



Voice of St. Mary's
Parish Monthly
Newsletter

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Other Parish Voices

"With God, All Things Are Possible!"

Parishioners Asked to "Connect with One Another"

Like for virtually all of Americans, these past two years have challenged the parishioners of St. Mary's. A historic pandemic, variants of the Covid virus, cultural changes from both sides of the street, along with social friction and discord tested us on our willingness to live together, work together, and come together, living our Catholic faith to the best of our abilities.

However, so many have stood tall during the past 24 months. Father Adam said, "Praise God for so many committed members of our parish community who have valued sharing their faith and bringing the love of God to our neighbors... We know that with God, these things have been possible, and God has certainly has even more that He desires to do going forward."

And that's what this "Making Disciples for the Mission" Program is all about. "I wanted us to



Fr. Adam explaining the Commitment Card process

be reminded of all that God can do," Father commented, "and how He has done such incredible things in so many of us through the beauty of this parish." Winning. Building. Sending. "That's how God works," he explained. "He wins our hearts, He builds us up through a series of

amazing ways, and then He sends us out." The key will be how our families can play an active role in how Jesus can continue to win those souls through our parish community.

When they received the mailing about this project, most people initially probably thought that it was going to be only about our Sunday collections. Father doesn't really pay too much attention to things like that. As he said, "If money is going to win souls for Jesus Christ, then so be it." What's critical is that we connect with another, making commitments to increase our financial support, the goal being to have the resources to bring Jesus Christ to as many people as possible.

Commitment cards were sent to all parishioners, and many returned them on the weekend of February 5/6. There are still cards in the pews to be filled out if need be. Folks can also go to our parish website to fill out a card electronically. Here's the link: <https://osvhub.com/stmaryspontiac/forms/commitment-card> As Father has often reminded us, "We have 11,688 souls in our little town (plus others from outlying communities), and we have right now around 250-400 or so who come through our doors each week, so we have a lot more people to reach as we move forward to bring our fellow mankind to Jesus. Participating in our "Making Disciples for the Mission" Program is the way we can do OUR part in making this goal possible.

Win! Build! Send! Commit today.



Father Adam filled out his Commitment Card. Have you?

Ash Wednesday, Lent Get Underway on March 2

Details Inside



AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO
LENTEN FASTING & ABSTINENCE
PRESENTED BY DYNAMIC CATHOLIC FOR THE PEOPLE'S BLOG

WHEN FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

ASH WEDNESDAY
GOOD FRIDAY
FRIDAYS IN LENT

WHO

CATHOLICS 14+
ARE OBLIGED TO PRACTICE ABSTINENCE

CATHOLICS 18-59
ARE OBLIGED TO FAST

THOSE OUTSIDE THE AGE LIMITS
and those whose state in life (e.g. pregnant women, manual laborers, those who are ill) may be excused from the requirements of fasting and abstinence, but are encouraged to take up some other form of penitence or acts of charity or piety.

ABSTINENCE

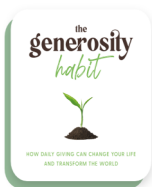
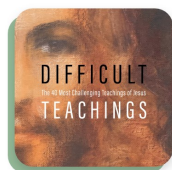
Lent 2022 begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2 and the message for the season hasn't changed at all. We shouldn't just give up chocolate for Lent. There's a better idea out there. Become more pro-active. Try something inspirational...something maybe even life changing. Here are some ideas/dates you might find worthwhile:

***Masses on Ash Wednesday will be as follows: 6:00 AM, 8:15 AM and 5:30 PM, with ashes being distributed at each Mass. A special note is that the 8:15 Mass will be streamed this year online and will be shown at 1:15 that afternoon to the residents of Evenglow Lodge. Bob Kane and Katie Wille will on hand as Eucharistic Ministers to distribute Communion and distribute ashes to the residents.



***Once again, all parishioners are encouraged, young and old, to enroll,

if you haven't already, in Dynamic Catholic's *Best Lent Ever* program. Just register at this website- and receive a daily email during Lent consisting of a short inspirational video (3 minutes or so in length) designed to help



all of us unlock our potential and become the best version of ourselves.

Guideline to 2022 Lenten Practices

And this year, we have a choice of two programs -*The Generosity Habit* and *Difficult Teachings: The 40 Most Challenging Teachings of Jesus*. Or you can choose to do both. Best of all—it's free! Here's the link to learn more - <https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/lent.html>

***The beginning of Lent also meant the return of the Knights of Columbus Fish Frys. Beginning with the Ash Wednesday Fish Fry on March 2, the Knights also plan tentatively to host on these Lenten Fridays (all from 5-7 pm) in the Parish Hall - March 11, March 18, April 1, & April 8. A limited number of in-hall seating will be available while Carry-outs/Drive throughs will also be available. Menu includes baked cod, fried pollock, fried shrimp, grilled cheese, mac & cheese, French fries, rice, vegetable, slaw, dessert, drink.



***Stations of the Cross will take place on all Fridays during Lent, starting March 4 at 5:30 PM in the church.

*** NOTE: Friday, March 25 is the Feast of the Annunciation. No stations nor Fish Fry on this day due to the celebration of Mary.

***Lent is an opportunity to attend an extra Mass during the week as part of your Lenten journey. Masses are held Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7 AM. Also, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament continues on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (in the church) and Friday. Come spend some time with the Lord this Lent.

***The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available at the following times: 6:25 AM-6:55 AM before 7 AM Mass; Wednesday from Noon-1 PM; Saturday—2:30-3:30 PM. Something to add to your Lenten repertoire.

These are just a few of the ways you can make Lent 2022 the "Best Ever," despite all the challenges we seem to face. Young or old – it's there for the sacrificing!

PRAY FOR OUR SCHOOL & CHURCH FAMILIES THIS YEAR

For 2022, we ask everyone to pray for specific church and school families each weekday. A list will be published each month in both the bulletin & in our newsletter. Please remember these families in your prayers each day for them to grow in their faith this year. Thank you.



Thurs. Feb. 17	Betty Benedino Family Isaiah and Kaeloni Jones's Family	Fri. Mar. 4	Jim & Mary Billington's Family Keylee Thomas & Gemma Bagnell's family
Fri. Feb. 18	Linda Benedino Family Alexis Brown's Family- Happy Birthday Alexis!	Mon. Mar. 7	Mark & Kimberly Boden's family Megan, Kate, Jacob, & Grace Lourtisen's Family
Mon. Feb. 21	Peter & Michelle Benning Family Chloe & Baily Cox's Family	Tues. Mar. 8	Candace & Larry Bradshaw Family Jaxson Rambo's Family
Tues. Feb. 22	Bill & Georgia Bertram Family Olivia & Eli Miller's Family	Wed. Mar. 9	Kevin & Michell Billington Family Champ Daily's Family
Wed. Feb. 23	Jeffrey and Becky Betrand Family Chris Gray's Family— Happy Birthday Chris!	Thurs. Mar. 10	Stanley & Bethany Boguszewski's Family Remi & Daxell Collins' family
Thurs. Feb. 24	Troy & Katie Bertsche Family Leleu Thurston's Family	Fri. Mar. 11	Chris & Josephina Brady's Family Chris & Tiffany Legner's Family
Fri. Feb. 25	John & Peggy Beyer Family Reagan Mackinson's Family	Mon. Mar. 14	Dona Blair's Family Payton Rogers' Family
Mon. Feb. 28	Janet Bier Family Kloey Wagner's Family - Happy Birthday Kloey!	Tues. Mar. 15	Nancy Boitnott's Family Adrian & Bianca Gill's Family
Tues. Mar. 1	David & Mary Billington's Family Ben Ehrgott's Family	Wed. Mar. 16	Cal & Mary Brainard's Family Adam Vitzhum's Family
Wed. Mar. 2	Mark & Lori Boatman's Family Hunter Fosdick's Family	Thurs. Mar. 17	Maria Blair's Family Liam & Brooks Lawrence's Family
Thurs. Mar. 3	Sarah Bowling's Family Ava & Eli faber's Family		

News & Notes Around St. Mary's Parish

*** "Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible," a video series by Jeff Cavins, group study began earlier this month and meets every other week on Monday evenings for a total of 8 sessions. All that is needed is a Bible and a willingness to share. Ideas. If you'd still like to join, contact Margo Law (815-579-5102) or Bryan Schweigert (815-867-0958) for the details.



themselves; two recently graduated seniors from their school completed the project in two weeks, saving them a tremendous amount of money. The committee is extremely confident that St. Mary's would be able to get volunteers to perform that task here, if necessary.



***Keep our RCIA candidates in your prayers as they will be participating in the Rite of Election ceremony at the Cathedral in Peoria on Saturday, March 5. This step involves the whole family, and past experiences reveal that this event provides an

RCIA
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

extremely powerful impact on everyone involved.

*** A huge note of thanks to those who contributed to the St. Mary's School Annual Fund (similar to the ADA Goal Achieved-thank you). Our goal this year was \$31,700 and we raised \$34,560. A huge thank you to our parishioners, alumni, and school families who gave so generously this year.



***The St. Mary's Building committee has agreed in principle to have a Security System installed throughout the parish campus. The system will include surveillance cameras located at various spots throughout the campus, including the school, the parish hall, the parish center, the rectory, and the church.

The committee has been discussing the feasibility and the cost of this project for the past few years, but bids that had been received were considered extremely high or not fitting our needs. With the blessing and encouragement of Father Adam, however, the group chose to look into the matter in greater detail.



After contacting Jim Henehan, the IT director at Bloomington Central Catholic High School, about the make-up of their security system that had been installed in the past five years or so, four BC members - Karen Jones, Jason DeYoung, Mick Peterson, and Father Adam - were invited to Central Catholic by Jim to get a first-hand look at their system and ask any pertinent questions. Jim proved

to be extremely helpful, and the group came away with a much better understanding of what needed to be done.

Next, Karen, Jason, Mick, and Mark Corrigan met with Rod Burch, from CNG (Converging Networks Group) in Kankakee, whose company had submitted an earlier bid when the idea was first proposed. After a lengthy discussion, a tour of the campus (both inside and outside), analyzing means of installation, and costs, Rod offered to rebid the project.

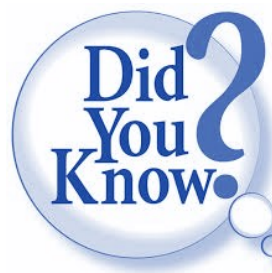
The new bid included 18 exterior cameras, 18 interior cameras, video recorders, wiring, and 8 access points around the campus that would be activated by a key fob or a card. Warranties, time frames, and other points of interest, including labor, were also included.

A key component was the cost of labor, specifically the pulling of wires throughout the campus. Central Catholic pulled those wires

Another issue was examining whether we could use a WIRELESS system. All the schools and experts that were contacted emphatically suggested we ignore that option. The size of our project, as well as replacing batteries and the greater chance of vandalism, made it a moot point.

An interesting sidelight is that during the past few summers, the St. Mary's kitchen at the Livingston County 4H Fair has raised a total of \$40,000 that has been earmarked for this project (See Back Page for more).

The Building Committee will discuss all these matters in detail at its March meeting on March 2. Results will be shared in the March edition of THE VOICE.



...why Lent is 40 days?

We Catholics say that Lent is forty days in number because the six Sundays are excluded from the rigors of Lent in order to afford the faithful a time to pause and rejuvenate, gathering new strength. Since the restructuring of the Liturgical Year after Vatican II, the Easter Triduum, which begins on

Holy Thursday, is not included in the Lenten season, so the actual days of rigorous Lenten observance are approximately forty days.

The number forty is found frequently in scripture to signify either a time of penitential preparation, or a time of punishment and affliction sent from God.

The Old Testament is replete with examples of the use of forty: God punished mankind by sending a flood over the earth that lasted forty days and forty nights (Gen 7:12); the people of Nineveh repented with forty days of fasting when Jonah preached the destruction of Nineveh (Jonah 3:4); Moses and the Hebrew people wandered in the desert for forty years (Num 14:34); the Prophet Ezekiel had to lie on his right side for forty days as a figure of the siege that was to bring Jerusalem to destruction (Ez 4:6); the Prophet Elijah fasted and prayed on Mount Horeb for forty days (1 Kings 19:8); and finally, Moses fasted forty days and forty nights while on Mt. Sinai (Ex 34:28).

In the New Testament we find Our Lord fasting and praying for forty days and forty nights in the desert in preparation for the public ministry that would end in his redeeming death (Luke 5:35). He is the new Adam who overcomes the temptations of the devil and remains faithful to God; the new Israel, who reveals himself as God's Servant by his total obedience to the divine will, in contrast to those who provoked God in the desert. The Church sets aside the forty days of Lent in order that we might imitate Our Lord by our fasting, prayer, self-denial and good works, and thereby prepare our hearts for an Easter renewal. "By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert." (*Catholic Catechism*, #540).



From the Principal's Desk...

We Believe.....



Dr. Weiss and the Office of Catholic Schools recently sent out a video which has 15 Belief Statements. This video can be viewed on our website. As Dr. Weiss stated, "Knowing how to do something is important, Knowing WHY you are doing it is even better." This was the idea behind creating a video demonstrating these beliefs. She went on to say, "Beliefs are the heart of a community, this is nothing new to Catholics as we recite the Nicene Creed each time we attend Mass.



The 15 Belief Statements are:

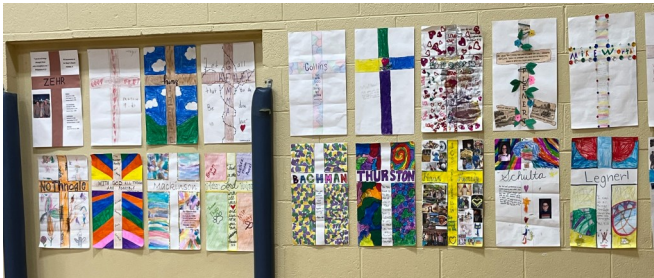
We believe parents are the primary educators of their children.
We believe we are blessed to support them in that pursuit.
We believe prayer and the resulting relationship with Jesus Christ is foundational to our education.
We believe our mission is to form disciples of Christ.
We believe in loving our students in the ways that Christ taught us.
We believe in the importance of teaching community and serving the common good.
We believe in the arts and the beauty that comes from using them to praise God.
We believe students can only thrive when they feel safe.
And Catholic schools provide a safe and loving environment.
We believe our faith allows us to persevere in times of crisis.
We believe in teaching Sacramental Awareness and this helps our students recognize that God's love and grace surrounds them.
We believe our students are the "greatest work of the Church."
We believe we are created in the image of God.
So, we believe every life is sacred.
And we believe we're obligated to teach this to our students.



Our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program allows preschoolers to third grade the opportunity to learn about Jesus and the sacraments at a child's level. We also teach about the sacraments through First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. In addition, we are blessed to have wonderful Art and Music programs which allow our students to use the talents God gives them. Through this pandemic, our Faith has allowed us the opportunity to pray for others, and as well as ourselves.

These beliefs are what we stand for at St. Mary's, as well as in our Diocese. Each day we strive to teach our students that Jesus is the most important person in our life.

Snow Can't Stop Catholic Schools Week



The snowstorm earlier this month may have knocked out a couple of days of Catholic Schools Week, but St. Mary's still found ways to celebrate. Family posters, participating in the 9:30 Mass on Sunday, and even the hot dog lunch (served on Monday, February 7 with Mrs. Jones (above) and Mrs. Gregory helping out) were just some of the activities the school participated in.

GONZAGA 2022 Ready for St. Mary's Teens

GONZAGA is a longstanding tradition here at St. Mary's for our youth. This March 11-12, the 11th Gonzaga will be taking place right here at St. Mary's. We are truly blessed to have this program as an opportunity for the high school group to have a retreat and take some time away from the speed of their life to quietly spend time growing in fruitful relationship with others and most importantly, with Jesus. This weekend is an opportunity to put a pause on the stresses of life and just be content with our Lord. A team of both adults and teens from St. Mary's parish and surrounding parishes have been meeting weekly for nine weeks to prepare for this weekend. It has been so amazing to watch this group of people grow together as a team and work toward a common goal: getting souls to Jesus.

Tyson Cramer shared this: "I joined the Gonzaga team because I thought it would be fun and exciting. The first time I went to Gonzaga I enjoyed it and couldn't wait to go again next year. This year I hope that someone else has that feeling I had freshman year."



"I have been able to connect to Christ and learn more about the love He has for me. Along with learning, I was also able to meet people that share the same belief as me, which is to grow to be better at following and loving Christ. Gonzaga is an experience that you will never forget, and when you attend you will end up growing a relationship with Christ." —Amelia Logan.

Gonzaga has truly been a blessing for so many teens in our Parish during the past several years, and it is exciting to see it the retreat in the works again. If you or anyone you know might be interested, grab an application from the back of the church and turn it in at the Parish Office or to myself. I am so excited to see what is happening with the team and cannot wait for it to be shared with the teens on the weekend!

Megan Lauritzen



This idea ties in with our theme for this year, pulled from the song by Rend Collective, "Build Your Kingdom Here." This upbeat song was chosen by the team because of the exact message it conveys. As they discussed different songs that were on the

table, the theme of bringing souls back to Jesus and building His kingdom up right here in Pontiac. The excitement and anticipation for this weekend is so exciting to witness and will be beautiful to watch spread to the teens who join us for the weekend.

Some of our team felt like sharing their thoughts—"Attending Gonzaga is a great way for you to grow in your faith because you get a whole weekend dedicated to not being on your phone; being able to be with people, and playing many fun games, with the main focus of growing your faith. If you are on the fence about attending, I encourage you to try it out!" —Brynn Pickett.



Altar Servers Go Bowling

A group of around 20 altar servers and chaperones were treated to a couple hours of bowling on a recent Sunday afternoon down in Bloomington. Some pretty "interesting" scores that afternoon...lots of fun had by all, including Father David



Margo Law 's Witness: "YOU are my Blessing!"



"We are family...This, all this...Jesus...the Mass, you, me, the blessings...and this is our home. And for that I am extremely grateful."

Margo Law completed her short, heart-felt personal witness before the weekend Masses on February 5-6 with these powerful words. Her journey reflects the true meaning of Commitment Sunday, a desire to become active, supportive members of St. Mary's parish in ways guided by the Holy Spirit.

Margo is a convert, a local lady from the Saunemin area who slowly has grown into the various roles she has assumed in the parish. She started as a lector, thinking that was enough involvement. But then, she became an Extraordinary Minister, first at Mass during Communion and then expanding to a service at Evenglow and delivering the Eucharist to the home-bound, a ministry she really enjoyed because of the people she was serving.

From there, Martha's Ministry, leading to the Bereavement Group; added a Holy Hour, then began scheduling lectors; followed by RCIA and, now, her latest endeavor – coordinating the Bible Study with Bryan Schweigert that began on Mondays this month.

She credits the people, the people she meets, the people who affect her in such a positive way. "It's the blessings...YOU are my blessings," she said. "You encourage me. Because of YOU, prayer and Jesus now come first in life. You at St. Mary's have changed my life; you have brought me closer to Jesus, and He has turned me right-side up in a world that is certainly upside down right now."

Stories like Margo's are what the *Making Disciples for the Mission* Program is all about. Answering our call to being a disciple and doing what we can to maximize our spiritual lives will help us as Catholics and also make St. Mary's Parish as vibrant as it can be.

**Making
Disciples
for the
Mission**

YOUR MATCHING GIFTS CAN HELP FUND ST. MARY'S SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS



Through the Invest in Kids Act, students living at or below the federal poverty level can receive a scholarship to attend St. Mary's School. Scholarships cover up to 100% of private school tuition and fees. **We have 24 students (with tuition totaling \$79,200) who have qualified and are on the waiting list, hoping to receive a scholarship for the 2022-2023 school year.** We are pleased to announce that a generous donor has created a 1:1 matching gift program. For every dollar donated, this donor will match the gift up to \$10,000! **We need to raise \$10,000 by April 15 to unlock the full gift.** Additionally, Caterpillar employees and retirees can have their gift matched by the Caterpillar Foundation. A \$1,000 gift matched twice becomes \$3,000 to SMS! All donations must be made directly to Empower Illinois, our Scholarship Granting Organization. Donors will receive a 75% state tax credit for their donation. If you can help, call the school office at (815) 844-6585 or email Danielle Gill at gill.danielle@stmaryspontiac.org.



ST. MARY'S PARISH DECEMBER 2021



"They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you."

~ Deuteronomy 16:16-17

WE THANK YOU

We continue to be truly humbled by the generosity of our parishioners. Thank you to those who have continued to give to St. Mary's throughout the pandemic. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and much needed to support our current and continued operation.

A QUARTERLY UPDATE ON OUR FINANCIAL JOURNEY*

	Previous Fiscal Year July 1 - Dec. 31, 2020	Current Fiscal Year July 1 - Dec. 31, 2021
REVENUES	\$1,512,292.08	\$832,356.64
EXPENSES	\$768,551.74	\$733,391.81
GAIN/(LOSS)	\$743,740.34	\$98,964.83

- Report covers both Parish and School Operations

Please be reminded that at this time last year we had received a very generous bequest of farm land from the Fitzgerald Family totaling \$740,731.00. This money has been set aside for future needs and is not being used for ordinary expenses such as salaries and utilities. We continue to encourage everyone to use your weekly envelopes even if you do not attend Mass regularly due to the pandemic.

We Asked for Input; You Responded!

The response from our parish survey (online, collection basket, & mail) was tremendous (over 180), and we are very grateful for all of you who took the time to answer these questions. Not everybody answered every question, which was fine. What was really appreciated were the comments made by several (30+) who provided a sense of direction for our future. Question #2 probably should have read "via email," rather than "online," but it seemed most understood that point. It was encouraging to notice that the front page articles were viewed initially each month, and, even though you like the format as it is, we will look to add more religious context and a few more writers from our parish to add to the mix. If anyone has other suggestions for this publication, please feel free to drop us a line via Flock-note or a message dropped in the collection basket. Here are the results of our survey; once again, THANKS for your input.

1. Our parish newsletter is an important communication tool for St. Mary's
179 Agree 4 Disagree
2. I read the newsletter when it arrives online.
103 Agree 47 Disagree 7 I didn't know that it came online.
3. I read the newsletter on our parish website.
25 Agree 99 Disagree 16 I didn't know it was on the website.
4. I read the newsletter when it is delivered in the mail.
137 Yes, I do 15 No, I don't 4 I didn't know it comes in the mail
5. I read the parish newsletter
12 Online only 49 In the mail only 90 Both online & the mail
0 On the parish website only 2 I don't read the newsletter
6. When the newsletter arrives, I look at THIS section first:
23 Upcoming Parish Events 8 Events that have occurred recently in our parish
5 St. Mary's School News 29 Father Adam's Monthly Article
8 Back Page 6 Photos
5 Did You Know Article 81 Front page Story
7. I would like to see more:
10 Photos of Parish Activities 27 Catholic Faith articles
2 Youth group info/photos 14 Lay columnists
5 School info/photos 93 Keep it as it is

JOIN US FOR OUR 29TH ANNUAL
ST. MARY'S SCHOOL DRAWDOWN

LIGHTS, CAMERA, *Auction!*

Featuring
Blake Stadel
as emcee

SATURDAY, APRIL 2
\$85 TICKET ADMITS 2 / PONTIAC ELKS LODGE

**GRAND PRIZE
\$2,000**

Your \$85 ticket admits two adults to the event and includes dinner, draft beer, a chance to win fantastic prizes, and the opportunity to participate in live & silent auctions.

5:00 pm Doors open
5:30 - 7:30 pm Buffet dinner served
5:30 pm DrawDown of tickets begins
 followed by Live Auction

RESERVE YOUR TICKET AT SCHOOL.STMARYSPONTIAC.ORG ONLY 300 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD! NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN. THIS EVENT IS FOR ADULTS 21+ ONLY.

From The Back Page

by Mick Peterson

I received this daily reflection from Dynamic Catholic earlier this month, and its subject matter really got me thinking. About the people of St. Mary's parish. About you.

Our social media world allows the person at the keyboard to create any feelings, emotions, judgments, sentencing, vitriol, and spite he/she might be experiencing at any given time. The faults, failures, and misfortunes of others become the platform for mass judgment, most of the time quick and decisive.

The discussion might be about politics, January 6, 2021, local government, the Cubs, the Cardinals, entertainers, the Bears, the Illini, local educators, coaches, the neighbor down the street, a picture online, a video released, a podcast, history from 20 years ago, something he said, something she might have said, something they were probably going to say, something they wished had said. The list goes on and on.

Many of us, I'm sure, have been on both sides of this fence - the ones being judged and the ones doing the judging. The Evil One loves this banter, this chaos; it fits in with his *modus operandi*. That's where this photo comes in. If people are going to publicly criticize, then turnabout's fair play. Let's publicly praise those who make mankind better. And that's what the people of St. Mary's have done...through YOUR willingness to respond, to sacrifice and do what is necessary for a goal to be achieved.

Here are my Top Three Selections:

1) It was mentioned last month in this newsletter. The ADA we were handed a ridiculous goal, in my opinion, \$79,000 to \$91,868! No way were we going to get that much! Wrong! YOU—the parishioners of St. Mary's—responded with a record amount—

"Never miss an opportunity to praise publicly. Public praise can be ten times more effective than private praise."

MATTHEW KELLY
The Generosity Habit



--a whopping \$94,190 pledged. And here's the kicker--if everyone fulfills their pledge, any amount we pay over that Pledge Goal will be returned to our parish. We should be extremely proud of this effort. 2) It's mentioned in this issue (page 3). Each year Development Director Danielle Gill conducts St. Mary's School Annual Fund to help out with school needs and projects. This year, the SMS alumni, our parishioners, and our SMS school families responded to the goal \$31,700 by exceeding that amount by almost \$3000! Hooray for you!

3) It's also mentioned on Page 3, almost in passing. For several years now, St. Mary's has been in charge of the kitchen at the Livingston County 4-H Fair. And every year, volunteers are asked to give their time and/or their baking abilities to contribute to the success of the endeavor. So many hours are put in organizing and publicizing and maintaining the quality of the week's efforts. And people ask why? Where does the money go? Once, the fair money earned was used to purchase a new sound system for the parish hall. The past few years, though, Anne and Mark Corrigan have wanted this money to go towards the purchase of a campus security system. So, as they donated the summer's earnings, the Finance Council kept them in a General Fund, along with other monies to be used when needed. With the go-ahead on the upcoming Security System, a total of \$40,000, including \$12,000 from 2021, will go towards that project. That's why we need people to help out at the Fair. That's why we are so happy to see the fruits of the labor be rewarded. That's a parish at work!!!!

That's not all. Money aside, just look at the great service efforts done by people and groups in our parish. We mentioned the Women's Guild last month with the Funeral Dinners. How about the Food Pantry? The Christ Child Society? The KCs and their Fish Frys? The Gardening Angels? The work our Liturgy Committee continues to do! The Drawdown is coming up; we haven't had one in a couple of years! Our school! The list just doesn't end!

Yes, St. Mary's! Be proud! Stand up and take a bow! So much GOOD is being done by so many people in this parish. We probably won't see it in social media, but that doesn't change a thing.

We know! And God knows! We ARE St. Mary's! Tell somebody!

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