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## Fish Frys: A Golden Fellowship Opportunity

When Bill Anderson, President of the Men’s Society, serves at our annual parish fish frys, he is often pleasantly surprised.

“It is not unusual for us to have 700 to 900 people at the fish fry,” Bill says. “The neat thing is that it is not just parishioners who come. There are many people in our community who enjoy coming to the fish frys, as well. Many times, when I worked on the serving line, I saw people who I know are not even Catholic, but they still like to come to the frys because they know the quality of the food, and realize that the price just can’t be beat! There are not many places you can go where you can get real catfish, sides, a dessert, and a drink for only \$9. The suppers give our parish a chance to show hospitality and even evangelize others.”

The annual fish frys also build up friendships, not to mention strengthen our parish family members on the journey of faith.

“The suppers help our parish and our community, allow great friendships to form, and help practicing Catholics keep the fasting rules of the Church during Lent,” Bill says. “They are nice family events, and give us great fellowship opportunities. Fellowship is so important nowadays, and events like the fish frys help our society become a better




place to live in. We are not meant to be alone. We need to talk to other folks. We need to learn from them, and they need to learn from us. There are people who look forward to the fish frys all year!”

Currently, the Church asks the faithful to abstain from meat on all Fridays during Lent, under pain of sin. On the

*continued on back cover*

# Time: The Foundation of Stewardship

*When we talk about stewardship of time, we are referring to prayer time. Prayer is of the utmost importance in a disciple's life, and it serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom.*



**T**he U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has told us that stewardship is part of discipleship and is a way of responding to God's call in every aspect of our lives. We refer to the three facets of stewardship as "Time, Talent and Treasure," and when we consider the importance of these three Ts of stewardship, the "time" component comes first by design.

When we talk about stewardship of time, we are referring to prayer time. Prayer is of the utmost importance in a disciple's life, and it serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom. Only by spending time in prayer each day and receiving the sacraments are we able to consistently and generously donate our talent and treasure to the Church.

When looking for examples of how to live our lives as disciples of Christ and as stewards of God's gifts, we can always turn to the great saints of our Church to guide us. And when it comes to the Stewardship of Time, the life of St. Damien is just one example of how prayer, or "Time," is the foundation for our lives of stewardship.

Shortly after being ordained a priest, St. Damien volunteered to serve a colony of lepers isolated on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. From May 1873 until his death in 1889 (at the age of 49) St. Damien worked to restore within the lepers a sense of personal worth and dignity.

Although for some time St. Damien took the necessary precautions to ensure that he did not contract leprosy, he knew that physical touch was necessary to communicate his love and concern to those afflicted with the disease. He embraced the lepers, dined with them, cared for them, and anointed them in the sacraments. With great humility and sacrifice, St. Damien offered his own life in order to save the lives of others.

From where did St. Damien draw his strength? What was the source of his inspiration? "Were it not for the constant presence of our divine Master in our humble chapel, I would not have found it possible to persevere in sharing the lot of the lepers in Molokai," St. Damien wrote. "The Eucharist is the bread that gives strength... It is at once the most eloquent proof of His love and the most powerful means of fostering His love in us. He gives Himself every day so that our hearts as burning coals may set afire the hearts of the faithful."

St. Damien found his strength in the Mass, the greatest prayer of the Church. Prayer was the impetus behind the generosity of this faithful servant of God, and is the fuel that ignites every heart to flame in love. Without prayer, without the grace that flows from the sacraments, we are incapable of leading lives of service and responding to God's call!

How much time do you dedicate to prayer each day? One hour? Fifteen minutes?

None at all? Before you consider joining a parish ministry or volunteering your talents in service, and before you discern your gifts of treasure to the Church, be sure that prayer is your foundation. Identify a prayer schedule that is manageable. This may entail arising 20 minutes early each day to offer your work to the Lord, or attending daily Mass once a week. Every prayer commitment is unique and personal. Yet, no matter what, this time offering, this dedication to prayer, is the key to serving the Lord with faithfulness, generosity and joy.



# ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

## Lent – A Time of Preparation, Introspection and Change

Dear Parishioners,

**T**his is the holiest time of year for Catholics. Lent, of course, officially begins on Ash Wednesday. Most of us are familiar with the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Those are important in relation to repentance and renewal. Everything we do should remind us that Lent is a penitential season.

In the midst of this serious time, however, we must keep in mind that the word “Lent” comes from a Middle English word, which means “springtime,” and the time of lengthening of days. When we think springtime, our thoughts tend to be lighter and brighter. That is how we need to view Lent, just as we recognize the joy, colors and brightness of Easter.

In the Church over the past few decades, we as Catholics have come to the insight that Lent is more than a time to give something up. It is also a time to add something, to take action about our faith in ways that make it more meaningful and real. This does not mean we should not make sacrifices – we need to consider that while sacrifices may mean denying ourselves something, they can also mean we are filling that denial with a positive action.

We are talking about conversion again. We are speaking of stewardship again. This is a time when we should be looking within ourselves. It is a time for introspection. How can we improve? Maybe we need to be a bit more patient



with people in our lives – perhaps we need to adjust some of our attitudes. One thing we all need to do is to see and find the good in many small things in our lives.

Do we spend quality time with God, and with our families? Do we help someone in need? Do we set aside a time each day to pray? The possibilities for change and positive action seem quite endless. The point is to do it. Stewardship is a life of action – Lent should be a time of action.

Rather than being concerned about how others see us, this is a time for us to look at ourselves. We may need to rethink and re-evaluate our faith and especially our relationship with God. The Lord has called each of us to love and serve. Every day and every season is a time for us to

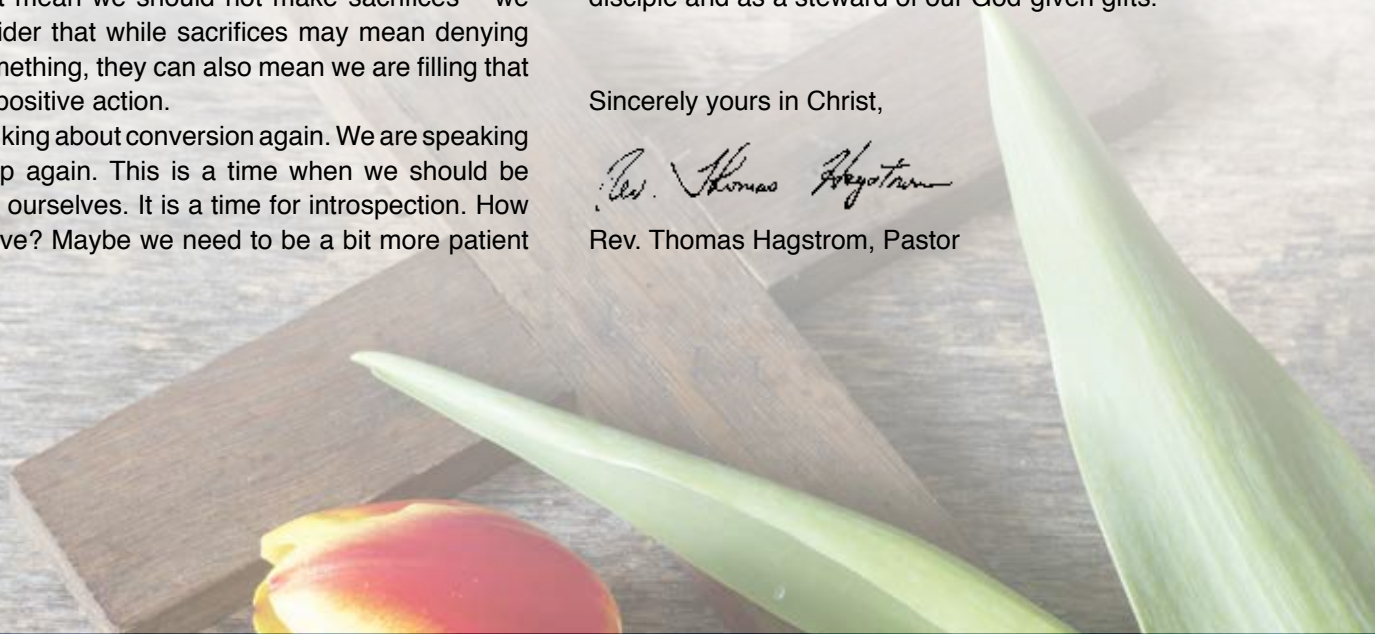
carry out that call – but now, during Lent in preparation for Easter, this is very important indeed.

The 40 days of Lent are a time for us to live life as a disciple and as a steward of our God-given gifts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Thomas Hagstrom". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rev. Thomas Hagstrom, Pastor



# “What Better Investment Than Our Children?”

## *St. Anthony’s JoAnn Witte*

*“Being a great role model to our parish is so critical as parents. Taking small steps to get involved at church can be so rewarding. I try to remember that I am not doing this for me. I am doing this to serve God, and when we serve others, we are serving God.” – JoAnn Witte*

While raising his family of 11 children, Gene Grawe had a simple saying – “If you see something that needs to be done, do it.”

“The more you put into something, the more you will take pride and ownership in it,” says JoAnn Witte, Gene’s daughter and the President of the Gene Grawe Fund, Inc. “This relates to everyday life whether at home, school, work, or in your parish.”

JoAnn, a lifelong member of St. Anthony, and her siblings were raised in a household that valued taking initiative and becoming involved in community life. Their parents modeled involvement for their children who “pitched in” at home and at church.

“I have always been very proud of being from St. Anthony,” JoAnn says. “I am so thankful my parents have instilled in me a great work ethic and my faith. I pray that I am that role model for my children.”

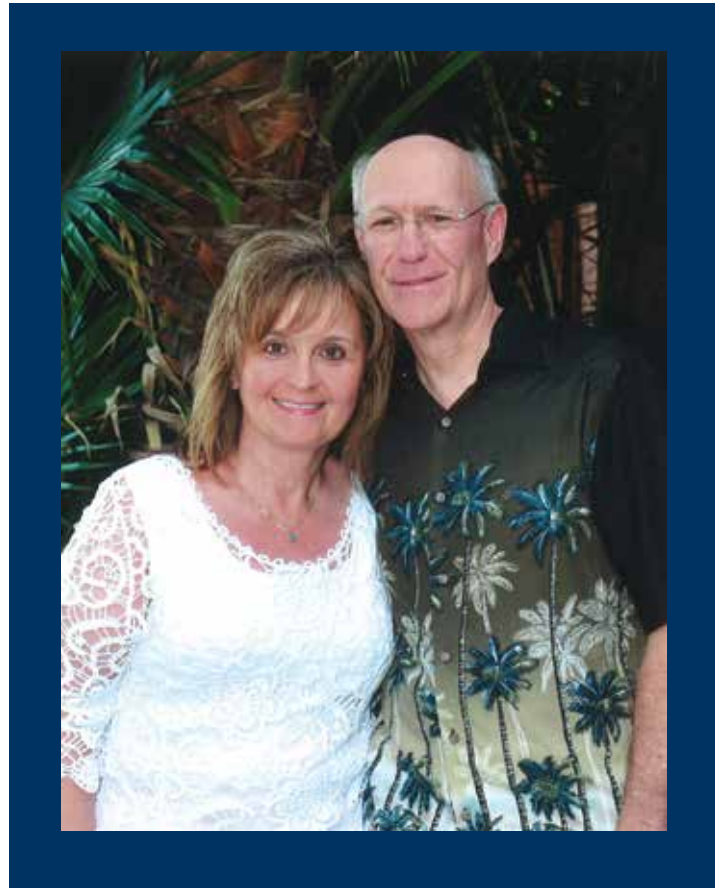
Today, JoAnn and her husband, Fred, have three children – Matt, Hannah and Andrew. As a mother and a parent, JoAnn endeavors to be a role model for her own children by being involved “as much as time allows.” She is a Eucharistic Minister and helps with funeral dinners, the choir and the picnic, as well as with Teens Encounter Christ and the Cursillo movement in Quincy.

In addition to her parents’ example, JoAnn believes that her foundational formation at Catholic schools helped shape her into the person she is today.

“Catholic education is very important to me,” JoAnn says. “My husband knew that I would do anything for our children to attend Catholic schools. Yes, we could have used the money for other things, but what better investment than our children?”

To help other families provide their children with such an instrumental Catholic education, The Gene Grawe Fund – GGF – was started in 2005 in memory of JoAnn’s father. It originally began to help families from St. Anthony’s Parish.

In 2008, the Gene Grawe Fund was offered to all families attending any of the four Catholic grade schools – Blessed Sacrament, St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Peter – and Quincy Notre Dame High School.



*JoAnn and Fred Witte*

“I remember not wanting to graduate from Quincy Notre Dame because I didn’t want it to end,” JoAnn says. “That is why I do the Gene Grawe Fund, so everyone can have what I was able to experience.”

Over 400 local and national merchants sell gift cards to the Gene Grawe Fund at a discount, and then the Fund sells the gift cards to families at their full value. Individuals receive the full amount they paid for the gift card, and the GGF receives a percentage from the merchant.

“The GGF is for everyone to support Catholic education, and you do not need to be a school family to support this!”

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# ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



## St. Anthony's JoAnn Witte

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JoAnn says. "It has grown so much that we now have an office at St. Peter Church staffed six days a week with all volunteers. The GGF has distributed over \$950,000 to help families pay for tuition since 2005."

The GGF is founded on Ephesians 2:10: "In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which God planned in advance for us to live our lives doing." Its motto is "Serving God By Helping Each Other."

"I believe that we are all called to do good works for each other," JoAnn says. "It can be starting with your own family, neighbors, parishioners or coworkers."

Over the past 50 years, JoAnn believes that St. Anthony's has had a vast influence on her and her family, and that she has grown exponentially in her faith – a journey that began with the role model of her parents and her Catholic education.

"Being a great role model to our parish is so critical as parents," JoAnn says. "Taking small steps to get involved at church can be so rewarding. I try to remember that I am not doing this for me. I am doing this to serve God, and when we serve others, we are serving God."

## Lenten and Holy Week Schedule

### **Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10**

8:30 a.m., *St. Dominic School*  
6:30 p.m., *St. Anthony Church*

### **Penance Service, Feb. 28**

3 p.m., *St. Anthony Church*

### **Holy Thursday, March 24**

6:30 p.m., *St. Anthony Church*

### **Good Friday, March 25**

3 p.m., *St. Anthony Church*

### **Holy Saturday, March 26**

8 p.m., *St. Anthony Church*

### **Easter Sunday, March 27**

8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.,  
*at St. Anthony Church*

## DID *you* KNOW?

- Our first St. Anthony Church was constructed of logs, and measured 24 feet wide x 36 feet long.
- The first Mass in the St. Anthony Log Church was held on a bitter cold day, Dec. 6, 1859.



# Lenten Practices: Penance and Abstinence

**F**or many Catholics, the practice of fasting and abstinence during Lent is as much a part of our faith as is our sacred liturgy. Catholics know that when Lent arrives, it's time to say "goodbye" to meat on Fridays and "hello" to fish sticks and bean burritos. It's almost as if our Lenten obligations were hard-wired into our biological clock at the moment we were baptized.

If there is one thing that Catholics definitely understand, it's adhering to the laws of tradition. Indeed, the tradition of fasting and abstaining from meat during Lent draws its lineage from the early days of the faith.

But why, exactly, do we fast and abstain from meat during Lent? And what are the Church's guidelines for this tradition?

In November 1966, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral statement on penance and abstinence. The statement outlines the Scriptural significance behind fasting and abstinence, and directs the faithful on when it is encouraged and appropriate to do so.

According to the statement, there are four main points the Church wants to make about the tradition of penance and abstinence.

First, all humans are sinners. Second, penance and abstinence are ways to turn away from sin and back to God. Third, the Church is constantly in a stage of ongoing renewal and penance. And finally, Advent, Lent and the vigils of certain feasts are the primary penitential seasons of the Church.

The statement makes clear that the practices of penance and abstinence are tools created to help lead us to Christ – they are not stringent laws designed to cause discomfort and pain. Fasting, abstinence and penance help us to reflect on, and in some way understand, the suffering

and selflessness our Lord experienced during His passion and death.

Traditionally, Catholics must abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, which falls on Feb. 10 this year, and Good Friday, falling this year on March 25. And, because Christ died on a Friday, the Church asks us to also abstain from meat on all Fridays during the season of Lent.

Lent is also a time of penance. In preparation for Jesus' death and resurrection, the Church encourages all Catholics to seek forgiveness from sins and to renew their spirits in accordance with the Father's spirit. The overarching goal of all Christians is to become "one with the Father," and penance and abstinence help us attempt to do that.

But Lent isn't just about what we aren't "allowed" to do. The Church encourages us all to seek ways to alleviate the pain and suffering of others – just as Christ lifted the burden of sin from the spirit of humankind – "by special solicitude for the sick, the poor, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, the bedridden, the discouraged, the stranger, the lonely, and persons of other color, nationalities, or backgrounds than our own" (*Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence*, 15).

This Lent, as the world prepares for the anniversary of Christ's death and resurrection, take on a few Lenten practices of your own. In addition to abstaining from meat on Fridays and Ash Wednesday, find a way to share the love of Christ with others through gifts of time, talent and treasure. The life of a disciple, as outlined in the Gospels, requires a renewed heart and a penitent soul. Seek to understand this Lent, in some small way, the magnitude of our Lord's suffering and love.



# ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



## The Quilters Ministry: Touching Hearts with the Work of Hands

To many, a handmade quilt is truly meaningful, and receiving one can speak volumes to the heart.

"People really appreciate getting quilts, and to the members of my family, they mean a lot," says Connie Maas, who serves as Treasurer of the Quilters Ministry. "My mom had quilted a top for a quilt in the 1930s, and it was something we wanted to keep in the family. Recently, my sister-in-law and I finished it off, made it into a full quilt, and gave it to my daughter. It brings back great family memories. My daughter really wanted it because her grandma had made it."

Thankfully, the passing down of handmade quilts is a tradition within our parish family, as well. For many years, St. Anthony's has enjoyed the blessing of the Quilters Ministry, which is a group of devoted, creative women who meet at St. Anthony School in a class room every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. to make quilts. The completed quilts are raffled off at various parish events, such as fish fries, the June Fest and the July Picnic. They donate all of the profits they make to the parish. Recently, they sold raffle tickets at a pancake and sausage breakfast at our parish, and made \$250!

"We bring a sack lunch and we have a great time together," Connie says. "We have really become friends over the years. I believe it is very important to have good, Christian fellowship. We support each other in a spiritual way too, and if one of us dies, we have a Mass said for them."

Members of the Quilters Ministry make all kinds of quilts – those that are embroidered, to others that have squares as little as a postage stamp. The ministry members even piece together and finish quilts that people bring to them.

"Those who receive the quilts are so grateful to have something that their fellow parishioners have made by hand," Connie says.

Although Connie is an excellent quilter these days, it wasn't always so. When Connie joined the Quilters Ministry about 10 years ago, she didn't know a thing about quilting, or any other crafts, for that matter.

"If I can learn to quilt, anyone can!" Connie says. "No one should feel that they can't do it. It is not that hard to learn. You can just learn as you go along. It is great to do something with your hands that keeps your mind occupied, as well. It's relaxing. If I don't go to one of our meetings, I

miss it! It also feels good to know you are doing something that is helping our parish community."

At this time, the Quilters Ministry is mostly made up of older parishioners. Younger parishioners are encouraged to get involved. It's a perfect way to find fellowship among our parish family, not to mention pick up a crafty skill to cherish throughout life!



*For more information about the Quilters Ministry,  
please contact Connie Maas at 217-224-0055.*

# ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

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## Fish Frys *continued from front cover*

Fridays outside of Lent, all are asked to make a significant sacrifice to honor Our Lord's Passion and Death, but what they give up is left to their discretion.

This year, there will be six fish frys, one on every Friday of Lent. The first one will be on Friday, Feb. 12, at St. Dominic School. The location of the suppers will alternate between St. Dominic School and St. Anthony Parish. Proceeds from the suppers will benefit the Men's Society, which is a group that helps take care of various parish facility and grounds needs, such as replacing roofs and organizing bus drivers.

Time and time again, the fish frys prove to be a blessing not only to those who come, but also to those who make them a real success.

"The fish frys are really rewarding to work at," Bill says. "There is always something that needs to be done! The whole parish community can find some way to help at a fish fry. People are needed to serve in line, help in the kitchen, and clean up afterward. We even have Scout troops that wait on



tables and refill drinks. I would also like to tip my hat to the ladies of our parish, who make almost all of our desserts and baked goods, and they are excellent! It saves our parish a lot of money."

*Further information on the fish fries will be printed in future parish bulletins.  
For more information, please contact Bill Anderson at 217-257-2108.*