



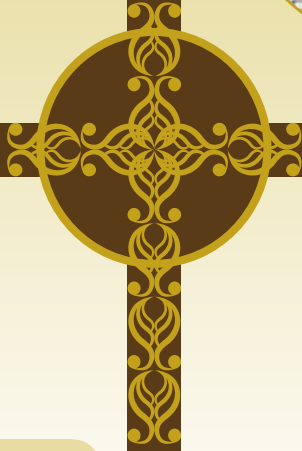
St. Alexius



Our Lady of the Angels



St. Paul's



A Legacy of Service Meet Varina Drevlow

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There are all sorts of things that often run in families. From physical traits, to career paths, to funny habits or quirks, some things just get passed from one generation to the next. For St. Paul's parishioner Varina Drevlow, the legacy of service is what is being passed along.

“It was instilled from day one by my parents, to always be looking for ways you can be helpful to other people and not always looking for a reward,” says Varina, who was raised Catholic. “My mom was part of Christian Mothers when I was younger, and I knew I needed to find a stewardship opportunity that I'd be interested in.”

Originally hailing from Grey Eagle, Minn., Varina joined St. Paul's after moving to the area seven years ago. She joined the Holy Family School staff this year as office assistant and Central Supply Coordinator.

Varina's husband, John, is a faithful Lutheran, and it's important to both of them that their four sons, ages 6 through 11, are raised to know the importance of practicing their faith.

“We want to make sure that they understand that it's important to take that little bit of time each week to thank God for what they have and to ask Him to help



Varina Drevlow and her family are strong believers in the importance of giving back to their parish community.

them,” Varina says. “[I don't want my kids] just going through the motions and saying, ‘Well, that's what we're supposed to do because we're Catholic.’ I want them to think that it's something they wanted to do and their parents wanted to do, even if they don't fully understand it now.”

Along with attending Mass and faith formation classes each, Varina and John hope to instill the important role that service plays in the life of a Christian. Knowing that example is often the best teacher, Varina is involved in the parish in a number of ways,

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THE SPIRITUALITY OF STEWARDSHIP

Following in the Footsteps of the Saints

The word “stewardship” has long carried with it the association of a financial obligation to the Church. Many believe that stewardship means “giving my time and money to the Church in support of its work, lest it is unable to survive and thrive.”

Indeed, stewardship does often require sacrifice of some kind. But the reality is that stewardship is not simply a guilt-laden obligation, or a “bill.” Nor is stewardship in any way comparable to a tax payment or a charitable networking opportunity at work. Instead, stewardship is a spiritual way of life – an active response to Christ’s invitation to unreservedly “come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19).

Stewardship is about how we respond to God’s call to discipleship, and there are many different ways we can respond to His call. We can, in turn, live the stewardship way of life simply by making small choices in our daily lives, under normal, everyday circumstances.

Nowhere in Christian history is there a more archetypal example of the variety of ways we can respond to God’s call, than in the lives of the saints. The saints represent a wide cross-section of individuals – old and young, rich and poor – living in different times in human history. Some were called to the religious life, focusing their lives on spirituality and material simplicity through prayer, and helping to form the tenets of faith. Others were individuals focused on charitable outreach, dedicating their whole lives to feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Still, others faced great adversity and challenges to their faith, and ultimately suffered death and martyrdom in loyalty to Christ and His Church.

However, the commonality that all of these individuals share is that they responded to God’s call to discipleship by utilizing the unique talents that God had given them. They did so in ways that were conducive to their individual personalities, and that actively influenced the circumstances presented to them in their respective days and times. Contemplative spirituality, charitable giving, great courage – all of these roads have led to canonization and, ultimately, eternal life with God in His glory. We are all called to do the same.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, “The challenge, then, is to understand our role – our vocation – and to respond generously to this call from God” (43). When thinking about the spirituality of stewardship, take some time to discern your talents, and how you can best respond to God’s call by naturally and effectively using the gifts He has given you. If you are a gregarious person, this might mean reaching out to a coworker you don’t know very well, thus helping to create a hospitable work environment. If you are an individual who is often “on the go,” perhaps this means praying the Rosary while you are driving from place to place. If you have recently experienced a financial windfall or unexpected increase in income, this might mean sponsoring a little league team in your community by paying for their uniforms.

God has provided many roads to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in the saints, we see examples of the many roads that have been taken. Choosing the one that is best for us means that we can live stewardship as a spiritual practice and a way of life, and that we may answer His call to discipleship.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Preparing for Our Lenten Journey and Prioritizing the Gift of Time

Dear Parishioners,

Lent begins on Wednesday, Feb. 14, Ash Wednesday. Most of us are aware that Lent is a time of prayer, penance and giving alms. So, it would seem that Lent is a perfect time for stewardship. As we examine our lives and try to find ways to deepen our relationship with God, it is good to remember that whenever we give our time, talent, or treasure, we are living as better stewards.

For each of us, our relationship with God should be the first priority. God has given us the precious gift of time, so we need to thank Him for this gift by using it wisely. Stewardship of time is about how we spend every minute of every day. Most of us probably feel that we do not have enough time for all the things we hope to accomplish or achieve. However, each of us is given the same amount of time — 24 hours in a day, seven days in a week. So, how do we choose to use our time? We need to prioritize this gift of time, which means putting the most important things first.

If deepening our relationship with God is our first priority, then time spent in prayer, at Mass, in our personal lives through reading Holy Scriptures, and meditating on



God's Holy Word should be paramount. Our second priority might be our relationship to our family. We need to spend time building a strong family unit filled with respect and love for life. And perhaps our third priority should be our relationship with our parish and our community of faith. Finally, we must spend time supporting others in their faith journeys and ministering to those in need.

We must remember that first requirement for our Lenten journey — prayer. Our Catholic faith

is full of prayer forms and traditions that are available to us all. Find a prayer form that works for you, and truly cultivate your prayer life in order to connect and build a real, personal relationship with the Lord. We all need to carve out time during Lent by dedicating time to prayer. Perhaps it is only 15 minutes each day for quiet reflection on Holy Scripture. Or it may be something more substantial — perhaps a reflective weekend retreat.

We might consider Lent our own personal Stewardship Renewal season. Fasting, prayer and almsgiving should be what we try to do the entire year. But we must make an intentional effort to practice these during the 40 days of Lent. After all, 40 days comprises just over 10 percent of the year — and that is remarkably close to our stewardship tithe of 10 percent, isn't it?

God bless you in all you do, and especially during this holy time of Lent.

In our Father's hands,

Fr. Greg Paffel

Oremus: Join an eight-week study on consecutive Thursdays, 7-8 p.m. at St. Paul's. Beginning Feb. 1, watch a 30-minute video followed by 30 minutes of personal prayer. No need to pre-register — just come the first night at 6:30 to buy an optional \$10 book. Or supply an email address to access the online videos! Bring a friend and this Lent recommit yourself to prayer!



April Marthaler Hopes to Le

In his first letter to Timothy, a young Christian, St. Paul urges his friend to remain steadfast in the faith and to remember that, despite his youth, he is a living example of Christ's love to everyone he meets: "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:12). These words of advice ring just as true today, as our Church looks to its young members to play an active role in bringing the light of Christ into the world.

St. Alexius parishioner April Marthaler, a 10th-grader at Sauk Centre Public High School, certainly serves as a positive role model in the faith for others. It all begins in the home with her younger siblings. As the oldest child in her family, April realizes that her two brothers and sister copy a lot of what she does. She feels that providing a strong example of the faith for them — the way her parents have always done for her — is important.

April's positive influence extends beyond the home with her participation in parish ministries focused on making the Catholic faith come alive for our youngest parishioners.

"Every other month, I help with the Children's Liturgy," April says. "During Mass, we take the children down for a short summary of the Gospel. It's fun teaching the children and helping them understand the readings. I also helped with the Bible school in the summer. It's just really fun working with the kids."

In addition to helping with the children's ministries, April is always looking for other ways to enrich her faith life. Last November, April attended the NCYC — National Catholic Youth Conference — in Indianapolis with a group of 19 local students and five adult chaperones. With over 25,000 high school students from around the country in attendance, the conference was an experience April will never forget.

"It was really cool to see so many people come together," she says. "One of the best parts had to be the closing Mass. Also, they had a lot of inspirational speakers there that shared their stories of how God helped them get more into their faith. Then you could



April Marthaler.

break off into groups to share, and I really enjoyed that. I feel like it definitely helps me understand things better and makes me want to make my faith stronger."

Returning to Sauk Centre after the NCYC, April is bringing her newly energized faith back to the St. Alexius and St. Paul's Youth Group meetings. She greatly enjoys being a part of these two youth groups, and hopes that all parish teenagers will consider participating in this fun and fruitful ministry.

And does April have any advice to offer her peers who may wonder about joining Youth Group?

"Definitely don't hold back, even if you're a quiet person like me," she says. "In Youth Group, you can really open up because there are kids your age that share your beliefs and are there for the same reasons. So, be open to new things, have fun and explore your options!"

Lead Fellow Youth By Example

April is thankful for the example of her own parents, Jason and Angi, who have given her a strong foundation and encouragement in the Catholic faith. Even as she strives today to live as a true model of Christ's love, she also looks forward to helping future generations discover the peace and joy of a faith-filled life.

For April, the rewards of actively seeking ways to walk closer to the Lord are clear.

"It's good to strengthen your faith so that it's always there when you need it," she affirms. "Then, no matter what — even when something goes wrong — God is always there for you, and your faith is always there for you."



April Marthaler enjoyed attending the NCCYC (National Catholic Youth Conference) in Indianapolis last November.

Meet Varina Drevlow *continued from front cover*

from doing paperwork for the children's faith formation program, to serving on the new Welcome Committee, and putting together welcome packets for new members.

"I always said, 'When my kids get older, that's when I need to start doing my part,'" Varina says. "I think volunteering is teaching my kids that it's important to take time to do that kind of stuff because, without volunteers, a lot of things won't actually happen."

Varina has also found that becoming more involved, especially in her role at the school, has strengthened her faith.

"[Working at the school] has given me that opportunity to learn more," she says. "Being around the teachers and the other staff and seeing how much

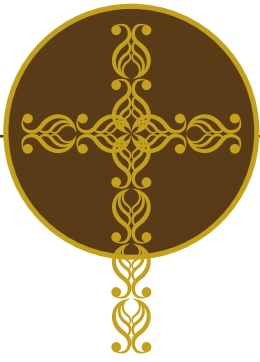
they focus on prayer has really changed my mindset because I think about it more during the day. I feel God was saying, 'This is where you're meant to be.' And now, He is opening doors for me to look at my religion a little differently. I think surrounding yourself by people who also think faith is important helps."

Varina encourages parishioners, who want to feel more connected, to find ways to give back.

"Join one of the committees and really start getting involved," she says. "You meet different people, you get to know different people, and I just think anywhere that you put yourself out there, you're going to build new relationships. I think that's important."

Thank you, Varina, for your generous service and example!

"Join one of the committees and really start getting involved. You meet different people, you get to know different people, and I just think anywhere that you put yourself out there, you're going to build new relationships. I think that's important." — Varina Drevlow



“Transformed by the Sacred Liturgy”

The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery

In a limited way, the liturgy can be compared to a story or a film – upon a first reading or viewing, we might understand the basic outline of the narrative, yet through every subsequent encounter, the story further unfolds before us, becoming richer and more complex.

Often, inquisitive children teach us about how to understand a story or the Mass. As a child inquires about the priest’s green vestments, the meaning of ashes or the presence of statues, we might pause to recall the symbolism undergirding the rich rituals of the liturgy.

There is a sense of the sacred in the liturgy, but its rituals and ceremonies can appear as empty pantomimes when divorced from their meaning. Far from empty signs, the liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery, of Christ’s passion, death, resurrection and glorification by which He “accomplished the work of our salvation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1067).

From the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning public service or worship, liturgy in the Christian tradition refers to the communal participation of the people in the work of God, and God is always present and at work in the liturgy, acting in and with the Church through the sacraments.

Annually, the Church’s liturgical year is structured around the Paschal mystery, which we observe every Sunday. We begin each year with a season of anticipating Christ’s birth, and following a celebration of Christ’s Incarnation, we gradually enter a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum, for His passion, death and Resurrection. The year closes with a period of ordinary time – a time to grow in our faith and in living out the Gospel.

Daily, the Liturgy of the Hours unifies the Church Militant in prayers said by the clergy and increasingly by the laity. As the liturgical calendar structures our year, the Liturgy of the Hours structures our day, offering us an opportunity to consecrate each present moment to Christ.

Ultimately, the liturgical life of the Church “revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments” (CCC 1113), for we receive God’s grace to fortify us in our spiritual lives and as His disciples through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Mass.



The Mass nurtures us spiritually, inviting us to reflect on the Paschal mystery and to lift our hearts to God as individuals and a community through spoken and sung prayer.

The Mass moves us corporeally, drawing us to sit as we listen to the Word, to stand as we unanimously profess our faith, and to kneel as the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass inspires us apostolically, sending us out to proclaim the Gospel and to share Christ with our brothers and sisters.

Though the “source and center” of all prayer, the liturgy and a sense of the sacred has, in some ways, become marginalized in the American Church. Once robust parishes are seeking to rebuild, but they frequently overlook the connection between the empty pews and the decentralization of the liturgy, which was underscored by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

“I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is, to a large extent, due to the disintegration of the liturgy,” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his autobiography *Milestones*.

Something in the simplicity of the child’s experience of the liturgy teaches us to return to what we might call the basics of the faith – meaning a love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the rituals of the Church. Only through the liturgy are we nurtured on our stewardship journey and inspired to proclaim the Gospel.

As Archbishop Alexander Sample from the Diocese of Portland, Ore., writes, “If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture.”

St. Paul's Cindy and Mike Karasch Embrace the Journey of Stewardship

Much like everything else in life, our stewardship calling is a journey. It grows and evolves with us as we move through life's various stages, finding new means of expression and opportunities to bless us. This has certainly been the case for parishioner Cindy Karasch, who has been part of our St. Paul's parish community since she was 5 years old. Although life has included many ups and downs, her faith has remained a constant source of comfort and support thanks in large part to her continual involvement here within the parish.

"I see stewardship as part of my faith journey. The more active and involved I've become with parish activities and ministries, the more I've grown in my faith. I've been able to meet other people growing in that faith and are supporting and helping me in my journey process," Cindy says.

At the top of that list of support, adds Cindy, is her husband, Mike. He remains her stewardship partner in all things, by supporting and encouraging her to give of herself to God's Church. Mike says, "Everything we have comes from God first, and so it makes sense that we return our gifts back to Him through offerings of time, talent, and treasure.

"The gifts that we have, we're given to share," Mike continues. "So, if we look at them that way — that everything we have already belongs to God — then it's easy to accept that that's how we're called to live."

For the Karasches, accepting that call has included a wide variety of services over the years. When her children were young, Cindy enjoyed serving in the parish ministries pertaining to youth, assisting with Religious Education and Confirmation classes. Cindy also previously sang in the parish choir, was the coordinator for the Homebound Ministry, and served on both the Building Committee and Pastoral Council. Together, the couple continues to serve joyfully as both Eucharistic Ministers and greeters on Sundays, while Mike greatly enjoys his involvement in the newly formed Welcoming Committee.

With seven children and fourteen grandchildren between them, along with the general business of modern-day living,



Cindy and Mike Karasch

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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

Cindy and Mike Karasch *continued from page 7*

it's not always easy for the Karasches to find time to serve. Yet, they still continue to embrace the call, feeling strongly that this is an essential part of what it means to be Catholic; what it means to be part of a faith community.

"Our priests can't do it alone," Cindy says. "We want a parish that is active — a parish that helps not only ourselves in the faith journey, but also our families and neighbors. If we don't step up and help out, then it isn't going to get done."

"We are the Church," Mike adds. "We are called to step up and to love others. Whatever our particular gifts are, we need to share those with others. That's how our Church continues to grow and thrive."

The blessings that come from it, adds the couple, are truly too great to count. It brings tremendous joy to their hearts knowing that they are helping others and are truly

engaged in the life of the Church. It brings them a deep sense of camaraderie, knowing that they aren't alone in life's sufferings, and that they have an entire church family here to love and support them. Most importantly of all, it transforms their faith from a mere obligation to a thriving relationship with Jesus Christ.

"I think too many Catholics get stuck in that understanding of faith as an obligation — a mere list of 'do's and don'ts,'" Mike says. "For me, getting involved has really made the personal aspects of faith come alive."

"We truly are always given back so much more than we give," Cindy says. "For me, I guess, it always goes back to those relationships with other parishioners, which in turn help me form a better relationship with God. It helps me realize that this truly is an ongoing, never-ending process — a lifelong journey."

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