

TO MARRY OR NOT? 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Mark 1:21-28

The old Baltimore Catechism offered a comparison between marriage and religious life. On one page there was an image of a bride and groom. Below them the caption read: “This is good.” On the following page, which showed a nun and a priest, the caption declared: “This is better.”

For centuries ambivalence toward marriage was widespread in Christian theological circles, and this week’s letter to the Corinthians would seem to feed this ambivalence. Married people are forced to divide their time and energies – Paul writes – while the unmarried are freer to focus on “the things of the Lord.” The conclusion seems obvious: when possible, marriage should be avoided.

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, much progress has been made to correct what was clearly a skewed assessment of the married state. Marriage and family are now valued and honored as bona fide pathways to sanctity. The question, then, is no longer whether marriage *in and of itself* is desirable, but rather whether two particular individuals at a given time and place are being called by God to marry.

Embraced as a vocation, marriage is a response to God’s call, not a personal choice. It is a vocation to be discerned. God calls everyone to holiness. God calls most of us to holiness through marriage, but marriage is the right option only when it can help one to grow closer to God. Otherwise it is precisely the type of distraction that St. Paul fears.

God blesses faith-filled spouses with the power to sanctify their households. God leads self-sacrificing couples along the path to holiness. God transforms partners who remain faithful through trials or who forgive one another into true signs and sacraments of divine love.

Even though some of St. Paul’s premises are open to debate, his warning against potential distractions is valid. Married or single, vowed celibate or otherwise, all of us are called to remain focused on “the things of the Lord.”

Marriage, when entered into and lived as a Christian vocation, is not a distraction. It is God’s gift.

Stephen J. Sauer, S.J.
Pastor

INTENTIONS OF THE HOLY FATHER FOR FEBRUARY

- That the Church's pastors may be ever more docile to the action of the Holy Spirit as they teach and serve the people of God.
- Guided by the 2nd Special Assembly of the African Synod of Bishops, may the Church in Africa find effective ways to promote reconciliation, justice, and peace.

FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION

First Friday Adoration will next take place on **February 6**. Exposition begins after the 7:30 AM Mass and concludes with Benediction immediately prior to the noon Mass. Please consider spending some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

LENTEN DAY OF REFLECTION

On Tuesday, **March 10**, the parish will sponsor a **Lenten Day of Reflection** at Manresa Retreat House in Convent, Louisiana. The retreat will be led by Fr. Sauer for both men and women. A chartered bus, with a capacity of 48 persons, will depart from Immaculate Conception at 8:30 AM and will return by 4:30 PM. An offering of \$40 is requested to cover the cost of food and travel, but no one will be excluded for inability to pay. Please call Mary Kay Zahn (376-5095) if you are interested.

SPRING FUND RAISERS

Each Spring brings fund raising events to benefit two of our parish-affiliated outreach ministries. On Monday, **March 16**, the 7th annual **Good Shepherd School Golf Tournament** will take place at Stonebridge Golf Club of New Orleans. On Saturday, **April 4**, the 4th annual **Harry Tompson Center Gala/Auction** will take place in the Jesuit High School Student Commons.

To register for the Golf Tournament or for sponsorship information concerning it, call David Nusloch (598-9399). To become a sponsor of the Harry Tompson Center Gala, contact Suzette Herpich (296-6698) or Indie McKay (430-4935).

INDIVIDUALLY DIRECTED RETREATS AT GRAND COTEAU

Anyone interested in making a 3, 5, or 8-day individually directed retreat at the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Grand Coteau, Louisiana should consult jesuitspiritualitycenter.org or call (337) 662-5251 for further details. Retreat dates are: **Feb 9-18, Mar 2-11, and Mar 16-25**.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

At the beginning of each calendar year we contact those who sponsor our bulletin through their ads and we ask them to renew their sponsorship. This is an appropriate time, then, to call your attention to these generous people and businesses and to urge you to thank them for their support by your patronage.

PRESIDER SCHEDULE

Saturday, January 31

4:00 pm - Fr. Fran Pistorius, S.J.

Sunday, February 1

8:00 am - Fr. Stephen Sauer, S.J.

9:30 am - Fr. Paul Osterle, S.J.

11:00 am- Fr. Fran Pistorius, S.J.

7:30 pm - Fr. Stephen Sauer, S.J.

Saturday, February 7

4:00 pm - Fr. Paul Osterle, S.J.

Sunday, February 8

8:00 am - Fr. Fran Pistorius, S.J.

9:30 am - Fr. Paul Osterle, S.J.

11:00 am- Fr. Stephen Sauer, S.J.

7:30 pm - Fr. Stephen Sauer, S.J.

MINISTERING TO THE SICK

Anyone interested in visiting the sick and homebound of our parish is asked to contact Bobby & Sally Bourgeois at (504) 828-1118.

PRAYER LIST

Anne Accardo
 Sea Barry
 Kelsey Favrot
 Maggie Hebert
 Tara Stoulig Monistere
 Beverly Morris
 Wescoat Sandlin
 Betty Smith
 Jim Taylor
 Justin Webb
 Whitney Welsh

To have someone added to the prayer list, please contact the parish office.

WEDDING BANNs

February 7, 2009

Emily Toups and Gavin Gillen

PARISH SOCIAL/DINNER

Many thanks to Darleen Danenhower, Mary Kay and Bill Zahn, and Cathy Espenan for sponsoring last week's monthly supper in Lenex Hall. Anyone wishing to sponsor our next meal on **February 15** after the 7:30 Mass is asked to contact Cathy DeMatteo 504-339-6886.

MASS INTENTIONS

Tuesday, February 3

7:30 am - Mark J. Vincent

12:00 pm - Humphrey McCarron

Wednesday, February 4

7:30 am - Suzette Guillot

12:00 pm - Alethia Simon Pepp

Thursday, February 5

7:30 am - Jerome A. Sauer

12:00 pm - Joseph B. Brechtel

Friday, February 6

7:30 am - Mehmet and Nedime Rende and Family

12:00 pm - Banos Family

Saturday, February 7

4:00 pm - Deceased Members of Sigma Alpha Kappa Fraternity, Albert and Genevieve Eckardt, Robert Salvador Gilberti, Gwen Cooney Melancon, Jerome A. Sauer

Sunday, February 8

8:00 am - Apatini Family

9:30 am - *Missa pro populo*

7:30 pm - Morel Miller Elmer, Jr., John Fitzpatrick, Jr., Theresa Reno, Tom Tomeny, Lucille Yenni