

Sacred Heart

Catholic Church

A Letter From Our Pastor

September Marks a New Beginning

Dear Parishioners,

I don't know about you, but I still get a surge of adrenaline as the beginning of September approaches. Even though I'm no longer in school, I feel a sense of anticipation when I see the shelves filled with brand-new notebooks, composition books, and all the assorted items students use. I'm aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds.



Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, the approach of September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the end of the summer vacation season, and our calendars reflect that fact. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine—they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September, as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.

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Living According to God's Will

Forming a Conscience as Your Moral Code

As Christians, it is important to recognize the difference between right and wrong — both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward, in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking" (CCC, 1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. But how exactly do we form a conscience? There are many tools to help us do so.

One valuable way to form a conscience is to embrace the Word of God through study, prayer, and practice. Sacred Scripture is a living document, divinely inspired by God, that can open our hearts to God through its frequent study. Sacred Scripture also gives us a "blueprint" of how to treat one another, through its record of salvation history. God the Father sent Christ, physically present on this Earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. As Bishop Donald W. Wuerl aptly states in *The Teaching of Christ*, "To conform to the mind of Christ is to conform to the mind of the Father" (p. 244). In other words, when we allow Sacred Scripture to come alive in our hearts and we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is the practice of Spirit-filled prayer. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important we take the time to put ourselves in God's presence and truly listen to what He is communicating to us.



Exercising the Ten Commandments in every decision that we make is another great way to help us form our consciences to objective moral standards. When we think of the Ten Commandments, the first thing that comes to mind is the "Thou Shalt Not's." In her book *The Ten Commandments: Laws of the Heart*, Sr. Joan Chittister reshapes this thinking into "Thou Shoulds," which we can easily apply into our daily lives. (We will study this in more detail this year as part of our parish Faith Formation program.)

Finally, Church teachings give us specific guidelines in forming our consciences as moral codes. Church leaders have spent centuries charting the course of our Faith, through prayer, debate, and divine inspiration. If we are ever at a crossroads when trying to make a moral or ethical decision, we can always look to the writings of the Church scholars. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a good "one-stop" source for the Church's teachings on moral and ethical issues.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and spend time with the Lord in prayer. Read the gospels for examples of Christ's teaching. Take heed of the Ten Commandments; think about how they apply to your current situation. And, find out what the Church teaches about the situation that you are reflecting upon. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.



Parishioner Profile

The Whiteman Family

Annette and Mark Whiteman give everything they can to their parish. Even when, for Mark, it is a faith community that is of a different denomination than his own.

But even though in many ways Sacred Heart is not his church, Mark, a Presbyterian, has made it his own.

“We felt that participating in the church and getting to know people there is something we should do as a family,” says Mark.

The Whitemans decided before they had children how they were going to raise them.

“Mark thought I was a better Catholic than he was a Presbyterian,” Annette recalls. “And I wanted him to support me, so that meant going to church as family.”

So in the six different states in which they have lived, the Whitemans have always gone to church together. But something was different about Sacred Heart.

“I found this particular parish to be an especially friendly, non-judgmental group of people,” says Mark. “Even though he often asks me about converting to Catholicism, Fr. Bill has always been very supportive and appreciative of my efforts.”

Mark’s efforts at Sacred Heart have been significant, and he even once delivered a researched presentation on a specifically Catholic devotion: the Stations of the Cross.

Annette has taught Faith Formation classes for the last three years, and she is also part of a women’s prayer group that meets every two weeks.

Together, Mark and Annette have served on the committee that plans the Seder Meal for the last few years, and they both help out whenever extra hands are needed, from Christmas bazaars to senior dinners, assisting with

cooking, cleaning, setting up, or waiting tables. They also clean the parish house together every two weeks, a task that they took on after their participation in the Christmas Giving Tree program.

Even their son, Michael, who will be attending the University of Connecticut this fall, has helped out as a videographer.

“We’re the ‘If you need help, call us’ sort of family,”

Annette laughs.

Mark, who sees firsthand all of the efforts that Annette puts forth, agrees.

“She’s willing to contribute a significant amount of her time,” he says. “It’s often not the most glamorous things in the world, but it’s things that need to be done.”

And that willingness, Annette says, comes from the example of her grandmother.



The Whiteman Family. From left to right: Michael, Annette, Emily, and Mark.

“My grandmother was very active in her own church,” says Annette. “She did a lot of stuff that a lot of people didn’t know about, but I saw how it made her feel and how it was a big part of her life.”

Now, for the Whitemans – Mark, Annette, Michael, and Emily – Sacred Heart is a big part of their life.

“This parish is a wonderful and welcoming place; it feels like a big family,” says Annette.

And after six years here, Mark has found a home at Sacred Heart.

“There are a lot of people who may be registered as Catholics in other parishes, but who don’t really have a home,” Mark says. “But Sacred Heart offers a lot for families, and you figure that if a Presbyterian can find fulfillment in this parish, then surely any Catholic can, too.”



A Total Stewardship *Sacred Heart Inherits Treasure*

At Sacred Heart, we stress the importance of living stewardship as a way of life, and returning to God a portion of the time, talents and treasure that He has given to each of us. But what happens when you replace the phrase “a portion” in the previous sentence with the term “everything”? Is it actually possible for us, as disciples of Christ, to go “all-in” with our commitment to stewardship?

The answer is “yes.” And the Carron/Hammond family recently proved it when they bequeathed their house, car, and belongings to Sacred Heart Parish.

Peter B. and Christina (Melrose) Carron originally bequeathed a two-story Victorian home to Sacred Heart Parish upon their death, but they asked permission for their daughter and son-in-law, Hilda and Robert “Zeke” Hammond, to continue to reside in the home for the remainder of their lives. Hilda passed away in 2001, and Zeke stayed in the house until his death last August, at which time, the 10-room Victorian became the property of Sacred Heart Parish.

“We inherited the house, all its contents, and a 1996 Buick Skylark,” says Lisa Stewart, the Sacred Heart Operations Manager. “We sat down with the Finance Team and the Pastoral Planning Team to determine what we were going to do with it. Did we want to keep it, renovate it, and rent it out? Did we want to sell it? We came to the decision that the best thing to do was to sell the house and the car.”

The “contents,” on the other hand, were another matter. When Lisa says “all its contents,” she isn’t kidding: furniture, clothing, dinnerware, major household appliances, electronic equipment – all the items in the house were left behind for the parish, plus numerous pictures and documents reflecting Zeke’s work as a town historian.

The parish consulted an antique dealer, multiple used furniture companies, and several businesses that clean out and re-sell estate materials for help. Nearly all of the consultants balked at the opportunity to work on the building, based on what they perceived to be a lack of valuable items. Sacred Heart did not



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Sacred Heart Operations Manager

want the items, many of which were in great shape and could be re-used, to be thrown out or placed in a landfill. So we were in a quandry as to what to do.

“I was talking to Scott Garland, our former fire chief, about the house, as he works with antiques and cleans out houses in his spare time,” says Lisa. “He suggested that we have a large yard sale. He even offered to help us with it, along with his wife, Molly. So we set a date of April 4 for the sale.”



Ship Commitment

Two-Story Victorian House



The night before the sale, a large group of parishioners volunteered their time to move all of the items in the house to the first floor and price every item in the house. Lisa and the volunteers had no idea what to expect the next morning when the sale commenced, especially based on the number of disappointments the parish had had prior to that point in making arrangements for the contents of the house. Lisa says that what happened the next day, however, was truly the work of the Holy Spirit.

“The yard sale was from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.,” she says. “When I stopped by the church to get things ready prior to the sale, I could see five people standing in line by the house at quarter-past-seven. By the time we got to quarter-of-eight, there was a line halfway down the street.

“We had a bunch of volunteers that we called ‘runners’ in each room. Buyers would identify the items they wanted, and the runners would write down the items the people wanted and the amount of each item on a piece of paper, and then I would add up the totals so the people could take the items they were buying. The line was the length of the house. I didn’t look up at all during the first hour, because it was wall-to-wall people buying things.”

It turns out that the items that had little monetary value to the appraisal companies actually had a very large sentimental value to the people that had fond memories of Zeke and Hilda.

“Several people paid above the marked prices because it was such a gift to them to get something of Hilda’s or something of Zeke’s,” says Lisa. “Those memories will continue as long as they are alive, and as long as they have that item. That was the most powerful thing; you see how people’s lives touch one another, and what a positive influence that can be. I was a recipient of many of those stories, and it was very moving to go through that experience.”

We were so blessed with all those who stepped forward to help with the yard sale — from those who came Friday night to help price the myriad of items we had to sell and move items big and small from the second floor to the first, to those who worked during the sale and helped clean up afterward. We are especially grateful to Scott and Molly Garland, who offered their time and expertise to help make this yard sale a great success. We couldn’t have done all this work without them!

In the end, the parish ended up throwing out only about one-and-a-half dumpsters worth of material. The rest was either sold, given away or recycled.

The Buick Skylark sold quickly, and Virginia Larkin, a realtor and Sacred Heart parishioner, stepped up to sell the house. The house, located on 86 Hopedale Street, went on the market on March 13. After many prospective buyers visited the house, it sold on June 4.

Ultimately, the Carron/Hammond family’s generous gift is characterized by their total commitment to giving back to God the gifts that He gave them.

“It is just an example of a pure gift,” says Lisa. “And through that, it gives us the opportunity to help more people around us. Even though there was a beginning and an ending to the transactions, their gift will live on for years, in many different ways. Between the sentimental value of the items people purchased and what we can do with that money, the sky is the limit.”



Back to the Basics

Parenting 101

It's back-to-school time again.

Parents have immersed themselves in a hectic scramble to unearth last year's backpack, purchase a mountain of school supplies, and find the perfect lunchbox that won't become a fading fad a few weeks after school begins.

Yet, these seemingly menial tasks are important: the role of parents in education is vital to classroom success. Studies reveal that increased parental involvement directly correlates to increased academic achievement.

Our role as parents, therefore, is crucial. We take the education of our children seriously and don't hesitate to drop everything to review spelling words, check homework, or explain a math concept. Not to mention the high volume of energy we exert washing uniforms, finding school shoes, making lunches, and carting children back-and-forth.

All of this is done in hopes of academic success and future security.

Yet, in light of these efforts, let us examine what we do for the spiritual formation of our children. Many years ago, as we stood by the baptismal font, we promised to "accept the responsibilities of Christian parenthood" by teaching our children through "word and example."

All too often, however, the spiritual formation of our children is lost in a sea of homework and extracurricular activities. We placate ourselves with the notion that they receive adequate spiritual education during religion class at school or through the parish faith formation program.

Yet, religious education is intended to merely reinforce what is taught at home. Parents are the primary educators of their children, and are expected to pass on the Faith through "word and example."

"Parents are catechists precisely because they are parents," explain the U.S. Bishops in the *National Directory for Catechesis*. "Their role in the formation of Christian values is irreplaceable. They should speak naturally and simply about God and their faith, as they do about other matters they want their children to understand and appreciate."

Where do we begin? First and foremost, we must start with prayer, and ask the Holy Family to guide our efforts in the



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National Directory for Catechesis

spiritual education of our children. Bless the food before meals. Establish a simple routine of family morning and night prayers.

Also, keep in mind that it is impossible to pass on the Faith to our children if we do not constantly pursue its knowledge and practice ourselves. Faith formation is a lifelong process and we – as parents – are not exempt. Take advantage of the parish adult faith formation programs, and seek spiritual reading; the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a great place to start.

Rest assured that your efforts will produce a firmly-grounded spiritual foundation for your children.

And the reward? An unwavering hope in life eternal!

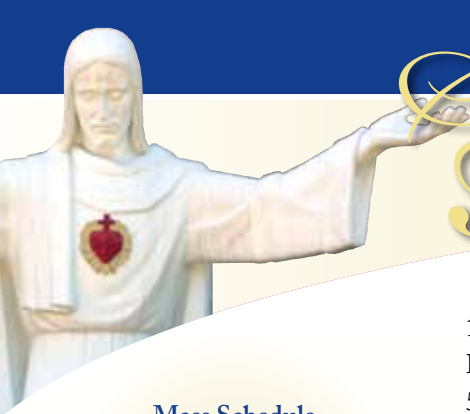


Sacred Heart Church Calendar

September 2009

This calendar is compiled a month before publication, and dates and times of events may have changed. Please confirm with the parish office, or check our Web site.

Location	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4	5
Faith Form. Topic	Faith Formation Classes Start September 27, 2009						
Church	Faith Formation Classes Every Sunday: 9:40 -10:20am Fr. Reilley Center Classrooms		9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Communion Service with Adoration	4:00pm - Confessions 5:00pm - Vigil Mass
Hall				9:30-11:00am - Mom to Mom			8:30-9:30am - AA
Thrift Shop					9:00am-3:30pm - Thrift Shop Returns!		
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Faith Form. Topic		Labor Day					Love of God
		Office Closed	Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary				
Church	9:30am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Communion Service and Adoration 7:00pm-9:00pm - Cluster Pastoral Team Retreat	9:00am-2:30pm - Cluster Pastoral Team Retreat 4:00pm - Confessions 5:00pm - Vigil Mass
Continuing Care Draper Place				10:30am - Mass			
Hall	10:30am - Coffee and...	6:30-9:30pm - Girl Scout Leader Meeting	7:30-9:30pm - Parish Life Night	9:30-11:00am - Mom to Mom	11:30am - Hopedale Senior Lunch Club	7:00pm-9:00pm - Cluster Pastoral Team Retreat	8:30-9:30am - Cancel AA 9:00am-2:30pm - Cluster Pastoral Team
Hall Conf. Room	9:30am - Children's Liturgy of the Word						
Thrift Shop					9:00am-3:30pm		
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Faith Form. Topic	Love of God						Love of God
	Regular Mass Schedule in Effect	Exaltation of the Holy Cross					
Church	8:30am - Mass 10:30am - Mass 11:45am - Anointing the Sick	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Communion Service with Adoration	4:00pm - Confessions 5:00pm - Vigil Mass (Baptisms)
Hall	9:40-10:20am - Coffee and...			9:30-11:00am - Mom to Mom			8:30-9:30am - AA 10:30am Set up for Ckn BBQ
Hall Conf. Room	8:30am & 10:30am - Children's Liturgy of the Word						
Mustard Seed Parish House			5:00pm		7:00-9:00pm - Baptismal Prep		
Rooms 1,2,3,4, 5, 7 & 8		6:00-7:00pm - Daisy Troop 71010 Meeting - CR 2					
Thrift Shop					9:00am-3:30pm		
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Faith Form. Topic	Love of God						Love of Neighbor
	Catechetical Sunday						
	Chicken Barbaque 12:00 to 3:00pm						
Church	8:30am - Mass 10:30am - Mass (Baptisms)	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Communion Service with Adoration	4:00pm - Confessions 5:00pm - Vigil Mass
Draper Place			10:30am - Mass				
Hall	No Coffee and...			9:30-11:00am - Mom to Mom			8:30-9:30am - AA
Hall Conf. Room	8:30am & 10:30am - Children's Liturgy of the Word						
Thrift Shop					9:00am-3:30pm		
	27	28	29	30			
Faith Form. Topic	Love of Neighbor						
Church	8:30am - Mass 10:30am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass	9:00am - Mass			
Hall	9:40-10:20am - Coffee and Reflection			9:30-11:00am - Mom to Mom			
Hall Conf. Room	8:30am & 10:30am - Children's Liturgy of the Word						
Parish House		7:30pm - PPT Meeting					



Sacred Heart

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Mass Schedule

Saturday

4 p.m. Reconciliation
5 p.m. Vigil Mass

Sunday

8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Masses
(September through May –
in effect after Labor Day)
9:30 a.m. Mass ONLY
(Memorial Day through Labor Day)

Weekdays

9 a.m. Mass – Monday through Thursday
9 a.m. Communion Service
and Adoration – Friday

Holy Days

7:30 p.m. Vigil Mass
(Evening before Holy Day)
9 a.m. Mass

September Marks a New Beginning *continued from front cover*

Nevertheless, I have a request for you as you make out your schedules for the fall. First thing, please put in some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples—as stewards—we are called to return to God a portion of the time, talent, and treasure He has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer Him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.

Next month you will be receiving from our Stewardship Team an envelope inviting you to prepare for our Annual Stewardship Renewal in October. Plan to make October the month you look through the materials and make a commitment to sing as a cantor, work with our parish faith formation program in one way or another, or decide to launder linens once a month. Or serve on a parish life team. Or join a hospital ministry. Or join a justice and service ministry. Or, well, you get the idea.

There are many ministries and groups within the parish where you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. Hardly anyone in the parish can't find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If you aren't involved, make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, some people say they don't have time for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge everyone to pray at least one *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and one *Glory Be* during the course of the day. That's a beginning!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Bill Konicki