



Front the Heart

A Newsletter ♦ Published by Sacred Heart Parish ♦ Main Street South, P.O. Box 686 ♦ Southbury, CT 06488

Reflections on a New Millennium

Facing the future, we anticipate the countless possibilities for opportunity and change. As part of our preparation to end this century and enter a new millennium, I think it is important to evaluate what we have accomplished as a society and to assess what we need to alter or abandon.

As we count down to this landmark new beginning, we hear a great deal about what other people consider to be the greatest achievements of this century. If we each had to make a list of the ten best or most revolutionary advances affecting our lives and our culture, we would no doubt come up with some very different ones. What would your list be like? (Why not jot it down on a piece of paper and then pass it along in the collection basket).

Because half of this century was over before I even entered the planet, I cannot personally relate to the technological and medical advances that my grandparents and parents "never thought they'd live to see" in their lifetimes: automobiles, telephones, refrigeration, the atomic bomb, aspirin and sulfa drugs, central heating and air conditioning, to name just a few. As I reflect on the progress in the last half of this century, I immediately think of space exploration, desegregation, the computer and internet, radiation and chemo therapies, cell

phones, microwaves, electronic banking, and one-stop shopping malls.

We certainly have come a long way and rightfully take immense pride in our many technological advances. Although they have made our lives simpler and more comfortable, I wonder, have they helped to make us better people? As a child I was excitedly drawn to the entertainment of television. Spending time watching it resulted

oppression injustice hatred
war disrespect selfishness
**Principles,
values and moral
integrity...**
power oppression injustice
hatred disrespect
selfishness hatred power
oppression injustice hatred
war disrespect selfishness war

in an obvious sacrifice of family interaction. With the advent of microwave and convection cooking came a plentiful array of convenience food options. Family meals and the opportunity for conversation and sharing were replaced by individual meals on the run. Once the Blue Laws (those that prohibited businesses from opening on Sunday) were abolished, the concepts of a family day and "The Lord's Day" were diminished. Rather than socialize or worship together, people worked or

shopped. Seemingly, the more we acquired—the two cars, multiple televisions, two homes (residence and vacation getaway)—the less we had in shared family time and neighborly contact, as both parents and the teenagers went off to work. Even the ability to see what we were losing in all this acquisition appeared to be lost.

There was a time when we knew all our neighbors and never locked our doors. Now we have neither the time nor the interest to be neighborly, and we engage our security systems as we exit the driveway. We tell ourselves that everything we do is to make our children's lives better than ours were when we were growing up. "Things" have become substitutes for quality time, attention and parental direction, the "real things" all children need most.

We cannot deny that as a society we've come a long way, achieved much, and excelled in areas that would astonish our great grandparents, but along the way of progress, we've given up so many of the important things that ought to be integral parts of our lives.

With technological progress we've lost our sense of awe, wonder and surprise. We have abandoned our sense of respect for authority, other people, and even God. We

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Marriage of Committees Successful

Spreading the Good News at Sacred Heart acquired a new dimension in August when the Website Committee, with Gary Napoli and Webmeister Bob McGarry, joined its resources to the Communications Committee, chaired by Katherine Pavone. This marriage has truly prepared these stewards for the coming millennium.

The Communications Committee will continue to produce this newsletter, *From the Heart*. Eighteen writers/editors and ten distribution staff members meet four times a year to plan the newsletter which provides information on topics both educational and inspirational to all the families in the parish. After the copy is printed, the heroic job of labeling and mailing the newsletter begins. With such a responsibility to discharge, the committee is always eager to welcome new members who can spare four evenings a year to plan or to work on distribution.

At www.rc.net/hartford/sacredheart, Webmeister McGarry virtually escorts parishioners to the atrium of Sacred Heart Church. It is an experience to find oneself standing in the church building without leaving one's home. Bob invites us to "enter into the spirit of Sacred Heart" where we can learn from "The Pastor's Desk", "Parish Information", "Upcoming Events", and

"Ministry Opportunities." Then parishioners can talk back by choosing the selection "Contact Us" and clicking on the E-mail section, we are encouraged to share website addresses of special interest to Catholics.

The exciting stewardship possibilities presented by the combined Communications/Website Committee may have been the reason that so many parishioners, especially our valuable youngsters, signed up for this committee at the Ministry Weekend Fair. Katherine Pavone and Jean Brickey welcomed old and new members at a Get-Acquainted Evening on October 19. This energetic group will continue to build on the heritage of *From the Heart* as it explores the future at its Website.

Barbara Arentz

www.rc.net/hartford/sacredheart

In This Powerful Way, The Word Of The Lord Kept Spreading



New Millennium

(continued from cover)

deify convenience, money, and personal autonomy and run from commitment, selfishly attacking forms of generosity and caring. In our quest for comfort and financial security, we have ignored the fundamental human principle formulated by our forefathers: to be a nation under God seeking liberty and justice for all.

Throughout this century we have been taught so many lessons about oppression, injustice, hatred, war, disrespect, selfishness and the fact

that power so often corrupts. We haven't learned our lessons very well. Increasing violence among our young, intolerance of religious and ethnic groups, and the silent acceptance of the termination of life all speak resoundingly about our so-called progress.

With the rapid approach of the 21st century, there is certainly a great deal to anticipate and fear. There is even more to recapture in our society (if that is even possible) from what we have willingly given up in

our quest for things. Principles, values and moral integrity will be found on very few lists of this century's greatest accomplishments. One can only hope that in the new millennium it will be said that people who put their faith in God rather than in things made a difference and left behind a legacy well worth struggling to defend and protect!

Father Flynn

Photo Spread by Jean

Jean Brickey

A Woman of Faith, A Woman of Action

If you are a parishioner of Sacred Heart Church, surely you know Jean Brickey. Well, maybe not by name, but by sight or from the many "behind the scenes" activities of which she has been an integral part for the past several years.

When asked for his comments regarding this woman of faith, Father Flynn wrote, "'As Jesus walked along the shore he came upon two brothers...Come, follow me, He invited..be My disciples.'

Our literal approach to these words is that Jesus chose men. Throughout the scriptures, however, we read of the many women who embraced His life and ministry with a true understanding of the commitment required for discipleship. This continues to be actualized in the disciples who surround us today in our own faith community. One such obvious witness is Jean Brickey, a woman of faith, a disciple of Jesus whose involvement in the world and in the community of Southbury is centered on making Gospel values a reality."

A twenty-seven year resident of Heritage Village, this native of New Rochelle, New York, regularly attended Mass at Sacred Heart and occasionally assisted with Church mailings. In 1992 after the death of Roy, her husband of twenty-two years, Jean was moved by the Holy Spirit to attend a ministry fair. With trepidation, she joined the Communications Committee, the publishers of this newsletter. Jean was apprehensive at not having any special writing skills, but as this writer can testify, she has contributed in so many ways to the committee and the newsletter in organization, planning, distribution, word processing

and photography.

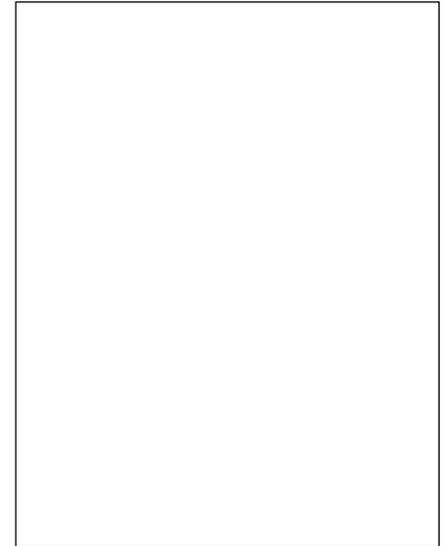
In 1996 Jean was elected to the Parish Council and became liaison to the Extend-A-Hand Committee, which she later joined. As Chairperson of the Parish Council, she reactivated The Welcoming and Hospitality Committees, which she also joined. Jean now serves on the Stewardship Committee, is also one of two parish trustees, and is a member of the Finance Committee.

Lest you think that Jean demonstrates Stewardship only within the Church, you may be interested to know that her Heritage Village community is also the beneficiary of her civic involvement. She is active in the Ambulance Association and is Secretary of the Pomperaug Ladies Nine Hole Golf Association.

Jean hasn't forgotten those from her past career at Exxon, where she was head bookkeeper and later administrative supervisor and executive secretary. Currently she is the director of the Exxon retiree club of Connecticut, where 230 members volunteered 9,000 hours to worthy causes last year. She is also editor of their newsletter, "Nutmeg News."

"If there is something that needs to be done, somehow to accomplish it, or someone who needs assistance, Jean quietly steps in and brings Christ's presence and ultimately His message. Nothing is expected in return; nothing is asked. For this disciple only one thing is important, to do God's work; to be His instrument," adds Father Flynn.

This willingness to give her all to whatever cause requires her "time, talent or treasure" is what has transformed Jean into a steward of God.



Jean says that she was blessed by God through the Holy Spirit, to see that there is life after the loss of a loved one. "Although you may not have the same life as before, if you listen to the direction of the Holy Spirit, you can have a very happy and fulfilling life when sharing your gifts with others."

Certainly all this would leave most of us no time for personal recreation. But not Jean! She plays golf several times a week, and is an active bowler, gardener and bridge player. She also is very close to her family, which includes twenty-eight nieces and nephews, to whom she is affectionately known as "Aunt Jean Bean."

Jean is a vibrant, generous, multifaceted person who has managed to balance the important aspects of life for her own enjoyment and for the benefit of many others. We, at Sacred Heart are truly blessed to have Jean Brickey as a member of our Faith Community and as a practical example of Stewardship in Action.

Rich Stephens

Two New Ministries

The Beauty of God's House

The smoothness of the pavement in the driveways and parking lot, the beautifully manicured lawn bordering the front of the church, the colorful flowers and well-trimmed shrubs surrounding the building, these sometimes-taken-for-granted features of Sacred Heart Church have been in the caring hands of Steward Ed Comstock, our Building Maintenance Coordinator. Now, Ed is being joined by nineteen parishioners who are members of the newly formed Buildings & Grounds Ministry.

This new ministry, founded by Stewardship Program Chairperson Tony DeNegro, was formed to help plan, oversee, and enhance the maintenance and beauty of the church property, which also includes the rectory and the cemetery. Improvement projects will range from seasonal planting to cleaning out the rectory basement and painting where needed.

Meeting with members of the Stewardship Committee, Father Flynn suggested the need for an expanded ministry whose work will revolve around creating and enforcing policies designed to maintain church property in a desirable manner and also sponsoring fund raising and volunteer projects to support ministry goals. "As we continue to develop our plans for this ministry, we will coordinate our efforts with Father Flynn, the Parish Council, Ed Comstock, Finance and other committees, said DeNegro. "The challenge with any new ministry is getting enough people to participate. Usually people hate yard work and tend to shy away from it. I'm quite pleased with the initial sign-up" at the recent Ministry Weekend.

Buildings and Grounds Committee members Bob Loiseau and Tony DeNegro. To volunteer or to obtain more information please call Tony at 598-3751 or Jackie DeNegro at the rectory at 264-5071.

Parish Nurse: Teaches Total Wellness

Had your blood pressure checked lately? Your Parish Nurse will help you with this, as well as questions about diabetes, mammograms, or any other health issues causing you concern.

The Parish Nurse Ministry is being reactivated under the leadership of Elizabeth Tishion, R.N. to bridge the gap between the faith and medical communities. Parish Nurse Tishion has a rich 30 year background of nursing at Danbury Hospital in cardiology. Tish believes that parish nursing gives her the opportunity to get to know the patient and to do patient education, a valuable component of wellness.

Tish's first task as Parish Nurse will be to form a Health Cabinet of four to eight health care professionals and other

Parish Nurse Elizabeth Tishion

volunteers who will assess the health needs of parishioners from teenagers to seniors. Based on this assessment, The Cabinet will determine what committees will be needed to carry out the educational programs and various activities. "The Health Cabinet is the catalyst. It encourages individuals and groups to become involved in the process of healing by making them aware of the healing that can come from themselves."

"Wellness consists of wholeness between body, mind, and spirit. Only when these three are in harmony can we live in the state of optimal health that God gave to us," says Tish. "My job as Parish Nurse is to make people more aware of this precious gift—our health."

The Parish Nurse Ministry is open to anyone wishing to participate. For more information or to volunteer, please call Elizabeth Tishion, R.N. at the Rectory at 264-5071.

Stellie Reck

I Remember When

During a recent birthday when my four offspring with grandchildren paid homage "to the ol' man" (me), stewardship actually found it's way into the discussion instead of the more enlightened philosophical ideas of Cicero, Sartre, and St. Thomas, our usual topics of conversation (if you believe that, then you would believe weekly collections are to be discontinued).

My future heirs had now reached the age when everyone was registered with a parish rectory. This registering apparently, not only gives one the right to proclaim his opinion on all church related matters, but also guarantees a hearing in front of a not terribly interested sibling. Frankly, I felt that this particular right to be heard was one of my sacred privileges as titular head of the family.

Watching my two grandchildren eye my more expensive bric-a-brac, (me poised ready to pounce and save) I heard Paul announce that he had received his first pastoral letter.

Tommy, my oldest son and the family cynic, inquired whether it was already a request for money. Paul assured him it was not, but that the import of the letter was about giving time to the various parish ministries.

Paul continued, "Frankly, Dad, tell me what is the difference between what was expected from us, way back when at St. Joseph's and now, except your church uses a different word: stewardship." Being unaccustomed to our family discussions, Kelly expected a response that could be interpreted as at least vaguely intelligent, that is, something beyond the usual sophomoric banter among her future in-laws. And so Kelly leaned forward with eager anticipation.

"I suppose," I began in my professorial voice, knowing that I had their full attention, "we can make the case that our religion has been entrusted to our hands since we are basically a community of faith. In fact, nothing has really changed from way back then. Historically, the Church could not have existed and grown without a foundation built by 'the faithful', or the women in those days, and I wonder if this is not still true today. But with the declining of priest and sister vocations, someone has to step into the breach, and that's us. So the Church asks that we offer our time, talents and even the spirituality found in our hearts to benefit the parish. A simple answer, perhaps, but I think there is sound reasoning to it."

"Yes, Dad, we understand," acknowledged Lauren, also watching her children as they hovered around

my breakables, "but Paul's question is, 'What is the difference?'"

"There is none," I replied. "The founding fathers' call for stewardship was important two thousand years ago, important as it is now and as it ever will be."

"For the greater glory of God," said Sean quietly.

"Always, my son," I answered just as quietly. The Jesuits at Boston College would be proud of the graduating senior, I thought.

I looked at Sean and imagined him dressed in a black suit with a stiff white circular collar. In mid-reverie, I heard Sean belch and ask for another beer. Sighing, I went to the kitchen to collect his refreshment, noting a possible passing of a dream.. always confident, however, that God does move in mysterious ways.

Dermis J. McLaughlin

Prayer for Those Who Live Alone

I live alone, dear Lord, stay by my side,
In all my daily needs, be Thou my guide.

Grant me good health, for that indeed, I pray,
to carry on my work from day to day.

Keep pure my mind, my thought, my every deed,
Let me be kind, unselfish in my neighbor's need.

Spare me from fire, from flood, malicious tongues,
From thieves, from fear, and evil ones.

If sickness or an accident befall,
then humbly, Lord, I pray, hear Thou my call.

And when I'm feeling low, or in despair,
lift up my heart and help me in my prayer.

I live alone, dear Lord, yet have no fear,
because I feel Your presence ever near. Amen.

From "Aloft With God"
Redemptorist Fathers, Perpetual Help Center

Spotlight on Youth

Following Christ's Example

My name is Kathryn Ellis and although I am only 16, I am a disciple of God. I am currently a junior at Sacred Heart High School. My parents and I have been parishioners here at Sacred Heart Church for about eight years. To me, being one of Christ's disciples means following the example of Jesus by giving selflessly our time, talents and resources to the Church, our families and the community.

I first became involved in Church ministries when my mom joined Covenant To Care. This probably comes with being an only child, but I was brought almost everywhere my parents went. I began helping out with activities such as making Easter baskets in the spring, and putting together backpacks in the fall. When I was younger, I would much rather have been outside playing, but no matter how much I didn't want to be there, I always had fun and my heart felt incredibly full afterwards. I loved the feeling I got after completing even a simple act of kindness, and I wanted to continue being involved in these ministries on my own.

In sixth grade I became a reader so that I could literally share the Word of God with others. I also became part of the music ministry program playing my violin. Last year I joined the Communications Committee and have written several articles in the church newsletter, *From the Heart*. Being involved in Church ministries is a very important part of my life, but I feel that it is equally important to serve in the community. This year I joined the Education

Committee at Carolyn's Place, a crisis pregnancy center supporting the Catholic pro-life position. We give presentations at schools and to Church groups. Right now we are trying to form a youth group to perform skits at these presentations so that we can make a more complete connection for the kids and teens we speak to.

One misconception about stewardship is that in order to participate, you must be involved in big service projects. However, even small acts of kindness like inviting a new student to sit with your friends at lunch so they aren't all alone is an example of sharing God's love with others. For summer reading this year, I had to read *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey. I learned that the way to effectively help others is to work from the inside out. It is okay to start small and work up to larger acts of service.

I believe that it is never too early to become a disciple of God and there is no age discrimination in sharing God's love. All human beings want to feel important and needed. Helping others fills this gap. I have learned that we can make a difference in the lives of others even if we do not know them, and a wonderful result of making others happy is that we become happy as well. I am so thankful that I had the chance to experience this so early in life and that I have so much time ahead of me to continue my stewardship.

Kathryn Ellis

A "Heads-Up" for Lent (Believe It or Not)

For the past half dozen years, our parish family has engaged in a remarkable cooperative effort, putting together a "Lenten Book of Reflections." On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, this resource for prayer and reflection throughout Lent is made available to everyone.

Well in advance of that season, the Parish Education CORE Committee posts a list of the Old and New Testament passages which will

be read during the forty days of Lent. We invite all parish members to select one reading from the list, give it some prayerful attention, and write a short 75 to 125 word reflection on that portion of sacred Scripture, returning it to the Committee for inclusion into the book.

Is it absurd to be talking about Lent now, when most people's thoughts are directed toward Christmas? Not really. Just as a well-celebrated

Christmas results from the careful preparation of four weeks of Advent, so also a meaningful Lent is more likely to result from preparing a rich groundwork. We hope that when we post the list of Scripture readings in early January, many from our parish family will be eager to share their faith with all of us once again.

Maureen F. McDermott
Parish Education CORE Committee

Ask Father Flynn

Q *Why is the weekly collection brought to the altar during the Offertory Procession?*

A For those who may not be familiar with liturgical practice, it is important to understand the meaning behind the symbolic actions that take place in every celebration of the liturgy between the two distinct movements of the Mass: (1) the Liturgy of the Word and (2) the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, our simple gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. We offer these gifts to be transformed just as we hope to be transformed into more Christ-like people by what we receive in Eucharist. The monetary gift we offer is part of who

we are and what we have become through the love of God. It is often referred to as our sacrificial offering. Our financial response comes out of the gratitude we show to God for the many gifts we constantly receive. It represents not what is "left over", a minimal obligation, but rather our gift freely and generously given for the continuation of the Church's mission. Transformation is also a characteristic of this act. These gifts, both simple and sacrificial are offered up to God who changes them and graciously returns them to us. We are always the recipients of God's generosity which can never be outdone!

If you have a question about your faith, send it to the Communications Committee in care of the rectory and watch for the answer in a future newsletter.

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