

ST. ISIDORE THE FARMER AREA FAITH COMMUNITY



ST. BRIDGET



SACRED HEART



ST. FRANCIS



ST. MALACHY



VISITATION ORATORY



ST. JOHN

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2

The Sacrament of Reconciliation:
Returning to the Father and
Lent and Holy Week Schedule

PAGE 3

Celebrating Easter with
Gratitude

PAGE 4

Fr. Jeremy Kucera Travels
to Micronesia to Build
Community

PAGE 6

Samuel Rosemeier Reflects
on His Journey to the
Priesthood

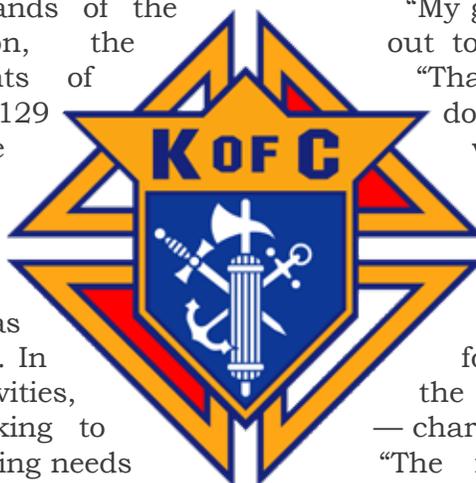
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 2129 *Bringing Service to Our Community*

Despite the demands of the farming season, the members of Knights of Columbus Council 2129 keep a busy schedule of fundraising activities to benefit St. Isidore the Farmer Area Faith Community, as well as the wider community. In addition to these activities, the council is working to make sure faith-building needs are also being met.

Council member Richard Rumreich says work is underway to schedule a prayer service for the council.

“We want to get it in before the spring planting starts,” he says.

By building members’ spiritual lives and fraternity through prayer activities and retreats, it follows that there would be a natural progression toward an eagerness to work on the activities that benefit others.



“My goal is getting the men out to pray,” Richard says. “That’s the first step to doing the activities we want to do.”

The fundraising activities serve to build the members’ faith because their work follows the first goal of the Knights of Columbus — charity.

“The fundraising and the charity work helps the people in the community and helps the men to be cognizant of the fact that charity is one of our goals in the Knights of Columbus,” Richard says.

So far, the schedule for the year has been busy. In January, the council held a Free Throw Contest for youngsters and awarded several scholarships to winners. In March the council hosted a French toast breakfast. This Spring the council will hold its annual beef commercial at the

continued on back cover



THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: *Returning to the Father*

Those of us who have children know what it's like when they come to us apologetically after having done something they know is wrong. As parents, it melts our hearts, and we can't help but forgive them freely, and take them into our arms – sometimes squeezing them with tears in our eyes! At times, we may even feel closer to them than we did before the event occurred.

This, we can assume, is how God feels, being our most clement Father. In His magnanimous love, He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to redeem the world, freeing it from the haunting grips of sin and death. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation through His Church to offer sinners forgiveness for the offenses they committed against God.

As the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas writes so beautifully, “[The Sacrament of Confession is a] sacrament of healing and a sacrament of conversion, returning us to the Father after we have sinned. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and

unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

As far as the details for the reception of this sacrament are concerned, three conditions are necessary – contrition, which is genuine sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works. A priest is gravely bound to keeping total confidentiality for all confessions they hear.

Church law requires Catholics to confess mortal sins – the most serious kind of sins – to a priest at least once per year, and to confess them before ever receiving Holy Communion, as well. However, this is by far the minimum; Catholics are encouraged to receive the sacrament freely and frequently since it is so extremely beneficial to the health of the mind, soul and spiritual life in general.



Lent and Holy Week Schedule

Lenten Stations Schedule

Sacred Heart, Murdock
Fridays at 5:30 p.m.

St. Francis, Benson
Fridays at 5 p.m.

St. John, Appleton
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday, April 18
7 p.m. — Sacred Heart, Murdock

Good Friday, April 19
Noon — St. Francis, Benson
3 p.m. — St. John, Appleton

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 20
8:45 p.m. — St. Francis, Benson

Easter Sunday, April 21
8:30 a.m. — St. John, Appleton
10:30 a.m. — St. Francis, Benson
10:30 a.m. — Sacred Heart, Murdock

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Celebrating Easter with Gratitude

Dear Parishioners,

Easter Sunday arrives later this year — April 21. The method for determining the date of Easter was settled by the ancient Church according to a complicated formula that allows it to fall anywhere between March 22 and April 25. However, most of us are content simply to look it up on a liturgical calendar!

One feature at this year's Easter celebration will be a dramatic contrast from what we have experienced in the winter months — the days will be noticeably longer.

As a matter of fact, the English word "Lent" is related to the Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to lengthen," for spring is the season when the days grow longer. Even though most Americans do not live in rural settings or agricultural environments like our ancestors did, we still find joy in the longer days that contrast with the early nightfall that we experienced at Christmas. So when Lent is over and Easter arrives, our spirits naturally delight as we leave the winter behind.

Don't get me wrong — I am not saying that Easter is some sort of spring festival. The central theme of the Christian festival of Easter is clear. It celebrates what happened once for all over 2,000 years ago, when Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross and was raised back to life on the third day by God the Father. This event took place during the Jewish observance of Passover, which comes during the spring, which is why we celebrate Easter then.

So, then, we have two reasons to celebrate at Easter. Primary, of course, is our yearly remembrance of the victory of Jesus Christ over sin, Satan and death. But we can also rejoice in the coming of



spring, which melts the snows of winter and brings us beautiful flowers in bloom.

In its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops gives a definition of who a Christian steward is. It has several parts, but the first noted aspect is that a Christian steward is "one who receives God's gifts gratefully" (9). The bishops don't distinguish between gifts from God that are spiritual and ones that are material.

After all, "God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good" (Genesis 1:31).

The first step in becoming a good steward is to receive what God gives, to recognize that these gifts come from God, and to be grateful for them.

So then, as we celebrate Easter with gratitude for what God continues to do for us in both the material and spiritual spheres, we can resolve to use all we have received — the time, the talent and the treasure entrusted to us, the beauty of the natural world, and the hope of eternal life — as stewards who use them for God's glory and the welfare of His people.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Jeremy Kucera,
Pastor



FR. JEREMY KUCERA TRAVELS TO MICRONESIA TO

On his recent trip to Micronesia, Fr. Jeremy Kucera had the unique opportunity to travel from one island to another via a skinny, 18-foot boat with a 40-horsepower motor.

“Tiny boat for a big ocean!” Fr. Jeremy says.

But in order to reach the Federated States of Micronesia, Fr. Jeremy traveled over 20 hours by plane. Micronesia consists of a large group of islands — a large number of our parishioners at St. John’s in Appleton are from one of the thousands of islands, Romanum, and many of the parishioners live in Milan.

With the Micronesians speaking their native language of Chuukese, there is a language barrier for many of the parishioners. Fr. Jeremy traveled to Micronesia with hopes of beginning to break down those barriers while learning more about the culture in the process.

“I loved the visit because it gave me an opportunity to meet the people and allow them to share

their lives with me,” Fr. Jeremy says.

Micronesia has a Compact of Free Association with the United States — this means Micronesians aren’t U.S. citizens, but can come and go from the U.S. as they please. Most have traveled here for job opportunities and so their children may receive a better education.

“I pray that the visit will speak to them in ways that our lack of words hinders our communication,” Fr. Jeremy says.

Fr. Jeremy traveled with David and Marie Raymond and Gabriel Elias, all parishioners in Appleton. Five Micronesians also traveled back with them to move to the area.

Fr. Jeremy experienced many new things during his time in Micronesia. Traveling to a place with a vastly different culture than the United States, there were lots of details and traditions that stood out. For instance, he learned that the travel plans and daily schedules of the Micronesians depends on the level of the sea.

“We were stuck in our hotel the first two days and missed a big party they had planned for us because of a typhoon,” he says. “The grounds were flooded afterward and even a coconut tree blew down.”

Fr. Jeremy was also surprised by the poverty he witnessed on the islands, as well as the lack of running water, refrigeration and electricity. He was humbled that his hosts always gave him the best they had.

“They even built me my own cinder block bathroom on Romanum and had a real toilet installed,” he says.

Growing up on a farm, the bathroom situation didn’t bother Fr. Jeremy at all.

“That still sticks with me and always will,” he says. “They didn’t need to do so much for an outsider — I just wanted to get to know them better.”

Celebrating Mass on the islands of Udot and Romanum are Fr. Jeremy’s favorite memories of the trip. He was joined by a local



Fr. Jeremy enjoys his first coconut at Blue Lagoon restaurant upon arrival.



Fr. Jeremy with Gabriel Elias and several locals after enjoying a meal.



Fr. Jeremy and Gabriel Elias enjoy a meal together.

BUILD COMMUNITY

deacon who preached the sermon, but he said Mass in English while the parishioners responded in their native Chuukese.

“By traveling to the islands, this gave us the opportunity to visit, listen and learn firsthand,” Fr. Jeremy says.

“This helped strengthen my appreciation for the Micronesian people and the goodness of their hearts and culture,” he adds. “To know their joys and struggles makes it easier to relate to and helps me have more patience in trying to relate to and understand a people that come from a very different place than Minnesota.”

What stood out most to Fr. Jeremy from the whole trip was a conversation he had with a few locals during his last meal before returning home. One local told him this was the first time that someone came to visit them.

“Usually it is everyone leaving to come live in America,” the local said.

This demonstrated to

Fr. Jeremy just how important this trip was.

“It was an amazing experience,” he says. “It really helped me gain a greater appreciation and respect for the people.”

In addition, Fr. Jeremy enjoyed the opportunity for time to himself while taking walks through the areas he visited. He also spent the last few days on a silent retreat, which gave him time to pray and “soak in a little sun and warm weather.”

“I tried to soak everything in and reflect upon what I had seen,” he says.

Overall, he is so thankful he had this opportunity to travel to Micronesia and start to break down cultural barriers.

“I only hope that [the Micronesians] know that this visit, in part, was to show them that they mean very much to our parish of St. John’s in Appleton and that they are just as much a part of the parish here as they are a part of their parish back



Fr. Jeremy celebrates Mass.

home,” Fr. Jeremy says. “The language barrier is a big one, but hopefully actions say more in this instance since I struggle to speak their language.”



Local traditional baskets are used during feasts as plate made out of coconut leaves and Fitaw. This women are preparing food for the day. From left are Adora, Aileen, Risan and Hersina.



Fr. Jeremy celebrates Mass.



Fr. Jeremy upon arrival at Chuuk International Airport. He was greeted with the traditional lei.

SAMUEL ROSEMEIER REFLECTS ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE

Priesthood

Samuel Rosemeier may be almost 5,000 miles away these days, but when he reflects on the path that brought him to pursue a vocation in the priesthood, it is clear that the parishes at St. Isidore the Farmer Area Faith Community are still very much at the heart of his journey. Currently in the midst of a semester abroad in Rome, this seminarian is thankful to our community for giving him such a strong foundation in the faith.

“My life was encapsulated by the faith within the St. Isidore the Farmer AFC from early on,” Samuel says. “It was there that my personal relationship with the Lord was started.”

Samuel’s family moved to our area when he was just 1 year old. They are members of St. Bridget in DeGraff, although they also became deeply involved with the parishes in other several locations of our faith community. In addition to serving as a cantor and altar server, Samuel was the janitor for St. Bridget and Sacred Heart in Murdock for six years.

Perhaps the most influential parish activity in which Samuel participated was the Youth Group. He attended regular meetings, diocesan youth rallies and the National Catholic Youth Conference. Wednesday night Teen Talk gatherings with Fr. Jeremy also stand out in his memory.

“For Teen Talk, high schoolers from anywhere in the AFC could come together to pester Fr. Jeremy about anything faith-related while snacking on M&Ms,” Samuel says. “We could also go to confession or pray a Holy Hour.”

Along with the strong example of Catholic faith provided by his parents, Tony and Charlotte Rosemeier, Samuel views his early participation in these parish activities as an invaluable step in his journey to seminary.

Samuel first heard a call to the priesthood at a very young age. When he again felt God calling him in high school, his first reaction was resistance. As the call became more persistent, however, he finally decided to open the door — just a crack — to the possibility of priesthood.

“It was early on in my senior year of high school that I finally gave in and ‘made a deal’ with God,” Samuel says. “I asked Him to change my heart and begin to grow that desire for priesthood within me, and that He did. It was during an unexpected trip to Rome, Italy, and Lourdes, France, that the seed was planted in my heart for love of the priesthood to begin to grow, and it continues to do so.”

Following his high school graduation, Samuel began attending St. John Vianney Minor Seminary. This spring — in his third year of studies — he is

“If you have even a suspicion that God might be calling you are afraid that they’re going to make the wrong decision and not the case. You can ask any guy that has discerned out of were the most formative of his life, and made him the man called, take the leap! Don’t spend your



Seminaryman Samuel Rosemeier with Fr. Aaron Johanneck overlooking the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome.

in Rome for a semester abroad, living at the Irish College and attending classes at the Angelicum. He is thankful for the opportunity to witness firsthand the immense historical and religious significance of Rome and Vatican City.

Samuel considers being a student at St. John Vianney Seminary to be one of the greatest blessings in his life. What stands out to him the most are the people — the exceptional formation staff and his incredibly supportive spiritual director, as well as the other students. Studying with 100 other young men who all desire to live a life of virtue and who seek to build one another up in the faith has been a wonderful experience.

Samuel would encourage any young man who may be considering a vocation to the priesthood to

pursue the call and see where it may take them.

“If you have even a suspicion that God might be calling you to be His priest, then you should go to seminary,” he says. “Many guys are afraid that they’re going to make the wrong decision and end up wasting [time] in seminary, and this is most certainly not the case. You can ask any guy that has discerned out of St. John Vianney, and he will tell you that his years there were the most formative of his life, and made him the man of virtue that he is today. So if you feel like you might be called, take the leap! Don’t spend your life wondering.”

After his own four years of study in Minor Seminary conclude, Samuel hopes to go on to complete four years of

Major Seminary and be ordained a diocesan priest.

“To serve the Church as her priest would be a beautiful vocation to live out,” he says. “I can only hope that God finds me worthy of it.”

“I will forever be grateful for the community I grew up in within the St. Isidore the Farmer AFC,” he adds. “The people there have played a huge role in making me the man I am today. Their continued prayers and support for me is most appreciated.”

Both the Rosemeier family and the Area Faith Community gave Samuel his roots in the faith, and now St. John Vianney Seminary is giving him the wings to fly and realize his full potential as a servant of God. Let us all continue to lift him up in prayer as he continues on this journey to the priesthood!

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WEEKEND MASS TIMES:

MARCH - JUNE

Saturday

7:00 p.m.

*Sacred Heart in Murdock
(Bilingual Mass)*

Sunday

8:30 a.m.

St. John, Appleton

10:30 a.m.

St. Francis in Benson

Knights of Columbus continued from front cover

Benson VFW Hall to raise funds for area charities.

“These are all well-attended by the members,” Richard says. “We get a good turnout. We also have fundraisers for the different church locations, and we help around the church, whatever Father wants. And this year we’re trying to branch out in liturgical activities.”

The fundraising efforts typically are scheduled in the spring and fall to accommodate our farmers.

The council meets at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month at Benson. There are 150 dues-paying members, with the members ranging in age from 20 on up. The Grand Knight is Gerry Aarhus.

“Gerry has been serving for a number of years,” Richard says. “He has been doing a really good job.”

In order to join the Knights of Columbus, a candidate must be at least 18 years old and a practicing Catholic.

“If anyone is thinking of joining, one of the things I would tell him is we spend a lot of time helping other people out, especially those in need of medical services or at the Special Olympics,” Richard says. “We work to help those kids and individuals. We helped with the ultrasound program in Willmar and we get involved with other fundraisers. It’s an opportunity to meet other men of our parish, since a good distance encompasses our faith community.”

Anyone who is interested in joining Knights of Columbus Council 2129 may speak to one of the Knights, or contact Gerald Aarhus at 320-567-2378.