

ST. CLARE of ASSISI PARISH

July/August 2016

Parish Responds to the Pope's Call for Marriage Support at Every Level

Our Holy Father has made an important call to all Catholics. And here at St. Clare of Assisi, we are certainly responding!

Amoris Laetitia ("The Joy of Love") is a post-synodal apostolic exhortation delivered by Pope Francis in April. In the text, the pope reflects upon and encourages the love of the family and speaks about acceptance and support for those who are divorced or living as single parents.

"Pope Francis has done a great job of reiterating the value and importance of marriage as a building block for family, and also marriage as a path to sanctification for us all," says Ann O'Leary, Coordinator of Sacramental Preparation. "It's exciting that he is helping us look at love in the family and how to do better. As a parish, our response is to offer periodic marriage enrichment events."

For St. Clare, that means supporting adult parishioners at every stage of their marriage, whether it be preparing to be married, helping in times of crisis, or opening up a supportive dialogue with those recovering from divorce.

Past events have included speaking engagements at the church and small



DIVORCED
CATHOLIC

VISIT DIVORCEDCATHOLIC.COM FOR AUTHENTICALLY CATHOLIC SUPPORT.

Answering Pope Francis' call to reach out to divorced Catholics, St. Clare will soon offer support groups for parishioners experiencing divorce.

groups who have taken a closer look at marriage.

"Going forward, we're looking for more resources for those who are married, from newlyweds to those celebrating their silver anniversary," Ann says. "As we build up our marriages, we can build stronger families and have people who can go out and live the Gospel and love their neighbors."

Ann says St. Clare is looking to start small groups for married parishioners at all stages of their lives together.

"We'd love to encourage people to contact me if they'd like to start a small group study," she says. "I have materials I

continued on page 2

3 Stewardship and
Discipleship Begin
With Love

4 Students and
Adult Volunteers
Keep Our Parish
Blooming

6 Getting to Know
"Summertime"
Saints

7 Getting Ready for
St. Victor School's
100th Anniversary

1760 14th Street, Monroe, WI 53566
Phone: (608) 325-9506
www.stclaregreencounty.org

Parish Responds to the Pope's Call for Marriage Support at Every Level *continued from front cover*

can give them. It's very simple; they can offer a marriage enrichment small group study in their homes. We've gathered at the church in recent history. It's such a great way to build community. I'd love to see us do more."

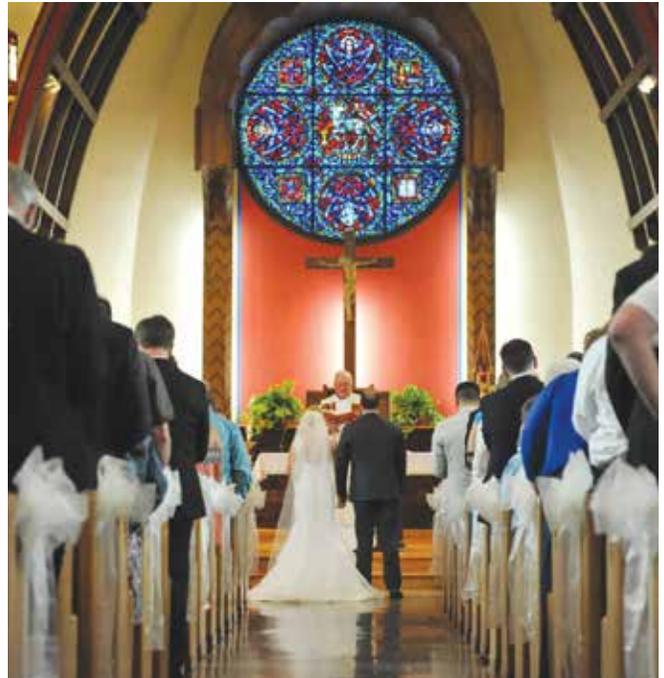
In an effort to answer Pope Francis' call to offer more support to divorced Catholics, upcoming diocesan-level training sessions will be held to pave the way for support groups at St. Clare and other area parishes. While such a group has not yet formed at our parish, Ann says she looks forward to hearing from parishioners who would be interested in either starting or joining a support network for divorced Catholics.

"I would love to hear from anyone who feels like they would want to be a part of the support group, so I can be in contact with them as we get going," she says. "Those are ideally people who have experienced divorce and who continue to try and live out their Catholic faith. The support and the materials would be provided; we just need some faithful and willing folks."

One resource Ann says she hopes parishioners experiencing marital crisis will embrace is help from our clergy. She says Msgr. Larry enjoys meeting with couples at all stages of their marriage journeys, especially those who have been married civilly and wish to have their marriage blessed.

"It's very much in line with what Pope Francis is asking us to do pastorally," Ann says. "And, if people would like to have their marriage blessed or sanctified, Msgr. Larry would be excited to help them do that."

"Going forward, we're looking for more resources for those who are married, from newlyweds to those celebrating their silver anniversary. As we build up our marriages, we can build stronger families and have people who can go out and live the Gospel and love their neighbors." – Ann O'Leary, Coordinator of Sacramental Preparation



Weddings are certainly the start of a beautiful thing. But when real life kicks in and things can get tough, marriage enrichment programs at our parish are ready to help at every level.

"The more we can encourage people to bring whatever it is that they're living in their married life or what they're hoping for, we can help to bring them more in line with what God wants for their marriage," Ann continues, noting that unlike a marriage counselor, "Msgr. Larry won't even charge!"

For more information on marriage enrichment, preparation, counseling, or divorce support, please don't hesitate to contact Ann O'Leary at 608-325-9506 or annoleary@stclaregreencounty.org.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Stewardship and Discipleship Begin With Love

Dear Parishioners,

In John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” So many times, the Lord calls us to love one another. This was one of the Gospel readings back in April. On that particular Sunday, Pope Francis gathered with a large group of teenagers, and the whole theme of his homily was built around that message. It is a message that is equally appropriate for all of us, young and old.

Pope Francis is well aware of modern technology and modern communication, especially with how it is so prevalent among today’s youth. He also said in that April homily, “Happiness cannot be bought; it is not an app that you can download on your phones, nor will the latest update bring you freedom and grandeur in love.”

The pope explained that “Love is the Christian’s identity card, the only truly valid ‘document’ which identifies us as followers and disciples of Christ.” Nevertheless, we must work to constantly renew this card, because if it ever expires, we cease being witnesses of the faith. If we are really followers of Christ, then genuine love needs to shine forth in our lives. As Pope Francis said, “Before all else, love is beautiful, and it is the path to happiness.”

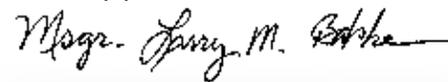
Who among us does not want to be happy? We all strive for that, and the Lord gives us a formula for achieving it. It may seem simple on the surface, but we all know how difficult it can be. Love – the kind of love to which we are called by Jesus – is work. Lots of work. It takes effort, renewal, conversion, and persistence.

During his homily, Pope Francis completely captured the essence of stewardship, and of love. He declared, “Look to the Lord, who is never outdone in generosity. We receive so many gifts from Him, and every day we should thank Him... Let me ask you something. Do you thank the Lord every day? Even if we forget to do so, He never forgets, each day, to give us some special gift. It is not something ma-

terial and tangible that we can use, but something even greater, a lifelong gift. He offers us His faithful friendship, which He will never take back.”

Gratitude is, of course, at the very basis of stewardship. It is this thankfulness that should inspire us whenever we run up against one of life’s many roadblocks – those things that make it hard for us to love as we should. If we rely on the Lord, we can accomplish this love. As the pope said in closing on that day in April, “Loving in this way, you will be recognized as disciples of Jesus. And your joy will be complete.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Msgr. Larry M. Bakke
Pastor



Students and Adult Volunteers



During our planting day, May 25, our Faith Family groups were busy beautifying the St. Victor and parish grounds.



Many hands made for light work during our planting day on May 25.

The beautiful landscaping and plantings around our church and St. Victor School is a visible testimony to stewardship in action by talented volunteers and our students.

Mike Davis and Glenda Buholzer look after the area around the church, according to the landscape plan Mike designed about three years ago.

“Glenda puts out the annuals, and we will replace perennials that don’t succeed, prune the roses back and that sort of thing,” Mike says.

Other volunteers have worked to improve the soil by tilling in black dirt, compost and peat moss.

Mike says he and Glenda view their work around the parish as giving back by using their gifts as gardeners.

“I’m a Master Gardener, and I helped design the square in Monroe,” he says. “I just like to do it. Rita [Koster] asked me [to help] and I knew Glenda, an excellent gardener. I worked for her. We kind of put our heads together and came up with a plan.”



May 25 was a beautiful day for our planting on campus.

rs Keep Our Parish Blooming

Meanwhile, our students at St. Victor School work together to keep their campus plantings attractive. This year, May 25 was chosen as the planting day.

“We divide the students into Faith Family groups, and each group is assigned a spot to do planting with flowers, and beautify the area,” says Principal Joe Peters.

The students take care of the plants around the school building, as well as a vegetable garden behind the school. They plant pots around the church and plant flowers around the sign at the parish center.

“There are about eight different stations around the campus, and each group of 12 to 14 kids and adults take turns planting,” Mr. Peters says. “They water, plant and talk. Annuals and perennials are explained to them. They include prayer in all of it, since all plants are a gift from God. We can share the beauty of God’s creation with whoever comes to our church. It’s a simple and fun day. They dress down and bring gloves and tools. It’s lots of fun – a nice simple day.”

“There are about eight different stations around the campus, and each group of 12 to 14 kids and adults take turns planting. They water, plant and talk. Annuals and perennials are explained to them. They include prayer in all of it, since all plants are a gift from God. We can share the beauty of God’s creation to whoever comes to our church.” – Mr. Joe Peters, Principal

If you are interested in volunteering for landscaping and planting, or if you would like to learn more, please call the parish office at 608-325-9506.



Chances are these students will remember fondly, for years to come, the planting days we held and the fun they had.



Work gloves and play clothes were the order of the day during our planting day May 25.

Getting to Know “Summertime” Saints

School is out, and summer is now in full swing. The days are longer, warmer and filled with plenty of fun summertime activities.

This summer, as we take family vacations, get together for barbecues, spend time by the pool, and enjoy all of the usual summertime activities, we can also take the time to reflect on some of the saints who are associated with the summer.

Family vacations are perhaps the most iconic of all summertime activities. Although there is no patron saint of vacations, there are a number of saints associated with traveling. One of the most popular is St. Christopher. According to his story, St. Christopher was an extremely tall and strong man who served Christ by helping people cross an especially dangerous river. That is why many people wear St. Christopher medals while traveling – to ask for his blessing and protection.

For those of us who are taking road trips this summer, there is St. Frances of Rome, the patron saint of cars and drivers. While St. Frances died well before cars were

invented, her story says that her guardian angel went ahead of her when she traveled at night and lit the road with a lantern to keep St. Frances safe.

There are also saints we can look to when traveling by plane. St. Joseph of Cupertino was a Franciscan friar who is said to have frequently and miraculously levitated off the ground during intense prayer sessions. Because of this levitation, he is recognized as the patron saint of air travelers. St. Therese of Lisieux is also associated with aviators and flying.

If you are going on a cruise this summer, you can ask for the intercession of St. Brendan the Navigator, an Irish monk who founded the Clonfert monastery and monastic school, and is the patron saint of mariners and sailors. He and his brothers sailed the Atlantic Ocean and evangelized on a number of islands, and may have even reached the Americas.

Another favorite summer activity is swimming. Whether you choose a pool, a lake or the ocean, seek the intercession of St. Adjutor of Vernon, a knight who was

captured in the First Crusade. His captors tried to force him to give up his faith, but St. Adjutor escaped by swimming to his freedom. For this reason, he is the patron saint against drowning, and for drowning victims, sailors and swimmers.

The summer is also a time of amusement and enjoyment. One of the biggest national celebrations of the summer is the Fourth of July. For this type of summertime activity, we look to St. Barbara, the patron saint of fireworks.

There are also a number of saints with feast days during the summer. The feast day of St. Anne, the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus, is celebrated on July 26. July 31 is the feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who is also associated with stewardship. These are just two of the many saints whose feasts we celebrate this summer.

No matter what kinds of activities we choose to enjoy during the summertime, let us remember to honor the saints who have gone before us, and give their intercession for us as we walk through our own journeys of faith.



Getting Ready for St. Victor School's 100th Anniversary

The 100th anniversary of St. Victor School is approaching in September, and plans are in motion to celebrate the event in ways marking the school's grand past, as well as looking toward the future.

"On Oct. 23, we'll have an open house to celebrate the 100th anniversary," says Principal Joe Peters. "Since Green County Cheese Days takes up the month of September, we opted to wait until October, and get school going."

One of the preparations for the celebration has been the collecting of memories and stories from alumni.

"We're going to create a hall of memories," Mr. Peters says.

The stories will be printed out and placed around the school for students and visitors to enjoy.

The students have also been assigned to research the decades covering the school's history.

"They will do a research project for each classroom, a decade or two, so they can 'place' themselves in that decade," Mr. Peters says. "They'll find out what life was like, how much things cost, and so on. The research will let



them understand how long 100 years is. The information isn't specific to our school, but it will also cover what our world and community was like. We'll get a lot of storytelling and photos, and well try to turn the school into a bit of a museum, so everyone can see what happened."

A cookout is in the planning process, which also will be a time to share stories and memories.

"Other things we will be doing include putting together a time capsule, and another

goal will be to create a mural in the gym, covering the past 100 years," Mr. Peters says. "We'll use the entire year to celebrate."

Our Faith Family will also be involved in the celebration.

"Next year we'll be doing Faith Family activities on our 100th year and what it means," he says. "I envision doing collecting throughout the year – 100 cans of food for our food pantry or 100 pairs of mittens, and so on."

continued on back cover

"We'd love to get information about alumni and former teachers so we can share the information with them and invite them. It's more of a grassroots thing – we're trying to do a lot through social media to get the word out to alumni. There won't be a formal invitation so much. We're looking to build a database for alumni and teachers." – Mr. Joe Peters, Principal



ST. CLARE of ASSISI PARISH

1760 14th Street
Monroe, WI 53566

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Monroe, Wis. 53566
Permit No. 177

Return Service Requested



Getting Ready for St. Victor School's 100th Anniversary *continued from page 7*

The goal for the celebration is to recognize the concept of 100 years, while also providing service opportunities for our students. A committee made up of school staff, parents, and alumni will be working on the celebration. There also are plans to post events on the school's Facebook page so followers can tag and share items.

"The thought is the page can pique interest beyond our formal committee," Mr. Peters says.

Parishioners are invited to help with the celebration, whether it is for the open house, the cook-out, collecting photos, or other events as they are planned.

"We'd love to get information about alumni and former teachers so we can share the information with them and invite them," Mr. Peters says. "It's more of a grassroots thing – we're trying to do a lot through social media to get the word out to alumni. There won't be a formal invitation so much. We're looking to build a database for alumni and teachers."



If you are interested in helping with the 100th Anniversary celebration, please contact Principal Joe Peters at 608-325-3395.