

SAINT MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PARISH

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The Benedictine Oblates: "Peace is St. Benedict's Motto"

St. Michael's Greg and Pat Schultz *"Teaching Children Makes Your Faith Grow"*

Greg Schultz felt drawn to Catholicism, and as he prepared to marry Pat, he also prepared to enter the Church. He received his First Confession at their Engaged Encounter weekend. And he received his First Communion on the same day that they celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage.

Today, Greg and Pat have been active in religious formation at St. Michael's for over 30 years, and together they share the faith they love with some of the youngest members of the community.

"We love being around the kids and giving them the love that we have for Jesus," Greg says. "We teach them about the Eucharist, our reverence for Mary, our deep traditions, and things that are unique to our wonderful and inclusive faith."

Greg and Pat were married at St. Francis in Randolph, Neb., where Pat's father was a deacon.

"I was raised in a family of 10, and the Catholic faith was always essential in my life," Pat says. "My parents were very adamant about making it to church no matter what the weather was. We went in a tractor and a wagon once!"



Greg and Pat Schultz

Greg was raised in the Methodist faith tradition and first met Pat at a college awards banquet at Wayne State College in Wayne, Neb., where he asked her to dance. They moved to the area in 1977 and have always lived on the west side.

Greg was the first to become involved with religious education.

"In the beginning, I helped in the different classrooms and just enjoyed being with the kids," Greg says. "After a couple of different transitions, I eventually became the coordinator and have worked

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The Eucharist and Stewardship as a Way of Life

More than 20 years ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a pastoral letter titled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. This document was an invitation to follow Christ Who gave of Himself for us. Each of us is called to serve our neighbors and to be stewards of God's creation and of all that has been entrusted to us. However, to truly understand stewardship, we must look to the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the total gift of our loving Savior to us. Stewardship is our response to that gift.

Even the word "Eucharist" implies stewardship. The word "Eucharist" finds its roots in the Latin word *eucharistia*, which in turn came from the Greek word *eukaristos*, which meant, quite simply, "gratitude" or "thanksgiving." How fitting that we, who are called to be a stewardship people, celebrate at the focal point of every Mass an act of thanksgiving and gratitude — namely, the reception of Jesus' gift to us — the Eucharist.

In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the bishops speak of the Eucharist in this way: "The Eucharist is the great sign and agent of this expansive communion of charity... we enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in Him, with one another. Here His love — indeed, His very Self — flows into us as disciples and, through us and our practice of stewardship to the entire human race."

When we receive Christ's Body in the Holy Eucharist, we hear the minister say, "The Body of Christ." To this, we respond, "Amen" — which means in Hebrew, "Yes; it is so." This is the essence of stewardship. We should enter the Church for Mass out of "gratitude." We recognize the presence of the Lord in Holy Communion, and then we truly receive the Lord. What is left for us to do is the fulfillment of stewardship — that is, sharing what we have received in love of God and neighbor. Our entire experience speaks to stewardship — we are grateful; we recognize the real presence of the Lord; we receive the Lord; and then we share what we have received.

Christ's gift to us through the Eucharist is an invitation to us. We are called to give beyond what

is convenient or what may be comfortable. We are called to forgive even when forgiveness may not be deserved; we are called to love even when that love is not returned. We are called to love as God loves us.

The Eucharist is stewardship celebrated. The Mass is more than a ritual. It is an actual encounter with God, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We need to respond to the Eucharist with our complete selves. What we experience in the Eucharist should, in turn, translate into our daily lives. We are committed to the Church, which is Christ's body. We show our love for His body by acts of charity and generosity. We spend time in prayer, expressing our gratitude and our love.

God's greatest gift to us is Christ's great love for us — this was shown when He was crucified on the Cross to pay the penalty for our sins and to give us eternal life. God's love for us is without limit, and He offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Stewardship is how we respond to that gift.



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

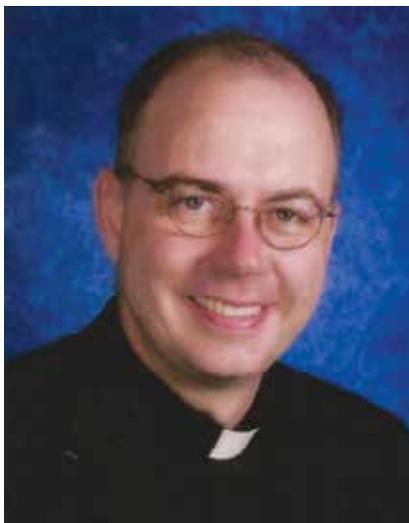
November is a Time for Thanksgiving

Dear Parishioners of Saint Michael's Church,

While many of the “big box” stores already have their Christmas displays up by October 31, when November comes, my attention shifts to thanksgiving and Thanksgiving – it is a time of year when we tend to think in terms of gratitude to God, and a time when we formally celebrate our American holiday. My memories of Thanksgiving are filled with sauerkraut and dumpling and football, but they are filled with thoughts of family and faith.

Thanksgiving is a time for families and gratitude. Thanksgiving became official in the United States in 1863, and in his proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln made very clear Whom we needed to thank. “To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God,” Lincoln said. In other words, we all need to thank Almighty God for our many blessings.

November is a significant month in the Church November 1 is a Holy Day, the Solemnity of All Saints. We honor all those who have gone to heaven – that is what a saint really is: a person who has gone to heaven. However, we do not honor saints for their sakes – they don't need our praise – they're in heaven and do not need our words of honor or recognition. The reason we honor the saints is for our sakes – just as other have gone before us in holiness, so too we're called to do the same – we're called to live a saintly life so that we can be saints in heaven. And its saints who provide us with the example of how we do this.



The very next day, we celebrate All Souls Day – a day on which we commemorate the faithful departed and we pray for them. As early as the 2nd century, we can find the grave markers of Christians with epitaphs asking for prayer. Christian writers from the 3rd or 4th century urge prayers and Masses offered for the dead. And continuing through Christian history, the existence of purgatory and goodness of praying for the dead is taken for granted. Having a special day to commemorate the dead goes back to the 7th century and All Souls Day celebrated on November 2nd finds its roots back in the 11th century. I encourage you to pray for the dead throughout this month of November – especially taking time to remember our deceased family members and friends in thanksgiving for the role they have played in our life.

Finally, November also brings us to the end of one Church year and the beginning of a new one. The Feast of Christ the King on Nov. 26 officially begins the final week of our liturgical year, and the First Sunday of Advent is on Dec. 3. From the beginning of the month when we thank God for the example of the saints and the saintly people in our lives, to the end of the month when we thank God for everything we have and everything we are, November is a time to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship truly is all about – about approaching God, about approaching each day, and about approaching all those with whom we come in contact, with hearts filled with gratitude and love.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Jeremy Hazuka,
Pastor

Questions & Answers About Our

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence — part of the rhythm of parish life at St. Michael. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year?

*Commitment Weekend is **November 11-12**. Don't forget to bring your Commitment Card to Mass!*

How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your Commitment Card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

Time Section: Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

Talent Section: You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

Treasure Section: Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving five percent of your income to St. Michael.

My age or physical limitations prevent me from being active in the parish. Should I still turn in a Commitment Card?

Yes! The first section of the card — Stewardship of Time — is the most important because it allows you to make commitments to prayer. Even if you can't join a ministry or make it to Mass on Sunday, you can still pray for our parish. Your spiritual support has tremendous value in the eyes of God.

One time I turned in a card, but no one ever called me when I signed up for a ministry.

If this happened in the past, please forgive us! And don't give up on filling out your Commitment Card! We have a very good plan to call every person interested in joining a new ministry. If for some reason the ministry leader does not call you within four weeks of turning in your card, let the parish office know.

How much should I give?

Your gift is entirely dependent on how much God has given you. At St. Michael, we ask that you give five percent to our parish, one percent to the diocese, and four percent to other charities. Why a percentage of income? First, because the tithe is a scriptural benchmark that the Church has honored for centuries (see Malachi 3:10). Secondly, we give a percentage of income because it is a common-sense standard by which everyone can equitably support the parish. Most of all, we give because we believe God comes first in everything, even finances.

What if I can't fulfill my financial pledge?

While our pledge is not a "contract," we should all make a good-faith effort to fulfill it. Of course, if your financial circumstances change — if you lose your job, for instance — then the amount of money you give the Church will change, too.

Annual Stewardship Renewal

Likewise if you get a raise or bonus. The biggest reason many people don't fulfill their pledge is that they attend Mass at another parish when they go on vacation, attend a wedding, etc. If you're out of town, just make up for the missed Sunday when you write your next check to the parish. Using your envelopes is a good way to see which Sundays you missed.

I don't even go to Mass very frequently. Why turn in a Commitment Card?

Because this is your chance to turn over a new leaf! Why not make a commitment to God to come to Mass every Sunday, and then write down that commitment? Even if that's the only commitment you make, take a step forward. Jesus Himself is waiting for you!

What happens if I don't return my Commitment Card?

We will mail you a reminder letter that includes an extra Commitment Card (in case you misplaced yours). Make every effort you can to participate. Our Stewardship Renewal is a very important annual event in the life of our parish. You and your family are part of what makes St. Michael a great community! Most importantly, your commitments are actually promises to Christ Himself. All of us are called to give back to God a portion of what He has given us.

ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Place to Belong

2018 Stewardship Renewal Commitment Card

First & Last Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Spouse First & Last Name (if applicable) _____

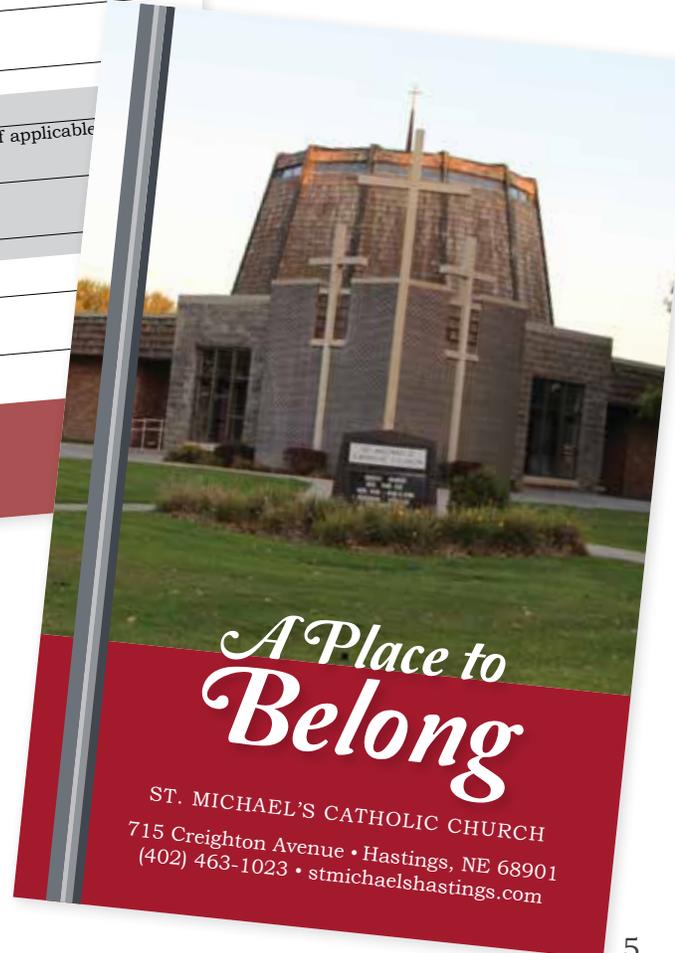
Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation: Returning to the Father

Those of us who have children know what it's like when they come to us apologetically after having done something they know is wrong. As parents, it melts our hearts, and we can't help but forgive them freely, and take them into our arms – sometimes squeezing them with tears in our eyes! At times, we may even feel closer to them than we did before the event occurred.

This, we can assume, is how God feels, being our most clement Father. In His magnanimous love, He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to redeem the world, freeing it from the haunting grips of sin and death. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation through His Church to offer sinners forgiveness for the offenses they committed against God.

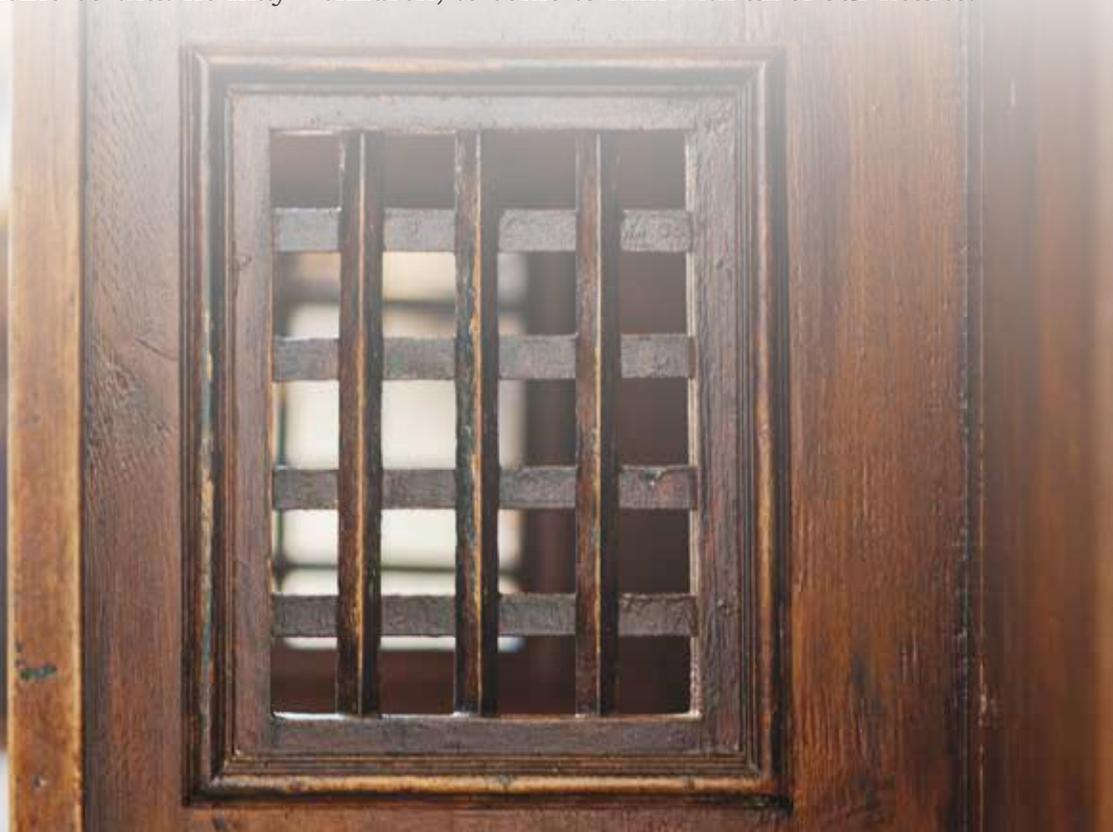
As the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas writes so beautifully, “[The Sacrament of Confession is] a sacrament of healing and a sacrament of conversion, returning us to the Father after we have sinned. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may

be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

As far as the details for the reception of this sacrament are concerned, three conditions are necessary – contrition, which is genuine sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works. A priest is gravely bound to keeping total confidentiality for all confessions they hear.

Church law requires Catholics to confess mortal sins – the most serious kind of sins – to a priest at least once per year, and to confess them before ever receiving Holy Communion, as well. However, this is by far the minimum; Catholics are encouraged to receive the sacrament freely and frequently since it is so extremely beneficial to the health of the mind, soul and spiritual life in general.

To honor the Sacraments is to honor God and the entire Christian community. To receive the Sacraments is to live in God's love and to strengthen our love for each other. Christ awaits us, His beloved children, to come to Him with all of our hearts.



The Benedictine Oblates: “Peace is St. Benedict’s Motto”

When Juliene Bryan joined the Church at the Easter Vigil at St. Michael’s in 2008, she felt a little overwhelmed by all the reading, the lives of the saints, the prayers, and the many organizations.

“I wondered, ‘Where is there a good fit for me?’” Juliene says. “How can I organize my time of meditation and prayer?” I felt drawn to the Oblates, and when the bulletin said they were having an orientation meeting, I was happy to find out more.”

What Juliene discovered is that the Oblates of St. Benedict are Christian men and women who have associated themselves with a Benedictine community in order to enrich their Christian way of life.

“They promise to follow the Monastic Rule of St. Benedict to the best of their ability in their chosen state of life, to pray and practice *Lectio Divina* daily and to be a witness of Christ by word and example to those around them,” says Juliene, the Hastings Chapter Dean.

All Christian men and women are welcome to attend the orientation meeting held each fall to inquire into the Oblates. The Hastings Chapter of Benedictine Oblates is associated with the Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, S.D.

A Benedictine pamphlet published by Liturgical Press states that the Oblates “seek God in association with a monastic community: as individuals and members of a body, they grow in love of God, neighbor and self. With the Rule as their guide, Oblates grow in Christian spirituality.”

“If that description speaks to your heart, then I encourage you to learn more about becoming a Benedictine Oblate,” Juliene says.

If “enquirers” into the Oblate choose to continue, they attend monthly meetings for a year as “novices” while studying the *Oblate Handbook*. After one year, a novice may take his or her final oblation and become a Benedictine Oblate.

Oblates are encouraged to attend two monthly meetings, the chapter meeting and a cell meeting.



Benedictine Oblates at a Dean’s Retreat at Sacred Heart Monastery – (from left) Jim Rea, Lincoln Dean; Juliene Bryan, Hastings Dean; Carol Olson, Senior Dean; Steve Blum, Lincoln Dean; Marcia Borchert, Steinauer Dean; Carol Barry, Lincoln Dean; and Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff, Associate Director

Each meeting has its assigned book for spiritual reading approved by the Sacred Heart Monastery.

“As individuals, we try to say Morning and Evening Prayer from the Divine Office (or Liturgy of the Hours), do holy spiritual reading (*Lectio Divina*) and examine our conscience daily,” says Juliene.

For Juliene, being an Oblate and a member of St. Michael’s community works well together, as St. Benedict’s rule is all about learning to live in community with Christ as our head and model.

“At St. Michael’s, we are all part of a Christian community,” Juliene says. “St. Benedict’s Rule gives Christians a guide for the journey. He calls us all to conversion to holiness through his ‘little rule for beginners.’”

Since becoming an Oblate, Juliene has developed a greater sense of peace through learning to make time for silence and prayer, and by sharing in the spiritual life of a monastic community from participating in retreats to joining the sisters for the Divine Office and receiving spiritual direction.

“All of this is so very helpful on this journey,” Juliene says. “Peace is St. Benedict’s motto, and I am happy to have a part of that peace in my life.”

If you would like more information about the Benedictine Oblates, or if you have any questions, please visit nebraskabenedictineoblates.org or contact Juliene Bryan at wjbryan@gtmc.net or 402-984-4674.

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St. Michael's Greg and Pat Schultz *continued from front cover*

with wonderful partners over the years.”

As Pat and Greg's children grew older, Pat also began giving to the program.

“I had always intended to become a teacher,” Pat says. “I taught third grade and now teach fifth grade, which is the Confirmation program. Every year is different. It has become part of my life.”

Now, Greg and Pat are teaching many of the children of the young people they taught in years past. They hope that the lessons they are sharing will help these girls and boys throughout the challenges that life brings.

“We have gone through some difficult things in our years together, as every family

does,” Pat says. “Each hardship has been made better by prayer, and I hope when these kids come across hard things in their lives, they pray and remember that help is out there.”

The religious education program always welcomes new volunteers. There are many different ways to become involved, and for Pat and Greg, sharing the faith with young people has deeply strengthened their own faith.

“When I lesson plan, I am in awe of the things that I find relate to my own life,” Pat says. “Teaching these children makes your faith grow, too.”

Greg and Pat have been married for over 40 years and have been blessed with three grown children and seven grandchildren. They feel honored and humbled to be a part of the faith community and to work with the young boys and girls who are the future of the Church.

“We just love the faith community that we have at St. Michael's,” Greg says. “We're just doing our little part to make everything work, and everyone can do that.”

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.*