



# The Lightpost



The Parish Newsletter of St. Joseph Catholic Church

A Letter from Our Pastor

## Renewing Our Love of the Lord

Dear Parishioners,

"I thought we did this already." Is that a thought that occurred to you when you heard about our Fifth Annual Stewardship Renewal, which is now underway? If so, may I explain why this is a yearly event, and not a once-and-for-all one?

So many of the things that we hold dear in life we renew regularly - like anniversaries, vows, birthdays. We want to keep them fresh and in mind. We want to see their meaning and significance even more deeply each year.

And so it is with the gifts that God has given us. Everything we have and everything that we are is a gift from God. And so we renew our commitment to honor God and His generosity to us by sharing our time, our talent and our treasure.

Someone might object, "But I have earned what I have." No doubt you have worked very hard, but who gave you the ability to do this, and the opportunities? Who gave you the breath that you have just taken? God is the source of all that we have and are. I must regularly thank Him, and gratefully adjust my priorities to reflect my gratitude.

This year, as I look over opportunities to share the time and the talent and the treasure that the Lord has entrusted to me, I am deeply aware of blessings that I have been given that I certainly do not deserve, and of happenings in my life that have turned out far better than I can take credit for myself. And I feel so unworthy of the Lord's goodness to me.

These were some of my thoughts when I read these words from an article by Father John Jay Hughes in *The Priest* magazine entitled, "My Replacement":

*"I'm not good enough," you say. Well of course you aren't! None of us is good enough to be a priest of the all-holy God: not the pope, not the holiest and best priest you know, certainly not myself.*

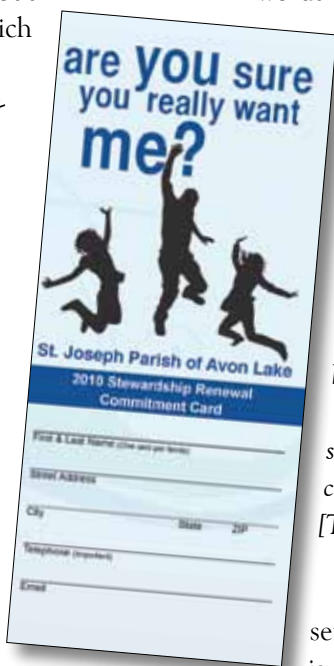
*"Paul knew that. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' he wrote [2 Corinthians 4:7]. God doesn't call us because we're good enough. He calls us because He loves us.*

*"And God does not call those who are fit, according to human reckoning. But He always fits those whom He calls.*

*"There are only two absolute disqualifications for priestly service. The Lord cannot use a man who will not work, or cannot love. All other defects can be remedied by His grace" [The Priest, May 2007, page 21].*

While Father Hughes was writing to a prospective seminarian, I think his advice can touch everyone who is trying to follow Jesus in his or her vocation. If we are willing to work and willing to love, God can fit us for whatever He is asking of us. And this happens not because we think we are good enough, but purely because He loves us.

Let us use this stewardship opportunity to renew our love for God by gratefully committing some of our time, talent and treasure back to Him, for He is the source of all that we have and all that we are.



Yours in Christ,

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor

## Vocation Reflection

### Scott Goodfellow

Six years ago, I would have never imagined myself being where I am today. I was 17 years old and I was busy looking at colleges where I could get a degree in music...the thought of the priesthood never crossed my mind. I am 23 years old now and am currently in my first year of graduate studies at the seminary. Last year I graduated from John Carroll with a four-year degree in philosophy. I have about 4 more years to go until I will be ordained a priest. How did this transformation take place for me? Sometimes it's hard to believe myself, but I attribute it to God's grace working in me despite my own hesitancy. Just as the author Graham Greene wrote, "I've caught belief like a disease," Christ's voice cracked through my shell once I let down my guard for an instant, an instant I have never regretted. Whatever we give to Christ, we can be sure He will give it back one hundred fold.

In the second half of my junior year at Avon Lake High School, one of my friends invited me to go on a weekend retreat at the St. Leonard Youth Retreat Center in Avon. The retreat was called COR (Christ in Others Retreat) and it gave my life new perspective. When I first arrived, there was gossip that a seminarian was going to be joining us on retreat that weekend. I had no clue what a seminarian was at this point, not knowing that in a year and a half I would be one of them! The seminarian's name was Frank, and he introduced himself during the retreat and I was able to talk to him a little about what he was getting himself into...and why. I don't remember the particulars of our conversation, but I remember being edified as I came away from our talk. Here was this young 19-20 year-old guy giving up dating, the prospect of becoming rich, and he would have

to pray countless times each day and actually listen to his superiors (which is often the most puzzling mystery to kids like me!). Despite all this, there was something jovial, even happy, about his personality. He was sacrificing a lot, but he was still happy and had fun. I was intrigued by this mystery, and one of Frank's comments stuck out in my mind. He said that marriage is not the only vocation people are called to. I began wondering whether I was just falling into suit with what our culture says to do when we grow up rather than praying for what God wants us to do. In the back of my mind I knew the answer, but I kept hiding it because I wasn't ready to make a sacrifice which was that big.

Months passed and the end of my junior year was near. It was at this time that a tragic event happened that made me able to make any sacrifice. The day after my junior prom, my good friend Jimmy died suddenly at his house. He too had met Frank and was thinking about the priesthood. I was devastated by this loss...I never got the chance to tell Jimmy that I was thinking about the priesthood too.

It's strange how the most important choices of our lives come only when life and death smack us hard in the face. It's when we're at our weakest that we are able to make the strongest decisions. I had sensed Jesus calling me to discern the priesthood, and I was finally able to overcome my own fears and weaknesses and give an answer to Christ's call. My decision came at an important time in the life of the Church too—at the height of the abuse scandal. By every right, I should have wanted to shirk away from any future with the priesthood, but I believe my generation has a special calling to boldly proclaim the true face of the priesthood, to proclaim what great witnesses a few good men can give to the world.





# Demonstrating Stewardship of Our Children: “A Night Under the Stars”

While St. Joseph School depends on the support of the whole parish, we in turn depend on our school to form those who will take our place as leaders.

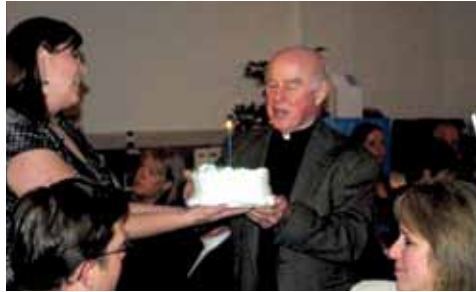
And as a demonstration of support for the students, teachers, and staff of St. Joseph School, over 200 parishioners attended the school’s fundraising dinner and auction, “A Night Under the Stars,” on Friday, Feb. 5. Because last year’s dinner was so popular that there was a long waiting list, this year’s was held at the Ahern Banquet Center.

“The most fun part for me was to see it all come together, since there was a lot of preparation and work that started many months before the event,” says Anne Persiani, one of the event chairpersons. “It couldn’t have been done without the volunteers and the committee which helped make it a relatively smooth process.”

This was no small-time shindig, however. With an open bar, a gourmet dinner, a D.J., and both silent and live auctions, it was an evening of decidedly sophisticated adult fun.

In the silent auction were featured many items contributed by the students and parents, including handmade rosaries from the first graders and a themed basket from each grade. And Cavaliers’ and Reds’ tickets, a suite for 16 for an Indians’ game, a Florida Keys’ condo vacation rental, a weekend trip to Chicago (with shopping money!), an American Girl doll, and a Michael Simon-themed cookery basket were among the many items in the live auction, which was run by Bob Hale, a real auctioneer.

The dinner and auction has raised over \$40,000 in each of the past two years, all of which contributes to continuing the mission of St. Joseph School.



And as a special thank-you to those who spend so much time with our children, attendees donated money to pay for the teachers’ tickets.

“We were amazed at everyone’s generosity and their willingness to show support for the teachers,” says Anne.

Another student contribution came through artwork. Every student at the school submitted a work of art showing what “A Night Under the Stars” means to them, and the winning piece was featured on the program cover.

But the evening did more than raise dollars for the school. By bringing together teachers, parents, and other parishioners, this year’s “A Night Under the Stars” also helped to bind us into a tighter community.

On a night showing the interdependence of the school and the parish, we showed that by being stewards of our treasure, we can enable all of us to be good stewards of another of our most valuable gifts – our children.

*Mark Your Calendars!*

*Vacation Bible School 2010 will be held the week of June 21*

# Are You Sure You Really Want Me?

## Questions & Answers about Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently "renewed" by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence — part of the rhythm of parish life at St. Joseph. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year?

### How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your commitment card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

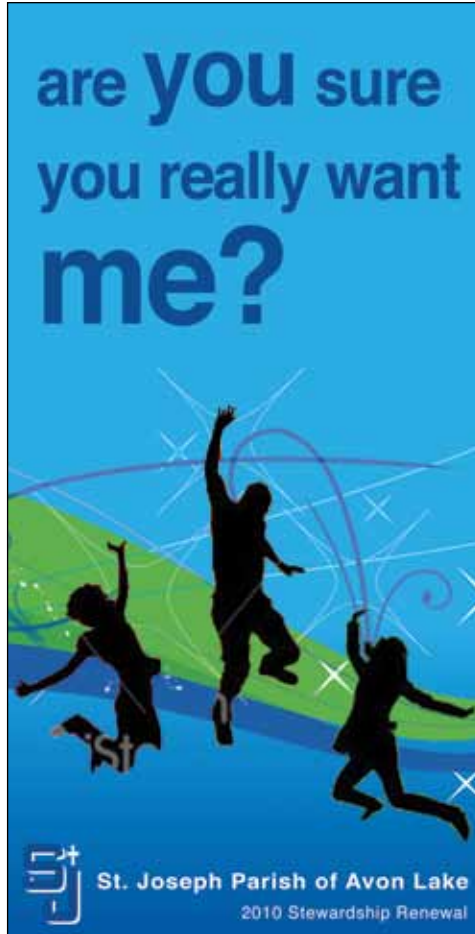
**Time Section:** Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

**Talent Section:** You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

**Treasure Section:** Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving 5 percent of your income to St. Joseph.

### My age or physical limitations prevent me from being active in the parish. Should I still turn in a commitment card?

Yes! The first section of the card — Stewardship of Time — is the most important because it allows you to make commitments to prayer. Even if you can't join a ministry or make it to Mass on Sunday, you can still



pray for our parish. Your spiritual support has tremendous value in the eyes of God.

### One time I turned in a card, but no one ever called me when I signed up for a ministry.

If this happened in the past, please forgive us! And don't give up on filling out your commitment card! We have a very good plan to call every person interested in joining a new ministry. If for some reason the ministry leader does not call you within four weeks of turning in your card, let the parish office know.

### How much should I give?

Your gift is entirely dependent on how much God has given you. At St. Joseph, we ask that you give 5 percent to our parish, and 5 percent to other charities. Why a percentage of income? First, because the tithe (10 percent) is a scriptural benchmark that the Church

has honored for centuries (see Malachi 3:10). Secondly, we give a percentage of income because it is a common-sense standard by which everyone can equitably support the parish, each according to his or her ability. Most of all, we give because we believe God comes first in everything, even finances.

### What if I can't fulfill my financial pledge?

While our pledge is not a "contract," we should all make a good-faith effort to fulfill it. Of course, if your financial circumstances change — if you lose your job, for instance — then the amount of money you give the Church will change, too. Likewise if you get a raise or bonus. The biggest reason many people don't fulfill their pledge is that they attend Mass at another parish when they go on vacation, attend a wedding, etc. If you're out of town, just make up for the missed Sunday when you write your next check to the parish. Using your envelopes is a good way to see which Sundays you missed.

### I don't even go to Mass very frequently. Why turn in a Commitment Card?

Because this is your chance to turn over a new leaf! Why not make a commitment to God to come to Mass every Sunday, and then write down that commitment? Even if that's the only commitment you make, take a step forward. Jesus Himself is waiting for you!

### What happens if I don't return my Commitment Card?

If you don't turn in a Commitment Card, Fr. O'Connor will turn your name over to the "stewardship police." Well... not exactly. But we will mail you a reminder letter that includes an extra Commitment Card (in case you misplaced yours). Make every effort you can to participate. Our Stewardship Renewal is a very important annual event in the life of our parish. You and your family are part of what makes St. Joseph a great community! Most importantly, your commitments are actually promises to Christ Himself. All of us are called to give back to God a portion of what He has given us.



# Lent is a special time for RCIA Class

By Lorrie Coughlin, Director of Religious Education

Each year in Catholic churches around the world, the Lenten season is a very special time for those who are preparing to become members of our faith family at the Easter Vigil.

And for the 13th year, we at St. Joseph's will welcome a number of new Catholics to our parish family. As you enter the Gathering Area for Mass each weekend, you have been seeing pictures and biographies of our RCIA class of 2010. So that you might keep them in your prayers throughout this month, you might like to know a little about them and what they are doing.

This year's class includes three catechumens, which is the designation for those who are coming to the Church, requesting Baptism. Darrell Finley and Shantiel Soeder both come to us from a Pentecostal background, and Christy Gojevic was not raised in any faith practice. All three are married to Catholics and are already raising their families in the Catholic faith. Darrell and his wife, Mollie, have a daughter in our day school, Christy has a daughter in our PSR program, and all three have children who are not yet in school. Shantiel is, in fact, expecting her second child at this time.

One of our class this year was baptized and made his First Communion as a child, but was not confirmed. \*Ken Price has attended all of the RCIA classes this year with his aunt and sponsor, Stephanie Koebel (among other ministries, a teacher in St. Joseph School and the head of the school Confirmation program), and he will be confirmed by Bishop Lennon on March 19th with our 8th graders and a number of adults who attended our Adult Confirmation Class (in conjunction with our cluster parishes).

Our other RCIA class members are designated as "candidates," which means they have already been baptized in a Christian faith, and at the Easter Vigil, they will make a Profession of Faith with us. With our catechumens – who



*L-R: Lisa DiGeronimo, Joel Woods, Shantiel Soeder, Jean Killinger, Claudia, Jackie and Mark Loper, Sarah Rogge, \*Ken Price, Stephanie Koebel and Nick Melzer*

will have just been baptized – they will then be confirmed by Father O'Connor and will receive their First Holy Communion during the same Mass. The candidates in this year's class include Joel Woods, who attends with his fiancée Lisa DiGeronimo; Sarah Rogge (whose wedding will, coincidentally, be celebrated in June on the same date as Joel and Lisa plan to be married); Jean and Kenyon Killinger, who are journeying with their daughter, Colleen McHenry, herself a former RCIA "graduate"; Angela Knapper, who is already raising three Catholic children; Nick Melzer, whose Journey Partner is parishioner Nora McManamon; and Mark and Claudia Loper, both dentists and the parents of two children who attend St. Joseph School.

During recent weeks, our RCIA candidates have been seriously studying Catholic theology, learning the differences between the faith we profess and the ones in which they had previously practiced, studying the sacraments, reading Scriptures, choosing patron saints and sponsors, and deciding how to become active once they are fully initiated into the Catholic faith.

One of the interesting things about RCIA is that we nearly always have parents of second graders as members of the class. This year, we

have three families that have children in the sacramental preparation for First Holy Communion. These children celebrated First Penance in December, and two of them – Katelyn Gojevic and Jackie Loper – were kind enough to visit our adults in RCIA and reassure them of the beauty of the sacrament of Penance. If every Catholic who does not regularly celebrate that wonderful sacrament could hear the positive comments of our second graders, Father would have lines out the door every Thursday and Saturday!

Our normal RCIA Class meets every Tuesday evening from fall through Easter, but for those who cannot attend at that time, other arrangements are made so that no one is left out who wishes to become part of our family. This year's class has three members who take individual instruction, following the same schedule as our Tuesday class but on their time frames; some years we have had members of the class who were distance learners through weekend visits, emails and phone conversations while working with a journey partner at their distant locations! So please, if you know of someone who expresses interest in becoming Catholic, let them know we will do all that we can do to help them take that step in their journey towards eternal glory!

Please keep our catechumens and candidates in your prayers as they conclude their preparation for the sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Come and share with them as they participate in the rituals and liturgies of Holy Week. (They assist at Tenebrae, have their feet washed on Holy Thursday, act out Living Stations on Good Friday evening, and celebrate the Easter Sacraments on Holy Saturday night.) If you'd like to send them cards of congratulation or encouragement, you can do so through Lorrie at the rectory. And when you see them in church, please make it a point to welcome them to our family!

\* – R.I.P Ken Price, Jan. 23, 2010

## Playing the Game the Right Way: St. Joseph CYO

Sports can be lots of fun. But how can we make sure that it's the kids, and not their sometimes overly competitive parents, who are having it?

St. Joseph CYO offers kids in grades 4 through 8 the chance to play sports with their friends in a setting where victory isn't god, but God is God.

The goal is "to make sure that the kids have an opportunity to experience organized sports in a way that is not about winning at all costs, but how to win, how to lose, how to be a good teammate and a good sport, all guided by a Christ-like attitude," says Pat Connaughton, president of the CYO board.

But it's only because of people like Pat that CYO can exist. Nobody gets paid, and everything depends upon the gifts of time from parents like Pat.

"This is a good way to give my time to the school, parish and kids," he says.

Through coaching, many parents are giving their time and talent to the parish and contributing to the social and physical well-being of our children.

Though the times vary based upon the sport, there are usually one or two practices each week, with games on weekends. Students from St. Joseph School, surrounding Catholic schools,



and PSR are all invited to sign up for CYO sports. With teams in football, baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, cheer, and track, there is surely a sport for your child.

Some students play purely for love of the game itself, while others are there as a way to have fun with their friends. But St. Joseph CYO teams aren't just playing for themselves. They also play for parish pride when they compete against teams from other Catholic parishes around the diocese.

The biggest event of the year for St. Joseph CYO just occurred: the annual Bob Roesky Tournament. Now in its 35th year, the tournament brings together many area basketball and cheer teams in a 135-game tournament. The tournament is attended by over 7,000 fans and is the organization's primary fundraiser. Volun-

teer coaches, cooks, scorekeepers, and many others spent weeks in preparation and long hours hosting this tournament for boys and girls basketball teams from around the area.

Baseball, softball, volleyball, and track are offered in the spring, and signups are going on now! To sign up, just use the online registration form at [www.saintjoesavonlake.org](http://www.saintjoesavonlake.org). And to find out how you can support CYO, whether as a coach, commissioner, or just as a general volunteer, contact any of the board members or commissioners through the website.



*"This is a good way to give my time to the school, parish and kids."*

*— Pat Connaughton, president of the CYO board*



## Vocation Reflection continued from page 2

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the seminary. The brotherhood is fantastic and I have the best friends someone my age could ask for. Seeing the seminarians older than me getting ordained priests is life-transforming! I have seen these guys doubt, struggle and grow into the men of faith they are now. Still, seminary isn't pure bliss. The academics and the spiritual growth required is challenging. I think it's similar to military in ways, but instead of primarily training one's body for service towards peace, we are preparing our souls and minds to take on a culture that could care less about the peace that Christ offers. The battle for priests of the new millennium is not so much the fight against evil, but the fight against mediocrity.

A vocation is a lifelong gift given by God to help us become the best and holiest persons we can be, and we all ought to ask Christ in prayer what that vocation is for us. My invitation, especially to the youth, is that we pray to learn what Christ might have in store for us, whether it be marriage, the single life, the religious life (friars and nuns), or the priesthood. Never be afraid of Christ. He chooses our vocations for our own benefit and happiness...that doesn't mean we will never suffer, but that we will become the best lovers we can be in whatever vocation Christ has in store for us. Going to the seminary was the best decision I've made.

I still have my passion for music. In addition to trumpet, I've also expanded into playing piano, guitar, violin, and, as another seminarian once put it, I also "tickle the ebony and ivory of the accordion." I enjoy skiing and snowboarding, movies, traveling, poetry, the beach, staying up late, napping, and tasting a fine Belgian beer. Our interests aren't destroyed when we hand them over to Christ. Rather, they are transformed with us and lead us deeper into our friendship with Christ. Christ gives them back to us a hundred fold.

I'll leave you with a quote from John Paul II that sums up what Christ has in store for us, "It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded down by mediocrity." The pope's message is clear: don't be afraid to follow Christ. He loves you and wants the best for you, so pray to understand what Christ's will is for you. If you are a young man and have ever thought about the priesthood even in the slightest, don't be afraid to shoot me an email if you'd like to learn more at [sgoodfellow09@gmail.com](mailto:sgoodfellow09@gmail.com).

## 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  
Patrick Curry  
Timothy Gaydosh  
Scott Hardman  
Patrick Harris  
Brendan Mackin  
Charlie Meyer  
Matt Monschein

Brian Nealon  
Robert Pate  
Ryan Petrella  
Michael Schumacher  
Larry van der Oord  
Dr. Roy Seitz  
Jessica Moran  
Brian M. Novotny  
Brian Hertvik

Scott Vorisek  
Tony Zelasko  
James Goodwin  
Scott Hutcherson  
John Stanley  
Daniel Urbin  
David Taylor  
Jeff Capretto



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.

# Saint Joseph

Catholic Church

32929 Lake Road  
Avon Lake, Ohio 44012-1402  
(440) 933-3152  
www.stjosephavonlake.org

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# Save the Date!

## Important Dates for March 2010

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2 Eucharistic Adoration 8a.m.-8p.m. (every Tuesday)   | 14 Daylight Savings Time begins<br>Reflections Art Fair<br>CONFIRMATION PRACTICE 7:30 p.m. |
| 4 Final Adult Confirmation Class 7:00<br>Matthew Kelly Book Discussion 7:30 (every week)  | 15 SJS 8th Grade Confirmation Retreat  |
| 5 24 Hour Adoration begins after 8:30 a.m.<br>Mass<br>Stations of the Cross 7 p.m.<br>St. Vincent de Paul Food Drive until 9 a.m.<br>Monday | 16 Adoration<br>PSR 8th Grade Confirmation Retreat   |
| 7 Special Mass with Anointing of the Sick 2:30 p.m.   | 17 Happy St. Patrick's Day<br>Junior Choir sings at Cathedral 10 a.m.                      |
| 8 NO SCHOOL; NO PSR<br>Main Street Mass 10:30 a.m.  | 19 Happy St. Joseph Day!!!<br>CONFIRMATION with Bishop Lennon 7 p.m.                       |
| 9 Iowa Tests Begin at St. Joseph School Adoration   | 20-21 Stewardship Commitment weekend   |
| 12 Stations of the Cross 7 p.m.   | 21 Bake Sale after all Masses<br>Cluster Communal Penance Service 7 p.m.                   |
| 13-14 Stewardship Fair and Meals after all Masses   | 23 Adoration and First Penance for RCIA  |
|   | 26 Stations of the Cross 7 p.m.  |
|   | 31 ALL grades PSR meet at 6:30: attend Tenebrae at 7 p.m.                                  |