



# THE GOOD STEWARD

St. Jane Frances de Chantal Parish Stewardship Council Newsletter

*Celebrating the Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure*

VOLUME 13 • ISSUE 1 • WINTER 2013

## LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

Burying the dead is one of the traditional corporal works of mercy. It is a sign of respect the living give to one of God's children and a mercy to the family members of the deceased. One of the ways that people can perform this work of mercy is by providing burial space to the poor and needy. From time to time, at my last assignment, burial sites in both Catholic and non-Catholic cemeteries would be given to the parish by families who had purchased them years before but who found they would no longer need them for a variety of reasons. The burial sites were in turn provided to poor families who were struggling with the high cost of funeral expenses for a loved one. The contributing families were able to count their gifts of the burial sites as a charitable contribution for tax purposes and find comfort knowing that they would be of considerable help to grieving families. If your family has a burial site that will not be used you might consider making a gift of it and fulfill this corporal work of mercy.

Gratefully,

Fr. Giese 

## HELPING THE CHURCH IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Through special collections at Catholic churches across the U.S., the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) provides support for the Church in the developing world supporting basic pastoral needs, evangelization and infrastructure support. During the weekend of February 23rd and 24th, St. Jane de Chantal Parish will conduct a special collection in support of this worthy cause. This collection is a combined collection to help the Church in Eastern and Central Europe, Africa and Latin America.

In 1990, just one year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops started their efforts to help rebuild the Church in the former communist countries. During the communist regimes, the Church suffered greatly in these countries. In 1967 for example, the communist government of Albania outlawed organized religion leading to the expulsion of clergy and destruction of many churches and mosques. It is estimated that only 30 clergy members remained in Albania and 95% of churches razed at the end of the communist regime. This story is repeated throughout Eastern and Central European counties many of which also face pervasive poverty particularly in rural areas.

Many Latin American countries also face pervasive poverty and have seen their churches damaged or destroyed by natural disasters such as the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile and Hurricane Sandy tearing through Cuba. When these disasters occurred the USCCB was there with support for rebuilding. This year the funds collected for Latin America will especially help support youth and young adult ministries.

The U.S. Bishops answered Pope John Paul's call to action in *Ecclesia in Africa* issuing a statement *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* and the establishment of the Pastoral Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa. The Church in Africa has tripled in size in the past 30 years despite the many economic and social hurdles found in the continent including severe poverty, political unrest, and epidemic. The Fund provides essential support for pastoral outreach, schools, evangelization, and education of clergy and lay ministers.

Let us too show solidarity with the Church in Africa and in other developing areas by contributing generously to this important collection and helping these churches reach their potential. 🏛️

Sources: [www.USCCB.org](http://www.USCCB.org); and *US Catholics come to aid of Eastern European churches*, National Catholic Reporter, Mar. 21, 2012

## CENTERING PRAYER AS A WAY TO RESPOND TO THE YEAR OF FAITH AT DE CHANTAL




Brother Ed Adams

If you were to ask me what I would like you to know about Centering Prayer, I would recommend beautiful descriptions in the Catholic Catechism that speak of 'contemplation' as a covenant relationship established by God *in our hearts*, a communion in which the Holy Trinity *conforms each of us, the very image of God, to His likeness*.

I like the simplicity of God's invitation to us to stop, look inside, and listen: "Be still and know that I am God." Centering prayer is a method of doing that. It consists of sitting down with your back upright, relaxed but alert, remaining still for a chosen period of time, closing our eyes slightly, and peacefully listening. As our minds wander off, we hold on to a prayer word of our choice like 'Abba', 'peace', 'love' 'Father' which helps us return to our original intention to 'rest' in God. We remain with open heart and open mind in silent adoration for twenty minutes more or less. A bell to begin and a candle for soft light can provide a conducive atmosphere. When praying together in a group, the leader may end the prayer period by praying the Lord's prayer or the Hail Mary very slowly. We take a few

minutes to open our eyes and resume our normal awareness. Faith sharing may follow.

How simple but how powerful it is when God speaks and when we don't know if we are in God or God is in us. In our present busy society, all of us are almost continuously bombarded by noise and media. Innumerable companies and individuals compete to catch and hold our attention. At the same time, we are members of a culture which values 'accomplishing things' and 'succeeding' over other values. It is very easy, almost inevitable, to lose touch with a deeper reality and truth. We can feel lost in that which is trivial and superficial. In Centering Prayer we enter the transformational mystery, reality, and meaning of life and love where we find God. Through that experience small faith groups often organically form and build up the Body of Christ.

A Centering Prayer group has been meeting at de Chantal on Wednesday nights at 7:30 PM at the Seton Center. Anyone is welcome to come in for the experience. There are many such groups at other Catholic and Christian Churches in our area where anyone is welcome at anytime. Small groups of friends and neighbors may come together to practice Centering Prayer with the help of leaders available at [www.contemplativeoutreach.com](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.com) or Brother Ed at [broedadams@aol.com](mailto:broedadams@aol.com). 

*St. Jane Frances de Chantal Parish would like to acknowledge the recent generosity of Barbara Lambert and Mary Bailey.*

*These two former parishioners remembered St. Jane de Chantal Parish in their wills. Their kindness assists the parish as we go forward with our mission.*

*If you would like to remember St. Jane Frances de Chantal Parish in your estate planning, please contact the parish office for appropriate instructions.*