

# SAINT MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PARISH

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## *Quilting Ministry Fosters Fellowship Between Parishes*

Since the early 90s, the Quilting Ministry has brought together women from both St. Michael and St. Cecilia parishes. Each Wednesday morning the group meets in the St. Michael basement to create beautiful quilts together and grow in their community of faith.

"Quilting is a passion that we all have," says ministry member Joan Nienaber. "It's ladies from both parishes, and it's a great social gathering. We all enjoy getting together."

"We start at 8 a.m. and then go until about 11:30 or 12," says ministry member Gladys Hupf. "We joke that it's almost like a therapy session for us, because everyone comes and shares what is going on in their lives. It's just a good outlet for women, and if someone is in need of prayers, we'll always pray with them."



*The Quilting Ministry group recently completed this quilt.*

The ministry members work on their own personal pieces, and also take commissions for handmade quilts.

"Hand quilting adds more of a personal touch than a machine-made quilt," Joan says. "It's really exciting to see some of the works that people bring in for us. Sometimes people will bring in

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## STEWARDSHIP GIVING DURING THE *Summer Season*

“We’ve stopped delivery of the newspaper and mail. We’ve taken the dog to the kennel. The iron is unplugged, and the stove is turned off. Is there anything else we need to do before we leave on vacation?”

Aren’t you forgetting something? Did you remember to write a check to your parish for the Sundays you’ll be gone?

“But I won’t be at Mass at home those Sundays. Can’t I skip those envelopes when I’m away? After all, I’ll put a dollar or two, or maybe even five, in the collection at the church where we visit. Isn’t that enough?”

Many Americans, whether we have school-aged children at home or not, mentally operate on an academic calendar. We assume our organizations operate September through May and then take it easy during June, July and August. And to some extent, many parish activities do function on such a schedule. Our parish may not hold Religious Education classes during the summer. Our choirs frequently take a break. Even many of the parish staff members take summer vacations! Can’t our giving take a vacation during the summer, too?

Even as we form the question in our mind, we know the answer. The prime reason for keeping up our pledge all summer long is that God doesn’t go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass wherever we travel. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are called to be faithful in our commitments

to Him and our parish family, even during our vacation time.

God’s steadfastness in giving to us is the primary reason for us to respond by being faithful in our stewardship toward Him. But there is also a practical reason why we need to keep up our pledges of time, talent and treasure throughout the summer – the Church needs our involvement year-round.

Even though some parish activities are reduced during the summer months, the parish’s expenses are not. After all, there are still Sunday Masses and weekday Masses, too. The parish staff members still need their salaries. And of course, we need to run the air conditioning in our church during the hot summer months. Despite the fact that some parish functions are suspended, other activities may take place, such as Vacation Bible School. And although the regular parish Religious Education program may be suspended, the summer expenses are often the highest, as textbooks and other supplies are bought for the upcoming school year. Our parish has to pay its bills on a year-round basis, just like your family.

Our parish plans a budget for the year, taking into account the commitments that you, the members, have made. If parishioners do not live out their financial commitments to the parish, the budget will not balance.

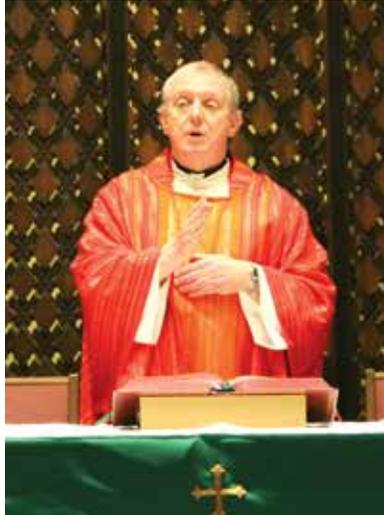
Our giving needs to be maintained throughout the summer, just as God maintains His generosity to us. Our stewardship is a response to God’s gifts. And God pours out His gifts and His grace upon us all year long.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

*Time Is Limitless... Or Is It?*

Dear Parishioners,

Some years ago, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI encouraged Catholics to renew their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the month of June. In thinking about that, it made me realize that we all like to measure time – not necessarily in minutes and hours, but certainly in terms of what happens at particular times of the year. In the Church, we celebrate so many occasions that measure time – Easter, Christmas, Corpus Christi, Pentecost, Ordinary Time, the feast days of our saints, and much more, all of which give us that sense of moving forward.



our relationship with God?” We have said many times that each of us needs to set aside time for both of those purposes – to serve and to pray. There is a reason it is called “prayer time.” Prayer should be a part of our lives, as much as eating, sleeping and working.

Another thing that June brings to mind is how life slows down for most of us. Young people are on summer vacation from school. Families and individuals take vacations. Unfortunately, some see it as a time to take a bit of vacation from worship. We can see it in declining Mass attendance and in the reduced number of activities within ministries and organizations.

In our own lives and the lives of our families, we mark birthdays, anniversaries, Baptism days, and more dates than we can possibly remember. These dates commemorate or remind us of a point in time. Time is also one of those gifts from God that we attach to the idea and life of stewardship.

We are fond of saying that time is the one thing given to all of us in equal amounts. However, we all know that is not necessarily true. Does a mother with several children have the same amount of time as a person with no family? Does a company manager who is expected to be available seven days a week have the same amount of time as someone who works a 9-to-5 job?

My point is that time is a valuable commodity, whether we feel like we have a lot or very little. God, on the other hand, is timeless. The Lord sees things in an eternal view, while we tend to look at it in shorter measures. The question is really “What do we do with our time to serve others and to increase

We all mark time. We all know that it is limited, and can be fleeting. That is why even countries celebrate special days that mark time – throughout the summer season, Americans celebrate Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. How do we mark time as individuals, as families, and as a parish? That may say more about our understanding of stewardship than anything else. Maybe now, as summer is upon us, is the perfect time to concentrate *more* on our spiritual habits, rather than less.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Houlihan,  
Pastor

## *“Keep th Larry and Laura Zabloudil R*

If you have been a parishioner here for long, chances are that you already know Larry and Laura Zabloudil, who have been attending St. Michael for about 45 and 35 years, respectively! Both of the Zabloudils have long been active in church life, with Larry helping out with computer issues in the parish and serving as an usher for over 30 years, and Laura lending her talents on the organ for over 20 years. This couple's decades-long participation in the faith life of our parish is a tangible sign of their patient and unwavering commitment to the Church.

Years ago, Larry and Laura both became more actively involved in parish life on the invitation of friends. In Laura's case, a fellow parishioner asked if she might be able to fill in now and again on the organ. And once Laura got the courage to do it, she never stopped!

Larry's long experience serving as an usher has been similar.

“Someone just asked me [to usher] one day, so I started,” he says. “And I've been doing it ever since. I don't look at it as an obligation, but as something I started to do a long time ago and I see no reason to stop. I just enjoy giving back in some little way – the Church has given so much to us and our families, and this is a small way to give back.”



*Larry and Laura Zabloudil*

Following their marriage over 20 years ago – a second marriage for both – difficulties procuring an annulment for one of their previous marriages prevented the Zabloudils from being able to receive the Eucharist. However, even when Larry and Laura encountered this obstacle to fully living out their Catholic faith, they never considered leaving the Church

they both love so deeply. In fact, they continued to serve the parish by sharing their talents as an usher and organist.

Reflecting on those years, Larry emphasizes that the couple's faith remained steadfast, despite the sense of loss they felt without the Eucharist in their lives.

“We both went so many years without taking the

# “Keep the Faith”

## Reflect on Blessings Received

Eucharist and participating in the sacraments, and it was something we both longed for in our hearts,” he recalls. “You just felt like there was something missing – and there was. As our grandchildren began making their First Communions, we felt the emptiness even more as we watched them go up while we waited in the pews. But in all those years, I don’t think either of us ever, ever thought of giving up on the Church – that was never in any of our conversations.”

After three rejections of their annulment request over a period of more than 20 years, Larry and Laura had accepted that they might never receive the Eucharist again. Then, last summer, due to the changes to the annulment process that were made by Pope Francis as a part of the Year of Mercy, the annulment they had long awaited was finally approved. The couple was allowed to have their marriage blessed by the Catholic Church in a marriage convalidation ceremony held here at St. Michael.

In the year since their marriage convalidation took place, Larry and Laura have felt incredibly blessed to be able to receive the Eucharist again, fully realizing the abundance of grace conferred in this sacrament.

“This was something that we never thought would happen,” Laura says. “But anything that happens in your life is in God’s time – you have to wait and have hope because you just have no idea what might happen. Now whenever I go up for Communion, I just think, ‘This is so wonderful because I wanted it so badly.’ It is so special for both us. Never take the Eucharist for granted, ever.”

This month, on June 19, Larry and Laura celebrate their 24th wedding anniversary and the first anniversary of their marriage convalidation. Looking back on the last year, they are still in awe of the incredible blessing they are once again able to receive in the Eucharist. They are also very grateful for the support they were shown over the years by Fr. Bourek

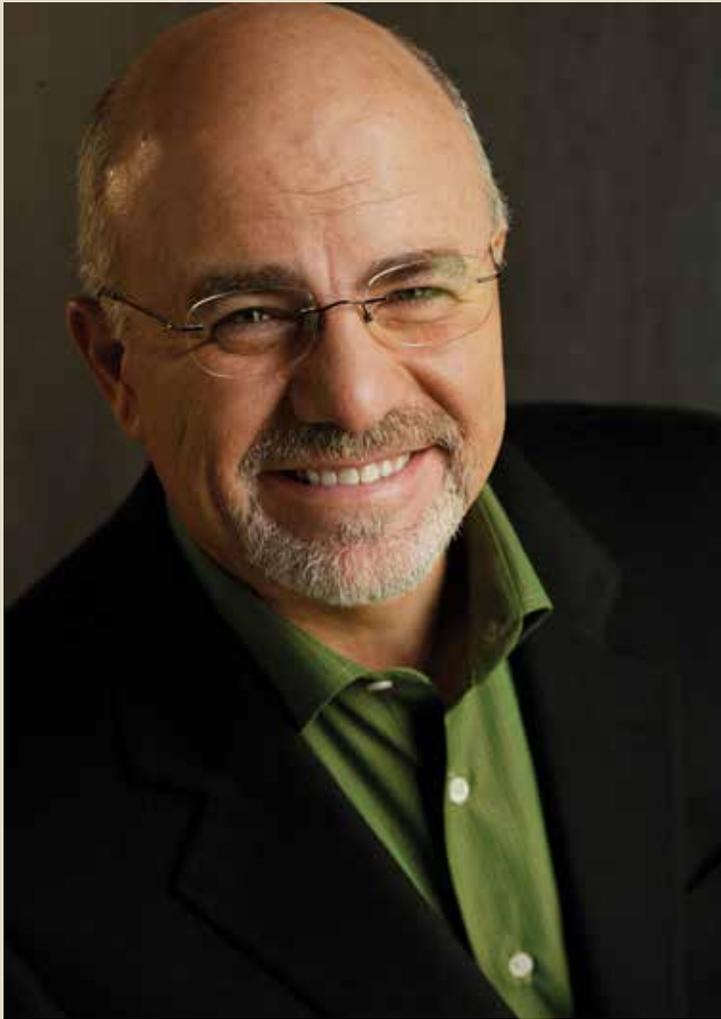
and then Fr. Houlihan, as well as the entire faith community here at St. Michael.

“We feel very blessed and very, very fortunate,” Laura says. “One of my favorite quotes in life is ‘Keep the faith.’ I think that, no matter what, you need to hang on to what you believe and be inspired to live through your faith. We are not perfect Catholics, but we are keeping the faith and just trying to get through life.”



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## *Financial Seminar Offers Chance for Peace*



*Dave Ramsey is a best-selling author, radio host and creator of Financial Peace University.*

**W**hy are we so stressed about our family finances?

Why are all our arguments about money?  
Can't we have some peace about our spending?  
There are a lot of reasons.  
And yes, it's possible.

Beginning this September, Tom Schik will be leading the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace Seminar.

"We plan to meet on Wednesday evenings for an hour and a half," Tom says. "The course has been pared from the original 13 sessions to nine, and we'll be talking about the steps to manage your finances."

Those taking part in the seminar will each receive a workbook and will be able to discuss the ideas presented each week.

"What Dave Ramsey says is that we all work very hard for the paycheck we get, and we're constantly bombarded by the media, and other means with messages to make purchases," Tom says. "And these are not necessarily good decisions. What the Dave Ramsey course teaches is setting up a specific budget and looking at stewardship as a way of maximizing the resources you have. It's really very much a stewardship-driven program. It's not specifically Catholic, but spiritually based about using your resources wisely and making good decisions about your resources."

During the seminar, participants will

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## *Financial Seminar Offers Chance for Peace*

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be taken step-by-step through the process of beginning an emergency fund.

“This is because most people go into debt because they have an emergency come up,” Tom says. “So, they have to use a credit card, and with a credit card comes interest. This is not a wise use of money. The emergency funds is the number one step and second, you learn how to eliminate debt.”

From there, participants will learn how to create a budget that lets one anticipate true expenses ahead of time. Unexpected expenses can be solved. Participants will also learn how to save for college and retirement.

“One of Dave’s lessons states that we’ve worked very hard for the money we earn and we should be building a retirement plan with some of that money,” Tom says. “It calls for ‘pay yourself first.’”

Seminar participants will come to understand that once family finances are under control, they will become better stewards and be more able to take care of their parish faith family.

“Once you are able to have a clear system to manage your finances, you’re able to have additional resources to support our church, other vocational programs, and the Diocesan Development Program,” Tom says. “We’re using our money wisely, and so we’re able to be more generous with the resources we have.”

For instance, Tom provides an example of paying 27 percent interest on a credit card – if you no longer have that debt, a portion of the money saved goes to a college plan, a retirement plan or a giving plan.

Tom assures us that there will be plenty of time to register for the seminar, with announcements slated to run in the bulletins.

“I already have a list of folks from the last stewardship renewal, so I’ll be contacting them,” he says.

Tom’s career as a director of a Catholic Social Services agency gave him a firsthand look how families fall into debt.

“A lot had incredible credit card debt,” he recalls. “They couldn’t pay their regular expenses. So, I became a true believer in the Dave Ramsey program. It’s a simple step-by-step process to manage our financial resources.”

Tom recommends that families make sure they teach their children how to manage their finances, citing the troubles college students can encounter when they sign up for the credit cards made all too available on college campuses.

“I know of engaged couples who have taken the Dave Ramsey program,” Tom says. “This is the perfect time to do it as you’re starting to talk about finances before you’re married.”

Fr. Michael reminds us that the seminar will be open to anyone, not just our parishioners. He also is happy that the seminar is being revived here after several years’ absence.

“Our parish has sponsored the Dave Ramsey course for several years, and was originally done to help our school families handle tuition,” Fr. Michael says. “It was kind of the parish’s way to provide the resource and to help reach out and let people be good stewards of their time, talent, and treasure. Dave Ramsey is a good fit. His teachings have been very, very helpful to a lot of people in the parish.”



***Anyone with questions about the seminar is welcome to contact Tom Schik at 402-984-7549.***

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## *Quilting Ministry Fosters Fellowship Between Parishes* *continued from front cover*

a top that their grandmother made, but never finished, so we finish it for them. Or sometimes they want a quilt made to remember their grandmother or great-grandmother. It's really nice to be involved in that personal project or special memory."

With the proceeds from these quilt commissions, ministry members are able to buy materials to make quilts to donate to parish and school fundraisers, such as the St. Michael Salad Luncheon or the school Bazaar. The quilts are raffled off, and the proceeds directly benefit school and parish needs.

For ministry members, though, this is the cherry on top of a warm fellowship with other women.

"You really look forward to going and seeing everyone, and talking and laughing," Gladys says. "Even when you're going through a tough time, it's still comforting. If someone is having a downer day when they get up, they can come over and talk to the other women and it can take your mind off of your everyday life. You soon forget your troubles when you're in the group, talking and sharing funny things amongst yourselves. It's always important to be around other people and share your thoughts and life with them."

### **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.*

*If you would like more information about the Quilting Ministry, or to get involved, please contact Gladys Hupf at 402-462-6336, or Joan Nienaber at 402-463-6082. Feel free to join the group on Wednesday mornings any time!*