



Many Paths on the Journey of Faith . . .



The Latin term, "lumen gentium" was used by Vatican II to pave the way for Catholics to move beyond themselves and to "be a light to the nations." At Sacred Heart, as with other Catholic parishes, traditional ministries of the church provide parishioners an opportunity to share their light and spirituality with others. For the past several years, The Spirit has provided Sacred Heart parishioners with some insights into the multiple ministries of the Parish, and how these ministries provide an opportunity for individuals to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most of the articles that have appeared have been about individuals who volunteer for the ministries and how this commitment has enhanced their spiritual awareness and compassion for others.

The rewards for volunteers are usually intrinsic, mostly unrecognized, and require a great deal of dedication and responsibility. The gratification of these silent partnerships with Christ are in knowing that by serving others, God is being served. In this issue of The Spirit, we are going to look also at the perspectives of those who are being served. What is their response to the people who have given of themselves so generously to spread the Word of the Gospel? What difference have these ministers of "light" and our religious leaders made in their lives? We hope these thoughtful perspectives give our readers pause to reflect on their own individual efforts to "light the nations."



Let the Little Children Come to Me . . .

Parishioners who attend the 11:00 Mass on Sundays are often provided with the opportunity to witness the gathering of the families preparing for the baptism of their babies and young children. A hint that a baptism is about to occur happens when Deacon Gil Parra places the baptism font in the center of the sanctuary. The excitement that occurs during this ceremony is contagious. The energy of the parents, Godparents, family and friends creates an atmosphere of anticipation that is both gratifying and humbling. Sarah and Luke Dalske reflect on what the traditions and rituals that are the essence of the Sacrament of Baptism mean to their family.



Having been raised as Catholics since infancy, both of us have been active in the Church throughout the years in various ways, attending Sacred Heart Church over the last several years. However, no activity seems more prominent in our lives right now than the education and preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism. In the last 3 1/2 years we have baptized our daughter and our son, and we have become godparents to two nephews. In addition, we will soon be preparing for the baptism of our third child due next spring. The responsibility of being a parent and godparent to a child initiated into the Catholic Church is on our minds daily. These children will be looking to us to be models for them in the faith; we truly need to practice what we preach. We are their first teachers!

The preparation gave meaning to the traditions and rituals that take place within the baptism ceremony. Each action symbolizes something much greater than the one-day celebration of the Sacrament, and each is deeply rooted in Scripture. The class at Sacred Heart did a great job at preparing us for the ceremony. Monsignor Walton, who baptized our children, did a wonderful job in communicating the meanings and significance of the rituals to our family and friends during the ceremony.

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Msgr. Robert Walton

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Father Felipe Paraguya

Pastoral Associate
Sr. Mary Martin, RSM

Deacons
Gil Parra
Bill Riehl

Religious Education
Kristin Hansen

School Principal
Theresa Sparks

Administrative Staff
Barbara Valentini
Josette Borland

Blessed are the Pure in Heart . . .

Almost 10 years ago Pam Milchrist, a Sacred Heart parishioner, faced the eminent death of her elderly mother who was suffering from Alzheimer's. She reflects on the profound effect that one minister to the Homebound and her young daughter had on her mother and on her own life.

During the last 6 months of my Mom's (Betty Milchrist) life, two angels of mercy came regularly from Sacred Heart church to my home to administer Holy Communion to my beautiful mother who suffered from Alzheimers. Helen Encinas and her young daughter Siena were part of Sacred Heart's Ministry to the Homebound program. Both significantly impacted my mother's life and my life through their dedication to the ministry and to my mom's well being.



My mom lived with me the last five years of her life. She moved in with me in my small East Sacramento home when it became apparent that she could no longer live on her own home in Chicago. At the time she arrived, the Alzheimer's had already robbed her of much of her short-term memory. During the remaining 5 years I saw how the illness ravished her mind and then her body until she became helpless.

Contrary to what people say about Alzheimer's, I found that the illness bonded my mom and me in a way that I never thought possible. The more the illness compromised her everyday living, the more I felt spiritually closer to her. I felt she was taking me on an unknown journey into another world that I certainly did not understand, nor could I talk about it with her. Yet, I felt a spiritual energy that transcended the illness. With each passing day, our bond became stronger.

One day, my neighbor asked if we were Catholic. I had been away from the church for close to 30 years, and my mom had given up her Catholicism when she married my dad. My neighbor said that it didn't matter and she would ask Father O'Hara if he could administer Holy Communion to my mom. When Father O'Hara came to my home, I did not know what to expect or how my mom might react. When I told Father O'Hara that my mom would not be able to give a confession because she couldn't talk, he looked at me with the kindest of eyes and said my mother was in a state of grace and a confession would not be necessary. When Father O'Hara reached out to my mom, it was as though he was embracing a wounded, lost lamb. There were no questions asked, nothing, just a kind hand that reached out to help us with our anguish.

After Father O'Hara left, Helen and her daughter started coming on a regular basis, and I know my Mom began to recognize them. She was particularly taken in by Siena, her youth, her innocence and her compassion for my mom and it bonded all of us in a realm of time and space that is difficult to describe.

One day before my mom passed away, Helen came to my home for the last time. We all knew it was time for my mom to let go. Helen and I managed to administer my Mom her last communion. It was an extremely moving experience for which I will be grateful the rest of my life.

by Pam Milchrist



A Bit of school humor contributed by Theresa Sparks

My first love is teaching so I spend as much time as I can in each classroom. Recently I was teaching a religion lesson in Kindergarden. The topic was Creation. The youngsters had already learned that after God created night and day He declared, "It is good." This had been well taught about each of God's creations and my lesson was about the creation of people. When I asked the students what they thought God said after He created people, one little hand in the front row shot up. When called upon, little Elena crossed her arms and said, "God said, hmmm, perfect!"

...Good-bye for now... and Thank You Sister St. John...



You may have noticed during daily Mass that a certain glow is missing at Sacred Heart. In the left center pews, there is a missing space that was once occupied by Sister St. John. She retired in August and is now living at the Mercy Convent in Auburn

For years, Sister St. John blessed our Sacred Heart Community with her presence as a lector, as a participant in daily Mass, and with her volunteer work at Mercy Hospital. Many of us did not personally know Sister St. John, but we were aware of her presence. Her unobtrusive ways and silent contributions provided an anchor of spirituality for those who knew her and for those who were only aware of her presence.

We wish Sister St John the very best in her retirement and we thank her for her selfless contributions to the Parish.



“When in a Prison, You Came to My Cell...”

What does it mean for individuals who have lost their way and have nowhere to turn? What if you are one of those unfortunate individuals who suffers from HIV/AIDS and sees no light at the end of the tunnel because you know you will die in a prison cell?



Father Healy and Sister Martin have reached out to HIV/AIDS victims who are living in prison. In this diocesan program, they regularly visit the California Medical Facility in Vacaville where they help the prisoners prepare for the unknown journey before them, and provide hope through their spiritual support.

Sister Martin tells a story of a visit she and Father Healy made to the prison, which is divided into 2 wings, one with 4 beds and the other with 2 beds. Usually Sister covers one side while Father Healy covers the other. Midway during their visit, they switch. On one occasion, Sister Martin visited a man who was close to death. She comforted him with her voice and kind words. When she left the cell, the man fell into a deep sleep. Shortly thereafter, Father Healy arrived in the cell to offer prayers. The man awoke and saw Father Healy. He asked, “Tell me Father was their just someone in here from Heaven?”

It is a delight to hear Sister Martin tell this story as it gives some insight into the mind of an individual who seeks forgiveness in a meaningful way and looks to embrace Christ before dying.



Introducing Mrs. Sparks

Enjoying the beautiful weather this past fall, how can one not be grateful for God’s many blessings? The season of Thanksgiving is always my favorite time of year. A particular blessing that has come to me this year is my new role as principal at Sacred Heart Parish School.

During the last twenty-five years I have had the honor of working in five Catholic schools throughout Sacramento. Each of them holds a special place in my heart for different reasons. My first school was just that, my first school. I learned about being a good teacher and a good colleague. After we had our first child I decided to work closer to home and I returned to my own elementary school. I worked there for 8 years and it was so much fun to work with my former (notice I didn’t say old) teachers. From there I was called to administration and that has continued to be my ministry.

My first four years as an administrator were spent at Holy Family in Citrus Heights. It is the largest school in the diocese with two classes per grade and a very large preschool. After getting my feet wet I moved to

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Walking Together on the Journey . . .

Disciples on the Journey is a Sacred Heart Lenten program that involves faith sharing. Many of us are reluctant to sign up for the program because of time constraints or apprehension about sharing their thoughts with a group of strangers. Two parishioners Claire Hyde and Andy Sevier reflect on their experiences with the Disciples on the Journey and elaborate on how they overcame their anxiety about being in the program and came to enjoy its many benefits.

Until two years ago, I had never been involved with Sacred Heart's Lenten Program, the "Disciples on the Journey." Like so many other Catholics, I attend Mass, but many times do not pay attention to the "extra" things going on in the Parish.

I'm sure that my pause and curiosity about the program was inspired by one of Fr. Walton's homilies, which are always profound, thought provoking, and full of inquiry. On one particular Sunday, I noticed a "sign-up" area in the back of the church for participants in the "Disciples on the Journey." I inquired about it from someone who greeted me warmly. It was explained to me that participants meet in small groups at various homes of parishioners for "faith sharing."

I attended my first meeting with what I term "catholic trepidation." Many Catholics, like myself, do not share their faith well. I grew up Catholic, attended catholic schools, including college, and I am quite comfortable with the formality of my religion. I like the structure of Mass, the memorization of standard prayers (which always comes in handy), and the ceremony of each Sacrament. I am not so good, however, at dialoging my faith and/or Catholic theology.

Initially I thought, the safety net of this program was the "structure" of these small faith-sharing groups. Each meeting was to follow a guide booklet. We were to reflect and talk about the Scripture readings for the following Sunday. There would be an opening and a closing prayer and a Saint of the Week. To my surprise, the first meeting was warm, friendly, and stimulating. The formality was present and the program scripted enough to feel comfortable, but there was still enough latitude for creative and confidential discussion. We spent time on the faith-sharing questions that were provided to us and often found a new slant.

We also talked freely about how to carry our ideas into the next week, into the kitchen, into conversation, and into our children's lives. To my delight and excitement, thoughts flowed between the formalities and to the next meeting.

When Easter arrived and our six meetings were over, I had made new friends, connected with old ones and had dialogued on my faith. Our leader and each group member inspired an excitement of the mind through thinking and talking about Catholicism and Scripture. This is my third year with Disciples on the Journey, and I am now on the committee.

Since becoming a Sacred Heart parishioner in 2002, our family has served in a number of ministries. My son Sam and my husband Steve were involved in RCIA. Sam served as a Eucharistic Minister until he departed for UC Berkeley. I have been involved with Catholics Returning Home and I am a lector at Thursday morning Mass and now at the 11:00 Sunday Mass. Steve was involved in our recent pledge drive for our school.

But the most satisfying ministry that Steve and I participate in is the "Disciples on the Journey" program. At first when we signed up, I envisioned that we would be in sessions with people we knew and I could blend into the background since I do not consider myself a leader. However, we were placed in a group of people that we did not know and I was assigned to lead the group. I was very apprehensive about leading any group but especially one that I felt I was unprepared for as I had previously been away from the Church for many years.

Steve and I have been leading this group now for 6 years with most of the same participants that were assigned to us at the beginning. We meet on Saturday mornings which is often a sacrifice for all of us. One member postpones his Saturday morning opera program. It is also prime spring gardening time for others. But all of us look forward with enthusiasm to Lent and gathering together to read and discuss the scriptures for the upcoming Sunday. *by Claire Hyde*

by Andy Sevier

Mercy McMahan's Star Resident



How lucky can you get? Yes, we were pleased to welcome Bishop Francis Quinn to our Mercy Family here at McMahan Terrace. It is a joy to see the Bishop interact with our residents, our staff and visitors. He is a blessing and a gift to our home. His gracious ways and infectious smile brighten up the breakfast dining room as he moves about to get his meal. He can get a refill of coffee for a table companion or exchange a greeting with a resident as he/she joins the group. Nothing is too great or too small for our Bishop.

Another thing that amazes me is his ability to remember everyone's name. He never forgets who they are and knows if one has gone to the hospital or to a skilled nursing facility, He is sure to visit them there. He is our little "Angel of Mercy" who is always willing to anoint a resident who is very ill or share a prayer with sick residents and their family. They really appreciate his concern for them when they are ill.

On Wednesdays there is Mass for the residents in our chapel. This is a very special time as we share Eucharist together. The homily is always uplifting and enlightening. We have a great attendance and afterwards the Bishop will chat with those who came, to their great enjoyment. On the feast of St. Francis he blessed the pets in the building. The owners also got a blessing, which they appreciated. Fridays we have our Inter-Faith service for the residents. I have several times asked the Bishop to do a service and he has always said "yes." On these Fridays the chapel is full as the residents always seem to flock to his service.

We consider ourselves blessed that Bishop Francis chose Mercy McMahan Terrace as his home when he returned to Sacramento. He is indeed an inspiration to all. I am blessed too as he makes my ministry easier by his presence and is eager to help when needed. We hope and pray his stay here will be long and filled with much happiness. He is our shining Star!

by Sister Mary Augustine



Different Ways to Bring the Eucharist by Tom & Shirley Wolfanger

Tom and Shirley Wolfanger are both Eucharistic Ministers, he to the homebound, she at the 11 o'clock Mass. They reflect on what this ministry has meant to them.



Tom: It is a joy and a privilege to be a Eucharistic Minister to people in nursing homes and homebound people (including one lady over 100 years old). In the ten years of such ministry I have on several occasions given Communion to people on the day they died. In talking with Father Aldrin about this, he said "You have an Angel in Heaven." I want to be a minister as long as I am able.



Shirley: I feel so privileged to be a Eucharistic minister, as I grew up when women were not even allowed to touch the chalice. It has brought me closer to our God.

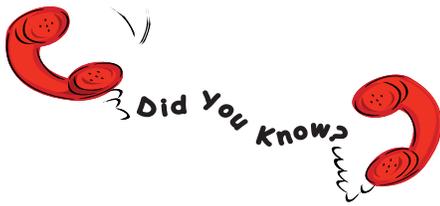


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Introducing Mrs. Sparks

Our Lady of the Assumption School in Carmichael for six years. While at OLA I realized that so much of the curriculum that we provide is driven by high school requirements. So I moved to the high school level to learn more. I have grown as an administrator through my experience at both the elementary and high school levels and I hope to bring to Sacred Heart what I have discovered throughout all of these years. I have many hopes and dreams for Sacred Heart School and plan to continue the strong traditions that are fondly remembered by so many alumni. I am truly thankful for the support of the parish and school families and I look forward to getting to know each of you. May God continue to bless you and your families.

by Theresa Sparks



- ... that Fr. John Healy is enjoying his mini sabbatical at All Hallows Education Center in Dublin until January 15, 2009? He will be back as Chaplain of Mercy Hospital when he returns on January 10.
- ... that Ten Great Dates Marriage Enrichment Program celebrated their final session at Sacred Heart on Friday night Nov. 14th with a potluck for the whole families?
- ... that eleven second graders attend religious program on Tuesday afternoons. They hope to receive First Holy Communion in May?
- ... that the Christmas tree lot at 53rd and Folsom regularly donates lovely trees that help adorn the Church for the Christmas season?

- ... that Lauren Gonzales and Becky Rivera are teenage lectors at Sacred Heart Masses?
- ... that Sr. Martin celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday in Orange County with family and friends?
- ... that a new class is starting January 29th for newcomers who would like to join the Catholic Church? Mark your calendars now!!
- ... that all of our homebound parishioners are visited by Fr Aldrin during Advent. They receive the Sacrament of the Sick and the Eucharist?
- ... that on January 20 Father Aldrin and Father Felipe Paraguya trade places. Father Aldrin goes to Yreka and Father Felipe comes to Sacred Heart Good bye Father Aldrin, welcome Father Felipe.
- ... that the RCIA students were accepted into the Catechumenate on Nov. 16th? They are now called, Catechumens and Candidates.

- ... that Dan Dillon and his Crib Crew opened up the Christmas season when they spent December 19th putting up the Crib in Church? The teenagers also helped to decorate that area.
- ... that Gene Sirois has resigned from being head Usher? For the past ten years he did an outstanding service to the people of Sacred Heart Parish. Thank you Gene.
- ... that the Sacred Heart School pageant was a great success on Dec 18th? To give everyone an opportunity to enjoy it they ran it again on Dec 19th.
- ... that sixteen families in the parish participated in the lighting of the candles on the Advent wreath. Many of them expressed the thought that they considered it a privilege to do so.
- ... that, during Advent, Father Aldrin offered Mass for the homebound parishioners in the three rest homes within our parish?

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Let the Little Children Come to Me . . .

Furthermore, it has aided us in preparing for our responsibilities as parents in choosing to raise our children in the Catholic faith. It started by choosing faithful and supportive godparents who would not hesitate to remind us of our duty should we ever stray from Catholic teaching. Beyond that, one of the things we decided, based on what we learned from these preparations, was to always attend Mass as a family. It would be easy to have each of us go separately, so that one could be at home with the children. And there are some Sundays that I question this decision! But in the end I realize that the constant exposure and participation from day one is so important. I can already see the positive influence on our 3 1/2 year-old daughter. It's not boring or foreign to her because she's been going to Mass ever since she can remember. We answer her questions about what each reading, prayer or action means. This is just one of the many parts that together will make up the foundation for our children's faith.

The class and further preparation we have received emphasized the lifelong commitment to and relationship with God, Christ and the Church that baptism brings, for us and for our children. We now fully comprehend that baptism is only the beginning of this journey. And we are confident that we are well-prepared for the path ahead.

by Sarah Dalske

THE SPIRIT

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The Sacred Heart Family

In Memoriam . . . January - June 2008

"May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace."

Gerald (Bert) Fortier
Annita M. Iwata
Joan J. Gilliam
Jose Gerardo Romo
George Francis Altstaff

Catherine M. Werry
Henry Thorpe
Mary Sekul
Brian Shawn Rosa
Edmund D. Roche
Norman Montgomery

Helen Mahaney
Magdalena A. Stover
Kathryn E. Kenney
George B. Weaver
Anna Mary Schwall

Baptism . . . January-July 2008

"You have put on Christ, you have been baptized." (Rite of Baptism)

Donevin Kai Valido
Giuliana Rosanna Del Guerra
Angel Campos
Paul Logan Lacoste
Madeline Cecelia Lacoste
Kaela Ameril Ruiz
Anthony Francis Rosa
Jacob Matthias Miguelino
Kamryn Paige Kirrene
Keaton Joseph Kirrene
James Tristen Bartz, Jr.
Isaiah Fifer
Carmela Fifer
Lincoln Fifer
Olivia Lathe Luther
Caroline Poe
Gabrielle Irengo
Wyatt Wilton Antonio Granucci
William J. Patton
Zachary Coss

Courtney Coss
Julia Coss
Johnny Lopez
Eden Lourdes Andrade Stuhr
Hannelore Rugg
Quinn Gordon
Dylan Sullivan
Claire Lopez
Alexis Bruno
Amelia Garrett
Addyson Clarke
Savannah Elizabeth
Manning
Jacob Emmitt
Matthew Harvan
Parker Randall Saake-Reimer
David Christopher Saake
Eva Cardenas
Jose Cardenas Perez



Jared Enos
Joaquin Xander Miguel
Kera Victoria Ochoa
Stephen Carvajal Hughes
Liam Patrick Higgins
Charlie Carlton Kramer
Brody Hocking
Tyler Ryan Swanson
Sophie Ann Ericson
Angelina Tamlyn Bernardo Kirrene
Trinidad Wylie Alvarez
Addison McKinney
Alden McKinney
Colton John Costa
Benjamin James Rasmussen
Bruce Brady Bradshaw
Breanna Xanthe Ocampo
Ruby Claire Glenn
Hadley Anne Tamblyn
Jianna Belen Arrendondo



Marriages . . . January-July 2008

"I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life." (Rite of Marriage)

Frederick Wilfred Evicci & Laurlynn Jones
Donald M. Lindt & Alora J. Bierman
Paul Matthew Merchant & Megan Read

Todd B. Andrews & Ashley J. Dyer
Arturo Garcia & Mary S. Katayama
Douglas Crispin & Sara Alicia Chacon
Joseph Paul Flores & Candace L. Quick

RCIA 2008

"You have become a new creation and have clothed yourself in Christ." (Rite of Baptism)

Todd Andrews
Sarah Baldwin
Tom Clark
Sarah DeVol
Buz Evicci
Ian Gookin
Cherisse Knapp
Lauren Knapp

Roger Schwitalla
Russell Skinner
Mark Taylor
Corinna Warehime
Jada Everon
Maya Everon.
Cecilia Geniesse

Felicia Geniesse
James Geniesse
Sera Geniesse
Katheryn Hughes
Alexandra Luevano
Matthew Massari
Staci Saladino
Susan Schell.