



*St. Alexius*



*Our Lady of the Angels*



*St. Paul's*



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## “A Reason to Get up Each Day”: *Anna Mae Deters Finds Fulfillment in Service*

**F**ifteen years ago, parishioner Anna Mae Deters began serving in a ministry that has since become a central part of her daily life – the Foster Grandparent program at Holy Family School. Following the passing of her husband, Anna Mae was looking for something meaningful to help fill her days. As a mother of five children (Karen, Gary, Don, Julie, and Tim), grandmother of 12 and great-grandmother of 16 — and counting! — Anna Mae has always had a deep love of children. So, when she began volunteering at Holy Family School as a “foster grandma,” she knew she had landed in just the right place!

Holy Family School currently has four foster grandmas serving their students. These foster grandparents spend all day in the classrooms, working one-on-one with children on reading, math and other subjects. Just as important as the academic help that foster grandparents offer is the extra social and emotional support that they provide these young children.

Indeed, Anna Mae views her role as a foster grandma to be more than that of a strictly instructional aide.

“I encourage children to do their best and have positive attitudes, more [confidence in their] ability to learn and more willingness to participate,” Anna Mae says. “They also develop a deeper respect for adults and peers. I listen to them and their stories, and they feel very comfortable and at ease with me.”



*Anna Mae Deters helping in a classroom as a “foster grandparent” at Holy Family School*

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## *Stewardship*

# Becoming Fishers of Men

Whether you hold a high-profile position, such as parish council president, or have more of a behind-the-scenes role as a coordinator of a parish ministry, God has called you – as a parish leader – to help build His Church.

This challenge is just as important as the call of any other Catholic leader, including the earliest disciples.

When Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He urged a group of fishermen, “Come follow me.” Jesus promised if they laid down their nets and followed Him, He would make them fishers of men. These men were among His original disciples, and they knew Christ’s call was so important that they left their secular occupation to follow Him.

Just as He did with the fishermen, Jesus calls each of us today. He is not necessarily asking us to leave our secular careers, but He is asking us to put Him first in our lives and to share His message of love with others.

God truly wants us to serve Him and to build His Church through the secular occupations we have chosen. It is through the Church that new disciples are born, and it is in the Church that disciples continue to mature. Forming disciples of Christ is the most important work that can be done on earth, and each of us has been called to play an active role in this work.

So, how do we go about building the Church? Where do we find the plans?

Some people mistakenly think that building the Church – in particular, building our own parish or diocese – is no different than building a successful business. Indeed, the purpose of building the Church is to change hearts – a goal that only God can accomplish.

Secular society has not prepared us for this work. However, the Holy Spirit – sometimes referred to as the “Architect of the Church” – has the plan. In order to implement this plan, we must become good listeners. We must open ourselves to the workings of the Holy Spirit as He transforms us and guides us to carry out God’s work and to serve as His instruments on earth, building the Church together with Him.

This is where spiritual exercises, such as retreats, come into play. A retreat offers the individual an opportunity to spend time alone with the Lord, allowing God to draw the person deeper into the mystery of who He is, who we are and what He is doing in our lives. Stewardship retreats can offer parish leaders the opportunity each year to spend time with the Lord as He directs them in the ways of discipleship. As leaders, we must take time to meditate on the Scriptures and allow Jesus to open up His Word to us. Then, as we grow deeper in our understanding of what God wants of us, we can exclaim, just as the first disciples did on the road to Emmaus, “Our hearts are burning within us” (Lk 24:32).

God has placed an extremely important call on the lives of all parish leaders, no matter how big or small the role. It is vital to understand how we, as parish leaders, can best answer His call. What, in particular, is the Lord calling each one of us to do? He most likely is not asking us to drop our nets, but to pick them up and become “fishers of men.” We must discern how we can most effectively cast our nets for Him.



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# Reflections at the End of the Year

Dear Parishioners,

It seems as if we just finished Lent and Easter, and here we are at Advent and Christmas. To say this is a busy month for many is an understatement. Although December is a month of love, it can also be a difficult month for some. For those with families, it may be a month of travel as people rush to be united with loved ones, sometimes after a long period of separation.

There is no shortage of reminders as to what time of year this is. However, for us as Catholics, we may need to refocus to see where we are in our faith lives. Were you aware that for us, December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception? In that regard, we celebrate a Holy Day of Obligation on Friday, Dec. 8. Advent begins on Dec. 3, and you may notice that we begin to wear purple as a sign of Advent. That color changes to white or gold beginning at Christmas.

Of course, this is also the last month of the regular calendar year, which may add additional tasks to our own schedules as we finalize things



for the end of the year. However, there are many opportunities for us during this month to share, to pray and to celebrate in a Christian way, and I would encourage you to make an effort to be part of these. Right here in our parish, much is happening along those lines, and a careful reading of the bulletin will alert you to the “when, where and what” of these upcoming opportunities.

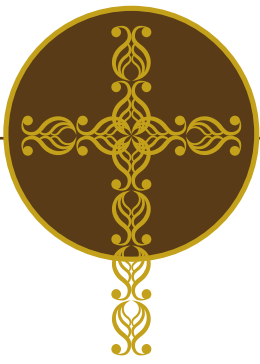
As I indicated earlier, this can also be a difficult time for some. In the midst of our own celebrations and joy, we need to be aware of that reality and of those living with it. This is a time to reach out, and it is a time to show love.

This December, let our minds be focused on Christ, Who will be born for us at Christmas, and for Whose coming we must always be prepared throughout the year. This is a time to thank God and to pray. It is a time to reach out to love and live peacefully with one another. We need to remember that life continues after December, in spite of everything we feel we need to get done.

My prayers and blessings go out to each of you and your families. May God continue to watch over you. May the year 2017 end well for all of us!

In our Father's hands,

Fr. Greg Paffel



## Rowing to Shore, Or *Meet St. Paul Parish*

There is a famous sailor's proverb that says, "Pray to God, but row to shore." Similarly, St. Augustine is famous for having said, "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." To St. Paul parishioner Abby Henderson, these two quotes perfectly explain what stewardship is truly about. For us Catholics, we aren't meant to simply remain on the sidelines, passively observing worship each Sunday. Faith is a relationship — a relationship that requires continuous action on our part as we draw closer to Christ.

"To me, stewardship is about being active in your faith community," Abby says. "It's about doing more than simply going to church and going through the motions. It's about being proactive and putting yourself out there for different experiences within our faith."

Abby's life of stewardship is certainly not limited to her involvement in our parish community. As a Registered Nurse, she is blessed to administer to her patients both physically and emotionally, often drawing strength from their resilience and courage. Abby is also actively involved in the lives of her extended family, recently serving as a Confirmation sponsor to a younger cousin, and in mid-November, donating a kidney to her 20-year-



*The Henderson family – (from left) Sammy (5), Abby, Haddie (3), and Scott.*

old cousin. After being identified as a match for the kidney transplant, Abby saw this as just another way to live out stewardship, sharing what she has with others.

"There are so many people in life that say, 'Oh someone else will do it,'" she says. "But if we all say that, how can we improve our lives for the better? So when I was a match for Richard, I thought how could I not do this for him?"

As she strives to live out stewardship in every aspect of life, Abby knows firsthand the dangers of a "going through the motions" kind of faith. As a girl, she was blessed

to have been raised in a Catholic family and even to have attended Holy Family School through sixth grade. She was confirmed with her classmates in high school and remained an active participant in the youth group.

"Although I participated in a lot of faith-based things, it wasn't for particularly spiritual reasons, but more because that's what my friends were doing," she says.

So, like many young people, her faith lapsed as she transitioned into the college and early young adult years. This changed after getting married and becoming pregnant

## One Service at a Time: Pioneer Abby Henderson



*Abby Henderson and her cousin, Richard, to whom she is donating a kidney.*

with her son. Suddenly faced with the awe-inspiring role of parenthood, she knew that she wanted to raise her children in the faith.

“I knew that we needed something more for our family,” Abby says. “We were living in Denver at the time and we found a really

beautiful church that was so welcoming.”

Now back in her hometown surrounded by family and childhood friends, Abby feels blessed to continue active involvement in her faith, seeking always to become that example to her two young children.

One way that this has taken form is through Abby’s involvement in the Baptismal Preparation classes. Remembering her own experience, Abby sees this ministry as a unique opportunity to minister to parents and godparents while preparing them for their role in this important sacrament.

“For some of these families, this sacrament is bringing the families back into the Church,” Abby says. “It’s a great way to get them to plug into the support of the faith community.”

Abby also enjoys volunteering for youth-related ministries such as Children’s Liturgy of the Word and Vacation Bible School. For her, this is a unique opportunity to grow in the faith with her children, while also modeling stewardship for them. She also serves regularly as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

As Abby continues “rowing to shore” to the best of her ability, she is giving her all to God and her “amazing village” of helpers.

***“To me, stewardship is about being active in your faith community. It’s about doing more than simply going to church and going through the motions. It’s about being proactive and putting yourself out there for different experiences within our faith.” — Abby Henderson***



# Christmas Doesn't End on December 25

## *Feast of the Holy Family*

It is Dec. 26, and we've celebrated Christmas. We have already opened all of our gifts and practiced all of our favorite Christmas traditions.

What do we do now?

The Christmas season is far from over. The octave of Christmas has, in fact, just begun. The Holy Solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord, on Christmas Day, is directly followed by the Feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth, which occurs this year on Sunday, Dec. 31.

Following Jesus' birth in the stable, Mary and Joseph were now charged with a great responsibility. Their home would be the place where our Lord grew up! Do you ever stop and think about what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph to raise the Savior of the Universe? They changed His diapers, fed Him, and helped Him learn to walk. No doubt, Joseph taught Jesus how to safely work a saw, and Mary probably helped Him mend His clothes. This puts all of our parenting duties into perspective. Can you imagine caring for our Lord as He was a vulnerable and helpless child? Regarding the Holy Family in this way gives us a newfound appreciation for family life – with all of its trials and triumphs.

Though little is known about Jesus' early years, we know He grew up just like any human child, and that Mary and Joseph were chosen to parent Him. The Lord chose the family as the place for His birth and His growth, thereby sanctifying the fundamental institution of society. From then on, the family was much more than just a group of people living together.



er. Indeed, the Holy Family is the example of how all Christian families are called to be small domestic churches. And as with the humble home of Nazareth, the family is an authentic school of the Gospel, wherein we live our faith on a daily basis. Pope St. John Paul II explained that “recollection and prayer, mutual understanding and respect, personal discipline and community asceticism and a spirit of sacrifice, work and solidarity are typical features that make the family of Nazareth a model for every home.”

As Christian families, we must follow the example of the Holy Family, and be lights to shine the Truth in the midst

of what is sometimes a dark world. Through their humble existence, Jesus, Mary and Joseph remained united to one another and to the Father, working always to remain close to Him and to show His love to the world. So also must we do. As Christians, we are called to show the world “convincingly that it is possible to live marriage fully in keeping with God's plan and with the true good of the human person – of the spouses, and of the children who are more fragile” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 47). Then, amidst all of the spilled milk and temper tantrums, all of the birthdays, graduations and marriages, we will serve as a sign of God Himself – three persons united in love!

May Jesus, Mary and Joseph bless and protect all families so that they will extol the peace, joy, justice, and love that the newborn Christ has given us as a gift to all of humanity!

## Blake Rousslang Serves as Stewardship Example Through Involvement in Faith and Community

Our communities of faith — St. Alexius, Our Lady of the Angels and St. Paul — are blessed with some wonderful stewards, and in particular parishioners who provide us with a model of stewardship. Included in that group is Blake Rousslang. Currently a ninth-grader at Osakis High School, Blake is an active parishioner at St. Alexius, where he is an altar server and is involved with the Youth in Action Youth Group. In addition, he attended the Band of Brothers program in Avon this past summer.

Blake is an excellent example of young people who have embraced their faith and seek to learn more.

“In my life I have learned a lot about God, how to involve God in all I do,” he says. “I have served at Mass since I was in fifth grade. I feel closer to God when I do it, and it has brought me closer to Christ. It also makes me feel good about what I do in the church.”

The eldest of four children, Blake has a sister and two brothers — Grace, Luke and Matthew. As involved as he is in his church and his faith, he is also very engaged at his high school and in his community. He played football this year on the freshman team (he is a tackle), and he intends to participate in competitive archery in the winter and baseball in the spring.

“I pray a lot,” Blake says. “I try to concentrate on what my faith means when I pray to God. I ask Him to help me believe in myself and those around me. I know I have a lot to learn about my relationship to God, certainly more than I know right now. My involvement as an altar server, and in Youth Group and faith formation really has brought me much closer to Christ in so many ways.”

For Blake, participation in Band of Brothers last summer was particularly impactful. “It was fun and it did help me to learn how to make God a part of everything I do,” he says.

Band of Brothers is a program under the auspices of the Central Minnesota Youth for Christ in Avon. The program’s desire is for each young person to depart the program saying, “I mattered to these people. They listened to me. I want to come back!” Blake is a great example of how they enable teens to develop a healthy and balanced lifestyle — mentally, socially, physically, and spiritually.

“I am still learning, as I guess all of us are,” Blake says of living out stewardship. “I do know that the Lord has called me to do something, but I am still trying to figure out exactly what that may be.”

Our parish communities extend our gratitude to young parishioners like Blake, who offer us so many wonderful examples of intentional stewardship in their lives!



*Blake Rousslang serving at the altar*



*Blake Rousslang*



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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

## **Anna Mae Deters Finds Fulfillment in Service** *continued from front cover*

Throughout her years volunteering as a foster grandma, Anna Mae has found it deeply rewarding to see the children get excited about learning new things, demonstrate increased responsibility, and take on leadership roles in the classroom. She finds herself continually amazed at the progress of the students she has the privilege of serving.

Although she is the one giving of her time and talent in the Foster Grandparent program, Anna Mae feels that she receives so much in return.

“Volunteering at Holy Family School is a blessing for me,” she says. “The children are so loveable and they just make you smile. I love people and I like to be busy. In the Foster Grandparent program, I have found great fulfillment, meaning and purpose in my life. It helps me

to stay active, see new faces, and learn with the children. It’s a reason to get up each day.”

In addition to living out stewardship through service, Anna Mae also daily maintains an active prayer life. She devotes time to prayer while walking, driving in the car, spending an hour of prayerful thanksgiving each week in the chapel, and regularly attending the First Friday and Saturday Masses.

Thankful for the blessings she has found in serving the children at Holy Family, Anna Mae plans on continuing to fill the role of foster grandparent for as long as she is able!

“Working at Holy Family School has made my faith deeper,” Anna Mae affirms. “I will continue to work as a foster grandma as long as I am blessed with good health — I leave it up to the One above.”

***“Volunteering at Holy Family School is a blessing for me. The children are so loveable and they just make you smile. I love people and I like to be busy. In the Foster Grandparent program, I have found great fulfillment, meaning and purpose in my life. It helps me to stay active, see new faces, and learn with the children. It’s a reason to get up each day.” – Anna Mae Deters***