

ON EAGLE'S WINGS

SUMMER 2009



KEEPING A GREEN BRANCH

BY: FR. MARK BURGER

What do you think the world needs most right now?

What do you think your family needs most right now? What do you think you need right now? If you comb through all the various possibilities of what we all need most, the one you may not think of right away is a particular attitude—the attitude of hope. We all live in a world that thrives on bad news. How often do we all read newspapers crammed with bad news? Many of us tune into news programs several times a day to get a dose of news that usually makes us depressed with the state of things. What kind of news seems to travel the quickest? Yes, it's true, we live in a world that thrives on bad news.

The Chinese have a saying, “Keep a green branch in your heart and for sure a songbird will come and sing there”. I think that Jesus would like that saying. I think that Jesus would want each of his disciples to be people who keep a very healthy green branch in their heart. Jesus came to bring us good news, to remind us that the world is filled with God's blessings and that we cannot look in any direction and fail to see some blessing from the Living God. Try it. Look around, notice how many wonderful blessings we have in the beautiful world of nature—the flowers, trees, blue skies, birds, animals

and even the cicadas have a beauty all their own! The list of beautiful things could go on and on. Yet, because they seem so familiar to us, we don't usually even notice the beauty right around us.

As an antidote to the world that urges us to thrive on bad news, I would suggest that each one of us strive to develop a “green thumb” for our hearts. We all need to nurture a “green branch” of hope in our hearts by feeding our hearts with noticed blessings. That means that we all have to make a grand effort to pay attention to the goodness that God has placed all around us—in nature, in the people around us and even in ourselves. If we open our eyes and begin to “tune in” to good news, we will find it. And when we do notice goodness and begin to give thanks to the Author of all goodness, that green branch in our hearts will grow and songbirds will surely come and sing! And once those songbirds have begun their songs, there will be little room in our hearts for bad news.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST | 9080 CINCINNATI-DAYTON RD. WEST CHESTER, OH 45069

PHONE: (513) 777-6433 | FAX (513) 777-9741 | INFO@STJOHNWC.ORG | WWW.STJOHNWC.ORG

At Home With Christ

When my husband, daughters and I moved to West Chester almost 10 years ago, it was the first time in my life that I had the opportunity to be a “stay at home” wife and mother. And although I considered myself “retired” from the professional work force, there was still an egocentric part of me that wanted to lay claim to a title, any title that added credibility to my work at hand as a “Domestic Engineer”. That was my initial transition.

However, I soon came to find that it is not often in life that we are given the opportunity to so dramatically “re-invent” ourselves or “re-engineer” the use of our time, talents and resources. I found this to be an unexpected opportunity for both me and my family. One aspect of being at home that I was looking forward to, was making friends – real friends, not just work associates or business acquaintances that came and went with the job. In the past I never had the time to join my neighbors for a leisurely cup of what was then called “coffee” (now referred to as a grande double pump white mocha java skinny latte with whip) once the kids were on the bus. Now I did. And to my amazement, I found myself quickly drawn into a network of wonderful women, including their friends and their families as well.

Without a doubt, this “network” would put Verizon’s to shame. I’ll never forget how my friend Sue couldn’t wait to introduce me to one of her best friends, Nancy. It went like this: “I can’t wait for you to meet Nancy. You’ll love her! She is loving, tender and compassionate. She is truly a loyal, faithful and trust worthy friend. She is outrageously fun and hilariously funny. I guarantee you that ‘she is always worth the price of admission.’ She’ll laugh with you, she’ll cry with you. She’ll listen to you and will always tell you the truth even if it hurts. I’m telling you; knowing her will change your life. I promise you, you’ll never be the same again. You’ll never miss an

opportunity to be in her company. That is how amazing she is!”

Needless to say, I was completely intrigued by this introduction and couldn’t wait to meet Nancy myself. Would she be all that Sue had claimed or had Sue overly exaggerated Nancy’s depth of character and charisma? The answer was simple. Nancy was and is all that and more. To this day being a part of Nancy’s life, even a small part, is transformational to say the least.

When I reflect on this snippet of reality from my own life and put it into a spiritual context, I see how simple “evangelization” really is. Shouldn’t we all be introducing Christ to one another in the same way Sue introduced Nancy to me? Put simply, isn’t evangelization just sharing our best friend-ship with Christ with one another? Shouldn’t we all be a part of God’s “network” by introducing Him in a similar fashion? “I can’t wait for you to meet Christ. You’ll love Him! . . . That’s how amazing He is”.

Sharing Christ is simple. It doesn’t have to be complex. We don’t have to be “Pre-qualified” or be “Pre-approved” to share Him with others. It can be done over coffee (or whatever you call it), on the phone, in the grocery, via the internet or at a sports event.

As St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: “So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us.”

Anywhere, any time, we can be ambassadors for Christ by simply calling Him our friend and sharing His friendship with others.

— Jo Koch
Evangelization Team

Career Path Ministry

An estimated 320 parishioners of St. John Parish are either underemployed or unemployed. As a community of St. John, we can be of assistance as Simon of Cyrene assisted Jesus carrying the cross. Through prayer and divine guidance of St. Joseph, the Patron Saint of Workers, your parish, St. John, has launched a program intended to counsel our fellow parishioners who are either unemployed or underemployed. The ministry's mission includes, but is not limited to:



- **Enable Discussions on Career** Coaching, Career Search Resources & Strategies, Résumé Writing, Interviewing Proficiency/Role-playing, Networking and Targeting Techniques for unemployed and underemployed.

- **Posting of job openings.** Seventy percent of all employment opportunities derive from family, friends and church membership referrals. Employers or employees of a company with the knowledge of job openings are encouraged to post job openings.

- **Utilize the trained Stephen Ministers** to listen to concerns regarding hardships encountered due to current under/unemployment situation.

If you would like to volunteer assist with any of the proposed ideas listed above or know of job opportunities, please contact Deacon Jerry Barney at 777-6433, ext. 121. or jbarney@stjohnwc.org.

Girl Scout Bronze Award



GIRL SCOUTS

Junior Girl Scouts are typically in 4th and 5th grades and the Bronze Award is the highest honor that they can earn. The girls learn leadership and planning skills that will help with a service project for their community. There are 4 requirements to earn the award. First, the girls must earn two badges that are related to their project. Second, they must complete one of the Girl Scout Signs. Third, they must earn the Junior Aide Award, Leadership Award or two badges that feature Girl Scouting or leadership. Fourth, they must complete their Girl Scout Bronze Award project that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to the community. They must show an understanding of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The project needs to take 15 hours to complete while following an action plan and providing a community service.

From Girl Scouts #40689

Dear St. John's,

Thank you for letting us use the Pavilion this past year. Your donations for the animal shelter were greatly appreciated. The animals will be very grateful for all the supplies. We were collecting so that we could earn our Bronze Award which is the highest award for Junior Girl Scouts. We appreciate you taking your time to help us with this task.

Sincerely,

Girl Scout Troop #40689

Alexis, Cheyenne, Delaney, Hanna, Ileana, Jillian, Mahalia, Miranda, & Samantha

ST. JOHN FAMILY FESTIVAL

9 0 8 0 C i n c i n n a t i - D a y t o n R d . • W e s t C h e s t e r , O h i o

Our Festival Has Everything!

- Silent Auction
- Basket Bonanza
- Major Award Raffle (New Car or \$10,000 cash)
- Live Music
- Great food (including our Famous Pulled Pork Sandwiches)
- Fun Rides

And don't forget all the GREAT GAMES like ... Funky Monkey, Snake Pit, Plinko, Duck Pond, Lucky Lolly, Ring Toss, Fish Bowl & more ...

Silent Auction

Our 4000 sq. ft. booth is packed with hundreds of new & pre-owned treasures located in both the Pavilion and the outdoor tent. Help the Silent Auction by donating your items now. Please call Julie Hunter at 755-2507 for more information or to make arrangements.

Festival Volunteers

Once again we ask you to prayerfully consider giving to our parish community for our festival. We need volunteers to assist with pre-event set-up, working the booths, nightly post-event clean-up and final teardown. Give just two hours over the weekend (or more if you are able) and we'll give you an experience to remember.

Our festival has always been a success because of YOU! Just a couple reminders when volunteering:

- Please sign up on line, go to the volunteer link at www.stjohnwcfestivalvolunteer.org. Select the booth you'd like to work then enter your contact info for the booth/day/time of your choice. If you are 16 or under, please include your age after your name so the booth captain can plan to have an adult in the booth as well. Example: Judy Smith (15)

- Don't have website access, contact a volunteer coordinator:

FOOD/DRINK BOOTHS – Jane Mueninghoff (530-9022 or email at jmueninghoff@cinci.rr.com) or

CHILDREN'S GAMES/18+ GAMES – Rose Braun (856-7144 or email at thebrauns@cinci.rr.com).

If everyone does a little it helps a lot – thank you!

Major Award Raffle



The Grand Prize this year is a 2009 Hyundai Elantra from Columbia Hyundai / Acura or \$10,000 Cash. The 2nd Place Prize is \$1,000 cash and 3rd Place Prize is \$500 cash. The Early Bird drawings with a prize of \$250 will be held on Monday, June 22nd and July 20th. Buy Tickets today for your chance to win. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25. Stop by the Church Office, on the weekend, or the Parish Office, during the week, to purchase your tickets.

Booth Sponsorship

Do you own a business or are you a professional in and around West Chester? I've got a great idea on how you can advertise your business to thousands of people in the area while helping your parish. Become a Booth Sponsor.

Each year, the St. John Church Festival is known for its great food and fun for the entire family. In order to help defray the expenses of putting on such a wonderful event, we ask local business owners to help sponsor the festival by advertising their business at the festival.

We have four levels of sponsorship, starting at \$150, to meet your needs and budget. Contact Joel Sodano at 885-1926 or orjoelsodano@yahoo.com for more details. Thanks for your support. See you all at the Festival!

Friday, August 7th (6pm - Midnight) • Saturday, August 8th (5pm-Midnight) • Sunday, August 9th (4pm - 10pm)

Our Parish, Stephen Ministry and You



How do you feel today? Sometimes, you or someone you love may feel sad, angry or anxious without knowing why. It can be difficult to talk to friends or family about these feelings. But at some point, it will be difficult to ignore these feelings anymore. Reach out to your parish Stephen Ministry.

If you are embarrassed, shy or worried, rest assured no one will know aside from one of the Stephen Minister leaders and your assigned Stephen Minister. This is a completely free, completely confidential service.

No problem is too small or too large. No problem is too vague or too shocking. The Holy Spirit has called Stephen Ministry to St. John Parish – is the Spirit calling you or someone you know to ask for a Stephen Minister?

To inquire about a Stephen Minister, please stop by the Parish Office or contact: Fr. Mark, Fr. Don and Scott Steinke at 777-6433 – or - Marty McClain – 235-7478 | Billi Allan – 642-5010 | Louise Moyer – 860-4538.



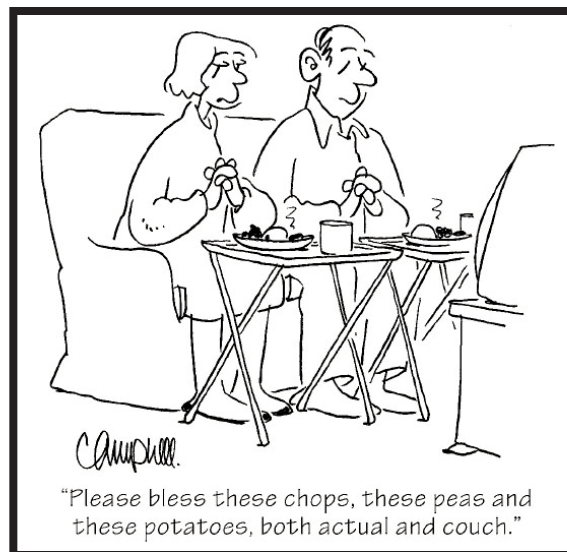
St. John Knights of Columbus 2009 Scholarship Competition



The St. John K of C congratulates our 2009 Scholarship recipients: *Ms. Jennifer Meyer & Mr. Nicholas Bogart*

Jennifer and Nick were selected from 26 outstanding applications from students of St. John Parish. We thank all of the students for applying and sharing some very good ideas about how Churches can help people in our community get through the nation's current challenging economy. Please join us in congratulating Jennifer and Nicholas!

Laughter



News From St. Gabriel Consolidated School

By: Joe Epplen, *Principal*

Our last six weeks of school have found our students and staff in the center of a whirlwind of activities.

A successful Race for Education, in which all students participated, showed a sponsorship rate of nearly one thousand. Many friends, relatives and immediate families saw this day as an opportunity to provide funds for our technology projects here at school. At this writing, the donations are still being tabulated and monies continue to come in. We are so blessed and thankful for the financial support, especially in these tough economic times.

Our annual Grandparents' Day for grades 2, 3 and 4 showed that grandparents continue to find ways to remain involved in the lives of their grandchildren. St. Gabriel Church was packed with grandparents on April 30th to share in the Eucharist and then a concert provided by all of the students present. *Amazing Grace* proved to be a fitting finale to the program.

Grandparents then had the opportunity to visit classrooms and have refreshments with their grandchildren.

May Crowning is always a special time at St. Gabriel and this year was no exception. *Bring Flowers of the Rarest* could be heard all over our campus as 400 voices sang strong the verses to this traditional song while 8th grader, Gabrielle Young, gently placed a crown of flowers on the head of our statue of Mary.

On May 27th, in an evening ceremony at St. Max, 48 students received awards and certificates of graduation as part of their final prayer service as students of St. Gabriel Consolidated School.

All of these activities strengthen our family bonds and help us to recognize and maintain our roles as members of the body of Christ.

Happy Summer to all of you!

Early Childhood Registration

Would you like your preschool or Kindergarten aged child to have some fun while learning about God?

Have them come to "Sunday School" and join in on all the fun!

Registration has begun for the 09/10 school year!

When: During 9:30 mass from the end of September through April

Where: St. John's Education Center

Who: Children turning 3 by September 30, 2009 through those entering Kindergarten in the 09/10 school year

Cost: \$65

If you already have a child in the program, forms have been sent home with your child. Forms are also available in the weekday office, the Sunday office and on our website. Volunteers are needed to teach our wonderful children. The cost is waived for teachers and assistants ... although the reward for working with the young children in our parish is priceless!

For more information, contact Jodi Krusling at 860-0233 or JKrusling@stjohnwc.org.

OUR PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY GO OUT TO ...



March 2009

- *Jennifer Van Nimwegen on the death of her sister*

April 2009

- *Jo Koch on the death of her father*
- *Sheri Russo on the death of her father*
- *Terry Hegeman on the death of her mother, Lucy Novak*
- *Kevin Barney on the death of his mother*
- *Russ Smith on the death of his mother*

May 2009

- *Sue Keegan-Biehle on the death of her mother*
- *Toni Baur & Jim Schlinkert on the death of their nephew*
- *Kathy Guenther on the death of her uncle*

... and for all those who have lost a loved one serving in the armed forces.