



From the Heart

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Our Stewardship Vision

As Christian disciples we recognize God as the origin of life, giver of freedom, and source of all things. We are grateful for the gifts we have received and are eager to use them to show our love for God and for each other. Looking to the life and teachings of Jesus, and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Stewardship Committee is dedicated to making Sacred Heart a more loving, caring, and sharing family community that encourages all parishioners to spiritually enrich the lives of one another. To fulfill this mission, we will endeavor to...

- Significantly broaden Sacred Heart's reach both within and beyond our parish community through the creation and development of new ministries
- Substantially increase both the number of Sacred Heart parishioners actively involved in ministries and the total amount of ministry time given by our parish.

1Peter 4:10

"As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another each in the measure he has re-

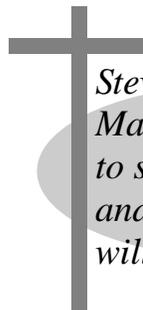
Stewardship Committee Objectives

- Assess the effectiveness of our present ministries and, where appropriate, assist those ministries that may be in need of resources or direction

1John 21

"This is the commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."

- Determine the needs of our parish community, local community, and surrounding communities; then research and develop responses to those needs
- Encourage and assist in the development of new ministries, particularly focusing on those that promote family involvement
- Continually invite more participation by parishioners in ministry service, both in numbers and in time, through our ministry fairs, lay witness, and everyday example of stewardship as a way of life
- Actively promote and solicit ideas from parishioners pertaining to the formation of new ministries
- Encourage ongoing and timely communication within and among members of all ministries so as not to diminish the interest level of those involved...



*Stewardship...
Make the time
to share your talent
and the treasure
will follow.*

Vol. 13, No. 3
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On Being a Lay Witness



When Father Flynn asked me to speak at the Archdiocese's Stewardship Conference as a lay witness, I was shaken. I really didn't think I had much to say or that anyone would be interested in listening, but I agreed because something in me understood that the Holy Spirit was behind this request.

My first thought after accepting the invitation of the Holy Spirit to witness before a group of people was to think, "Where do I begin?" On my knees, of course—his direction was clear.

I realized I must thank him for my gifts and talents, in real humility submit to his will, ask for his guidance, and

pray for the wisdom to see my life through his eyes.

I offer this as a guide to anyone who is called to give formal witness and to all who are called to give witness everyday. Don't ever be afraid to ask others to pray with you and for you.

I encourage you to write your ideas and inspirations, always putting yourself in the presence of God, and asking for the guidance to see him in the events of your life. In preparation for my first formal witness, I found it helpful

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Peg Reilly Honored

On Sunday, May 26, Peg Reilly was presented with the St. Joseph's Award by Archbishop Cronin at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford. This award is bestowed upon individuals from parishes throughout the Archdiocese who have given of themselves in

order to enhance the work of the church and to promote the Gospel.

Peg is one of the most senior members of the community who has given freely of her time and talent to Sacred Heart. In the 28 years that she has been a parishioner, she has served as a catechist, eucharistic

minister, parish trustee, RCIA staffer, and has been involved in many of the parish ministries.

Always willing to lend a helping hand, she is blessed with many friends, and they are blessed to have Peg as their friend.

Our congratulations to Peg for this well-deserved honor!

Jean Brickey

Peg Reilly, pictured with Fr. Flynn, proudly displays the St. Joseph's Award presented to her Archbishop Cronin on May 26.

From the Heart

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New members, ideas and Ask Father questions are welcome throughout the year. Please contact the rectory or Katherine Pavone at 264-6599.



Like a Seed

I don't know how you feel about "command performances," or any activity or event that implies a "must attend or else" connotation, but I innately dislike them.

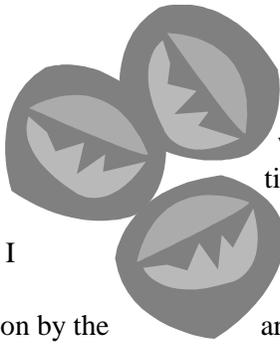
Four years ago I received an invitation by the Archbishop to just such an event. Most of the dutiful pastors of our 223 Archdiocesan parishes attended. Thus amid a current of obvious and almost universal resentfulness, we, the parish leaders, were introduced to "stewardship." My initial resistance to having been summoned to this command performance quickly faded because I realized that stewardship is an appropriate response to Gospel values. I was grateful that the principle of stewardship as a conscious response to God's graciousness was going to be encouraged as a way of life and as a means of renewing the challenge of discipleship for all Christians regardless of age.

Of course, some only saw this as another program rather than the obvious response of faith. Some saw it as directed solely to those who have time on their hands for volunteering. Others jumped to the negative conclusion that stewardship was ultimately about asking people to dig deeper into their pockets. Make a commitment to time, talent and resources? Sign a card that pledges support? How ludicrous!

We are now in our third year of trying to make stewardship *our* way of life as a parish and as people who have been called by Christ to follow in his steps proclaiming the kingdom through our lives. We modern day Christians are not very good at making commitments and honoring them. No, we're much better with convenience than commitment. And we're even better at making excuses or looking for reasons to turn our backs or finding some loophole that will allow us to sever the commitment.

In the fall we will once again ask everyone in our parish to renew your commitment. We will once again ask you to offer your time, your talent and your resources, the gifts you have been given by God, which you are giving back in appreciation and sacrifice.

Who of us has enough time; even one hour a week to give back to God in addition to the hour we spend in



worship to renew our world-worn spirit? But, how much time do we manage to find to watch television, sit at the computer, play bridge, golf, or some other sporting activity. Somehow we make time for certain things!

And just what is your particular talent? Maybe you are a great listener, a good cook, a capable organizer, a plumber, electrician, carpenter, computer genius or simply able to pray for those who can't or won't pray for themselves. You have innate talents, which are your particular gifts. Why not use them for God who gave them to you in the first place?

Of course, like time, we never have enough resources to do all the things we'd like to do or need to do. Our collective Christian pockets are pretty shallow; we tell ourselves over and over, the church is wealthy—I need it more. But do we ever ask ourselves, "What is my faith worth? What is eternal life worth? What is the price I put on my faith compared to the many things I decide are necessary to satisfy my human needs? Is my giving to God minimal, or is it really an expression of my gratitude?"

There's no doubt about it. The Gospel is crystal clear about discipleship or stewardship; the words are interchangeable. It is our way of living our faith commitment.

Our lives are like seeds, full of potential despite a rather insignificant appearance. From the seed something glorious is born. But unless it is planted, it cannot grow. Our inner home is very much like the heart of the seed. We have great potential for receiving the Word of God and for becoming who we are meant to be. Deep within all of us are many gifts and virtues that have never been sown. They just lie there, seemingly dry and lifeless. We must believe in what lies within us—our deep storehouses of gifts. The more we believe in this treasure, the more we will be willing to risk "cracking open the husk" of our potential.

Our hearts are the soil for the wonderful seeds of faith, hope and love—time, talent and resources.

Let us once again renew our commitment to plant the seeds, which God has formed in us. Be conscious every day of the seeds within you carrying so much potential. Dare to sow them and let God tend them. You will truly become a steward of his Kingdom.

On Being a Lay Witness

(Continued from page 2)

to focus on Scripture passages, which seem to come easily to mind, such as: “The Lord has done great things for me,” and “With God all things are possible.” Songs, hymns, the words of family, friends, and even strangers can speak to your heart. These are God’s guiding ways, and occur not out of coincidence but by his design.

We witness to God’s love each time we go out of our way for another, each time we thank God for his gifts and guidance, and each time we call on him to help us. We freely acknowledge his goodness and power before others. If we give thanks each time we recognize a gift, we will begin to see how often he works in our lives and how much he reveals himself to us; we will be strengthened in our witnessing beyond measure.

If you are called upon to talk in front of a group (formal witness) as I was, think of it as a prayer of praise that *you* have written, and then go “shout from the mountain.” Your talk may be focused on how God has lifted you up from difficult times—perhaps from depression, a wanton lifestyle, lack of faith, fear and uncertainty—and brought you to a place of calm and peace, “...a peace the world cannot give.”

Ideally, a witness talk should be about 15 minutes and should include the most remarkable ways God has been with you on your journey and how he has led you to grow stronger in his way. Your example may inspire others to also witness.

LET
US
SING HIS
PRAISES

Speaking in front of a group can be an enormous challenge. For me, it is a major obstacle, but I was amazed at how calm I was that Monday of my first formal witnessing. I had deliberately kept in mind a reading I had found about St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian woman who worked with immigrants in New York City in the 1880’s, the saint I had chosen for my confirmation. She disliked boats and water, yet in her lifetime, in order to perform her duties, she crossed the ocean by boat more than 20 times! Reflecting on that fact reminded me that the Lord often challenges us to do difficult things. It also reminded me that God provides us with all that we need to do his will.

I found the evening to be invigorating; rather than being nervous, I felt uplifted. I knew that the Holy Spirit had been with me every step of the way, even before I realized I had been called to duty. He does inspire our thoughts and words if we let him.

We have all been called to an important task. “Ever on my lips the praises of the Lord.” Lay witnessing can and should be done every day,

spreading the good news of all that God does. Your example can be the beginning of something greater. You will find others coming to ask you to pray for and with them. Some will share their stories and their challenges. This is an opportunity to encourage them to find God in their challenges, to trust him, and to look for the little and great gifts he sends us each day.

As simple as our story may seem, God will see that it reaches the ears of those who need it most. God does indeed work in mysterious ways.

In His Name
Marge Griffin



Listen

Is it the whisper of the wind,
Or the rustling of leaves in the breeze?
Or is it the voice of a loving God
Saying, “Listen a moment, please.”

Is it the song of a warbling bird
Or the laughter of children at play?
Or is it the voice of a loving God
Urging, “Listen to what I say.”

Is it the wail of a troubled world
Or the cry of a soul in pain?
Or is it the voice of an anguished God
Pleading, “LISTEN TO ME” again.

Irma Rilling

Spotlight on Youth

What's a SHYG? Are you a SHYG?

When you hear the word SHYG, what do you think of...an animal, a person, a dance? What really is a SHYG? At first I didn't know what one was either, then I sat down with a SHYG representative and became informed. SHYG stands for the Sacred Heart Youth Group and is under the direction of the youth minister who is assisted by two teen leaders.

Each month there is a meeting with the core committee where the two teen leaders alternate as chairpersons. Anyone can attend, and it usually takes place on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm in room B, but you might want to check the bulletin to make sure. During the summer, the SHYG takes a break and does only a little planning, but when school starts, big plans for the entire year are made.

The meeting begins with an icebreaker, or an activity to bring everyone into the meeting so they can concentrate on what will follow. Next comes a "popcorn bible"; a random passage from the bible is read and the group reflects on it. Finally they discuss upcoming events, activities and retreats. Usually the 10-15 members of the youth group attend with their parents who are there to oversee, reinforce and assist.

The youth group holds activities, retreats and Masses specifically for kids in grades 7-12. In the past there have been dances, Masses for the graduating class and picnics in the church parking lot where local bands play. Other

events that SHYG has held are the Christmas pageant, the faith walk, and the annual Mother's Day flower sale fundraiser. The youth group also participates in the stewardship membership drive, trying to entice more people to join. SHYG nights are held on the first Friday of every month (but not in the summer). At SHYG nights kids can watch a movie, eat popcorn, talk or just hang out. These events are aimed more toward fun while still keeping the idea of church and faith in mind.

A picnic will be held at the end of August. Watch the bulletin for details. A group has just returned from this year's Steubenville East Youth Conference held at LaSalette Shrine in Attleboro, Massachusetts. Each year about 10,000-11,000 kids from around the country gather together for prayer, song, workshops, and fun. Check out the Sacred Heart Church web site for exciting pictures of this event.

The youth group is a great experience for kids from 7-12 grade. It gives youth an opportunity to express ideas on how kids can and should participate in church. So now you know what SHYG is, and the next time you hear someone ask you to join the SHYG, you won't be thinking you will need to learn some new dance.

Matthew LeFurge



Come Join the Fun

The Social Activities Committee has plenty planned to keep you busy this fall.

Our parish picnic will be held at Ballantine Park on Saturday September 21, 2002, from 12 noon to 4:30, followed by Mass at 5:00. There will be food, games, prizes and music. It will be a great way for the parish family to come together for a day of fun. The price is \$5 per person with a

limit of \$20 for families with young children. Tickets can be purchased at the rectory or after Mass in the weeks prior to the picnic.

On Saturday September 14, 2002, the parish has the opportunity to take a Circle Line cruise circumnavigating the island of Manhattan with a close-up view of the Statue of Liberty. The \$49.00 tickets will be sold at the rectory.

Finally, a parish dance will be held on Friday, October 25, from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m., for parishioners 18 and up, at a cost of \$10 per person. B.Y.O.B. Set-ups will be provided and coffee and dessert will be served.

Call Mary Korsu at the rectory for tickets and information.

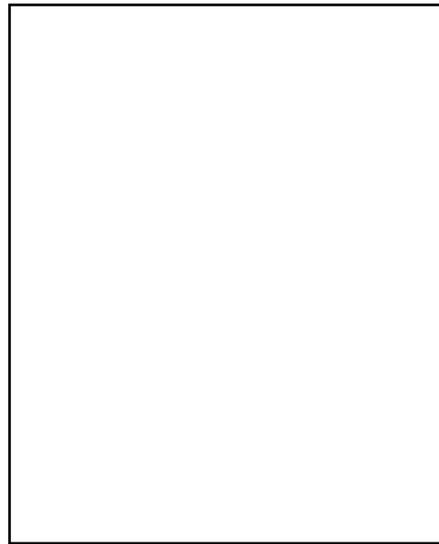
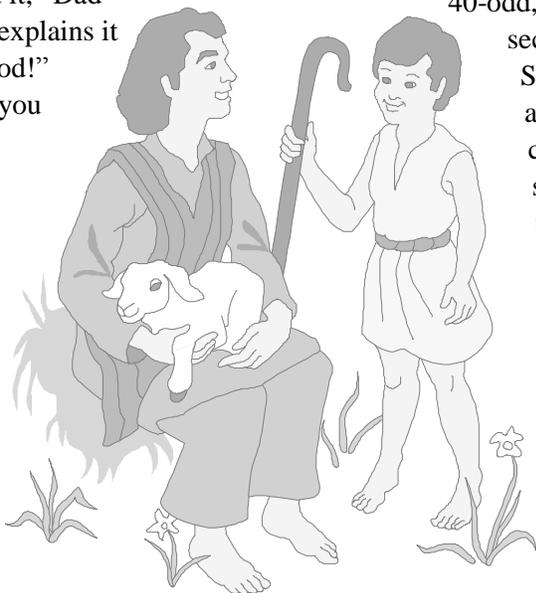
Katherine A. Pavone

Family Focus

Deb and Rick McGrath joined the Sacred Heart faith community ten years ago when living in Woodbury. On Easter 1996, Deb became a full participant of Sacred Heart through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Both are active in various ministries including, Stewardship, Communications, Small Christian Communities and Core Education. Deb is also the Religious Education Gainfield School Coordinator and the coordinator of the Advent wreath workshop.

The focus of this article however, is their joint participation in Sacred Heart's Liturgy of the Word for Children ages 6–12. Deb coordinates scheduling, books and other supplies for the Sunday children's sessions that take place during the nine and eleven o'clock Masses and Rick is a proclaimer, explaining the readings of the Mass to our young parishioners, including their son Tim, age seven, in terms they can understand, or as Tim put it, "Dad always explains it very good!"

Did you



Rick, Debbie and Tim McGrath.

ever wonder what actually goes on in the chapel after the children parade out of the church with their leaders? I did, so unannounced, I joined, Rick and the group one Sunday morning to find out. Not surprisingly, it takes more than one adult to handle 50 or more little ones and keep their attention on the readings of the day. For the July 4th weekend-sized group of 40-odd, Rick was joined by a second proclaimer, Ann Sharkey, and both were assisted by two older children. Rick and Ann showed patience and used humor to relate an

Old Testament reading, the Gospel, and in assisting the children with the recitation of the Creed ("what we believe," as Rick explained) as well as prayers of the faithful. They both were very effective, as witnessed by the interaction of the group, in using a question and answer format to bring out the children's interest. And since there was a Baptism being performed during that Mass, they took the opportunity to convey that the sacrament of Baptism is the first sacrament and that it was bringing one more member into the church that day. Together, they then identified all seven sacraments.

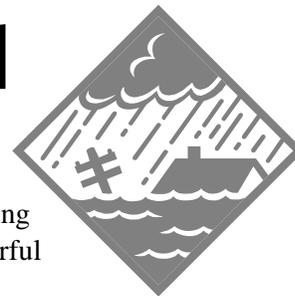
So as you can see (as I did along with two little parishioners who adopted me as their Sunday "Grandpa") this is one liturgical experience that keeps all participants busy, creative and on their toes which Rick is happily able to accomplish in his easy-going style and with Deb working in the background to keep the program running smoothly.

Sacred Heart's faith community is fortunate that Rick and Deb make the commute from Newtown, where they now reside, having chosen our parish, because there was "more action" and a greater sense of the Spirit here.

Truly, the McGraths are a big part of our "faith action" bringing their son Tim and his generation up first-hand in their faith understanding.

Rich Stephens

Faith and Stewardship on The Road



It's not too early to start planning for next summer's vacation. If you are looking for a different way to spend those sultry nights and humid days, while at the same time putting your faith into action, consider the Passionist Volunteers. After extensive research to find a religiously oriented volunteer opportunity, Bernie and Bob McGarry of Sacred Heart Parish headed south this summer with the Passionist Volunteers. The couple spent two weeks in July, along with 35 other volunteers from many states, assisting the folks of Wyoming County, West Virginia rebuild after last year's flood. Glen Fork Elementary School served as headquarters and shared living space.

The experience far exceeded the McGarrys' expectations, with days spent repairing walls, adding roofs, reconstructing porches, visiting the elderly, and helping with local food banks and Head Start Programs. Evenings

were rich with community life—dinner, recreation, planning the next day's work, and prayerful reflection.

Lack of experience using complex tools posed no obstacles, and in very short order everyone was reasonably proficient, with emphasis on "reasonably." At least there were no trips to the emergency room or clinic. The two weeks sped by, and the only downside was the 90-degree heat. But even now, the memories of the area and the wonderful people have obliterated any negative that a little heat may have caused.

If anyone is interested in becoming a part of the Passionist Volunteers, or joining the McGarrys on next year's adventure, please contact Bob or Bernie at 264-9028.

Dolores Matzen

Ask Father Flynn

Q Why does the church use incense? What is its significance?

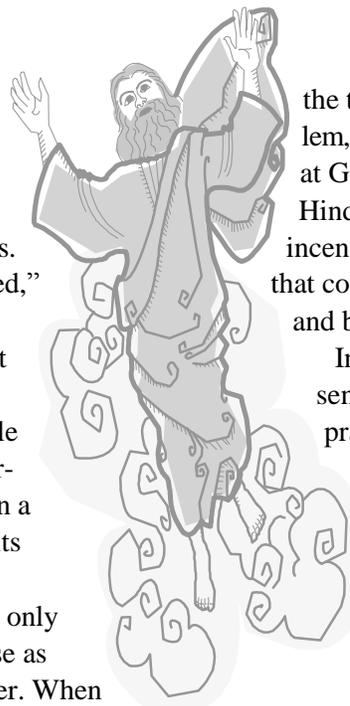
A "Let my prayer rise before you like incense." The church sings these words from Psalm 141. That is one reason Christians praise God with incense. It is a symbol of prayer.

The smoke of melting incense is also a sign of sacrifice, of purification, of homage, of mystery. It calls to mind the bright cloud of God's presence that filled the holy of holies in the temple in Jerusalem. At the transfiguration and ascension of Jesus, a cloud surrounded his body. Perhaps that is why some people imagine heaven to be a place of shining clouds where the angels

glorify God with incense.

Church incense is made from the sap or resin of particular plants. After the plants are "bled," the resin is mixed with other materials so that it will harden. Then it is broken into grains a little bigger than popcorn kernels. It actually melts on a hot charcoal to release its fragrance.

Christians aren't the only people who burn incense as part of liturgy and prayer. When



the temple stood in Jerusalem, the Jews offered incense at God's altar. Still today, Hindus and Buddhists burn incense—usually the variety that comes in slender sticks and burns without charcoal.

Incense involves our sense of smell in our prayer, reminding us that the Spirit is as subtle, yet detectable, as a sweet scent borne aloft.

Saints of the Church

Stewards of Faith

Saints are the foremost stewards, as models for the people of God who care for the church in their inspiration and in their practical leadership. Among the great holy men and women of ecclesiastical history, St. Catherine of Sienna has for centuries served as a paragon of both mysticism and wise care of the church in this world. She lived in a time remote from our modern sensibilities, yet her great devotion and the spiritual direction she gave the church's leaders—popes—continue to inspire Catholics today.

Susan Tierney

St. Catherine of Sienna

St. Catherine was born on March 25, 1347, the youngest of 25 children born to Giacomo and Lapa Bernin-casa in Sienna, Italy. At six, she began having visions but as she grew into her early teens her parents thought of her worldly path and asked her to consider marriage. Catherine refused, saying she was married to Christ. She cut off her lovely hair, as a sign and to make herself less attractive for marriage. Enraged, her mother took away her room and fired all the servants, making Catherine do all the housework and leaving her no time to pray. The Lord came to her and said, "Turn inward to the cell of your

own soul and there will be time and place to find me always."

After seeing a dove hovering over her head as she prayed, her parents finally allowed Catherine to become a Dominican tertiary. During her three years of solitude, praying, fasting, and silence, she was plagued with doubts, demonic visions, and taunting voices. She dispelled them with laughter. But Catherine was also often enraptured in prayer and comforted when Jesus said to her, "I am always with you in your heart to strengthen you."

Catherine wanted to do all her suffering on earth, so she would be spared purgatory. She practiced self-mortification and allowed

herself little or no food or rest. When she was 19, the Lord appeared to her with the Blessed Mother and heavenly hosts. Mary held Catherine's hand as her son placed a ring on Catherine's finger and espoused her to himself. Jesus told Catherine she was now armed with faith to overcome anything the enemy sent her way. Now God's message to her was, "The salvation of many souls requires that you not inhabit your cell anymore. You must leave even your own city for the salvation of souls.

I will always be with you, and I will lead you forth and I will bring you back. You will carry the honor of my name and my spiritual warnings to the small and the great, as much to lay people as to clerics and religious. And I will give you a mouth and a wisdom that no one will be able to resist."

Catherine began ministering to the most abandoned and repulsive people. She tended lepers, prisoners, and the plague-ridden. She buried the dead. When her widowed mother was seriously ill, Catherine prayed for her recovery but God told her it would be better for her mother to die than to face the sorrows before her. Catherine persisted. When she was at church one day, her mother died. "Lord, my God," Catherine cried, "Are these the promises you made me? That none of my house would go to hell? As long as there is life in my body I shall not move from here until my mother is restored." Lapa was revived and lived many more years, but her life was indeed filled with sorrow.

Catherine attracted many followers and was well known for leading people to turn from sinful lives. Catherine was also a remarkable arbitrator and frequently mediated feuds. In 1374, Jesus appeared to her and told her to go to France to counsel the popes and church magistrates during the era that came to be known as The Great Schism or the Avignon Papacy, when multiple men claimed to be the true pope. French cardinals had managed to move the papal court



to Avignon, France, but Catherine met with Pope Gregory the XI and persuaded him to return the papacy to Rome. Urban VI succeeded Gregory, but the French cardinals declared his election illegal and selected their own pope. Urban would not abdicate. The church was at war with itself for decades. Catherine wore herself out trying to obtain the recognition Urban was due, while also counseling him in his duties.

In meditation in a small church in 1375, Catherine saw five blood red rays emanating from the crucifix. They pierced her hands, feet, and heart. The stigmata were visible only to Catherine during her life, but became clearly visible to everyone after her death.

In 1380, she had a seizure and one of her last visions. A ship of the church seemed to crush her to earth. She offered herself to the Lord, feeling that a profound wound to the church could only be healed by a great sacrifice. She fell to the ground in terrible pain and paralysis. She lost the use of her legs during the last months of her life and lived on water and chewed herbs. One night when she was too weak to receive communion, witnesses say that the bread moved through the air to her. Catherine said the hands of Christ had carried it. On April 21, she had a stroke and eight days later died at the age 33. Catherine was canonized in 1461 and for her wisdom and counsel was named a Doctor of the Church in 1970. Her feast day is April 29, the day of her death.

Diane Tomas

The Priest



His priesthood is from God.
His foolishness is from himself.
His courage is from Christ accepting the Chalice.
His cowardice is from the fearing apostles.

He must give, give, expend,
Listen and be patient,
Care and show concern for others.
He must lift others up.
He must console, heal and cure.

The demands on his energies are endless
He must always be available—
ready to let life happen to him,
ready to become involved
in the tragic complications and
the deep misery and anguish of others.

His rewards are great in the knowledge
that he tries to be another Christ.
His anguish is greater because he is aware of
his own failures in himself and in his
relationships with others.

And his people, the people of God;
He must love as Christ asked him to love—and
yet he must hide his human love.
In this he is so easily misunderstood, misjudged.
In this a sense of loneliness, aloneness can
overwhelm him.

Independent he is expected to be self-sufficient
He falls on the way—few willing hands lift him up.
He lapses—his lot is seldom one of sympathy.
He can be weak and impatient—no one understands.

In the midst of finance and administration,
In his own mind his vision of priesthood can be lost;
if he cannot see it himself
in this no one sympathizes.
Drained from generosity—worn by his own selflessness,
he needs your prayers as he stands alone.
He is another Christ in spite of all.

*Author Unknown
Submitted by Shirley Ross*

Human Cloning and Stem Cell Research

Why all the fuss about research on embryonic stem cells and the developing research on human cloning? The research aims to cure diseases. Embryonic stem cell research is supposed to provide an answer to diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. By cloning humans, we will be able to use a heart or lung or kidney or whatever body part is needed to cure someone of disease. Isn't that a form of stewardship, of caring for the sick and the suffering, of promoting life?

The insurmountable problem is that to obtain an embryonic stem cell, the human embryo must be killed.

Stem cells develop in the human embryo very soon after fertilization. They develop into 200 or more different kinds of cells to make up the organs of the human body. Scientists theorize that they can cultivate these cells and program them for specific therapeutic purposes, such as growing new brain, heart, or kidney tissue to repair damaged tissue. Some scientists want to do research on embryonic stem cells—called master cells—that are believed to be easier to reproduce and manipulate in the laboratory.

Stem cells are also found in the placenta and the umbilical cord, the adult brain, bone marrow, blood, skeletal muscle, and skin; it is not necessary to kill a human to obtain these stem cells. But human embryos obtained via abortion or created by in vitro fertilization are wanted as a primary source for research. The embryo's cells would be cultivated in the laboratory, replicating over and over again. And, in each case, the embryo—a living human being in its earliest stages of formation—would be intentionally destroyed for the sake of scientific experimentation.

The church teaches that the destruction of a human person, fully present even in embryonic form, is wrong. It is wrong because the Gospel of Life is at the heart of Jesus' message. Jesus says, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

"The church knows that this Gospel of Life, received from the Lord, has a profound and persuasive echo in the heart of every person—believer and non-believer alike—because it marvelously fulfills all the heart's expectations while infinitely surpassing them. Even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties, every person sincerely open to truth can, by light of reason and the hidden action of grace, come to recognize...the sacred value of human life from its very beginning until its very end." (Encyclical I John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, pg. 691)

The human community is founded upon the recognition of the right of every human to be respected to the highest degree, even as the political community contests it. In a special way, believers in Christ must defend and promote this right, aware as they are of the wonderful truth recalled by the Second Vatican Council: "By his incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human being. This saving event reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God, who 'so loved the world that he gave his only Son.' (John 3:16), but also the incomparable value of every human person."

Human cloning is wrong because it dehumanizes human reproduction. Cloning treats beings as products, as mere carriers of traits that others find useful. Cloning human embryos for research (therapeutic cloning) demeans life by creating new human lives solely to destroy them. Cloning embryos for live birth (reproductive cloning) violates human dignity, robbing the child of a mother and a father and of his or her own personal destiny. All life is sacred, from conception to natural death.

Bernie McGarry





About That Date in September...

On this part of our planet, September is a season of new beginnings. Schools, colleges and universities prepare for their new year with new programs, new classes, fresh ideas, and considerable enthusiasm. Enthusiasm and excitement, grip children and young people, as they shop for new gear: new shoes, new outfits and new backpacks. Parents share the excitement, and the apprehension as well, particularly when the new beginning is a “first:” nursery school, kindergarten, first grade, high school, and college—all the signposts to adventures into the unknown. Even those of us long out of school can sense the anticipation, enjoying it vicariously. For a time, it even pushes aside the thoughts of impending cold weather and shorter days; we do indeed remember those days in September!

This year, the adults of Sacred Heart Parish have a unique opportunity to experience this season of newness in a way especially tailored for them and their faith life. Under the sponsorship of the Parish Education CORE Committee, they are invited to engage in a twelve-week course entitled “A Journey From the Head to the Heart,” given by Father Edward J. McLean, director of the Catholic Library and Information Center in Hartford. Lectures will be held on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 in the Parish Hall, beginning September 17.

Father McLean has been giving this course to immensely enthusiastic audiences for a number of years. In fact, CORE Ed has made several unsuccessful attempts to engage him; his popularity is legend. This time, he managed to find room for us on

his calendar, and he is looking forward to meeting us. So that nothing will interfere with anyone’s ability to participate in these sessions, no other program of adult faith formation will be scheduled during that three-month time frame. An opportunity such as this is a priority.

The syllabus (a list of the titles of the twelve lectures) is available on request. The program is intended as a way of deepening one’s understanding of a gentle, non-judgmental God. It offers the possibility for a personal conversion experience by moving the Gospel values from the head to the heart by way of Scripture, prayer, and consideration of the issues of justice and peace.

*Maureen F. McDermott
Parish Education CORE Committee*

Extend-a-Hand Ministry

There is perhaps no time in our lives when we find ourselves more lost and empty than when confronted with the death of a loved one. We are faced with attending to details that we’d prefer to ignore and dealing with the human inevitability that we’d prefer to deny.

The Extend-A-Hand ministry is “hands and hearts” reaching out, not simply to console and comfort, but to assist in planning the liturgy for Christian burial, preparing a reception for family and friends of the deceased, and offering on-going support and assistance in the aftermath of burial when the pain of loss is so often overwhelming.

Presently, there are over one hundred and sixty members of this important ministry who give of their hearts and hands, time and talent, in order to comfort the grieving. These men and women are part of seven teams, each

headed by a captain and a co-captain who organize and set into motion the activities needed to relieve the stresses associated with loss. Members of this ministry serve many roles: some bake; others prepare for and clean up after receptions; some provide on-going contact and support. Because of the wonderful response of those who are involved in this ministry no one is ever overburdened.

As brothers and sisters to one another, we are energized and blessed to be able to support, comfort, and care for those whose lives have been assaulted by loss. If you have ever suffered through the death of a loved one and were touched by the support and concern of those who reached out to you, perhaps this ministry could be your way of expressing your gratitude.

Co-Chairpersons: Eileen Locher & Helen Lavoie

Stewardship By A Swimming Pool

There we were, clad in bathing suits, having secured the southeast corner of the pool area at “The Heritage” on the July 4th weekend, Judy, Sean Joseph McLaughlin, my budding law student and future Jurist of the United States Supreme Court, and me.

Eventually, believe it or not, directed by our Guardian Angels (believe it or not), the conversation drifted into an aspect of stewardship in the “one true church” (I love to tease Judy, a very spiritual Protestant).

And so...

“What law school preparation, Dad? All I need are law books and a good laptop!” so proclaimed Sean, apparently recently revisited by the Holy Spirit.

“Finding a good roommate to study with is also important, preferably male, of course,” I joked.

The humor of my remark stopped about two feet short of Judy. Ignoring it, she said, “From what I have heard about Fordham Law, you will be too busy to think about other things, and to be successful, you probably should include in your daily prayers St. Thomas More, a popular saint with the legal profession, so I understand, and even for matrimonial lawyers.” A sly smile from Judy and yes, her knife went in and out so quickly I just barely felt the pain.

“How did you know about ol’ Tommy More?” questioned Sean. His use of familiarity with a beloved saint made me flinch, and Judy’s knowledge of the Catholic Church surprised me as always.

“How and where did you...!” I joined Sean’s inquiry with my own

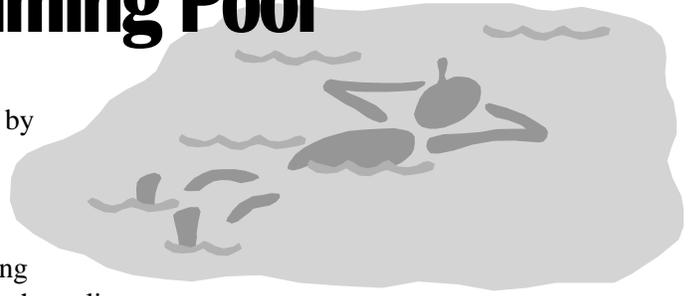
but was interrupted by the arrival of Thomas McLaughlin, newly titled Equipment Bearer, carrying all the required paraphernalia to insure the survival of one small four month old female, Erin, my latest grandchild. Both were accompanied by Allison, Erin’s mother and Tommy’s wife. As I recall, I moved not a muscle while watching Tommy struggle to open the playpen. Sarcasically I said, turning to Allison, Sean and Judy, “Ah, I remember those days and quite frankly, I would not welcome them back. Oh, Tommy, I don’t think you set up the baby carriage quite right!” I was rewarded with one of my son’s infamous glares. Allison was now changing Erin, as after all, almost two hours in a car is a little too much for a young lady to remain proper.

Sean, feeling his oats as a bachelor, said, “What is it you always say to Judy, Dad? I am only here to serve and obey, with the emphasis on obey!”

Allison looked over at Sean, “Believe that statement and you will make some woman a good husband. Your father says it, but he really doesn’t mean it. Isn’t that so, Judy?”

“I’m saying nothing,” replied a laughing Judy. “I am pleading the Fifth.

“Are you sure you really want to practice law? That may be the deal breaker, you know. And what are you going to do about St. Ignatius Church? You did make a promise to Father Gefty that you would offer your service as part of the youth ministry associated with the Men’s



Club to satisfy your stewardship obligation.” I have developed changing the subject into an art form. Heaven knows, I’ve had enough experience trying to keep peace in a very rebellious Irish family. “Service and prayer is what we are expected to give to the church,” I added.

“And money too, if possible,” said Sean now revealing the extent of his infusion with the Holy Spirit. “I’ll be there for the kids. Trust me on that one, Dad.”

Meanwhile, Allison was propping Erin up in her lap so she could take part in her first family discussion. The female infant, now wide awake, smelling fragrant, and using coos and gurgles the meaning of which the rest of us had not yet deciphered (except Allison of course), seemed particularly fascinated with Sean. My other grandchildren also have this similar fixation on their uncle. It has always been a mystery to me that the one with no children receives all their attention. I wonder if nephews and nieces have a sixth sense as to which uncle is about to serve as a future picture of generosity whether he is ready or not.

The oldest son immediately rushed to the defense of his younger brother, (nothing ever changes) using a tone that told me he was still smarting from my sarcasm. “What is he supposed to do? His preoccupation with life for the next three years is

going to be the law. I think St. Ignatius will be taking a back seat and the Jesuits should realize Sean's predicament."

I responded. "I can't believe, after spending eight years with them, you have forgotten, 'For the Greater Glory of God,' the Jesuit credo. Sean will find the time. I know he will."

"Personally, I welcome service to Sacred Heart. It is true I never volunteer (anybody who spent four years in the military understands that logic) but when called upon, I always seem to find the time. I'm not patting myself on my back, but Tommy, you can't tear yourself away from writing for five hours a month to serve on a ministry? That is not the Tommy I know and love."

It was a low blow and I knew it. Tommy turned to writing in search of intellectual fulfillment since he thought, and still does, that television serves as an answer for those deprived of the requisite brain cells to function as a normal human being.

"Well, good luck little brother. I hope in your case, God will provide."

"God provides for all of us. Most of the time we just don't know it," answered Sean.

"Or appreciate it," interjected Allison, gazing at Erin.

A knowing silence filled that southeast corner of the pool area.

"Time for a dip," said Sean getting up from the lounge chair

"I'll join you. You don't need me Allison?" asked Tommy. As the brothers walked a way I laughed.

Judy looked at me and frowned that "What is going on?" frown. "Tommy just asked Sean who Thomas More was."

And so, between brothers, life goes on.

Dennis J. McLaughlin

Renew Your Faith and Re-discover the Holy Spirit

Most of us go through our lives in stages. We make extended plans for the future, starting with graduating from high school or college, getting a job, purchasing a car and eventually, a home. After that we think of life as a continuous cycle of getting up, going to work, and then coming home again, at least until we retire. For that, we will invest our money, watch our 401k and work until we are senior citizens.

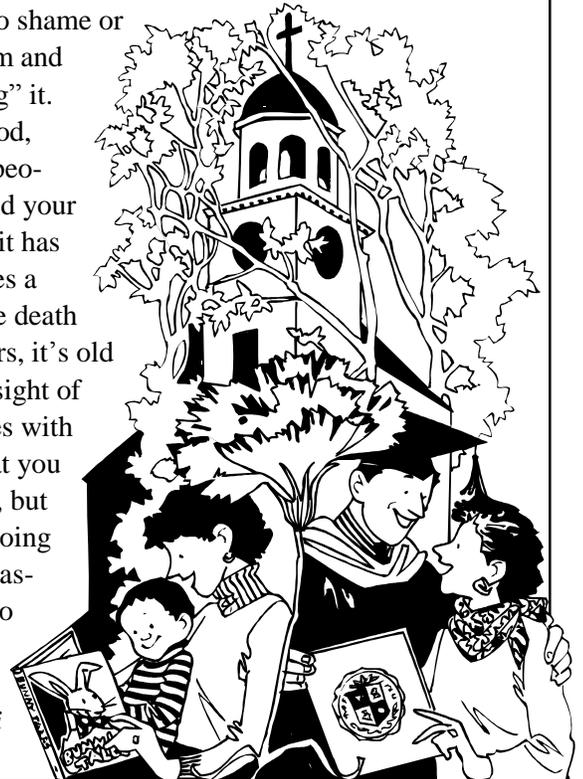
Our futures revolve around economic success and having a family of our own some day. For all of the plans you have made, have you considered what your future in religion is? Decades from now, do you see yourself as a valued part of a community, and a moral pillar that sets an example for others to emulate? Many people "find" God late in their lives, but I am very skeptical of these people. Mind you, I'm ecstatic for anyone who can genuinely find Christ—at any point in his or her life. However, it is all too human to grasp for elements of immortality as we see our mortal bodies wither in old age.

The best possible time to find God is when you are still young and full of faith. You know the history of your religion, the expectations you must live up to, and above all you still know how to find God through prayer, good works, and other people. If you lose your faith in God, though, you will have a hard life.

The Holy Spirit guides us every day. If you're not convinced that he does, ask yourself if you've ever made a mistake and felt ashamed. If you have, you know that you have the Holy Spirit by your side because you can believe that you HAVE made a mistake, and you didn't like yourself at that point because of it. People who do not have God in their lives think they can do no wrong. They feel no shame or disgust; life is a game for them and they take pleasure in "winning" it.

If you lose your faith in God, you will be like one of these people—empty and arrogant—and your life will be much harder than it has to be. For some people, it takes a great loss to find God, like the death of a family member. For others, it's old age. Other people never lose sight of God, and they lead happy lives with his guidance. Ultimately, what you decide is entirely your design, but ask yourself if what you are doing now would be an accurate measurement for where you want to be for all eternity.

Mark Adam Prybylski



Take Care

I am selfish in the prayer with which I begin every day, a strong but lovely prayer familiar to many. The saying of it gives me joy and energy and a sense of safety. It helps me to re-identify, rename myself. Without it at the break of day, I feel disconnected from the universal, fearfully adrift in an infinite sea.

So little a thing it is, to say such a prayer. Yet the saying allows me instead to leap daily into that sea and know that if I simply desire to move toward the holy, the way will be shown. I will be protected, cared for, one with God's world, and seeking salvation.

As children of faith, we are taken care of, and so can take care. In faith, we are given a sea to swim in and a light to swim toward, despite the terrors of the deep. But our own arms must reach out, long, through the strokes. We must labor. We must, as in this prayer, bind ourselves to be free. We desire the freedom found in the eternal, but find it only by being willingly bound and by binding to us.

I bind this day to me forever, by power of faith:

*Christ's Incarnation,
His Baptism in the river Jordan,
His dying on the Cross for my salvation,
His bursting from the tomb,
His riding on the heavenly way,
His coming on the day of doom.*

*I bind to me this day the virtues of the starlit heavens,
The glorious sun's life-giving rays,
The whiteness of the moon at even',
The whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,
The stable earth,
The deep salt sea around the old eternal rocks.*

Christ's presence around and with and in us is mirrored in the stewardship required of our natural world, in the care we give to others, in our individual spirituality, and in the coming together as church. We are to bind together—protect and care—because we have on the armor of Christ, "St. Patrick's Breastplate," the name of the prayer.

*Christ be with me, Christ be within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ below me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in the hearts of all who love me
Christ in the mouths of all I meet, friend
and stranger.*

The Celtic heritage that formed the prayer has graced many with a gift of language and story and a distinct sense of God's voice calling through all things. He speaks to us all through sea and fire, long summer days, and cold, troubled nights, through our own story and the stories of others. He offers his protection and gifts, even as we must face life's tempestuous shocks and crash against eternal rocks, and he requires of us an answer. Our response is voiced in the hours we give him and the return to him of our own creations—our work, our relationships, our prayers, our ministries—shaped by the grace of our gifts.

This circle, this coming from God and returning to God that is innate in nature and the craving of our souls, informs our going out to meet those who love us and to serve friends and strangers with Christ in our mouths, hearts, and deeds.

Susan Tierney



FROM THE LIBRARY OF DEACON MIKE

“We have never deceived ourselves by pretending to be angels on earth, but we know that Christian perfection and union with God must be realized in the treadmill of daily life. That God, in short, is found in normal life, provided this life is truly the life of grace and that we endeavor to live it thoroughly, with no pretense, seeking God and nothing else!”

—Thomas Merton

From the author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* comes an inspiring book that puts human feelings of guilt and inadequacy in perspective—and teaches us how we can learn to accept others and ourselves even when they and we are less than perfect. For no one is perfect. But too many people insist on demanding perfection of themselves, their parents, their husbands or wives, their children, and others in their lives. The result: guilt, anger, depression, and disappointment. The book is entitled *How Good Do We Have to Be?* and is for everyone who experiences that sense of guilt and disappointment. Writing with his customary wisdom, author Harold Kushner shows us how human life is too complex for anyone to live without making mistakes, and why we need not fear the loss of God’s

love when we are less than perfect. A God who could not love flawed people would be very lonely, because imperfect people are the only ones here. If we can’t accept and love people with all their imperfections, we condemn ourselves to loneliness as well.

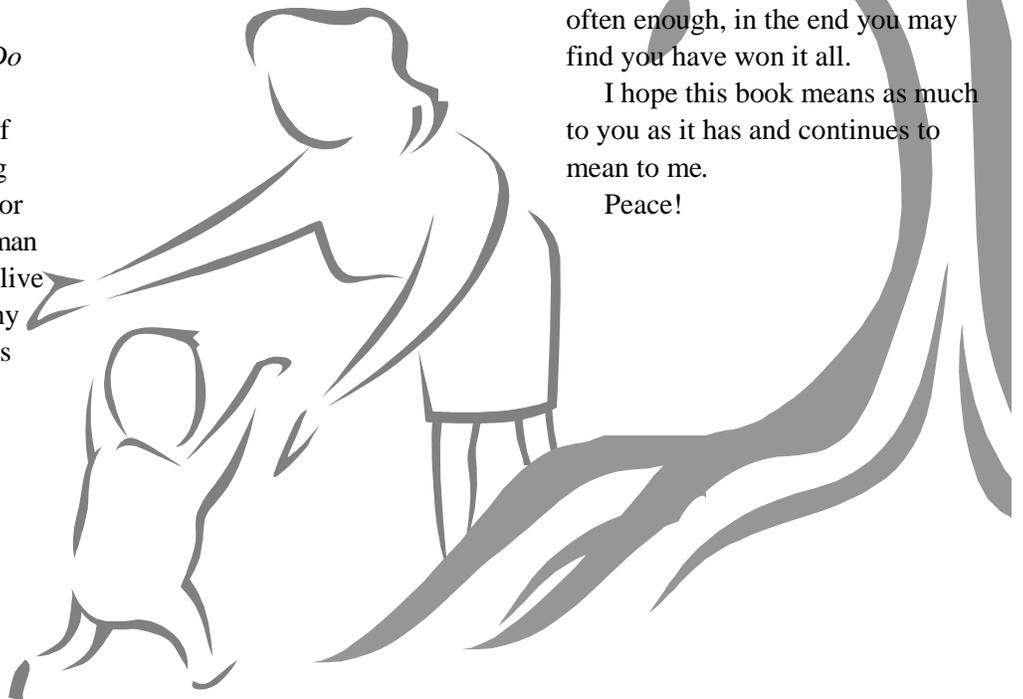
Harold Kushner explains why we need to stop blaming our parents for having made mistakes in raising us. They were amateurs when it came to raising children—a task for which even experts don’t always have the answers. In their loving, faltering way, our parents gave us something more valuable than a perfect childhood. They taught us what a complicated thing love is, what a challenge it is to love and raise a child. And for those of us who are parents, Mr. Kushner explains how we owe our children the right to make mistakes and to learn from them. When our

children were first learning to walk, taking tentative steps and falling down, we didn’t scold them for being clumsy. We praised them for trying to do something new and challenging. We can do our children no bigger favor than to maintain that attitude as they grow up.

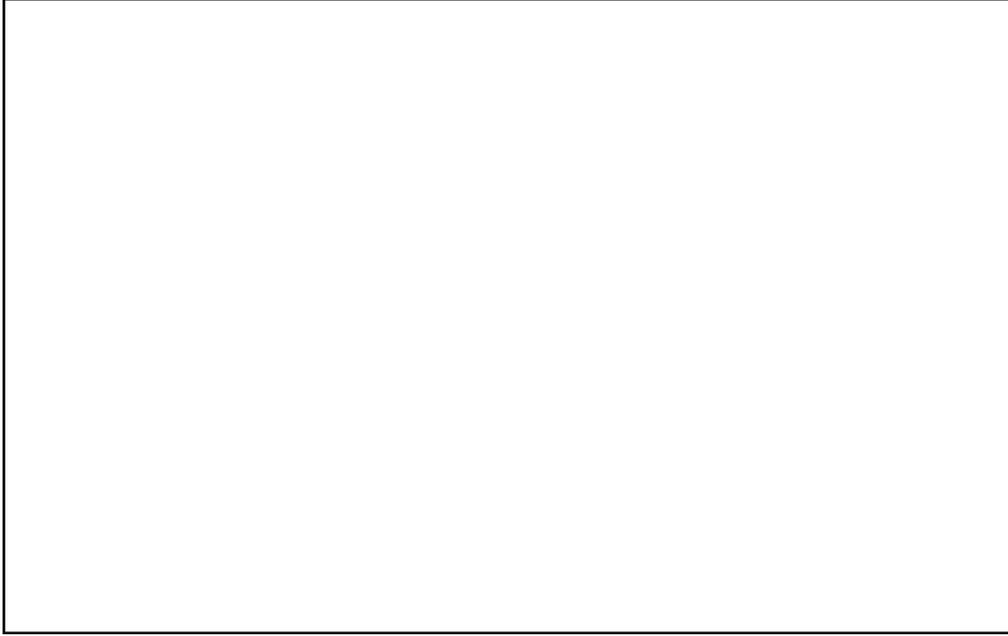
We need to give ourselves permission to be human, to try, to stumble, and to be momentarily weak and feel shame, but to overcome that shame with moments of strength, courage and generosity. We need to learn to define ourselves not by our worst moments but by our more typical ones. Life is not a test for which the passing grade is 100 percent and anything less is failure. Life is like the baseball season: even the best team loses at least a third of its games and even the worst team has its days of brilliance. The goal is not to win every game but to win more than you lose, and if you do that often enough, in the end you may find you have won it all.

I hope this book means as much to you as it has and continues to mean to me.

Peace!



Parish Council Elects Officers



Seated in front are Cindy Harris, Secretary; Sharon Guck, Chairperson; and Laurie DePalma, Vice Chairperson. Standing from left are: Rosemary Butterly, Diane Tomas, Jeanne Tillinghast, Paul Adams, Ray Thompson, Joseph Addonizio, George Davy and Joseph Stango. Missing from photo is Gino Albertario.



From the Heart

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