



St. Victoria
Parish Family
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Strategic Planning Process Built Trust

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Did You Know . . .

When this issue of the newsletter went to press St. Victoria had . . .

- Had 1,085 registered households
- Had 303 children in grades 1 through 6 enrolled in Faith Formation.
- Had 65 children preparing for First Communion.
- Had 99 youth in grades 7 and 8 enrolled in Faith Formation.
- Had 96 youth in grades 9 and 10 preparing for Confirmation.

From the Front Pew



By now, most of you know the structural changes recently announced

by Archbishop John Nienstedt for our Archdiocese do not directly affect St. Victoria.

What you might not know is that I had a chance to be an integral part of the strategic planning process. Here's how it happened. When Fr. Stan Mader of Our Lady of the

Lake in Mound was transferred to another assignment, it left the "Dean" position vacant for Deanery 10. And guess who got elected. As Dean, it was my responsibility to not only convene meetings, but to represent the brother priests of my Deanery at the Presbyteral Council with whom the Archdiocese consults. (Parishes throughout the Archdiocese are divided into Deaneries.)

Throughout the process, we worked at listening to one another, even when

discussing tough issues where a lot was at stake. The process brought us closer together as a Deanery and we came to see the value of the process. I think we set a positive tone for the people in our parishes and we were able to assure our parishioners that the Archdiocesan Planning Process was one they could trust, even as it resulted in changes for some.

It became obvious that change was necessary throughout the Archdiocese and that change was needed for many reasons:

- More than 25% of parishes were being monitored by the Archdiocese due to serious debt and budget issues.
 - In parishes across the Archdiocese 32% of weekend Masses were less than 1/3 full.
 - Catholic schools have approximately 20% more seats than they have students.
 - The Archdiocesan population is aging with the fastest
- Continued on page 4.*

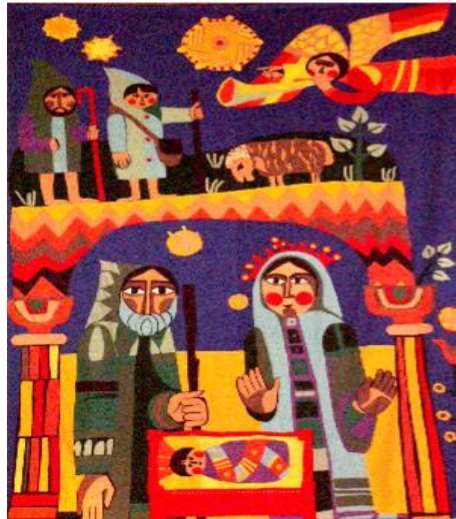


Clarence and Dorothy Kelzer shared their antique gravel wagon for the annual Harvest of Gifts. The wagon has been on the Kelzer family farm since the 1920s.

Why Celebrate Christmas on December 25?

The date universally recognized, December 25, as marking the birth of Christ and officially opening the Christmas season was contested for hundreds of years. The earliest Christians didn't celebrate Christmas and over one hundred years elapsed before Telesphorus, the second Bishop of Rome, declared that a special church service would be held to mark and hallow the birth of Jesus. No one was sure of the date of Christ's birth so the celebration and week of worship was held in September. From that time on Christmas was held in one fashion or another, but the date was not fixed.

The date of December 25 and the name Christmas didn't come into existence until 325 AD. It was Constantine the Great who declared December 25 the official birth date and proclaimed the observance of what he termed Christmas was not to be moved each year. This was done in part to replace and sweep away the last vestiges of the pagan holidays that had traditionally been celebrated during the Winter Solstice.



The assimilation or resignation to the popularity of the Christian observance of Christmas has been a theme. For example, Christmas celebrations were once banned by leaders of churches and nations. Notable bah-humbuggers include Oliver Cromwell who banned Christmas from 1649 to 1660. Now secular and religious leaders participate freely and even encourage Nativity celebrations.

Other signs of assimilation include lights, Christmas trees and even mistletoe. These Christmas

traditions all have their birth in the pagan celebration of the Festival of Lights during the Winter Solstice. As Christianity became the prevailing custom, these traditions took on new Christian meanings.

As for our modern celebrations, they typically are joyful, family centered and the source of childhood memories and magic that lasts a lifetime. The history of Christmas is a great reminder of those that have come before us. Whatever your celebrations include, may they be merry and bright.

Easy Gift Ideas

Let us help you with your Christmas shopping. We have a variety of gift ideas that just might help you complete your list.

There's our *What's Cookin'* parish cookbook available for a suggested donation of \$15. (Additional copies purchased at the same time are just \$12 each.)

"Gathering of Memories and Celebrating New Ones," is our DVD showcasing our parish today and in years past. This DVD, produced by Dave Williams, includes the work of Mark McCarthy and others as well as historic pictures provided by many parishioners. This St. Victoria keepsake is available in the parish office for a suggested \$10 donation.

We have two CDs featuring our Music Ministry, *"Words of Life"* and *"All is Calm, All is Bright,"* each available for a suggested \$15 donation.

And there is *"Cherished Memories"* the beautiful, historic winter scene of St. Victoria painted by parishioner Jim Hansel. The prints are available in both small and large at \$35 and \$50 respectively. Call the parish office or stop in for more information.

Annual Children's Christmas Pageant

Be sure to sign up your little angels and tiny lambs for the traditional St. Victoria Children's Christmas Pageant. The 2010 Children's Christmas Pageant will take place before our 4 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass (not on December 19 as listed in the Faith Formation calendar.) All our St. Victoria children, ages four through Second Grade are welcome and encouraged to participate. There will be one rehearsal on Wednesday, December 22, at 5:30 p.m., in the Worship Space. **This rehearsal is mandatory!**

To sign your child up to be part of this beautiful tradition, contact either Amy Kusber at akusber@stvictoria.org or Joni Wohl at jwohl@stvictoria.org.

Pictorial Directories

The Parish Pictorial Directories are available in the parish office. If you had your picture taken, please pick up your complimentary copy. If you are not in the book, but would like a copy they are available for a \$10 donation.



St. Victoria Holiday Schedule

Saturday and Sunday, December 4 and 5

Giving tree Gift Return

Tuesday, December 7

La Noche Azul Advent Dinner with Social at 6:30 p.m. and Dinner at 7 p.m.,
Followed by Guest Presenters

Thursday, December 16

"Prime Timers" Winter Night Lights Tour and Dinner
Bus leaves at 3:30 p.m. and returns at 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 18

Private Reconciliation after 5 p.m. Mass

Sunday, December 19

Advent Christmas Concert, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, December 21

Penance Service with Scripture and Prayer (4 priests), 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24

4 p.m. Mass

Preceded by the Children's Pageant

Little Ringers and Jr. Youth Choir accompanied by Sharon Schindler

6 p.m. Mass

Cantor Caroline Swanson accompanied by Sharon Schindler

10 p.m. Mass

Adult Choir accompanied by Sue Orsen

Christmas Day, Saturday, December 25

9 a.m. Mass

Cantor Jamie Moore accompanied by Sharon Schindler

The Feast of the Holy Family, Sunday, December 26

8:45 a.m.

Cantor Denise Simoneau accompanied by Sue Orsen

10:45 a.m.

Cantor Jamie Moore accompanied by Sue Orsen

The Vigil for Epiphany, Saturday, January 1

5 p.m. Mass

Cantor Caroline Swanson accompanied by Sue Orsen

The Feast of Epiphany, Sunday, January 2

8:45 a.m.

Cantor Jamie Moore accompanied by Sharon Schindler

10:45 a.m.

Little Ringers accompanied by Sharon Schindler



Archdiocese Announces Future Plans

Continued from page 1

growing age group 55 to 69 years of age.

- Ethnic diversity is once again growing in the Archdiocese.
- The number of parishes continues to change in response to conditions. Today there are 217 parishes, 10 less than a decade ago.
- The number of pastors will decline. There currently are 182 priests eligible to be pastors, in 10 years that number is projected to be 163. It often takes eight to 12 years for a man entering the seminary to be educated, trained and ordained and to have enough pastoral experience to be eligible for assignment as a pastor.

Throughout the process leadership, parishioners and Catholic school families were invited to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas. That input resulted in major themes:

- Outreach — recognizing the need to reach out to young people, disaffected Catholics, new immigrants and the poor.
- Transparency — recognizing a need for more openness about parish and Archdiocesan finances and improved communication at all levels.
- Responsible stewardship — recognizing the need to make better use of the gifts we are given so all are served well and within our means.
- Collaboration — recognizing that fostering cooperation, communication and a shared commitment between parishes is important.
- Healthy and unhealthy competition — recognizing that parishes and schools often sense we are competing.

The result of the 20-plus months of study led to three possible changes to affected parishes:

Collaboration — the intentional sharing of personnel, programs or resources between two parishes.

Cluster — Two or more parishes that share a pastor; separate parishes retain their parish status and basic organization structure.

Merger — Two or more parishes or Catholic school communities combine into one. A church or school building may be closed.

Some sites identified as “mission critical” will be supported by all parishes in the Archdiocese.

(The results for schools will be announced at a later date after additional studies.)

In Deanery 10, **St. Nicholas** in Carver is identified for structured collaboration with **Guardian Angels** in Chaska, moving toward clustering with Guardian Angels.

St. Boniface in St. Bonifacius is identified for structured collaboration with **Immaculate Conception** in Watertown, moving toward clustering with Immaculate Conception.

St. Bernard’s in Cologne and **Annunciation** in Norwood/Young America are in an existing cluster arrangement.

St. George’s in Long Lake has been declared an Oratory of St. Bartholomew's in Wayzata.

Overall, 21 parishes will merge with 14 receiving parishes during the next several years; bringing the Archdiocese to 192 parishes. In addition, 33 parishes will enter into new cluster arrangements and 25 parishes are identified for structured collaboration. (At the time the newsletter went to press, the Archdiocese had received a considerable number of appeals that will all be addressed.)

While St. Victoria was not slated for change, we are like all parishes charged with finding ways to collaborate with our neighboring parishes. I think to date we have done a good job of collaborating with such things as subsidies to schools, sharing information among administrators, communicating events, co-hosting some youth events, supporting the Venezuelan Mission with St. Hubert’s and St. Joseph’s and our prison ministry. And, we are committed to our involvement with Love INC of Eastern Carver County, a collaboration of more than 20 churches of all denominations helping our neighbors in need.

During the months – and even years – ahead as changes are instituted throughout the Archdiocese, we can keep all those affected in our prayers.

What about Deanery 10

Deanery 10 is the land of ten thousand acres of lakes and water ways.

There are 14 parishes with 12 pastors, two active associates, one retired associate, one weekend associate and 14 deacons.

There are nine Catholic grade schools and one Catholic high school.

The eastern part of the Deanery is more landlocked. The western part is less developed and tends to be more rural.

Lake Minnetonka covers much of the land mass of the eastern half of the Deanery. It has 110 miles of shoreline and is the biggest lake in the metro area. It’s big enough that half of the parishes in Deanery 10 are located on or around Lake Minnetonka.

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Getting to Know More About Deanery 10

Continued from page 4.

The parishes (starting at 12 o'clock) are St. Therese in Deephaven; St. John the Baptist in Excelsior, St. Victoria, St. Boniface, St. Bonifacious, Our Lady of the Lake in Mound, St. George's in Long Lake and St. Bartholomew in Wayzata. The lake's extensive bays and inlets cut up much of the land and prevent easy access to some parishes, like Our Lady of the Lake and St. George.

Just west of Lake Minnetonka is Lake Waconia, the third biggest lake in the metro. St. Joseph's in Waconia is on Lake Waconia.

The other six parishes in the Deanery are Holy Name of Jesus in Medina, St. Hubert's in Chanhassen, St. Bernard's in Cologne, Ascension in Norwood, Guardian Angels in Chaska and St. Nicholas in Carver. But even these parishes are near some body of water, either a lake or, in some cases, the Minnesota River.

The Deanery is growing and can expect additional future growth in the future. At the same time, we will see continual change from a rural to suburban culture. In 2002, St. Victoria was selected to host "Rural Life Sunday." That was probably the last year we could have qualified for the event.

Another aspect of the Deanery is its economic diversity. There are pockets of high-end wealth in and around Lake Minnetonka and other areas of the southwest quadrant of the Deanery. Meanwhile, migrant workers continue to pour into the Minnesota River Valley.

Deanery 10 has two growing Hispanic communities. The bulk of the Hispanic population lives in and around the Minnesota River Valley as noted above. Guardian Angels has a growing Hispanic population as does St. George in

Long Lake. Caring for and changing to accommodate our Hispanic neighbors will be an important consideration in the future.

Deanery 10 also has a strong tradition for parochial education. Nine out of 14 parishes have their own grade school. In past years,

the percentage was even higher. In 2000, Holy Family became the first new Catholic High School to be built in the metro area in 30 years. Making this school unique is the fact that it is the first Catholic high school in the country that came about through an initiative that was driven entirely by the laity.

Fr. Bob

St. Victoria's Champion Pie Baker



Parishioner GlenNeice Kutsch won St. Victoria's pie baking competition and was honored at this year's Sunset Fest. Not only was her pie perfectly delicious, it was beautiful!

"Raspberry-Rhubarb" Pie.

Basic pie pastry for a 9-inch double-crust pie

1 C sugar

3 Tbsp. cornstarch

¼ tsp. salt

1-1/4 lb. rhubarb stalks, peeled and sliced into ½-inch pieces

2 C raspberries

2 Tbsp. unsalted butter

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Roll out the pastry for a bottom crust and use to line a 9-inch pie pan. Roll out the pastry for the top crust and set aside.

In a large bowl, stir together the sugar, cornstarch and salt. Add the rhubarb and raspberries and toss to mix well. Pile the fruit mixture into the pastry-lined pan and dot with butter. Cover with the top crust and trim and flute the edges. Cut a few vents in the top for steam to escape.

Bake for 20 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350 degrees and bake until the juices are bubbling and the crust is browned, 30 to 40 minutes.

Staying Connected is Just a Click Away

In our fast paced culture these days, things are always on the move and changing—including the various ways we connect with each other. Your parish family wants to stay connected with you! If you have moved, switched home and cell phone numbers or have a new email address, drop us a line. We'll be sure to update our info and keep you in the loop with all of the happenings here at St. Victoria.

We would like to have an email address for each household so we can communicate more effectively with you and at the same time go "greener" as a parish. If you have not been receiving emails from us, just send us your email and we'll add you to the list. To pass along any new contact information, email Julie in the parish office at jschmieg@stvictoria.org or call her at 443-2661 x11. Thanks!

Electronic Giving Makes "Cents" for Everyone

Electronic giving provides convenience for members and much-needed donation consistency for churches. In addition, electronic giving reduces manual processing, increases security and has an excellent environmental profile.

Vanco Services, LLC, the firm that provides electronic giving options for St. Victoria parishioners as well as thousands of other churches, recently shared some statistics.

Churches, with their historical reliance on weekly, bi-weekly and monthly check writers, were among the earliest organizations to recognize the benefits of electronic giving and adopt it as a way for members to make recurring donations. By 2005, electronic giving was growing as individuals became accustomed to making all types of payments automatically, first by electronic fund transfer (ACH) and later by credit and debit card.

According to Vanco, electronic giving allows churches to overcome some of their special challenges.

Typically, donations tend to track closely with the number of weekly worshippers, producing a seasonal slump in most congregations. A church's operating costs and program expenses continue year round but weekly check and cash offerings are erratic and typically taper off after Easter and then drop — often precipitously — during summer months. Vanco data shows an average 43% decline in weekly giving by paper check from Easter to mid-summer. Even the most dedicated churchgoers miss services due to vacations, illness and weather (good and bad). Severe early winter storms can be especially detrimental considering that many churches receive up to one-third of their annual contributions during December.

Another statistic shared by Vanco

is that getting "twentysomethings" to write checks is not always easy. Many people no longer carry a checkbook and, in fact, some young folks and/or families never have. In the most recent seven-year period measured by the Federal Reserve, paper check use for all purposes declined by almost 50%. A growing number of households simply prefer to make electronic payments and contributions whenever possible.

However, giving is not a "one-size-fits-all" proposition. Some members will always want to make their offerings by check. Others are happy to have their accounts debited, but want a paper authorization form. Still others want to move all their finances online — including donations.

"At St. Victoria, we want to make all options available to our parishioners," says Joni Jeurissen, Administrative Support for

Administration. "We are happy to make available all viable options for stewardship. However, the number of households opting for electronic giving continues to grow. We first offered electronic giving at St. Victoria in 2001 and we now have 171 households making their contributions electronically," Joni says, adding that the numbers continue to grow.

You may want to consider signing up for automatic withdrawal. If you want more information or if you want an automatic withdrawal form, please call Joni at the parish office at 443-2661 x30, visit the website at www.stvictoria.net or check the kiosk in the Franciscan Commons. You can also make contributions on-line by going to the parish website at www.stvictoria.net and clicking on Stewardship. (Please continue to put your envelope in the collection basket — just checkmark "EFT.")

Celebrating Baptisms at St. Victoria

Baptisms are celebrated at St. Victoria each month during all three weekend Masses and after the 5 p.m. and 10:45 a.m. Masses. Please note that Baptisms typically are not celebrated during Lent. In the case of an emergency, a Baptism may be celebrated whenever and by whomever necessary.

All parents are required to attend Jordan Night (Baptism Class) prior to a Baptism. If you have attended a class within the last three years, it is not necessary to attend again. If you attended a class at another parish, a signed letter on church letterhead is required.

At the directive of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, beginning this year, we also

require that the parents (or parent) provide a copy of the child's birth certificate at least seven days prior to the Baptism date. (If your child is adopted, please call the parish office for additional information.)

You may have one or two sponsors for a child's Baptism. The sponsors must be one man and/or one woman, and at least one must be a Confirmed Catholic.

You may include others in the ceremony as witnesses, however, they will not be recorded as sponsors in the official church registry.

Please call the parish office at 443-2661 with questions, to register for Jordan Night or to schedule a Baptism.

The "Heart" of our Clean Sweep Ministry

(We continue to feature our dedicated volunteers.)

Love INC (Love In the Name of Christ) of Eastern Carver County, in cooperation with 20 area churches as well as community business and organizations, provides help and care for individuals and families in need living here. Many churches have what they call GAP Ministries with special projects. For instance, Guardian Angels collects used musical instruments and bicycles, the Chaska Moravian Church offers bed linens, St. John's Lutheran coordinates food drives and hosts an annual Thanksgiving Dinner and St. Hubert's provides car seats.

Our St. Victoria GAP Ministry — Clean Sweep — provides cleaning supplies for people who might have to forego purchasing such supplies in order to put food on the table.

Kris and Bill Cain have coordinated Clean Sweep since day one. They came on board and literally built it from the bottom up communicating the need for cleaning supplies, moving them to the lower level of the parish center and keeping an inventory of items available.

When they received a voucher from Love INC's main office they filled bags and delivered them to clients in Chaska, Victoria and other locations. Since April 2009, they have served nearly 250 clients sharing over 125 hours of their personal time.

While they give so willingly of their time, they did have one super helper. Their grandson, William, who is five years old often joined his grandparents stocking shelves and delivering the bags of cleaning supplies. "This has been special for all of us," Kris says. "William enjoyed the opportunity to help and he also learned about helping others. He thought it was pretty cool meeting people."



Kris Cain and grandson William with Clean Sweep supplies.

That's much the same sentiment that Kris shared, "It has been heartwarming to see how people appreciated the gift of cleaning supplies. I think it gives them some order to their lives knowing

that they could at least keep their homes clean while knowing that they can use their money for food or rent and utilities.

"But we were the real winners. It felt good to meet such nice people, to visit with them and know we were helping them in some way," Kris says.

Now after three years, Kris and Bill are turning over the ministry to Linda Spevacek who, with a team, will continue to provide this essential GAP ministry.

People are always welcome to drop off cleaning supplies (there's a bin outside the parish office) and from time-to-time we will continue to have a "Clean Sweep" weekend collection to restock the shelves.

Sacramental Record Requirements

The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis recently announced new requirements for recording sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination and Death) and for fulfilling requests for copies of Sacramental Certificates (Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage or Death). It is now required that requests be made in writing and signed by the requestor (they can be mailed or faxed) or they can be requested in person in the parish office (identification may be required).

The only people who can make such requests are:

- The individual himself or herself.
- The parent or legal guardian of someone under the age of 18.
- The spouse of a deceased individual or the child of a deceased couple (with proof).

In some cases, sacramental records may be issued to other parties if legally required.

The requested certificates will be signed by Fr. Bob and include the official church seal.

The certificates should be issued no earlier than six months before sacramental preparation begins (preparing for First Communion, marriage, etc.). It is also important to note that you should not wait until two or three days before a certificate is needed (i.e. prior to First Communion) because it may not be possible to fulfill the request.

Under no circumstances, will information be provided for genealogy research. Some records dated prior to January 1, 1925, are available at the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and research is available for a fee. Email archives@archspm.org or call 651-291-4485 for information.

G.I.F.T. — A Gift to the Women of St. Victoria



So, what is the G.I.F.T. Ministry you've been hearing about? G.I.F.T.

(Girlfriends in Faith Together) Ministry was launched in 2009 by Barbara Ragalia and a steering committee of five women. The thought was that the women of our parish, whether a new or a life-long member, young or retired, need a place to gather and to know what is offered to them to make a connection with their faith and church. Barbara has since moved, but the steering committee has remained with the hope of bringing the women of our parish connection, direction and support. The G.I.F.T. ministry mission is to connect the women of St. Victoria in faith and friendship and to support Patty Schlader and her work as Director of St. Victoria Shared Ministries.

The goals of G.I.F.T. are:

- Host semi-annual fellowship events, with speakers in the spring and fall.
- Host quarterly women's social events such as Bunko Nights and coffee talks.
- Support existing ministries to women's through communication and education.
- Facilitate the establishment of new women's groups.

Patty Schlader is the parish contact person for the G.I.F.T. Ministry and the steering committee members are Patty, Robyn Dumcum, Lynn Gerebi, Carisa Kuntz, Kiersten Hansen, Missy Murphy and Lulu Barker. If you are interested in joining the committee, please

Committee, contact Patty at pschlader@stvictoria.org or 443-2661 x14 or any steering committee member.

Fellowship and Socials

Thanks to all of the women that attended "The Surprise of your Life" women's fellowship event in October. Our very own renowned inspirational speaker Janie Jasin filled our morning with laughter and thoughtful reflection. More than 90 women listened to Janie Jasin and laughed, cried and shared their stories.

G.I.F.T. members hope you will join them in March for the launch of their 2011 Lenten Journey. Take time in your busy life to join others, making connections with your church and girlfriends in faith. Vicki Klima, Leadership and Spiritual Director, will speak about Lenten traditions and personal spiritual journeys. Vicki will answer many doctrine/dogma Catholic questions including: "Why don't we eat meat on Fridays during Lent?" "Why do Catholics believe in seven sacraments while Protestants believe in only two?"

During the last part of the morning, attendees will gather together for self-reflection and small group discussion. The morning will conclude with a traditional Lenten experience and prayer. Together, spend three hours that will renew your life with a spiritual heart. Mark your calendars now for this Lenten fellowship journey on Saturday, March 12.

Next Social Event

Join G.I.F.T. at the School of the Wise on January 15, at 9 a.m. Sip coffee, have a morning treat and sit back with Girlfriends in Faith Together. Please feel free to bring a friend.

Watch the Sunday bulletin for info.

A testimonial to the Women in Faith Conference held at Excel Energy Center.

Kiersten Hansen, a member of the G.I.F.T. Steering Committee, recently attended the Women of Faith Conference at the Excel Center in St. Paul. She shares with us more about this experience in hopes that you will join her in the fall of 2011, when more members of G.I.F.T. plan to make the trip to the Excel Center.

Kiersten writes: "I had an amazing experience at the Women of Faith Conference. I was not prepared for the spiritual lift that came from attending this one-of-a-kind weekend. The speakers made me laugh and cry, and left me with powerful messages that I cannot stop thinking about and applying to my life. The music was also amazing and uplifting. I will definitely be attending again next year on October 21 and 22."

The Women of Faith website sums up the conference very nicely. For more information, visit the Women of Faith website at www.womenoffaith.com.

Suggestions, Questions and Concerns

This is a reminder that we have a suggestion box in the kiosk in the Franciscan Commons. Please feel free to use the forms available — or any piece of paper — to share suggestions, ideas, ask questions or make comments. While it is not mandatory, we really do appreciate it if submissions are signed — that way we can provide a personal answer to you. And, whenever appropriate, we'll share the information with all parishioners. (Be assured we won't use names in the bulletin or newsletter.)

A Visit to the Cathedral of St. Paul

St. Victoria parishioners recently contributed \$1,312 to help defray the cost of refurbishing the Cathedral of St. Paul, the seat of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The Cathedral, which sits on the highest point of the city, is a replica of St. Peter's in Rome with its towering 175-foot copper dome and massive rose window. Constructed of granite and travertine, it is one of the largest cathedrals in the United States.

In 1904, realizing that the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis was outgrowing its present building (the third church built in the area), Archbishop John Ireland secured the site for the cathedral. The cornerstone was laid in 1907 and the first Liturgy

Mark These Upcoming Dates for Special St. Victoria Events

- **Men Building Bridges Breakfast**, Saturday, January 8.
- **Baby Bottle Collection**, pick up bottles January 15 and 16; return January 22 and 23
- **Minnesota FoodShare Drive**, March 19 and 20
- **Prime Timers** Lunch and talk by Stan Tekiela, "Uncommon Facts about Common Birds," Tuesday, May 5
- **Bridging**, May 14
- **Baby Shower for Minnetonka Life Care Center**, pick up gift tags May 14 and 15; Return gifts May 21 and 22
- **All Saints Swim**, Saturday, August 20
- **Sunset Fest**, Saturday, September 10

was celebrated on Palm Sunday, March 28, 1915.

Work continued on the interior of the cathedral for decades, with the Cathedral being consecrated October 14, 1958. In 1974, the cathedral was placed on the National Register of Historical Buildings.

On March 25, 2009, at the request of Archbishop John Nienstedt, the cathedral was designated as the

National Shrine of the Apostle Paul by the Vatican and U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops. The Apostle Paul is honored through a series of bronze grills depicting major events in his life from conversion to martyrdom.

Tours are available at 1 pm. Monday through Friday (except on holy days and holidays) and organ and other musical concerts are regularly scheduled.

Cathedral History . . .

1680 — French missionary Father Louis Hennepin is abducted by Native Americans and uses this providential "opportunity" to be the first to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Minnesota.

1839 — Bishop Mathias Loras, seminary classmate of St. John Vianney, celebrates the first Mass in the region.

1840 — Father Lucien Galtier arrives in the frontier settlement of "Pig's Eye" to establish a permanent Christian community in the upper Mississippi River valley.

1841 — Father Galtier oversees the construction of a primitive log chapel dedicated to the great missionary Apostle Paul and succeeds in having the settlement renamed St. Paul, later designated as the Minnesota State Capitol.

1850 — Blessed Pope Pius IX creates the Diocese of St. Paul appointing Bishop Joseph Cretin, friend of St. Peter Chanel, as its first bishop.

1907 — The cornerstone of the current Cathedral of St. Paul is blessed by Archbishop John Ireland, beginning the process of building one of the

largest cathedrals and greatest monuments of Beaux-Arts architecture in the United States.

1936 — Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, later elected Pope Pius XII, visits the Cathedral of St. Paul.

1941 — The Ninth "National Eucharistic Congress" is held in St. Paul.

1958 — After more than half a century of construction, Archbishop William Brady solemnly consecrates the great church in a five-hour ceremony.

1974 — Cathedral of St. Paul is added to the National Register of Historic Places.

1984 — Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, later elected Pope Benedict XVI, visits the Cathedral of St. Paul.

2008 — Pope Benedict XVI opens the jubilee "Year of St. Paul" in honor of the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of the great apostle—the first time someone other than the Lord Jesus or the Blessed Virgin Mary is universally honored by the Church in this way.

2009 — The Vatican and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops designates the Cathedral of St. Paul as the National Shrine of the Apostle Paul, following a request by Archbishop John Nienstedt.

Fees for Weddings at St. Victoria

We offer discounted fees to parishioners (either the bride or groom or their parents) when they celebrate their weddings at St. Victoria. However, effective January 1, 2011, the bride or groom (or their parents) must have been a registered member of St. Victoria for at least three months prior to the couple's first

pre-marital meeting with Father Bob or Deacon Ray to receive the discounted "member fee" for the church. Beginning January 1, the fees are \$250 (members) or \$400 for the Historic Church or \$500 (member) or \$700 for the Worship Space. There also is a \$100 refundable deposit required to confirm your wedding date.

Sunday Morning Commentary with Ben Stein

The following was written by Ben Stein and presented by him on CBS Sunday Morning Commentary. It is reprinted here with permission of CBS Sunday Morning and Ben Stein.

My confession: I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejeweled trees, Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are, Christmas trees.

It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, "Merry Christmas" to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it.

It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu.

If people want a crèche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away. I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period.

I have no idea where the concept came from, that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution and I don't like it being shoved down my throat. Maybe I can put it another way: where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where these celebrities came from and where the America we knew went.

In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke; it's not funny, it's intended to get you thinking.

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her "How could God let something like this happen?" (Regarding Hurricane Katrina).

Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, "I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?"

In light of recent events . . . terrorist attacks, school shootings, etc., I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found a few years ago) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said okay.

Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school. The Bible says "Thou shalt not kill"; "Thou shalt not steal," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." And we said okay.

Then Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave, because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem. We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said okay. (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide.) Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with "we reap what we sow."

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says. Funny how you can send 'jokes' through email and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Are you laughing yet?

Funny how if you share this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you.

Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us.

Share this message if you think it has merit. If not, then just discard it . . . no one will know you did. But, if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.





*Wishing one and all a
blessed and happy
Christmas and a joyful
New Year.*

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