

**FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

Dear Parishioners,

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” (1 Cor 6:19-20)

These words from St. Paul remind us that the call to holiness is a call to “whole-ness.” As the essay below explains, to be all that the Lord is calling us to be we should try to maintain.

With my prayers,  
Father Conley

**Want to Grow Spiritually? Get Physical!** by Eric Sammons  
*Mind and Spirit Magazine* August 21, 2018

Anyone who has been a disciple of Christ for any real length of time knows that the spiritual life can be hard. Having a life of prayer, regularly reading the Bible or other spiritual works, dying to self to serve others: these things don't come naturally to most of us. Although we might experience bursts of spiritual enthusiasm from time to time, remaining motivated to maintain and improve our spiritual health is challenging. Many factors can influence our spiritual life: psychological factors, external influences, and the effects of Original Sin are a few that come to mind. But there's one factor that I think is often overlooked, although it can have a great impact on our spiritual health: Physical health.

**The Body/Soul Duet**

It's a fundamental Christian teaching that the human person consists of body and soul. Like the animals, we have a body that occupies space, eats, sleeps, and engages in various activities in this physical world. Like the angels, we are also spirit: we have a soul that is eternal, cannot be seen, and can communicate with the spiritual world, including with the creator of the universe. It's common among Christians to see these two parts of the human person as almost completely separate. What impacts the body has no impact on the soul, and what lifts up (or brings down) the soul doesn't have any effect on the body.

But this is not the case. We are a *composite* of body and soul—what impacts one aspect of our selves will impact the other. This is something I have come to realize from experience.

I've had nagging health issues over the past decade. Nothing too serious, but enough to impact my daily life. One particular problem has been related to energy and digestive issues. ...For years I was plagued by lethargy, “brain fog,” and stomach problems. Doctors had no conclusive answers for me.

During this time it was hard for me to be active or to do much more than the bare minimum I needed to support myself and my family. It was also difficult for me to keep up with my spiritual life. I had little desire to spend time in prayer, I didn't read spiritual books, and I had no energy to serve others....Over time I came to discover that my eating habits were the culprit of my health issues. I was pre-diabetic and my body had a hard time processing carbohydrates. So I put myself on a different diet and began intermittent fasting. I noticed the physical difference almost immediately: I now had energy, my brain fog was lifted, and my digestive issues disappeared. Needless to say, I was ecstatic.

**Physical Energy Leads to Spiritual Energy.**

But I noticed something else. With the regaining of my physical energy, I had also regained my *spiritual* energy. I had the energy to get up early and spend time in prayer. I had the mental clarity to read spiritual works and contemplate their insights. I began again to look to serve others, instead of just budgeting my energy to make sure I could maintain my own existence. My physical improvement was directly connected to spiritual improvement.

Although it was a surprise for me, this phenomenon really shouldn't have been. In fact, St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, understood it centuries ago. The rule of life he created for his monks is a wonderful blend of spiritual and physical advice. Unlike some monks before him, Benedict urged moderation in all things, including in physical endeavors. His monks didn't overeat, but neither did they observe overly-rigorous fasts (at least, by the standards of their times). He also advocated for a balanced life: the monks were to spend their day in equal parts silent prayer and contemplation, corporate worship, and physical labor. They were to have a strict schedule to ensure that both their physical bodies and their spirits remained healthy. It's no surprise, then, that so many monks were not only holy, but also had long lifespans in a time before modern medicine.

**Improving Your Physical and Spiritual Health.**

All Christians should seek ways to improve their spiritual health. They should want to grow in their intimacy with Christ and desire to be more and more like him. But in order to do this, a Christian must also take care of his or her physical health. Here are a few recommendations:

**Eat Well.** The modern diet is awful for our bodies. Too many people are like I was: pre-diabetic, low-energy, with brain fog and digestive issues. Diet is the main culprit in a lot of these cases. Do what you can to improve your own diet. Do some research and consider a low-carbohydrate diet like the Keto diet.

**Exercise.** You don't need to be a marathon runner or a bodybuilder. But many of us spent most of our days sitting at a desk, and such a lifestyle causes all kinds of health problems. So spend at least 15-30 minutes a day getting some physical exercise.

**Live a Scheduled Lifestyle.** Make a schedule for your daily routine. Be sure to allocate time for prayer—preferably an hour a day. Get up early, and go to bed early. Like the monks of old, such a lifestyle will improve your physical health, which in turn will ramp up your spiritual health.

**Minimize Screen Time.** Modern life includes hours spent daily in front of screens: computer screens, TV screens, mobile screens. This constant screen time keeps us from physical activity and can easily lead to the sin of sloth. Plan times in your daily routine without screens—time spent for both physical and spiritual activity.

**Intermittent Fasting.** The religions of the world have advocated fasting for millennia. In fact, it's one of the few activities that all religions agree is spiritually beneficial. Now scientific research has shown that fasting—specifically intermittent fasting, where a person fasts for 16-20 hours daily—is highly beneficial to the body as well. Incorporate intermittent fasting into your routine, and discover its physical and spiritual benefits.

God has made us physical and spiritual beings. We are not simply animals, nor are we angels. These two aspects of our selves are intimately connected, so if you want to have spiritual health, be sure to also work on your physical health.

**THIS FRIDAY IS FIRST FRIDAY AND WE WILL HAVE EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT** following the 9:30 Mass. Volunteers are needed to sign up for adoration times from 3 to 7. The sign-up sheet is in the foyer. Come and pray in the presence of the Lord in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

**BECOMING CATHOLIC OR "MORE" CATHOLIC** - If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a full member of the Catholic Church by receiving all of the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation, please contact Fr. Conley or Sue Wolfe.

**"FOLLOWING JESUS: PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING"** is the subject of our next faith formation class. **The class will begin on Thursday, September 13.** The subsequent classes will be on September 27, October 11 and 25, November 8 and 29 and December 13. This DVD series will be presented by Bishop Robert Barron. He is a very popular speaker and has many presentations on YouTube. We will continue our usual format on Thursday nights for this seven part series. The cost is just \$10 for the series to defray some of the food costs. You may sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr Conley at [frconley@comcast.net](mailto:frconley@comcast.net)

**CCD REGISTRATION** will be held on the weekends of September 8 & 9, and September 15 & 16, after all the Masses in Sue Wolfe's office, and next Monday – Thursday from 10AM – 5PM in her office.

Middle School starts on Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup> from 7-8:30, and Elementary School starts on September 23rd following the 10:00 Mass.

**RETREAT DAY ON DIVINE HEALING ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6 FROM 9:30A.M. TO 3:30**

**P.M.** The day will focus on Healing Prayer with presentations on praying for physical and inner healing. The retreat day will conclude with the evening Mass and opportunities to receive Prayer for healing and the Sacrament of Anointing. You can register at [www.eventbrite.com/e/healing-prayer-retreat-tickets-49560541915](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/healing-prayer-retreat-tickets-49560541915)

**OUR CHOIRS NEED YOUR HELP!!!** *We are now asking SMB members to consider joining our 10 AM or our Noon choirs. Our music ministry provides beauty, joy, comfort, inspiration, and prayer. This is possible only with the generous sharing of the time and talent of our committed choir members. If you can carry a tune and want to join a group of loving, caring Christians, please consider joining us! If interested, please call Kaye Oliver at 240-254-2463.*

**FALL DINNERFEST** is fast approaching. There will be a Planning Meeting on September 5, in the Parish Hall at 7p.m.

**MASS PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM** - The little ones of the parish are invited to join us for some Sunday fun and learning at the St. Mary's Angels, Mass Pre-school program for ages infant-five years (infant spots limited) at the 10:00 am Mass. Parents can attend Mass each Sunday, while your children interact with other children in a religious atmosphere. The program will start on September 23rd. Don't miss out on the fun and a free service. RSVP: Lisa Shumaker [smbacct@comcast.net](mailto:smbacct@comcast.net), or (301)870-2220 ext. 11.

**COUNTRY FIXIN'S DINNER** – Sacred Heart in La Plata is having their dinner on Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup> from 12 Noon - 5 PM. Menu: Fried Chicken, Pulled Pork, Baked Crab Balls, Parsley Potatoes, Green Beans, Corn Pudding, Cole Slaw, Baked Apples/Pears, Rolls & Butter. \$25 per dinner. all you can eat. Carry-out/Drive- Thru Menu: 4 pc. Chicken, Pulled Pork, Potatoes, Green Beans, Cole Slaw, Roll, Meal or Bucket: \$16.00. Baked Crab Balls 6 for \$5.00. Children 6-12 is \$10, Children under 6 are free.

**ALTAR SERVERS** are needed for our weekend Masses. Parents with children who are interested should contact Karen Bray at 301-274-4469. Servers must be in the fourth grade or above to be servers.

**RELIGIOUS GOODS STORE WILL BE HAVING SELECT ITEMS ON SALE FROM 50 -70% OFF ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, AFTER ALL THE MASSES.**

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**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:**

**SUN:** 8am Rev. Withrop Brainerd, 10am Parishioners, **12N:** Janet Joy Brillantes, **MON:** 8am Jessie Chlysta, **TUES:** 8am Ernest J. Keller, J r., **WED:** 8am Jessie Chlysta, **THURS:** 8am Mary Theresa Bowen, **FRI:** 9:30am Richard Koch, **SAT:** 9am Maurice Long, Sr., 4pm Donald Goldsmith.

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:**

Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Susan Welch Day, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Jim Middleton, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Ryan Myers, Joseph Quade, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Gary Williams, Brice Zimmer.

**OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:**

\$8,234.50. The unidentified donations totaled \$584.50. We received \$50.00 for our School Support