

10-page Newsletter for St. Victoria Catholic Church

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Thank you. Mary Harvey 952-443-2661



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Giving Back: A Way of Life

From The Front Pew



When I was growing up, I was maybe about four, when my

Fr. Bob White father came home and asked my mother if they could respond to a request from Catholic Charities. A widow and her seven-year-old daughter had just arrived in America from war-torn Latvia and they needed a place to stay. My father asked if we could take them in for the weekend.

Olga and Maria ended up living with us for the next two-and-a-half years. In the process, they became part of our family.

Some 35 years later, my dad again came home with a request — this time from their home parish. The church was looking for families who were willing to take in refugees from Vietnam. With their family grown, my parents opened their doors to Tai Ho, a young man who had escaped Vietnam by boat. He stayed with my folks for the next eight years.

We've all been there: A situation presents itself. There's a need. We have a chance to make something good happen. You know it involves a bit of risk and sacrifice, but you make your move. I think that is what Christian stewardship is all about.

Right now, we have a chance to make something good happen as we conclude our Fifth Annual Stewardship Drive. Many of you have already stepped forward and to you I say thank you for your generosity!

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Did You Know . . .

- Worldwide, 1 in 3 children will never set foot in a school.
- Worldwide, 1.3 percent of total gross domestic product is spent on primary education.
- Worldwide, 1 in 5 adults can't read.
- In the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Catholic education is a priority with 93 elementary and 14 secondary schools serving more than 36,000 students.



It was Volunteer Appreciation Weekend on May 30 and 31 and the Saint Victoria Parish Staff honored all the wonderful volunteers who make it possible to reach out as the Face and Hands of Jesus Christ. In addition to saying thank you, they served gallons of coffee and lemonade, nearly 20 dozen cookies and 50 dozen doughnuts. Pictured left to right are: Julie Schmieg, Mary Harvey, Patty Schlader, Jamie Moore, Mary Catino, Fr. Bob White, John Wall, Joni Jeurissen, Amy Kusber and Deacon Ray Ortman.

Every Pledge Can Make a Difference

Continued from page 1

For others, it does involve a bit of risk and sacrifice on your part, but it is Christian fellowship at work.

At press time, we had received 292 pledge cards. That means we are behind by 3 pledges versus last year, but we are still 25 percent short of our goal of 389 pledges. Our goal was calculated based upon our observation that giving this year is down 10 percent. Our hope is to offset the decline in giving by an equivalent increase in the number of pledges.

Even more worrisome, our new church building fund has dropped to less than one month's mortgage payment. Without immediate and significant new contributions and pledges to our capital campaign, we will be forced to dip into operating funds to pay our mortgage and to do so will limit our many ministries here at St. Victoria.

With today's poor economy there are those who are saying this is the worst time for a stewardship drive. Yet, I think it is a perfect time. I happen to believe that hard times bring out the best in people. That's when you see people making sacrifices and giving their best.

I truly hope that we can count on everyone to give something. Every little bit helps. With our tough economy, your gift may be smaller than last year, but we know you are sacrificing every bit as much and that you are giving out of love for the Lord and for our parish. And, know we thank you!

The only way we can continue to be the parish we all expect is if everyone steps up to do their part. Thanks for your generosity to our parish family. Your gift will help God continue the miracles that he wants to work here at St. Victoria and beyond. Even if your gift is \$5 or \$10 a week it will make a huge

difference. Remember the young boy with his two loaves and five fish? It wasn't much, but look what Jesus did with it. Christ continues to work the same miracles with our humble gifts today. Even though your gift may not seem like much, it will make miracles happen.

I want to conclude with a note I recently received with a hundred dollar bill — I think it says everything. It simply said, *"Thank the Lord for everything."*

My prayers go with you and thank you for all you do!

Fr. Bob

Capital Campaign Report for Fiscal Year 2008-2009

Amount Pledged: \$247,561

Amount Received thru

April 30: \$186,319

Projected Deficit: \$30,000

Monthly Mortgage: \$21,400

Balance in New Church Account as of May 1: \$10,320

As you can see, we need your continuing Capital Campaign Contributions for the new church in order to pay our mortgage or we will have to divert funds from our operating accounts and ministries.

Introducing Eric Duffy!



We're pleased to introduce Eric Duffy, our new Youth Minister. Eric is a recent graduate of St. Mary's

University in Winona, MN, and joins the St. Victoria staff in mid-June.

Eric earned a degree in Pastoral/ Youth Ministry and during his college career gained a great deal of youth ministry experience with internships and leadership opportunities through the University's Campus Ministry program.

Eric, who grew up just a few miles away in Minnetonka, describes himself as a fun, energetic person who enjoys outdoor sports, watching movies and playing or listening to music.

"I have a fiery, passionate love of Jesus Christ and can't wait to get to know the youth of St. Victoria and begin this next phase of my life," Eric says.

Eric was hired after a lengthy process of interviews by Fr. Bob, Deacon Ray, the staff, members of the Youth Steering Committee, parishioners at large and by members of St. Victoria's youth.

Eric's duties will include Faith Formation for grades 7 and 8, Confirmation preparation for students in grades 9 and 10 as well as those of Youth Minister.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to offer this important position to Eric," says Fr. Bob. "His recommendations, including one from Fr. Paul Kammen, our former Seminarian here at St. Victoria, all speak to his abilities to lead youth on their spiritual journey.

Please join me in welcoming Eric to our parish family and to our staff.

Register Now for Faith Formation

Summer vacation has barely started, but before you know it we'll be getting the kids ready to go back to school! And, that means St. Victoria's 2009-2010 Faith Formation program will be starting.

"Our parish Faith Formation program can help you as you pass on our amazing Catholic Faith to your children," says Amy Kusber, Director of Formational Ministries. "Our programs are designed to help children age-appropriately experience what it means to be 'Catholic,' not only in the classroom, but through activities that introduce the children to liturgy, prayer, principles of Catholic Social Justice and acts of charity and service to others."

Registration for the 2009-2010 year is now underway. You may register using the enclosed form, download a form from the parish website at www.stvictoria.net or contact Amy in the parish office.

Tuition for St. Victoria's Faith Formation program is based on the cost of providing the program. Tuition for the coming year is \$75 per child for the first three children in a family who are enrolled in the program for Grades 1 through Confirmation (typically 10th grade). There is no charge for additional children in a family. Non-parishioners are welcome to participate in St. Victoria's Faith Formation Program and are charged a tuition fee of \$150 per child.

Sacramental fees are charged in addition to tuition to cover materials, retreats and other costs associated with preparing children for sacraments. Typically, children in Grade 2 receive First Reconciliation and First Communion, while students in Grades 9 and 10 prepare for Confirmation. (Children who are

older and need to be "caught up" in a specific sacrament may also register for the sacrament that is needed.) The fees are \$100 for First Reconciliation and First Communion (\$50 if not receiving both) and \$75 each year of Confirmation preparation. Everyone pays sacramental fees including full-time, weekly volunteers — teachers, hall monitors, permanent substitutes, and child care providers — who do receive free tuition.

All fees, including sacramental fees, are due at the time children are registered. However, no child is ever denied the right to Faith Formation based on ability to pay. Financial assistance is available upon request and a flexible payment schedule can be arranged.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Amy Kusber at 443-2661 or akusber@stvictoria.org.

The St. Victoria Parish Family Always Has the Welcome Mat Out

"We want every new person joining our St. Victoria Parish Family to immediately feel that they have been welcomed into that family," says Fr. Bob White. "And, two of our ministries have that as their mission."

Bien Venidos (Good Welcome) Ministry

When an individual or family calls the parish office, the welcoming process begins! Typically, Julie Schmieg answers the calls and gathers some basic information and sets up an appointment for "an official welcome" on an upcoming Wednesday evening or Saturday morning. That's when our Bien Venidos Ministry makes new parishioners feel welcome and an important part of our parish family.

When new members come for their official visit, they first meet with a volunteer parishioner who offers a heartfelt welcome and then shares a packet of information about the parish. "This welcome is an immediate link with another parishioner who, along with the information packet, provides resources and help in gaining a

working knowledge of the parish. It also offers them the opportunity to meet other new families who are joining at the same time," explains Fr. Bob.

The next step in the process is a meeting with Fr. Bob or Deacon Ray Ortman. "The meetings," Julie says "are informal and intended to help new members become better acquainted with St. Victoria and with Fr. Bob or Deacon Ray. It also offers new members a chance to share a bit of their faith journey and how we can continue that walk with them. And, it's a great opportunity for new members to ask questions about our parish," says Julie.

Following the meeting, new members are welcomed during a weekend Liturgy, their names are shared in the bulletin and the parish staff receives a thumbnail sketch of the members with information about the interests and skills they might like to share with the parish.

Coordinator of Bien Venidos is volunteer Jeanette Hay. If you *Continued on page 8*

Ministries That Make a Difference

“If you are sick, hurt, grieving the loss of a loved one or facing a particularly difficult crisis in your life, you never need be alone,” says volunteer Mary Bishop, Coordinator of Pastoral Care. “At St. Victoria, there’s a caring person, and sometimes whole groups, to help you through difficult times.”

Under the Pastoral Care umbrella volunteers bring the caring presence of Christ to people in the parish family and community with a variety of ministries.

The Bereavement Ministry focuses on providing a caring presence if you are grieving the loss of a significant person in your life. The goal is that no person will grieve alone. Members of this ministry provide quiet listening and support that can help immeasurably at such difficult times.

Others members of this ministry bring Communion to people who are unable to leave their homes

due to illness or an accident and to those who are hospitalized or living in care centers. Members of this ministry report that it’s a fulfilling ministry — they are able to bring the Eucharist to special people who can’t get to Mass and they have the pleasure of visiting with them as well.

If you are living at Good Samaritan in Waconia, you can look forward to Mass with Fr. Bob or a Communion Service with Deacon Ray on the second Wednesday of each month. Volunteers join them to share in the Mass or Communion Service and then stay to visit and serve refreshments that they bring to share. In addition, members of the Rosary Ministry travel to Good Samaritan to pray the Rosary with the Catholic residents there on the first and third Wednesday of each month.

Perhaps the “first line” of caring is our Prayer Line. Whenever you, or someone you know, might need

special prayers, a simple phone call or email to the parish office or directly to a Prayer Line Coordinator will, often within minutes, have caring members of the Prayer Line Ministry offering prayers in their own way for your intentions.

Members of the Funeral Hospitality Ministry offer their caring presence during an especially stressful time in your life and that of your family. They provide a meal and hospitality following the funeral of a loved one. Julie Schmiege, who serves as a communication link between the family and the luncheon volunteers, has seen time and again that on a moment’s notice, there’s an army of caring parishioners at work preparing lunch and/or making salads and desserts to donate as they reach out as the face and hands of Jesus. The luncheon experience offers families that special extended time where they can continue in faith and fellowship the celebrated life of their loved ones.

If you have lost a loved one (recently or whenever), the Healing Hearts Focus Group is a safe place for you to grieve and can provide an opportunity to learn new ways to address day-to-day issues and ways to reawaken the zest for life. Everyone is welcome to join Healing Hearts (the dates are announced in the bulletin). And, there are a number of Focus Groups for men and women where you can join others on a weekly basis and they can offer friendship as well as comfort. Call the parish office for information.

Each ministry has its individual mission, but they all have one goal and that is to make certain you feel support, concern and love at times of stress in your lives. Think of these ministries as a ‘911’ for help.

Baptisms at St. Victoria

We embrace the opportunity to share our Baptismal Call with all.

At St. Victoria we celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism for infants one weekend each month during all the Liturgies and after the 5 p.m. Saturday and 10:45 a.m. Sunday Liturgies. (Date changes will be noted in the Sunday bulletin and on the parish website at www.stvictoria.net.) Normally, Baptisms are not celebrated during Lent, however, exceptions are made in the case of emergencies.

Special arrangements can be made for children of school age or for adults who wish to be baptized.

Parents who wish to have a child

baptized must be registered parishioners at St. Victoria and attend a Jordan Night (Baptism Class).

Jordan Night is held four times each year and parents are requested to attend a class before the birth of their baby. Both parents are encouraged to attend and registration is required. Parents are exempt from attending if they attended a class at St. Victoria in the previous three years. Godparents are also encouraged to attend.

For additional information, to register for Jordan Night or schedule a baptism, contact Joni Jeurissen at 443-2661 or jjeurissen@stvictoria.org.

Love in the Name of Christ

Love INC (Love in the Name of Christ) of Eastern Carver County is a coalition of churches of all denominations, businesses and organizations with one purpose — to help those in need. It could also aptly be called a “Coalition of Caring.”

Currently, there are 15 churches, along with schools, organizations and community agencies such as CAP and Carver County working together to provide help for people living in and around Chanhassen, Chaska, Victoria, Carver and East Union. (Love INC of Eastern Carver County is part of a U.S.-wide affiliate founded in 1977.)

Love INC enables churches and other organizations to pool their resources and outreach services so neighbors in need can receive support, care and encouragement, ranging from immediate to long-term help.

When a person or family contacts Love INC, it acts as a clearinghouse to screen requests for help and then refers those requests to the appropriate resources.

Most churches, including St. Victoria, have a cadre of volunteers who are called upon,

often to share specific skills including rides, house repairs, sharing a meal, teaching computer skills, befriending a person or family, helping with a budget, playing with the kids, fixing a car, listening and talking and much, much more. When St. Victoria held its volunteer recruitment, more than 100 parishioners volunteered and shared their interests and skills so they can be most effectively matched with people in need.

In addition to serving as a clearinghouse, Love INC coordinates clothing give aways, food distribution and holiday dinners — most with the help of member churches and their volunteers.

Some churches have established “Gap Ministries” to fulfill specific needs such as a Linen Closet at the Chaska Moravian Church, a Diaper Ministry at Living Christ Lutheran Church in Chanhassen and a Crib and Car Seat Ministry at St. Hubert’s in Chanhassen.

And, in April, St. Victoria launched a Gap Ministry, along with Waterbrooke Fellowship, to provide household supplies that are not offered at emergency food shelves. Parishioners donated cleansers,

liquid cleaners, disinfectant wipes, paper towels, toilet brushes, buckets and garbage bags. Since opening our “household supply shelf” in April, more than 40 families have been served.

St. Victoria’s Love INC Coordinators are volunteers Kris and Bill Cain. They can be reached at 443-2957. In addition, Fr. Bob serves on the Love INC Board of Directors.

Together, Love INC, the coalition of churches and the other partners can transform communities, individuals and families.

The note below from a parishioner at Guardian Angels sums up how a simple act of kindness can help!

“Thank you so much for your ministry of cleaning products in the name of Love INC. I appreciate being able to choose items we can use since I am allergic to many of the scented products. This is the “daily bread” which I pray for most every day, though it isn’t necessarily in the specification I request. God is so fruitful and we are so blessed! Thank you so much. We pray for continued success in your ministry and our joint mission.”

Visit An Architectural Gem in nearby Chaska

In Chaska, near Guardian Angels Church, is a 140-year old Franciscan Friary. For the first century plus of our parish’s existence, the Franciscan Friars headquartered there served the parishes of St. Victoria, St. Hubert, St. Nicholas and Guardian Angels.

A Friar rode horseback out to St. Victoria every Saturday, heard Confessions, bunked out in the sacristy, celebrated Mass on

Sunday and then headed back to community life in the Friary.

The Chaska-based Franciscans were also affiliated with the Franciscans ministering out of St. John in Jordan and there was a Franciscan Seminary (now razed) in Chanhassen, near the Minnesota River.

The long-mothballed Friary is among the oldest buildings in Minnesota and, according to the

Minnesota Historical Society’s historical architect, the building and its enclosure gardens are in excellent shape.

The Friends of the Friary, members of the Franciscan parishes, are cleaning and repairing the old Friary, gradually returning it as much as possible to its original state. You’re invited to explore this architectural gem and delve into a very important part of St. Victoria’s history.

Evolution and Faith: What is a Good

By Deacon Ray Ortman

No examination of evolution or any other scientific theory can begin without understanding the proper relationship between truth that is found by scientific inquiry and reason, on one hand, and truth that comes to us by Divine Revelation and faith, on the other. We begin then with our first principle, which is that Truth and Faith are not opposed. Scripture informs us that God is Truth [*John 14:6*]; so the search for truth, in whatever field of study, is ultimately the search for God. Seen in this light, scientific truth thus is one of many faces by which we can see the God who made the world and everything in it. [*Acts 17:24.*] As the psalmist sang, “the heavens declare the glory of God.” [*Ps. 19:1.*] Science often teaches us the “what” and the “how” of things as they are. Faith, on the other hand, supplies the all-important “who” and the “why.”

No “truth” discovered by observation of the natural world should be seen as a threat to our faith, because God is the author of all truth and the creator of all that is. God is “the same yesterday today and forever.” [*Heb. 13:8.*] In Him there is no contradiction. Therefore, whatever is true is of God. Our challenge as people of faith is to seek the truth wherever it may be found [*Matt. 7:8*], and to discern carefully what that truth teaches us about the nature and attributes of God and of His loving plan for us. Simple logic tells us, moreover, that truth is one. See John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), §§ 16-17, 34 (1998). There can be no contradiction between truth that is acquired through scientific research or reason and truth that is received through Divine Revelation. Thus,

we can approach the pursuit of truth joyfully and with an open heart and mind because Truth (*i.e.*, God) has nothing to fear from investigation.

As the late Holy Father explained in his 1998 encyclical on Faith and Reason (*id.* at § 34):

“The two modes of knowledge [faith and reason] lead to truth in all its fullness. The unity of truth is a fundamental premise of human reasoning, as the principle of non-contradiction makes clear. Revelation renders this unity certain, showing that the God of creation is also the God of salvation history. It is the one and the same God who establishes and guarantees the intelligibility and reasonableness of the natural order of things upon which scientists confidently depend, and who reveals himself as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This unity of truth, natural and revealed, is embodied in a living and personal way in Christ, as the Apostle reminds us: “Truth is in Jesus” (cf. *Eph 4:21; Col 1:15-20*).”

The Catholic Church — especially in Renaissance and early modern times — was a primary patron of and advocate for the development of the natural sciences, precisely because of this intimate association between Faith and Truth. Indeed, the scientific field of genetics was pioneered by an Augustinian monk named Gregor Mendel, whose ground-breaking research predated Darwin’s work, *Origin of Species*,

by several years. And it was Darwin’s work that inaugurated our modern fascination with the Theory of Evolution.

Having laid a proper foundation for our inquiry, we can now turn to the specifics of the question at hand: that is, what is the Catholic position concerning belief or unbelief in evolution?

Concerning cosmological evolution (*i.e.*, how the heavens and the earth came to be as they are), the Church has infallibly declared that the universe was specially created by God out of nothing. [*Gen. 1:1.*] In this regard, Vatican I solemnly defined that everyone must “confess the world and all things which are contained in it, both spiritual and material, as regards their whole substance, have been produced by God from nothing.” *Canons on God the Creator of All Things*, Canon 5. The Church does



not have an official position on whether the stars and planets we see today were created all at once or whether they developed over time (e.g., in the aftermath of a “Big Bang”). But the Church nevertheless would maintain that if they did develop over time, this still must ultimately be attributed to God and His plan. Therefore, the faithful are free to believe or

Catholic Supposed to Believe?

disbelieve in the Big Bang theory, as they see fit, and to form their own conclusions based upon the scientific evidence at hand.

Because it appears to explain so much of what is without contradicting God as being the First Cause and Author of the so-called “Bang” — indeed, the Big Bang theory is deafeningly silent on the question of where the “Bang” and its massive energies came from — this author (personally) is persuaded that much of the theory is true. But this acknowledgment does not in the least diminish God. On the contrary, to glimpse (even in part) how the hand of God fashioned the universe is to stand in wonder of the Maker’s artistry and mastery of His craft. God’s attention to the finest details of His creation is awesome. So carefully and so finely (to tolerances in many cases of a mere *fraction* of a percent) did God balance physical laws and forces in order that a stable universe could come to exist on the precipice between carefully balanced cosmological forces on either side, for instance in the case of “gravity” that would alternatively have crushed us or sent us into an oblivion of near nothingness eons ago. Thus, far from competing against faith, the pursuit of scientific truth can both complement our knowledge of God and enhance our wonder and awe of His work.

Concerning biological evolution, the Church similarly does not have an official position on whether various life forms developed over the course of time or from previous life forms. However — as it does with regard to all questions of the origin of life and matter — the Church does teach that no matter

how life developed it did so under the impetus and guidance of God, and the ultimate creation of all forms of life must be ascribed to Him. Concerning human evolution, the Church has a more definite teaching. It allows for the possibility that man’s *body* developed from previous biological forms, under God’s guidance, but it insists on the *special creation* of his *soul*.

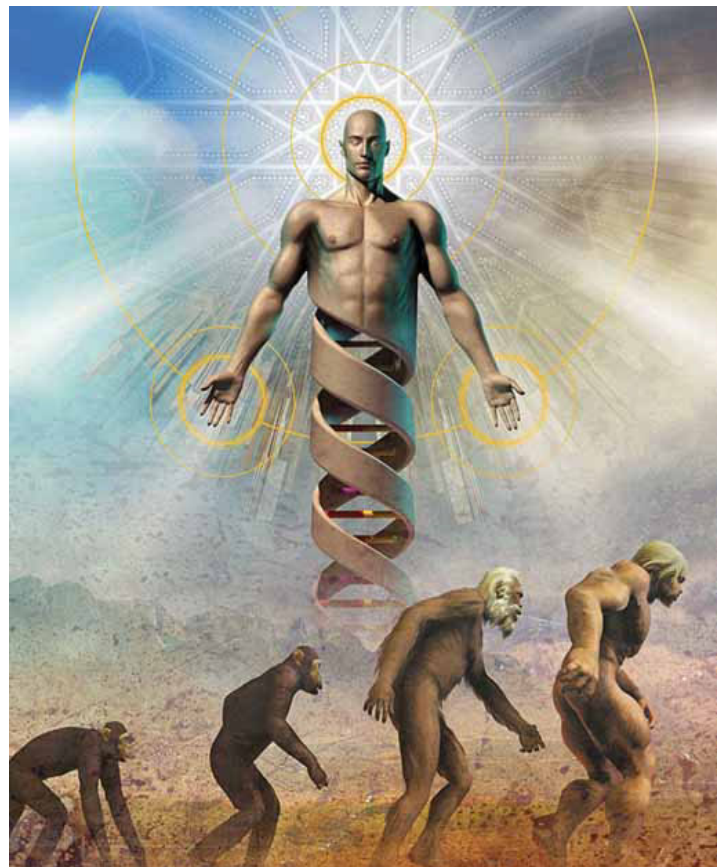
As Pope Pius XII declared in his 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis* (The Human Race) at § 36:

“The teaching authority of the Church does not forbid that ... research and discussions ... take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter — [but] the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God.”

So, whether the human body was specially created or developed, our faith holds that the human soul is specially created; it did not evolve, and it is not inherited from our parents, as

our bodies are. Further, since the human person is a complex hybrid or composite being, inextricably composed of and constituted with both body and soul, it would not be proper (or accurate) to refer to a creature having only a similitude of our body (but not our soul) as human. Accordingly, the human story (*per se*) began not with the theoretical progenitors of the form of our human bodies (which the theory of evolution would classify as apes or other proto-humans), but rather with that first true man and true woman into whom God breathed His Divine Spirit as the indwelling of their souls.

How wondrously and marvelously are we made indeed by our loving God! [*Psalms 139.*]



Care and Upkeep of St. Victoria's Cemetery

This is a reminder that we do have regulations that are intended to make sure that the St. Victoria cemetery is a place of peaceful beauty and that it can be cared for easily.

Please remember that:

- No enclosures or fences are allowed. Statues and stone seats are not allowed on individual lots and may not be added to the general area without written approval of the Cemetery Committee.
- Trees, shrubs and flowers may not be planted on lots. (Those already in place may remain, but must be cared for by the family of the deceased person.)
- Each lot may have one permanent, pipe-style hanging

plant stand. Flowers and plants may be fresh, planted in pots that fit in the plant stand or they may be artificial. Fresh flowers and/or artificial flowers will be removed when they are no longer attractive.

- Containers with flowers or plants, loose flowers or other decorations may not be left on the ground.
- All summer flowers will be removed on September 15 (or the previous Friday if September 15 falls on a weekend).
- Wreaths, both fresh and artificial, may be hung from the plant stands from Thanksgiving through the end of January.

- Flags, flag holders and decorations of a similar nature may be displayed two weeks prior to Memorial Day and/or Veterans Day. They must be removed within two weeks of the holidays.

(Please note: General care of the cemetery does not include watering flowers and plants on individual lots.)

All flowers, plants and other decorations removed from the cemetery will be discarded.

Brochures with complete information about the cemetery and funerals at St. Victoria are in the kiosk in the Franciscan Commons and on the parish website at www.stvictoria.net.

A St. Victoria Welcome Awaits All New Members

Continued from page 3

would enjoy meeting new members as part of the Bien Venidos Ministry, please call Jeanette at 443-1984.

Welcome Dinners

In that packet of information each new member receives is an invitation to a "welcome dinner," an opportunity for new parishioners to enjoy a fun dinner with Fr. Bob, several "veteran" parishioners, staff members and other new parishioners. The dinners are held on Saturday evenings at Fr. Bob's — outside when the weather permits — or inside in his cozy living room. Each dinner is hosted by a volunteer catering team. "This is a wonderful opportunity for new parishioners to meet our 'veterans' in an informal atmosphere and enjoy a great meal," says Fr. Bob.

Volunteer Coordinator for the welcome dinners is Lisa Katalinich, 443-3946. If you like to cook, this is a great volunteer opportunity. Just give Lisa a call.

And, if you are new parishioners, and have not yet enjoyed one our parish welcome dinners, also be sure to give Lisa a call and plan to attend the next dinner.



Spotlight on a Volunteer: Linda Spevacek

(Editor's Note: In this issue we are introducing a new feature — spotlighting a parishioner who makes a difference at St. Victoria.)

Linda has been a parishioner at St. Victoria for 19 years and in that time has touched the lives of many sharing her talents and loving spirit while reaching out as the face and hands of Jesus Christ.

We asked her some questions —

What volunteer opportunities have you undertaken?

- Faith Formation — 3rd Grade for 13 years, 7th/8th Grade for two years
- Parish Pastoral Council
- Esperanza
- Simpson House
- Sunset Fest
- Giving Tree
- Eucharistic Minister
- Alpha
- The New Evangelization (TNE)
- Thursday Eucharistic Adoration
- Partners in Preaching
- Strategic Planning
- VIRTUS
- Various interview groups

Why is volunteerism important to you?

It gives me a chance to share my faith, my time, my talents. I feel very blessed in what I have and feel a need to do what I can to reach out to others. And it makes me feel good!

What have you learned?

A greater appreciation of my faith, especially through the eyes of third graders. I've learned to step out of my comfort zone with Simpson House. I've learned to be patient when ministries are slow to grow — Esperanza. I've learned to be grateful for the help that so many contribute to making our parish as dynamic as it is.

What skills have you shared?

My willingness to become involved — the main skill anyone needs — and

my willingness to talk to people and to meet my fellow parishioners.



What gives you the most enjoyment?

Seeing the wonder of third-graders who realize that Jesus loves them and is beside them, now and forever.

What would you change?

I'd love to see more people involved

kids — there's plenty for even the little ones to do. Too busy? No time? Start out with little steps — but watch out — it'll grow on you!

Linda grew up in Chicago and moved here with her family in 1990. She and her husband, Erv, are somewhat empty-nesters (well, they do have the dog, cat, rabbit and bird to keep them company). Their son Nathan, 31, works for Cub Foods, lives in Fridley and will be married to Christie on October 3. Amanda, 28, lives in Chaska and works for the International School. Tracy, 21, is a student at Augsburg in Minneapolis, soon to begin her senior year and also is a committed volunteer. Linda works for SouthWest Transit. She says, "Volunteer activities take up a lot of my spare time, but you'll also find me curled up with a good book."

Travels of Ancient Lands

If you're thinking about a special trip, here are two opportunities you might like to consider.

Holy Land

Deacon Ray Ortman and Fr. Bob Hazel are hosting a 10-day journey to the Holy Land from November 4 through 13. This Biblical Tour of Israel includes Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Jericho, Jerusalem, Mt. of Olives and Bethlehem.

See the sunrise on the Sea of Galilee, renew your Baptismal vows in the River Jordan, visit the Wailing Wall and many historic churches and sites. This is an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and to experience a profound transformation of spirit and renewal of life.

There is an added optional nine-day visit to Egypt to see sites that highlight ancient Egypt including the pyramids and the world-famous Egyptian Museum. The visit also includes a four-day cruise on the River Nile with many historic stops along the way.

Contact Deacon Ray in the parish office at rortman@stvictoria.org or 443-2661 for information.

Greece and the Greek Isles

In 2010, from April 11 to 20, Fr. Bob White and Fr. Paul Jarvis from Guardian Angels will lead a tour for Guardian Angels and St. Victoria parishioners and friends to Greece and the Greek Islands.

Visit where the Apostle John and the Blessed Mother lived after the death of Christ. You'll visit Delphi, tour Thessaloniki where Paul preached during the winters of 49 and 50 AD and wrote two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians and travel to Philippi where he gave his first sermon in Europe, sowing the seeds of Christianity.

You'll fly to Athens and board a ship for a four-day cruise to the isles of Mykonos, Rhodes, Patmos and Kusadasi.

Call the parish office at 443-2661 for information. Brochures for both tours are in kiosk and on the website at www.stvictoria.net.

From the Back Burner

Now's the time to get your calendars out because plans are underway for some great activities and events.

Sunset Fest

On August 22, we'll gather for our Annual Sunset Fest — the Saturday we set aside every year to celebrate another Minnesota summer with an outdoor Liturgy followed by a fabulous picnic supper, fun, games, music and time to visit with friends and family. And this year, we'll be introducing our fabulous new "St. Victoria Cookbook" for the first time. And, of course, the day will start with the "All Saints Swim" across Lake Bavaria.

G.I.F.T.

In late August, at a date yet to be determined, G.I.F.T. (Girlfriends in Faith Together) will offer an opportunity for women of all ages in the parish to gather and express what they see as needs for replenishment and ministry for St. Victoria women.

Spiritual Healing

On September 22, we will have a presentation by Sister Therese, a long-time friend of Fr. Bob's. She will talk about healing — whether it is physical, psychological, or spiritual — plus the healing of our histories. Sr. Therese's presentation will be followed with an anointing by Fr. Bob and a social gathering for lunch.

Harvest of Gifts

October 2 and 3 are the dates set aside for our annual Harvest of Gifts — a time to recognize our volunteers and to provide an opportunity for you to learn more about ministries and events at St. Victoria. It's also your chance to sign up for activities you might find interesting and perhaps challenging.

Food Collections

Throughout the summer we will continue to help people in need. We have planned three "focused" food drives— on July 11 we will collect canned tuna; on August 1 it's canned fruit and on September 12

we'll collect peanut butter. All of the donated food will be contributed to Bountiful Basket in Chaska. We will also collect cleaning supplies on June 27 and 28 for our Love INC Gap Ministry.

Neighborhood Event

And our neighbors to the south, Guardian Angels, have an event that you might want to include on your calendar. They are planning a parish and school festival that could possibly rival the Basilica Block Party. On Saturday, September 26, there'll be an all-day celebration with great food — they're bringing back the festival dinner of the past with a variety of cuisine. And, the music will be great with the Mary Jane Alm Band, a Mariachi band and a Czech-German band. The 5 p.m. Mass will feature the Czech-German band's music. There'll be lots to do throughout the day including tours of the 1886 Friary, one of the state's most historic buildings. (See story on Page 5.)

Have a Great Summer!

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