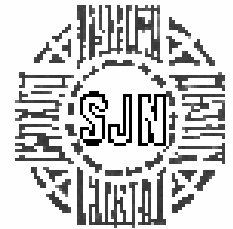




SJN Insights



SJN Insights

November, 2009

Beyond Renew

Beyond “Proverbs” –Our Proverbs

by Paul Lang

Inside this issue:

“Gain wisdom—be successful—live a good life.”

Such were the objectives of the biblical Proverbs for the people of their time. Today they provide insights of wisdom for us as well. The characteristics of Wisdom within this arena are: common sense, upright conscience, self control, and authentic values. The purpose of the individual proverb is to spur us to “think about life.” Of themselves they are incomplete. They provide insights but there are no instruction manuals for application to actual situations. It is up to us to “live and learn” where it applies and how to apply it.

Chapters 1-9 of the Book of Proverbs treat the value of “Wisdom”—“more precious than gold.” Remember Solomon’s choice, chapters 10-30 contain some 600 insights in a somewhat random order— much like life experiences.

A few examples may be in order:

1. “The hearing ear and the seeing eye—the Lord has made them both.” Notice the emphasis on listening and observing—part of God’s good creation and our ability to live and learn.
2. “Do not sleep, or else you will come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread.” Sleep is good but not in excess. Life takes dedicated effort.
3. “Many proclaim themselves loyal, but who can find one worthy of trust?” When times are trying, can you count on them? There is a Marine saying that addresses this: “When times get tough, the tough get going.”

There are a number of proverbs that fall under the umbrella of “look before you leap!” and to the contrary “He who hesitates is lost.” These certainly require practical discernment as to where and how they apply. This is all part of the wisdom we seek as we live and learn. The bible is open—scripture is there—opportunity awaits.

Beyond Proverbs

Let’s shift gears. Is there a place for your and my personal-experience proverbs? As our lives move forward, we experience, and in many cases adopt, insights of wisdom that become important benchmarks for how we think about life. Where do they originate - your grandmother; my granddaughter; a plaque; a book; an experience. In many ways they represent the “Wisdom” of who we are.

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Beyond Renew (continued from page 1)

Let's consider a number of proverbial insights that came from discussion and exchange in our Renew group. Certainly you could do many more with just a little reflection.

- A blest man does his best and leaves the rest to God.
- Seek first to understand rather than be understood.
- Thank you Lord for all the hills I have had to climb and the free ride down the other side.
- Be open to a different road. Let God surprise you!
- When you know in your heart its right, take a risk! We only go around one time.
- The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.
- Do not walk before me—I may not follow. Do not walk behind me—I may not lead. Walk beside me—be my friend.
- Love your children, especially when they do not deserve it.
- The past is history; the future God's mystery; the gift of the current moment is your present—open it carefully and use it wisely.
- Do unto others as they would have you do unto them. Read it again! It takes a lot more effort; listening; searching; learning; empathizing.



As we think about life in terms of proverbial insights, there is one concept that is woven throughout: relationships, with each other and with God. Recognizing how complex and mysterious this arena can be—even with Wisdom insights

— I choose to pray!

RCIA — Looking at You!

By Barbara Stokes

Every year we invite people to come take a look at the Catholic church from the inside out.

Most years, it is an amazing number who accept the invitation. I wonder if we realize what we are doing? In many ways we are asking newcomers to take our faith teachings more seriously than the majority of us take them. They come seeking a closer walk with the Lord through worship, scripture and sacraments. They watch how we do this. They pay attention to our participation in gesture and song at Sunday Mass. They pay attention to our reverence when we receive the Lord Himself in Eucharist. They pay attention to our enthusiasm and joy as we have the opportunity and obligation to worship each and every Sunday. Many of them see the richness we have inherited in daily communion and a variety of Sunday Mass times. So much grace to be shared! They come from traditions that had only one gathering time each week and sometimes only once a month when they could take communion. We have SOOOOO

much. Do we ever appreciate it enough? They do and they want a place in this faith story we call Catholic.

They are looking at us. Show them a community that treasures the many gifts we have been given. Show them a community that believes firmly and joyfully. Show them a community that makes Sunday Mass and Eucharist a priority over all other activities. Then open the door and invite them to walk their faith journey with you. We will all grow in grace and wisdom!

PLEASE NOTIFY THE RECTORY...

If you have a family member who becomes seriously ill or home bound and would want us to know.

If there has been a death in your immediate family and you wish to have the person mentioned in the Prayer of the Faithful on Sunday.

Fall Teen Retreat on a Sheep Farm

by Debbie Migliozzi

This was my first experience to chaperone a spiritual retreat. I didn't know what to expect but I knew my daughter and I would enjoy it and learn from the experience. The retreat took place on a sheep farm in Greene County. The farm turned out to be a wonderful place to relax and enjoy nature and sharpen our awareness of God's beauty that surrounded us. God's presence was all around in the sights, smells, and sounds, and was especially evident in the barn as we witnessed the birth of twin lambs. We heard the mother's sounds as she delivered her young, watched as she cleansed and nursed her babies, and felt the emotion of the entire process unfold before our very eyes. The relaxed atmosphere on the farm also helped me to put things into perspective and let me focus on life's special gifts that I normally don't have the time, or the desire to fully appreciate, because of the hectic lifestyle I live. I cannot tell you the last time I laid in a field at night and looked up at the constellations or sang with friends around a campfire. We all talked, hiked, laughed, prayed and learned as Fr. Al guided us by his inspirational talks of God's love for us. Getting in touch with myself, getting to know the teens and adults better and putting our trust in one another was a terrific learning experience and one that I will never forget. I came home happy, energized and full of stories that I wanted to share with my family. As a parent, I was so grateful my daughter was there with her friends and with adults from our church and Fr. Al who has such a desire to strengthen the faith of our youth and help them build a future with the presence of God. I would strongly recommend to anyone who should ever have the opportunity for such an experience, to take it, and energize your connection with God and with fellow parishioners. I am so thankful I did.

FROM THE INSIGHTS EDITOR

The next Insights will be the 2010 Lenten Issue.

The deadline for all articles is:

MONDAY, January 18th, 2010

Please email your articles to fjenkins@pitt.edu

OR

Place them in the "Insights" mailbox in the Education Building.

Sheep Farm Retreat

by Samantha Migliozzi

On October 11th and 12th, our high school youth group did something we have never done before. We went on a retreat to a sheep farm! Teens from all four grades were there to represent our youth. We had a great turnout and a lot of fun and came back with many stories to tell.

After we drove on the dark, unfamiliar roads to the farm, we all followed Fr. Al to an open field on the property where we gazed at the stars and had a bonfire. We took in the fresh air, sang songs of worship, and ate s'mores by a warm fire. After our adventure outdoors, we went into the farm house to settle down for the night. The owners, John and Joan, were very kind and welcomed us into their home. Their house was very unique, as it had a loft and so many twists and turns and almost secret rooms. I think all the teens were very amazed with the house, while the adults thought of it as very warm and inviting.

The next morning, after some of us got up for an early morning hike, Joan gave each of us a job to do. Some of us were in charge of collecting hay and giving it to the sheep, while others were given the task of feeding the mother sheep inside the barn. That day we also went for a hike that took us to many different places along the trails in the woods and discussed how our surroundings related to stories and journey from the Bible. This activity truly helped us grow closer to each other.

Later that day, we witnessed a true miracle of life as we watched a lamb being born. We were so lucky to be at the farm during this special time as there were two sets of twin lambs born. After the last birth, we helped Joan gate in the mother with her babies so they would be secure.

I think everyone who went on this retreat can say that it was such a fun time, and that they would love to do it again! Hopefully next time you can join us, and experience a retreat for yourself. It is a great way to grow closer to God, and build fellowship with others in our parish community.

SJN DEBT REDUCTION APPEAL

We were granted a **two year window** to have Debt Reduction collections be exempt from Diocesan assessments (approximately 26%) until June 30, 2011.

We are asking all parishioners to consider **increasing** their contributions **by 25-30%** for this two year period. Our 2008-2009 collections were essentially flat compared to 2000-2001. The amount being requested is basically inflation over that period of time.

We are requesting that you **mark your envelope** as Debt Reduction (we cannot allocate for you) for this additional amount. (If you cannot increase your amount consider allocating a portion of your current contributions to Debt Reduction or Parish Share).

We are striving to **control expenses** as evidenced by the operating expense budget of \$699,397 (a reduction of over \$40,000 from fiscal year 2009).

We can **save over \$200,000** in Diocesan taxes and interest over the two year period.

We are striving to reduce our debt from \$1.6 million as of June 30, 2009 to **under \$1 million** by June 30, 2011.

Thank you for your continued personal and financial support of St. John Neumann Parish and all its Ministries. May God bless you for all your support to **our** Parish.

SJN Parish Debt	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2010 Goal
Building Fund Revenue / Debt Reduction	\$159,216	\$156,156	\$103,067	\$350,000
Interest Expense on Debt	<u>85,683</u>	<u>88,224</u>	<u>83,768</u>	<u>72,000</u>
Excess Revenue vs. Debt	<u>\$73,533</u>	<u>\$67,932</u>	<u>\$19,299</u>	<u>\$278,000</u>
Ending Debt	<u>\$1,782,756</u>	<u>\$1,652,723</u>	<u>\$1,624,642</u>	<u>\$1,225,000</u>

The Spirit Shines on Us

By Barbara Stokes

On December 5, almost 70 young people received the power of the Holy Spirit through the sacrament of Confirmation. These newly confirmed have participated in retreat, service and instruction on their way to this sacrament. All this preparation pales in comparison to the glory of the Holy Spirit. Our parish is stronger because of these newly confirmed among us.

Congratulate them and watch for the wonderful way they will use their GIFTS of the Spirit so that we see the FRUIT of their work in the world. They can now really "make a difference" as they shine with the Spirit. Thanks to all who helped them prepare in any way and thanks to these newly confirmed for taking this awesome step in their faith life.



Present! The journey continues

by Rick Caruso

On September 13th, 2009 at St. Bernadette's in Monroeville, my name was called by Fr. Harry Bielewicz, the Vicar for Clergy for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. My response to his call was one word .. 'Present!'. I then moved towards the front of the church, bowed toward Bishop David Zubik, and took my place in line. Two responses of 'I do' and one response of 'Amen' later, and I am now recognized as a Candidate for the Permanent Diaconate in the Class of 2013 for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Last time I wrote, I was in the middle of my summer Pastoral Assignment here at St. John Neumann (SJN). I would like to thank Fr. Al and all of the members of the SJN staff for supporting me during this important experience. As I wrote in my personal reflection paper, I left this summer with many memories. Most of the memories were very positive. Some of the memories left me wondering if this vocation was, in fact, God's plan for my life. And so, the discernment process continued. Following consultation with Fr. Al, my formation director, my spiritual director (two priests from the Diocese of Pittsburgh), my family, and my God, I decided I was led to apply for admission to Candidacy. And now, I am moving forward with the formation process.

So far this fall, I have taken course work in Fundamental Theology and Christian Anthropology. A short course in Christology will round out the year. I have written a paper for each of the classes I have had. In addition, I attended a Pastoral Communication workshop and prepared my first Homily. The Homily experience was a leap in faith as I was not as well prepared as I wish I would have been. I felt the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit as I talked about 'Death' to some of my 23 classmates. I'll have plenty more opportunities I'm sure to hone my preaching skills before my ordination (God willing) in 2013. There are workshops planned for 2010 and a brand new 'Non Parish Based' pastoral experience in store for me during the summer of 2010. I am looking forward to what God has in store for me.

To close this article just a brief history of the diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church and a road map for my journey ahead.

As for the history, the first reference to deacons occurred – perhaps as early as 53 A.D – St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, which is addressed to "all the holy ones at Philippi, with their bishops and deacons in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:1) Some hold that the very origin of the diaconate is recorded in the New Testament – in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. There we read of a dispute which arose in the church of Jerusalem between Greek – speaking and Aramaic – speaking Christians, the former complaining that some of their poor weren't getting a fair share of the goods which the Christian community divided among people in need of help. When the argument came to the attention of the Apostles, the leaders of the community, they declined to become directly involved, explaining: "It is not right

for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables." Instead they told people to select for these charitable works seven upstanding men "acknowledged to be deeply spiritual and prudent". The seven candidates were presented to the apostles, who "prayed over them and then imposed hands on them". Among them was one Stephen, "a man filled with grace and power", who for his courage in proclaiming the Good News of Christ soon became the first Christian martyr (cf. Acts 6-7). In a special way deacons were and still are considered to be 'helpers' of the bishop, with emphasis on service to the poor and needy of the community.

As for the journey ahead, my next milestone is receiving the ministry of Lector. This allows me to read all of the readings during the liturgy, except for the gospel, as an 'Ordinary' minister of the word. I'll then receive the ministry of Acolyte. This allows me to assist a priest by preparing the altar and sacred vessels used in the liturgy. Those recognition dates will most likely occur in 2010 and 2011.

Please continue to pray for me, for my family, and for all of the 23 members of my class and for the 49 men who are in the Class of 2011.

May you all be richly blessed in your vocation as you help make the Church in the Diocese of Pittsburgh 'Alive in Christ'.

Peace, Rick Caruso



LOVE JESUS, LOVE MARY

AD JESUM PER MARIA, To Jesus through Mary

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is a key element in the spirituality of all holy men and women – the canonized Saints, of the Catholic Church. Deep union with and love of Jesus and the Church, He founded, is the object of true devotion to Mother Mary. St. Louis Marie de Montfort, (1673-1716) in his book, *True Devotion to Mary*, asserts that “*united with Mary, we make more progress in love of Jesus in a month, than we make in years without recourse to her.*” Devotion to Mary is a combination of veneration, intercession, imitation, and consecration or entrustment of oneself - one’s person and being, spiritual and material possessions, talents, duties and responsibilities and all the details of one’s daily life into her hands. This entrustment to Mother Mary is often called the “secret of the saints” because “*She forms one into the image and likeness of her Son and she adds her own incalculable merits to one’s meager self-offerings, multiplying them and making them more pleasing to God.*” (Jerry Coniker, founder, Apostolate for Family Consecration, www.catholicfamilyland.org) Two spiritual giants of our time, Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa of Calcutta exemplified this tender and loving devotion to the Mother of God. Pope John Paul II’s coat of arms emblazoned with the letter “M” beneath the cross, his public and personal Holy Rosary meditation prayers, his many pilgrimages to the world’s Marian Shrines, his homilies, and writings all bespeak of his child-like devotion to the Mother of God. In Mother Teresa’s opening paragraph for the Missionaries of Charity’s Original Rule Explanation, she wrote: “*That the society may more easily attain its end, let each sister choose the Immaculate Queen of Heaven for her Mother. She must not only love and venerate her but fly to her with child-like confidence in all her joys and sorrows. We must imitate her virtues and abandon ourselves into her hands.*” (Mother Teresa: In the Shadow of Our Lady, by Joseph Langford, MC, page 39) Throughout her life of free and wholehearted, cheerful service to Jesus in the poorest of the poor, the person and presence of the Blessed Mother was fundamental in Mother Teresa’s life and in the lives of all the sisters of her congregation.

To those who voiced their objection to her devotion to Mary, thinking perhaps of Mary as an obstacle to unity with Jesus, Mother Teresa would simply say, “*No Mary, No Jesus.*” St. Louis de Montfort assures us that going to *Jesus through Mary* is merely following the lead of God, the Father, who could have sent Jesus down to earth as a full grown man like Adam, but chose to send Him as a helpless Baby in Mother Mary’s womb through the power of the Holy Spirit. She nourished and nurtured Jesus throughout His earthly life as a good and loving mother.

Let’s encourage our children from infancy, to have a tender love and devotion to Our Mother Mary. Let’s teach them the basic doctrines taught by the Church concerning her so that they will have a clear understanding of her special role in the mystery of

salvation and grow in gratitude and love of her and her Son, Jesus.

- Mother of God (“*Theotokos*”, Council of Ephesus,, 431 A.D) Mother Mary is one of us, a mere creature, but she conceived and gave birth to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Immaculate Conception (*Genesis 3:15; 411*, She possessed supernatural grace from the first moment of her life. She had all the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. This singular privilege was won for her by her Son, Jesus, Our Savior, because she was chosen to be His Mother
- Absolute sinlessness (*491,CCC*) Although she had free will, she was never inclined to disobey the will of God because she was confirmed by supernatural grace. Like her, we can freely choose to do God’s will, as we grow in grace through prayers especially the Holy Rosary and frequent reception of the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and of Penance and Reconciliation.
- Perpetual Virginity (*496-507, CCC*) Mother Mary is a virgin, before, during and after Jesus’ birth. She, the Ark of the New Covenant, bore the Son of God in her sacred womb. Let’s teach our children to live chaste lives in their state in life, to dress modestly and to imitate the purity of Mary.
- Assumption (*966, CCC*) She is in heaven body and soul. One day, we will also enjoy eternal happiness in heaven both in our glorified bodies and in our souls as a reward for all the sacrifices we make here on earth, for our holiness of lives spent in love of God and of our neighbor.

“*On First Saturdays, for five consecutive months, with the intention of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of My Mother, for the Offenses and blasphemies of ungrateful people*

- Receive Holy Communion in the state of grace.
- Go to Confession (within 8 days before or after the First Saturday, if confession is not available on First Saturday).
- Pray five decades of the Holy Rosary.

“*Keep the Blessed Mother company*” by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary for another fifteen minutes.”

The Five Offenses and Blasphemies against the Immaculate heart of Mary are:

1. Attacks against Her Immaculate Conception.
2. Attacks against Her Perpetual Virginity
3. Attacks against Her Divine Maternity and refusal to accept

(Continued on page 7)

Love Jesus, Love Mary

(continued from page 6)

her as Mother of all mankind.

4. Neglect of and indifference of implanting in the hearts of children insults, rejection, dishonoring and profanation of Her sacred images and statues

To those who practice the First Saturday devotion for five consecutive months, the Blessed Mother promises “**assistance with all the graces necessary for salvation at the hour of death.**”

Let's continue to help our children know, love and serve God, through Mother Mary by:

- Frequent reception of the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- With our family, let us practice Scripture meditation or *Lectio Divina*.
- Study the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- Read the papal and Vatican Council II documents, spiritual books and books on approved Marian apparitions.
- Enrich our faith through spiritual readings especially on the lives of the Saints and making pilgrimages to holy sites.
- Perform corporal and spiritual works of mercy and faithfully fulfill our daily duties in our state in life.
- Meditate on the life of Jesus Christ, His teachings and saving actions through and with our Mother Mary by praying the Holy Rosary everyday with our family.
- Practice the Divine Mercy Devotion, the First Friday Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the First Saturday Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Consecrate ourselves and our family to *Jesus through Mary*, in union with St. Joseph.

Let us love Mother Mary and allow her to lovingly enter our homes and our lives. She promises that she will always look after us and tell Her Son to protect us, if we let her.

By Delia V. Mendoza,

Director of Religious Education Certificate,

Franciscan University of Steubenville

Member: *Marian Catechist Apostolate and Apostolate for Family Consecration*

Marian Ministry by Mike Conroy

Joy is contagious in nursing homes. Each week members of St. John Neumann's Marian Ministry visit parishioners who are in local nursing homes bringing them the Holy Eucharist, parish news and flowers. The visits include warm conversations and prayers with each resident and a welcome reminder of the friendly atmosphere of St. John Neumann Parish. We are often treated as 'adopted' family members and the flowers are a reminder that they have received a visit from the St. John Neumann Parish community. The grandson of one MM volunteer and the therapy dog of another MM volunteer often accompany them on the visits; these 'adjunct MM volunteers' generate even more smiles. The joy brought to the nursing home residents is always returned a hundredfold and our parishioners look forward to our visits. We have made many new friends in our ministry.

If you have a family member recuperating from surgery or other illness and you would like to have a Eucharistic visit, please contact the Parish Secretary at 412-366-2020, ext. 10. If you are interested in joining the Marian Ministry, please contact Mike Conroy at 412-364-7342.



Parish Pastoral Council

Parish Pastoral Councils have been mandated by the Diocese for every parish. The Council is a leadership structure that enables priests and people to work together to build up a dynamic Christian community that is characterized by worship, education, service and hospitality; all of this for the build up of the Church through evangelization.

Their purpose is:

- to search out the needs of parishioners

- Prayerfully discern and plan the future direction of the parish

- Enable others to use their gifts in the service of God and mission of the Parish

- Review the life and activities of the parish so that parishioners can see how they are bringing about the reign of God

- Ensure that effective dialogue takes place within the parish, the diocese and the wider community.

For the past nine months a group of interested and concerned parish members have been discerning and working towards developing a Parish Pastoral Council as mandated by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The hope is that this Council will bring a renewal of life and energy to our journey in faith together. We are in the process of establishing a selection process of the new Pastoral Council by early 2010.

Those who have been involved with this process are:

Al Skorupka
Alex Betancourt
Ann Shuckrow
Carole Shepard
Charlie Schneider
Cindy Hatcher
Clare Browne
Craig Antonelli
Dave Evankovich
Debra Wolf
Dennis Hixenbaugh
Don Huber
Ed Brett
Ellen Carlins
Ellen Savadge
Helen O'Hallaron
Jack McCluskey

Jeff Full
John Kohler
Judy Robertson
Larry Emark
Linda Fetzer
Mark Golik
Maureen Turo
Michele Vora
Mike Conroy
Mike Petrusek
Noelle Hoguet-Singer
Paul Lang
Rick Caruso
Sam Kirsch
Sandy Jagus
Sharon Wirtz
Tom LaVoice



NCYC Update

Our NCYC (National Catholic Youth Conference) group of 18 has worked hard to raise the money needed to fund our trip to Kansas City and as of this writing, we are raring to go! We leave at 7:10 on Thursday, November 19th, which means we have to be at the airport at 5:30 AM.

This National Catholic Youth Conference to Kansas City is hosting 21,000 people, mostly teens. It is amazing and we cannot wait, especially for our new NCYC people to go. The theme is "CHRIST REIGNS". How awesome is that.

When we return our teens will write some of their thoughts and reflections for the bulletin and we will have some of them speak at one of the Sunday night 5:30 Masses.

God bless you for your generous support of our teens and adults,

In Christ,

Grace Ghirardi

SJN Advent Speaker Series



SJN Advent Speaker Series

This Advent we will be celebrating Mass on Wednesday evenings at 7pm for all those who would like to attend. These Masses will be celebrated by various priests from the surrounding parishes: Fr. John Rushofsky from St. Sebastian on December 2, Fr. Joe Freedy from Good Samaritan on December 9, Fr. Bob Coyne from St. Victor on December 16, and Fr. Al on December 23. Each speaker will be putting their own perspective on Advent. The talk will take place during the homily time, with the possibility of questions after Mass. This will replace our usual Wednesday morning Mass

at 9am, and give a different time for people to attend weekday Mass. We hope to see you there.

Important Dates!!

Advent Penance Services all at 7 PM

SJN-12/3

Sts. John & Paul-12/14

St. Alexis-12/16

St. Alphonse-12/21

Holy Day of Obligation 12/8

Masses are:

12/7 (vigil) 7:30

12/8 – 9 AM & 7:30 PM

Christmas Eve

4, 8 & 11 PM

Christmas Day

9 & 11 AM

Jan. 1, Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

Holy Day of Obligation

12/31 5:30 PM (vigil)

1/1 10 AM

SJN Advent Speakers (7pm)

December 2nd-

Fr. John Rushofsky

December 9th -

Fr. Joe Freedy

December 16th-

Fr. Bob Coyne

December 23rd-

Fr. Al McGinnis

Social Justice: When Today's World Presses in on our Faith.

Adult Education Speakers Discuss Globalization and Climate Change.

By Terry Hartnett

In the Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31, Jesus directly calls us as Christians to measure our society by how it treats the least among us. [*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, he will sit upon his throne and all the nations will be assembled before him. ...He will separate them from one another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left..]*

This Bible story, perhaps more than any other, embodies Catholic Social Teaching, said Anna Scheid, PhD, Professor of Theology and Catholic Social Thought at Duquesne University. SJN welcomed Scheid at the first in a three-part series on Catholic Social Teaching sponsored by Adult Education and the SJN Social Justice Committee, September 20. "The sheep and the goats are nations in this Gospel," said Scheid. "It is not just 'me' who will be judged, but rather countries, empires, and kingdoms," she explains. We, as citizens of a "have" nation, said Scheid, are responsible for how we treat poor nations. "The U.S. Bishops in their pastoral letter, 'Economic Justice for All', have told us that we will be judged by what we do as a nation to and for the poor -- to empower the poor and to seek solutions to get people out of poverty," says Scheid.

She spoke at SJN four days before the G-20 Summit began here in Pittsburgh and tied our Church's rich history of Catholic Social Teaching to this meeting of global leaders who are responsible for the world's economy. Technological advances and the ability to travel across cultures and economic systems have reshaped the way we think about our responsibility in a global world, said Scheid. "There is less importance on national boundaries and a lot of new wealth. But it is not distributed evenly. The poor are sinking deeper into poverty and the middle class is going away."

Scheid talked not only about how our Catholic faith challenges us to do what we can to alleviate poverty in our own nation but also about the call to "solidarity with the poor." As she explained, solidarity "moves our interdependence to a higher level, it shapes our response to more than compassion." When we see other people as members of our own faith family, it changes our response to letting them suffer," she added. "Solidarity is a remedy to structural sin," says Scheid. In summary, she stressed that we are called by our faith to see how our decisions both as individuals and as faithful citizens affect others.

Daniel Scheid, PhD, brought similar themes of faithful citizenship and global solidarity to his talk October 21 on how we are called as Catholics to be stewards of the earth. He noted that the U.S. Bishops see the ecological crisis as a moral and spiritual crisis, not just a technological crisis. Scheid walked those in attendance through the idea that the human person has a place in

the story of creation and is, indeed, "the center of creation as the co-creators of God in participating in creation and bringing it to its fulfillment," he said. "We are made in God's image insofar as we love and care for creation."

Scheid listed five lenses through which we as Catholics might see a human-earth relationship: dominion, steward, partner, sacrament/priest, and prophet/covenant. Through the lens of dominion, said Scheid, "The earth exists for human welfare. We give shape and meaning to nature, which is composed of resources for human use or human appreciation. Much Papal teaching still fits here: 'Everything in creation is ordered to man and everything is made subject to him.'" [*Gospel of Life, 61*]. In the steward model, humanity is the trustee, protector of creation. In the partner model, the human being is de-centered as the goal of creation or the measure of worth and instead seen as one among many creatures. Sacramental/priest model sees human beings acting on behalf of creation. The prophet/covenant model stresses covenantal responsibility and urges repentance and conversion for the human community.

Scheid brought in the basic tenets of Catholic Social Teaching to summarize his message. As the tenet of "a universal common good" states, "We must acknowledge our interdependence and the fact that our choices have consequences in other parts of the world. Individual nations must measure their own self-interest against the greater common good and contribute equitably to global solutions."

SJN is grateful to Anna and Daniel Scheid for bringing these important discussions to our parish. We will welcome them both back on Sunday, February 21, 2010 for a presentation on how we can incorporate Catholic Social Teaching into our everyday lives. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.



From the Desk of Health and Wellness

by Iris McClenahan

CPR CLASS, ANYONE?

Our parish, as it drew to completion of its Congregational Needs Assessment Survey, was offered CPR classes. Two classes were organized enabling a certified instructor to teach CPR, AED (emergency defibrillator kept at some worksites, schools, and churches including SJN), and First Aid information.

After the first class, a parishioner who took the class to recertify, related her experience with a successful Heimlich Maneuver while at a restaurant with family. As is usually the case, the culprit of the event was meat. A family member recognized the choking and the need for "a Heimlich" and came to the rescue, along with other unknown diners who identified themselves; one as "CPR certified", and another as an E.R. physician. Our parish bulletin carried a "Thank you" to those who take time to acquire or refresh CPR skills.

The E.R. physician offered this caveat: When breathing seems restored but the object is not ejected but apparently has been swallowed, the victim should only be taking SIPS of water until it is assured the object has passed. Until assured, a larger ingestion of fluid or food poses risk of vomiting from another blockage (in the esophagus) and subsequent aspiration (drawing of liquids into the lungs).

After the second class, another graduate/parishioner only a short time later recognized a person in distress with apparent stroke symptoms. She was instrumental in calling "911" and helping to initiate support until help arrived. Thank you, J., to rescuers and the unknowns who were there to help.

Let's go back to the first class story. Neither the rescuer nor the family member were the parishioner. The person in distress was the parishioner and author of this article. Thank you, Suzy, and our good God who put you there for me.

And a third class? ANYONE, when it comes, be there for someone!

St. John Neumann Women's Retreat – The Gift that Keeps on Giving

By Carol Caruso

One Saturday morning I awakened to the sound of a men's choir chanting. I was slightly disoriented till I remembered where I was. I went to the window and looked out at the hilly, twisty streets of the South Side Slopes. Having been raised on the hills of Pittsburgh, I felt very much at home there. Thus began Saturday morning of the St. John Neumann Women's Retreat.

I have attended the retreat for the past 3 years. The retreat is held at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center (St. Paul's Monastery) on the South Side of Pittsburgh. The January weekend set aside for the SJN women is a chance to take a breather after the holidays and look prayerfully to the year ahead.

Arrival is Friday evening, in time for Mass if so desired, and dinner. I have roomed alone the times I have attended the retreat but there are plenty of chances to interact with the other women who are there with you.

The weekend ends Sunday after breakfast and liturgy, and in between are many wonderful presentations, prayer services, and liturgies. You choose which scheduled events you want to be a part of – it's your retreat. I have participated in most of the activities but have also found time to nap – a wonderful luxury.

The retreat staff is spirit-filled, gracious, and friendly. St. Paul's Monastery is a special place indeed, beautiful to look at and just the place to encounter God in your own way. Every year there is a theme. Last year's theme was 'Love is Patient, Love is Kind, Love never fails'. This coming January, the theme will be, 'The Parables of Jesus'. Many of the reflections given by the staff are built around the theme.

In 2010, the weekend that the women of SJN will be attending the retreat is January 15th, 16th, and 17th. Please consider saving the dates on your calendar today. I hope that you will consider giving a gift of a women's retreat to yourself! It's a gift that will keep on giving!

For more information about the retreat, please contact Carol Caruso at (412) 369-5794 or email at djrick60@comcast.net.

SJN INSIGHTS

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