

SAINT MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PARISH

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Seminarian Carson Kain Lends the St. Michael Evangelization Committee a Helping Hand

This summer, St. Michael has been blessed to have a seminarian visiting with us and helping out around the parish! Carson Kain is a student at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, where he will be returning in August for his sixth year. So far, he is greatly enjoying his stay here at St. Michael, which began on June 5 and lasted until Aug. 2. Summer assignments like this one are designed to let seminarians learn more about what it's like to live and work in a parish setting before they are ordained.

Carson is thankful for the opportunity to experience living in a rectory and helping out in a church.

"It's been really good being at St. Michael," he says. "I get to meet the people in the parish, and it's taken a lot of anxiety away from wondering whether or not I could work in a parish setting. It's busy, but you just have to know how to work with people and know that we're all in this together."

In addition to helping out at the Masses and learning about the general workings of a parish, Carson has joined with the Evangelization Committee to



Seminarian Carson Kain is enjoying spending his summer here at St. Michael

carry out daily home visits to people in the parish. The visits are part of a new effort to build stronger relationships with parishioners who are already

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Seminarian Carson Kain Lends the St. Michael Evangelization Committee a Helping Hand

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currently active in the church, as well as to reach out to inactive parishioners. Each evening, Carson and one or two members of the Evangelization Committee visit a different number of homes. Depending on whether people are home or away, and on how much time the individuals and families have to chat, the group may visit anywhere from two to seven households each night.

Carson and the committee members bring a printout of St. Michael Mass times and a copy of Matthew Kelly's *Rediscover Jesus* book to each home, inviting people to become a more active part of our faith community. However, another important aspect of the visits is the informal conversations that take place, creating personal connections and building relationships throughout the parish.

"I've been blown away by how hospitable everyone has been," Carson says. "Every night, at least one person has invited us in and we've sat and talked for awhile. We live in a time when people are very isolated, so our main goal is to bring the faith of Christ to people, pray for them, show them that we care and are just there to be friends."

When Carson finishes up his summer here at St. Michael, he will begin his sixth year of seminary — something that he himself could not have predicted just 10 years ago. While he first became interested in a vocation to the priesthood as a young altar server witnessing the Liturgy of the Eucharist up close, Carson began taking a different path in college when he decided to enroll in pre-med classes. However, his involvement with the Newman Center at the University of Nebraska, brought his faith

back to the front and center. During a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi during those college years, Carson experienced an undeniable call to the priesthood, and promised God he would try seminary for at least one year — and five years later, here he is!

Reflecting on his own story, Carson has one main piece of advice for any young man who might be considering seminary — it never hurts to try.

"The biggest thing preventing me from going to seminary at first was the idea that once I went in, I couldn't leave," he says. "But when I got there, they told us we had six years before the final decision of becoming a deacon. So, don't get worried or scared about it. As a friend once told me, it's a win-win situation going to seminary — if you go and leave after two years, and you get married, you're a better husband and father because of those years. You won't regret it. And if you stay and become a priest, that's wonderful, too."

Carson is grateful for the opportunity that this time at St. Michael has given him to learn about building connections within a faith community, and he is looking forward to the day when he is able to serve the Church as a parish priest.

"I really love meeting families and getting to know them," he says. "Something I heard earlier this year in Philadelphia was that before you can preach the Gospel message, you have to build a sense of community. If people aren't coming together, there is no way to get to the deeper things. So, I'm really looking forward to getting to know people better and letting them know that we're all on the same journey, striving for holiness."

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A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

*Summer Vacations Are Coming
to an End...Now What?*

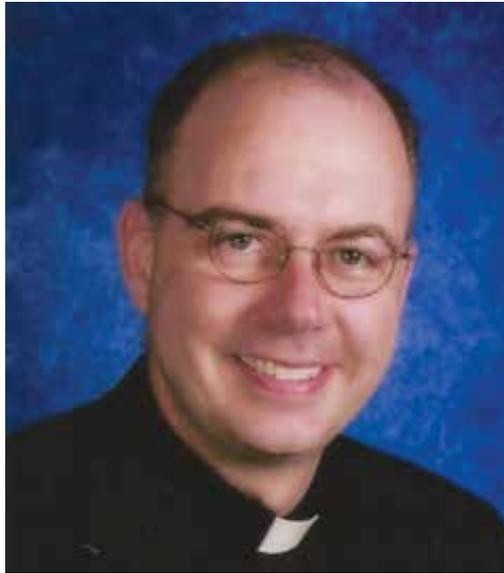
Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: “What is mine and what is God's?” The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are



fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to

routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Jeremy Hazuka,
Pastor



Meet New Pastor Fr

“I Just Want Us to Grow in Unders

By now, you have certainly seen our new pastor, Fr. Jeremy Hazuka, either at Mass or out and about around the parish! Fr. Hazuka arrived in mid-June and is excited to join our large, vibrant faith community here at St. Michael.

Before arriving in Hastings, Fr. Hazuka was the Principal of Bishop Neumann High School in Wahoo, while he also served as pastor at two small churches in Morse Bluff, a town with a population of 135. Coming from St. George and Sacred Heart – parishes made up of about 45 households each – to our large parish here at St. Michael will be quite a change for Father!

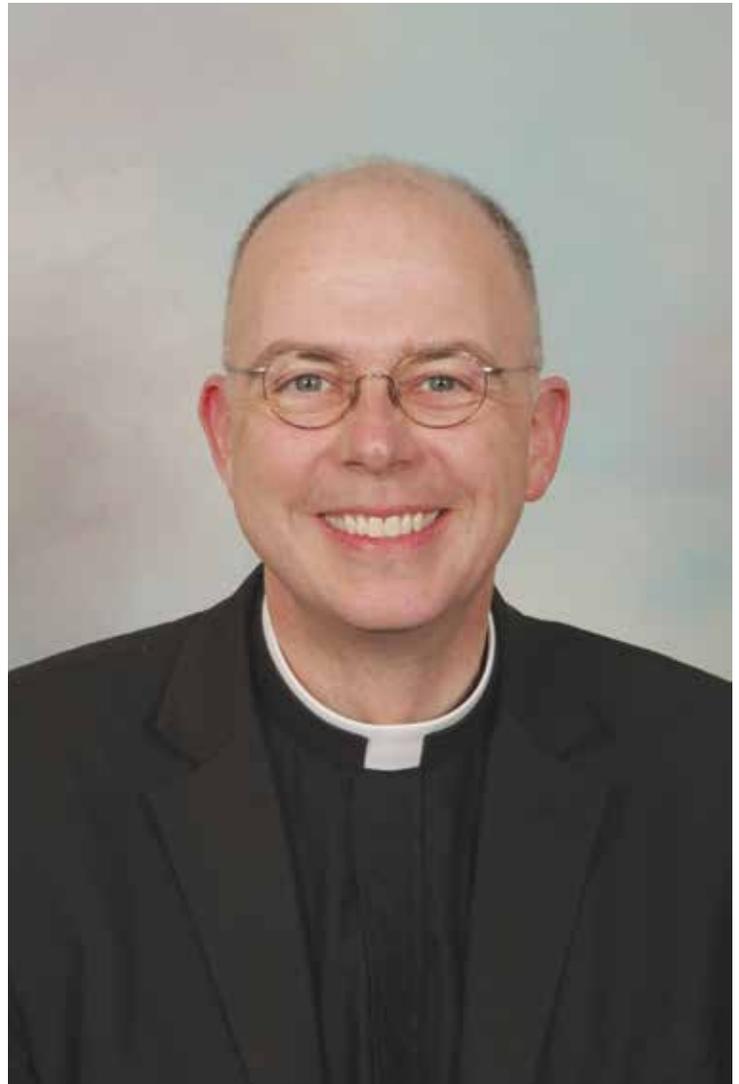
When Fr. Hazuka was ordained into the priesthood in 1997, it was in answer to a call that he first began to hear as a very young child.

“I guess beginning in second grade, I had thought about [a vocation to the priesthood],” he recalls. “Being able to attend a Catholic school where I had the opportunity to see a parish priest on a daily basis played an important role in my faith.”

Although Father had begun considering the priesthood at an early age, in high school he found himself more drawn to science and technology, and he went on to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering. After two years of study, however, he made the decision to leave the engineering field and begin attending seminary.

“I tell people that I got tired of homework, because there would be times I’d be up late, until 2 or 3 in the morning, just doing what was in effect math homework,” he says. “And for the first time, someone had asked me if I ever thought about being a priest. It was Msgr. Joe Nemecek who first asked me. So maybe that’s the real reason why I got tired of the math homework – because I started thinking of something else!”

In the 20 years since his ordination, Fr. Hazuka



Fr. Jeremy Hazuka

has served many parishes in the roles of Assistant Pastor and Pastor, and has taught and served as Principal at several Catholic high schools. He enjoys working with the youth of the Church, and looks forward to acting as chaplain at our parish grade school and having Mass with the children,

Fr. Jeremy Hazuka

Understanding of Our Value as Persons”

as well as helping out with the high school.

While Father was serving as Principal of Bishop Neumann High School last year, the boys basketball team won the state championship and the girls team placed third, leading us to wonder – does this bode well for the teams here at Hastings Catholic Schools?

“My guess is probably not,” Father laughs. “When I was [Principal] at Lourdes Central Catholic High School before Bishop Neumann, the sports teams won no championships. It was only after I left that they began to win. So, when it comes to sports, I’m definitely not a lucky charm! I think St. Cecilia’s can hold their own with sports. They’ve had a lot of success.”

Over the years, one of Fr. Hazuka’s favorite aspects of serving the Church as a priest has been the opportunities it provides him to learn alongside the parishioners. His love of learning with others gives him a particular interest in developing RCIA programs and other types of adult faith formation ministries, and he hopes to build upon the strong programs already put into place here at St. Michael by our previous pastor, Fr. Houlihan.

During his first weekend with us, Fr. Hazuka laid out a few more goals for his time here in our parish.

“As I mentioned in my homily on my first weekend here, I just want us to grow in understanding of our value as persons,” Father says. “We live in a world where there is a lack of understanding of how valuable we are in God’s eyes, how we are made in His likeness. Our world doesn’t recognize the dignity of the human person. I’d also like to grow in understanding of how God is with us

on the cross, present during our trials and our suffering. And just to grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ – in knowing about Him, but most of all *knowing Him*, as a person we can know.”

During his first month here at St. Michael, Fr. Hazuka has enjoyed getting to know our faith community, and he is greatly looking forward to worshipping, working and learning together with the many parishioners at our vibrant and bustling church!

“The people here are very welcoming and encouraging,” he says. “There are a lot of things going on – a lot of activity – which is a good sign of a healthy parish. I’m excited about that because I would like to build upon what Fr. Houlihan has brought here.”

Here at St. Michael, we are happy to warmly welcome Fr. Hazuka as our new pastor!

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THE TRAITS OF THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD



Each day, we strive to live stewardship in our lives, recognizing our roles as “God’s co-workers” in His creative, redemptive and sanctifying work. But in our quest to live as disciples of Christ, many obstacles often arise.

One of the most prevalent roadblocks in living stewardship is understanding the traits that make up a good Christian steward. Surely, it would be much more convenient if we had some sort of “stewardship profiler” who could lay out the necessary steps to becoming a good steward, like on one of those television crime dramas. Unfortunately, it more often feels like living stewardship is a lifelong journey that we will never fully comprehend.

Fortunately, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, gives some insight into the characteristics that make up a good Christian steward. It may not have the powers of a stewardship “profiler” or “mentalist,” but it certainly gives us some tangible things to think about.

The Christian steward should display some of the following traits:

INSIGHT – Before the disciples could live what we know as the stewardship way of life, they needed a flash of insight, or a certain way of viewing the world and their relationship to it in a fresh light. This “divine grandeur,” more than anything else, is often what sets people on the path to Christian stewardship (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 39).

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS – Stewards are fully conscious of their accountability in sharing of their time, talent and treasure. As caretakers of the gifts that God has given them, they have the opportunity and responsibility to use them to their fullest potential to spread God’s Kingdom on Earth (40).

GENEROSITY – Christian stewards are generous out of love as well as duty. They should display a desire to share with and care for others based on the sacramental graces they have received. And they are also cognizant of the many warnings that the New Testament presents to those who fail in charity and authentic love (40).

JOY – Christian stewards are often presented with difficult obstacles, but they should remain joyful in the face of challenges to their lives of stewardship. Like Paul, the good steward is able to say, “I am filled with encouragement, I am overflowing with joy all the more because of all our affliction” (2 Cor. 7:4). Only by serving with a joyful spirit will stewards fully reap the rewards of their service, both in this life and the next.

Indeed, living as a Christian steward is a lifelong journey with many ups and downs along the way. But if we strive to consciously incorporate each of these characteristics into our giving of time, talent and treasure, we will find that the profile of a good Christian steward will become much clearer with each experience of service.

The Mailander Family: *Making Faith a “Family Thing”*

For the members of the Mailander family, loving God is something they do together, and that’s what makes it such a joy. Day by day, Karess and her husband, Patrick, strive to make faith a “family thing” by embracing a life of stewardship, and giving their children the most precious treasure on earth – the love of Christ.

“It is important to practice stewardship as a family, and provide an example to your children of giving back,” Karess says. “We firmly believe in tithing and in being active in our parish. We believe that when you give to God, He provides. And the more you give, the more He provides.”

Patrick and Karess have been blessed with three children – Celia, 8; Lydia, 5; and Avram, 1.

Even though it isn’t always easy, they strive to open their hearts to their vocation as Catholic parents, and bring their children the faith in every way they can. One such powerful and effective way has been to send their children to our school, and take an active part in the school themselves.

“We wanted our children to have a spiritual aspect to their education, and a quaint school atmosphere, so we decided to send them to (Hastings Catholic Schools), where there are numerous opportunities to embrace the Catholic faith,” Karess says. “Then, we know they are in an atmosphere where they are included and cared about. It is really wonderful to have their faith reinforced every day at school.”

As a convert, Karess appreciates learning about Catholicism and family faith traditions right along with her children.

“I went to public school, but my husband graduated from St. Cecilia’s,” Karess says. “Having our children attend Catholic schools has helped me to learn more about family faith traditions and neat ways to teach our kids about Catholicism. I have learned things about God right along with my children, and have been reminded of things I have forgotten.”

However, making such an educational choice doesn’t come without making plenty of sacrifices – and reaping the rewards.



Karess Mailander – along with her husband, Patrick – strives to make stewardship a family effort.

“Sometimes, we don’t know if we will be able to pay tuition, but we always make it through,” Karess says. “We see God providing over and over again. I also truly enjoy volunteering for the Home and School Association and helping out with fundraisers for Hastings Catholic Schools. As a family, we like going to both school and church social events, as well.”

In fact, the Mailanders have found that being an integral part of our parish and school community brings abundant blessings to their family. Patrick serves as an acolyte. He also helps maintain the exterior of the parish building. Their children bring up the offertory gifts during Holy Mass, and

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The Mailander Family: Making Faith a “Family Thing”

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the whole family has been trained to be greeters.

“The children really get a lot out of taking up the offertory gifts,” Karess says. “They feel honored to do it and take great pride in it. We are also really looking forward to serving as greeters, as a family.”

Ultimately, the Mailanders believe that centering their family life upon Jesus and living a life of discipleship alongside their fellow Christians pays off, both now and in eternity.

“We have been in this parish community for 11 years, and find it very welcoming,” Karess says. “We really enjoy getting to know the other parishioners and we feel at home here.”

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– Karess Mailander

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sunday:

*Saturday Vigil 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m.
and 11:00 a.m.*

Weekday:

*Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. & 8:10 a.m.
(School Mass)
Saturday 8:00 a.m.*