

# ST. CHARLES BORRAMEO CATHOLIC CHURCH

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2019

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## LECTORS PROCLAIM AND SHARE EXCITEMENT FOR GOD'S WORD

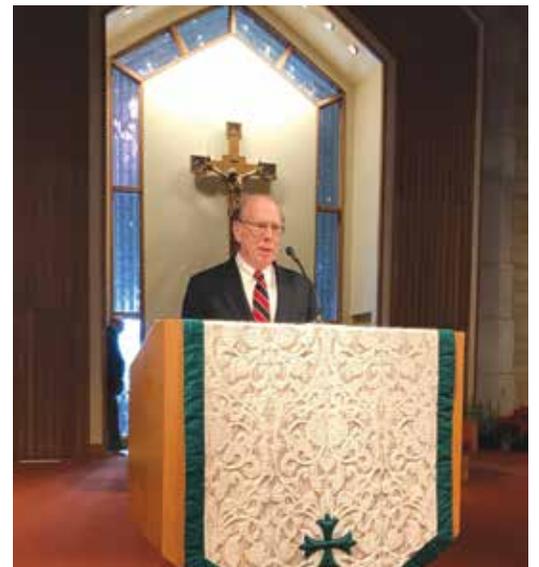
Since the beginning of the Church — and even before, in the Jewish tradition — the faith was passed on through the spoken word. From the reading of the Torah at synagogues, to the proclamation of Scripture at the earliest Masses recorded in the New Testament, the proclamation of the Word of God has always been a central aspect of the faith. At St. Charles Borromeo, those who serve as lectors proclaim the Scriptures each week to their brothers and sisters at Mass.

Parish secretary Susan Langham coordinates, schedules and trains our lectors. She has also served as a lector for the past four years.

“I just enjoy lectoring so much,” she says. “We’ve got about 45 lectors and most lectors serve every other month.”

Those who serve as lectors are given a book that guides them in preparing for the readings — from explaining technical

aspects like pronunciation, to providing context to the particular Scripture passage.



*Many lectors find their appreciation and love of Scripture deepens by serving in this way.*

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## STEWARDSHIP

# HANNAH, THE GOOD STEWARD

What should we do when our prayers are answered? Is there anything left to do after we have sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we would probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do for Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells us to “go and do likewise.” That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That is the definition of stewardship!

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most poignant examples of stewardship in the entire Bible. The first chapter teaches us of an unhappy, barren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah’s elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart’s desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow, as Hannah kept her promise to God by taking Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The Book of Samuel tells us that once Samuel became Eli’s servant, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.

Indeed, Hannah knew that Samuel was truly a gift from God – an answered prayer. Hannah’s response is that of the Good Steward – with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet, through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an entire nation. Samuel would, in time, become one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of stewardship, while the results may just be impossible to miss! However, He asks that we continue to be faithful in either case. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us – at whatever the cost, we are to “go and do likewise.”



## ANSWERING THE CALL FOR LENT

Dear Parishioners,

This month, as we proceed on our Lenten journey to Easter, every one of us should ask ourselves, “What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ and how well am I living that out each day?”

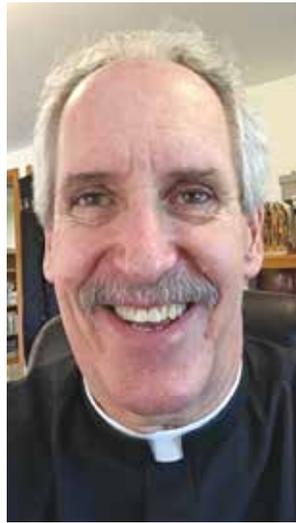
The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops addressed what it means to be a disciple when they wrote their pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*. “Who is a Christian disciple?” the USCCB asked and, in turn, they also provided the answer, “One who responds to Christ’s call, follows Jesus, and shapes his or her life in imitation of Christ’s” (9). So, as disciples of Jesus Christ, it is essential that we consider the true meaning of that answer.

The first step in the Christian life is responding to Jesus’ call. Jesus invites every person to develop a relationship with Him. But obviously, not every person is a Christian disciple. Some people are too busy to even hear that invitation or don’t make the effort to recognize it. Others make a conscious decision to reject the call because it demands that they can no longer place themselves at the center of their lives.

On the other hand, for those of us who make an affirmative response to Christ’s call, the most meaningful life possible awaits us, both now and into eternity. However, saying “yes” to Jesus has consequences that affect the rest of our lives.

The first consequence of becoming a disciple is that we now follow Jesus. The Gospel accounts record that when He called His disciples, they left what they were doing and followed Him. The same is true for us today. Becoming a Christian disciple does not necessarily mean that all of us will leave our present job, or enter into the consecrated life, or serve as a missionary in another country — although that might be where the journey leads you. But it does mean that we offer our work — whether as a doctor, homemaker, mechanic, farmer or teacher — to build up the Kingdom of God.

In following Jesus as His disciples, we should strive to more fully absorb His teaching and then apply it to our daily lives.



As we do, we find that we attempt to imitate Him, treating others with the same welcoming and generous spirit. St. Peter was direct when he described how Jesus acted: “He went about doing good... for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). That’s the model for how we must live.

Discipleship leads naturally to stewardship as a way of life. The time we offer in prayer and worship will give us the strength and guidance for serving Christ. Using the skills and gifts we have to build the Kingdom will direct our offering of talent. The support of all these endeavors with our treasure will ensure that our lives as disciples and stewards are genuine.

As a Christian steward this Lent, I encourage you to reflect on the changes you can make in

growing as a disciple of Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Kovatch'.

Fr. Thomas Kovatch  
Pastor





# GROWING OUR YOUNG MEN AS FAITHFUL

## THE ST. GEORGE WARRIORS MINISTRY

*How am I to live my life as a true disciple of Christ in an increasingly ego-centric world? What does it mean to be a man of God? How can I stand up for what is good and true without being uncompassionate or judgmental?*

According to our pastor Fr. Tom Kovatch, these are just some of the profound questions faced by young men today. Surrounded by countless lies designed to strip them of their identity as a man of God, it can seem all but impossible to grow into the male leaders they are called to be. And yet, as is so often the case, the answer lies in Christ Himself — the perfect example of manhood.

“The goal is to help develop these young men so that they are confident and committed to living their day-to-day lives in a Christ-like manner,” Fr. Tom says. “To do this, though, first we need to help them examine the way Christ chose to live His own life, how He gave of Himself — suffering and dying for each one of us.”

To assist in this process, Fr. Tom is launching a new ministry entitled St. George Warriors. Open to all high school-age young men, St. George Warriors is designed to help these parish youth become strong Catholic leaders, and to form them in their faith and help them “revert back” to God’s intentions for them, namely, following in



*Building a Christian brotherhood through the new St. George Warriors Ministry for high school-age boys*

Christ’s footsteps.

“In the current high school environment, Catholic boys and, really, high school youth in general are being prevented from living as Christ would,” Fr. Tom says. “They’re told not to be leaders — not to stand up and fight for what is good, beautiful, and true. That’s why so many Catholic men today don’t truly know how to live the Christian life. I think statistics have shown that if a family goes to Mass together — mother, father and children — 80 percent of those children attend Mass as adults. But if the father doesn’t attend and it is just the mother taking them, that percentage drops down to 50-60 percent. The male figure in a household really is so important — and that’s what I want to help them see, to help them recognize their importance to the family and the Church, and their importance as a Catholic leader.”

While many of the details are still being ironed out, Fr. Tom has big dreams for how this ministry will grow and expand over the next years. He envisions Bible studies and deep faith conversations on Church morality and relevant social issues, as well as fun activities like fishing trips, or trips to baseball games and theme parks. In addition, Fr. Tom envisions mission trips both within and without the United States, as well as yearly retreats and regularly

**“The goal is to help develop these young men so that they are confident and committed to living their day-to-day lives in a Christ-like manner. To do this, though, first we need to help them examine the way Christ chose to live His own life, how He gave of Himself — suffering and dying for each one of us.” — Fr. Tom Kovatch**

# L LEADERS:

scheduled opportunities for fellowship and prayer.

In these ways, Fr. Tom hopes to establish a true spirit of Christian brotherhood, doing his part to support these young men in the faith journey and help them become the leaders they were created to be.

“I just want to make sure that I do my part with all of the young guys coming through my parish and my schools, that they have an opportunity to learn how to be good

leaders and how to do it the way Christ would,” Fr. Tom says. “I think it’s obvious now that men are not acting as leaders. I don’t know if it’s because they don’t want to, or if they just don’t know how to. Our country and world is moving away from religious beliefs being our guide. So I think first and foremost they need to understand what is truly expected of them. What did Christ do and why did He do it? I think understanding that is crucial.”

The St. George Warriors plans to have its kickoff event on Sunday, March 10, following the noon Mass. For more information, please look to the parish bulletin or contact Fr. Tom Kovatch at either [frkovatch@stcharlesbloomington.org](mailto:frkovatch@stcharlesbloomington.org) or 812-336-6846.

## LECTORS PROCLAIM AND SHARE EXCITEMENT FOR GOD’S WORD *continued from front cover*

“It takes each reading and it gives you some help for proclaiming, not just reading,” Susan says. “I try to really know my reading, I go over it many times. I’m able to look at the people and I’ve learned to speak a little slower than I normally do. I’m hoping that the message that the Lord is giving out is getting into their heart. More than anything, I hope they can hear the Lord speaking to them through the readings.”

Not only is it important for lectors to prepare by studying the reading, but perhaps even more important is taking time to pray beforehand.

“I encourage people to really pray about their reading, and pray for God to help them — to not just read the words, but also to give the congregation the excitement they have for the Word,” Susan says. “If they understand those readings and where they come from and why they were written, that really helps.

“I encourage them to sit quietly before Mass and just really pray that the Holy Spirit helps them to proclaim those

words through them,” she adds. “They’re like the vessel and the Lord uses them to get to His people.”

For many people, serving as a lector helps to increase their understanding and appreciation for Scripture.

“I have much more of an appreciation of Scripture now,” Susan says. “I have learned more about Scripture than I ever had, just because of preparing for it and understanding it. Because of doing a little research and learning more about the actual reading I’m going to do, it’s helped me learn more about Scripture and it’s much more meaningful now, even listening to the other readers.”

Susan encourages those who may feel called to this ministry to consider serving.

“If you have a good, strong voice; if you’re at Mass; if you love the Lord — there are a lot of blessings that go with being a lector,” Susan says. “Consider it. Pray about it. Let me know if you’re interested.”

If you would like more information on becoming a lector, or to schedule training, please contact Susan Langham at 812-336-6846 or [susan.langham@comcast.net](mailto:susan.langham@comcast.net).



## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS:

*A POWERFUL PRAYER TRADITION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH* .....

Since we say and make the Sign of the Cross so often, it may easily become a rote, perhaps even thoughtless, action. However, it is important to remember that the Sign of the Cross is much more than a simple gesture. Even in its most basic form, the Sign of the Cross — accompanied by the spoken or unspoken words “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” — is a prayer, a creed stating our belief in the Holy Trinity, the dual nature of Jesus Christ, and the dependence of our salvation on His crucifixion and resurrection.

In addition, making the Sign of the Cross is an indication of a willingness to take up our own cross and suffering for the sake of Christ. The prayer is considered one of the greatest weapons against Satan and all demons, and an added strength against the temptations of the flesh.

In the Roman Catholic Church today, the Sign of the Cross is typically made with either three fingers or an open hand touching first the forehead, then the chest, followed by the left shoulder and then the right (in the Eastern Church, the right shoulder is touched before the left). The concept of making a sign, or “setting a seal,” upon the forehead of those who place their faith in the Lord appears in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible — see Ezek. 9:4 and Rev. 7:3, 9:4, and 14:1.

Early versions of the Sign of the Cross were traced on just the forehead, using the thumb and forefinger held together in the shape of a tiny cross. We still see this version of the blessing performed during Baptisms (with the cross traced on the infant’s forehead) and on Ash Wednesday (with the cross traced in ashes on the foreheads of the faithful). Similarly, when the Gospel is read during the Liturgy of the Word, the priest or deacon leads the congregation in forming this small cross on the forehead, mouth, and chest, indicating a willingness to keep the Word of

the Lord in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

There is no doubt that our early Church fathers were strong believers in the sanctifying power of the Sign of the Cross. A second-century ecclesiastical scholar, Tertullian, and a third century saint, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, both wrote about the necessity of performing the Sign of the Cross at one’s waking and one’s lying down, at entering and leaving a room, at mealtimes, and more. St. Augustine also referenced the importance of marking the cross on the faithful’s forehead during the administration of the sacraments.

It is likely that the sign transformed from the tiny cross on the forehead to the larger, full-body cross used today sometime in the fifth century, when heretics began questioning both the dual nature of Jesus Christ — fully human and fully divine — and the unity of the Holy Trinity. Believers in these crucial Church doctrines began forming the cross with three extended fingers (representing the Trinity), keeping the ring finger and little finger pressed down into the palm (representing Christ’s dual nature), and tracing a cross on their entire upper body so there could be no mistaking the gesture.

Today, the Sign of the Cross still figures predominantly in our prayer life as Roman Catholics. We commonly perform it upon entering a church; at the beginning and end of the Catholic Mass, a Benediction, or the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; when opening and closing our personal prayers; at mealtimes; and when passing by a Catholic Church (in recognition of Christ, present in the tabernacle). As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, the frequent, intentional use of the Sign of the Cross can help the faithful dedicate each day to the glory of God and provide strength in the face of trial and temptation (2157).

# FIVE WAYS YOUR FAMILY CAN PREPARE FOR LENT IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

When you look at the calendar, 40 days can seem like a long time. But the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday often goes by quickly, the daily routine of our lives pressing on in place of what could be a time of intentional preparation for the celebration of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection.

Deacon Marc Kellams wants you to know there are many ways you can make Lent more meaningful by taking advantages of services and events offered here at St. Charles Borromeo. Here are five ways to mindfully embrace the season of Lent!

## Come to Stations

"We have Stations of the Cross every Friday at 6 p.m.," Deacon Marc says. "We pray as a community, and it's led either by Fr. Tom or me. We all pray together and it's a wonderful opportunity to focus on the Passion of Christ and His path to the cross. It reminds us on a regular basis of why we go through a period of penance and preparation for Easter Sunday."

A meatless supper is offered every Friday during Lent after Stations has ended and various soups are provided by members of parish ministries.

"We continue in community then after stations," Deacon Marc says. "It's a great opportunity for us to come together as a community and recognize our opportunity to have meatless Fridays."

## Attend Adoration

Adoration services are available at the parish 24 hours per day, most days of the week, all year long. Deacon Marc says he wants to encourage families to take advantage of it as a reminder that Christ is always waiting for us to spend time with Him.

"Even 3 a.m. someone is there because it's perpetual," he says. "I would encourage people to stop in whenever they want. It takes no particular skill or ability, you just place yourself in the presence of Christ."



## Pray the Rosary

And while you're spending time at adoration, a great thing to do is to pray the Rosary.

"Almost every Catholic has at least one rosary, but many haven't been in the habit," Deacon Marc says. "That's a good habit to get back into because that helps us focus our prayer life, our attentions on spiritual things."

## Give Up or Give Of

Lent is always a popular time to "give up" or abstain

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**ST. CHARLES**  
BORROMEIO  
CATHOLIC CHURCH



**2222 E 3rd Street · Bloomington, IN 47401**  
**812-336-6846 · [parish.stcharlesbloomington.org](http://parish.stcharlesbloomington.org)**

**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*

**FIVE WAYS YOUR FAMILY CAN PREPARE FOR LENT IN A MEANINGFUL WAY** *continued from page 7*

from a favorite food or activity.

“You can give up something you enjoy as a penance,” Deacon Marc says. “If you love chocolate as much as Deacon Marc, then that’s a real sacrifice to make!”

Fr. Tom has also suggested giving of our time and energy by volunteering or spending time involved with one of the parish ministries.

“There’s dozens of agencies that could use volunteers,” Deacon Marc says. “There’s work around church that could be done. It’s an opportunity to look into our various ministries. Visit elder care or hospitals. We have sacristans who help care for the sacred linens. St. Vincent

de Paul helps with money gifts and furniture to help people provide basic needs for themselves. There are many opportunities to give rather than to give up.”

**Attend Daily Mass**

Finally, often of the simplest ways we can prepare our hearts for Easter is by making time for daily Mass.

“There is Mass every day of the week at St. Charles and at St. Paul’s,” Deacon Marc says. “Sometimes one Mass will work better than the other and it’s a good opportunity to add an additional Mass each week. Many can’t do that, but they can work into their schedule a mid-week Mass.”

**What are your favorite ways to embrace Lent and make it meaningful? For more ideas and information, please check the calendar on the parish website at [parish.stcharlesbloomington.org](http://parish.stcharlesbloomington.org) or call the parish office at 812-336-6846 to find out when services and events are held.**