



FEBRUARY 2012

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## Reflecting on the Weekly Mass Readings “*Scriptures with Steve*”

St. Joseph parishioner Steve Stasik works at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Cleveland, and years ago, he joined a men’s prayer group that gathers there on Friday mornings. For Steve, one of the most fruitful parts of being involved in the group was going over and discussing the readings from the upcoming weekend’s Masses.

“The group has been using this guidebook from Liturgical Press to preview the weekend Mass readings for years,” he says. “I always thought it was a pretty good book, because it gives readers a chance to go over what we’re going to be seeing in advance, and offers readings, questions and reflections for discussion. I thought this could certainly work in our parish, as well. I just kind of suggested it to Father [O’Connor] and Lorrie [Coughlin, Director of Religious Education].”

Steve received a perfect opportunity to share this experience of Scripture study with his fellow parishioners when St. Joseph recently adjusted its Sunday Mass schedule to accommodate the PSR classes.

“There is some downtime between the end of the 8:30 a.m. Mass and the beginning of the 11 a.m. Mass,” he explains.



“That hour-and-a-half is when the younger children are given their PSR lessons, and some of the parents will stay on the campus to socialize and interact with one another. Being there for an hour-and-a-half can be long, and going home and having to come back and pick up your child – I appreciate the fact that the parents are kind of torn about what they should do. So I thought that as long as the kids are taking opportunities to get deeper into their Faith during that time, the adults should have the same opportunity.”

Steve offers the “Scriptures with Steve” ministry every Sunday in the

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# Celebrating the Feast of St. Blaise

## *Feast Day, Feb. 3*

Every year on Feb. 3, we celebrate the Feast day of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr. In remembrance of this great saint, priests at most parishes around the world bless the throats of the faithful at Masses on this feast day.

Year after year many of us step into line to receive the blessing, yet how many of us know the reason that St. Blaise is associated with the blessing of throats? Where did the ritual of placing candles across the throat come from?

Though we do not know much about the life of St. Blaise, tradition tells us that he was a physician before being consecrated bishop. Around the year 313, when the Roman Emperor Licinius was persecuting the Church, Blaise went into some woods, where he lived as a hermit among animals that he befriended. One day a group of hunters found Blaise in the woods and seized him. Upon their trip to the governor, they encountered a woman whose pig was being attacked by a wolf. Blaise commanded the wolf to leave the pig alone and upon his command, the pig was freed unharmed. Blaise was then taken to prison where he miraculously healed a boy who was choking to death on a fishbone. While Blaise remained in prison, the woman whose pig he had freed brought him two candles to serve as his light so that he could read the Scripture.

Because of his prison experience and his great reputation as a healer, St. Blaise's intercession is invoked for the healing of diseases affecting the throat. The candles that the clergy place upon our throats while blessing them symbolize the candles that enlightened St. Blaise's cell as he studied Sacred Scripture — connecting his spiritual life to the physical healing. Let us remember to invoke the intercession of this great healer upon any ailments that might be affecting us, either physical or spiritual — especially those pertaining to the throat.

Through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat, and from every other illness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.



*Year after year many of us step into line to receive the blessing, yet how many of us know the reason that St. Blaise is associated with the blessing of throats? Where did the ritual of placing candles across the throat come from?*

A Letter From Our Pastor

# *Preparing for Lent as Good Stewards*

Dear Parishioners,

**I**t is time to be thinking about our Seventh Annual Stewardship Renewal. Our Ministries Fair will take place on the weekend of Feb. 4-5, which will give all of us a chance to see what activities are taking place in our parish and to make our involvement decisions. Stewardship Commitment Weekend follows on Feb. 18-19 when we turn in our completed cards with our commitments of time, talent and treasure for the next 12 months.

Last year we did all of this a month later. But we thought that this earlier start for our Stewardship Renewal will also enable us to have all of our follow-up completed by the end of April, before the summer season gets underway. This will make it possible for people to become engaged with their ministries a little sooner.

I see so many fruits of our stewardship in the life of our St. Joseph Parish Family. My dream is that every one of our 1,750 households would be active in our parish life. Stewardship helps us to this goal by inviting the participation of everyone in our parish family in whatever capacity each person is able. We each have something to offer and every commitment has value and is needed. As in family life, when we all do what we can in the spirit of love, amazing things happen.

Please be thinking about both renewing past commitments in the realm of time, talent and treasure, as well as perhaps trying something new this year.

I invite the participation of every parishioner in the life and prayer of our St. Joseph Parish. Let's continue to pray for and support one another.

Thank you for being the good people that you are. It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve you.

In Christ,

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor



## *Stewardship* **Good for the Giver**

If you don't give it away, you can't keep it. But if you give it away, it will increase.

How's that for a riddle? The best answer, if you haven't already guessed it, is love. But the beauty of this paradox is that there can be a number of different answers. Another one might be artistic talent. Ask any artist, and they'll tell you that their skill for drawing or painting decreases after a few weeks or months of inactivity. But the more they paint, the more their talent grows.

If you hoard it, you'll lose it; if you share it, it stays healthy. We even see this concept illustrated in nature. For example, the Sea of Galilee teems with fish and other wildlife. However, all the water in this beautiful reservoir is constantly being drained through the Jordan River, which stretches about 60 miles, providing the only fresh water for all of Israel. It finally drains into the Dead Sea – which, unlike Galilee, has no outlet. Consequently, it is stagnant and totally lifeless, continually evaporating into thin air.

The point, in a nutshell, is that the good steward takes care of his or her gifts by giving them away. By doing so, you don't have less left over; rather, you have more!

There is a story that when Mother Teresa was visiting one of the hundreds of convents she had founded,

the Superior of that convent told her, "Mother, we don't have enough time to do our work with the poor; there's just not enough hours in the day." Mother Teresa responded, "Then you need to pray more." When they added another full hour of prayer each day, they somehow found that they had enough time to do even more for the poor in that city.

The difficulty with this idea – that by giving we receive – is that it's still a struggle to give. At the very moment of giving, it looks for all the world like we'll have less left over. This is especially true when it comes to money. Mathematically, after you write a check to a charity or to the parish, you end up with less money to spend on other things. And yet, the immaterial value of our sacrifice is immeasurable. This is why Jesus speaks so frequently in the Gospels about the spiritual benefits of giving to others. We do have more after we give, but it is simply more of something else – and something better.

When we emphasize stewardship at St. Joseph's, it isn't primarily to increase "volunteerism" or to swell our budget. Rather, our first aim is always the "good of the giver." It's not because the parish has needs, but because we have a need to give. In the end, the model Steward is Jesus, who indeed gave all, even His very life, so that we may have everything.



### **Stewardship in Nature**

*The Sea of Galilee stays fresh and healthy because it "gives away" all its water through the Jordan River. When all that water finally drains into the Dead Sea, it just stays there, becoming stagnant and lifeless. Human beings are the same way. Giving of ourselves is one of the main ways we stay spiritually healthy.*

# *Extraordinary Ministers Honored to Participate in Holy Communion*

There is no greater privilege for a human being than the responsibility that comes with being an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion: bearing Christ's body and blood, soul and divinity in their hands and distributing Him to the faithful.

"To be even allowed to do this is an unbelievable honor," says Barb Krulik, a longtime extraordinary minister and the ministry coordinator. "When you stop to think about it, who is worthy of doing such a thing?"

Over 100 parishioners regularly participate in the distribution of Holy Communion, with most being scheduled around once a month. Each week roughly 30 ministers participate in this ministry: seven at the 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday, the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses on Sunday and another three at the 5 p.m. Mass on Sunday evening.

All extraordinary ministers go through training both with the Diocese of Cleveland and with Sr. Irene at St. Joseph.

"At the diocesan training they give you all the 'whys' and 'wherefores' of the ministry, but Sr. Irene tailors it to the specific practice here at St. Joseph — both are important aspects of the ministry," Barb says.

In addition to the sheer gratitude experienced by extraordinary ministers at the opportunity to serve Christ in such an amazing fashion, many ministers notice an increased sense of awe at the Eucharist even when they aren't serving.

"When you see the faces of the people receiving and the wonder that they have — especially children some times — it's hard to explain, but it's very touching and a most powerful experience," Barb says. "But that experience carries over to every Mass: it makes you so



much more aware of the fact of what the Mass is and what the Eucharist is."

As we begin the season of Lent and look forward to Christ's passion and death on the Cross, we remember that each Mass is a perfect re-presentation of that one, perfect sacrifice made almost 2,000 years ago at Golgotha.

"During the Lenten season, when we are asked to give up certain things that might mean a lot to us — such as food items or certain activities — we consider what a small sacrifice that is compared to what our Lord did for us. One of the most meaningful Lenten seasons that I've ever had was when I was able to attend Mass during the week and received Holy Communion. That was an Easter I'll never forget, having joined my Lenten sacrifices to Christ's sacrifice at Mass and listening to the Gospel message."

All practicing adult Catholics in good standing with the Church are welcome to participate in this beautiful ministry. Diocesan trainings are offered biannually in the spring and fall, with parish training to follow. For more information please contact Barb at the rectory: 440-933-3152.

***"To be even allowed to do this is an unbelievable honor," says Barb Krulik, a longtime extraordinary minister and the ministry coordinator. "When you stop to think about it, who is worthy of doing such a thing?"***

## Scriptures with Steve *continued from cover*

parish Conference Room, starting at around 9:30 a.m. Participants spend an hour either reviewing or pre-viewing (depending on which Mass they attend) that Sunday's Mass readings, using the Liturgical Press book as a guide. The group has an informal structure by design, and it gives parishioners an opportunity to simply reflect more deeply on the day's readings, and utilize some provided questions and reflections to discuss how the readings apply to their everyday lives. The group gives parishioners plenty of time to pick up their children after PSR classes. It is also meant to be a ministry that is drop-in friendly, so that participants don't feel as if they are getting behind or missing out on something if they are unable to come every single week.

"I know for a family active in school, homework,

stuff like that, it is difficult for them to make it consistently because of their family obligations," Steve says. "So, again, this is not a structured Bible study. It's whatever we're going to read in the Mass that weekend,

and it's a chance to reflect a little more deeply on God's Word and how it applies to our lives."

All parishioners and visitors are welcome to participate in "Scriptures with Steve," and parents of PSR students are especially encouraged to attend. The group is still in the early stages of its development, and Steve says that he would love to see more

people stop by and take advantage of this opportunity for Scripture study in a laid-back, friendly environment.

For more information, please contact Steve Stasik at 440-933-2495 or [steve.stacik@rbc.com](mailto:steve.stacik@rbc.com).

*"I thought that as long as the kids are taking opportunities to get deeper into their Faith during that time, the adults should have the same opportunity." - Steve Stasik*

## Our Family in the Armed Forces

When you gather your family for prayer, please remember these members of our parish family who are placing their lives on the line to protect and serve us!

Michael Baker  
Jeff Capretto  
Dan Collister  
Carin Cozza  
Timothy Gaydosh  
Craig Goodwin  
Scott Hardman  
Patrick Harris

William Hayes  
Joseph Hisey  
Scott Hutcherson  
Greg Jones  
Brendan Mackin  
Christopher McMenemy  
Charlie Meyer  
Matt Monschein

Jessica Moran  
Sean Ortiz  
Michael Paradis  
Robert Pate  
Adam Petrella  
Patrick Ruth  
Michael Schumacher  
Dr. Roy Seitz

Jacob Smith  
John Stanley  
Christopher Stover  
Daniel Urbin  
Larry van der Oord  
Scott Vorisek  
Tony Zelasko

If you have any loved ones in the service, please let us know so we can add them to our honored list and keep them in our prayers.

# Prayer Shawl Ministry

## *Making Something Beautiful for God*

*“Together, you and I can do something beautiful for God.”  
— Blessed Teresa of Calcutta*

Recently, when Judith Kruman went to see her granddaughter become christened at another parish in our diocese, she had an inspiration to do something for the glory of God.

“As part of the christening, she and her parents were presented with a prayer shawl,” Judith says. “I knew at that very moment that was something I’d like to see occur in my own parish church.”

Next, Judith looked into the idea and then put a notice in our parish bulletin to see if there were others, in addition to herself as coordinator, who would be willing to get this ministry going.

Currently, there are eight members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry who, out of love for Christ, enjoy getting together to knit, crochet, or both.

“Through this ministry, we are spreading our love on to the youngest members of our parish,” Judith says. “Although we hope to expand our ministry to involve all ages, we are focusing at the present time on the infants that are christened into our parish family. Our hope is that within the next couple of years, we will have enough members to extend this ministry to those confined to their homes, nursing homes, etcetera. However, that is in the hands of God and will all be done in His time.”



The group meets either in St. Joseph Hall or at the home of a member, usually on the first Monday of every other month. The date and time of the meetings can be found in our parish bulletin prior to the meetings.

“As we make the prayer shawls, we pray, meditate and focus on the love and abilities that God has given to each of us in order to carry out our ministry,” Judith says. “This ministry is so very important because we are showing parents that they are not alone in raising this new child in their lives. It is a way of showing that not only their families and friends are there for them, but their parish family is there for them as well. The prayer shawls then become a symbol of the love extended to them from this family.”

In giving their time to make the shawls, the members of this ministry have been blessed abundantly in return.

“We enjoy doing this ministry because it has gotten a group of individuals together who share their love of the Lord and want others to know about this love that is so readily available to them,” Judith says. “As a group, we also share each other’s joys and support each other when we hit a ‘speed bump’ on the road of life. This has, indeed, built up our faith.”

New members are always welcome to join in this wonderful way to do something for God. Donations of materials are always needed. For more information, contact Judith Kruman at [jjk4366@yahoo.com](mailto:jjk4366@yahoo.com) or 440-315-8738.



# St. Joseph Parish of Avon Lake

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## *Save the Date! February 2012*

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|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b>   | <i>First Friday, 24-Hour Adoration<br/>St. Vincent de Paul Food Drive thru<br/>Monday morning<br/>Night Under the Stars Auction</i> | <b>13</b>    | <i>10:30 AM Mass at Main Street Care Center</i>   |
| <b>4/5</b> | <i>Stewardship Fair</i>                                                                                                             | <b>14</b>    | <i>Adoration 8 AM – 8 PM</i>                      |
| <b>5</b>   | <i>1:00 Never Alone Bereavement Support<br/>5:00 Mass with Youth Ministry leaders</i>                                               | <b>18</b>    | <i>Roesky CYO Tournament Continues</i>            |
| <b>7</b>   | <i>Adoration 8 AM – 8 PM</i>                                                                                                        | <b>18/19</b> | <i>Stewardship Renewal Commitment<br/>Weekend</i> |
| <b>11</b>  | <i>Roesky CYO Tournament Begins<br/>Solo &amp; Ensemble Contest</i>                                                                 | <b>21</b>    | <i>Adoration 8 AM – 8 PM</i>                      |
|            |                                                                                                                                     | <b>24/26</b> | <i>Roesky CYO Tournament Concludes</i>            |
|            |                                                                                                                                     | <b>28</b>    | <i>Adoration 8 AM – 8 PM</i>                      |

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### ***Sunday, the Lord's Day, Mass Schedule***

Sat. — 4:30 p.m. | Sun. — 8:30 & 11 a.m., 5 p.m.

### ***Weekday Mass Schedule***

Mon., Tue., Wed. — 7:30 a.m. | Thu. — 7 p.m. | Fri. — 8:30 a.m.