

# The Grateful Heart

Living Stewardship as a Way of Life

May 2016

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*A Letter From Our Pastor*

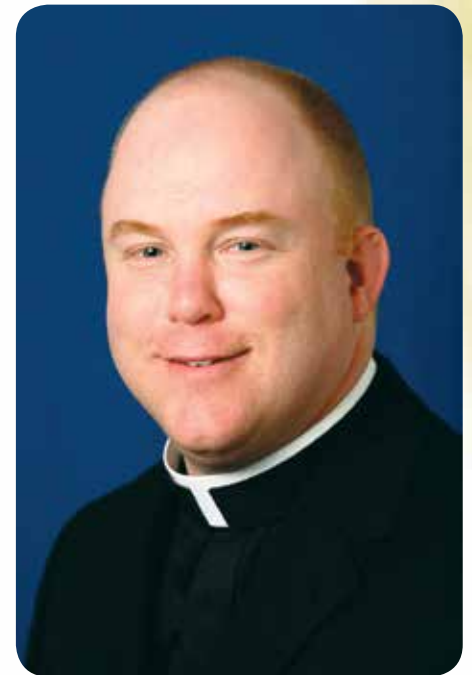
## We Are All Ministers of Hospitality

Dear Sacred Heart Families,

This is a time of many celebrations in the Church. The list is almost endless at this time of year – First Communions, Confirmations, graduations, and weddings. There are so many events that bring people who are not from the parish, or even members of the Church, into our parish.

You may recall that we speak of the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. I want to particularly speak of that pillar of Hospitality this month. It is important every day of every year and at everything we do as a parish community. However, at this time of year, when there may be strangers and newcomers in our midst, it becomes even more important.

Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith. In Matthew 25:35, the Lord speaks to us in terms of expectations when He says, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” He makes it clear to us that whenever we welcome any of His brothers and sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. Sometimes, we may think that this



concept of hospitality is the responsibility of a committee, ministry or group of people assigned that task – but the truth is that we are all part of the parish hospitality effort.

If we are going to be a stewardship parish, and if each of us is going to be a good steward, we need to be aware that we need to seek and find Christ in everyone around us, everyone we meet,

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## Schierts Family Shares in Profound Faith Experiences

For Hal Schierts and his wife, Lori, prayer is at the center of their spiritual life and involvement at Sacred Heart.

"If I had to pick one thing that fuels my spiritual life and involvement at Sacred Heart, it's my daily prayer life," Hal says.

And while Hal notes that he doesn't necessarily enjoy getting up early, he rises at 5:30 a.m. to pray, using a form of meditative prayer that he learned through the Spiritual Mentorship Program in which he has participated through the archdiocese. Each morning, he takes time alone with God, beginning with reading from Scripture or other spiritual reading, and then sharing a conversation with God that gives him resolution as he begins his day.

Although Lori doesn't get up quite as early, she has found her own rhythm of daily prayer.

"My resolution has been to journal," she says. "I often find myself looking at the Scripture of the day, writing down a passage, and reading and re-writing. In reading and re-writing, there's things that speak to me and I try to write a resolution that sticks with me."

With that as the fuel, it is no wonder that Hal and Lori are able to be so fully involved in their parish family.

Lori first moved to Shawnee in 2001 and started by joining Mother's Circle. She found the support

and care she needed from a group of friends. "We all had similar age children that facilitated some of our close-knit friendships," From celebrating holidays together to group texting prayer requests, the families share their faith and their



lives together.

Lori says. "I have to say I think it was journeying through hardships together that brought us closer to one another. There's this bond that is unbreakable because it's part of our faith and we grow in our faith together."

Lori and Hal actively serve their church together with their combined 5 children. They consider Sacred Heart Church their home. Both Hal's and Lori's involvement includes both serving the parish and deepening their own faith.

"Sacred Heart is an incred-

ible parish and these people are just really passionate and excited about their faith," Lori says. "It's kind of hard to not be part of something!"

One significant step in the couple's faith journey was when each attended a Christ Renews His Parish, or CRHP, retreat.

"CRHP really pushed me out in my faith," says Lori, who also served on the CRHP Continuation Committee. "My faith was mine, really personal and private but I'm learning, as I'm growing in my faith, that it's nothing if it's just private. You have to have a personal relationship with Christ, but it's when you carry it out that the fruit begins to grow."

She also loves to share her faith with the smallest members of the parish and their families, whether in Baptism Preparation Class or Vacation

Bible School, and until her children outgrew it, Little Church.

Hal also seeks to find ways to grow in his faith and share with others. He began attending School of Faith classes in 2004.

"It really made me grow and learn and start to understand [the faith]," Hal says. "Learning, when we are able to share it and help others with it, becomes this really wonderful thing. The purpose is always to be able to help others."

Now, Hal uses his knowledge to teach classes, participate in small men's groups, and go

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## Schierts Family Shares in Profound Faith Experiences

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through training with the Spiritual Mentorship Program of the Archdiocese. He also has a great love for the Eucharist, whether it's serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion or spending time in adoration.

Of course, Hal and Lori take most seriously their responsibility to pass their faith to their children – Lindsay, 18; Owen, 16; Zoe, 15;

Grace, 13; and Abby, 9.

"We use God's name all the time, it's in a lot of our conversations, it's how we approach problems – 'Did you pray about it?'" Lori says. "I can see in all five of the kids this desire to help."

"I think the default is, 'How can I help?'" Hal adds. "I think all the kids are much more mature in their faith than I was at their age."

Hal and Lori also seek to keep Christ at the center of their relationship, working to draw each other closer to the Lord.

"We're in this relationship together with God, and it's such a wonderful blessing to be married to someone that brings you closer to God at the same time [as growing closer to them]," Hal says.

*"Learning, when we are able to share it and help others with it, becomes this really wonderful thing. The purpose is always to be able to help others." – Hal Schierts*

## We Are All Ministers of Hospitality

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and certainly everyone who enters our church or other parish facilities.

Hospitality is a parish priority that each of us must take to heart. It is not so challenging to greet someone, smile at them and welcome them – yet, it may require a little extra effort on our part. That means we must have an awareness of those near us, of those who may appear to be alone or new. We may not always think of Christ in this way, but if we carefully listen to Holy Scripture, we must realize that He was a caring, welcoming and friendly person. If we are to be His disciples, we need to be the same.

As stated, Jesus assures us that when we welcome others, we are welcoming Him, as well. St. Paul once said that people who are hospitable sometimes entertain angels. For us, parish hospitality is not an option. It is our way to model the Kingdom of God right here and right now.

Peace,

Fr. Pat

## Fostering the Faith in Our Children

Part of the beauty of our Catholic Church and a life of stewardship is how it incorporates all age groups and truly creates a community. An older person may share their wisdom with others while children show us joy and trust in our Heavenly Father. Each of us has gifts to share and encouragement to give as we journey in our faith. While many may associate lives of stewardship and parish involvement exclusively with adults, it's important to foster an active faith within our youth, as well.

This summer, Sacred Heart is offering two summer camps for youth – Vacation Bible School and Totus Tuus. Heather Buchwitz, parishioner and Co-Chair for Vacation Bible School – VBS – remembers back to her childhood years when she attended camp, recognizing the vital role camps like this can have in a child's faith journey.

"When I think back to my youth, I don't necessarily recall what facts I learned in VBS every summer, but I remember that I learned a love for God and made a community with my peers," Heather says. "Those are



some of my best summer memories from growing up! What better way to anchor our children in this faith community than helping them to build it at an age-appropriate manner while also learning more about their faith!"

For Heather, VBS was essential in forming the foundation for her faith, enabling her to live our stewardship through activism in the faith community today. The theme for this year's VBS program is "A Radical Ride on the Wings of Prayer with Amazing Angels and Super Saints." At the camp, the children are divided into small groups and then take turns at various stations such as music, crafts, games, faith, snacks, and skits.

"I think the most important thing is to get them involved," says Laura Berg, parishioner and Co-Chair. "We go to Mass every week, but after awhile that becomes a habit and when kids can get involved through camps like this they can see the church in a different light and have an opportunity to learn in different ways."

Laura, who has a 3-year-old daughter, notes that children also learn by watching each other. VBS gives children an opportunity to "watch their peers as they learn about the faith." And as Laura says, it's a way to get children excited about church and their faith.

The second camp available this summer is called Totus Tuus, the name of which comes from a Latin phrase meaning "totally yours." The camp strives to bring our faith to life by focusing on Marian devotion and the meaning and practice of the sacraments.

Jodi Wohletz, parishioner and Chair, explains some of the other differences between Vacation Bible School and Totus Tuus.

"Totus Tuus has a traveling team of four people, two men and two women, who come to our parish with a set curriculum for the camp," Jodi says. "It's very sacrament-oriented. There is Mass every day and there is





## Fostering the Faith in Our Children *continued from page 4*



also the opportunity for confession during the week.”

One of the unique benefits of the Totus Tuus camp is that the children get to see other young adults actively living out their faith by traveling to different parishes and sharing Catholic teachings.

“They see these faith-filled young adults and they start to think, ‘I can actively live my faith, too,’” Jodi says. “And it helps them to see that priests and seminarians are regular people, as well.”

The camp has a deep focus on prayer life and the “whys” behind Catholic teaching, allowing children to be rooted in their personal relationships with Jesus.

The opportunities available for our youth truly invite them into the parish community, fostering their growth in the faith and as active members in church life. In Heather’s words, “Please pray for a successful camp week, for volunteers and attendees to have a faith filled week of Catholic enrichment!”

*Vacation Bible School is held June 6-10, from 9 a.m. to noon – it is open to children age 3 through fourth grade. The cost is \$25 per child. If you would like to help make this camp possible by volunteering, please contact Heather Buchwitz or Laura Berg by e-mail at [heather@scrapsbyheather.com](mailto:heather@scrapsbyheather.com) or [loribethku@hotmail.com](mailto:loribethku@hotmail.com).*

*Totus Tuus is the week of June 26-July 1 and available for those in first grade through 12th grade. Children in first grade through sixth grade will have sessions Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Junior high and high-schoolers will have evening sessions Sunday-Thursday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. If you would like to sign up as a volunteer or sign your children up for the camp, please contact Jodi Wohletz for the day sessions at [jlwohletz@hotmail.com](mailto:jlwohletz@hotmail.com) or Casie Olberding at [casieo@hotmail.com](mailto:casieo@hotmail.com).*



## Understanding the Role of Sacramentals in Our Faith

Most Catholics are familiar with the idea of *sacraments* in the Church, of which there are seven. Sacraments are the foundation of the spiritual life for an individual and the Church. Sacraments are sources of grace — God’s very presence in our lives and unmerited favor from God. They are signs of God’s love, and these signs make present what they signify. Although a person benefits — receives the gift of grace — from the sacraments regardless of whether he or she is well disposed to them, one must cooperate with what the Spirit is doing in the sacrament to receive its full benefit.

*Sacramentals* are different. These are also sacred signs that can build holiness, but they do not work on their own. One must be aware and fully conscious of the sacred action. Sacramentals sanctify us to get the most benefit from the Sacraments (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1667). Sacramentals are given to us to make holy certain actions in life and life’s circumstances. There are many such sacred signs that are reminders to us of God.

The sign of the cross is perhaps one of the most fundamental of these signs, and for Catholics, this invocation is done at the start of every sacred action and prayer. Holy water is a sacramental, as it reminds us of our Baptism. By dipping our fingers into holy water and making the sign of the cross, we are combining two foundational symbols of the Christian life and the Paschal Mystery — the passion, dying and rising of Christ — and bringing them to life in us.

The exchange of peace in the Mass — and at other Catholic rites — is another example of a sacramental. By making some kind of meaningful sign of peace, we are giving the peace of Christ to another person. The chalice and other sacred vessels at Mass also are sacramentals, as they remind us of what they are to contain — the very Body and Blood of Christ.

It might be helpful to organize the types of sacramentals into categories, as author Michael Pennock lists in *This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*:

“*Actions* (blessings; genuflections; the sign of the cross; bowing one’s head at the name of Jesus; church processions); *Objects* (candles; holy water; statues and icons; holy pictures; blessed ashes; palms; rosaries; relics; incense; vestments; scapulars; church buildings; crosses; religious medals); *Places* (the Holy Land; Rome; Fatima; Lourdes; the National Shrine in Washington, D.C.; and other places of pilgrimage;

chapels, retreat centers, and even Catholic cemeteries; *Prayers* (short prayers we say throughout the day; grace before and after meals; prayers at rising and going to bed; praying the rosary, praying a host of other traditional Catholic prayers and devotions); *Sacred Time* (liturgy; holy days; feasts of saints; your saint’s name day; special days of prayer; fasting and abstinence; retreats, etc.)” (*This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 176-177).

“Sacramentals...prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it” (CCC 1670). In a word, sacramentals, through the prayer of the Church, bring us to holiness in Christ. All devotions of piety, including sacramentals, should point us toward the liturgy of the Church, a connection to a local parish community, and to the Eucharist (CCC 1675).

The Church, through Christ’s passion, death and resurrection, has given us these sacred signs to lead us in holiness, and to better recognize an authentic Christian life. How many sacramentals can you recognize in your life? Probably more than you think.







## STEWARDSHIP

### Serving the Master

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Jesus tells us in the Gospels that we cannot serve two masters. This idea that we can only truly “follow” one master can also be found in today’s spiritual literature, where much is written about having “a divided heart.”

Indeed, the business world is full of motivational speakers trying to convince us to be “focused” and “single-minded” in the pursuit of success.

But why must we be focused on serving only one master, of being driven by one motivation? Jesus adds to this admonition the command that we must love God and “hate” mammon. Does He mean that we must “hate” wealth or its pursuit? What could Jesus have meant?

When we choose one master over the other, we place the rejected master in service to the other. Therefore, if we choose to serve God as the ultimate focus of our lives, then we can also use wealth to serve Him. However, we can also fool ourselves into thinking that we are serving God when, in reality, we are only serving our own agendas. There are three basic ways that we sometimes think of God that, in turn, lead us to fooling ourselves about who we are really serving as the master of our lives.

First, there are those who relate to God only when there is an emergency. We can

call this the “God as paramedic” approach. If something or someone we love or deeply care for is in danger, we immediately go about calling, serving, and worshiping God. Our motivation is that He will protect or heal that person or thing. God is not master here. Instead, our love or attachment to that person or thing is what influences our devotion and piety.

The second approach is one we can call the “God as my personal insurance policy” method. This is adopted by folks who usually attend some sort of religious congregation, and may perform an occasional act of charity. But most of all, they “believe” in God. The bottom line here is that the person’s “faith” pays the premium on the eternal policy, thus keeping him either affiliated to God, or out of the flames of damnation. Personal protection, rather than faithfully serving God, is the main motivation of this approach.

The third and final method is the “God is my friendly neighbor” approach. People adopting this method are regularly involved in religious activities, and may even belong to parish groups or associations. But with this approach, all religious and parish activities serve only to gain social acceptance and respectability in the eyes of one’s peers. This method treats God simply as a friendly neighbor to whom we

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## STEWARDSHIP

### Serving the Master *continued from page 7*

tip our hats and say “good morning,” and perhaps offer occasional help by doing Him a favor. This method is founded on the desire to project a certain image that falsely dictates our relationship to God.

All three approaches demonstrate that our agendas, and not God’s, are the central focus. God’s

Person is being used in all three ways to serve the individual. These instances have God made to serve us, rather than us serving Him. When we serve God, putting Him at the center of our lives, everything and everyone is placed in such a way as to serve Him. This is what “God as Master” means.

### Whom Will You Serve?

We can fool ourselves by rationalizing about whom we serve. However, it is through prayer and worship, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance, and being intimately connected to the local Church that help us remain focused on God as our master, and to not surrender to temptations, physical pleasures or societal pressures. When we surrender to the devil, the flesh and the world – the three traditional enemies of the Chris-

tian that correspond to the three rationalizations – we place our individual selves as the ultimate master and are no longer serving God. But when we place all of our gifts in service to Christ, then we are following Christ’s command. We are serving the one, true master. Service to God is not performed in isolated instances. Instead, this service is every day, in all that we say and do. The choice is yours. Whom will you serve?

## CALENDAR OF PARISH EVENTS

### May 22

Michael Guastello’s Diaconate Ordination Reception  
Immediately following 11 a.m. Mass in meeting rooms 1 & 2

### June 3

Feast Day of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Vespers at 7 p.m. in Church

### June 4

Sacred Heart Days (Parish Picnic)  
Immediately following 4:30 p.m. Mass

### June 6-10

Vacation Bible School  
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

### June 26 - July 1

Totus Tuus (Totally Yours)  
1 - 6<sup>th</sup> grades (Monday - Friday) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Jr. High and High School (Sunday - Thursday) 6:30 p.m.



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