

2014

# TOGETHER SHARING CHRIST LENT

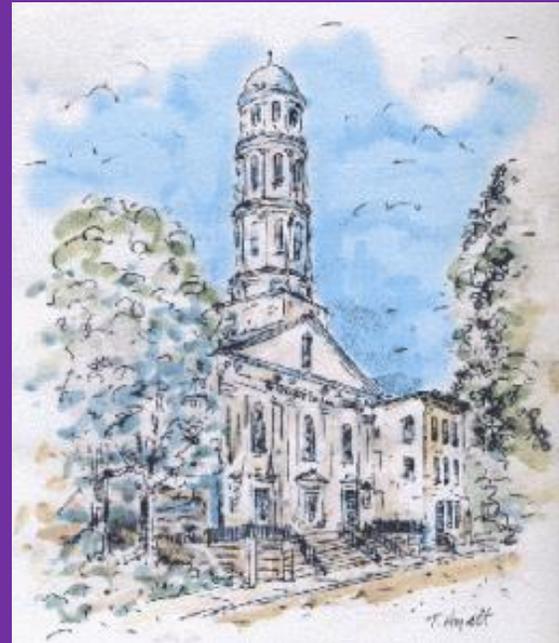
## IN THIS ISSUE:

As we begin our Lenten journeys we look into the “what,” the “so what?” and the “now what?” of our faith life. We will venture into the desert where we consider our discipleship and the sacrifice that is required of us.

- Importance of the desert for Jesus in contemplating his call
- Teaching our kids the story of our faith
- The cold reality of being homeless
- Why did Jesus have to be sacrificed?
- Parish news, including our strategic planning process, new family-oriented ministry

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# Letter from the Pastor

February 28, 2014

Shalom!

Every once in while, someone comes up with a way of putting something that makes it so much clearer than it ever was before that you immediately say to yourself, "That's right. That expresses what I've been trying to say, trying to think, for some time now."

The Liturgy Committee had an experience like that as we were talking about a theme for the Lenten liturgies and how to present it. Janice Bonner (known in the rest of the world as "Dr. Bonner, Professor of Biology at Notre Dame") described trying to get an important concept across to her students. She said that it suddenly came to her that the exposition could be outlined in three questions: "What?" "So What?" and "Now What?"

We sat there and looked at her and at each other for a minute or so, with dawning looks of recognition on our faces. Of course. That's exactly the way it is. Not only in college lecture design, but in liturgy planning, scriptural exegesis, and lots of everyday life.

First comes the "What?" What is it that's new, or that we are trying to learn about or understand better? Whether we get the a new fact from something we've read or a scientific experiment or our own experience, there's something new on our horizon, to be grasped, explored, and integrated with our view of the world up to now. We look at it from as many points of view as we can and ask questions. We try to learn as much about it as we can.

Then comes the second question "So What?" This is where a lot of questions turn out to be dead ends. If the "What" question was "Who is going to win the Oscar?" unless you are in the movie business, the answer to "So What?" may be "Who cares?" The answer to that "what?" really doesn't matter. But sometimes it does matter. Sometimes a little, sometimes a lot. If the "What" question was about the weather, it matters a little. If the question was about whether a friend is trustworthy, it matters a lot. Is this new fact another ornament to be added my Christmas tree of knowledge, or does it demand a radical restructuring of how I view the world?

Then, if there is a substantive answer to the "So what?" question, there finally comes the third question, "Now What?" What demands does this new fact, this new idea, this new way of looking at things, make on me? The answer may be cognitive, calling on me to refine or even to totally reconstruct my way of looking at the world. Or it may be behavioral, calling on me to change the way I respond to things. It may be as small as deciding to take an umbrella or as large as reevaluating a friendship, or even my relationship to God.

As we go through Lent, you will see how the Liturgy Committee used Janice's insightful aphorism to help us as a parish delve into the paschal mystery once again. In the meantime, try it out for yourself in situations large and small, religious and everyday. "What?" "So What?" "Now What?"

Peace and Love,

*Dick*

Pastor

## LETTER FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

January 2014

Dear Parishioners,

As I sit here a few days before the January Town Meeting, the snowflakes are tumbling down and winter is in full force. We have concluded the data collection phase of our Strategic Planning and remain profoundly grateful for your responsiveness. I am hopeful that many of you will be able to attend the presentation of these data at the Town Meeting this Sunday but I realize we may be up against winter weather still. If you cannot be there, both the meeting handout and the full data report for the planning team are posted on our website. Let me know your concerns or questions and I promise you a prompt reply. The Strategic Planning Team will meet in February and the Council will conduct another Town Meeting on March 23 to present their plan to the parish before taking any action on it at their April meeting.

Then the real work will begin as we flesh out the plan looking at our structures and procedures to achieve the vision. Our parish staff and committees will do this work but their efforts will have to be complemented by the talent that sits in our pews. Depending on where the plan takes us, we may need parishioners with expertise in IT, marketing, finance, child development, education, construction, etc.... to consult with the committees. This is an exciting time and there is a new energy that is palpable.

Finally, in the last Council letter, I promised to update you on any changes in our financial picture since our last Town Meeting. We compared the three month offertory giving pattern after the October Town Meeting to the previous three months. There was a 33% increase! But since that was comparing summer to fall, we examined the same comparison from 2012 to see if this was a seasonal jump. In 2012 there was a 1% increase in the same period. We have concluded it is indeed due to your generous response to the financial status information you received. If a level close to this can be sustained, we certainly can begin to address the many current and new ideas likely to emerge from our planning. You are giving us a real margin for growth.

Keep us in your prayers. Do not hesitate to bring any concerns or ideas to anyone on Council; contact information is in the bulletin and/or on the website. Parish Council meetings occur on the second Tuesday of every month and are open to parishioners. The minutes are always posted on the website. There is a box in the Gathering Space for you to submit your ideas or concerns.

Peace and blessings,

*Audrey*

Audrey Rogers for the Parish Council

## FORTY DAYS IN THE DESERT: WHY?

BY ANNE MAURA ENGLISH

Each year at Mass on the First Sunday of Lent, we read the account of the temptations of Jesus. The story is told by all three of the Synoptic Gospels so we hear a slightly different telling of the event depending on which liturgical cycle we are in.<sup>1</sup> In each case, we have traditionally used this as an entrée into themes of sin and temptation and the need for Lenten repentance. Last year, however, I found myself struck by the prelude to those temptations. Jesus is described as spending forty days in the desert. Why?

The evangelists' choice of "forty" is unlikely to have been accidental. In the Bible, forty need not indicate a precise time measurement. Rather it is a powerfully symbolic number, signaling an intensely significant time, a spiritual journey, a transformation to new birth. Noah and family spend forty days in the ark and emerge to a fresh start for humanity. The Israelites spend forty years in the desert beginning the process of learning what it means to be God's people. Elijah is roused from his despairing abandonment of his role as prophet and walks forty days to the Mountain of the Living God where he experiences a personal encounter that reconfirms his mission.

Jesus is described as spending *forty days* in the desert. Why? Perhaps the answer lies in what immediately precedes his turning to the desert: his baptism, an event recorded by all four evangelists.

Our usual understanding of the event seems to be heavily influenced by Matthew's account (Mt 3:16-17). In this telling, when Jesus comes up from the water, a voice is heard proclaiming, "*This* is my son, the beloved; my favor rests on *him*." This revelation seems to be aimed at the bystanders, encouraging them to follow Jesus. John's account has a similar purpose (Jn 1:29-34). Here, John is the only one who hears the voice and uses it to motivate others to follow Jesus.

The other detail which Matthew provides is the Baptist's initial protest that it is Jesus who should be baptizing him. Jesus shows no surprise at this. Instead he assures the Baptist that this is all part of the plan. This presentation is in line with an understanding of Jesus' divine nature that overrides his humanity. Jesus knows exactly who he is, what his mission is, and how this particular incident is supposed to play out.

The account by Mark (the earliest gospel) and Luke; however, have a different nuance (Mk 1:10-11, Lk 3:21-22). Here, the divine voice says, "*You* are my son, the Beloved; in *you* I am well pleased." God is speaking to Jesus, not merely about him. In Luke the voice is not heard at the baptism but rather "when all the people had been baptized and Jesus was at prayer." In light of Jesus' humanity, we may be able to view this passage as a revelation to Jesus. Through the experience of his baptism, Jesus had a revelation of who his Abba is, of the relationship of shared life which his Abba wishes for all humans and of the fully realized perfection of that relationship in Jesus' own life.

How could this be? How could Jesus not know? Well, how do I, how do you "not know?" It is the solid tradition of our faith that by sacramental baptism we have within us sanctifying grace, "uncreated" grace. "Uncreated"—what is the only reality which could possibly be "uncreated?" . . . God. God alone can be uncreated. So any of us, who are not totally turned away from God, have something of God's life--the divine self--within us. Paul gives us a different image of this, speaking of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. The Third Person of the Trinity *dwells within* us. How can I, how can you "not know?" Apparently God's sharing of life with human beings, although it may be always present, does not overpower human consciousness or awareness. We remain fully human. A deepening understanding of Jesus begins with this idea of *fully human*. It is based on the Scriptural insistence that Jesus was "human like us in all things but sin." It is fundamental to the Council of Chalcedon's definition of Jesus as fully God **and** fully human.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus walks the sixty-five miles or so from Nazareth in Galilee to the riverside where John is baptizing. This baptism is not our Christian sacrament. A water baptism—like any other ritual: anointing with oil, bestowing a garment or ring, lighting a candle—can be used in a variety of contexts. The people who came to John could hardly have been seeking to become Christians, nor to be baptized into Jesus in the name of the Triune God. Some—for example the soldiers—would not even have been Jews. But they all seem to have wanted a deeper spirituality, a greater openness to God, a sense of how to respond more fully to the Divine.

“Jesus also came . . . and was baptized in the Jordan.” Was this a genuine seeking, not simply something he acted out to teach something? It can take a while for a gifted person—a Beethoven or an Einstein—to grasp how they are different from other people. Even those not extraordinarily gifted may go through a period of trying to “find themselves,” find their purpose in life. Even so, how fully do they or we really know ourselves? Unlike the others who came to the Jordan, Jesus would not have needed to turn away from sin to enter into a new phase of his life. But did he walk those sixty-five miles in hopes of finding an answer to his inner restlessness, his sense of being called to more, his hunger for something he could not yet name?

If so, the insight, “You are my son, the Beloved one; in you I am well pleased,” might easily have overwhelmed him. Perhaps it was that which drove him into the desert. How would I, how would you react if we had a sudden blinding grasp of who we are to God? Our first “fully human” response might very likely be to pull back. Surely we misunderstood. The infinite God could not possibly have this relationship with us. Surely it is egotistical heresy even to entertain the notion. That is as far as some of us would get. But others, the potential Holy among us, would continue to ponder “what if it’s all true?” What depth of joy and awe would that open up—along with the inevitable question, “Now what?” If this is who I am, how do I live, what does it mean to be this person?

If Jesus were responding in a fully human way to an intense revelation of who he was, it is understandable why he would seek desert solitude. He would need the biblical “forty days” to come to terms with that. Temptations would follow—the siren seductions to use for his own aggrandizement the reality of who and what he was. First, however, he would need to own that reality, to accept it, to embrace both it and the mission which could flow from it. He would need to encounter in a new way the God he was learning to call “Abba.” He would need to become better at “deep listening” (the Hebrew meaning of the word “obedience”). “Forty days”—perhaps a convenient abbreviation for the soul-wrenching, life-revolutionizing, exhausting experience which the fully human Jesus took on.

Perhaps, then, one way to use this gospel as an entrance to Lent is to follow Jesus’ example. Perhaps our forty days of Lent would be better spent not moving immediately to penance for our sins but engaging instead in a radical, no-holds-barred confrontation with who we are (or as close as we can get to that). A contemporary t-shirt proclaims, “You are the product of 36,000 years of evolution. Act like it.” What might it mean to face what it means to be baptized and confirmed, to be child-heir-apostle of the Triune Loving God. Awareness of what keeps us from fidelity to that will inevitably follow. But it probably will demand more of us than giving up candy or even spending some days fasting. It may even invite us to the life-revolutionizing *metanoia*<sup>4</sup> which Jesus began to preach in the wake of his own forty days.

1. Mk 1:12-13; Mt 4: 1-11; Lk 4: 1-13
2. For a more thorough treatment, read Audrey Rogers’ “What did Jesus know and when did he know it” in *Together Sharing Christ*, Vol. 33, No. 4, archived on the St. V website (stvchurch.org) under “Publications.”
3. In English, *holiness* and *wholeness* come from the same root—perhaps something worth attending to.
4. This is the Greek word which the English anemically tries to capture by “Repent.” In Jesus’ preaching it is a call to radical re-orientation of one’s life in response to the dawning of a new age, the offer of life in a new dimension. . .

## THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT: GODLY PLAY/ADVENT



During Advent, the youngest members of St. V played in a whole new way—it was, in fact, “Godly Play.” Since this play was going on during the Liturgy of the Word for Children, one might expect the fun to be “godly” but there’s more to it than that!

Godly Play is Montessori-based religious education program based on the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, which was created in the 1950s. In the 1970s, while studying Montessori at the Center for Advanced Montessori Studies in Italy, Jerome W. Berryman began his own, unique program, which he called Godly Play.

St. Vincent is now in the process of bringing Godly Play to our children, and Advent was a pilot program. It will become the content for Faith Fun Fellowship for preschoolers and kindergarteners starting in the fall. If you have a moment, come and take a peek at the Godly Play classroom, located in the former nursery on the second floor of the rectory. This has been a time-consuming, challenging, spiritually-fulfilling, and exciting process for the parishioners involved in its launch. Here are some of their stories, in their own words:

### **RITA McMULLIN:**

Together with Anne Gibson and Bethany Gregg, I attended a brief training session for Godly Play well before Advent. Later we met with Chris McCullough to decide how, and if, we would utilize this exciting. We decided to begin with our youngest group (3 years through kindergarten) and to present it all four weeks of Advent. We wanted to see IF we were capable of doing this and how receptive the children would be.

Preferring to put things off as long as I possibly could, I chose the last week of Advent to be the presenter. Since the program recommends making our presentations without reading them or even using cheat sheets, this would give me many weeks to prepare. However, I realized my choice of the fourth week actually meant more work because I had to memorize the scripts for weeks one, two and three as well, plus a small intro for Christmas Day!

The stories are written so beautifully and with such touching and descriptive language, I did not want to paraphrase. I wanted to use their exact wording ... so I started practicing! Truly, it was a wonderful way to prepare for Christmas because I read my parts many, many times...and the stories are just as special for adults as they are for three-year-olds.

Using Godly Play to work with our young children is very different than our normal Liturgy of the Word for Youth or Faith Fun Fellowship. The room is treated with reverence—soft tones, gentle hands and great concentration on the manipulatives. The children are asked if they are ready to enter; they can only come in when they are calm and quiet. The stories are told in quiet voices, but with lots of enthusiasm and respect. The “work time” that follows the stories is done independently by the children, giving the children time to sort through the story on their own and to express their own thoughts through drawing, coloring, building with Play-Doh or, for older children, via their writings (poems, prayers, or paragraphs).

Even though I have taught Liturgy of the Word for Youth and Vacation Bible School for many years, it was quite an enlightening and beautiful experience!



**BETHANY GREGG:**

My favorite moment during my experience as the storyteller for Godly Play was when I looked up to find all of the 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children, all lying on their tummies with their folded arms holding up their heads, looking attentively at me or my story materials. None of them looked bored or distracted. All were focused on what was happening in our story about Advent and the birth of Christ. I thought, “This is it! This works. This makes sense.”

I had further confirmation when I found my two young daughters, ages 3 and almost 5, talking to me and asking me questions about Advent. “Why were only kings and queens able to wear purple a long time ago?” my three year old asked. “Why is Advent a mystery?” my older daughter asked. And, as we were blowing out the Advent



candles at our own dinner table at home one commented, “Do you see the smoke spreading around the room? What do you see in the smoke?” echoing the part in Godly Play we ask the children to “watch what happens to the light” when the candle is extinguished. They were listening during Godly Play, and the messages were truly reaching them.

The experience of memorizing my Godly Play script was spiritually fulfilling for me as well. My favorite line from the script was:

*The King who was coming is still coming. This is full of mystery. You know, a mystery is hard to enter sometimes. That is why this time of Advent is so important. Sometimes people can walk right through a mystery and not even know it is there.*

I read that line so many times. I wanted to make sure that I wasn’t walking right through Advent, right through the mystery of Advent, without really “getting” it. The experience of preparing for Godly Play helped me to tiptoe, stroll, walk slowly through the mystery of Advent, not just run through Advent preparing for the secular aspects of Christmas.

**MY BRIEF EXPERIENCE AS A HOMELESS MAN IN BALTIMORE**

BY TONY MAGLIANO

For quite some time I have had an interest in the plight of the homeless. I have read about it, prayed over it, and have done small things to help.

But feeling that I could, and should, do more to make a difference, I concluded that living as a homeless man – at least for a very brief period – was the best way to understand what it’s like to have no place to call home.



(Photo via Flickr Creative Commons/[Tom Brandt](#))

I decided that St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, on the fringe of downtown Baltimore, would be my first stop. Since the parish opens its basement to homeless people every Friday for a hot meal, and allows

them to stay in the small park adjacent to the church, St. Vincent's was symbolically a very good place to start my day as a homeless man.

After praying before the Blessed Sacrament, I hit the sub-freezing streets with no money.

After walking several blocks I reached Our Daily Bread Employment Center, a comprehensive facility run by Catholic Charities that is dedicated to supporting efforts of homeless people to secure stable employment and housing.

There I got into a line of men, women and children waiting to be admitted into the dining room, where a free, hot meal is served every day. Once inside, I sat at a table with a young man who said he was trying to recover from drug addiction and was homeless as a result.

From there I walked to Health Care for the Homeless – an organization dedicated to providing free medical care to people who have no permanent residence, and would otherwise go untreated. Inside were approximately 75 homeless women and men waiting to be seen by a nurse. There I spoke with an older man who had serious family problems that caused his homelessness.

Next, I stopped at a hotel and fast food restaurant, asking if they were hiring. They were not. From there I walked the streets of downtown Baltimore asking people – like some homeless persons do – for a little loose change to buy a cup of coffee.

I politely approached approximately 35 people. About 30 of them ignored me, said they didn't have any money, or simply said no. I almost got arrested for approaching a police officer who sternly warned me that "panhandling" was a crime in Baltimore.

Five people did offer a small donation. I explained what I was doing, and thankfully declined their generosity. Asking strangers for a small favor was a humbling experience.

Next stop was the Helping Up Mission – a multiservice, nondenominational shelter where 53 homeless men can get a shower, laundry done, needed clothes, a clean bed, and a good supper and breakfast. Unfortunately, there was not enough room for everyone who came that cold evening.

At the Mission, I talked with men of various ages who were down on their luck, had supper with them, and attended an inspiring Protestant chapel service.

Later that night, as I walked back to my vehicle, I realized that I was a richer person for having lived one day as a homeless man.

I thought about the homeless men and women I encountered, and their monumental problems. And I more clearly understood God's call to each of us, our church and our government, to work for the day when every human being has a decent place to call home.

*Tony Magliano, a pastoral associate of Shrine of the Little Flower in Baltimore, is a syndicated columnist.*

## JESUS' DEATH AS "SACRIFICE"

BY ANNE MAURA ENGLISH

What does it mean to speak of Jesus' "sacrifice?" Whether that question just flits across the background of our consciousness on Good Friday or whether it troubles us enough to demand serious reflection time, it is at the heart of the Christianity we profess. Multiple images and quotations throughout the New Testament refer to sacrifice in connection with Jesus' death for our salvation. But that very variety prevents the text from providing a single theology of why Jesus' suffering is called sacrifice. In addition, although the Church has defined meanings for beliefs like the Trinity and the Incarnation, it has never done so with the relationship between sacrifice and salvation. *That* Jesus' death saves us is a fundamental dogma; *why that can be called a sacrifice* has been left to various strains of preaching and theology.

The word "sacrifice" has become synonymous with suffering and pain of some sort, even in a non-religious context. The origins of the word itself say nothing about pain. It is rooted in two Latin words: "facio," the verb "to make," and "sacer," the word for "holy."

The impetus to offer sacrifice to the Divine may be as old as humanity itself. It was born of a desire for union with the Holy. Ancient Israel practiced sacrifice rituals offering grain and offering animals. At its best, the destruction of these gifts was not the focus. Burning the grain or slaughtering the animal seemed the only way to express that the gifts were being given to God, not simply loaned for the ceremony. Some rituals did include eating bread from the grain or the cooked meat of the animal, but this flowed from the giving, as a further sign of union. Similarly the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the people (at Sinai) or on the altar not to revel in the death but because blood was seen as life. To be blessed with the blood of the offering designated responded to the sacrifice by giving life and covenant to Israel.

Like everything else human, however, this nobler understanding could become twisted. Ritual sacrifice could easily become understood as placating an angry god or buying the divine favor of a deity who enjoyed watching suffering. Israel was able to avoid the resultant more brutal excesses of its pagan neighbors. Israelite priests even worked out the quickest and least painful way to kill the animals. But inevitably the destruction of the offering at times seemed to be the point of the ritual.

The Scriptures bear witness to Israel's attempts to avoid both this tendency and the tendency to see the ritual as an end in itself. Sacrifice was about responding to God, not just with this ritual but with one's entire life.

Is the pleasure of God in holocausts and sacrifices or in obedience to the voice of God? Yes, obedience is better than sacrifice. (1 Samuel 22)

Holocausts and sin-offerings You do not require, so I said, "Here I am. I come to do Your will." (Psalm 40:7-8)

For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice. (Hosea 6:6)

This is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke, setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke, sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless, clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. (Isaiah 58:4-8)

The New Testament uses the term "sacrifice" in relation to Jesus. Two cultural realities colored how it was applied from that time through the first 1000 years of Christianity. First, people believed in a personal devil who was very near and active. Secondly, slavery was part of their world. It remained a reality of life even after Roman culture declined. "Ransom the captives" became a Christian corporal work of mercy at a time when pirates on the Mediterranean or Viking Norsemen might swoop down and carry people into slavery.

In this framework sin was understood as slavery to the devil. In the secular world, one could become a slave by being conquered by an army or pirates more powerful than you. Or a financially desperate person might voluntarily sell themselves or a family member into slavery. How did one get free? Someone more powerful could attack your captor and free you. Or you could be bought back—ransomed. That is, someone could compensate your owner and restore your freedom.

One theology that derived from that culture envisioned Jesus' life as a cosmic struggle between Jesus and the devil. Jesus remained faithful to God despite the early desert temptations and the horror of the passion and cross which the devil ultimately orchestrated. In remaining faithful to the Father, Jesus proved himself stronger than the devil. He won. He overcame the devil and set the captives free.

In a second, but related, theology the devil was seen as having a right to humanity. They had sold themselves into slavery and for them to be freed the devil needed to be compensated just like any other slave owner. The passion and the cross were the price the devil demanded for Jesus to *redeem* humanity.

For over a thousand years, these theological reflections provided Christians with a meaningful way to understand what it means to say Christ has saved us. Note that although these interpretations play little role in our understanding today, we have retained the terms “Redeemer” and “Redemption” to describe the salvific role of Jesus.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Anselm of Canterbury (St. Anselm) presented an alternative. He also drew on the values and worldview of his culture—medieval Europe. It was shaped by the cultures of Rome and of the tribes native to Europe, both of which heavily emphasized a rigid legal justice. In Christian Europe, God came to be seen as the authorization for that justice and consequently that kind of justice became an important attribute of God.

Status was also a key cultural factor. One's status society was determined by one's birth and was arguably the most significant aspect of one's life. The victim's rank, or status, was also crucial in determining the gravity of a crime. And because rank was so important, insult to someone's rank was itself a crime, its seriousness depending on whether the outrage was to the villain who oversaw an estate, the lord of several estates, or the king.

Drawing on this worldview, Anselm presumed that the key component of original sin was not just disobedience but dishonor. Human sinfulness had offended—insulted—the dignity of the Creator. Since God is just (in the way Anselm understood that), a direct pardoning of the sin would make God not God—clearly impossible. Further, God's justice and dignity required that a penalty be paid over and above the insult offered.

Human beings had committed the offense so they obviously must compensate the offended one. But that would seem impossible. God is infinite and, thus, so is his dignity. Restitution for such an outrage could only come from someone divine; no one of lower station would have the “clout” to make up for such an affront. This is why the Word of God became flesh. As God he was able to pay an infinite penalty, as human he was able to pay the penalty on behalf of humanity. The brutality of the passion and cross of Jesus was the “satisfaction” exacted by God, the all-Just One.

This theology introduced two major innovations into the theology of sacrifice and salvation. First, for most Christians, Jesus' sacrifice became synonymous with the torture and crucifixion. Before Anselm this was not always true. Jesus' sacrifice was often seen as the totality of his life, his self-gift to the Father. For the Eastern Fathers, it was actually Jesus' becoming human that was salvific, reuniting God and humanity.

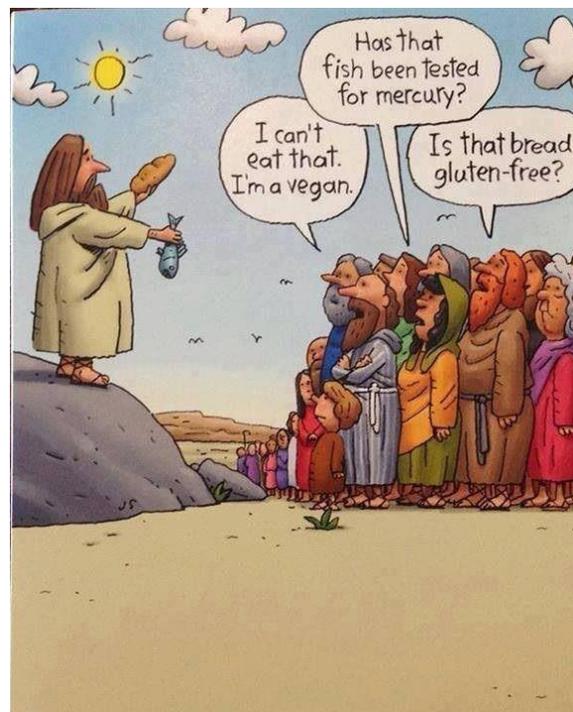
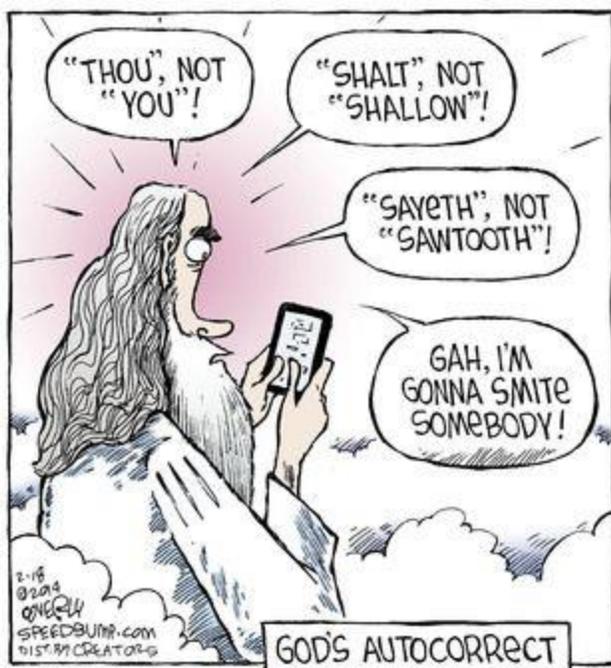
Secondly, God the Father became the heavy in the scenario. Jesus' sacrifice was seen as a penalty exacted, not by the devil, but by a severe God who would not "open the gates of heaven" until Jesus shed every last drop of blood. God's compassion and love were interpreted to mean his willingness to send Jesus to suffer.

This understanding of Jesus' sacrifice dominated theology—both Catholic and Protestant—for the second millennium of Christianity. The framework of legal justice ("punishment fitting the crime") somewhat replaced the emphasis on honor, but the image of God the Father demanded by this theology remained as one of the key images for God. In the past century, Jesus' view of God as his loving Abba, Jesus' own actions toward sinners, the stories Jesus told have begun to question this picture of the Father and, consequently, of Jesus' death. In the English-speaking world, it was pointed out that "atonement" (paying the penalty) might be more accurately read as "at-one-ment" (emphasizing the intimacy a loving God desired to re-establish).

Increasingly the focus has become Jesus' fidelity as the essential component in his reversing humanity's trajectory away from God. The earliest humans *were not* faithful to the Creator's plan, chose to reject the offer of the divine life of grace by which they could be children of God. The fully human Jesus *is* faithful, chooses to accept his true identity as God's child and grounds his actions in that identity.

In one sense, then, this makes Jesus' horrific torture and death incidental. What is important is not that he suffered, but that he remained faithful to God's vision and values. On the other hand, there is appropriateness—gruesome as it may seem—that his fidelity be tested in that context. Sin has consequences. Human sin is responsible for human suffering that at times beggars the imagination. Because Jesus suffered in the way he did, it becomes impossible for any human being to say, "Easy for you to be faithful. You don't know what it's like for me." This is not to say that God ordered Jesus' suffering, that God made it happen. Rather, given the radical change in worldview and societal structure and values that Jesus preached, it was understandable that human sinfulness tried to destroy him.

From this perspective, to name Jesus' act as "sacrifice" restores that concept to its root—and holiest—meaning. Jesus' entire life is seen as an act of fidelity which restores humanity to the relationship more in keeping with the Creator's vision. "Through Christ, and in him, and with him" our entire lives—not just our pain—are genuinely "made holy."





# FORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



## **THE 40 DAYS**

### **ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY**

Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>  
12:00 Noon & 7:30 PM

### **JOY OF THE GOSPEL**

Discussion I  
Week of March 9<sup>th</sup>  
In area groups

### **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 PM - St. Vincent's Church

### **JOY OF THE GOSPEL**

Discussion II  
Week of March 23<sup>rd</sup>  
In area groups

### **RECONCILIATION SERVICE**

Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>  
7:30 PM - St. Vincent de Paul

### **JOY OF THE GOSPEL**

Discussion III  
Week of April 6<sup>th</sup>  
In area groups

## **HOLY WEEK**

### **TENEBRAE SERVICE**

Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 PM St. Vincent's Church

### **HOLY THURSDAY**

April 17<sup>th</sup>  
6:00 PM Jewish Seder Meal (Ticket required)  
8:00 PM Celebration of the Lord's Last Supper

### **GOOD FRIDAY**

April 18<sup>th</sup>  
3:00 PM Children's Liturgy of the Passion  
7:30 PM Passion and Veneration of the Cross

### **HOLY SATURDAY – APRIL 19<sup>TH</sup>**

#### **VIGIL OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD**

9:30 PM Lighting of the Easter Fire & Exultet  
10:00 PM - 8:30 AM Vigil of the Lord: Salvation Story through the Jewish Scriptures

### **EASTER SUNDAY – APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>**

8:30 AM Epistle and Gospel, Homily  
Liturgy of the Water

Liturgy of the Eucharist Easter Breakfast for all follows the Service

11:45 AM Easter Sunday Mass (for late risers)

## EVANGELII GAUDIUM - JOY OF THE GOSPEL

### LENTEN STUDY GUIDE

What follows are discussion questions intended to lead individuals in reading sections of “Joy of the Gospel” and offering questions for reflection. These questions are the matter for discussion in the area groups.

Please remember in your sharing that each participant may hear the text differently and that there are no “correct” answers. Some questions may lead to others and some may not prove fruitful for the group’s discussion. Use what works and leave what does not.

The questions will require participants to be vulnerable with each other about their faith life and discuss what individuals may not be used to discussing. BUT the point of Pope Francis’ exhortation is to get individuals to become evangelizers by becoming more comfortable in talking about one’s faith experience.

Link to the PDF of the document:

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium\\_en.pdf](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf)

#### **Week I Reading: Chapter 1 #s 20-24; Chapter 2 #s 50 – 75**

##### Chapter 1 *The Church’s Missionary Transformation*

###### Discussion Questions for #20-24

When the right moment arises in our relationships with others, Pope Francis is asking us to speak about how faith fills our lives with meaning. Give an example of a time when you did this in the past, or a time when you could have but failed to do so.

##### Chapter 2 *Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment*

###### Discussion Questions for #50-57

- 1.) What is your experience of meeting the poor, either in person or by reading about their lives in the news?
- 2.) Looking back over Pope Francis’ key points above, which one or two of them really stand out as vital and important? Please share why.

###### Discussion Questions for #58-75

- 1.) How does our Catholic social teaching reflect the Gospel and the teachings of Jesus Christ? Try to name four or five ways.
- 2.) Pope Francis is connecting our economic system to the teaching of Jesus Christ. In your own words, how do you describe that connection? What personal challenges does the pope present to you?

**Week II Reading: Chapter 2 -Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment #s 76 - 109**

## Discussion Questions for #76-92

- 1.) How and when have you experienced the Church becoming dry and lifeless rather than on fire with the love of Jesus Christ?
- 2.) If we are the Church, then we need to be carriers of that fire. When have you been dry and lifeless? Create a prayer inviting Christ to come into your life and open your heart to his grace. Take the time to write your prayer in four or five lines in order to share it with the others in your group.

## Discussion Question for #90-101

How do you recognize “religious worldliness” in today’s Church?

## Discussion Questions for #102-109

- 1.) Pope Francis is inviting local communities to talk about and find solutions to the challenges he sees in pastoral ministry today. Return to his list, starting with article #76, and discuss among yourselves how you believe your community can respond. (You may need to choose one or two items if time is limited.)
- 2.) List the elements that might, for your parish or other community, be part of a plan that helps correct some of the challenges that Pope Francis has named here.

**Week III Reading: Chapter 4 –The Social Dimension of Evangelization #s 186-258**

## Discussion Questions for #186-216

- 1.) Describe how you as a parish or other community (or even as a household) will take concrete steps to include the poor and vulnerable and be in greater solidarity with them. Be quite specific.
- 2.) Create a prayer in which you offer your own money, property, possessions to Christ to use as needed for his mission.

## Discussion Questions for #217-237

- 1.) List the principles that Pope Francis has outlined here and give one or two examples of how each plays a role in evangelization.
- 2.) Choose one principle from this list and talk about how it could be implemented in your parish or other community. How can you be a part of the implementation?

## Discussion Questions for #238-258

- 1.) How does dialogue play a role in bringing about peace and justice?
- 2.) Could you and your community be in better dialogue? How can you widen the dialogue you have with non-Catholics who live within your community.

## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2014**

The meeting was brought to order by the Council President at 7: 35pm and started with a group prayer.

**In attendance:** Fr. Richard Lawrence, *Pastor*; Chris McCullough, *Pastoral Associate*; Audrey Rogers, *President, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Sara Kelley, *Vice President, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Rosie Graf, *Secretary, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Bethany Gregg, *9:30 Mass Rep.*; John Kober, Sr., *7:15 Mass Rep.*; Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep.*; Laureen Brunelli, *Communications and Outreach Committee Chair*; Peggy Meyer, *Social Action Committee Co-Chair*; Peggy Shouse, *Education and Enrichment Committee Chair*; Dan Rolandelli, *Facility Committee Co-Chair and Dennis Flynn (Finance Committee).*

**Excused Absence:** David Potts, *Facility Committee Co-Chair*; Maureen Fitzsimmons, *Finance Committee Chair*; Anne Marie Freeburger, *Corporator*; and John Helie, *Liturgy Committee Chair.*

**Missing:** Graham Yearley, *Corporator.*

### **Pastor's Report:**

Fr. Lawrence noted the addition of new members and families. He also reported that the parish has received the final set of recommendations from the Archdiocesan Audit team whom he and Chris McCullough met with. One recommendation we will undertake is the need to establish a formal conflict of interest policy. Fr. Lawrence also shared the results of a church-commissioned survey published in the New York Times. The survey results show that the practices in the North American Catholic Church are more progressive and pastoral than the Catholic Church in many parts of the world, particularly in the developing countries. This certainly will present a challenge for Pope Francis in communicating his vision for the church to be a more welcoming, healing presence.

### **Pastoral Associate Report:**

On Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, St. Vincent's hosted a BRIDGE event in support of raising the minimum wage. Fox News, CNN, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake, Governor Martin O'Malley, Senator Cardin, City Council Representatives Carl Stokes and Mary Pat Clarke along with nearly 250 attendees participated. The organizers from BRIDGE were appreciative to have held it here. The event was a highly publicized success.

### **Status Report on Catholic Churches of Central City:**

No report from CCCC. The pastoral teams of the churches within the CCCC Cluster have been asked to meet with Church leaders on Tuesday, Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, with the next scheduled cluster meeting two days later. Fr. Lawrence will report on this at the March Parish Council Meeting.

### **Finance Report:**

Dennis Flynn reported on our financial status for the month of January. Total attendance, average weekly attendance, donations, and total offertory giving were all down for January compared to the previous months. It was noted that January weather was particularly and abnormally bad.

### **Old Business**

### **Report on Fund-Raising Events:**

Mary and Joe Strassner propose that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Fundraising be deferred for the time being. They have found it difficult to identify any project that could meet the criteria required by Council that would not interfere with the parish-wide participation that will be necessary for successful strategic planning at this time. They would be happy to re-visit this effort in the future if Council decides a re-examination is in order.

### New Business

#### **Implications of Parish Support for Raising the Minimum Wage:**

The Parish Council moved to adopt the policy proposed by Father Richard Lawrence that the parish raise the minimum wage of church employees to \$10.10 per hour beginning on July 1, 2014. The council asks the finance committee to implement this decision when constructing the FY 15 budget.

#### **Town Meeting Review:**

The Town Meeting was held on January 26, and went very well. In response to the report on the committees' self-evaluation, some parishioners asked how they could volunteer. Audrey has initiated collection of this information from the committees and sub committees to prepare a bulletin insert in response. The next Town Meeting will be on March 23<sup>rd</sup> after the strategic planning committee formulates their plan and presents it to the Council in March.

#### **Mid-Term Assessment of 2013-14 Goals: (See addendum)**

#### **Progress Report: Canvass of Volunteer Needs of Committees/Groups:**

Audrey has heard back from several groups and committees; responses are due this week.

**Parish Recycling:** Louise Gregg asked for this issue to be deferred to March.

**Report on Issues in the Park:** Sara Kelley had no issues to discuss this month & will defer her report until March.

### Committee Reports

#### Liturgy Committee (*John Helie, Chair*)

The Liturgy Committee met on Saturday, February 8, 2014 to continue planning for Lent/Easter Cycle. The theme will be "What? So What? Now What?" Janice Bonner and Audrey Rogers will coordinate with liturgy planners to have a unified theme. In response to the 2013 parish survey about the Lent/Holy Week/Easter Services, the committee also continued to reconstruct the Good Friday liturgy and Stations of the Cross service. The Good Friday Service was finalized at the meeting. The two primary revisions to this service are that the Gospel will be read by Fr. Lawrence (rather than sung) and the veneration of the cross by the parish will be communal from the pews with optional individual veneration after the conclusion of the liturgy. Audrey Rogers and Chris McCullough are also planning a family-oriented Good Friday Service for the afternoon.

A sub-committee is still working on reconstructing the service for the Stations of the Cross. They have recommended that the Stations be more-scripture based as well as to keep the movement from station to station aspect of this service.

St V's will host the Reconciliation/Penance Service on April 2, 2014. This is a joint service with Corpus Christi and St. Ignatius. The committee is in the process of recruiting a 'threader' for the all night Easter Vigil as well as planners for each of the hours. The Committee decided to continue discernment about the all-night Easter Vigil at its annual retreat, traditionally held in August of each year.

The committee discussed several ideas related to communications of the Lent/Holy Week/Easter Services. Bulletin announcements (both pre-Lent and during Lent), a flyer with the schedule and explanation of the theme, and large poster board in the Gathering Space as well as updates to the website will be used.

The committee also provided to Audrey Rogers a list of the committee's tasks that have volunteer opportunities.

The next meeting was scheduled for May 3, 2014 at 10:30 am.

Education and Enrichment Committee (*Peggy Shouse, Chair*)

The summer session of Faith, Fun, Fellowship will be July 21-25, 2014.

There are 7 children making their first communion, but the date was not definite at the time of the meeting.

Fr. Julio Martinez will be our retreat director, speaking on “St. Francis of Assisi and the Taming of the Wolf – Living a God-Centered Life.” He will be preaching at St. Vincent’s on April 27 at the 9:30 Mass. The same people who led last year’s children’s program have agreed to do it this year. If enough people with babies/very young children sign up, we will ask one of our nursery workers to care for them during the sessions.

Sign-up for new groups for Dinner for Eight will begin in March, with new groups starting in April. People already on the list can sign up with Rita via email.

The Family Life Subcommittee has several activities planned and underway.

Our Lenten series will be on the Pope’s document, “The Joy of the Gospel.” The full text is online, or individuals who prefer may buy it for themselves. Chris McCullough will provide discussion questions for the specific sections we will discuss. The fall discussion/book series will probably be by geographic regions. No book has yet been selected. Alternatives to actually meeting together were discussed but not finalized.

The E & E Cape May weekend will be either September 12-14 or October 17-19, according to availability of the house. Emphasis was given to the fact that this trip is not limited to E & E members, but is open to others on a first-come basis. Cost for the house is usually around \$100 per adult (depending on numbers) and kids are free.

Our next meeting will be March 27 at 7 PM.

Social Action Committee (*Peggy Meyer and Ray Heil, Co-Chairs*)

**Peace & Justice Committee:** Supported the BRIDGE gathering, including Bishop Madden, Rev. Allen of Interfaith Worker Justice, and Rabbi Cotzin Burg of Jews United for Justice, on February 3 at St. V’s, to share our support for raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 with the Governor. In addition to the Governor, speakers included the Mayor, Senator Cardin, Director of Catholic Charities, CEO of Healthcare for the Homeless, Chair of MD Alliance for the Poor, and Director of MD Hunger Solutions. The news coverage was great with all major stations here including CNN. St. Vincent’s was mentioned and tapes on the news were all in the church. We continue to help plan the Candidates’ Night on 2/13 for those running for Governor.

**Jonestown Planning Council:** The developer for the Hendler Creamery Space showed drawings for their plan. Ronald McDonald House will use part of the space for their new location. Also discussed were plans for McKim Park. They will work with developers and Recs and Park advisory board. Recs and Park will look at additional space in the neighborhood for more park space, one for a dog park and one for a regular park, and will work with the neighborhood. The Rabbi of the Jewish Museum said their visitors substantially increased this year and talked to neighbors about developmental needs for the neighborhood so their visitors feel safe. Jewish Federation of Baltimore for individuals is willing to work with the Jonestown community for progress planning. They will have an Albemarle Square day for neighbors to visit for free. Lindsey and Jonestown City Lab Team want to launch one of their projects and distributed choices. Ellis Prince from Gallery Church said they are hoping to serve.

City Springs Elementary School said they would break ground the end of this month.

**Emergency Services:** The food program gave groceries to almost 30 families in January and spent \$35. The men’s program gave clothing to 41 men in January and spent \$304.

**The Resource Exchange:** We supplied 8 individuals, whom Healthcare for the Homeless placed in apartments, with furniture and starter kits in January. We are applying for a grant from Johns Hopkins for additional funding because as we continue to do more moves our expenses increase. We use most of our funding to purchase beds. Our second highest expense is for our storage units. We are blessed with continued donations of furniture.

**Friday Dinner:** We distribute clothing most Friday nights that people drop off at the rectory or with our committee and continue to serve 140-320 guests dinner each Friday evening.

**Helping Up Mission:** are cleaning the park the first and third Saturdays of each month. They also give us a multitude of back packs and suitcases a couple of times a month that we pass out on Fridays during the dinner.

**Christopher Place:** The men at Christopher Place continue to clean the park on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month.

Facilities Committee (*Dave Potts and Dan Rolandelli, Co-Chairs*)

**Facilities Committee Charter :** The charter for the facilities committee was reviewed. It was suggested that the committee keep a “Maintenance Schedule or calendar” so that routine maintenance can be carried out on a regular basis. It is thought that Jerome Bird may have started such a plan.

Dave suggested that we divide up the church, interior, exterior, parking, landscaping, etc., and two or more members of the committee take responsibility for an area or areas relative to tracking items that need addressing and keeping the maintenance schedule up to date. We could brainstorm on what needs to be done and break it down into smaller projects

### Old Business

**Solar Panels-**Bob Reuter has given some information. Peggy Myers will check and see if the grant would subsidize the understructure to support the panels.

**Arborist-** The bid to have the trees trimmed was \$11,000. This includes trimming all trees, pruning branches so that they are 1 feet from the church and also trim the trees near the street lights.

**Parking-**The satellite lot is available for use on Sunday and Holy Days. The church parking still needs to be re-measured and striped.

**Park Benches-**need good weather for work to be completed

**Park Working Group-**Sarah Kelly has worked with parishioners to get them signed up for clean-up duty. She has also brought in other groups to help with clean up.

**Window flashing/Caulking-**There has been new water damage in the rectory. It has been determined that the windows were not flashed properly when they were installed. Chris proposed using Baltimore Trade Guild to have the windows repaired.

**American Institute of Architects (AIA)-**Is willing to provide assistance. We need to submit an application. They will assess our needs and help with fund raising. They have access to groups looking for projects to fund. The application may take a few months to be processed.

**New Boiler-**New boiler has been installed. The cost was covered by insurance. The only cost to the Parish was the \$5,000 deductible. The air handler still needs some work on so that the heat can be distributed evenly. Chris met with a mechanical engineer, who will submit a proposal to evaluate the air handler.

**North Window Repair** is finished and they even repaired the plaster on the inside.

**Accessibility-**need to have a hand rail installed on the choir side of the altar. Parts have been ordered and this will be completed in February.

**Stabilize ladder behind altar-**to be done.

**Electric Inspection**-need additional outlets for the coffee. Chris contacted Hirsch who came out and did an evaluation and said it was safe to add outlets. We need to task someone with doing it now.

**Security Systems**-The alarm companies have not gotten back to us with an estimate or plan.

**Underlayment**-the underlayment in Father Chuck's bathroom will be done when we do the accessibility project.

**Repurposing**-Father Dick's old living is almost cleared out. Most of Dick's stuff has been moved.

### **New Business**

Chris suggested securing the floor boards in the back of church to help lower the noise level. There are several pews that need to be repaired and kneelers need to be recovered.

The repair of the North Side windows and the resulting water damage has been completed. The Council noted with gratitude the beautiful appearance of the floor after cleaning and waxing by Larry Fenaroli.

### Communications and Outreach Committee (*Laureen Miles Brunelli, Chair*)

The C&O Committee met on 2/6/2014 and welcomed three new members. In addition to the meeting, C&O would like to report that an ad on the pharmacy bags of Harris Teeter near Fort McHenry for St. V was purchased. Scroll down to see ad.

Below are the minutes of the 2/6 meeting. Note: Action items are in bold.

After introductions, Audrey and Laureen presented some background information on the committee's establishment, goals and history for the benefit of its new members.

### **Internal Communications Discussion**

Laureen made a brief presentation describing how communications from committees and individual parishioners at St. V flow out to the larger St. V community. (See figure below).

As illustrated, communication can go through channels that largely bypass staff/C&O involvement (email tree and announcements after Mass) or go through staff/C&O but via a variety of forms of communication, e.g. bulletin, email or emails, phone calls, in-person discussions and meetings. Either way, staff/C&O picks up the information from the many different sources and sends it out through all the channels appropriate, which may also include website, Facebook, *Together Sharing Christ*, bulletin, etc.

We agreed that this is not an efficient or effective way to get information out. However, the traditions and culture of St. V may keep committees and individuals from adopting new methods of communications. It was decided that **we should have "mission outreach" to other committees** where a C&O member would attend another committee meeting to present some best practices in communicating that committee's mission, events and goals.

However, before that can be done we must outline the process and procedure for communications, and so a **subcommittee was formed** to study the process and develop new procedures. Jackie, Laureen and Anne Maura will be on the subcommittee.

While the committee decided that our focus should be on improving the process of communications before tackling specific issues, we did have some discussion about these issues:

- *Email tree* – Discussed having a newsletter, more focused on events at St V, in addition to the email tree.
- *Website* – Discussed recruiting new website editors or communications liaisons in each committee. These people would be trained (or retrained) on the website and calendar.
- *Webinars* – At some point in the future, the parish should have the capacity to do video conferencing or webinars so people can participate in activities like Bible Study from home. Developing this capacity

would be the C&O's committee's responsibility, but putting on the programming would be up to all committees where this is applicable.

### Outreach Discussion

Given the ongoing parish strategic planning, C&O committee's planned to discuss what members think the Ad Hoc Planning Committee should consider about outreach in formulating its plan as well as what can we glean from the data collected in the planning process (or what other data we need) and what C&O's role as "mission support" to other committees in terms of outreach.

The conversation evolved into brainstorming that coalesced around several themes and ideas related to outreach:

- Marketing
  - Determining our target market – Committee must determine whom we want to target.
    - Nominal/niche groups – LGBT community, younger Catholics, families are among the groups St V might appeal to.
    - Neighborhoods – Drawing new parishioners from nearby city neighborhoods could minimize the time/travel issues for events and services. Additionally, people from these areas may be part of the niche groups we target and may be less likely to be deterred by issues
    - Networking
  - Formulating a brand of St. V – Committee needs to define the "brand" that we want to project to attract new members. The brand should reflect the reality of our community as a whole but emphasize elements that are attractive to our target market. Elements of our brand might be social justice, Pope Francis, community-led worship, etc. A tag line should be developed.
  - Advertisement – Chris showed the committee an advertisement for St. V that will go on Harris Teeter Pharmacy bags. The ad features a quote from Pope Francis. This is a start on our branding efforts, but it could be tweaked or further developed as we further define our market and brand.
- Engagement of new visitors – A strategy for engaging/contacting new visitors needs to be developed. One idea for engagement was to create a high quality video "St. V in 7 Minutes" that could be viewed in the back of church or online to give information about St. V but also to generate excitement and communicate our brand to visitors.
- Publicity/Events – These can be a way to demonstrate what St. V is to greater Baltimore. However, they typically need a timely news hook to get traction in the local media.
  - Megan had an idea to develop an event around The Resource Exchange's successful track record of furnishing homes for formerly homeless people. The hook would be 150<sup>th</sup> person served by TRE. The event might include a gathering of donors and recipients and an art exhibit, which would feature photographs that tell the stories of TRE clients. There was some discussion of tying it to Artscape where it would receive exposure to a broader audience. **Laureen will contact Peggy Cronyn** to find out when the 150<sup>th</sup> person might be served and for feedback on the idea. **The committee will then discuss via email.**
- Communication – Further refining our systems for internal communication will improve our communication to potential parishioners or new visitors. Finding ways to showcase the "content" that St. V develops for its parishioners (e.g. Advent booklet, presentations/lectures, TSC) to a large audience can be a form of outreach.

Next C&O Committee Meeting: April 10, 7 pm

Addendum: St. Vincent's has purchased ad space on pharmacy bags at Harris Teeter in Locust Point. The committee welcomed 2 new committee members who bring many new ideas and much excitement.

**Meeting Closed with Prayer at 8:45 pm.**

**Reminders:** The Next Parish Council Meeting is March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by  
Rosie Graf, Secretary to the Council

**Addendum:****Status Report on the 2013-2014 Objectives for the Parish Council**

In 2013-2014, the Parish Council will

## 1. Establish a Five Year Strategic Plan

- A. Undertake and complete the data collection phase of strategic planning;
  - 1. Form Ad Hoc Group to collect and analyze data;
  - 2. Communicate process to the parish community and invite participation in various response and feedback exercises.

B. Undertake and complete strategic planning focusing on mission and mission support activities, articulating the *theological* (why), the *pastoral* (what), and the *temporal* (how);

- 1. Form Ad Hoc Group to process data reports and draft a strategic plan for Parish Council review;
- 2. Review, discuss, debate, and revise as indicated the Ad Hoc Committee's draft strategic plan and approve it for implementation.

## 2. Revise the Parish Budget Presentation Process

- Devise and implement a budget process that integrates finances and assets, understandably presenting all revenue and expenses, allowing for modeling of the parish planning, and clearly aligning staff positions and expenses to parish planning;
  - a. Direct Finance Committee to work with the Ad Hoc Committee(s) to produce a more coherent budget process; *Amended to work with Council.*
  - b. Communicate an understandable report on revenues and expenses to the parish community;
  - c. Identify and provide up-to-date mechanisms for parishioner donations;

## 3. Immediately Address Identified Needs of Families with Young Children

- Establish a structure and process for addressing the needs of families with young children in the parish community.
  - a. Build on information from these families collected in Spring 2013;
  - b. Establish a Family Life Subcommittee under the Education and Enrichment Committee with a mission and scope;
  - c. Identify individuals to coordinate specific activities within this subcommittee.