

ST. ISIDORE THE FARMER AREA FAITH COMMUNITY



ST. BRIDGET



SACRED HEART



ST. FRANCIS



ST. MALACHY



VISITATION ORATORY



ST. JOHN

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EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Faithfully Serve Residents of Scofield Place and Scandi Haven Village

When Vicki Selix had a kidney removed in the late 1990s, she was unable to attend Mass for several Sundays. She still recalls a sense of loss at being unable to receive Christ in the Eucharist.

"I really missed being able to receive the Body of Christ," Vicki says. "I know what it means when other people are unable to participate and to get to church to receive Him."

When she considered how to share her time, talent and treasure, Vicki felt personally motivated to become a Eucharistic Minister for those Catholic members of our community who are physically unable to attend Mass.

"I thought about it and realized now that the kids are grown, that this is something I can really commit to doing," Vicki says. "I started out about five years ago with another member of St. Francis, and we alternated weeks of the month. Now it is just me."

Every Saturday at 4 p.m. Vicki brings the consecrated hosts, the Body of Christ, to the residents of



Catholic residents of our assisted living facilities gather to receive the Eucharist on the first Friday of April. This ministry is a wonderful opportunity to serve our fellow Catholics.

Scofield Place and the newly opened Scandi Haven Village, an assisted living facility south of Scofield.

"The older part of the facility is Scofield, and Scandi Haven is the new building, but they will all eventually be connected," Vicki says.

Between seven and 15 residents congregate in a gathering space for a prayer service conducted according to the guidelines from the diocese.

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Highlights of Our 2019 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

Recently, our St. Isidore the Farmer Area Faith Community Leadership conducted the 2019 Stewardship Renewal. This renewal gave parishioners the opportunity to discern how they are living out the stewardship way of life, and to make commitments of time, talent and treasure.

This month, we are happy to share with you some of the highlights of the 2019 Stewardship Renewal.

- There were 134 commitment cards received from 25 percent of active households.
- There were 849 prayer commitments — the stewardship of time — from 94 percent of participating households.
- Some of the commitments to prayer included: “Attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day,” 119 commitments; “Pray for our priests,” 99 commitments; “Spend 15 minutes a day in personal prayer,” 90 commitments.
- There were 437 ministry commitments — the stewardship of talent — from 85 percent of participating households. Of these, 75 were new ministry commitments, while 362 were re-commitments to ministries.
- Some of the commitments to ministries included: St. Francis Family Groups (Benson), 36 commitments; Eucharistic Adoration, 34 commitments; Knights of Columbus - Council #2129, 30 commitments; Council of Catholic Women - Murdock, 29 commitments; Liturgical Ministries - Benson and Liturgical Ministries - Murdock, both 23 commitments.
- There were 98 offertory commitments — the stewardship of treasure — from 73 percent of participating households. The average pledge was \$1,519.

We thank all those who participated in the 2019 Stewardship Renewal. If you did not have the opportunity to fill out and return a commitment card as part of the renewal, we invite you to consider the ways you might share your stewardship gifts with God, the Church and community. After all, there is no time like the present to begin living out the stewardship way of life!

STEWARDSHIP
NOT A PROGRAM
NOT A FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN
NOT AN EMPTY BUZZWORD
A Way of Life
ST. ISIDORE THE FARMER
Area Faith Community

2019 COMMITMENT CARD
My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

First & Last Name

Phone

Email

Spouse: First & Last Name

Spouse: Phone

Spouse: Email

Address

City

State

ZIP

Please check
Parish Membership: St. Francis St. Bridget
 St. John Sacred Heart
 St. Malachy

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Honoring Our Lady in May

Dear Parishioners,

As people of faith, we often refer to May as “the month of Mary.” For centuries, Catholics throughout the world have included special devotions to Mary in their activities during this month. Best known, I’m sure, is the widespread and ever-popular practice of May Crowning — crowning an image of Our Lady with flowers.

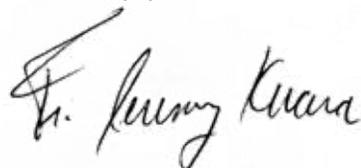
May is certainly a beautiful time — it is, after all, a month full of renewal and celebration. For many Americans, cold March winds and dreary April showers have given way to blooming flowers and trees. Yet, it’s not only flowers and trees that reflect the newness and joy of May. Many students in junior high, high school and college are celebrating their graduations, and will soon be moving on to new phases and exciting opportunities in their lives. And of course, it is the month when we celebrate Mother’s Day, honoring and extending our gratitude to the women who have faithfully raised and nurtured us.

And May is most certainly a month of joy for all of us who claim the Church as our spiritual home. This year, we spend the whole month in the Easter season, which closes with Pentecost in June. Thus, the joy of the Resurrection and the glory of the Ascension are the themes that fill our Christian calendar this month.

As we rejoice with Mary at her Son’s triumph over sin, Satan and death, we also remember her faithfulness to God’s will throughout her life. Indeed, she can be viewed as the model of Christian stewardship. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops pointed to her in their pastoral letter on stewardship: “After Jesus, it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who by her example most perfectly teaches the meaning of discipleship and stewardship in their fullest sense. All of their essential elements are found in her life: she was called and gifted by God; she responded generously, creatively, and prudently” (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 41).

As we enter into the month of May, let us take the time to gratefully reflect on the newness and joy that surrounds us. And in doing so, let us follow the Blessed Mother’s example of total dedication to God as we rejoice in the blessings He gives us, this month and beyond!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Jeremy Kucera,
Pastor



OFFERING A WARM WELCOME

Meet Dylan and Kaylyn

Kaylyn and Dylan Christopherson made the big move to our community, arriving in what was a new place — even as they didn't yet know anyone here. As Kaylyn says, "it was just the two of us."

"We're just going on this big adventure together," says Kaylyn, a new parishioner at Sacred Heart in Murdock. "But we're finding the small town fits our personalities. It's a simple way of life and we're really enjoying it."

Originally from Bismarck and St. Cloud respectively, Kaylyn and her husband, Dylan, were both raised Catholic. However, their faith began to flourish and deepen during their time in college at NDSU in Fargo, where they were both active in the Catholic Newman Center.

"I started to dive more into my faith and learn more about it, early on in my college years," Dylan says. "The Newman Center was really good for fostering that knowledge and relationship with Christ."

"I had Catholic education growing up, but it wasn't until I got to college that I realized faith is about a relationship with the Lord," Kaylyn says. "Once I started to discover that, I wanted more and more of that. The Newman Center was where we got those great resources to grow in our faith and the community was super important to us."

Upon Dylan's graduation last December, the newlyweds moved to the area and haven't wasted any time getting involved. From their experience of community in college, both Kaylyn and Dylan were convinced of the importance of getting involved in a parish.

"When we moved here, the first place we went, to find community, was the church," Kaylyn says. "Right now, we don't have kids and we have time on our hands, so getting involved right away wasn't really a question for us. We wanted to get involved right away."

They began attending the Adult Education sessions and joined a Lenten Bible Study. They also hope to become involved as leaders in the youth group.

Dylan has become involved with the Knights



Dylan and Kaylyn Christopherson

of Columbus and appreciates the opportunity for fellowship with other men.

"These men are amazing examples of Catholic marriage, and I look up to the fathers and the way they raise their kids and the values they instill in their kids," Dylan says. "I look up to a lot of the men in our parish. They have a lot of knowledge, they're hardworking, they're really grounded and they depend on their faith."

Although not a mom yet, Kaylyn felt welcomed and included in the Mom's Group, and enjoys being able to meet other like-minded women.

"It's been a really good source of community and it's been a source of blessing for me," she says.

In the short time they've been here, the Christophersons have been thankful for the

WE ARE IN OUR FAITH COMMUNITY:

Kaylyn Christopherson

friendships that have begun to develop, whether through activities at the parish, or from parishioners inviting them over for a meal.

“We’re used to bigger churches where people say ‘hi’ to each other but they don’t know each other,” Dylan says.

“There’s an intimacy here and right away, people were very interested to get to know us,” Kaylyn says. “Right away, we felt super welcomed.”

And although Dylan and Kaylyn may have arrived in the area on their first big adventure of marriage, not knowing anyone, they soon

realized they had a whole community ready to support them.

“The parish is so welcoming,” Dylan says. “We were complete outsiders, but we didn’t feel that way.”

“We just have so much gratitude for how people have accepted and welcomed us and we’re looking forward for when we can do the same for someone else,” Kaylyn says. “We’re looking forward to the next people who move to town, so we can turn around and serve them and make them feel loved, too.”

“We just have so much gratitude for how people have accepted and welcomed us and we’re looking forward for when we can do the same for someone else. We’re looking forward to the next people who move to town, so we can turn around and serve them and make them feel loved, too.” — KAYLYN CHRISTOPHERSON

Eucharistic Ministers continued from front cover

“We start with a greeting and the Confiteor, read the Liturgy of the Word, say the Lord’s Prayer and then have an invitation to Communion,” Vicki says. “There’s a concluding prayer and a blessing.”

Vicki also regularly brings the Eucharist to one resident who is unable to leave her room.

“She actually does not know English and speaks Spanish,” Vicki says. “Her daughter does know English, and she’s there when I bring the Eucharist.”

If any resident is unable to come to the gathering space for the prayer service, Vicki brings the Eucharist to that resident. She explains that this can mean a resident might be experiencing worsening health.

“I went to one woman’s room for a few months until she passed away,” Vicki says. “I was with her and knew she was in the process of dying, and I

brought her Communion during those months and kept Father informed about administering the Anointing of the Sick.”

Over the years, Vicki has formed relationships with several of the residents she visits each week.

“They all know me,” Vicki says. “They know my family and grandkids. They have prayed for me and for my husband.”

Another faith community member, Chuck Koenigs, brings the Eucharist to the residents on the First Friday of every month, and more ministers would be enthusiastically welcomed to participate in this vital ministry of bringing Christ to others.

“There is always a need for more people,” Vicki says. “I know it is hard because everybody is busy, but you would be very welcome.”

If you would like more information about serving as a Eucharistic Minister to the residents of our assisted living facilities, reach out to the parish office at 320-842-4271.

ST. ISIDORE'S SIMPLE STEWARDSHIP

When we consider the lives of the saints, the first that usually come to mind are more than likely classed into four categories — martyrs, priests, religious, and great miracle workers. St. Isidore was none of these, and yet he is revered in Spain as one of “the five saints,” which include St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Philip Neri, all of whom were canonized with him in the same year. His feast day is May 15.

The life of St. Isidore is a great testimony to how, with God’s grace, we can take the occurrences of a simple, mundane, and even sometimes difficult life and use them as opportunities for sanctification.

Isidore was born near Madrid, around the year 1070, into a peasant family. While still a young boy, he began working as a day laborer on the farm of Juan de Vergas, a wealthy landowner, just outside of Madrid.

Despite the hard work on Vergas’ farm, where Isidore spent the rest of his life in service, he did not complain and always tried his hardest to meet the tasks requested of him. Above all things, he upheld his relationship with Jesus. As he walked behind his plow, he would talk to God, offering up his work as a prayer. He rose up extra early each day before work to attend daily Mass. He would even spend his vacations touring the different churches of Madrid and the surrounding areas.

As hardworking as Isidore was, his fellow workers complained to Vergas that the pious laborer always arrived late for work because he attended Mass every day. Isidore could not deny the accusation, but he assured his employer that he always made a special effort to compensate for the extra minutes he spent in prayer. One



day, Vergas decided to see for himself whether Isidore was really slacking in his work. Hiding in the bushes, he watched as Isidore came out of church, went directly to the fields, and began his plowing. To Vergas’ astonishment, he saw a “man” with another plow beside Isidore, driving a team of white oxen. When he ran toward the mysterious team, it disappeared and Isidore only looked puzzled when Vergas asked him about it. “Sir, I work alone and know of none save God to whom I look for strength,” Isidore said. No doubt, God had sent His angels to help ensure that

Isidore’s work would not suffer because of his placing the spiritual above the temporal.

While working for Vergas, Isidore fell in love with and married a young woman, Maria Torribia, who shared his devotion and faith. They had one child, a son, who died while still a boy. A model of sanctity herself, Maria — also a canonized saint — served her husband faithfully all her life. Together, Isidore and Maria would look for ways to serve the poor, even though they had very little themselves. One story says that when Isidore brought a number of hungry people home with him one day, Maria realized as she scraped the bottom of the pot that there was no more stew. Isidore asked her to check one more time, and she was able to spoon out enough to feed everyone. They could not refuse an act of kindness to anyone.

At times, we might be tempted to think that we do not have the talents or the assets to be good stewards. But St. Isidore shows us by his simple, humble example that we can live out the call to discipleship in the smallest actions of charity and piety — that we only need do as much as we can, and trust that God will do the rest.

COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

Goes Wherever Needed as Members Serve Sacred Heart Parish

The words of St. Teresa of Avila beautifully sum up the commitment of the Murdock Council of Catholic Women (CCW) members: “No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which God looks compassion on this world; Christ has no body now on earth but yours. Let it be.”

Every Sacred Heart female member over age 18 is automatically a member of the Murdock CCW. Women are divided to six groups of 15 women each. There are two co-chairs per group.

“All of the groups are equal and serve or volunteer on a rotating basis,” says Judy Hoffer, CCW Deanery 2 Service Commission Coordinator.

Whether it’s cooking a funeral meal, to serving refreshments to honor high school graduates, to providing coffee and rolls after Sunday Masses or appetizers after Saturday night Masses, CCW members help where they are needed. There is also a mission group that’s part of CCW.

“They get together every Monday to make quilts, doll clothes and other items, and they raise money for charities of their choosing,” Judy says.

The mission of CCW, a national organization founded by the Council of Catholic Bishops in 1920, is to “support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service.”



CCW attendees gather at a recent meeting. (Front, from left) Shari Wentzel, Judy Hoffer, Sue Lundberg; (back, from left) Kathy Walsh, Nancy Zimmer, Jesse Collins, Lyn Swenson, Nancy Miller, Cathy Holt and Cindy Lehne.

Programs offered through CCW are meant to “respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.”

In April, Judy and Murdock CCW members planned a talk to make youth and adults aware of the dangers and reality of sex trafficking in the area. This is great example of living the CCW mission by serving the needs of Murdock and surrounding communities.

“Wherever we are needed, we will help,” Judy says. “Prayer is also an important part of all we do.”

The Diocese of New Ulm is divided into three separate

deaneries, and each has their own officers. Many members of Deanery 2 gather twice a year for Mass, a meal and a pertinent speaker.

The project in Murdock that Judy holds most dear to her heart is the potluck fundraiser in December for our mission parish in San Lucas Tolimán in Guatemala. The fundraiser is a great opportunity for fellowship and to raise money for an important cause.

“Last year, our Council of Catholic Women matched what we received at the fundraiser to send to San Lucas Tolimán,” Judy says.

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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

Council of Catholic Women *continued from page 7*

Judy has visited San Lucas Tolimán five times over the years.

“My favorite project is to feed the poor, to give to those that don’t have much and do work for just a few dollars per day,” she says.

CCW members also visit residents at Gabriel House Assisted Living once a month and help with special church cleaning projects. Member Rosie Collins visits new parishioners and writes cards to those who are ill from the parish. Members also pray at Planned Parenthood in St. Cloud during the 40 Days for Life. Recently, the group hosted a paint party for local women, and are donating money to local charities and for events like the after-prom party.

“We welcome any eligible group to ask for

funds,” Judy says. “We recently gave \$1,500 to upgrade the church speaker system.”

Most funds granted by the CCW come from their fall meal, where students in third through 12th-grades help serve a family-style turkey dinner with all the fixings. CCW usually cooks for about 800 people.

“When you work together, you get to know each other,” Judy says. “People appreciate what we do.”

The Council of Catholic Women is there to pitch in where needed — and as St. Teresa of Avila so perfectly said, to be Christ’s body on earth.

“When a special project comes up, we are happy to do it,” Judy says.

If you would like to learn more about the projects coordinated by the Council of Catholic Women, are interested in donating to the group, or would like to get more involved, please contact Judy Hoffer at judyonfarm@tds.net or 320-264-5228.