

upcoming events

the bridge

news and views for the Our Lady of Charity community

volume 36, number 1

January 2018

January 7, 2018

Holy Family
Family Sunday, 10:00 am
St. Ambrose
9th Grade & Confirmation
Class, 5:45

January 9, 2018

Maguire Hall
Holy Name Society
Meeting, 7:00 pm
Holy Family
Parish Council Meeting,
7:00 pm - Meeting Rm 5

January 10, 2018

St. Ambrose
St. Vincent de Paul Mtg.,
6:30 pm

January 13 - 14, 2018

Bottles for Babies Program
begins

January 14, 2018

Holy Family
Spaghetti Dinner - 12:30

January 15, 2018

Martin Luther King Day;
parish offices closed

January 18, 2018

Social Action Committee
Meeting, 7:00 pm
Parish Office

January 22, 2018

Discipleship Program for
Grades 1-8 & Adults

January 23, 2018

Buildings & Grounds,
6:00 pm Parish Office

January 26, 2018

Holy Family
Anointing of the Sick
following 8:00 am Mass

The View from a Pew

By Steve Banko

I know I'm not the only parishioner to encounter friends and neighbors who have been having difficulty adapting to the evolution of our parish. One of the new directions that poses a lot of the problem with change is the emphasis on discipleship: What is it? Why must we strive toward it? I've never had to do this before.

When you reach a certain age (that I am long passed), it becomes more challenging to deal with change, even though the only real constant in our lives is that they change. While I was waiting for the Christmas Eve vigil Mass to begin, I took in the images on our beautiful Ambrose site windows for the hundredth or so time. I had a bit of an epiphany as I did. I saw a lot of people who actually personify discipleship with the example of their lives. A lot of them were Catholics who not only lived their faith they died for it. Archbishop Oscar Romero is one. My namesake, St. Stephen, is another. Such martyrs were and remain exceptional people who were called on to sacrifice their lives for our faith. Others were not called upon to make so severe a sacrifice. They are nonetheless exceptional because their lives were dedicated to service and ideals that improved the lot of so many people. Mother Teresa was one and Dorothy Day another. Their lives were testaments to a commitment to the simple command of Jesus to love one another as I have loved you.

As revered and respected as those enshrined on our windows are, they do not represent a form of discipleship that most of us will ever be called upon to embrace. We are fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters. Our lives are quite mundane when compared to the heroes of our faith. But we are still afforded many opportunities for discipleship. We can live our lives as parents by demonstrating to our sons the proper way to treat women by our own treatment of women. We can show our daughters the kind of treatment and respect they deserve by respecting their moms and aunts and other women. We can prove our discipleship in reaching out a helping hand to a friend in need. We can recognize and appreciate, and when possible, address the human condition that is suffering around us. We live our faith when we live our understanding of the simple commandment to love one another. A priest at St. Bonaventure once described our lives as similar to the reaction to a pebble dropping into a pond. The size of the pebble determines the kind of waves it creates. We must commit ourselves and live out our discipleship appreciating that much of what we do directly or indirectly affects others.

True discipleship means that the waves we create will improve the lives of those around us. We are not all called on to create tidal waves but we are all called upon. Discipleship is determined by how we respond.

Happy New Year from Shirley and I.

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"What's at YOUR Center?"

By Christian Hehr

When Galileo had brought up the idea that the sun was at the center of our solar system and earth and planets moved around it, people were naturally pretty shocked. Some rejected the idea outright saying it was impossible; God placed us at the center because we are His greatest creation.

Funny, looking back, especially with all the technology we have now, it seems almost silly that the sun and literally everything else in the universe revolved around us.

So why do we still think it does?

I don't mean physically here. But you do see this sort of attitude everyday. We place ourselves at the center of our lives. We have the attitude that things should work around us and that we have some privilege that we can warp and change things based on what we want or what we think is good or bad. People should act the way we want them to. My job should go the way I want it to. After all, God gave me control of my life, and darn it, I want it to be the way I want it to be!

Or maybe you're a person that, instead of putting yourself at the center of your universe, you put something else there; maybe you put money there, or a sport, or your job. Maybe you make every single one of your life plans based around some material thing, and you simply get lost in orbit around it.

Regardless, in either case, Jesus becomes just another planet revolving around you. Perhaps you think that you can get away with something that you know is wrong and do it anyway. Your faith life dims as you make it just another thing you do because you have to. Maybe you argue with your family all the way

to church, spend your obligated one-hour there, and then walk out the doors unchanged and living just as sloppy of a life as someone who has no faith at all.

You must ask yourself: what is at the center of my universe? Where have I put Jesus?

I'm telling you, Jesus must be the center of every single thing that you do. It can be as significant as choosing a career, or as seemingly menial as picking what you want for breakfast. In John 8:12, Jesus says, "I am the light of the World. Whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." Think about it... if you place yourself or some other thing at the center of your life, what light is being given off to the things you have to do? In case you haven't heard this, you aren't God. But in placing Jesus, the Light of the World, in the center, His light touches every single thing around it, just like the sun. Just as the sun MUST be at the center of the solar system, Jesus MUST be at your center.

Trust me, there is no greater a feeling than to know your whole self just rests in Jesus. It might seem hard to really place Him as the core of your life and not your own needs. But it's ok! Jesus says, "Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" For the pagans (the nonbelievers) run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them." (Matthew 6: 31-32). God understands that there are things you need and things you want before you even come to Him asking for it.

But He also says this: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all of these will be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33) If you place your whole life into His hands, making Him the very life of all

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that you do, God will never steer you wrong. He WILL take care of you. He WILL provide for you. He WILL fulfill His plan for you. But first, we must place Jesus where He belongs, at the center of our lives. Don't place money, power, pleasure, yourself, your hobbies, your job, or even your family at the center. Seek HIM first, and I assure you, everything will be taken care of.

St. Vincent de Paul Society

We give thanks for the generosity of our parishioners, family members and friends who have assisted Our Lady of Charity Parish St. Vincent de Paul Conference members to provide care to persons in need within the South Buffalo Community. An Annual Report is submitted yearly in November to the Buffalo Diocesan Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. For the period, October 1, 2016 thru September 30, 2017, we gave assistance to 52 persons; 24 home visits were made. Food was the primary need (39% of cases), followed by assistance with appliances (33%) and assistance with clothing, furniture and other emergency needs (28%) determined case by case. These expenses approximated \$4,200. We continue to give a modest donation in the Fall and Spring to support the Bishop Timon SVDP Conference, supporting persons living in Buffalo without the benefit of parish conferences, and to the South Africa SVDP Society conference through the work of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Annual dues of \$250.00 are paid to support the Diocesan, National and International SVDP Councils. Through the project, "One Can at a Time," In-Kind donations (food and toiletries) in

excess of \$4,000.00 were donated to the Bishop Kmiec Food Pantry (Catholic Charities).

We are excited to announce that the sum of \$744.00 was raised through the "Friends of the Poor Walk" in September 2017. We are very grateful for your financial support through the annual SVDP parish appeal (February), private donations, poor box donations (HF site), support of "Friends of the Poor" Walk in September and donations of gift cards from the Giving Tree in December.

Audrey Kunz

Conference President 12/2017

Thank You Notes

The Sisters of Mercy in Peru were deeply grateful for our support both financial and spiritual.

The Bishop Kmiec Food Pantry thanked us for our donations that will help many families during the holiday season.

The Consolata Missionaries were very thankful for our gift that supports their work in Kenya.

Via International sent a note to thank us for our continued generous support.

The South Buffalo Community Table was grateful for our support of the soup kitchen and our donation of salad ingredients.

A thank you note was received in appreciation of our gift to help the Lord of Hope parish in Peru.

St. Brigid's Food Pantry sent a note to thank us for the cash and gift cards that will help to support the pantry.

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities sent a note to express their appreciation for our donation that helps the needy children in Kenya.



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"Ask the Families we have served..."

Monthly Money Minutes

By Amy Jo Lauber

*Certified Financial Planner™ Professional and president of
Lauber Financial Planning*

“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

I am probably too idealistic in thinking that good financial planning can develop one’s faith, but it is the same process (of learning, choosing, and waiting) that is required to improve your finances as it is to growing in faith and love.

If you are setting any resolutions this month, you most likely have identified an area of your life that you’d like to improve, be it your health, your wealth or your faith. All require commitment; commitment of time and – equally important – your energy; the energy of your will/motivation, which may or may not be rooted in love. Examine your motivation for achieving your goals and pray for guidance and support from The Holy Spirit.

Know that you are not beyond learning more and choosing again, you now have another opportunity to choose wisely and lovingly.

Friendship Corner

by Audrey Kunz

“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.”

Edith Sitwell

“For I know the plans I have for you, ‘declares the Lord’, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11 (New Year’s Day)

“To holy people the very name of Jesus is a name to feed upon, a name to transport. His name can raise the dead and transfigure and beautify the living.”

St. John Neumann, Bishop (Feast Day-Jan. 5th)

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. (Birthday-Jan. 15th)

“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

2 Corinthians 13:11 (Christian Unity)

“The things that we love tell us what we are.”

St. Thomas Aquinas (Feast Day-Jan. 28th)

We welcome into our parish family:

Baptisms

Adelyn Jade Erickson
Olivia Rose McDonald
Arianna Grace McDonald

New Parishioners

Joseph Pasinski and Jessica Olson
Andrew & Alissa Schmidle
and their daughter Penelope
Bob Eberhardt

the bridge

Published by
Our Lady of Charity Parish Council
<http://ourladyofcharityparish.com>
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