



St. John the Baptist

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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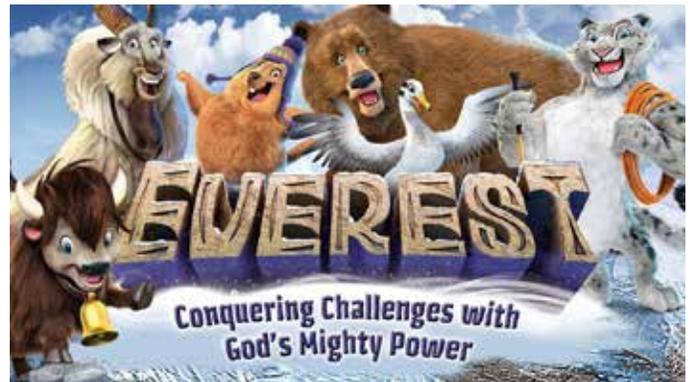
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Vacation Bible School Offering “a Mountain of Fun”

Vacation Bible School at St. John the Baptist will scale new heights this summer when the youngsters experience this year’s program titled “*Everest: Conquering Challenges with God’s Mighty Power.*”

Vacation Bible School will be held from 8:30-11 a.m. on June 25-28 at our Parish Center. Children eligible to attend are those who will be entering kindergarten this fall, up through fifth-graders.

“There’s lots to do and learn this week,” says Carol Shelton, Director of Religious Education. “I think the children will have a mountain of fun as they learn about God and His power to love and help us through our daily struggles. We will also be featuring a saint of the day who demonstrated their trust in God as an example for all.”



There will be lessons each day in the form of “Bible Points” that state a fact about God’s love for us, with each point reinforced by a key Bible verse and a Bible story. “Bible Expeditions” will take the youngsters through challenges that will allow them to learn about God’s infinite love.

“There will be music, games, skits and a little lesson that are usually presented through skits and activities,” Carol says. “And we’ll have snacks – that’s very important!”

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SERVICE

The Fourth Pillar of Parish Stewardship

Throughout Sacred Scripture, there are numerous references to service. There is the parable of the vigilant and faithful servants who await their master's return from a wedding, "ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks" (Lk 12:35-40). There is the story of the good Samaritan who was moved with compassion to help the victim of a violent robbery (Lk 10:25-37). And there are several examples of Christ serving those around Him – feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, and even turning water into wine at a wedding banquet.

Why is service a running theme throughout the Gospels? Because service is at the root of living in imitation of Christ. Christ served others throughout His life on Earth, and His death on the cross was the ultimate act of service to mankind. And when we serve others, we are not only following in Christ's footsteps, we are also serving Christ Himself: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

As a stewardship parish, service must be at the heart of everything we do. The parish community is the bastion of service within the Catholic Church, as we serve one another and are also served by our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the Diocese of Wichita's document, *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*, states, "Like a blood family, the parish family stands ready and eager collectively to wrap their arms around their brothers and sisters when they suffer in trial and/or celebrate special events in their lives."

It is good to recognize the parish community as a place where service is appreciated and can be utilized for the good of the Church. However, it is not enough for us to simply serve other members of our parish family. As disciples of Christ, it is our obligation to serve people in need everywhere they exist – in our families, our greater community, our country, and throughout the world. This can be a challenging concept, as it is often much more comfortable and convenient to serve those who are close to us than it is to reach out to "outsiders." But, as *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* eloquently points out, "Failure to have this understanding leads to a selfish parochialism, which is life draining to a parish stewardship way of life."

Think of ways that you can serve others around you, both within our parish family and in the greater community. Our many parish ministries offer a great place to begin offering your time and talents, but the opportunities for service don't end there. There are many civic and nonprofit organizations that do an immense amount to serve others across the globe and are always looking for volunteers.

Once you serve, you will find that you will reap numerous rewards in return, much like the faithful servants who doubled the talents their master had entrusted to them: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy" (Mt 25:21).

SERVICE

A Letter From Our Pastor

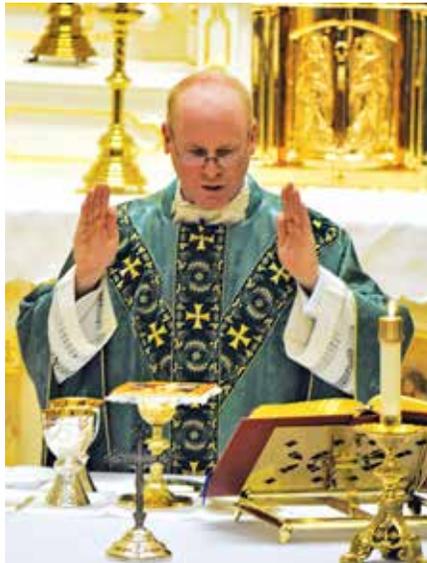
THE MONTH OF *Mary:* A TIME FOR CELEBRATION AND JOY

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In the Catholic Church, we designate a particular devotion for each month – and May is when we honor our Blessed Mother Mary. Thus, this is a good time for us to think about and concentrate on our devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps we can add a few more Marian prayers to our daily routine, such as the Memorare, Angelus, Regina Caeli, Litany of Loreto, Hail Marys or the Rosary. One way to do this is to join your fellow parishioners 9 a.m. in the Grotto in front of the Church to pray the Rosary together. Also, it is beneficial for you to pray Rosaries together as a family, perhaps in the evening after dinner. The important thing is that we honor Mary by giving more attention to her and entrusting our lives more and more to her this month. In turn, she will help us all the more.

Our Blessed Mother is important to our faith and to our Church. Her willingness to serve in a way at the Annunciation opening her heart to God's plan that allowed the Lord to take human form really made our salvation a possibility. Because of her complete trust in God, she lived her life free from sin, and after her life, she was assumed body and soul into heaven by the power of God and crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

She is, of course, not divine. We worship only our Lord Jesus Christ, but we honor Mary as a saint and as the Queen of Saints and in many other ways. We honor God when we remember the role of Mary in our salvation. Devotion to Mary always leads to Je-



sus Christ Himself. That is because Mary's intention is always to bring us more perfectly to Him.

Mary said "yes" to God. And, we, too, must say "yes" to the Lord. Let us imitate Mary in our openness and readiness to follow God's will in our lives. It is in serving Our Lord in imitation of Mary that we serve one another in love. Our prayer and devotion to Mary helps to dispose us to do just that.

I am deeply blessed to be your pastor. My priesthood has been a blessing and serving you all has made that blessing even more significant. I

pray for you daily. Please pray for me.

God bless you and keep you always.

In Christ,

Fr. Butler

Fr. Butler, Pastor



St. John the Baptist

A Great Way to Respond to the Call to Stewardship

The Knights of Columbus is the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. Founded by Fr. Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, Conn., in 1882, it originally served as a mutual benefit society to working-class and immigrant Catholics in the United States and developed into a fraternal benefit society dedicated to providing charitable services – including war and disaster relief, actively defending Catholicism in various nations, and promoting Catholic education. By 1892 – 10 years after being established – more than 6,000 Knights marched in the Columbus Day parade in New Haven.

St. Pope John Paul II referred to the Knights of Columbus as the “strong right arm” of the Church. He cited their support for Church doctrines and Church communities, as well as their philanthropic and charitable efforts.

Our Fox Valley South Knights of Columbus Council 13436 was founded in January 2004 and serves the entire area, but particularly St. John the Baptist and St. Paul the Apostle in Sandwich. The Grand Knight is Bob Asleson, and Nick Cinfio serves as an officer in our Council as the recorder.

“To me, the great value of our Knights Council and being a member is that it is a great way to respond to the call to stewardship,” Nick says. “We are all called to serve God, our faith community, the Church and our civic communities. The Knights do that effectively and well. I am proud to be a member.”

All the good works done by the Knights of Columbus are based upon their four core principles – Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. And as Nick points out, there is much our Knights Council does to support the parish community – almost too many works to mention here!

“One of our efforts I am particularly satisfied with is our involvement and support of the Open Door Rehabilitation Center in Sandwich,” he says. “Some of our fund-



(From left) Bob Asleson, Dave Baker (of Open Door Rehabilitation Center), Vic Siedleski, Richard Cherry

raising efforts are devoted to that support. For example, our annual Tootsie Roll Drive, with which many are familiar, has provided more than \$4,000 a year for the past several years to the Center.”

The Open Door Rehabilitation Center began with family – actually, the two families of David and Juanita Graf and William and Virginia Squier, Sr. – who developed a community-based “employment” workshop in the Grafts’ basement. From serving six clients with special needs upon its establishment in 1963, Open Door today provides services to 129 individuals with special needs in a variety of programs. It is locally and community-based and focuses on families. They are devoted to “helping people help themselves.”

Through the support of Open Door and so much more, our Knights are an ideal example of what stewardship is truly all about.

“Our Council is a prime example of service and fellowship,” Nick says. “We serve, but we also recognize the need for fun. We have an annual picnic and an annual

“To me, the great value of our Knights Council and being a member is that it is a great way to respond to the call to stewardship. We are all called to serve God, our faith community, the Church and our civic communities. The Knights do that effectively and well. I am proud to be a member.” — Nick Cinfio

hip: Knights of Columbus Fox Valley South Council

Christmas party, and we are planning a couple trips to baseball games in Chicago this summer.”

Any Catholic male age 18 or older is eligible for membership in the Knights.

“We have about 60 members at present,” Nick says. “But we would love to have more. The more dedicated men we have the more good we can accomplish. I would especially like to see some younger men become involved.”

The Fox Valley South Knights of Columbus Council 13436 meets at St. John the Baptist on the second Tuesday of every month. For more information, or if you are interested in becoming involved, please contact Chuck Durancik at 815-498-2010.

Vacation Bible School Offering “a Mountain of Fun” *continued from front cover*

Providing lessons about their faith during the summer is a way to help keep that faith strong.

“It helps them keep in touch with Jesus and their faith,” Carol says. “It helps them to grow and have more of a community of believers. It’s enjoyable for them. It’s not ‘normal’ religious education – it’s just a different type of learning.”

The youngsters will be mentored by high school and junior high school volunteers who will help them learn more about their faith.

“And this helps the older students learn more about faith,” Carol says. “Sometimes you learn more by teaching. And the younger kids look up to the older students. They think ‘this is really cool.’ They’re excited about being with high school students. The high school students have a lot of energy – they get into the music and skits. We get a tremendous amount of help from them.”

Keeping youngsters engaged with their faith during the summer enables them to strengthen their relationship with God.

“It’s very important,” Carol says. “It keeps all of us in touch with our faith, with Jesus, Mary our Mother, and we have to have that relationship. It’s like any other relationship – you have to maintain it by keeping in touch and develop that relationship. You can’t be friends with someone and not ever speak to them and not do anything with them.”

Volunteers are always needed and most welcome for Vacation Bible School. Often, the volunteers’ participation leads to more wonderful things once the summer winds down.

“A lot of times, volunteers will become catechists in the fall,” Carol says.

Parents wishing to enroll their children in Vacation Bible School may contact the parish office at 815-498-2010. The fee is \$10 per child and the last day to register is May 31 — “But we don’t turn anyone away,” Carol Shelton says. Anyone interested in volunteering may contact Carol at 815-970-1928 or call the parish office.

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MASS REVERENCE and Etiquette

For many of us, when we are invited to a wedding, one of our first considerations is “what am I going to wear?” We wouldn’t think of showing up at a formal event in our workout clothes. How many of us search for just the right outfit to wear to our annual office party or on a date? Compare that to how much thought we put into what we wear to Mass on Sunday.

How we dress for an occasion indicates the importance that we place upon that particular celebration. At Mass, we encounter God through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Dressing appropriately for Mass is one way that we show respect both for God and for our faith family. And this respect is important at all Masses – no matter what time of day or night.

Think about what you are teaching your children when you all wear your “Sunday clothes” to Mass. You are reminding them that Mass is a special celebration. After all, we are going to Jesus’ house.

Some people may quickly point out that Mass shouldn’t be a fashion show – a place to show off your finery – and they are right! We also know that some parishioners come

to Mass on their way home from work, and they certainly should not feel embarrassed about arriving at Mass in their work clothes. And no one should ever stay away from Mass because of simplicity of clothing.

But one rule should apply in all instances – our attire at Mass should always be modest. Our clothing should never distract others from what we are gathered together to celebrate – the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

The celebration of Mass is always a holy occasion and thus should be treated in the most holy manner – in body, mind and spirit.



Bethany Green Continues Faith Journey With Family at Her Side

For Bethany Green, her journey to the Church has brought her entire family together in faith.

“My husband, C.J., and I have two boys — a 5-year-old, Brantley, and a 6-month-old, Jaxson,” she says. “C.J. grew up Catholic — I was raised to believe in God, but never really went to church. I always kind of knew that I wanted to but was never pushed to do it on my own. After our kids were born, we had them baptized, and after we had Jaxson it hit me — if we’re going to raise our kids this way, I want to be able to be a good example for them. It gave me that little push.”

Although Bethany was unable to attend the scheduled classes because of her infant son, RCIA catechists were nonetheless able to accommodate her.

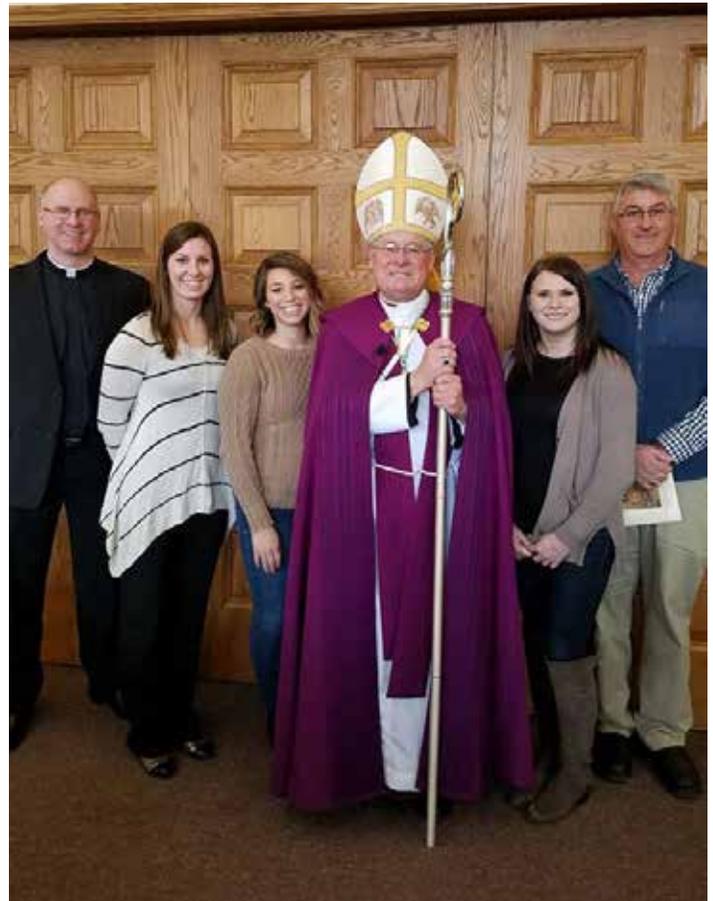
“They were awesome teachers and were really great at fitting everything into my schedule with the baby since I couldn’t make the Sunday classes,” she says. “They even came to my house! The way the parish supported my decision and went out of their way to make sure I could be a part of it was amazing. Everyone was so accepting, and so eager to help in any way they could.”

This past Easter, Bethany was Baptized, Confirmed, and received her First Holy Communion.

“It was a really special night, and my first time ever going to receive Communion,” she says. “I was so excited for that, and I hope it never feels like routine. Every time, I want to go up to Communion feeling like it’s a brand-new thing. Also, C.J. and I had our marriage convalidated earlier in the month, so overall it was a very special month for our family!”

During the RCIA process, Bethany was able to learn much more than just the basics of the Catholic faith — she also had the opportunity to

continued on back cover



Bethany Green (third from left) enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the “why” of Catholicism through the RCIA process.

“Obviously, I still have a ton of things to learn — there is so much to learn about the faith — but I feel like I have a little bit more of an understanding of everything I’m looking forward to being able to teach the kids about it, and to be able to answer their questions as much as I can.” — Bethany Green



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Mass Times

Saturdays 5:00 PM
Sundays 8:00 and 10:30 AM
Weekdays:
Tuesdays 6:30 PM
M, W, Th, F 7:00 AM

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesdays 5:00 PM
Saturdays 4:00 PM
or by appointment

Adoration

Tuesdays 5-6 PM and
First Fridays 7:30 AM-9:00 PM with
Benediction 9:00 PM

Bethany Green *continued from page 7*

delve into the “why” of what Catholicism is all about.

“Since I never really went to church a lot growing up, this was all a really new and big experience for me,” she says. “I learned so many things that I didn’t know, and that I found so interesting! One of the biggest things for me was learning about all the sacraments and what they mean, and what all the symbols mean. It really hit me as I was learning about them that this was actually going to happen to me, and it was life-changing.”

Bethany looks forward to learning more and continuing to grow in faith. She hopes that this knowledge will help her to guide her children along their own faith journeys.

“Obviously, I still have a ton of things to learn – there is so much to learn about the faith – but I feel like I have a little bit more of an understanding of everything,” she says. “I’m looking forward to being able to teach the kids about it, and to be able to answer their questions as much as I can.”

