

Catholic Church of St. James Newsletter



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Vacation Bible School 2015

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PEACE
BE WITH
YOU

How many of us have explored our family trees through Ancestry.com? My father was fascinated with discovering all that he could about the Schmidt family line. In fact, three years ago he and I were planning a trip to Germany to visit some of the towns of our ancestors. Dad had spent some time there during WWII, so he knew his way around pretty well. Unfortunately, he passed away a few weeks before our trip. Still, I'll never forget how excited he was at the prospect of showing me the sights.

So when I saw that there was a Catholic publishing company that had produced a vacation bible school (VBS) program called Jesse Tree Journey, I was intrigued. For those who aren't familiar with a Jesse Tree, it is a tradition in which a tree is decorated during Advent with ornaments that remind us of Jesus' ancestors and of the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus would be the promised messiah, the one who would rise from the root of Jesse. (Jesse was the father of King David.) As we read in Isaiah 11:1-3:

But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord.

Julia Johnson, the creator of the VBS program, explains, "Children meet Joseph and his brothers, Moses, David, and more Bible heroes until they reach the Holy Family and our Savior during a celebration of Christmas in the summer! And with the birth of Jesus came his ministry and the building of our Church!"

70 children in grades K-5 registered for our one-day extravaganza this year. The day was filled with prayer, music, dance, art projects, games, and lots of food. The day concluded with a celebration of Jesus' birthday, complete with cupcakes and singing *Happy Birthday*.

Because of the stewardship of over 40 teens and adults who volunteered their time and talent, the day was a resounding success, filled with love, laughter, and learning.

By Paulette Flench
Religious Education Coordinator



Bible Study at St. James Catholic Church

How many times have you made a New Year's resolution, or had someone say to you that reading the bible was something you should do? Well, if you are like most people, you took a look at your bible, turned to the book of Genesis, and starting reading the first chapter. By around chapter 18 or so, it was becoming clear that you weren't sure why you were doing this, and you may have decided that this would be something to do at another time.

Good News!

We recently completed an eight-week bible study program for adults that ran from mid-March thru the beginning of June, called *A Quick Journey through the Bible*. I know that at first glance you might say, "Quick?? Why take so long (eight weeks) to do a bible study?" But if you were to ask any of the 60 parishioners who took part in this program, most of them would tell you that eight weeks didn't seem very long at all. We offered the program at three different times to accommodate people's busy schedules. One choice was Sunday morning, one was Tuesday afternoon, and the third choice was Wednesday evening. Each session was 90 minutes in length, and included a 15-20 minute review of the previous week's information and readings, a 30 minute video presentation, and concluded with small group discussions concerning the video and several workbook questions. All participants were required to purchase the workbook and laminated timeline which are extensively used throughout the program. We also asked that each participant bring their own bible to the classroom each week during the course. A Catholic bible, such as the *New American Bible, revised edition*, is strongly recommended for this program because the readings and discussion questions rely on the Catholic bible's information and methods of interpretation

This fall we will be offering a more extensive 24-week program which will be conducted over two 12-week periods of time. There will be a four week break between the two 12-week periods. Facilitators for the different time slots are volunteer parishioners, who like you, may be doing bible study for the first time. They are not responsible for teaching the weekly course, but rather to make sure that the class

stays on topic and that the presentation runs smoothly. They do have the responsibility to be fully prepared for the weekly readings and be able to guide their group in a productive meeting. This is considered to be an Adult Religious Education program, and no child services are provided.

The overall message of the 24-week program is to learn what God's message to all his people was and how they responded. To learn the message, we need to understand the story told in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The **story** is explained in the 46 books of the Old Testament, and in the 27 books of the New Testament.

More Good News!!

We don't have to read all 73 books of the bible in this class! The story of the bible can be told in twelve books of the Old Testament **and** two books of the New Testament. In this course, these books are known as the *narrative* books, and the other 59 books are known as the *supplemental* books. Our focus is on these 14 narrative books which occur during twelve *historical* time periods. The study program clearly explains how these books fit into their time periods, and also how to understand what is happening in the world during these periods. Dates, places, countries, and world events all become very understandable and the bible starts to make sense, because we are finally being presented with a clear pathway through God's story. As a facilitator and a first-time participant of this program, I became more interested in what I was learning than I could have ever imagined at the beginning of the eight weeks. My New Year's resolution has been kept, and I have a much stronger faith in God the Father, and Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It is such a good feeling to find out what the bible's story is, and how difficult it was for all of us, since creation, to do God's will. The materials used in this program are remarkable, the workbook is easy to understand, the video is professionally and religiously presented, the timeline is extremely helpful, and the participants are happy with their decision to be a part of God's story.

(continued on page 3)

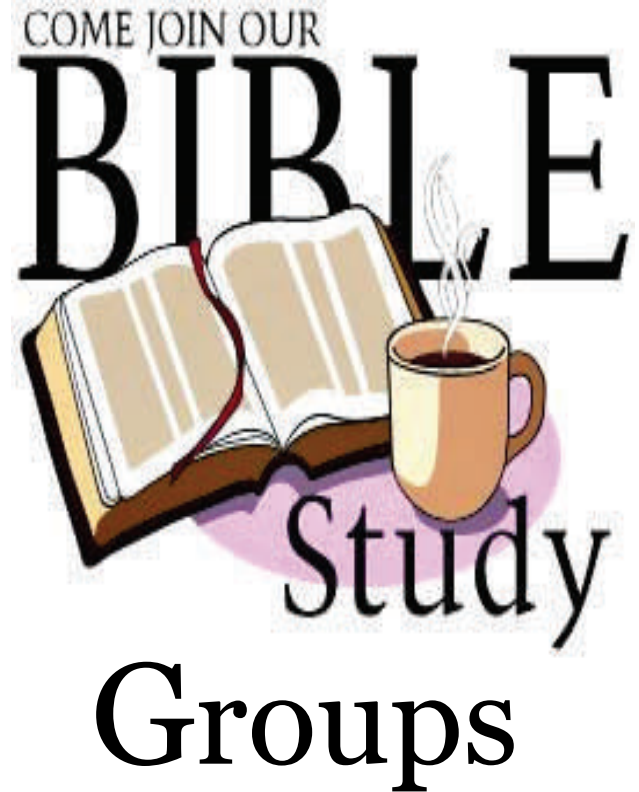
Bible Study (continued from pg 2)

The Best Good News!!!

The bible does not end with the book of Revelation. It ends with you. You will come to know what part you play in this story. You will learn to know God and what he desires for you. I found a prayer, in another religious education class that I taught, that all of us can say whenever we need an simple prayer to pray, at any time: "*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with me, protect me, and guide me. Help me to know your will, and have the strength and courage to do your will. Amen.*"

I hope that this information helps everyone who has promised themselves that they would read the bible some day. Please take this opportunity to sign up for the 24-week study program this fall. Make a commitment to yourself and your faith in God, to learn the story of the bible.

By Tom Flench
24-Week Bible Study Facilitator



FAQ: Bible Study 24-Week Program

When do the classes meet for this program?

one class meets every Wednesday, 6:30-8:30pm, the other class meets every Thursday 1-3pm

How much time is involved in weekly classroom activities?

class begins with a 30-minute group discussion of home study questions
followed by a 50-minute video/class
last part of class is a 40-minute discussion group of the video

How much does the program cost?

required material cost: \$40 (less than \$2 per week!)

Is there home study involved?

Yes. Reading of narrative book(s) and home study questions which are discussed in each class

What kind of bible is needed?

a Catholic bible, such as *The New American Bible, revised edition*

What kind of study aids will we use?

a 100-page student workbook with maps, charts, home study guides, and study questions
Salvation History color-coded fold-out timeline (creation up to the present time)
Salvation History color-coded timeline bookmark
Salvation History color-coded beaded bracelet (optional)

Update on Raffles in South Carolina

Most of us remember the news being loudly reported on Election Night last November that South Carolina voters had voted to authorize raffles to be conducted in the future. Little thought has been given to the subject since then by most of us, even though the new law went into effect in April, 2015, with little fanfare along the Grand Strand. Many Catholic parishes and schools have been anxiously awaiting the diocesan guidelines for conducting raffles.

It was thus very surprising to read in the June 4, 2015 edition of the Diocese of Charleston newspaper, *The Catholic Miscellany*, that the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, which helps the bishop govern, unanimously recommended that the bishop continue the ban on raffles. The Council provided the following justification: “This decision was based upon in-depth research of the new law and the regulations surrounding its implementation. The regulations are extremely onerous and would cause great confusion to those trying to comply with the new law.”

The article went on to say that “any organization that is separately incorporated” is free from the ban on raffles. This applies, for example, to the Knights of Columbus. With regard to our parish, the issue in question is our “Spring fundraiser,” our “raffle,” which was recently completed. The Knights of Columbus Council has conducted the fundraiser for a number of years, donating all monies collected to the parish. They will continue to do so in the future, as long as there is a diocesan ban on parishes conducting raffles. The Knights are glad to help the parish conduct this important fundraiser.

By Don Ullmann, Grand Knight
K of C Council 7531



Hey Brother – Do You Have an Hour to Spare?

“I don’t have time to join any organization! I’m too busy.” Did you know that being part of the Knights of Columbus has many benefits for you and your family? Faith inspiration; a support group of men and their spouses; life, disability, and nursing home insurance; being part of a worldwide organization supporting the Church, and working for Our Mother.

Those are the benefits. What does it cost you? It could be as little as an hour or two per month. This could be spent attending a meeting, attending Eucharistic adoration, helping cook or serve a meal, hauling food to Catholic Charities, gathering undergarments for the homeless and poor, being an usher, working with a soccer or basketball tournament, teaching Religious Education, handing out tootsie rolls and taking in donations for the intellectually challenged, or simply praying the Rosary. You choose an activity and increase its power by doing it along with 1.9 million fellow Catholic gentlemen.

What else are you part of? An organization which donated \$173 million and 71.5 million hours of service to those in need – inside our churches and parishioners, in the community, and across the world. Coats for Kids, Food for Families, Special Olympics, Ultrasound Initiatives, and Global Wheelchair Mission are just a few organizations we cooperate with to aid others.

So do YOU have an hour to spare, or perhaps simply share with us what you are already doing? Contact a Brother Knight at church or contact Lanny Breczinski (Admission Chair) at 843-246-2522 or growl678@hotmail.com to become part of the largest layman’s organization of the Catholic Church.

By Lanny Breczinski
Admission Chair, Knights of Columbus



Let's Take A Look At The Prophets

A Brief Introduction

Many people think of the Old Testament prophets as those who did nothing but foretell the future. They imagine the prophets to have been crystal-ball gazers who spent most of their time predicting details of Christ's life for the benefit of future generations.

But the word *prophet* means "someone who speaks for another." Old Testament prophets were those who spoke for God to their contemporaries. They were mainly concerned with current events and their own situations.

The kings and priests often failed in their role as spiritual leaders. When they did, God inspired prophets to speak out, to remind people of the covenant and call them to repentance. The prophets threatened evil leaders, warned sinners, consoled the suffering, advised rulers, and taught morality.

The prophets, however, did not completely ignore the future. They had a view of what it should be, and some of them foretold that God would send a Messiah (meaning "anointed one") who would be a savior for God's people. Most often, they seemed to place hope for such a savior in their immediate future.

But in God's plan their message about the immediate future could foreshadow the distant future. The prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-5, "In the desert prepare the way of the Lord," foretold that God would lead the Israelites back home from exile in Babylon. In the New Testament, Luke saw this prophecy as prefiguring the coming of Christ and John the Baptist as the one who prepared the way of the Lord (Lk 3:4).

Some prophecies were fulfilled in ways the prophet might never have imagined. For example, Nathan's prophecy that David's house would endure forever (2 Sam 7:16) was thought by many Israelites to show that God would restore Israel to worldly power. But God had something greater in mind. Luke 1:32-33 views the kingdom that will endure forever as the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. New Testament writers, looking back, could see things in God's inspired word that would not have been evident to Old Testament readers.

A guiding principle in reading the prophets is to remember that they were preachers, not scientists, lawyers, or theologians. Their aim was to persuade people to act. They used all the means that preachers employ. They focused on imagination. They used figures of speech: similes, metaphors, parables, paradoxes, exaggerations, and puns. At times they acted out messages from God.

For the most part the prophetic books are compilations of sermons, poems, conversations, and historical notes. In ancient times people did not have the technology to record such material exactly. So we find bits and pieces of one prophetic utterance joined to others from different times and places. A sermon admonishing people for their sins is placed next to words of comfort. Such abrupt changes in the train of thought can be disconcerting for readers. Good Bible commentaries can be helpful because they offer explanations of the historical situations behind each prophecy as well as interpretations of difficult words and phrases.

General Characteristics Of A Prophet includes one who:

- has received a particular mission from God, such as to challenge people to change their way of life now, because later will be too late.
- has been gifted with particular charisms for this purpose, such as being able to speak to people of their own day, also to people who would come later.
- had a certain 'sameness' about them, such as repentance from sin and selfishness.
- used concrete images and specific challenges. For example, Amos to the women of Samaria: Change or you will be dragged away with hooks (a reference to the Assyrian method of deportation).

Prophetic Vocations Prophetic vocations depended upon the will of God. God chose those who were to be 'spokesmen for God' or 'the mouthpiece of God' with no regard to personal merits, social conditions, culture, sex, or age.

Prophets of Action In the primitive period of Israel's history, the divine message of God was communicated to others through the actions of the life of the prophet rather than through words. Spoken word was brief: a simple oracle or a concise sentence. This primitive conciseness slowly disappeared and was eventually replaced by the elaborate discourse of later prophets. Prophets of Action included Abraham, Moses, Miriam (sister of Moses), Joshua, Deborah, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha.

Prophets of Writing Prophets of writing were responsible for the prophetic books of the bible and are divided into two groups: major and minor. The only difference between the two groups is solely the length of their books. Major Prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Minor Prophets include Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Nahum.

Parts Most prophetic books contain five parts: 1) *Call to prophecy* - through a vision, appearance of an angel or a voice; 2) *Listing of sins or offenses* - how people were violating the covenant; 3) *Usually an extremely direct message or challenge* - how people were violating the covenant, with the prophet telling the people to change their way of life. All could be condensed into 'repent and be saved.' 4) *Lament of the prophet* - he was sorrowful because people wouldn't listen to him or the word of the Lord. There was a wish for conversion, not a desire to see people suffer. 5) *Rejection of the prophet and his message* - the prophet was almost always doomed to failure because people were comfortable and didn't want to change.

In order to learn more about the Prophets, it would be interesting to read about each one since their stories are interesting and informative.

Material for this article was taken from *A Catholic Guide to the Bible* by Father Oscar Lukedaahr, C.M., *Meet the Prophets* by John W. Miller, *Reading the Old Testament* by Lawrence Boadt, and college notes from Felician College.

By Eleanor Fisher
Catechumenate Director

Joe Sandoli Retires (The Sandman)

After six years as the Director of Maintenance at St. James, Joe Sandoli has decided to retire from the ranks of the working class and head into the best part of life, retirement. We wanted to ask Joe to tell us a few things about himself and what his plans are for the next few years.

Q: Joe, what was your previous work experience before becoming the Director of Maintenance?

R: Well, my career has been in the food industry with two jobs in grocery, several in convenient store managing, and mini-mart stores in New York State. Two years after high school graduation, I served in the army in Vietnam. I have also worked as an electrician before coming here to St. James for the last six years.

Q: Tell us a little bit about your family.

R: The kids live all over the country, with our son out in Colorado working in a fire department. We have a daughter Michelle in Michigan, and another daughter, Monica, back in New York State. We also have four great grandchildren, and what family would be complete without our two cats, and Gail's mother.

Q: What were some of the highlights of working at St. James? What are you most proud to have accomplished here at your job?

R: The list of accomplishments is long and makes me feel really proud to have been involved with so many facility improvements. I'm talking about such things as the upgrading of the altar to a beautiful hardwood flooring, designing the classrooms in Founder's Center, and the new stage floor in the Founder's Center. Also, we had a great time rebuilding one of the classrooms into John Paul's office and teen

meeting room, getting the new carpeting in the church, hallways, and the chapel. Oh, and we also upgraded the security system with cameras and better secured doorways here in the church and also the Founders Center.

Q: What are your plans for retirement?

R: Well, of course, there's always the honey-do list that I really enjoy and is keeping me busy, and I would love to try to fit in some hunting, fishing, and golf. Traveling to see our son in Colorado would be nice, but right now we spend most of our time at home with Gail's mom and our easy-to-care-for cats.

Q: What will you miss most about your work life here at St. James?

R: That's easy, without a doubt I will miss all my friends on the staff, interactions with so many of the parishioners, and even though the day care is no longer open, the endless spur-of-the-moment jobs at work that always kept the workday interesting. One of the really funny, quirky things I'll always remember is how the kids in the CDC would see me and ask, "What do you know, Joe?" And I would answer them back with a quick, "Nothing! You?" then a friendly fist bump. They all surprised me with farewell cards that said, "What's up Joe? Retirement? Have a happy one!" That really made me feel happy.

Thank you, Joe, for everything you have done for the church and our country, and please stay in touch. We'll see you at Mass, and at special events.

By Tom Flench, Newsletter Publisher



The "Sandman"

Pastoral Visitors

Recently, a parishioner who regularly attends weekday Masses confessed that she thought that the Masses scheduled for the nursing homes and assisted living residences were closed to the public and were offered only for the residents and patients in those facilities. That created a response that led to this article.

The Masses that are celebrated in the care facilities in the Conway areas are open to anyone who wants to participate. First and foremost are the residents and patients, but all parishioners are invited to share the experience with their fellow Christians and bring the gift of community to the sheltered and suffering.

The Masses are celebrated on Wednesday afternoons at 4:00pm in the facility named in the Sunday bulletin for that week. There are five facilities which are served in this way, so Mass is offered every ten weeks in one of these facilities. They are Conway Manor, Brookdale (formerly The Place), Kingston Nursing Center and Medstar Rehab., Anderson Oaks, and Agape.

The practice of saying Mass in the nursing home was actually started by the first resident pastor of St. James, Rev. Henry Burke, of fond memory. Then the practice was discontinued until Rev. Rick LaBrecque restored it and expanded it to include all the facilities that were added in the area in the time between his pastorate and Fr. Burke.

To be sure, an early deacon, who retired from a diocese in New Jersey, offered a communion service while he was living in the area, and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist have also celebrated Communion Services with the reading of the Scripture for the day, from time to time, but the Mass is what the weak and infirm long for, and community revitalizes them to endure. The Holy Mass is for everyone, parishioner and resident alike, bringing all together in fellowship and worship.

By Pat Millus, Pastoral Visitors Ministry



Lectors Needed

The Liturgy of the Word is an important part of every Mass. God speaks to the people gathered for the liturgy through lectors and the priest or deacon. The Word of God is not merely read during the liturgy. It is *proclaimed*. Proclaiming the Word effectively is a serious commitment made by those called to this ministry.

REQUIREMENTS

The ministry of the Word requires a willingness to develop and improve public speaking skills and an understanding and love of the Scriptures. Lectors new to St. James are trained before they are scheduled to proclaim. This training includes practical guidelines for proclaiming the Word as well as the particular procedures that are used at our church. In addition, lectors attend an annual retreat which offers spiritual reflection and renewal, as well as a practical refresher.

PREPARATION FOR READING

Preparation is necessary in order for the proclamation of the Word to be effective. Spiritual preparation involves reading, reflecting, and understanding the Scriptures so that when it is proclaimed, the faithful assembly can respond to it. Practical preparation involves learning how to pronounce difficult words, knowing what they mean, and practicing the delivery of the text out loud in front of someone who can offer feedback. Each lector is given a workbook; for those who can afford it, we ask for a \$10.00 donation to offset the cost. This workbook contains the Sunday and Holy Day readings for the liturgical year, and includes tips and background information for each reading.

These three paragraphs are the first three paragraphs of our training procedures for lectors. The rest of the procedures expand on various topics such as the entrance procession, pre-Mass needs, scheduling, and useful hints for lecturing. We have an excellent group of lectors who enjoy this ministry and enjoy contributing to the liturgy part of Mass. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, please call the church office at 843-347-5168. They will direct your inquiry to me so that we can discuss becoming a lector.

By Tom Flench
Adult Lector Training

Welcome Aboard, Earl Videan

We would like to take this opportunity to officially welcome a new staff member to the parish. Although he has been a parishioner for several years, Earl Videan is now our new Director of Maintenance. If you have not had the pleasure of meeting him in his new role, we would like to let you meet him up close and personal in this interview from July 20.

Q: Earl, tell us a little about your family, and how long you have been with us at St. James.

R: I have 3 kids, 2 girls and 1 boy. Our oldest daughter is Alexandria, 24, who currently lives in Illinois. Our daughter Teresa, 21, currently resides in Carolina Forest. Our son Matthew, 15, lives at home here in Conway. He is an altar server at the 6pm Life Teen Mass on Saturdays. My wife Lori and I have been parishioners at St. James for the last four years. Lori is in real estate sales.

Q: What are your duties at the church, and where is your office located? How can parishioners get in touch with you?

R: I am the Maintenance Director, and my duties include overall maintenance, janitorial, and grounds-keeping responsibilities for all buildings and areas of the church. My office is in Founders Center, and my phone number is 843-347-5169 ext. 232.

Q: Most everyone remembers the first few things that they did at a new job. Can you share with us anything of interest that occurred on your first day?

R: My first day started out with normal duties. Then I realized the air conditioning was out in the chapel. After a little troubleshooting, I called our service company, who told me it was one of the older units at the church, and it had to be replaced.

Q: You had a two month-long overlap with Joe Sandoli to get your feet wet and learn the lay of the land. What kind of ideas did the two of you discuss that we might expect to see in the future?

R: We discussed many improvements for the church. The one that sticks out the most that needed quick attention was the lighting. We are now switching out all the old fluorescent bulbs and replacing them with new, cost-saving LED bulbs. These bulbs do not rely on ballasts to operate, and shine bright white. All of the carpeting needs to, and will be, replaced. So far the

main church, the chapel, hallways, and the sacristy have been completed. More carpeted areas will soon be done, as well as getting started on many of the other projects we discussed.

Q: What types of facility improvements are needed and can parishioners contact you if they feel that they can help in some way? What is your work schedule?

R: There are many facility improvements that are needed as the buildings age. There is a constant need to maintain and/or upgrade things. Painting and landscaping are ongoing maintenance. I am available Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm, and I welcome any parishioner to contact me at extension 232 or stop by my office.

Q: Are there any thoughts you would like to share with the St. James family about the maintenance department?

R: One thing I would like to share with the parish is that we are a generous parish, and I would appreciate any offers to volunteer help with our projects. There are many things like painting and landscaping that several people have graciously helped with. These projects do not require specialized training or skills and can be worked on when people find the time. An hour or two per day, or week, or month will be much appreciated. I'm dedicated to beautifying the church and the grounds, making it a place we can all be proud of and happy to show off to visitors.

Thank you very much Earl, welcome to the staff, and may the Holy Spirit guide you with much success in your new position as Director of Maintenance.

By Tom Flench
Newsletter



Are You On Fire With Faith?

As we approach the Jubilee Year of Mercy that the Holy Father has recently declared, our diocese will be hosting a conference on Evangelization and Catechesis. *On Fire with Faith* is a biennial conference, which was previously called Fire at the Beach. At *On Fire with Faith*, we celebrate the fact that as a Eucharistic people we are Called, Nourished, and Sent. This event will be held at St. Mary Magdalene in Simpsonville on October 2-3, 2015. It will begin on Friday evening and conclude with Mass on Saturday evening.

This year, we have included a variety of speakers and topics that should be of interest to all Catholics. Our keynote speakers will be Hector ‘the Motivangelist’ Molina, who is known for his work with the website, *Catholic Answers*, and Dr. Carole Eipers, from Sadlier, Inc., a publisher of catechetical materials. Both are phenomenal speakers and will each bring their unique approach to the topic of evangelization.

We also have an impressive and diverse slate of breakout sessions, including one given by Bishop Guglielmo. In addition, there will be several

young adult sessions that are intended specifically for those aged 18-35 and sessions in Spanish. Some of the sessions are particularly focused on catechesis and should be of interest to clergy, parish catechetical leaders, catechists, and school teachers. Other sessions are aimed at evangelization, a task we all share as Christians. In other words, there should be something edifying and inspiring for everyone. This is a major event for our diocese.

Our diocese is offering this year’s conference at a reduced registration rate of \$40, which includes refreshments and lunch. Please visit the website, www.onfirewithfaith.org, to learn more details about this exciting event.

Adapted from an article by Michael Martocchio, PhD., Director of Catechesis and Christian Initiation for the Diocese of Charleston.

By Paulette Flench, Member of Diocesan Board of Catechetical Advisors



A Bible Timeline Journey

“What did God do before creation? Nothing – he didn’t have time.” This was one of the quips from Jeff Cavins in his video series, *A Quick Journey through the Bible*. About 20 St. James parishioners participated in the Sunday morning Bible Study beginning in March, and there were two other groups that met on week days. I was pleased that the response was so strong for this adult religious education program because the presentation equipped us with a narrative that runs through the scriptures and a timeline that made the library we call the bible, coherent. I was also pleased that all in our group were engaged in the material, and I was grateful for the leadership of members who stood in for me when I had conflicts and could not facilitate the sessions. Our thanks go to John Paul Williams for bringing this series to St. James and to Paulette Flench for arranging all the details.

Beginning with creation, the video recounts that “human beings were created on the sixth day along with the birds and the fish and all beasts – we were created on the same day as pigs!! We didn’t even get our own day!” While God created us on the sixth day, He invites us to the seventh day – the Sabbath – to appreciate all He has done for us and proclaims it good. The second story of creation relates how God forbade Adam and Eve to consume the fruit of the tree of life and knowledge with the implicit question, “Do you trust me?” Starting with the eating of the fruit and all through human history, most of us have answered, “No,” but God keeps offering us opportunities to say “Yes.” This is the glory of the annunciation and Mary’s “Yes” to God.

The timeline for the series shows God’s ever-widening circle of covenant love. In Adam and Eve he made a covenant with One Holy Couple; in Noah, God made a covenant with One Holy Family. In Abraham, God made a covenant with One Holy Nation; in David, God made a covenant with One Holy Kingdom – and in Jesus, God makes one last covenant with One Holy Church, the entire world.

The other theme that runs through the scripture is how God has espoused the people of God. In the book of Hosea, God directs the prophet to marry a prostitute as a dramatic statement that the people have been unfaithful in the face of God’s faithfulness. When Assyria conquered the Northern kingdom of Israel, most of the ten tribes were exiled, but a remnant remained and mingled with five peoples that the Assyrians imported. That is why Jesus, in speaking to

the Samaritan woman says, “You have had five husbands, and the man you are now with is not your husband.” Jesus was revealing that God wishes to restore a people – a church - who will be his spouse in covenant love. This is the kind of connection we fail to make unless we are continual students of the bible.

Let us grow in our biblical understanding according to the prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas: “God grant me the desire to learn, the will to labor, and the light to understand.”

By Deacon Jeff Mevissen

Reading is Time Well Spent

I am always honored to have people tell me how much they enjoyed the newest newsletter, whether it was one article or the entire newsletter. To me there is nothing more enjoyable than a good book or short story. And whether I have ten minutes or several hours to fill, reading is something that calms my nerves and puts me in the right frame of mind to accomplish whatever is around the corner.

In my opinion, one way to read something significant to the moment is to read the insert page found inside the weekly bulletin that the ushers hand out as we enter the church. On the front side, the heading always identifies the time period of the church year, currently Ordinary Time. The article will relate to the readings of the week, just as the priest’s homily does. And as an added benefit, the readings for Sunday Mass are identified in the accompanying picture. The gospel reading may give you a sneak peak at the homily’s message.

On the back side of the insert can be found what I think are common question that many of us wonder about, but never really get around to finding an answer that we can live with. Well, here’s your chance to find that answer you have been searching for. There is always a positive response to the question, and you can rest assured that you will walk away more informed in the Catholic way.

If you like to get to church early for that special seat, or if you like to hang around after Mass to let the parking lot empty, reading the bulletin’s insert will add significance to your worship, peace to your mind, and a smile to your personality. Thank you for your reader loyalty.

Peace be with you.

By Tom Flench
Newsletter Publisher

Keeping Our Children Safe

Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out in the field." When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel? He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" God then said: What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! Genesis 4:8-10

As we see in the book of Genesis, since the earliest of times there have been people who have had evil intentions. Cain killed his own brother! So it should come as no surprise that, even today, there are those who, given the opportunity, would try to harm our children.

For sexual abuse to occur, three conditions must be present: there must be someone who wants to abuse a child; there must be a child who cannot stop an abuser; and the abuser must have access to children. Of those three conditions, the only one which we, as concerned adults, can control is the third one: we can, we MUST, control access to our children. How do we do that?

At St. James, we control access by monitoring our facility. This involves keeping rooms locked when not in use, and having windows in doors to rooms so that any meetings with children are openly visible.

Controlling access also means that adults do not meet one-on-one with children. This includes virtual situations, such as Facebook or email. If communication is necessary, adults need to contact the parents, rather than the child.

Background screening is required for adults who have regular access to children. Through the screening process, individuals who are known offenders are identified, and therefore, are not permitted to be with children. In addition to background screening, adults must also complete paperwork in which they promise to abide by the *Diocese of Charleston's Policy Concerning Allegations of Sexual Misconduct or Abuse of a Minor by Church Personnel*. In this document, **"church personnel" includes not only the clergy, but also all church employees and any volunteers with regular access to children.**

Church personnel must sign the *Diocese of Charleston's Code of Conduct*, which lists how adults will behave in the presence of children. Lastly, church personnel must attend an awareness session on prevention education. Our diocese uses a program called *VIRTUS*. St. James offers this free course on a regular basis, as do the other Catholic churches of our diocese,

and applicants can attend anywhere in the diocese.

To recap, all employees and adults with regular access to children, also known as *church personnel*, must submit to a background screening, read and sign the code of conduct and the receipt of the policy of abuse, and attend the Virtus session. This must be done within the first 30 days. If any of the four components are not completed within that time frame, adults are not permitted to continue in their work/volunteer position.

Although only adults with regular access to children and all employees have these requirements, others at St. James share the responsibility of keeping our children safe. For instance, parents and grandparents should not allow their children to roam the halls or go to the bathroom unattended. When religious education classes are in session, parents should never drop their children off at the classroom door unless the catechist is present.

Children should always be supervised. Long gone are the innocent days we fondly recall from our own childhoods, when children would play outdoors, coming home only for meals and when the street lights came on at night. Our children are a gift from God. It is our responsibility to keep them safe from those who would harm them, if given the opportunity.

Our diocese's policy also mandates that our children receive prevention education each year. Our diocese has chosen the *VIRTUS Teaching Touching Safety* program. Detailed instructions regarding curriculum and the lesson plans assist catechists in this required training, which is taught during religious education class for grades K-8, and at LifeTeen youth group for grades 9-12. All children are taught using age-appropriate lessons, unless parents specifically opt out their children. Please note that this is NOT sex education; rather, it is prevention education. For instance, the lessons last year pertained to internet safety.

With the support and vigilance of caring adults, we can keep our children safe from those who would do them harm. Then we can all say that we ARE our brother's keeper.

By Paulette Flench
Safe Environment Coordinator

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