feel great that I am part of this family who helps me out,” Tori adds. “Thank you for believing in me and saying that I can accomplish these things.”

Samantha hopes to take the lessons she has learned from those who have helped her, and share them with others.

“I want to be someone who helps others in need and I hope to be a teacher,” she says.

“I hope to get people to believe more in God, and if they have little faith, help them to have more faith,” Tori says.



Cindy and Bill Bosl celebrated the Easter Vigil with their great-nieces, (from left) Samantha, Tori and Kassandra, becoming Catholic.

Kassandra, the youngest, has no intention of being left out on this mission.

“I want to be helping everyone I could and helping them to know more about God,” she says.

Aunt Cindy says there are many ways she has seen the girls grow since becoming involved in the faith.

“They help others without being asked and have become involved in our community,” she says. “They are growing every day in their faith and that’s nice to see.”

Samantha, Tori and Kassandra, the parish community and Holy Family are so glad you’ve joined us, and we look forward to seeing the big plans God has in store for you!

DON'T FORGET!

If you have not yet done so, please remember to turn in your commitment card and participate in our Annual Stewardship Renewal! Commitment cards can be returned to your parish office. This is a great opportunity to deepen your faith and recommit yourself to prayer, ministry involvement and offertory giving. Thank you for your “yes” to Our Lord and our parish!

A Letter From Our Pastor

“Here I Am, Lord.”

Dear Parishioners,

Throughout the Bible we hear people say, “Here I am, Lord,” or something similar. Normally, it is a response to a call from God. In the Book of Exodus, for example, it states, “God called out to him from the bush: ‘Moses! Moses!’ He answered, ‘Here I am’” (Exodus 3:4).

In the Church we too have each received a calling from God. We are called to be Disciples of Christ! That is what Jesus means in the gospels whenever he says, “Come follow me.” So if discipleship is our calling, then the best way to respond is to follow Jesus on the path of stewardship.

Of course, many people do not hear God’s call. They may not be listening or for some reason they might not want to hear it. All the same, that is not our response as Christians. Our response is one of open ears to hear whatever God wants to tell us.

This is the time of year we hold our Annual Stewardship Renewal. This is when I call you, on behalf of Jesus, to recommit yourself to God in prayer, ministry, and giving. And for those of you who par-



ticipate in the renewal process, you will quite literally receive a phone call to invite you to be more involved in your parish.

There are two basic things we should address. First, to hear the call, we need to be listening. If we toss our church mail to the side, ignore the phone because of caller id, or zone out during church - we will miss the call. But if we let ourselves be stretched for the Kingdom of God, by hearing the call of Jesus to make stewardship a way of life, then we will be accepting an avenue of grace indeed.

The second thing is how we respond to the call. Do we indeed say, “Here I am, Lord?” Or, do we choose to do nothing? Stewardship is a call to action. It is a call to do something: to grow in faith, to share with others, and to bless the church.

In the passage cited above Moses responded, “Who am I?” (Exodus 3:11) He felt unworthy and unable to fulfill his call from the Lord. But God’s answer means everything. He said to Moses, “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12). So trust me, even if you feel inadequate, God will be with you if you step out in faith and respond to his call.

As we enter this part of our calendar year, may we all be ready to listen for God, to respond to his call, and then do his will. You can be sure that the Lord is with us always! May you be strengthened and empowered to say “Here I am” as you hear Jesus’ call, “Come follow Me.”

In our Father’s hands,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Greg Paffel".

Fr. Greg Paffel
Pastor

So trust me, even if you feel inadequate, God will be with you if you step out in faith and respond to his call.



Here for the Ride Wi

We can have our lives planned and feel certain that we know exactly how it's all going to go. But no matter how many plans we make, God is the One who already has it all planned out.

"He's the one managing all the curves of life," Sue Rick says. "And all I need to do is sit back and enjoy the ride."

Sue's time at Our Lady of the Angels has certainly been filled with unexpected blessings and "bends in the road." Ten years ago, she never would have described herself as a "church lady" – as her husband lovingly refers to her – or have dreamed that she would one day become Our Lady of the Angels and St. Paul's Faith Formation secretary. In fact, her involvement at the parish began rather simply – with a mother's desire to form her children in the faith.

"When we moved up here, we had three kids, and the oldest two had previously been in a religious education program," Sue says. "So, when we came to Our Lady of the Angels, I was anxious to have their education continue, showing them that faith formation is really an ongoing thing. I contacted Kathy Knoblach to schedule a casual meeting where my kids could see where their religion classes would be. Soon after, I enrolled the kids in the program and everything just kind of naturally evolved from there."



The Rick family

Sue began volunteering with Vacation Bible School and also participating in her own formation opportunities by attending Bible studies. From there, she volunteered with the elementary Faith Formation daycare and became a Youth Group leader. She also signed up for a weekly holy hour at the Adoration Chapel and more recently started assisting with the Children's Liturgy of the Word program. In addition, she now serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. In these ways, Sue was able to grow in the faith with her children, having good discussions at home and modeling for them what it means to be a good steward.

"It really just started because my kids were in the program and I wanted them to see that the faith was important to me also," Sue says. "For me, being part of their religious education process is a big part of living out my own stewardship. I want my kids to grow up seeing me involved in the church and to see that the faith is something that isn't meant to be hidden or private. Our faith is meant to be lived and shared."

For Sue, these ministries are simply her way of living out the faith; her way of keeping faith at the "upper portion of the priority list" amidst all the hustle and bustle that comes with raising four children in modern-day society.

With God: Meet Sue Rick



Sue Rick completing some of her Faith Formation office work

“The more we can get involved, the more we are able to live out our faith,” Sue says. “When you ask me to think about the ministries I’m part of, I don’t even think about them as different ministries. To me, it’s just my way of keeping my faith an active part of my life – my way of being involved, which to me

goes hand in hand with the faith. And that involvement is what helps keep things in perspective. There is so much to be thankful for. God gives us so much, so how can we not want to give back?”

And as her giving has increased, so too have those unexpected blessings. Over the years, Sue has made

some wonderful friends – people who are “rock solid” and can always be turned to during times of sorrow or trouble. She has been blessed to come to know our parish priests on a personal level, calling them “friend” as well as “Father.” And best of all, she has witnessed the faith come alive in the hearts of her own children, laying the foundation that will strengthen them through the storms of life ahead.

“I truly feel like I’m the one who is benefitting much more than the church,” Sue says. “I love the Faith Formation program which allows all parish families to help instill the faith in their children while they are young. Then as they grow older, they might experience lulls in the faith, but if that foundation is laid, they’ll know where to turn when they hit that wall. I’m really honored to be part of this ministry. It’s funny how everything has evolved from a casual meeting. It’s been such an organic process where everything just felt right. I feel truly blessed.”

“The more we can get involved, the more we are able to live out our faith. When you ask me to think about the ministries I’m part of, I don’t even think about them as different ministries. To me, it’s just my way of keeping my faith an active part of my life – my way of being involved, which to me goes hand in hand with the faith. And that involvement is what helps keep things in perspective. There is so much to be thankful for. God gives us so much, so how can we not want to give back?” – Sue Rick



Good Stewardship of Our Social Media

When we are talking about the idea of stewardship and how we care for the tools and gifts we have been given, it is not often that we stop to have a conversation about how we are caring for and using the gift of social media to positively spread Gospel values. However, this is an appropriate topic for us to consider when we are talking about the many young people, as well as adults, who gather online on a frequent basis. Therefore, it is important for us to think about how we are using the amazing gifts of technology.

If you are frequently online – especially on Pinterest – there is a popular acronym that you may have already come across. While it is used in many different contexts, it seems very appropriate to follow as we find ourselves posting statuses and pictures on various social media sites. The acronym is T.H.I.N.K., and it invites us to consider what we are saying and sharing, and whether or not it should be said!

Is what we are posting:

True? Are we sharing factual information or a rumor that we heard, and if we think our information is factual, what is our source? Is it trustworthy?

Helpful? Is the information we are sharing something that can be useful to another person? We don't need to over-examine all of our content to consider its "educational factor," but is the content we are posting going to help someone learn about us, learn about a place or an activity, think about the world, reflect on life, engage us in laughter, and so forth?

Inspirational? There is certainly no requirement to be a poet or an artist, but social media has become a wonderful outlet for positive self-expression. "Positive" is the key word – are we posting to inspire others about the good in our world, or are we posting to cut someone down or to simply rant?

Nice? Have we considered the feelings of others when we include them in a status or post a picture of

them? Will they be embarrassed? Are we using social media to humiliate and intimidate others, or are we using it to try to better the world and the lives of others?

Kind? What a great tool to compliment, show gratitude, and build the self-esteem of those you care about!

People often speak of social media in a negative way because of the content they see posted. T.H.I.N.K. is a great way for us to remind ourselves that we can be good stewards of our own social media use. Remember that there are many ways to share the Gospel without writing out its words. Gospel living has to do with the positive way we approach this life and bring God's light and love to others – and it couldn't be easier than sharing an uplifting status on Facebook, a Tweet of gratitude to a friend, or a beautiful image of God's inspiring creation on Instagram. What a great way to build the Kingdom of God!



Tom and Carol Miller

“Give Glory and Honor to God by Sharing Your Talents”

Carol and Tom Miller were on a snowmobiling trip when they visited a small church that had a beautiful Rosary garden. It inspired Carol, who has always loved gardening, to use her talent for the faith community and begin the Rosary Garden at St. Alexius.

“I was called to do it, and believe that we should give glory and honor to God by sharing the talents that He gave us,” Carol says. “We feel that we try to live a life of service to God and His Church. If you put His concerns first, He’ll take care of you.”

Carol and Tom were married on Sept. 15, 1979, at St. Alexius, the parish within which Tom was raised and received all his sacraments. They have been active members of the community since the fall of 1992, when they moved back to the area and to Tom’s family’s farm.

“We have always had our Catholic faith, and it grew over time, especially when we started praying together as a couple every night,” Carol says. “Faith in God is the most important thing in life. It gets you through the hard times.”

Carol and Tom have four adult children – Nick, Gabe, Alex, and Missy – and Carol first became active in parish life when she was invited to join Christian Mothers. Shortly thereafter, she became an officer in the group and then the president.

“One of the concerns of the Christian Mothers is the faith formation of our children,” Carol says. “When they needed teachers, I volunteered and taught catechism for a few years and then became the coordinator for the program.”

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“We have always had our Catholic faith, and it grew over time, especially when we started praying together as a couple every night. Faith in God is the most important thing in life. It gets you through the hard times.” – Carol Miller



Tom and Carol Miller



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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

Tom and Carol Miller *continued from page 7*

Carol was also appointed to start a Vacation Bible School at the parish. Now, she is a substitute catechists for the Religious Education program.

"We always tried to show our faith to our children and to keep Sunday as a family day," Carol says. "In the teaching of the children, you have to take time to study the Bible and its lessons, and you grow in your own faith. It is such a blessing."

Over the years, Tom has served on the Parish Council, which taught him more about the many needs of the parish.

"You get to know your parish by participating in it," Tom says. "Events like the Sausage Supper are a good time to get together with other parishioners and work side by side."

Today, Carol is the coordinator of the Sausage Supper and serves with the church's decorating committee.

Tom is currently involved in the St. Joseph Society, and he serves as one the two trustees who help advise Father on parish matters. For example, recently Father and the trustees discussed how to best use the parish house, where the clergy used to reside, for the parish's current ministries and needs.

"We think that people should pray and ask God which of the talents can be used for Him and His church," Carol says. "Sign up at the Stewardship Fair. There is always someone there to help you."

Carol and Tom encourage everyone to discern how to give back to the community and to get to know the other members of our welcoming and vibrant parish family.

"It is a parish family, and all are welcome here at St. Alexius," Carol says. "Say 'yes' when you're asked to participate and watch for ways to use your talents."



The Rosary Garden at St. Alexius Church

