

Spirit of Life

Roman Catholic Church

“HELPING IN GOD’S HOUSE”

JERRY HOPFAUF REFLECTS ON STEWARDSHIP

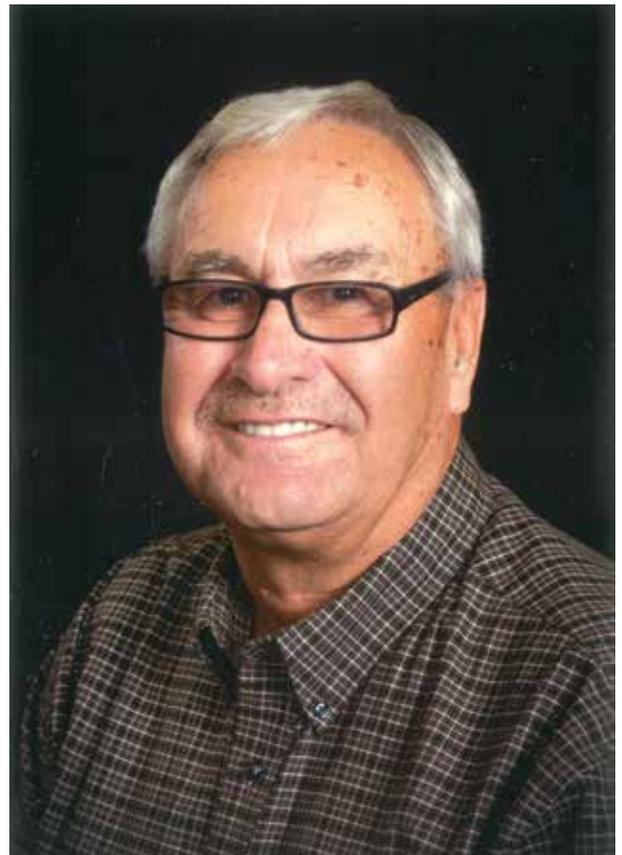
Parishioner Jerry Hopfauf was raised in a small Catholic community in rural North Dakota. Beginning at the age of 6, he traveled to a Catholic boarding school in Fallon every Monday morning and returned home on Friday evenings. In the coldest months, it was a five-mile commute that often required a horse and sleigh just to navigate the snowy terrain. The school itself was made up of two classrooms and a chapel where a daily Mass was held for the young students. It was in that small school, as well as in his family home, that Jerry learned not only about reading and math, but also the great importance of having a vibrant faith life.

Today, Jerry is an active parishioner here at Spirit of Life, serving as an usher and a greeter, and often pitching in to help out with various parish functions.

“It’s a good feeling to be involved and feel like you belong,” he says. “It’s the idea of saying there is more to it than just coming to church and back home on a Sunday. There are so many times you can see the church needs help with something, and it just feels so good to be able to help.”

Jerry enjoys serving as an usher and greeter because it allows him to get to know the other parishioners and be there to assist them with any needs that might arise during the Mass.

“I’ve always been a ‘people person,’ and I enjoy talking to people,” Jerry says. “I like being able to stand there as a part of the church and greet people, answer any questions they might have, pass the basket and help



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“THEREFORE GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS”

Evangelization, the Church, and Our Commitments as Stewards

According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus’ parting words to us before He ascended to heaven after His resurrection included these instructions: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

That is, quite frankly, a call to evangelization. Clearly, evangelization is not new to the Church – it is traced to that call from Jesus Christ, a call to His apostles and followers of that time, and that call continues today in relation to us and our lives as Catholics. “Evangelization” has become a bit of a “catchphrase” in today’s Church. Of course, it is not a new idea, nor is it a new call.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis’ absolute first publication – officially an apostolic exhortation – was titled *Evangelii Gaudium*, which means “The Joy of the Gospel.” In that document, the pope had much to say about evangelization, including this: “Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love” (120).

Nevertheless, the idea of evangelization is nothing new. Pope St. John Paul II issued an encyclical in December 1990 titled *Redemptoris Missio* – “The Mission of the Redeemer” – in which he called for the church to renew its efforts in evangelization. This has become known as the “new evangelization,” but within, what Pope St. John Paul II says is that the Church “must renew her missionary commitment.” He adds, “Faith is strengthened when it is shared and given to others” (2).

Yet, it would seem that some Catholics resist this call to evangelization, perhaps recalling images of street preachers, television evangelists or door-to-door

groups saying “repent” or talking about the “wages of sin.” Or, we may feel that evangelization is the role of saints or missionaries or Catholic priests. The truth is that evangelization is born from a love of people and a desire that everyone comes to know the love of Christ and the blessings of living as part of His Kingdom.

Over a decade before Pope St. John Paul II addressed this issue, Pope Paul VI issued an apostolic exhortation in 1975 titled *Evangelii Nuntiandi* – “Evangelization in the Modern World” – in which the pope said, “We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing of all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church” (14).

So, what does this mean to us as faithful stewards? Obviously, each of us is called to be an evangelist. That does not mean we go door-to-door or stand on street corners proclaiming our faith. Our own mission statement has a strong flavor of evangelization, especially because of our effort to embrace stewardship as a way of life. In recent years, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued two pastoral letters – one called *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy of Catholic Evangelization*, and the other titled *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*. The connection between stewardship, evangelization and discipleship is obvious, it would seem.

Pope Francis also said in his first official statement *Evangelii Gaudium* the following: “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ” (10). That is who we are, or who we should be.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

NOVEMBER IS A TIME FOR THANKSGIVING

Dear Parishioners,

November seems to automatically bring us to thoughts of thanksgiving and Thanksgiving – it is both a time of year when we tend to think in terms of gratitude to God, and a time when we also formally celebrate our American holiday. My memories of Thanksgiving are filled with food, of course, but they are also filled with thoughts of family and a sense of togetherness and a sense of my faith.

But this is also a significant month in the Church from a number of perspectives. Nov. 1 is a Holy Day, the Solemnity of All Saints. The next day is All Souls Day, a day devoted to all the saints in our lives – living, not living, known, and unknown.

Most of us have people in our lives who have had a profound impact on us – people we can consider our own personal saints. This month is a wonderful reminder to think of them, thank them, and thank God for making them a part of our lives.

Our Thanksgiving holiday falls on Nov. 23, and is a time for families and gratitude. Thanksgiving became official in the United States in 1863, and in his proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln made very clear Whom we needed to thank. “To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have



been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God,” Lincoln said. In other words, we all need to thank Almighty God for our many blessings.

Finally, November also brings us to the end of one Church year and the beginning of a new one. The Feast of Christ the King on Nov. 26 officially begins the final week of our liturgical year, and the First Sunday of Advent is on Dec. 3. From the beginning of the month

when we thank God for the example of the saints and the saintly people in our lives, to the end of the month when we thank God for everything we have and everything we are, November is a time to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship truly is all about – about approaching God, about approaching each day, and about approaching all those with whom we come in contact with hearts filled with gratitude and love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Msgr. Chad Gion". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Msgr. Chad Gion,
Pastor

TANGIBLE EXPRESSIONS OF CHRIST'S LOVE: J

Many of us are already in the midst of our holiday preparations – purchasing plane tickets for upcoming travels, planning menus for holiday meals, and even doing some early Christmas shopping. This is the season, after all, for celebration and an overall spirit of good cheer. Yet, for a family financially struggling, this time of year quickly becomes burdensome. Already struggling just to make ends meet, the thought of providing something extra becomes downright impossible. That's when, says parishioner Shelly Preszler, Spirit of Life's Holiday Food Basket Ministry can make all the difference in a family's life.

"My husband and I had six children when he went back to medical school," Shelly says. "So, we were very strapped for money. Christmas was a particularly difficult time for us as we struggled to get gifts for our children. I just remember that people were so generous to us during that time, and it's an experience that has really stuck with me. Now I'm so grateful to be able to give back to others in similar situations through this ministry."

In addition to providing weekly baskets containing the basic food needs, the Holiday Food Basket Ministry also works to ensure



In conjunction with its efforts to provide food, the Holiday Food Basket Ministry also coordinates the parish Angel Tree.

that every family has the needed resources to properly celebrate special holidays with their family. For Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, struggling families are given a specially assembled basket containing a ham or turkey along with the basics needed for a holiday dinner.

"The ministry is meeting a basic need for food by helping those in the community who are at greatest risk," Shelly says. "When

people are in a tight spot and don't know where else to turn to for food, Spirit of Life works hard to treat them with love and respect by caring and providing for their needs in a variety of ways. And then, to take it a step further, it's also a real way for parishioners to get involved in the giving spirit of the season."

In conjunction with these holiday food baskets, the ministry also coordinates the parish Angel

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The Holiday Food Basket Ministry

Tree. Each “angel” contains information for a specific size and items that can be donated to a child or adult for Christmas. Gifts are then dropped off to the parish, where they are placed in a room filled with other gifts. Later, Holiday Food Basket recipients can enter the room and “shop” for Christmas presents for their children and loved ones.

“This allows each person to choose a gift that will actually fit their child, rather than just handing them a randomly chosen item,” Shelly says. “It allows them to actually select something for their child. We also have adult gifts, allowing husbands, for example, to choose a gift for their wives or a grandma who helps take care of the kids.”

Similarly, goodie baskets are put together each Easter containing candy and other Easter treats, egg-dyeing kits, and little messages reminding the recipients of the season’s true meaning. This, Shelly says, is just another way for us as a parish family to care for others, bringing the love of Christ to them in real, tangible ways.

“As baptized Christians, we are all called to be Christ here on earth,” Shelly says. “We are called to not only share His love with others, but also any gifts that we have. We need to be generous not only with our time, but also any extra treasures that we have. And by serving in this way, we end up indirectly evangelizing through the way we radiate His love.”

Already blessed with many dedicated volunteers, we hope to see support for the Holiday Food Basket Ministry continue to grow as the holidays approach. For more information, please contact the parish office at 701-663-1660.

JERRY HOPFAUF REFLECTS ON STEWARDSHIP *continued from front cover*

get the gifts ready to be brought up.”

For Jerry, who likes to spend quiet time conversing with Christ, it would be hard to imagine a life that didn’t involve participation in the church. He finds the sanctuary to be especially beautiful when it is filled with people gathering for worship on Christmas and Easter. It is his hope that by serving as a warm and welcoming greeter, he is doing his part to make all visitors feel comfortable and at home here at Spirit of Life, so that they will feel encouraged to return on a regular basis.

Jerry’s wife, Betty, is also actively involved in her local Lutheran parish, and the two of them both participate in church life at their parishes in Mesa, Ariz., when they travel south for the winter.

“No matter where we go, I like to get involved and help out,” Jerry affirms. “It’s a matter of saying, ‘I’m helping in God’s house.’”

“It’s a good feeling to be involved and feel like you belong. It’s the idea of saying there is more to it than just coming to church and back home on a Sunday. There are so many times you can see the church needs help with something, and it just feels so good to be able to help.”
– Jerry Hopfauf

UNDERSTANDING ALL SOULS DAY AND ALL SAINTS DAY

All Souls Day and All Saints Day are two important days on our Catholic calendar, and both illustrate foundational elements of our faith.

On Nov. 1, as we honor the saints, we also honor God with our whole heart and soul. We need the example of the saints, who have carried Christ's cross before us, just as a newborn child needs the help and wisdom of its mother.

The saints have carried us inestimably far along the path of salvation. Many Catholics may never gain eternal life without the graces won by their red and white martyrdoms. Let us pay our saints due honor by decorating our houses and dressing up to celebrate their presence among us. Life is too short to ignore our most loyal friends!

On Nov. 2, All Souls Day, Catholics traditionally visit cemeteries to attend a solemn memorial Mass, arrange beautiful flowers on a loved one's grave, or pray the Holy Rosary for poor souls in purgatory.

Some of us may wonder, "What is purgatory? Why do we honor the dead and pray for them, anyway?"

"The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different than the punishment of the damned," (*Catechism of*

the Catholic Church 1031). The Church formulated her doctrine on purgatory at the Councils of Florence and Trent, and in reference to Scriptural texts which speak of a "cleansing fire," such as 1 Cor 3:15 and 1 Peter 1:7.

Understanding that purgatory truly exists, we easily conclude that there are souls who are there right now. We then need to help these souls through this purification process – especially if they are our loved ones!

This is how the Old Testament character Judas Maccabeus felt: "Therefore (Judas) made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin," (2 Macc. 12:46).

The *Catechism* supports this clearly: "From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may obtain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead" (CCC 1032).

Let us hold the dead close to our hearts and not forget about them. They are helplessly waiting for us to have compassion on them and pray for them this All Souls Day, and every day.



PLANTING SEEDS OF *Hospitality* AT SPIRIT OF LIFE

When the seeds of hospitality are planted, they grow beautiful fruit far into the future.

“When I was growing up, my father owned a grocery store in Mandan, and everyone in my large family worked there,” Trish Bahm says. “My father really made people feel welcome in his store. He had many customers who liked to come in because he made them feel so appreciated.”

Many years later, the impression that Trish’s father made on her continues to stick with her.

“I learned a lot about hospitality from him,” she says. “We were known as the friendliest store in town. My dad used to say, ‘A smile doesn’t cost a cent, but it can really brighten someone’s day and make all the difference. It keeps people coming back!’”

In fact, for the last 25 years, Trish and her husband, Richard, have been helping out with

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“It is important for our parishioners to have a time of fellowship after church, and get to know each other. Hospitality is important to any parish. It can be shown in simple ways – like if you have a vacant seat at your table, you can invite someone to join you. If you make people feel welcome, they will feel much better, make new friends, and really look forward to coming to church.” – Trish Bahm



Parishioners enjoy fellowship with one another over coffee and donuts.

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Change Service Requested

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Spirit of Life

Monday: 8 a.m.

Tuesday - Thursday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.

Friday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.,

Saturday: 9 a.m., 5 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m.

CONFESSIONS: Sunday: 8-8:30 a.m.

Saturday: 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 7-8:30 p.m., and 20 min. before
weekday Masses except Mondays

St. Martin's Parish

Even Months: 9 a.m.

Odd Months: 11 a.m.

St. Anthony's Parish

Even Months: 11 a.m.

Odd Months: 9 a.m.

PLANTING SEEDS OF HOSPITALITY AT SPIRIT OF LIFE

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the Hospitality Ministry to make our parish a warmhearted, welcoming haven. In various ways, they have brought God's love to life by embracing the call to hospitality. Recently, Trish began coordinating the Coffee and Donut Ministry, which provides refreshments after the 9 and 11 a.m. Masses from October until after Easter.

"It is important for our parishioners to have a time of fellowship after church, and get to know each other," she says. "Hospitality is important to any parish. It can be shown in simple ways – like if you have a vacant seat at your table, you can invite someone to join you. If you make people feel welcome, they will feel much better,

make new friends, and really look forward to coming to church."

Time and time again, Trish and Richard have found that being hospitable is a wonderful way to put stewardship into action.

"Hospitality is one of the Four Pillars of Stewardship, and it involves giving of your time," Trish says. "The Coffee and Donut Ministry is an easy way for someone to try volunteering at church, when maybe they don't normally do. I think if they join in on it, they will see that it is not such a big commitment – just one or two Sundays per month – and it really is fun. It's a family-friendly ministry that almost anyone will enjoy doing."

If you would like more information on how to help out with the Coffee and Donut Ministry, please contact the parish office at 701-663-1660.