

# ST. CHARLES BORROMEIO CATHOLIC CHURCH

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2019

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2** Stewardship of Treasure  
Giving to God First
- 3** Celebrating God's Love
- 4** Staying Connected to Christ and the Community through Outreach  
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
- 6** The Blessings of the Catholic Mass
- 7** Tri-Parish Seniors Group Maintains Strong Fellowship

## PREPARING FOR FOREVER

..... *MEET OUR MARRIAGE PREPARATION SPONSOR COUPLES*

**T**he dress. The flowers. The menu. There are usually a million things to accomplish between “Will you marry me?” and “I do.” But for couples preparing to be married at St. Charles Borromeo, the parish hopes to help not only in preparing for the details of the big day, but also in supporting couples as they plan for a marriage that will last a lifetime.

Over the years, many dedicated married couples have chosen to serve as Marriage Preparation Sponsor Couples, walking alongside engaged couples as they prepare to enter into the sacrament together, and playing an important role in their formation.



*Marriage Preparation Sponsor Couples walk alongside engaged couples as they prepare for marriage.*

Parishioners Ed and Susan Langham began the Marriage Preparation program when their own children were preparing to be married.

“When I started working at St. Charles, there was nothing for engaged couples and since we have six kids, I wanted some preparation in the Catholic Church for when they would get married,” says Susan of the impetus behind this ministry.

Now, nearly 30 years later, they’re still involved.

For couples who are preparing to be married at St. Charles Borromeo, a two-part

..... *continued on back cover*



## STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

### *GIVING TO GOD FIRST*

Have you ever wondered why no one really becomes uneasy when someone brings up the first two “Ts” of stewardship – giving of your time or talents – but when the third “T” comes up, many of us become uncomfortable?

That third “T” is treasure, and some people simply become so annoyed by the subject, they tune out the words from the pulpit.

Why is there seemingly such an adverse reaction?

Our finances are such a personal subject. Discussing money issues with others is not easy, and having someone tell us what to do with our finances is even worse. We earn the money, after all. So shouldn't we decide what to do with it?

Of course, the answer is “yes” – we decide every day how to spend our hard-earned dollars. Indeed, the monetary choices we make will either keep our finances in check, or put us into the red. The average American family has about \$7,000 in credit card debt – so finances certainly represent a challenge to our current society. Tight budgets, trying to “keep up with the Joneses” or poor financial management

may be to blame for our tight resources. Does this mean we do not have anything left over for God?

Stewardship, at its roots, teaches that we are not supposed to give God our “leftovers.” We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our “first fruits” – giving to God first and then using the rest for our other needs. God gave us our talents that help us earn a living, after all. He should come first.

This idea can be worrisome for many. If our finances are already strained, how will we ever find enough to give back to God? Or, if we do try to give God our “first fruits,” will there be enough left over to cover our required expenses?

Taking the correct financial steps toward good stewardship simply boils down to trust – believing that God, who takes care of all of His creation, will take care of us. Trust that in giving to God first, we are both acknowledging that our multitude of blessings come from Him, and that we are thankful He chose to give them to us. And finally, trust that if we give to Him first, that all else will fall into place – because He is in ultimate control.

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*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## CELEBRATING GOD'S LOVE

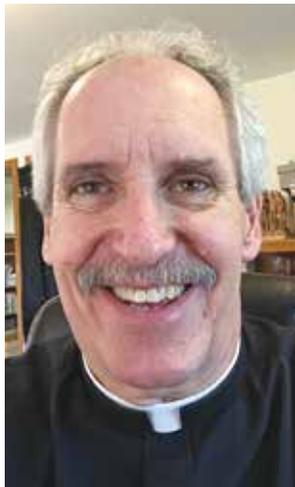
Dear Parishioners,

What is the most widely observed saint's day in February — the one that is kept even by those who aren't practicing Catholics? Undoubtedly, it would be St. Valentine's Day, Feb. 14.

So who was St. Valentine? The saint we celebrate was a priest of Rome martyred in the late third century. But that doesn't explain how his feast came to be celebrated as the day for sending letters, cards and presents as expressions of romantic love.

The truth is that the custom of sending tokens of love comes not from any direct connection with St. Valentine, but from the ancient belief that birds begin to pair off on Feb. 14. And if courtship in the natural world occurred then, it must be appropriate for humans, as well. The association between St. Valentine and love notes is a later development.

Nevertheless, it's not wrong to connect the two. Love has many aspects, and our conception of it is richer if we keep more than one of them in mind. Martyrdom is the result of loving God more than our earthly life. St. Valentine was a martyr because of his love — his love for Jesus Christ and the Church. If he had not loved God so much, he could have repudiated his Lord and saved his life. We, in turn, express our love by sending cards and gifts on St. Valentine's Day.



But isn't that what stewardship as a way of life is, a little martyrdom? Not to push the image too far, but when we are faithful stewards, we give up a little portion of our lives out of our own love for Christ. Most Christians will not be called on to be martyrs, in the sense of forfeiting our physical lives for God. But we are called to give up some of our comforts, indulgences and riches because of our love for Him.

So then, as you prepare to celebrate and share your love with your valentine this month, remember St. Valentine and his love for Christ. As well, keep in mind that God loves us, and return that love with your own toward Him. Loving God will be reflected in how you prioritize

your use of the time, talent and treasure God has entrusted to you. As St. John wrote (1 Jn 4:19), "We love because he first loved us."

Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Thomas Kovatch  
Pastor

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# STAYING CONNECTED TO CHRIST AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

In the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the Catholic Church allows us to receive one of God’s greatest gifts — the true presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. For those of us who attend Mass weekly, or even daily, it can become easy to take our regular access to this gift of grace for granted. But for faithful Catholics who find themselves unable to come to the church — due to an injury, an illness or advanced age — Holy Communion is a cherished connection to the Lord and to their faith community.

For over a decade, Deacon Marc Kellams has helped our parish bring Holy Communion to the homebound, nursing home residents and hospital patients. As the coordinator of this special ministry, he has seen firsthand what an important service the Outreach Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion provide for our faith community.

“It’s a wonderful ministry,” Deacon Marc says. “The concept is that we the people are a Church, and we gather together on a regular basis for Mass so that we can celebrate the sacraments



*Sally Ciasto, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion with the Outreach Ministry, brings the Eucharist to a resident at Brookdale Senior Living Solutions.*

as a community. So when they can’t come to us, we go to them. It’s a simple service to provide, and people are so grateful to have visits and to receive the Body of Christ, which is a central

tenet of our faith.”

Currently, volunteers with the Outreach Ministry from St. Charles Borromeo bring the Eucharist to Bloomington Hospital on Sundays, Wednesdays

**“It’s always enriching to participate in someone else’s sincere faith, to learn what the faith has meant to them, how they’ve lived it out, and how they’ve lived through the inevitable difficulties we all face. It’s encouraging and inspiring to be able to witness the genuine love that people have for our faith and for our Lord.” — Deacon Marc Kellams**

# E COMMUNITY THROUGH OUTREACH

and Fridays. Volunteers are on a rotating schedule, covering one week at the hospital about once a quarter. Those who bring Holy Communion from our parish to the elder care facilities visit weekly, and visits to the homebound can vary based on each individual's specific situation.

Deacon Marc is thankful for the many volunteers who make this ministry possible. And in turn, those who serve as Outreach Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion feel blessed by the opportunity to participate.

"We volunteers get far more out of this ministry than we give," Deacon Marc says. "It's extremely fulfilling not only to bring Christ to other people, but also to bring some joy to their lives, keeping them connected to the church community and giving them hope and happiness."

By forming relationships with the people they serve — whether over a short period of time or several years — those who bring the Eucharist to the sick and elderly often find their faith lives greatly strengthened.

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to witness the genuine love that people have for our faith and for our Lord."

Serving as an Outreach Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is a rewarding role that can fit into almost any parishioner's schedule. As Deacon Marc points out, the only requirements are a willingness to be good stewards of the Eucharist and to bring love to the people visited. Parishioners do not have to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion during Mass to be a part of this ministry. After a simple one-on-one training with Deacon Marc, new volunteers will be put on a call list. When there is a need for the Eucha-

rist to be brought to someone, Deacon Marc will find out who is available to serve at that time.

Bringing Holy Communion to those who are not able to come to Mass is an easy way to serve, but one that brings immeasurable joy and grace to those both on the giving and receiving end. What greater gift can we give than to bring the presence of the Lord Himself to the homebound and hospitalized faithful?

"The ultimate message of our God is love," Deacon Marc says. "And that's what we bring to those people — the love of God."

## Prayer for the Sick and Homebound

*All praise and glory are Yours, Lord our God.*

*For You have called us to serve You and one another in love.*

*Bless our sick today so that they may bear their illness in union with Jesus' sufferings and restore them quickly to health.*

*Bless those who remain homebound and give them courage and strength in their faith.*

*Lead us all to eternal glory.*

*We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Your Son, who lives and reigns with You  
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.*

*Amen.*

Are you interested in learning more about becoming an Outreach Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion? If so, please contact Deacon Marc Kellams at [mkellams@gmail.com](mailto:mkellams@gmail.com) or call him in the parish office at 812-336-6846.



## THE BLESSINGS OF THE CATHOLIC MASS

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally represented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would

we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to *receive* the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces to fill us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to



stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.

**Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?**

# TRI-PARISH SENIORS GROUP

*GROWING CLOSER TO CHRIST THROUGH FELLOWSHIP* .....

Whenever a group maintains itself for 40 years, you know that it means something special to the members, and the Tri-Parish Seniors Group carries on year-round.

Members hail from the three Catholic parishes in Bloomington — St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul. The group meets at 11 a.m. on the second Thursday of each month at St. Charles Borromeo, where Fr. Tom says Mass. After Mass, the group convenes for lunch at a restaurant chosen by a group vote.

“The group votes where to go for lunch,” says Sandy Lively, coordinator. “We vote on where we want to go at one of the restaurants in Bloomington.”

While there is no regular program or monthly activity, the purpose behind the seniors’ group has remained the same since its organization in 1979.

“We just enjoy each other’s company,” Sandy says. “It’s always good to see each other. We have a good time.”

The group meets all through the year, depending on the weather. If the roads are icy, Sandy calls the others to tell them she won’t be coming — she draws the line on driving on ice.

“Sometimes I go to the nursing homes and pick up some members who live there, of the ones who can’t drive anymore due to age,” she says. “We usually have 12 to 26 attending. A lot depends on the weather and what time of year, as some older couples go to Florida for the winter.”

The fellowship and friendships that the group fosters help bring the members closer to Christ.

“Oh, yes, definitely,” Sandy says.

She notes that Fr. Tom helps center that closeness with his homilies at Mass, although the group does not discuss faith during the gatherings.

“We just talk about what’s going on in our lives, with our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids,” she says. “We just have a good time together.”

The group’s closeness is further enhanced by its sending out sympathy, birthday, get well or anniversary cards to the members.

“It’s just something the members like to do,” Sandy says.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, all one has to do is come for Mass at 11 a.m. on the second Thursday of the month at St. Charles Borromeo.

“Every now and then, Fr. Tom will tell someone about the group and we get a new member,” Sandy says. “They always come

**“We just talk about what’s going on in our lives, with our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids. We just have a good time together.” – Sandy Lively**



If you would like more information about the Tri-Parish Seniors Group, please call Sue Campbell, secretary at St. Charles Borromeo at 812-336-6846 — she will direct the inquiry to Sandy.



ST.  
BORROMEIO  
CATHOLIC CHURCH



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## MASS SCHEDULE

### WEEKEND:

Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 8:30 a.m., 4:00 p.m. Sunday Vigil

### WEEKDAYS:

Monday: 8:30 a.m.  
Wednesday: 8:30 a.m. (middle school attends)  
Friday: 8:30 a.m. (elementary school attends)  
Tuesday, Thursday: 5:30 p.m.  
*\*Confessions are offered 30 minutes prior to every Mass*

## PREPARING FOR FOREVER

*MEET OUR MARRIAGE PREPARATION SPONSOR COUPLES continued from front cover .....*

preparation program is required. First, the engaged couple meets several times with their sponsor couple. Then, they participate in a daylong retreat, focusing on topics such as prayer, finances and Natural Family Planning.

“We stress communication big time and the sponsor couples give examples of a good, strong marriage,” Susan says. “I hope they take away tools for a successful marriage. They’re able to see how the different sponsor couples use the tools we talk about.”

“It helps engaged couples to connect to the community,” she adds. “If they have problems, they’re connected to that sponsor couple. We’re here to help you have a wonderful successful marriage. Any problems, you call us, we’ll sit down and help you.”

Many of the sponsor couples find that being involved in this ministry has been a blessing to them, as well as the engaged couples they serve.

“That has been so good for all of us — it strengthens our own marriages,” Susan says. “[The sponsor couples] meet two times a year besides the retreat, so we have a chance to talk to each other. We have similar values and ideas about marriage so it’s a good community-building thing for the sponsor couples, too.”

Susan hopes that, above all, the marriage preparation

program will help remind couples of the importance of preparing for a lifetime, and not just the big day.

“When they come to us, they’re thinking about their wedding day,” Susan says. “How many hours go into that one-hour ceremony? This preparation is so important for the rest of their lives.

“When the Church speaks of ‘the Sacrament of Marriage,’ it is not only speaking about the wedding,” she adds, referencing a quote that she often shares with engaged couples. “Although the ceremony and Rite are wonderful, the whole marriage, the relationship itself, is the sacrament. A marriage of 50-60 years is a well-aged sacrament that merely began with a one-hour ceremony.”

If you would like more information on our Marriage Preparation Program, or if you are planning to be married at St. Charles Borromeo, please contact Susan Langham in the parish office at 812-336-6846 or [susan.langham@comcast.net](mailto:susan.langham@comcast.net).