

TWENTY- THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

September 4, 2011

MATHEW 18:15--17

- Jesus is pointing out that we have social responsibility in family, in community, and in neighbourhood. We have a responsibility for each other, for the common good.
- When there are issues that we cannot walk away from, we pray to God for help, and we do this with others. That's where God is---two or three gathered in the community of God.
- We can help each other to goodness; we can support each other, correct each other, and help each other on our way to God.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 5th

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| Wednesday | 9:00 a.m. | |
| Friday | 9:00 a.m. | |
| Saturday | 7:00 p.m. | Mike Sr. & Agnes Dolan by Pat Fahey |
| Sunday | 9:00 a.m. | June Williams by Anthony & Family |
| | 11:00 a.m. | Desmond Bolton by Elizabeth |

WEEKEND COLLECTIONS: \$1,958.95 Thank You!

Development and Peace: Re Africa – Total to date: \$1,413.80

How we welcome potentially new Parishioners matters a great deal

At this spot you often find a word of welcome to potentially new parishioners. This time it is a word of encouragement to parishioners to be attentive to potentially new parishioners, to be hospitable to them, to give them a hand in finding their way among us. That is tricky business. Some potentially new parishioners are here simply to take a look; others have made up their mind and have decided to join us; and there is quite a range between these two. It takes some sensitivity on our part to respect that wide range and to act accordingly.

Naturally, our ministers of hospitality and our priest play an important role here, but we cannot leave it exclusively to them. How hospitable are we to newcomers? All it takes sometimes is handing them our CBW III or the Sunday Missal and indicating where they can find what we sing and what we pray; it may also be a matter of pointing out or explaining why we do certain things a little differently at St. Mark's; at other times it may be a matter of showing them where the washrooms are or where they can find a registration form. And, on our Coffee Sundays downstairs in the hall, can we make sure that no potentially new parishioners are simply left alone without anyone of us making a move to include them? We don't have to "jump on them" and overwhelm them, but keeping our eyes open and making sure that newcomers are not ignored is already a great thing. Yes, it may make us break out of our comfort zone, but is that not part of parish life as well?

So let us welcome potentially new parishioners!

Sunday, September 18: Catechetical Sunday. What is that?

It is an initiative which the Québec Bishops launched a few years ago. They designated the third Sunday of September as **Catechetical Sunday**. It is the sort of initiative that tries to address the new situation we as Church find ourselves in. What new situation? That is hard to summarize, but a few quotes from Charles Taylor's **A Secular Age** may help us think:

Why is it so hard to believe in God in (many milieu of) the modern West, while in 1500 it was virtually impossible not to? The generations formed in the cultural revolution of the 1960's are in some respects deeply alienated from a strong traditional model of Christian faith in the West.

...the relationship of people to a church from which they stand at a certain distance, but which they nevertheless in some sense cherish; which they want to be there, partly as a holder of ancestral memory, partly as a resource against some future need (a rite of passage, a funeral) or as a source of comfort and orientation in the face of some collective disaster.

'believing without belonging'... many people drop out of active practice while still declaring themselves as belonging to some confession, or believing in God.... They consider themselves Catholic while not accepting many crucial dogmas ... or they pray while not being certain they believe.

In that sort of world, how do we live from and bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How can we function as a parish, especially in the area of faith formation?

A first and important step is the recognition Taylor describes as the reality for many of our contemporaries, certainly for many of our children – and we ourselves are affected by it as well in subtle ways. We cannot take anything for granted. The familiar methods of passing on the faith in many instances just don't work any more. So what do we do? Lament and complain is of little use, it is not productive. Let us start with recognizing the seriousness of the situation; and follow that up with taking small steps and supporting each other in presenting the Gospel of Jesus in such a way that it may still occasionally find a hearing.

That is the sort of thing that **Catechetical Sunday** wants to put into focus. Naturally, it also serves as an opportunity to renew our commitment to bear witness to Jesus Christ in really challenging times. It is a sort of mobilizing the entire parish, to raise the awareness of all parishioners of the challenges we face. It is not the concern of a few, but the challenge for all of us. **How can we as a parish be a catechizing community?**

Our particular take on Catechetical Sunday

The theme chosen for this year's Québec-wide **Catechetical Sunday** is that **He is Still to be Found...** That is an interesting theme. Of course, the one referred to here is Jesus Christ. We are all in search of him; no one of us can claim to "be in possession of him"; we are all searchers at different stages of our faith journey, not just on our own, but accompanying and supporting each other. There are moments of greater intensity – depending on at what stage of our faith journey we are – but in the Roman Catholic tradition the celebration of the sacraments, especially those two central ones **Baptism** and **Eucharist**, are recognized as more explicitly authorized intensifications of that search for Jesus Christ.

It just so happens that this year **Catechetical Sunday** coincides with the Sunday that we normally welcome the children at our Sunday Masses who are going to be baptized the following Sunday, September 25. But how about, especially as this is **Catechetical Sunday**, if as a parish community having gathered for Sunday Eucharist, we give some more attention and care to the parents of the children to be baptized? For an increasing number of parents today making the request to have their children baptized is the result of some serious reflecting. At whatever stage they are at in their faith journey they have made the request. That presents us as a regular Sunday Eucharist-celebrating community with the beautiful opportunity to welcome these parents in our midst, to make some fuss about them and the child they want to have baptized, and to support them on their faith journey. They are, after all, our fellow faith-journeymen.

These considerations will be translated in the shape we'll give that Sunday to the Opening Rite and the Liturgy of the Word of the Mass; they will be slightly altered to better accommodate the theme of this year **He is Still to be Found...** But it is not just a matter of accommodating the theme. What is more important is that we find some way of recognizing that all of us – those who come to church for Eucharist on Sunday and those who are with us that Sunday requesting that their children be baptized – know that together we keep on searching for **the One Still to be Found...** and we support each other in that search.

Registration for Confirmation and First Communion

Ideally, the three **Sacraments of Initiation** (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) belong together and are celebrated together. That is still the case when it concerns adults. But when we are baptized as infants, the other two sacraments of initiation get celebrated later, and it varies a bit from diocese to diocese. In our case, the Diocese of Gatineau, children tend to be 7-8 and up, when they make their First Communion. Those to be confirmed must be 15 years at least. We celebrate those two **Sacraments of Initiation** in the Easter Season. We prepare for them from the moment we are baptized, but a more focussed preparation starts in the fall of the preceding year, usually the second part of October.

So it is time to register for those two sacraments now. You can come to the Rectory in person and fill in the registration form. The Registration Form can also be found at our website www.stmarkparish.ca and then you can send it to us by e-mail stmarkchurch@bellnet.ca. We would like to have the registration for both sacraments finished by the end of September so that the more focussed preparation can start without delay. You may want to pass on this information to those who may be interested.

When do we sign up for different ministries?

The last few years ***Catechetical Sunday*** provided us with the opportunity to sign up for the different volunteer positions in the parish. An overview was given of what we need to keep the four poles of parish life (**Liturgy, Faith Formation, Fellowship, Service/Outreach**) alive and active, and then we could sign up. It was a sort of recruitment Sunday. This year we would like to handle that differently. On four successive Coffee Sundays of October and November we would like to have a display in the church hall of what makes up and what is needed for each of these four poles. So, we'll hear more about it in the Sundays to come. If, however, you are anxious to sign up now and do not want to wait, by all means, let us hear from you, and we'll get things going.

We need help in two areas

We are jumping the gun a bit on the above because of a more urgent need as mentioned in last Sunday's bulletin:

Liturgy of the Word with Children

This enables children to celebrate the First Part of the Mass (**Liturgy of the Word**) in a more child-friendly manner. That has worked very well for the 11:00 a.m. Mass, but we would like to see it happen as well at the 9:00 a.m. Mass. But to make this possible we need more leaders.

Sacristans

They put everything in place for the upcoming Sunday Masses, they keep things we need for Mass clean, they help decorate the church for the bigger feasts of Easter and Christmas.

CWG MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING: Please note **Tuesday, September 6, 2011** for the annual Fall kickoff for the Catholic Women's Guild. All are welcome and are invited to participate in a potluck supper. At **5:30 p.m.**, we will take new membership registrations and member renewals; at **6:00 p.m.** we will share in the potluck supper and this will be followed by our first meeting. Should you have any questions, please call Lydia Richard at 819-684-3242.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: Kindly remember Jean Paul Bourassa, Don Daly, and their families in your prayers.

PRAYERS & SYMPATHY: Our prayers and sympathies are extended to the Brennan Family on the death of Michael; and to the Daly Family on the death of their Aunt Catherine O'Neill.

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