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Jerry and Trudy Dreier Reflect on a Spiritually Fulfilling Life in Our Parish

Ask parishioners Jerry and Trudy Dreier about parish life here at St. Anthony of Padua, and they will tell you that our faith community is like an extended “family” to them. Rather than simply attending Mass once a week and returning home, this couple has chosen to become involved in various ministries and activities in the parish. By staying active in parish life, Jerry and Trudy have made St. Anthony more than just a place to worship on Sundays. Instead, it is a place they can honestly call home.

When the Dreiers became parishioners at St. Anthony 24 years ago, it was a return to Jerry’s home parish. Growing up, Jerry’s parents were very active in our parish and he was a student at the former St. Anthony School.

Today, Jerry serves St. Anthony as a lector and an usher, belongs to the Men’s Society, and is on a team that takes turns cutting the grass on church grounds.

“I probably got started from my parents, who were both really involved,” he says. “When my dad used to go to the Men’s Society meetings way back when, I always tried to attend those with him because they couldn’t wait to finish the meeting so they could play cards!”

Trudy often serves alongside Jerry, helping out with the annual hog butchering, the pancake breakfasts and the fish fries. She is also an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, participates in the Prayer Chain Ministry and is on the team that does church cleaning. In addition, she and Jerry lead the Rosary before the 8 a.m. Mass one Sunday a month.

The Dreiers certainly feel that serving and cultivating an active faith life together has helped give them a strong foundation as a couple. And sure enough, later this year, the Dreiers will celebrate their 48th wedding anniversary! With the Catholic faith at the forefront of their marriage, Jerry and Trudy always knew that they would follow the example of their parents and raise their own children in the Church.



Jerry and Trudy Dreier

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STEWARDSHIP

Becoming Fishers of Men

Whether you hold a high-profile position, such as parish council president, or have more of a behind-the-scenes role as a coordinator of a parish ministry, God has called you – as a parish leader – to help build His Church.

This challenge is just as important as the call of any other Catholic leader, including the earliest disciples.

When Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He urged a group of fishermen, “Come follow me.” Jesus promised if they laid down their nets and followed Him, He would make them fishers of men. These men were among His original disciples, and they knew Christ’s call was so important that they left their secular occupation to follow Him.

Just as He did with the fishermen, Jesus calls each of us today. He is not necessarily asking us to leave our secular careers, but He is asking us to put Him first in our lives and to share His message of love with others.

God truly wants us to serve Him and to build His Church through the secular occupations we have chosen. It is through the Church that new disciples are born, and it is in the Church that disciples continue to mature. Forming disciples of Christ is the most important work that can be done on earth, and each of us has been called to play an active role in this work.

So, how do we go about building the Church? Where do we find the plans?

Some people mistakenly think that building the Church – in particular, building our own parish or diocese – is no different than building a successful business. Indeed, the purpose of building the Church is to change hearts – a goal that only God can accomplish.

Secular society has not prepared us for this work. However, the Holy Spirit – sometimes referred to as the “Architect of the Church” – has the plan. In order to implement this plan, we must become good listeners. We must open ourselves to the workings of the Holy Spirit as He transforms us and guides us to carry out God’s work and to serve as His instruments on earth, building the Church together with Him.

This is where spiritual exercises, such as retreats, come into play. A retreat offers the individual an opportunity to spend time alone with the Lord, allowing God to draw the person deeper into the mystery of who He is, who we are and what He is doing in our lives. Stewardship retreats can offer parish leaders the opportunity each year to spend time with the Lord as He directs them in the ways of discipleship. As leaders, we must take time to meditate on the Scriptures and allow Jesus to open up His Word to us. Then, as we grow deeper in our understanding of what God wants of us, we can exclaim, just as the first disciples did on the road to Emmaus, “Our hearts are burning within us” (Lk 24:32).

God has placed an extremely important call on the lives of all parish leaders, no matter how big or small the role. It is vital to understand how we, as parish leaders, can best answer His call. What, in particular, is the Lord calling each one of us to do? He most likely is not asking us to drop our nets, but to pick them up and become “fishers of men.” We must discern how we can most effectively cast our nets for Him.

ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Surrounded by Saints and Good Stewards

Dear Parishioners,

It is June — not quite the heart of the summer, but certainly a time when everything seems to be wrapping up. From school and religious education, to many of our ministries, much is winding down and going on hiatus.

Last month, we celebrated the month of our Blessed Mother Mary. This month, I would like to turn our attention to the idea of stewardship, although that concept is important every month and every day throughout the year.

We do not have to look far to find good stewards. They are all around us. They may be sitting near us at Mass. They may be part of our own families and households. Pay attention at our liturgies as they are always there, serving in a variety of ways. I suppose the big question is, “Do people look at us and see a good steward?” We are talking about more than our parish and the Church here. There are people in our communities and neighborhoods who show us what it means to be a good steward, and they do not have to be Catholic.

In June, we celebrate Father’s Day. St. Joseph, the earthly father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may seem to be overlooked, but we do need to look at him always and especially on Father’s Day. He humbly accepted his role much in the same way that St. Mary did. He does not have much to say in the Bible, indicative of his humility and understanding. Yet he, like Mary, was obedient. He was selfless. He was a worker, and in his own quiet way he was a leader — an example to all of us.

St. Joseph is, as you know, the patron saint of fathers, workers and the universal Church. If we could all emulate Joseph in some small part each day, we would be closer to being the disciples Christ has called us to be.

Sometimes, we Catholics are criticized for using statues, and some may be under the misguided impression that we worship statues. Our country and our lives are filled with statues — for instance, look at Washington, D.C. and its various monuments. Think of Mount Rushmore. People go to see these statues and stand in front of them, sometimes bowing their heads in prayer, or looking at the statue or piece of marble in awe. Does this mean these people are worshipping these statues? Absolutely not.

Let us be proud of our Catholic heritage and let us not be afraid to honor and respect our saints and the saints in our midst, the good stewards all around us. In fact, we must each try to be more like them.

God bless you in all you do.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Tom Donovan".

Fr. Tom Donovan
Pastor



St. Joseph is, as you know, the patron saint of fathers, workers and the universal Church. If we could all emulate Joseph in some small part each day, we would be closer to being the disciples Christ has called us to be.

An Introduction of Graces to Our Children

Restoring the Order of the Sacraments of Initiation



Perhaps you've heard the buzz around some of the changes coming from our recent diocesan Synod. Maybe you've heard that we're planning to confirm children before they receive their First Communion. Perhaps you're confused or curious, or even concerned.

So, what exactly is happening?

"We're trying to bring back the original intent of the sacraments and how they were historically practiced, originally in the Church," says Chris Malmevik, the Director for the Diocesan Office of Catechesis.

Although in recent years, we've become familiar with the practice of children receiving their First Communion in second grade, and then being confirmed several years later, even into high school, this was not the original design.

For centuries, in the early Church, all three Sacraments of Initiation — Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist — were received altogether. For a variety of reasons, over the years, the sacraments became separated. And in 1910, when Pope Pius X lowered the age for the reception of First Communion to the age of reason, generally understood to be about 7 years old, Confirmation suddenly became the last sacrament to be received.

Unfortunately, along with this reversal in the intended order of the Sacraments of Initiation also came an element of misunderstanding of the meaning of the sacraments.

People began to see Confirmation as a Sacrament of Christian maturity, becoming an "adult" in the Church, and one choosing to "confirm" their faith for themselves. In addition, there was also a lack of emphasis on the Sacrament of the Eucharist as the "source and summit" of our faith and the culmination of our initiation into the Church.

"Why do we withhold the grace of Confirmation from children until they're older? Children need the graces now to live their life as good Catholic Christians, even as young as third grade," Chris says.

"I think we keep forgetting that it's God who has extended the invitation to our children," she adds. "He wants a relationship with them, even as children. Confirmation is going to help them in responding to that invitation."

Contrary to what has often become common understanding, the Sacrament of Confirmation is the completion of the graces received in the Sacrament of Baptism and binds the person more closely to the Church, strengthening them with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and empowering them to live and bear witness to the faith. In contrast, it is the Eucharist that celebrates full membership into the Body of Christ and provides continuous nourishment on the journey of faith.

"Essentially, the Sacrament of Confirmation is the second step of initiation, and it's the fulfillment of the

reception of the Holy Spirit — it grants the recipient graces to live their life as a good disciple of Jesus Christ," Chris says. "There's no reason to withhold the graces — I think this opens up their understanding more to what a relationship with Jesus is and that's a foundational step they need to nurture the rest of their lives."

"The bishop wants the restored, original order to happen here in the diocese, which means children around the age of reason will receive Confirmation first and then Eucharist, in third grade," she adds.

In a world where our young people are experiencing situations that pull them away from the faith at increasingly younger ages, the Sacrament of Confirmation will serve to fill them with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, empowering them to follow God and develop their relationship with Him now and in the years to come.

"By the time they're eighth-graders, they still don't have the grace of the Sacrament, and they really could've used it earlier to live their life as a disciple," Chris says. "Essentially, why withhold the graces of the Sacrament or the Holy Spirit from doing what He wants to do in the lives of these children?"

Focusing on Sacramental Preparation at an earlier age will also allow continued faith formation programs to help young people grow deeper in their understanding of the faith and relationship with God.

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“Formation beyond Confirmation is then formation as disciples,” Chris says. “I’m really hoping that there will be good opportunities to continue sharing and discussing their faith with each other and helping each other like the disciples did in the beginning.

“The gifts that were given to the disciples, we too have those gifts and those will be nurtured and it will be a continuation in growth,” she adds.

For U.S. dioceses that have already implemented this change, restoring the order of the Sacraments of Initiation, the fruit has been evident.

“Archbishop Aquila [of the Archdiocese of Denver] said that there’s no reason to withhold the sacrament, the graces from the children, and that he’s seen wonderful things with the children in understanding the sacraments and how the graces have worked in

their lives, as young as third grade,” Chris says.

Chris hopes that people will begin to understand these changes in context of the larger vision of our recent diocesan Synod, which included representatives from all the parishes, consultations with religious orders, priests and more.

“The direction of the diocese is for us to become a discipleship and a stewardship diocese, so that we’re living a discipleship and stewardship was of life,” Chris says. “In order to do this, one of the declarations that came from the Synod [was that] the concentration of the Sacraments of Initiation will be brought down to third grade so formation afterwards becomes discipleship formation, in how to live the faith and how to become great stewards and disciples of Jesus Christ. That’s where the heart of it is.”

Although change can certainly come with its challenges, we hope that through prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit, all people within the Diocese of Springfield will be able to welcome the wisdom of this decision.

“Take any doubts to prayer,” Chris says. “Pray that God will help you understand and accept this as the way it will be.

“We’re trying to put as much information out there as much as possible,” she adds. “We would like people to read, look at the videos, get informed. Pray about it and be open to what you might experience when you see or read or watch the video that’s trying to help you understand. This is what we believe is the best thing for our diocese and we hope people will take advantage of the resources we have.”



To learn more about the Diocese of Springfield’s decision to restore the Sacraments of Initiation to their original order, please visit www.dio.org/catechesis/restored-order.html.



“Transformed by the Sacred Liturgy” *The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery*

In a limited way, the liturgy can be compared to a story or a film – upon a first reading or viewing, we might understand the basic outline of the narrative, yet through every subsequent encounter, the story further unfolds before us, becoming richer and more complex.

Often, inquisitive children teach us about how to understand a story or the Mass. As a child inquires about the priest’s green vestments, the foregrounded wreath or the presence of palm branches, we might pause to recall the symbolism undergirding the rich rituals of the liturgy.

There is a sense of the sacred in the liturgy, but its rituals and ceremonies can appear as empty pantomimes when divorced from their meaning. Far from empty signs, the liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery, of Christ’s passion, death, resurrection and glorification by which He “accomplished the work of our salvation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1067).

From the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning public service or worship, liturgy in the Christian tradition refers to the communal participation of the people in the work of God, and God is always present and at work in the liturgy, acting in and with the Church through the sacraments.

Annually, the Church’s liturgical year is structured around the Paschal mystery, which we observe every Sunday. We begin each year with a season of anticipating Christ’s birth, and following a celebration of Christ’s Incarnation, we gradually enter a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum, for His passion, death and Resurrection. The year closes with a period of ordinary time – a time to grow in our faith and in living out the Gospel.

Daily, the Liturgy of the Hours unifies the Church Militant in prayers said by the clergy and increasingly by the laity. As the liturgical calendar structures our year, the Liturgy of the Hours structures our day, offering us an opportunity to consecrate each present moment to Christ.

Ultimately, the liturgical life of the Church “revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments” (CCC 1113), for we receive God’s grace to fortify us in our spiritual lives and as His disciples through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Mass.

The Mass nurtures us spiritually, inviting us to reflect on the Paschal mystery and to lift our hearts to God as individuals and a community through spoken and sung prayer.

The Mass moves us corporeally, drawing us to sit as we listen to the Word, to stand as we unanimously profess our faith, and to kneel as the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass inspires us apostolically, sending us out to proclaim the Gospel and to share Christ with our brothers and sisters.

Though the “source and center” of all prayer, the liturgy and a sense of the sacred has, in some ways, become marginalized in the American Church. Once robust parishes are seeking to rebuild, but they frequently overlook the connection between the empty pews and the decentralization of the liturgy, which was underscored by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

“I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is, to a large extent, due to the disintegration of the liturgy,” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his autobiography *Milestones*.

Something in the simplicity of the child’s experience of the liturgy teaches us to return to what we might call the basics of the faith – meaning a love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the rituals of the Church. Only through the liturgy are we nurtured on our stewardship journey and inspired to proclaim the Gospel.

As Archbishop Alexander Sample from the Diocese of Portland, Ore., writes, “If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture.”

ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



A Small “Something in Return” *Our Baptismal Gowns Ministry*

“I get joy out of doing this, knowing that it’s for the new little babies that are born in our parish. I think, too, that we get blessed any time that we do things that relate to volunteering for the Church. Jesus takes care of us all of the time and it’s good to be able to do something in return for His Church.” — Joan Dietrich

Ofentimes in thinking of how we are personally called to give back to God and His Church, we tend to focus on one of the three stewardship components — time, talent, or treasure. Yet, if we look more closely at our personal gifts, perhaps even thinking a bit “outside of the box,” we might discover a way to give which incorporates all three at once. This is certainly the case for longtime parishioner Joan Dietrich who has spent the past 30 years lovingly sewing the baptismal garments for newly baptized members of our parish family.

“There was just a need for someone to step up and do it, and so I volunteered,” Joan says. “We’re all called to be good stewards and there are lots of little ways to do that within the Church. Sometimes, we don’t even realize how much service is needed because there are so many people quietly doing them behind the scenes. This has been something that I feel I can do, and it’s a ministry I plan on continuing as long as I’m able.”

Joan first began sewing as a young girl under her mother’s instruction. It’s a skill that has served her well in life, allowing her to make wedding dresses for both her daughter and daughter-in-law, as well as countless other major sewing projects. And though she may not be attempting quite such ambitious projects nowadays, at the age of 85 she continues to use her gift for God’s glory by sewing each one of these symbolic gowns.

“I get joy out of doing this, knowing that it’s for the new little babies that are born in our parish,” Joan says. “I think, too, that we get blessed any time that we do things that relate to volunteering for the Church. Jesus takes care of us all of the time and it’s good to be able to do something in return for His Church.”

And so Joan continues quietly donating her time, talent, and treasure through the purchasing of materials and sewing of each new baptismal gown. Each carefully embroidered and lined with lace, these gowns become symbolic of the child’s new life in Christ. And then later, Joan says, they become a beautiful keepsake in memory of this first Sacrament of Christian Initiation.

“It’s a great way to help the child remember that baptismal date,” Joan says. “You only wear it once, but then it becomes this nice keepsake.”



Joan Dietrich holding up one of her handmade baptismal garments.

*New volunteers are welcome to become a part of this behind-the-scenes ministry.
For more information or to begin sewing, please contact Joan Dietrich at 217-656-3788.*

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Jerry and Trudy Dreier Reflect on a Spiritually Fulfilling Life in Our Parish *continued from front cover*

“I think both sets of our parents gave a lot to our upbringing and our education,” Trudy says. “They were hardworking, loving people. I think we tried to pass that on to our kids, and I do think having a faith-based education is very important.”

The Dreiers are thankful for the sacrifices their own parents made to ensure that they received a Catholic education. Jerry is one of nine siblings, and still marvels at how hard his father worked to put them all through Catholic schools. Even Trudy’s father, who was not Catholic, always said that he believed sending his children to Catholic school was the best thing he did for them. Trudy herself was a teacher in a Catholic school for 40 years, and all three of the Dreier children attended parochial schools, as well as their five grandchildren.

While active stewardship is obviously a longstanding tradition in the Dreier family, Jerry and Trudy have also found themselves greatly inspired by the role models they have found in their fellow parishioners and friends here at St. Anthony.

“There are so many wonderful examples that came before us, so that when someone asks you to fill in or take part in something, you would never say ‘no’ to them,” Trudy says. “All the parishioners help out the parish so much — there are so many hardworking people that would do anything for the parish. There are just a lot of good people here, and a very good leader in Fr. Tom Donovan.”

When all is said and done, there is a simple reason for the Dreier’s involvement in parish life — they truly consider our faith community to be a kind of family to them, and one that they are happy to serve in any way they can.

“Whatever you do — and the more you do — brings you closer to this ‘family,’” Jerry says. “I think just being involved, no matter what you’re doing with any parish, makes you feel like you know the other people better and understand what they’re going through. It’s just being a part of the family.”

To learn more about stewardship at St. Anthony of Padua, please contact the Stewardship Committee at stanthonystewardship2015@gmail.com.