

St. John the Apostle

PARISH NEWSLETTER

"A Great Way to Support Our Fellow Parishioners and Also the School"

The SCRIP Program

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For more than a decade here at St. John's, we have embraced stewardship as a way of life. This has allowed us to do things and accomplish goals almost beyond our comprehension. Thus, much of what we do has a stewardship element. One ministry that most certainly falls into that category is the SCRIP Program. Simply put, SCRIP is based on the gift cards and certificates issued by many stores in our community where you may already shop. Bishop Ryan Catholic School buys certificates at a negotiated discount and exchanges them for your cash at full face value. The discount benefits the school and Catholic families.

Since the time her own children attended Catholic schools in Minot, parishioner Karla Ritzke has been involved. In fact, for the past several years, she has coordinated the program for St. John.

"The SCRIP Program helps families pay for their children's tuition," Karla says. "It also helps our Bishop Ryan Catholic School – the best thing is it costs nothing to you! It is a great way to support our fellow parishioners and also the school. Overall, it is a wonderful expression of stewardship. You have nothing to lose! You can use the SCRIP certificates for basic things you were going to buy anyhow."

There are currently more than 90 restaurants, grocery stores, drug stores, gas stations, and retail stores in our area where you can use SCRIP! Of course, people



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How Can We Model the Faith for Our Children?

The Church has made it clear that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual and cognitive development of their children in matters of the faith. As the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, states, “Husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children” (Chapter 4, Section 35). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* further emphasizes this vocation by pointing out that the moral education and spiritual formation of children is not only the right, but the responsibility, of their parents: “The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable... Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children” (CCC 2221, 2223).

But how can we as parents create an environment in the home conducive to spiritual and moral development? As busy adults, how are we to disseminate the knowledge and understanding of the tenets of the faith to our children in the way that a trained and experienced catechist can? Furthermore, how do we strike a balance between teaching our children in the home and not interfering with the faith formation and sacramental preparation they are currently receiving through their parish school or religious education program?

The answer to all of these questions is stewardship.

Indeed, it is important that we reinforce the lessons that our children learn in school and at religious education classes by talking to them about the faith, reading Sacred Scripture with them, and spending time in family prayer. And there are several authoritative resources online that can help parents in this task, including Catholic Parents OnLine – www.catholic-parents.org – which links parents to numerous websites and documents that can help them in talking to their children about the faith.

But the best way that we can teach our children is by serving as a living example to them of how to live as disciples of Christ. If we want our children to grow up as strong Catholics and to display a lifelong commitment to their faith, then it is important that we ourselves live a committed faith life. This includes an ongoing commitment to our own faith formation as adults and active participation in the sacraments.

It also includes the giving back of our time, talent, and treasure in service of our community in thanksgiving for the gifts that God has given us.

Parenting can be a tough vocation, and children deal with many influences in their lives that exist in stark contrast to the values that their parents often hope to instill within them. Fortunately for parents, the stewardship way of life provides a simple and effective model for teaching our children in matters of the faith. By living as stewards of God’s gifts and reaping the spiritual rewards that accompany this lifestyle, we are tangibly showing our children that sharing of our gifts and talents leads to a life of happiness and spiritual fulfillment. In doing this, we give them a good opportunity to follow in our footsteps and make their faith a top priority for the rest of their lives.



A Letter from Our Pastor

The Word of God: How Do We Hear It? And How Do We Respond to It?

Dear brothers and sisters,

A few short weeks ago, we completed our Christmas season. We are now in what we call Ordinary Time – but before long, we will begin Lent. This is one of those rare years when Ash Wednesday is in March – so, Lent does not, of course, begin in February this year.

The Gospel of John begins with the statement, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We speak often of the Word in the Church. As most of you are aware, the first part of our Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word. What does that mean to us?

Basically, there are four parts of our celebration of Mass: Introductory Rites; Liturgy of the Word; Liturgy of the Eucharist; and Concluding Rites. My focus in this reflection is that second part – the Liturgy of the Word. The main parts of that are a First Reading, a Responsorial Psalm, a Second Reading, the Gospel, and a Homily.

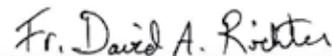
We draw on Holy Scripture from the Bible for the readings. As Catholics, we do not consider that these readings are about God, or about the Church, or about our faith, or a history lesson, or a nice story from long ago. We consider them to be God speaking directly to us. Thus, our attentiveness to what is being proclaimed is important. Are we listening? Do we hear? And then, do we respond in our

lives? All of those should be facets of how we approach the Word of God.

For us, the Word of God is the living Word. God is speaking to us as a community, and He asks us to be faithful to His Word. If we pay attention and truly listen, God can nourish our spirit, and Christ can be more real and present to us. The Homily, the Responsorial Psalm, the Profession of Faith, and the Intercessions develop the Word further and complete it. The Profession of Faith is our acceptance of God’s Word.

However, the question for us is, how do we respond to the Word? Does it change our lives? Does it bring us to the conversion necessary to live lives of stewardship and service? It is not easy, I know. Being able to listen, to hear and then to act requires time, practice, commitment, and a desire to fulfill all of this. That is one of my prayers for us – that we can hear the Word, and that we can bring it to life in our own lives and in the lives of others.

Yours in Christ,



Fr. David Richter,
Pastor



Working Together at the St. John



"It is a good thing for people to work together. Unless you work alongside someone, it is a lot of work, but it is very rewarding."

Preparing a meal and sitting down together as a family provides a moment to pause in our hurried lives to connect with each other. We have an opportunity to do just that with our church family each year.

It was the addition to our church that provided the space for our growing family to enjoy the "new tradition" of the Fall Dinner.

"Prior to this addition, we had a kitchen that was about the size of the bathroom," Kathleen Haider says. "We were limited in terms of communal activities. Now we have a huge kitchen equipped with all the bells and whistles."

This October, we celebrated the Second Annual Fall Dinner as a community. Two years ago, a Fall Dinner Committee formed to organize this parish event.

"We served over 700 people the first year," Kathleen says. "It has been so successful. It is a great thing to have for the parish because you get people working together."

Kathleen, who joined the faith community in 1972, was raised on a farm and grew up cooking. Over the years, she has used her talent to serve the community by cooking for funeral dinners and now for the Fall Dinner.

Kathleen and her good friend, Mary Larson, work together to plan the dinner and order the groceries.

"Everything is made from scratch," Kathleen says. "We have roast beef, mashed potatoes, corn, coleslaw, buns, and a pumpkin dessert."

In the fall, announcements in the bulletin and during all Masses invite members of the faith community to come together to prepare the dinner.



Watch the bulletin for announcements regarding the Fall Dinner. For more information, please reach out to the Fall Dinner Committee at 701-833-1234.

Work together as a Church Family The Parish's Fall Dinner

Work together as a church family. The more you work together, the more you don't get to know them. It is very rewarding." – Kathleen Haider

The day before, dozens of potatoes, which are donated by a faith community member, are peeled. In addition, tables are set, and desserts are prepared. The day of the event, Kathleen and Mary arrive at the church at 4 a.m. to begin cooking the approximately 22-pound roasts.

"I honestly couldn't tell you how many volunteers we have," Kathleen says. "A lot of men help with lifting heavy kettles, slicing meat, wrapping roasts, and preparing the desserts."

Many of the young people of the faith community give their time to the event, as well. The Confirmation and Religious Education students do the serving and clearing of the tables. The younger children color blank place mats for the tables.

"All the children do a great job," Kathleen says. "The young kids draw on the place mats or write notes like 'God loves you.' We've had many comments on them. That is another way that we feel that we are getting everyone involved."

The dinner is served family style with six people at each table on a Sunday, with community members enjoying the meal in rounds from 11:30 a.m. until approximately 4 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under the age of 12.

Everyone is welcome to be a part of this parish tradition. Come help prepare a meal and share in familial fellowship.

"It is a good thing for people to work together as a church family," Kathleen says. "Unless you work alongside someone, you don't get to know them. It is a lot of work, but it is very rewarding."

Find more volunteers for the Fall Dinner. For more information contact the Dinner Committee through the parish office at 393-7076.





Valentine's Day

The Feast of a Christian Martyr

Candy, flowers, romantic dinners, and excuses for wooing are the common traditions we associate with the once-pagan holiday known as Valentine's Day.

Dangling cupids, candy "message" hearts, and faux long-stemmed roses clutter every card store, waiting for that last-minute purchase.

The question is – how did this over-commercialized holiday really begin?

There are a few stories surrounding the history of Feb. 14 and St. Valentine himself, all dating back to the Roman Empire. The 14th day of February was a day set aside to honor the goddess Juno, queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. The following

day, Feb. 15, began the feast of Lupercalia – a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

As part of the festival traditions, there was a name drawing among the young people. The names of young Roman women were written on slips of paper and placed into a jar. Each young man would draw a young woman's name from the jar, and the two would be partners for the duration of the festival. Sometimes the pairing lasted an entire year, and often, the couple would fall in love and later marry.

At the time, Emperor Claudius II was involved in many bloody and un-

popular campaigns, and he was having a difficult time recruiting soldiers to join his military leagues. Claudius believed that soldiers were reluctant to join because they did not want to leave their loves or families.

With this in mind, Claudius decreed all marriages and engagements cancelled in Rome. During this time, St. Valentine was a priest in Rome, and he and St. Marius secretly married young couples. For this, St. Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who sentenced him to be beaten and then executed by beheading. He suffered this martyrdom on Feb. 14, around the year 270 AD.

Before his death, it is said that St. Valentine left a note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine." Although the truth behind the St. Valentine's legend is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and, most importantly, romantic figure. It is no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Over time, Feb. 14 became a time for lovers to exchange sweet messages, making St. Valentine the patron saint of lovers. The date was often commemorated with the sending of poems and simple gifts. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that Feb. 14 was the beginning of the avian mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February – Valentine's Day – should be a day for romance.



Being Joyful Stewards of God's Creation

Since 2004, Doris Gilles has been using her talents for God in a beautiful way by caring for His creation through the Floral Gardens Ministry at our parish. And the neat thing is, it has been a very natural way for her of serving the Lord – like the giving of one's talents should be.

“Because I go to Mass nearly every day, I just took it upon myself to make sure the parish flowerbeds were being watered, fertilized and weeded,” she says. “I also have enjoyed maintaining the rose gardens around the Children's Memorial. It is such a nice place for people to pray, especially those who have lost a child. The Pro-Life Ministry prays the Rosary at the memorial in May and October, as well.”

For Doris, this great act of service has brought much serenity and joy to her heart. Time and time again, she sees the deeper value behind it, and knows that through it, she is actually praying.

“This ministry is very important because it beautifies the parish yard, which makes a good impression on all of those who come to our church,” Doris says. “I grew up on a farm, and as a child, I was close to nature all the time. I love being outside. I believe God gave me a ‘green thumb.’ I like taking care of our parish gardens because I know God made all the plants, and it helps me enjoy the beauty God has created.”

Up until this time, Doris has been the coordinator of the Floral Gardens Ministry, but she will be organizing a committee this spring including volunteers who have indicated on their Stewardship Commitment Cards that they would like to help with garden maintenance. Clarine Sandstrom has also helped out each May by buying pots of



flowers and putting them on the altar platform of our worship area, and then planting them in the parish gardens afterward.

“People want to participate in the stewardship way of life, and they feel this is something they can do to help our parish out,” Doris says. “Some want to learn more about flowers and gardening, while others have ‘green thumbs’ already. Either way is fine.”

Doris hopes that new committee members will enjoy taking turns caring for the gardens at various times. With the extra help, she foresees being able to do more weeding, and possibly planting more perennials instead of annuals, as well as installing a small statue of St. Francis or the Blessed Mother on the south side of our new parish addition.

“I grew up on a farm, and as a child, I was close to nature all the time. I love being outside. I believe God gave me a ‘green thumb.’ I like taking care of our parish gardens because I know God made all the plants, and it helps me enjoy the beauty God has created.” – Doris Gilles

For more information on how to join this ministry and serve the Creator in a special way, please contact Doris Gilles at 701-839-4449 or email her at gordornd@min.midco.net.



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Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesday - Friday: 8:30 AM - 8:50 AM
Saturday: 3:45 PM - 4:45 PM
Sunday: 9:30 AM - 10:15 AM

Weekend Liturgies

Saturday: 5:00 PM Mass
Sunday: 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM Mass

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 58040
PERMIT NO. 3

Change Service Requested

SCRIP Program *continued from front cover*

may be compelled to ask, “What’s the catch?” But, there isn’t one – SCRIP doesn’t cost you a thing to use! For example, let’s say you buy \$500 worth of Marketplace Foods SCRIP for one month’s worth of groceries. You receive \$500 worth of Marketplace gift cards to buy \$500 worth of groceries. In one recent year, the total program raised more than \$50,000 for Bishop Ryan and an almost equal amount to benefit St. John the Apostle school families.

Catholic education is something very important to Karla.

“This is one way to keep the cost of a Catholic education affordable,” she says. “Even if you do not have children in Catholic school or your children are grown, you can designate that your savings be put toward a family in need

or one you know has children at Bishop Ryan. This was a great benefit to my family when our children were in school. For example, let’s say during a school year, you purchase and use a \$400 gift card to Miracle Mart, a \$200 gift card to Stop and Shop, and a \$200 gift card for Walmart. You would save almost \$200 a year on tuition.

“I am a faithful user of this program,” Karla adds. “I am very aware of what businesses participate in the program and which ones do not. It may require some planning, but I try to do my shopping at businesses that participate and support our church and schools in that way. There is such a wide variety of businesses which do participate, so it is easy to do.”

Volunteers are needed to assist in selling SCRIP after Saturday and Sunday Masses. For more information on the program or to assist, please contact Karla Ritzke at 701-839-5322 or Elaine Benson at the school, 701-838-3355.