

## Parenting—An Extraordinary Life Experience

by Ellen Ruskin

Touch any single part of a mobile and the entire mobile moves. In much the same way, any change in one member of a family will effect movement throughout the entire family. In a mobile, each piece is connected to the other so that any two pieces may move closer or farther away from each other. However, even when positioned far away from other pieces, movement anywhere in the mobile still impacts a single piece.

In like manner, family members are inextricably joined to one another. All family members are part of this entity we call a family. In other words, a family is a system in which any behavior by one individual will have impact on all members of the system.

### The Ripple Effect

Looking at families in this light can generate some ideas about how to help a family member make a change in his/her life. Any change that one might make in one's life will "ripple" through the family. Thus, the potential for change is enormous. When one changes a behavior (i.e. moves to a new position on the mobile), the other members are sent into new positions, too—or in terms of behavior, are likely to make a different response. If one is able to make a change in the context of one's own family, and if the family supports the change, there is a greater chance that the change will be more long lasting.

This is what makes being a member of a family so exciting, so full of potential. If we use these thoughts as a way to think about our role as a parent, we can have a very positive effect on those family members with whom we share our life's journey.



### Active Parenting

A few weeks ago at Pax Christi, three groups of parents finished a seven-week class designed to help them reflect on their current parenting styles. Two groups focused on families with children 2-10 years of age and a third group focused on adolescent development and the issues that arise when parenting teens.

These Active Parenting groups also provided the opportunity for parents to gain new parenting tools that can be useful in trying to create a healthier family climate in which parents and children can strengthen communication with one another. If we have a communication system that is open and respectful, we as parents are better able to help children learn to become responsible human beings and to have more ways to solve family issues/problems. If you are interested in learning more about these ideas, I recommend reading the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families* by Stephen Covey.

### God's Incredible Gift

In conclusion, I'd like to share a quote from Ellen Goodman who had this to say about parenting: "The best prepared, the most hyper-planned of us, still find that parenting is 20 years of on-the-job training. The pleasure of being a parent isn't reasonable or objective. It doesn't lend itself to grades... it is the extraordinary experience of having short people who hang around awhile; who change you as they change; who push and prod and aggravate and thrill you and make life fuller; who are, more than anything else, irrationally special to you."

As parents, God has given us the incredible gift of children. May we nurture them in their efforts to develop roots and wings and thus grow and change ourselves in that very process. Blessings to you in your parenting!

*Pax Christi anticipates offering this parenting series again in fall 2000. Watch for further information.*



Fr. Tim Power performs the immersion baptism of Owen Granger, son of Anne and Bruce Granger.



### The Pax Christi News

*The Pax Christi News* is a monthly publication sent to members and friends of Pax Christi Catholic Community.

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### End-of-Year Children's and Youth Ministry Celebration

From Crooning Tykes...  
 ...to Rockin' and Rollin' Teens.  
 Steve Angrisano  
 Makes Family Faith  
 Fabulously Fun!  
 Simon Says...  
 ...and Steve Sings.

**Youth Ministry Small Group Profiles**



**FOCUS Group**

- ▶ Our names: Mike Bann, Lindsey Cable, Jenna Ericsson, Justin Howde, Dan Johnson, Mike Jones, Ashley Kampen, Kris Pearson, Chelsea Veire. Carol Jones, facilitator.
- ▶ Where we go to school: Central Middle School
- ▶ Our Grade: 8
- ▶ The best thing about being a part of this group is seeing our friends and getting to know each other better.
- ▶ When we are not going to school we like to hang out with friends, play guitar, snowboard, ski, skateboard, swim, dance.
- ▶ Words we like to use to describe God: good, nice, caring, respectful and loving.
- ▶ Favorite prayers or ways we like to pray to God: "squeeze prayer," Our Father, Hail Mary and much more.
- ▶ Some of our favorite movies are *She's All That*, *Sixth Sense*, *Rush Hour*, *Happy Gilmore*, *Billy Madison* and *Big Daddy*.
- ▶ Our plans for service this year are to go to Castle Ridge!



**Small Faith Community**

- ▶ Our names: Vanessa Gartrell, Michael Greywitt, Christopher Jacobson, Erik Jacobson, Kevin Kerber, Matthew Kistner, Amanda Leduc, Eric Olson, Maureen Pearson, Stephen Rausch, Megan Rowekamp, Heather Schoonover, Jessi Schwartz, Ryan Sieling, Brianna Staff, Karen Stotts, Janelle Truman. Cheryl Carlson and Laurie Pepper, facilitators.
- ▶ Where we go to school: Bloomington Jefferson, Bloomington Kennedy, Chaska and Eden Prairie High Schools
- ▶ Our Grade: 10
- ▶ The best thing about being a part of this group is that we've all become friends, there's comfort within the group, it's fun and relationships have been made.
- ▶ When we are not going to school we like to snowboard, go clubbing, shop, ski, go to movies, hang out with friends, play sports.
- ▶ Words we like to use to describe God: Father, Holy Spirit, "the man," forgiving, strong, creature, big, my Savior, loving, light, wise, almighty, powerful, always there.
- ▶ Favorite prayers or ways we like to pray to God: silently, in a group, in church, in song, alone, Our Father, "squeeze prayer."
- ▶ Some of our favorite movies are *Ace Ventura*, *Pet Detective*, *Matrix*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *The Green Mile*, *Speed*, *Dumb and Dumber*, *Go*, *Waterboy*, *Scream*, *American Pie*, *Sound of Music*.
- ▶ Our plans for service this year are daycare, caroling for the food shelf, Adopt-a-Family, cardmaking, Thanksgiving meal donation.



**Small Faith Community**

- ▶ Our names: Trevor Acker, Riley Brost, Matt Bykowski, Cheryl Gardner, Cassie Guttman, Megan Kurzeka, Justin Moe, Meghan Poepping, Stacy Smith, Andrew Walker. Pat Gardner, facilitator.
- ▶ Where we go to school: Eden Prairie High School
- ▶ Our Grade: 9
- ▶ The best thing about being a part of this group that it is fun, respectful, cooperative, cool, phat, exciting and caring.
- ▶ When we are not going to school we like to watch TV, hang out with friends, sleep, eat.
- ▶ Words we like to use to describe God: awesome, God Almighty, powerful.
- ▶ Favorite prayers or ways we like to pray to God: in group; examine Hail Mary.
- ▶ Some of our favorite movies are *James Bond*, *Half Baked*, *Toy Story 2*.
- ▶ Our plans for service this year are sock drive (we helped collect over 1,200 pairs of socks for the homeless), Mary's Place.

**Children's Ministry**

**Three Days of After-School Religious Education Proposed**

by Janelle Heikkila

**P**ax Christi parishioners with children in Eden Prairie's elementary schools face a schedule change next year! The four schools housing grades 1-4 have changed their start and release times. At Cedar Ridge and Forest Hills, the school day will end at 2:45 PM; at Prairie View and Eden Lake, it will be 3:35 PM.

What does this mean for after-school religious education at Pax Christi? A new challenge for us! But after much prayer and discernment, we hope that we have found the solution. First, a little background.

For the past few years, we have been offering after-school religious education classes for Eden Lake, Prairie View and Oak Point Intermediate schools because of their early release times—2:45 PM for Eden Lake and Prairie View, 2:00 PM for Oak Point. We've been able to transport children from the schools to Pax Christi for after-school classes and still have time to begin classes at 5:00 PM for children from other school sites and districts.

**Many Benefits of After-School Program**

For three years we have watched students come to Pax Christi right from school. Week after week, we watched them grow as a faith community, make "church friends," laugh and learn. We watched them come to understand that church is a great place to be.

The Pax Christi parishioners who taught classes during the afternoons found something special, too. We watched as they arrived early to chat and plan. We watched them transform our stark classrooms into prayerful places to learn. We watched them hang the children's artwork and create prayer tables with fabric, candles and symbols of our faith. We watched as they formed special relationships with other catechists.

And what about us? As Children's Ministry leaders, Renee and I have enjoyed our mornings of preparation. We had time to set our own table with coffee and treats for our special guests, the catechists. We have come to know the children by name. We have had less stress and more prayerful moments.

Considering all of this, imagine our distress when

we heard that the schools were changing their release times! We were concerned that, with the later release time, the after-school religious education classes would not end in time for the 5:00 PM classes to start. Could we still continue the after-school program?

Well, as usual, the Holy Spirit intervened and we were inspired. Why not add another day to bring the children and catechists from these schools to Pax Christi—a day when there wouldn't be a problem with starting and ending times? So, after meeting with Eden Prairie parishioners and the principals of two schools, we've come up with an exciting proposal.

**Three-Day Proposal**

We are adding Monday afternoons to our after-school religious education schedule. We will offer after-school classes on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for students at Oak Point (Eden Prairie school buses will transport the kids to Pax Christi). For students at Eden Lake and Prairie View, we will offer after-school classes on Mondays; for students at Cedar Ridge, Tuesdays; and finally, for students at Forest Hills, Wednesdays. (Adams School Bus Transportation will bus all non-Oak Point students.)

In addition, Pax Christi's Activity Center will remain open until 5:00 PM for those students who cannot be picked up until that time and/or who may have choir practice on Tuesdays.

Why the different days for the different elementary schools? First, for those families who have children at Oak Point and one of the elementary schools, it would be possible for their children to attend religious education on the same day. Second, bus costs double for every school the Adams Company transports. Transporting one school per day seems to be the most responsible way to use the busing budget. And, because the busing budget is made up solely from the bus fees that Eden Prairie bus riders pay with their faith formation program fees, it is necessary to keep our costs within budget constraints.

Finally, why have an after-school program at all?



It doesn't provide faith formation programs for *all* the elementary children of Pax Christi—or does it?

We think it does. Providing after-school classes makes it possible for families outside of Eden Prairie to attend faith formation classes in the evening. Neighbors from Bloomington, Chanhassen, Minnetonka, Edina and the 14 other cities who attend Pax Christi will be able to come together as church community during evening hours. The afternoon and evening programs allow this large parish to come together as smaller faith communities.

**Better Use of Space**

As many of you know, our new building provides 20 classrooms. Yet, this year, we had classes stretched out across both the old and new buildings, so we rarely saw some of the catechists and children. There was "no room at the inn" on Wednesday evenings for any of the other many ministries that offer programs to the adults of our community.

We believe that the after-school program, particularly by adding another day, will allow all the classes to stay in the new building where we can see, communicate with and come to know by name the catechists and children. In this way, we also can offer more evening adult faith formation programs.

**Your Participation Needed**

We think this plan will work successfully if we have enough people:

- to teach;
- to supervise busing at the elementary schools;
- to help in the Activity Center;
- to assist with childcare.

That's our proposal—the rest is up to you! Call today to offer your help: (952) 941-6007.

## May Events at Pax Christi

- 1 Monday**
- Boy Scout Troop Meeting—6:45 PM
  - Camp Bible Study—7:00 PM
- 2 Tuesday**
- Rosary Group—9:45 AM
  - Good Shepherd Program—4:45 PM
  - Renewing Life—5:30 PM
  - Art & Environment Committee—7:00 PM
  - Handbell Choir II—7:00 PM
- 3 Wednesday**
- 12-Step Spirituality Group—9:30 AM
  - Parents of Young Children—9:30 AM
  - Good Shepherd Program—4:45 PM
  - 6th Grade Retreat—6:00 PM
  - Handbell Choir I—6:10 PM
  - Small Group Scripture Study—7:30 PM
- 4 Thursday**
- "Winning in the Game of Life: Spiritual Wisdom Changes More than Tires" Tom Gegax—7:30 AM
  - Women's Bible Study—9:30 AM
  - Good Shepherd Program—4:45 PM
  - Pax Christi Men's Basketball—6:00 PM
  - AA Big Book Study Group—6:30 PM
  - Companion Ministry Meeting—6:45 PM
  - Communal Reconciliation Service—7:00 PM
  - Adult Choir—7:30 PM
  - Alanon—7:30 PM
  - Alcoholics Anonymous—7:30 PM
  - CARE Team Ministry—7:30 PM
- 5 Friday**
- 56ers Year-End Social—7:00 PM
- 6 Saturday**
- First Communion Practice—8:00 AM
  - Trinity Men's Spirituality—8:00 AM
  - "Ancient Aboriginal Teachings on True Consciousness in Living Our Spiritual Values" Tjanara Goreng-Goreng—9:00 AM
  - Angel Hour—9:00 AM
  - Emmaus Community—9:00 AM
  - Good Shepherd Program—9:00 AM
  - Overeaters Anonymous—9:00 AM
- 7 Sunday**
- "Spiritual Resources for Dealing with Change" Julie Neraas—9:00 AM
  - Children's Liturgy of the Word—9:30 & 11:00 AM
  - Franciscan Spirituality—10:30 AM
  - Baptisms—12:30 PM
  - First Communion Celebration—1:30 PM
  - Handbell Festival—3:00 PM
  - Remembrance Service for Pregnancy and Infant Loss—4:00 PM
- 8 Monday**
- Camp Bible Study—7:00 PM
- 9 Tuesday**
- Rosary Group—9:45 AM
  - Senior Gathering—1:30 PM
  - Good Shepherd Program—4:45 PM
  - Renewing Life—5:30 PM
  - Handbell Choir II—7:00 PM
- 10 Wednesday**
- 12-Step Spirituality Group—9:30 AM
  - Good Shepherd Program—4:45 PM
  - Handbell Choir I—6:10 PM
  - RCIA—7:00 PM
  - Ensemble—7:30 PM
  - Small Group Scripture Study—7:30 PM
- 11 Thursday**
- Women's Bible Study—9:30 AM
  - Good Shepherd Program—4:45 PM
  - Pax Christi Men's Basketball—6:00 PM
  - All-Board Dinner—6:00 PM
  - AA Big Book Study Group—6:30 PM
  - "Exodus, Sinai and the Law" Steven Deffler—7:00 PM
  - Liturgy Council—7:00 PM
  - Adult Choir—7:30 PM
  - Alanon—7:30 PM
  - Alcoholics Anonymous—7:30 PM
  - Blended Family—7:30 PM
- 12 Friday**
- Couple-to-Couple—7:00 PM
- 13 Saturday**
- Emmaus Community—9:00 AM
  - First Communion Retreat—9:00 AM
  - Good Shepherd Program—9:00 AM
- 14 Sunday (Mother's Day)**
- New Member Registration—after all Masses
  - Children's Liturgy of the Word—9:30 & 11:00 AM
  - Baptisms—12:30 PM
- 15 Monday**
- Boy Scout Troop Meeting—6:45 PM
  - Camp Bible Study—7:00 PM
- 16 Tuesday**
- Rosary Group—9:45 AM
  - Renewing Life—5:30 PM
  - Handbell Choir II—7:00 PM
  - Men's Personal Growth—7:00 PM
- 17 Wednesday**
- 12-Step Spirituality Group—9:30 AM
  - Parents of Young Children—9:30 AM
  - Handbell Choir I—6:10 PM
  - RCIA—7:00 PM
  - Ensemble—7:30 PM
  - Small Group Scripture Study—7:30 PM
- 18 Thursday**
- Women's Bible Study—9:30 AM
  - Pax Christi Men's Basketball—6:00 PM
  - AA Big Book Study Group—6:30 PM
  - Adult Choir—7:30 PM
  - Alanon—7:30 PM
  - Alcoholics Anonymous—7:30 PM
- 19 Friday**
- 20 Saturday**
- Confirmation Retreat—9:00 AM
  - Overeaters Anonymous—9:00 AM
  - First Communion Practice—9:30 AM
  - Bridge Group Annual Party—6:00 PM
- 21 Sunday**
- Children's Liturgy of the Word—9:30 & 11:00 AM
  - Baptisms—12:30 PM
- 22 Monday**
- Boy Scout Troop Meeting—6:45 PM
  - Camp Bible Study—7:00 PM
- 23 Tuesday**
- Rosary Group—9:45 AM
  - Renewing Life—5:30 PM
- 24 Wednesday**
- 12-Step Spirituality Group—9:30 AM
  - Baptism Preparation—7:00 PM
  - Ensemble—7:30 PM
  - Small Group Scripture Study—7:30 PM
- 25 Thursday**
- Women's Bible Study—9:30 AM
  - Pax Christi Men's Basketball—6:00 PM
  - AA Big Book Study Group—6:30 PM
  - Alanon—7:30 PM
  - Alcoholics Anonymous—7:30 PM
- 26 Friday**
- 27 Saturday**
- Twin City Core Retrouvaille—7:30 AM
  - Overeaters Anonymous—9:00 AM
- 28 Sunday**
- Children's Liturgy of the Word—9:30 & 11:00 AM
  - Baptisms—12:30 PM
  - Emmaus Community—7:00 PM
- 29 Monday (Memorial Day)**
- Building closed
- 30 Tuesday**
- Rosary Group—9:45 AM
  - Renewing Life—5:30 PM
  - Memorial Mass—7:00 PM
- 31 Wednesday**
- 12-Step Spirituality Group—9:30 AM
  - Small Group Scripture Study—7:30 PM

For more information, call the parish office: (952) 941-3150.

### The Leaven Center Program Highlights

#### Winning in the Game of Life: Self-Coaching Secrets for Success

According to Tom Gegax, dynamic speaker, businessman and author, in the game of life, learning the right plays and effective self-coaching are the first steps to true success. That success can include, yet transcend, material gain and involves body, intellect, psyche, spirit and joyful relationships.

Gegax should know: In 1989, after a three-ring wake-up call in the form of cancer, divorce and a floundering business, he developed a comprehensive, integrated game plan for winning in life that breaks down the barrier between being successful at work and being a fulfilled human being.

Integrating the best of Western business models and techniques, mind/body self-care and perennial spiritual wisdom, Gegax's self-coaching approach has helped him achieve life-enhancing relation-

ships, a high level of wellness and career success. He presents his thoughts about "servant leadership" and a team-based, spiritual approach to business in the book *Winning in the Game of Life: Self-Coaching Secrets for Success*.

Gegax, who is the founder and "head coach" (CEO) of Tires Plus, the largest independent tire store chain in the U.S., was named 1995 Minnesota Entrepreneur of the Year by *Inc. Magazine* and Ernst & Young. In 1999, total company sales topped \$207 million. The company boasts an annual growth rate of 23% during 1995-99.

Join us for breakfast and a talk by this innovative business leader on Thursday, May 4, 7:30-9:00 AM (book signing to follow). Reservations are required and there is a \$15 fee. Call The Leaven Center at (952) 946-9709.

#### Ancient Teachings from "Down Under": True Consciousness in Living Our Spiritual Values

The Leaven Center, along with Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality and other Twin Cities sponsors, welcomes back renowned Australian Aboriginal healer, educator, storyteller and songwriter Tjanara Goreng-Goreng. Her visit in fall 1998 had such a significant impact on more than 80 people that we've had many inquiries to invite her back.

She returns on Saturday, May 6, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, for an even livelier discussion of how the Aboriginals, the oldest living culture in the world, have used three universal laws to live in communion with each other and the earth. Learn how abiding by these deceptively simple laws can change life as we know it and enhance our ability to live more consciously and fully our spiritual values.

"Why all the excitement?" you may wonder. Tjanara is quite a presence! From the moment you see her you are curiously drawn in by the mysteriousness and

beauty of her Aboriginal features. Her deep, dark eyes hold the wisdom of the ages, long dark curls outline a face that reveals infinite tenderness, and an overall presence exudes an integrity that is rare and true.

In our first afternoon with Tjanara, we learned about Biame (God), healing, songlines, walkabouts, big little deaths, sacred connections and guidance of the ancestors, and the Christian conversions of Aboriginal youth. Tjanara, who was raised Roman Catholic, offered insights into the ways in which Christianity converges and diverges with her ancient Aboriginal heritage. Hearing her perspective and stepping into her culture enabled many of us to encounter our own faith in a new and meaningful way.

Reservations are required and enrollment is limited, so please register early: (952) 946-9709. The \$50 fee includes lunch and an unforgettable experience!

# Economic Justice for All: An Appeal to Transform the World's Economic Institutions

by Thomas Harvey

In 1986, the Catholic bishops of the United States issued their pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All*. Since its publication, one of the most charged discussions has been the appropriate role of religion and spirituality in economic matters. Two perspectives have shaped the debate.

One perspective viewed religion primarily as an instrument of personal conversion. If institutions are shaped and managed by morally sensitive leaders, then such institutions will positively contribute to the good of people, of society and of the world. This viewpoint represented a very popular notion of religion within the United States and surfaces under various guises. During the welfare debates of 1996, there were calls for less government (an institution that exists to promote the general welfare) and for more reliance on individuals within faith-based communities to solve problems associated with poverty, a reflection of an individualistic spirituality.

The second perspective holds a more expansive expectation for religion in economic matters. In this view, not just individuals need conversion; institutions do as well. Institutions are the structures through which people, their values and their activities are organized. If organized unjustly, or if they function unjustly, the institutions should be considered unjust. In some ways, unjust institutions pose a greater threat to human dignity than individuals who act unjustly. Such institutions structure and thus perpetuate the injustice.

## From a Spirituality of Individualism

As I listen to those who would limit the role of religion to one of fostering individual conversion, I try to apply their logic to slavery, which fundamentally an economic institution. I wondered if anyone would really want religion to be a force to develop morally sensitive slave owners on the one hand and to comfort the afflicted slaves on the other.

As absurd as this seems, this very kind of spirituality was an influential force in the formation of the United States. The architects of the Declaration of Independence called for a nation that promised "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for all people. Yet they permitted the institution of economic slavery, based on race, to be given the protection of law in a significant part of the new nation. The spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching challenges the moral assumptions on which slavery or any evil system is based.

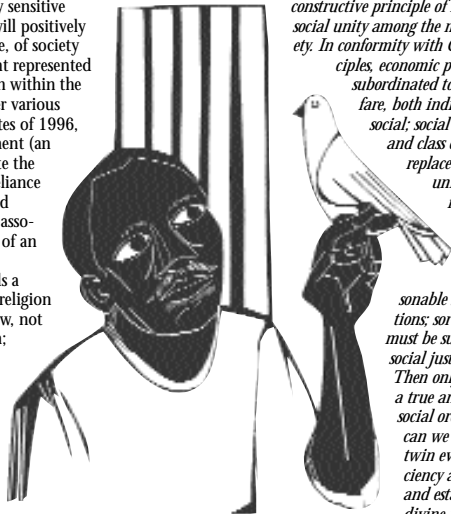
Catholic Social Teaching describes official documents of the magisterium of the Catholic Church that address any structured aspect of society that puts humanity at risk. It looks not just at individual behavior, but at the social context through which behavior is structured. This body of official teachings began in 1891 with the publication of *Rerum Novarum*, the encyclical of Leo XII on the rights of labor. A treasury of such teachings addressing issues critical to human well being and to just social structures now exists. *Economic Justice for All* lies at the heart of this mainstream body of teachings that bring the power of social analysis, based on biblical revelation and religious tradition, to bear on societal problems.

## Toward Moral and Social Unity

In fact, *Economic Justice for All* is not the first official social teaching of the bishops within the United States on economic matters. The Wall Street crash of 1929 triggered a worldwide economic depression, with rampant unemployment. The unemployed poor were the majority in this nation. Unemployment could not easily be blamed on individual behavior. It was a recognized result of the failure of the marketplace as structured at that time. The problems of the poor were the nation's problems. And the problems had to be solved through structured intervention and institutional change, not by fixing the unemployed.

In 1940, under the leadership of Karl Alter, then bishop of Toledo, the bishops addressed the economic conditions of the Great Depression in a pastoral letter. The final paragraph of the 1940 document is worth remembering. It unequivocally takes umbrage with a spirituality of individualism in such matters:

*Our economic life then must be reorganized, not on the disintegrating principles of individualism, but on the constructive principle of moral and social unity among the members of society. In conformity with Christian principles, economic power must be subordinated to human welfare, both individual and social; social incoherence and class conflict must be replaced by corporate unity and organic function; ruthless competition must give way to just and reasonable state regulations; sordid selfishness must be superseded by social justice and charity. Then only can there be a true and rational social order; then only can we eliminate the twin evils of inefficiency and insecurity, and establish the divine plan of a human family united under the (providence) of God.*



## Biblical Roots of Catholic Social Teaching

These teachings, as all other documents of Catholic Social Teaching, rely on other heritages of the faith as well. For brevity, I will mention two.

Social teachings about society and its institutions have roots in the earliest stories of the Bible. The people of God were forged as a people in a cauldron of unjust political and economic social arrangements. Consider the Exodus story of Israel's conversion experience, which led to the discovery that they were to have a special role in this world mandated by God.

The story opens with the people—the entire Hebrew people—enslaved in Egypt. Their liberation will become symbolic of the freedom from every oppression that God wills for all people. God did not send Moses to make the Pharaoh a more morally sensitive person. God's plan was for all to be free. Moses was not to tinker with the plan, but to implement it!

After several disrupting plagues, Pharaoh decided it would be better to let the men go, but keep the women and children to ensure future generations of slaves. He sent for Moses and Aaron and asked: "Who will you take on this journey?" (Exodus 10:9) The reply: "We will take our sons and our daughters, our young and our old, our flocks and our herds!" The mission was nonnegotiable. Redemption was for everyone.

In the desert, a covenant with God was codified. Through this, the Hebrews would be God's people "through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed." How were these people to be recognized as God's people? By their institutions, by their social arrangements, especially those that safeguarded the poorest and weakest among the people.

And when the people failed, punishment was not given to individuals. The conquests and resultant exiles of the Hebrews reveal God's wrath at the betrayal of the Covenant by the people, not just by individuals. Thus we see that the earliest teachings of Judeo-Christianity focus on the community and its institutional arrangements.

## Visionaries Challenge Unjust Structures

The other heritage of Catholic Social Teaching can be traced to those visionaries who were immersed in the lives of those most adversely affected by the new realities of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. They brought the lived power of the Gospel (praxis) to bear on the signs of the times. These witnesses to Christ's love included the founders

of the modern activist religious orders and lay associations. They challenged the assumptions of why some participated in the goods of society and why some were excluded. Specialized service was often the chosen method of intervention, the value transcendent.

An example will make the point. An assumption of 18th-century France (and of Europe in general) was that the poor could not, or should not, be educated. St. John the Baptist de La Salle (as well as many others) rejected that assumption. He organized a group of men (the Christian Brothers) to teach poor boys. Relatively few boys directly benefited from his service. Yet, as a result of these efforts, France, and its counterparts throughout the industrializing world, made the right to education a universal right. Thus private educational undertakings for, and with, the poorest forced a public awareness that education had to be restructured. It was a matter of justice. And with restructuring, all of society benefited by having an expanded pool of educated workers and leaders.

## A New Humane Global Community

Recently, participants in a conference commemorating the publication of *Economic Justice for All*, added a chapter of their own to the documents of Catholic Social Teaching to challenge other people of good will at this time in history:

"Deep attention to the presence of the unifying Spirit of God can draw people of diverse religious traditions together in ways that foreshadow the truly humane global community God wills for all humanity. It will lead to mutually sustaining relationships with one another and with all creation, encountering a God who lives among us and honoring that Presence by our treatment of the other with justice and compassion, with love. This renewed spirituality will feed our hunger for meaning and temper culturally cultivated temptations to excessive individualism, to consumerism, to control, to greed. It will shape our vision of the future and critique proposals for getting there. It will inspire new social structures of justice and breathe passionate life into them. The tradition of Catholic Social Thought can help sustain this spirituality and shape the social structures."

Thomas Harvey holds the Philip Land Chair in Applied Catholic Social Thought at the Center of Concern, Washington, D.C.

## Parish Directory

### Pax Christi Publishes New Photo Directory

We have awaited this day with keen anticipation. Pax Christi's new photo directories will arrive in early May! We are expecting a first-rate publication.

If you participated in the parish photo project, you are entitled to one complimentary copy of the directory in exchange for the letter that is being mailed to your home. Additional copies are available for all members to purchase at \$5 each.

We encourage every household to obtain a copy of this illustrated directory. It captures our community at the beginning of the new millennium and will be a valuable resource in helping us connect to one another.

Please watch the weekly bulletin for information on the distribution schedule.



**Visioning Process**

## Vision Presented to Council for Final Phase

by Sandra Chmielewski



Irwin Templin, Sandra Chmielewski and Judy McCloskey exchange perspectives with parishioners, Council members and staff on the results of the Vision Process.

Webster's dictionary describes "vision" in many ways. One description notes vision to be a "concept of imaginative contemplation...." Many among our Pax Christi community have prayerfully, mindfully and imaginatively contemplated a five-year Vision—a concept we imagine will guide us in spiritual growth and connectedness as Jesus has taught us.

On April 2, the Vision Writing Team presented the Vision draft to community members for final review. In describing the energy in the room that day, Pax Christi member Cassie Erkins felt "a profound depth that touched people, even though there were different perspectives."

"The Vision Process has been mindfully done," shared staff member Mary Poepping. "The Vision articulates what we want this place to look like."

Along with many affirmations, questions around some of the wording still remained. Commenting on these remaining concerns, Community Council member Bob Rubenzer stated, "I don't know if we could

ever achieve complete consensus. At some point we need to move forward as a community."

Pax Christi members who participated in conversations that day identified questions and issues for the Council to consider as they embrace the Vision. Suggestions most often made were that the Council should take time prayerfully to discern strategies for implementation, keep listening to the Pax Christi community and invite participation when implementing the Vision.

After reviewing the work of the Vision Writing Team and listening to parish member responses, the Vision Coordinating Team submitted the second draft to the Community Council. Recommended changes, supported by April 2 feedback and the Vision Process, accompanied the draft. Also, the Vision Coordinating Team, whose task was to design and implement the Vision Process, offered the Council process suggestions for the final phase, which includes implementation of the Vision.

*Editor's Note: Pax Christi's new Vision statement remains in dynamic process. On April 27 the Vision Coordinating Team presented the latest draft of the document to the Community Council. The Council in turn*

*will spend a period of time in prayerful discernment of this Vision before issuing the final statement. In the June edition of The Pax Christi News, the Council will report on the emerging trends in the Vision. Then, in the fall of this year, the Council will present the completed Vision document to the entire community.*



Betsy Knapp and Rochon Bergevin-Smith led the April 2 final review of the Vision draft.

**Review the Process for Yourself**  
Vision Process data and information are available in the Pax Christi library. Please feel free to skim or study at your leisure. The materials are just inside to the left, marked Vision Process.

### Easter Visioning Prayer

• Focus for Prayer

"The risen Christ comes to meet us, as surely as the dawn ends the night, and to show us the path to life."—*Marrocco*

• Quiet Time for a Few Moments

• Reading for Meditation

"Easter season is a time of hope. There is still fear, there is still a painful awareness of sinfulness, but there is also light breaking through. Something new is happening, something that goes beyond the changing moods of our lives. We can be joyful or sad, optimistic or pessimistic, tranquil or angry, but the solid stream of God's presence moves deeper than the small waves of our minds and hearts.

"Easter brings the awareness that God is present even when his presence is not directly noticed. Easter brings the good news that, although things seem to get worse in the world, the Evil One has already been overcome. Easter allows us to affirm that although God seems very distant and although we remain preoccupied with many little things, our Lord walks with us on the road and keeps explaining the Scriptures to us. Thus there are many rays of hope casting their light on our way through life."—*Henri Nouwen*

• Thoughts for Meditation

"When we limit our encounter with the risen Jesus to occasions we designate as holy, we are often disappointed." Where else in your life could you expect to encounter the risen Jesus?

If you have participated in the Visioning process at Pax Christi even in a small way, what are some of the gifts you have received as a result of that experience?



• Prayer

Almighty, everlasting God, you conquered death through your son and opened for us the path to eternal life. And so we celebrate in joy the feast of the resurrection.

Make us new through your Spirit, so that we too may rise and walk in the light of life.

We ask this through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*Prepared by Maggie Hessian*

## Community Council Membership, Constitution to Change

by Bob Martinka

The Community Council is addressing a modification in its membership and constitution. Due to the nature of the Council's membership changes, timing and slight growth over the years, the Council would (by default) experience a 50% or four-member turnover this year and every third year hereafter. On behalf of the parish, it is the Community Council's plan to take steps to avoid such a turnover and to further ensure continuity of membership, knowledge and working relationships to better serve the parish.

The steps being planned are three-fold. The first two steps are not specifically accommodated for in the current Community Council constitution, but are planned as follows:

Kim Grams, who was selected to replace a Council member in the second year of that member's three-year term (in 1998), has agreed to stay on for an additional year. This allows the Council to provide a smooth transition to a three-person turnover this year

and every year hereafter (from the current 4-2-2 to 3-3-3).

Sara Muehlenbein has agreed to switch from the Community Council's Vision subcommittee to its Action subcommittee this coming Council year, in the third year of her three-year term. This allows us to avoid a full turnover of women on the Vision committee next year (2001) and every third year thereafter.

The third step will require a change to the constitution, as it will entail the adding of a *ninth* selected member of the Community Council (instead of the current *eighth*). This will be documented in the short term as an addendum to the Constitution until it is fully instituted in spring 2002:

In 2002, *two* current Community Council members (Ruth Ische and Bob Martinka) will complete their three-year terms, and *three* new Council members will be selected. This will allow us then to have fully gender-balanced voting on the Council (five



women and five men, including Fr. Tim Power), and to finally complete the transition of the Community Council membership turnover.

Questions or comments regarding these planned changes can be directed to any member of the Community Council, to the Council voicemail at (952) 941-3150 x788, or can be reviewed further on the Community Council pages of Pax Christi's Web site: [www.paxchristi.com](http://www.paxchristi.com)

# Eucharist Without Walls: Part II

*A Pastoral Letter by Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., Archbishop of Milwaukee*

*As part of our Vision Process, this article is reprinted for your continued prayer and reflection. Eucharist Without Walls: Part II was originally published in November 1999.*

Exactly 50 years ago on October 7, the Feast of the Holy Rosary, I found myself at Lourdes in France. What a moving experience for a young man of 22: the candlelight procession at night in the large square; the fervent singing of the Lourdes hymn, the Ave Maria; the large numbers of sick and lame with their expectant faces filling the square; that tremendous expression of faith in Jesus Christ shared by thousands.

The next day I boarded the train for the long and tedious trek back to Rome where I was studying theology. In 1949 the trains were crowded and not too comfortable. I caught the train to Marseilles just on time, found a comfortable corner and half dozed off. Eventually, three others entered the compartment. First, a young woman—pretty, but looking so very tired and cuddling a child I judged to be about six, greatly deformed and in need of much care. Last, a middle-aged man—elegantly dressed and (for some reason I remember this detail) hanging on tightly to a handsome leather briefcase.

The conversation started at once and roused me from my nap. In a rather whiny and nasal voice, the gentleman asked the young woman if she was coming from Lourdes. "Yes" was the simple reply. "And did you expect a miracle?" he snidely asked again. After 50 years I can still repeat her reply: "Each year I come to Lourdes with my child. I have been doing so now for five years. And each year I come away with the courage to face life for another year. That is miracle enough for me."

How I wish all Catholics were able to say those same words about Sunday Mass: "Each Sunday I come to Mass and I find the courage to face another week." For the kind of conviction that results in the practice of participating at Mass every Sunday, one needs a renewed esteem for the value of the Mass in itself and in the life of every disciple of Christ.

## Encounter Christ Every Sunday

We must see the Mass, first of all, as an encounter with Jesus Christ. What a unique event Sunday Mass could become in our lives if we were to do so! Christ invites us personally each Sunday to his Last Supper. We all have so many excuses for refusing the invitation. The events of the Last Supper, the sacrifice on Calvary, and the resurrection on Easter Sunday are all made present at the Mass—to which we should add, of course, his presence at Pentecost through the powerful action of the Holy Spirit. We encounter Jesus Christ in all these events rolled into one.

The encounter with Jesus Christ at Mass is both personal and communal. We must keep both aspects in mind. It is personal and, in that sense, also very subjective, because Jesus Christ comes into each one of our lives. He is not out there somewhere, but in our midst here and now, in our very being. All the graces and benefits, all the dynamic power of love and forgiveness that were historically at work in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are now

present to each one of us. Through that belief we obtain the courage and strength to face another day, another week. The real presence of Christ on the altar becomes alive in us in Holy Communion. Could there be any presence so intimate, so overwhelming and so full of love?

## Be with Others in Christ

The presence of Christ is also communal. It is a community of faith that is gathered at Mass, not a group of isolated atoms. We are with others in Christ when we encounter Christ. We followers of Christ are convinced with Saint Paul that Jesus Christ can now never be separated from the fullness of the Body, the Church. Wherever Jesus is now, he brings with him the whole Body, all the saints, all the baptized, because they are all united to him. The Mass is, thus, both a personal and a communal meeting with Jesus Christ.

That is why we celebrate the Mass together: We listen, we respond, we sing, we accept the priest's greeting as one. We also greet each other with a sign of peace to show through that gesture that our unity is deep and not something superficial. It is a sign that we want to be one with all the others in Christ. We pray for the living and the dead, we invoke Mary and the saints. Throughout the Mass we try to keep both the personal and communal aspect in mind so that we are interiorly one with Christ, but ever mindful that in and through the same Christ we are united to one another. The action of the Holy Spirit at Mass is a unifying one.

It is that unifying experience to which we become so attached. The experience of praying together becomes an experience of intense joy—one we want to continue to share. Parishes that embrace and feed their faithful with both the personal and communal

aspects of Eucharist are the strongest and most vibrant.

## Go Forth in Love and Peace

In our culture it would be so easy to stop here and see everything in terms of what each one of us has received at Mass and how that will strengthen us in our relationship to Jesus Christ. Wisely, though, we are taught that Eucharist does not stop at the walls of the church, that we must then bring the presence of Jesus Christ to the world in which we live. The Eucharist must break down the walls that divide the church from home, from the marketplace.

Often we say that we have to become Eucharist to and for others, that we have to be Eucharist to the world. Since the way this will work itself out for each one of the faithful will vary according to the situation in which each one finds him/herself, I can only ask questions about how we should act as we exit the church doors when the priest or deacon says that the Mass is ended, go forth in love and peace to serve the Lord and one another.

How do I bring the presence of Jesus Christ to my personal life? If I am a student, it means asking myself how I relate to others around me in so many aspects of school life and in so many different circumstances. If I am a parent, it means asking myself how to bring that presence to the home, to those with whom I am most intimate. If I am single, how do I bring Jesus Christ into my friendships? In each one of those circumstances there is always need for courage and love. It is often more difficult to bring Christ into the workplace. There we might have less control over what happens and are often more passive. But Christ must be found there as well.

## Say Little Prayers during the Day

Finally, there is leisure. How do I bring Christ into my recreation, or do I lose that strong presence of Christ at that point? These are the questions one must ask. The trick I find is to say little prayers during the day, just short reminders of Christ's presence. These calm us down and give meaning to the whole of our day and lives.

How do we bring hope and courage to the larger society and world? This is the challenge the Eucharist presents not just to the individual but to the whole faith community.

That question will make no sense, however, if we have not been at Eucharist on Sunday, if we are not a part of the Eucharistic community. For each of us, individually and collectively, it is necessary to return again to Mass every Sunday, to have our spiritual batteries recharged Sunday after Sunday, so that we can face the challenges in the following week of bringing Christ as light to the world.

Because Jesus Christ had a special love for the poor and those who were living at the margins of society, we cannot be a Eucharistic community without constantly questioning how we are reaching out to the less fortunate. Seeing Christ in them should be the result of our union with Christ in the Eucharist.

*Note: View this entire letter at [www.catholicjubilee.org](http://www.catholicjubilee.org)*



*What would be my hope?*

*I am permitted to dream: that on Every Sunday the Masses would be so well attended that one would think Every Sunday was Christmas or Easter.*

*Why should it not be so?*

REMBERT G. WEAKLAND

## March Parishioner News

### BAPTISMS

Tyler Michael Buckman  
son of Natalie & Timothy Buckman

Katie Michelle Clouthier  
daughter of Lisa & John Clouthier

Kelly Ann Clouthier  
daughter of Lisa & John Clouthier

Michael James Clouthier  
son of Lisa & John Clouthier

Stephen Luke Conway  
son of Janet & Allen Conway

Nick James Ehresman  
son of Jan & Lee Ehresman

Sam John Ehresman  
son of Jan & Lee Ehresman

Colin Richard Fitzgerald  
son of Pauline & Richard Fitzgerald

Caroline Elsie Koehl  
daughter of Jennifer & Michael Koehl

Maia Catherine McGough Kurvers  
daughter of Margaret & Craig Kurvers

Kieran Murphy Ludke  
son of Catherine & Kevin Ludke

Madison Anne Mahlen  
daughter of Jean & Todd Mahlen

Isaac Joseph Martin  
son of Bonnie & Joseph Martin

Christopher Jacob Miller  
son of Patricia & George Miller

Andrew Michael Norfolk  
son of Kara & Michael Norfolk

Samantha Lauren Salo  
daughter of Judi & Randall Salo

Amanda Nicole Tahnk-Johnson  
daughter of Mary & Ray Tahnk-Johnson

Aimee Marie Trudeau  
daughter of Jane & Scott Trudeau

Andrew James Trudeau  
son of Jane & Scott Trudeau

Alyssa Louise Wedin  
daughter of Karen & John Wedin

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Liz & Tom Batta  
Colleen & Pete Betker

Pat & Tim Bot

Leanne & Sean Connelly

Elizabeth Dostal

Wrinthia Encarnanzen

Solange Eso

Diane Esterley

Elinor Esterley

Lisa & Arthur Fratamico

Diane & Paul Gillis

Glenda & David Halter

Ann & Michael Johnson

Kelly Jones

Janelle Jurek

Shannon & Michelle Kern

Patricia & Robert Kramer

Ellen Krumholz

Laurie Montgomery

Melissa & Patrick Nault

Bob Norman

Kathy Norman

Marie Ntangi

Rita Ntangi

Kathy Pfann

Jackie & Brian Ramsay

Judine Reinhardt

Kim & Dean Rudrud

Barbara & Gerard Ruehle

Greg Schmitt

Michelle Smith

Joseph Sutcliffe

Todd Tennyson

Deb Theisen

Mike Thompson

William Thompson

Lisa Voska

Deborah Weiser

Sara Wickman

### MARRIAGE

Brenda Johnson & Kevin Caspers

### REST IN PEACE

David L. Gorski  
Marguerite Rutter

**Commentary**

## One-Time-Only People

by Fr. Tim Power



We know that most children sleep with Teddy bears or stuffed tigers or a special blanket. But did you ever hear of a three-year-old who sleeps with a can of anchovy fillets—King Oscar brand, caught off Morocco and distributed by the H.J. Nosaki Company in New York? Brian Doyle says that is exactly what his son Liam does. He sleeps with the can every night; won't go to sleep without it under his right cheek.

Brian goes to his son's room each night after Liam is asleep to remove the can. In the dark he wonders: "What's the deal with this boy and his anchovies? How is it that we are drawn to the odd things we love? What do we know about anchovies other than their savory saltiness?"

Subsequently, Brian has done some research on anchovies. They don't survive in captivity so we know little about them. We know that they range in dimension from a Brazilian anchovy the size of your thumb-nail to a ravenous New Guinea anchovy as long as your forearm. We know that their hearing is perhaps the sharpest of any marine animal. We know that their noses contain a



sensory organ that no other creature in the world has. What's it for? We don't know.

We know they get their food by dragging their open mouths through the ocean in mammoth schools. What do they eat? We don't know. There are dense nets in their cheeks. What are they for? We don't know.

### Fully Mysterious Creatures

Brian came to the conclusion that the anchovy is a fully mysterious creature. But, as he sat in the dark of his boy's bedroom, he became deeply aware that his very son was also a fully mysterious creature. He writes: "He is a startling, one-time-only, bone-headed miracle with a sensory complex in his head and heart that I can only guess at and dimly try to savor in the few brilliant moments I have been given to swim with him."

Thank you, Brian, for sharing this experience of your son and the anchovies. It reminded me of all the energy I sometimes spend trying to "figure someone out" rather than to just savor them. It reminded me that I do not always appreciate the many "fully mysterious creatures" that God sends to swim in my part of the ocean of life.

It reminded me that as spring and summer emerge and I stop to marvel at flowers and trees and the creatures of our world, even more I need to appreciate the "startling, one-time-only" people who surround me. I hope you will do the same. ✠

## Five Good Ways to Leave a Legacy

by Roger Beaubien

Americans are an extraordinarily generous people—in fact, in 1997 more than \$140 billion was contributed to non-profit organizations. Churches and religious institutions received the greatest share of these dollars. And, as is so often the case, Minnesota is among the most generous states.

Minnesotans are making a considerable difference in our communities through charitable donations. More and more of these gifts are being made through what is known as planned giving. These are gifts of either current or future benefit to a charity that are made through bequests or through a variety of estate or planned lifetime gifts.

Over 70% of Americans give some type of charitable donation—from supporting their local faith community to helping alleviate the suffering of the poor throughout the world. But as incredible as it sounds, only 6% of us have made arrangements for a charitable gift in our will or estate plans. We would like to erase this "64% gap."

A planned charitable gift benefits so many people including the donor who derives great personal satisfaction from the legacy that is left. Planned charitable giving is a tangible way for us to have an enduring stake in our faith community by supporting long after our death the vision and the programs that are close to our heart.



### How to Leave a Legacy to Pax Christi

- *Prepare a will or a living trust.* Half of those who die have neither. Without a will or living trust, you will lose control of your hard-earned assets.

- *Leave a gift in your will or trust to Pax Christi.* Name a specific dollar amount or percentage of the assets in your estate.

- *Consider naming specific assets for your charitable gift.* These include, but are not limited to: stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, real estate, vehicles, art and jewelry. Such gifts may even provide tax savings.

- *Name Pax Christi as the beneficiary of your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or pension plan.*

- *Name Pax Christi as the beneficiary of a new or an existing life insurance policy.*

Imagine the positive impact on our community if everyone made even a modest gift to Pax Christi in their estate plans. We are ready to help you with your gift planning. Call Roger Beaubien, director of financial development, for more information: (952) 941-3150 x25. ✠

**News in Brief**

**ART COMMITTEE TO ENHANCE THE ESTHETICS OF OUR FACILITY:** This small group (Karen Goon, Jan Mahoney and Sue Marshall) seeks additional members.

Their initial charge is threefold: to serve as custodians of our artwork and its proper placement; to produce a Pax Christi art book that documents the origin, history and value of our art; and to acquire appropriate crucifixes for all major spaces and meeting rooms of the building. As it moves forward, the Art Committee will write an art vision statement for the parish, develop more art resources and provide assistance to parishioners who purchase art to donate. To see their work to date, look at the art in the Chief Joseph Room, East Link. To serve on the Art Committee, call Karen Goon, (952) 975-9880 (evenings).

**PIONEER TRAIL (COUNTY ROAD 1) IS SLATED FOR MAJOR RECONSTRUCTION, BEGINNING JULY 2000.** The stretch between Highways 212 and 169 will become a four-lane, divided highway. Hennepin County plans that Pioneer Trail will remain open throughout the current construction season. During the 2001 construction season, a new culvert will be installed at Purgatory Creek (just to the east of Pax Christi). At that time, through-traffic will be interrupted and a detour will be in effect. A final paving of the new highway and landscaping will be completed in summer 2002. The \$9.4 million project eventually will improve travel to and from Pax Christi. In the meantime, we will keep you informed of developments in order to minimize any inconvenience.

**HELP PAX CHRISTI SELECT THREE NEW MEMBERS TO COMMUNITY COUNCIL ON PENTECOST WEEK-END:** Below is a recap of the process to select one woman and two men. Please continue to pray for the Spirit's guidance of the process and empowerment of the members chosen for this important leadership role.

- April 29/30  
Nomination Weekend during all Masses
- May 2  
Invitation letter sent to all nominees
- May 5-12  
Council contacts each nominee
- May 15  
Information night
- June 7  
Discernment prayer service
- June 10  
Selection of new Community Council members at 5:00 PM Mass; Pentecost blessing at Saturday and Sunday Masses
- June 25/26  
Community Council Retreat

**IN HONOR OF MOMS:** Pax Christi's Twelve Baskets Ministry is sponsoring a "May Flowers Baby Care Drive" on May 20-21. Bring new clothing items and accessories for babies (newborn to 12 months): layette items, bedding and blankets, formula and bottles, baby food, diapers, safe baby toys and disposable cameras for baby photos. Donations will be given to St. Joseph's Community Homes, Seton Services of Catholic Charities and Mother/Baby Help Program. The loving embrace of new life that enters this world in fragile circumstances lends a larger meaning to our celebration of Mother's Day.

**WHAT'S COOKING IN THE LEAVEN CENTER'S INCUBATOR?**

1—Ministry leaders Carolyn VonWeiss and Irwin Templin and more than 100 couples joined Bill Doherty, Ph.D., for an evening of conversation, insight and sumptuous dessert at the launching of The Marriage Initiative. Phase Two involves a "community activation team" that will take the ministry to the next stage of development.

2—Sharing a prayer is a lovely, inspired thing. At least we think so. So we're delighted to be working with Patty Byro on introducing the community (and hopefully some Catholic publishers!) to her thoughtful, contemporary approach to praying the rosary. An event is scheduled for December; call us if you'd like to help further develop the prayer.

3—How do you find a place for yourself in the communal experience of worship if you have a child with special needs? Parents of children with ADHD welcome you to assist with this Incubator project.

4—After spending her entire pre-ministry career in the information industry, Trish Vanni can't resist looking at a cutting edge, Web-based tool to support parishes and the disciples that comprise them. A team is assembling to build a more sophisticated presence for The Leaven Center on the Web. Become a "dot-com" entrepreneur for God!

*If you are interested in participating in or have questions about any of the above Ministry Incubator efforts, call Betsy Knapp at (952) 946-9709 x75.*





# The Pax Christi News

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## Building Up the Reign of God: Ascension and Pentecost

by John Bennett

This year the feast of the Ascension will be celebrated on the Seventh Sunday of Easter (June 3-4) instead of the preceding Thursday.

This was a decision of the bishops of the Midwest who felt that the importance of this feast for the Church was such that it should be celebrated on Sunday. Some may find that disconcerting since the date of the feast of the Ascension has traditionally been fixed on the Thursday that marks 40 days after Easter—Jesus is said to have appeared among the disciples for 40 days.

However, we need to be careful not to see the feasts and celebrations of the Easter cycle as a re-enactment of the historical events, requiring such exact timing that the celebrations have the same chronological relationship as the actual events themselves (and this is even begging the question of the historical timing of these events).

The feast of the Ascension, traditionally celebrated on Thursday, June 1, this year has been transferred to the following Sunday, June 4. There is no longer a separate holy day of obligation associated with this feast in our Archdiocese.

### In Glorious Exaltation

This change in how we observe the feast of the Ascension is an opportune time to reflect on what this feast is about. What we celebrate in this feast is not simply a startlingly miraculous event—Christ ascending into the clouds—but rather the mystery of Christ's glorious exaltation as ruler of the universe enthroned "at the right hand of God." Neither is this feast merely a celebration of a mythical understanding of what happened to Christ after the resurrection and why Christ is no longer with us as he was in those days.

The Ascension is a celebration of Christ anointed as the glorified one who sends the Spirit upon the church, who remains with us through that same Spirit and who sends us forth in mission to the world. In fact, the disciples are told specifically not to stand around gazing up into the sky. Rather, as the Gospel of the day teaches us, we are to go into the world, proclaim the Gospel and work for the building up of the reign of God.

This feast celebrates our own anointing as well, a day to remember our confirmation that marks our sharing in the royal priesthood of Christ. This feast is intimately tied to Pentecost.

### Gift of the Spirit

If the feast of the Ascension celebrates our call to mission, the feast of Pentecost celebrates the sending of the Spirit as the energizing presence that gifts us and enables us to accomplish the mission of Christ in the world.

It has been our tradition here at Pax Christi to select by lot those who will serve on the Community Council as successors to the Council members who have completed their three-year term of leadership. Last year we added to this tradition a blessing by the community of all those serving on the Council, and a blessing and calling forth of the community's gifts by the members of the Community Council. This is a very appropriate thing to do on this day when we celebrate the birth of the church and the gifting of the church with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

*We invite all Pax Christi parishioners and guests to wear red on the feast of Pentecost (June 10-11) as a sign of the Holy Spirit present in each person and in the community as a whole. It is a celebration not to be missed!*



## Revering Life, Reducing Violence: My Own Personal Rally

by Mary Beth Schleif

Reverence for life takes on many forms. Vocal protesters against the death penalty, abortion, military action or assisted suicide have a reverence for life that they act out in a very public way. While I'll probably never join them in their chants or marches, I will agree with them in spirit.

To me, reverence for life is not about such large-scale, public issues or actions. It's more of an everyday philosophy suited to my life as a mother. Rather than those high-profile issues that focus on the end of life, I'm actually more interested in preserving the life that is all around us—and making sure that all of it is given the respect it deserves.

I'm thinking in terms of the newly implemented catch-and-release policy at our house whenever we capture a butterfly or insect. It just doesn't seem right to study and marvel at God's creatures and then leave them to die in a jar.

I'm also thinking about how I felt when I started sharing fairy tales with my toddler daughter. I had loved them when I was young, so I was excited to begin reading them to her. But my copy of *Grimm's Fairy Tales* is filled with stories of wicked stepmothers mistreating their stepchildren, beautiful princesses degrading and belittling commoners, and servants tricking their masters. Many characters are completely self-centered and there are a lot of violent solutions to problems. These just weren't ideas I wanted to introduce. We found other books to read together.

### Choose to Be Peaceful, Not Just Anti-Violent

And while toy weapons and violent television shows are also banned from our house, that's not even the whole point. The point is what we do. We don't just avoid violence, we try to be peaceful. We discuss alternatives to violent actions. We work hard to be polite to each other at home and wherever we go. We talk about how people feel, and how we can avoid hurting feelings.

We, as a family, give to charities that help other families who don't have what we have. We try to remember to thank people who are kind to us or help us. We respect the property of other people.

While none of these are new or unique ideas, I think they deserve a lot of attention. I want not only to teach the importance of these simple values to my children while they're young, but also to stress that the values should be a part of their lives forever.

And as they try to practice them, I think they'll also have a reverence for life and a tendency toward peaceful behavior.

Of course, my own personal behaviors probably won't affect very much of the rest of the world. But I'm also supporting an organization that focuses on curbing violence, especially

among children ("Lion and Lamb Project"), and I've found a set of guidelines I'm embracing. I can't say it's going to bring about an end to violence, but it can't hurt, and who knows what it might do.

### Embrace Every Living Being

In his book *Raising Nonviolent Children in a Violent World*, Michael Obsatz answers the question "How can America become more peace loving?" with the following ideas for demonstrating that every living human being is valued:

- Make every child a high priority.
- Value people for their inherent worth rather than for material wealth and social status.
- Take care of those who are poor in spirit and material goods.
- Make morality and ethical decisionmaking vitally important.
- Support victims who experience abuse.
- Teach children that helping others is gratifying.
- Encourage independence but also encourage community building.
- Support a work ethic by which all workers have dignity.
- Value peacemakers and teach peaceful conflict resolution.
- Appreciate ordinary heroes.

While I won't be carrying a placard or megaphone stating my views, I think my actions will have an impact. Consider it my own personal rally.

