



How to Build a Culture of Life

Watching the news and reading the headlines, we may feel helpless seeing the heartbreaking lack of respect for human life. How do we respond when our efforts seem small in the face of the culture of death?

To understand more fully how to defend and protect human life, we must first consider who we are, at the deepest level. God creates us in his image and likeness, which means we are made to be in loving relationship with him. The essence of our identity and worth, the source of our dignity, is that we are loved by God: “We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father’s love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son.”

We are called to divine intimacy, true communion with God, and we can grow in this closeness with him through daily prayer, reading the Scriptures, and frequent participation in the sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist.

Our Mission as Christians

The knowledge and realization of how deeply we are loved by God elicits a response of love that simultaneously draws us closer to God and, at the same time, impels us to share his love with others.

Embracing a relationship with God means following in his footsteps, wherever he may call. Just as Jesus invited St. Peter and St. Andrew to become his disciples, he invites us to do the same: “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

Being a disciple of Jesus naturally includes sharing the Gospel with others and inviting them into a deeper relationship with God. As Christians, our identity and our mission are two sides of the same coin; like the apostles, we are called to be missionary disciples.

Missionary Discipleship

This doesn’t necessarily mean quitting our jobs or moving to foreign countries. For most of us, our mission field is daily life: “Christ teaches us how to evangelize, how to invite people into communion with him, and how to create a culture of witness: namely, through love. A Christian life lived with charity and faith is the most effective form of evangelization.”

The first step towards living this life is allowing Jesus to meet and transform us daily. If we respond to his grace, our lives will show we have something beyond what the world offers: we follow a person whose love changes our lives, so we want others to also experience his transforming love.

When we live in union with God, open to his prompting, we’re more able to see the opportunities for witness and his guidance in responding to these opportunities. We may fear doing the wrong thing or saying the wrong thing, but we do not need to be afraid. Jesus promised his disciples, “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Identity Crisis

As a society and as individuals, we often measure ourselves by false standards: by what and how much we do, our successes or failures, how others treat us, the degree of our pleasure or independence, etc. And when these changeable substitutes prove to be insufficient, or when we are faced with challenges and suffering, we may feel helpless, alone, or abandoned; we may be tempted to feel as though our lives have decreased value or worth.

But God’s love—individual, real, unchanging—is the true source of our worth, identity, and dignity. It really is not a question of who we are, but rather whose we are. Because his love will never change, nothing can reduce our God-given dig-

Culture of Life

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nity, and nothing can diminish the immeasurable worth of our lives.

Our Response

When someone is facing great trials, we need to meet them where they are, walk with them on their journey, intercede for them, and be open to sharing Christ's love however he directs.

When, for example, a woman becomes pregnant and her boyfriend threatens to leave if she continues the pregnancy, we need to lovingly walk with her. When family members or friends become seriously ill, we need to assure them that God still offers them something in this life, and they still have purpose. We need to consistently be with them every step of the way.

Sometimes our actions speak for themselves; other times, words are needed. Whatever the situation, Jesus knows how to speak to each person's heart; we simply need to follow where he leads.

A Culture of Life

This is how we answer our missionary call. This is how we build a culture of life, a culture that joyfully proclaims the truth of God's love, purpose, and plan for each person. Changing the culture is a process of conversion that begins in our own hearts and includes a willingness to be instructed and a desire to be close to Jesus—the source of joy and love.

When we encounter Christ, experience his love, and deepen our relationship with him, we become more aware of our own worth and that of others. His love for each person is cause for great joy, and growing understanding of this priceless treasure motivates us to share his love with others. Our lives are often changed by the witness of others; so too, others' lives may be changed by our witness and authentic friendship with them. Let us go, therefore, and not be afraid. God is always with us.

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Catholic School Open Houses

St. Paul on the Lake Catholic School – January 28th from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
170 Grosse Pointe Blvd., Grosse Pt Farms • stpaulonthelake.com • (313) 885-3430

St. Clare of Montefalco Catholic School – January 28th from 2 – 4 p.m.
16231 Charlevoix, Grosse Pointe Park • stclareschool.net • (313) 647-5100

St. Joan of Arc Catholic School – February 1st from 6 – 9 p.m.
22415 Overlake Street, St. Clair Shores • info@stjoan.net (586) 775 8370

St. Germaine Catholic School – January 28th from 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
28250 Rockwood, St. Clair Shores • stgermaine.org • (586) 771 - 0890

Our Lady Star of the Sea School – January 28th from Noon – 3 p.m.
467 Fairford, Grosse Pointe Woods • starschoolgrossepointe.org • (313) 884-1070

St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School – January 28th from 1 – 3 p.m.
21100 Madison Street, St. Clair Shores • stisaacjoguesschool.org • (586) 771-3525

U of D Jesuit High School & Academy - Call for registration information
8400 S. Cambridge, Detroit • uofdjesuit.org • (313) 862-5400

Regina High School - Call for registration information
13900 Masonic Blvd., Warren • reginahs.com • Phone: (586) 585-0500

De La Salle Collegiate - Call for registration information
14600 Common Road, Warren • delasallehs.com • Phone: 586.778.2207



The Brazeal Dennard Chorale, founded in 1972, has specialized in promoting the tradition of the Negro Spiritual and African American composers – though they easily shift into performing the classical choral bulwarks by Mendelssohn, Handel and others.

Born in Detroit in 1929, Dennard earned a master's degree at Wayne State University and spent many years teaching in Detroit Public Schools, and later served as an adjunct faculty member at Wayne State. He arranged and recorded spirituals and was instrumental in creating the annual Classical Roots concerts with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, which celebrates the contributions of African Americans to the classical tradition.

The Chorale eventually sparked two offshoots: the Brazeal Dennard Community Chorus and the Brezeal Dennard Youth Chorale. Dennard died at the age of 81 in 2010, but the music he loved did not perish with him. Now, under the direction Alice McAllister Tilman, the Chorale carries on the tradition of its founder.

On Sunday, February 18th the Chorale performs here at St. Ambrose at 4 p.m. and on March 2nd and 3rd, they will raise their voices in the Classical Roots concerts with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at Orchestra Hall. More information at brazealdennard.com.

All Things Considered

These days when kids are exposed to extreme moral relativism and "alternate truths," Catholic schools are more important than ever. In the face of increasing secularization, Catholic schools provide an atmosphere that privileges Gospel values and reinforces the role of parents as the primary educators of their children.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has written, *"Catholic schools afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the fourfold purpose of Christian education, namely, to provide an atmosphere in which the Gospel message is proclaimed, community in Christ is experienced, service to our sisters and brothers is the norm, and thanksgiving and worship of God is cultivated."*

This is Catholic Schools Week, typically observed with open houses and other activities for students, families and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to Church, local communities and the nation.

While we certainly have fewer options of parochial schools in our Archdiocese, we are nevertheless fortunate that in this part of town we still have many great Catholic schools serving us. Take a look at the listing on page two, and if you are a parent or grandparent, you may want to check out the open houses that are being offered. When we operated St. Ambrose Academy, **Sister Marie Cyril Delisi** used to say that you'll know if a school is right for your kids within the first five minutes of entering the building. Check out that theory for yourself.



Lent is the traditional time for adult preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation into the Church at Eastertime.

How does someone know that he or she is ready for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – RCIA? They should feel drawn to walking with the

Lord. RCIA is not merely about becoming Catholic, but it emphasizes listening to the plan that God has for each person.

Those drawn to RCIA may already worship with Catholics and find something about the Mass encouraging them to learn more. Many are drawn by the Eucharist and want to be in Communion with God and other Catholics.

Some people simply have realized there is something missing in their lives. Perhaps they have never had an active church membership. Or maybe they went to a church (whatever denomination) when they were young. Either way, they realize now is the time to explore a lively, vibrant faith.

People are often attracted to a particular parish church. And we hope that parishes represent the best of what Catholicism can be. At the same time, becoming Catholic means joining the universal church, one that connects millions of persons throughout the world

Those who enter RCIA do not necessarily have to have made a commitment to joining the Catholic Church.

Rather, the commitment is to explore the Catholic Church. No one is ever forced to join the Church; we also encourage families not to put pressure on anyone since the decision needs to be made in freedom. Hop on now as Lent begins soon. Contact Chuck Dropiewski.



In compiling the end of year financial statements for our parishioners, we broke down the giving pattern into the following categories:

- 172 donors gave between \$5,000 and \$50,000
- 227 donors gave between \$500 and \$4,999
- 250 donors gave between \$250 and \$499
- 150 donors gave between \$100 and \$249
- 151 donors gave less than \$100 or made no financial donation in 2017.

These figures reflect a composite of all contributions given annually, electronically or in the traditional envelope. If we went with just what came in the weekly envelopes – like last week



Candlemas

Friday, February 2nd is the feast of The Lord's Presentation. Catholics have been observing this festivity since at least the year 386 when, on that date, pilgrims to the Holy Land recorded their participation in candlelight processions, recalling the meeting that Simeon and Anna had with the infant Jesus, "the light of revelation".

Candles blessed on this feast are considered to be especially potent. For this reason, it's Catholic custom to offer Candlemas candles blessed on February 2nd to the faithful for use at home. We will have boxed sets of candles available for you on display at the front of church between now and Lent. We ask that you make a minimum donation of \$5 to cover their cost.

On Saturday, February 3rd, we use these newly blessed candles to honor St. Blaise. Blaise was the Bishop in what we know as modern day Armenia. He once saved a boy from choking to death, and for this reason, he is invoked against diseases of the throat. As part of one of the final purges conducted by the Romans against Christians, Blaise was arrested, tortured and beheaded in the city of Sebaste in the year 316. His feast was immediately popular among Eastern Christians, and his fame was later brought to the Western Church by the Crusaders.

In accord with custom, we will invoke the protection of St. Blaise on those who come to have their throats blessed on his feast day. We'll conduct individual throat blessings this Saturday, February 3rd, after the 4 p.m. mass.

All Things Considered

Continued from Page 3

– this parish wouldn’t last until the next federal budget extension.

We live in the midst of some challenging times. But we are not to operate in fear, but in faith in a God who is bigger than the latest media headlines of our day. We need to be dependable stewards and generous givers with whatever we have.



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. Ordinarily, we would celebrate Mardi Gras with a parish party the weekend before. But the untimely death of our executive chef, **Fred Whaley** finds us reorganizing the ARK’s catering operations. For that reason, we are taking a pass this year on a pre-lenten party.

It is our intention to continue our famous meatless dinners on the Fridays of Lent. As to how exactly we will put the kitchen together for that remains to be seen. We are currently talking with different caterers and chefs about a limited contract that will cover just the Lent and Holy Week food services.

Food preparation aside, we absolutely need the volunteer services of our parishioners in order to make the event work. In order to keep the price-point where it is and not reduce the menu quality or quantity, we depend on the volunteer labor of our parishioners and friends. Last year we lost a lot of our teen helpers and that sent us scrambling.

So, starting early, we are going to ask for volunteers and volunteer coordinators. There will be a sign-up sheet in the back of church, or you can send us an email letting us know what days you will be available. Volunteers are needed the afternoon before to help set up the room. Then there is a crew needed to bus tables and help at the buffet service. And it’s always good to have a fresh couple of volunteers come in at the end of the night to do the final clean up and help reset the room for the next event. Our Lenten Dinners have a great reputation, not only for the food, but for the fellowship and community they engender. Let’s build on that.

TRP

Post Diakonos

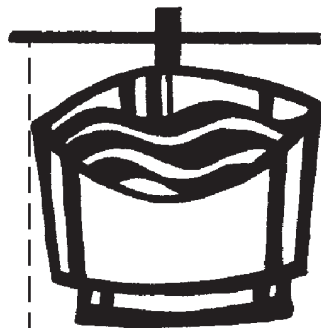
My brother (who reads our bulletin, so maybe I should have cleared this with him, in which case – oops?) told me when we were in college that he’s only ever felt comfortable in three places: a church, a school, and a bar. He became a teacher. Maybe his comfort zones are mine? A couple of decades in the hotel business meant that I kind of chose “bar” for a while, but that couldn’t last. It’s a young person’s game anyway. Still regarding “bar” (and parents, you might want to ask the children to leave the room for this) there is something to be said about having that certain place to go when you have nothing in particular to do and good company with which to do it. If you have such a place, bully for you. I am sure they are out there, but I ain’t misbehavin’ so I don’t know anymore, nor do I need to. What I mostly see are dreary chains and all-hat-no-horse “concepts,” with the emphasis on the first syllable.

I reckon you can have a great bar without a great bartender. And you can have a great church without a great pastor – in fact, it’s a sure sign that ministry is the work of all the people. But, could you possibly have a great school without great teachers? I’m thinking not. When my brother and I were making our way through the Philadelphia schools we rode the peaks of two cresting waves: as adolescents we saw the final years when women religious were able to maintain a substantial and determinative presence in parish schools, and as teenagers in a public school we caught the GI Bill-funded generation of teachers pretty much in their prime time. I owe so much to these women and men.

I can only understand it in hindsight, but those Mercy sisters implemented the ideals of Vatican II, and all it taught about the Church in the modern world, while the ink was still drying on the documents. And the men at the high school (and it was mostly men on the faculty; it was an all boys’ school with a long history) seemed almost as staggered as we were at having ended up together: deeply immersed in the arts and sciences and living out that great minds/average minds/small minds aphorism that Eleanor Roosevelt never said she said, but there it is. They were frank about their upbringing, and the commonality was remarkable. Many of them were Jewish kids from big families who grew up living day to day with lots of financial insecurity, and were the first generation to earn a degree and become professionals. The sisters were far more circumspect about their lives – and so young, and perhaps still sorting it out – but what I remember was their warmth, their joy, and their positivity. Did they surrender everything to follow Jesus? I am sure they did. Yet their lives looked full to me.

But how do you thank someone who has taken you from crayons to a MOOC? It isn’t easy, but let’s try.

Fr. Robert Wotypka, OFM, Cap



Return this to the Parish Rectory or drop in the Collection basket.

Christian Initiation for Adults 2017-18

NAME _____
 HOME PHONE _____
 WORK PHONE _____
 E-MAIL _____

Faith Formation Station

"If we're faithful to prayer, God gives us the strength to be what we're praying for and to make a difference in the world." -- Sr. Janet Schaeffler, OP

We have just completed our first semester in religious education classes with progress reports being mailed out in early February. As catechists we find that our students tend to forget their traditional prayers: prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, meal prayers, Nicene Creed. One might consider whether children today should memorize traditional prayers; maybe they don't understand the words or they would rather use their own. Spontaneous prayer is what comes most naturally to children and is a precious connection to God. I know in my own home we cherish our spontaneous daily prayer and our simple nighttime prayers that so often encompass all the events and emotions of our day. These are the prayers that we feel like we are so closely talking to God and expressing our personal hopes, cares, fears, and intentions. While we don't want to hamper these uniquely personal prayers, it is also important for children to have a connection to the Christian community and its prayer practices.

Traditional prayers connect children with their Catholic heritage as well as to people in the past, all the way back to Jesus and even further to the ancient Israelites. These prayers have been said millions of times for hundreds of years. When we learn the words to these prayers, we pray as others did long ago, including Jesus, Mary, and all the saints. Take time this month to review these prayers with your child/ren. Many of them can be found in the back of our classroom textbooks and a handout full of prayer ideas will be coming home with the progress reports.

Family life is hectic and fast-paced. But if we remember that faith is the underlying foundation of family life, a solid thread that is part of every aspect of life for ourselves and our families, then there is plenty of time for faith, right in the midst of all of the responsibilities, activities and tasks at hand. In fact, faith in Christ can give all those other parts of our lives new and greater focus.

As parents we give our children many things: time, attention, food, clothing, a home. Behind all of the things we give them, however, is the message that we love and care for them. God gives us many wonderful things as his children: our lives, talents, material resources. We know these are signs for us of God's love and care for us. As we hope our children will learn to respond to the love in which they are nurtured and grow, God hopes we will respond to all that we have been given by growing gratitude and by responding generously.

As we remember that God loves us beyond our greatest imagining, we should respond by making a commitment to go to Mass every Saturday evening or Sunday as a family. There will be weeks when this will really take a lot of effort, when the ball games, chores and the hope for a few moments of rest tempt us to stay home instead. Yet, numerous studies point to the positive impact of family worship in the development of healthy and holy behaviors and attitudes among children and teens. Weekly Mass attendance is part of our call as Catholics to be active followers of our faith. Lead your children by your own faith example and make Mass attendance a weekly priority in your family. God bless you and your family as you head to Mass together to celebrate your faith and your special part of our St. Ambrose faith community.

Kelly Woolums

Vincentian Reflection

In the Gospel today we read that because Jesus spoke with authority his reputation spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. As his disciples, we can also speak with authority when we put our faith into action by helping those living in poverty. This month, through your gifts, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was able to assist 115 families in our neighborhood by providing them with food, help with utility, rent and other bills, clothing and household goods. All of these make their lives a little more hopeful and remind them that they are loved.

Pray Every Day



Could you be searching for a fresh new way to pray every day of this New Year?

Daily Prayer 2018 is your guide to prayer that includes scripture, psalmody, a brief reflection, general intercessions, and a closing prayer. It is ideal for personal and family reflection upon the word of God. This also makes an excellent gift for a senior, a newlywed or for a student away at college.

These prayerbooks are now discounted to \$10 each – which is a modest investment in someone's spiritual formation. To pick up a copy of this year's Daily Prayer 2018, stop in the back of church or call the rectory office at 822-2814.

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the
St. Ambrose Catholic Community
Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc
Assistant: Rev. Robert Wotycka OFM, Cap
Assistant: Rev. Mr. John Maksym
Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski
Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums
Minister of Music: Norah Duncan IV
Office Manager: Pamela Moffitt

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton

Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230

Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838

Email address: stambrose@comcast.net

Religious Education: (313) 822-1248

Pastoral Ministry: (313) 822-2017

Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814

Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

Monday, January 29

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Tuesday, January 30

8:30 a.m. - Mass- Joann VanGampelaere, Sophie Angelescu, Anne Martin

Wednesday, January 31

St. John Bosco, priest

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Thursday, February 1

8:30 a.m. - Mass - William Schneedecker, Joanne Mieszczak, Gerry Baker

Friday, February 2

The Presentation of the Lord

8:30 a.m.- Mass - William Grogan, Rev. Daniel McGrath

Saturday, February 3

St. Blase, bishop & martyr

(Blessing of Throats after mass)

4:00 p.m. - Mass - For All People

Sunday, February 4

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30 a.m. - For All People

11:15 a.m. - For All People



Scriptures for the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Monday, January 29

- 2 Sm 15: 13-14, 30; 16: 5-13
- Ps 3: 2-7
- Mk 5: 1-20

Tuesday, January 30

- 2 Sm 18:9-10,14b, 24-25a, 30- 19: 3
- Ps 86: 1-6
- Mk 5: 21-43

Wednesday, January 31

- 2 Sm 24: 2, 9-17
- Ps 32: 1-2, 5-17
- Mk 6: 1-6

Thursday, February 1

- 1 Kgs 2: 1-4, 10-12
- (Ps) 1 Chr 29: 10-11b, 11d-12d
- Mk 6: 7-13

Friday, February 2

- Mal 3: 1-4
- Heb 2: 14-18
- Lk 2: 22-40 or 2: 22-32

Saturday, February 3

- 1 Kgs 3: 4-13
- Ps 119: 9-14
- Mk 6: 30-34

Sunday, February 4

- Jb 7: 1-4, 6-7
- 1 Cor 9: 16-19, 22-23
- Mk 1: 29-39

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time February 3rd and February 4th

4:00 p.m. – Saturday – Celebrant: Fr. Bede **Lector:** Cathy McPherson
Eucharistic Ministers: Beverly Bennert, Della Cimini, Maria Cox-Borkowski, Karen McShane, Elizabeth Puleo-Tague, Matthew Strong
Altar Servers: Joseph & Andrew Strong

8:30 a.m. – Sunday – Celebrant: Fr. Wotypka **Lector:** Karlos Haynes
Eucharistic Ministers: Colleen Gatzke, Joan Jackson, Maggie Jackson, Steve Linne, Joellyn Valgoi, Chris Walsh
Altar Servers: Nicholas, Margaret, & Meredith Kramer

11:15 a.m. - Celebrant: Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Michele Hodges
Eucharistic Ministers: Lupe Davila, Pat & Michael Moceris, Janis Ramsey, Darryl Swiatkowski, Patty Yaden
Altar Servers: Effie Hodges, Ella Chamberlain

Your Envelope Speaks . . . the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

On Sunday, January 21, 2018

in envelopes we received \$5,931.00
in the loose collection \$431.00
in electronic donations \$1,390.00
in children's envelopes..... \$5.00
for a total of..... **\$7,757.00**
Under budget for the week..... **\$2,343.00**
Number of envelopes mailed 800
Number of envelopes used..... 154

Brothers and sisters: I should like you to be free of anxieties." - 1 Corinthians 7:32

How much anxiety do we bring upon ourselves by constantly worrying about not having enough or attaining more things?

God won't necessarily give you everything you want, but he will provide everything you need.

Try this – use the word “pray” instead of the word “worry” in the future.

Our Sick

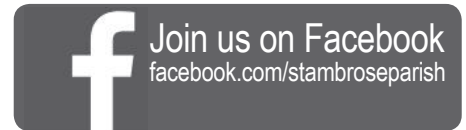
Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Hudson Brown, Andrew Chavez, Maria Chinchilla, Karen Culver, Kathleen Elberson, Ann Sullivan Kay, Josephine Marino, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Mary Myers, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Bucec, Scott Nedoff, Emilie Kasper, Arthur Stoyshin, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Darby O'Toole, Martha Luna, Dan Urbiel, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Mike Corrion, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Alexandra Billiu, Jan Ramsey and Mark Olstyn

Bowling for Babies

Join Pregnancy Aid from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., TODAY, Sunday, January 28, 2018 at Lakeshore Lanes for its annual fundraiser – Bowling for Babies.

Enjoy unlimited bowling, shoe rental and food. The cost is \$15 per adult (20+) and \$10 for children 4 through 19. Children 4 and under are free.

Lakeshores Lanes is located at 31025 Jefferson (near 13 Mile Rd.), St. Clair Shores. Call Pregnancy Aid at (313) 882-1000 for more information.



Pointes for Peace

This coming Monday, January 29th, Pointes for Peace will meet to discuss **The Moral Relevance of Korea's Peace History.**

The featured speaker will be Dr. Hope Elizabeth May, professor of philosophy at Central Michigan University, where she also directs the Center for International Ethics.

Dr. May has lectured numerous times in South Korea, and in 2017 received a Fulbright Scholarship to teach at the graduate institute of Peace Studies at Kyunghee University in Namyangyu, South Korea.

Pointes for Peace will meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Ewald Branch of the Grosse Pointe Public Library at 15175 E. Jefferson, in Grosse Pointe Park. For more information email: pointesforpeace@yahoo.com

Catholic Schools Week

A Catholic Education is Worth the Sacrifice



I never imagined that crossing paths with homeless people would become a part of our children's grade school education. Who would put that on the curriculum? "Diversity" was not a concept to be learned but a reality to be lived. In school they studied alongside both very wealthy children and some from the well-known poor side of town. They learned almost with a shrug to include children and adults from vastly different backgrounds with compassion and acceptance. Doing so at a Catholic school, they learned about the world through a lens filtered by charity, the greatest virtue of all. There is no trade-off for that. None.

After 16 years, my wife, Sally, and I are in our first year of not having our two children in Catholic schools. Our daughter and son now attend a public university. So as we reflect on our choices, we zero in on two principal reasons that we are pleased we chose Catholic schools.

First, we wanted our children exposed to the Catholic faith daily and to a value system that would forever be a part of their lives. They could and did get this exposure at home as well. But parents are not perfect. So the institution's reinforcement of our values and a community to support us were blessings, indeed.

The second reason was to have our children experience their inevitable exposure to a secular world through the filter of Catholic institutions that theoretically value the life of every person. In their grade school, our children endured an interesting playground rule. The older children did not play games but rather monitored the younger students. The older ones grumbled, but they learned every day that to a certain extent they are indeed their sisters' and brothers' keepers.

Then our children went to an Ursuline high school whose motto is *Serviam*, which translates, "I will serve." I like that motto in an era when self-fulfillment and being happy are the current cultural infatuations of American society. Many schools, including public schools, are now requiring community service of some kind. That's great, but even better, I think, is when "I will serve" is your motto, your mission. Service is central to our faith, and probably much healthier for one's personal health than all the modern rhetoric about self-fulfillment.

Much of the promotional material I've seen from Catholic school leaders emphasizes academic achievement, a quality education, discipline, values, and a Christian community-based experience. Catholic parents, like all other parents, want the best for their children. Maybe that's why the appeals focus so much on the kinds of secular successes that win the admiration of our society.

So one challenge facing Catholic schools is not to market their achievements and accomplishments so much that they end up sounding elitist, arrogant, and exclusive. To be a

leader in athletics and academics generates great pride. But in some communities, it has become a divisive source of bitterness.

The research also shows that sending children to Catholic schools is no longer a choice for some parents as the cost becomes prohibitive and the decreasing number of Catholic schools makes them less accessible.

A couple of years after our oldest child graduated from grade school, I ran into the mother of one of my daughter's classmates and asked how her girl was doing. OK, she said, but the child had wanted to go to a Catholic high school and they just couldn't afford it. She seemed sad as she said it, and no doubt she was. But I imagine I'm the first among many who never wanted the tuition to increase very much. Such is the dilemma of Catholic schools for which the answer is frightfully elusive: paying higher salaries while controlling costs and keeping tuition as low as possible.

I cannot write about Catholic schools without talking about money. I used to tease other parents that one unwritten rule is that they could never enter a Catholic school unless they wrote a check for something. Sally and I observed with curiosity but without resentment as others we knew sent their children to public schools and were able to afford more things like better houses in nicer neighborhoods. But we know all about choices and trade-offs, and we don't regret being pro-choice about Catholic schools.

As I make the case for Catholic schools, I also think of one of the most faith-inspired Catholics I know. She just retired after years of teaching in a public school. I know she modeled solid values for her students, and she undoubtedly provided a quality education. I am thrilled that Catholics take their values and skills into the secular world and model the faith so fruitfully in public school settings. So I am not disparaging public schools or their teachers. Neither am I implying that children cannot receive a quality education in a public school. They can, and many do.

We do not yet know what values our children ultimately will accept for themselves and whether they will practice their faith as they move into adulthood. But we believe that their experiences of Christian community and service in Catholic schools were worth the sacrifices and numerous extra checks. The schools successfully handed down the faith to the next generation, and our children had as many faith-based experiences as possible in an increasingly secular society. Given a choice to give them the same opportunity again, we would.

By Ed Wojcicki excerpted from U.S Catholic Magazine. Log on to uscatholic.org/life/2008/07/a-catholic-education-worth-sacrifice