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MEET CALEB KASAYKA: *Fostering a Heart for Service to Our Lord and the Parish Community*

Caleb Kasayka had good reasons for becoming an altar server at age 8 – he wanted to be closer to Christ at the altar. And, at that time, he also thought the chairs in front looked more comfortable than the pews. Now a high school junior, Caleb has taken his years serving the altar seriously and is considering the priesthood.

“What I love about serving is that I get to actively participate in the holiest thing that happens in our lives,” he says. “I also feel it helps me to personally have a more intimate connection with the Lord and help make His celebration as beautiful as possible.”

Serving at the altar has helped Caleb see up close what the priest does during Mass. This ministry has also helped him get to know the priests and see how they live. He’s also had a chance to hear their stories. Caleb truly appreciates the priests at St. Patrick’s and all they do for the parishioners and parish.

“Many of our priests have taken me under their wing from a young age and really helped foster my consideration of the priesthood and helped me to see what a fruitful life it is,” Caleb says.



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St. Patrick

CATHOLIC CHURCH

STEWARDSHIP: *The Four Pillars*

You've heard about the three Ts of stewardship, but what about the four Ps? The three Ts – Time, Talent, and Treasure – describe the personal gifts we offer to the Church. The four Ps are the Four Pillars of Parish Stewardship described by the renowned pastor Msgr. Thomas McGread. They are the hallmarks of a stewardship parish – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Let's take a look at each of them to understand how we can improve in each area.

Hospitality **Christian Kindness**

"When I was a stranger, you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). The Gospel teaches that whenever we welcome the least of our brothers or sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. That is why the first mark of a stewardship parish is hospitality. Being friendly is one of the first ways we can be Christ-like toward others.

Modern Catholic parishes are often so large and have so many Masses that many parishioners don't know one another. To create a sense of community, be sure to smile and greet others as you enter and exit the Church. Let's try harder than ever to be a welcoming community.

Prayer **Heart-to-Heart with God**

"Do not become so involved in the work of the Lord that you forget the Lord of the work," a seminary professor once taught. In other words, don't get so caught up with parish projects and outreach efforts that you forget to draw aside to spend time with God in prayer. Every great saint has taught that prayer is the most essential component in the life of the Christian. Through prayer, we nurture our most important relationship – the one that will last for all eternity.

A healthy prayer life should include communal prayer such as Mass, as well as personal prayer and family prayer. The two biggest obstacles to prayer are lack of time and lack of understanding of how to pray. We have to schedule time for prayer just as we would for an important appointment. And we have to learn how to pray from other people. Many saints have written spiritual books that describe different methods of prayer.

Formation **Continuous Conversion**

St. Pope John Paul II always emphasized ongoing conversion. From childhood through adulthood, our whole life must be a process of drawing closer to God. He never stops calling us forward to learn more and to examine ourselves more deeply.

Very often our society values material things more than interior virtues. But as personal experience shows, when we finally acquire the car or house or "toy" that we wanted so badly, it doesn't really satisfy. On the other hand, we don't tend to desire spiritual virtues with the same kind of longing, but when we actually have them, we find them far more rewarding than material things.

Service **Love in Action**

"Amen I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). This Scripture was one of St. Teresa of Calcutta's favorites. Each time she picked up a poor and hungry child, she knew she was ministering to Christ. While we may not view ourselves as saints, we too are called to such heroic service right within our own community. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "To be a saint is not the privilege of a few, but the duty of everyone."

We have many service opportunities right here within our own parish. If you have the willingness to serve and take the initiative to find where you are needed, you'll find that there is no end to the families and individuals who truly need help. How can you reach out to them in love?



A Letter From Our Pastor

SAY “THANK YOU” TO GOD BY SHARING YOUR TALENTS

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

*M*ay the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

As we step into the month of February, a month that often invokes sentiments of love and gratitude, I am filled with a sense of appreciation for the vibrant and compassionate community that is St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Colorado Springs.

In our faith journey, stewardship is not merely a duty; it is a disciple's way of life — a conscious and joyful response to the countless blessings bestowed upon us by our loving God. This February, I invite each one of you to reflect on the special gifts and talents that God has uniquely endowed you with.

Our parish family is a rich tapestry of diverse skills, abilities, and passions. Each of you possesses talents that can be shared to enrich the lives of others within our community and the wider surrounding neighborhoods of the Springs. In the spirit of love and gratitude, let us consider how we can actively contribute to the well-being of our parish family and extend our kindness to the broader community.

Sharing your stewardship of talent is not just a selfless act; it is a profound way of expressing gratitude to God. It is an acknowledgment that the talents we have are not meant to be hoarded but shared generously

with others. In doing so, we participate in the ongoing work of God's love in our midst.

This February, let us explore ways in which we can utilize our unique gifts to foster a sense of belonging and support within our parish family. Perhaps you have musical talents that can uplift our worship, or the gift of hospitality that can create a welcoming atmosphere for all. Your talents may also extend to outreach programs that benefit the less fortunate in our community.

Through our stewardship of talent, we embody the spirit of gratitude for all the gifts God has provided to us. It is through these intentional acts of giving that we demonstrate our love for God and our neighbors.

May this month be a time of self-discovery, generosity, and deepening connections within our community. Together, let us celebrate the love that binds us and express our thanksgiving to God through the sharing of our unique talents.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Quezada, Pastor

TALENT



EMBRACING

A Valuable

Every year during the season of Lent, the Church calls us to go into the desert as we prepare for the celebration of the greatest mystery of our faith — the death and resurrection of Jesus.

“Lent is a retreat for Catholics,” Fr. Francisco says. “It is a time for us to retreat from the bad habits in our lives and experience a change of heart, an encounter with Christ — a metanoia.”

Lent offers us a poignant opportunity to get on our knees and be prayerfully grateful for what we have, as Fr. Francisco emphasizes.

“As Catholic Americans, we have so much,” he says. “We have roofs over our heads; we have food to eat; and we have families and friends. We are wealthy in that we are not running from bombs in the streets while the people living where Jesus was born, they are running from bombs. We are truly blessed, and Lent gives us the opportunity to step back and recognize our blessings while at the same time looking deep into our hearts and increasing the level of our faithfulness to God who has given us so much.”

Throughout Lent, there are many opportunities here at St. Patrick for us to enter into the desert together and grow spiritually as we do.

Every Friday at 6 p.m., we will pray the Stations of

the Cross together. Each week, different parish ministries will take turns leading the Stations. Then, after Stations, we will enjoy a simple meal together — a soup supper or a fish fry.

“The dinners give us the chance to build community with one another after we pray,” Fr. Francisco says.

On Feb. 26, 27, and 28, we will come together as a parish family for our Parish Lenten Retreat. Each evening will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will offer us time to grow in faith together.

Additionally, as usual, we will offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation every day except Sunday, and Fr. Francisco encourages everyone to participate. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is such a merciful gift. Christ is there, ready to dispense grace upon grace — we need only to go and participate.

On Wednesday, March 13, Fr. Francisco will offer a Mercy Wednesday. On this day, he will be available to hear confessions from 7:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. or later, depending on the need, and Fr. Pressley will help him throughout the day. Be sure to make the time to participate, and experience the mercy of God anew this Lent.

Get involved in these many parish activities. They are bound to help each one of us grow in our relationships with one another and, more importantly, in our



ING THE LENTEN SEASON

the Opportunity to Go Into the Desert and Come Out Anew

personal relationships with Christ. That's what Lent — and life as a whole — is all about.

“We want to get to heaven,” Fr. Francisco says. “That is the goal of our lives. And when we participate in these kinds of activities at the parish, our souls reflect Jesus more and more. When we get to heaven, God's not going to be interested in how many worldly possessions we have, but in how much our souls

reflect Christ. These types of activities help to sanctify our souls.”

So, make it a priority to detach from bad habits and worldly possessions in an effort to grow closer to Christ this Lenten season, and embrace these many opportunities to do so. Then, when we enter into Holy Week and celebrate the glorious resurrection of Christ, we can do so with refined souls on fire for Him!

MEET CALEB KASAYKA *continued from front cover*

Caleb also helps with youth group and works with the Homeless Ministry. He loves the vibrancy here at St. Patrick's — ours is a community that has helped to nurture his faith.

“I love how the parish feels alive,” Caleb says. “Many of the parishioners participate in some sort of stewardship, and there are many young people and children that go to it, making it feel like it is alive and growing.”

The Catholic faith is an integral part of Caleb's life. He loves the beauty of the faith and the fact that we can receive Jesus in the Eucharist — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

“That is what the Catholic Church provides that no one else does,” he says. “No one does beauty like the Catholic Church does.”

Caleb wants to give a big shout-out to his parents for helping to foster his consideration of the priestly vocation. They have given him ample opportunities to learn more about the priesthood.

“They also helped me develop a strong base for my faith,” he says. “They had my brother and me learning about the Church and Jesus from a young age, and without that base they helped develop, I wouldn't feel so strong in my faith and love it as much as I do.”

In addition to his altar server duties and involvement with the youth group, Caleb keeps busy in his extra time as a three-sport athlete. He plays football and basketball and throws discs on the track team. He serves as captain for the track and football teams. In his free time, Caleb also likes to ski, bowl, and read.



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A CATHOLIC TRADITION OF REFLECTION AND RENEWAL

Ash Wednesday

A solemn day that marks the beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday holds a special place in the hearts of Catholics worldwide. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, this observance is laden with symbolism and significance, providing a profound opportunity for spiritual reflection and renewal.

Ash Wednesday falls 40 days before Easter Sunday, excluding Sundays, and serves as a period of penance, fasting, and prayer, mirroring the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert. The name itself is derived from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful in the sign of the cross. This year, it falls on Feb. 14.

The history of Ash Wednesday can be traced back to the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting, symbolized in Judaism by the sprinkling of ashes on the head. This practice was later adopted by early Christians as a public expression of repentance. The ashes used on this day are typically derived from the burned palms blessed on the previous year's Palm Sunday, symbolizing the connection between death, repentance, and the promise of resurrection.

The liturgy of Ash Wednesday is profound and poignant, emphasizing humility and mortality. The priest applies ashes in the shape of a cross to the foreheads of the faithful, uttering the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return" or a similar phrase. This

ritual serves as a stark reminder of the brevity of human life and the need for repentance and conversion.

The significance of Ash Wednesday extends beyond the symbolic act of ash imposition. It heralds the beginning of Lent, a period of self-examination, prayer, and fasting. Catholics are called to reflect on their lives, identify areas of sin, and strive for spiritual growth. Fasting and abstinence from certain pleasures during Lent are seen as a way to detach from worldly distractions and draw closer to God.

The 40 days of Lent are symbolic of the time Jesus spent fasting in the desert, facing temptations from the devil. Through prayer, fasting, and acts of charity, we seek to emulate Christ's journey, fostering a deeper connection with their faith.

Ash Wednesday serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative journey toward Easter, where the faithful celebrate the resurrection of Christ. It invites Catholics to embark on a period of introspection, penance, and spiritual growth, fostering a renewed commitment to their faith. As the ashes are traced on foreheads, the faithful are reminded not only of their mortality but also of the eternal hope found in Christ's sacrifice. In this season of Lent, we are encouraged to embrace the call to repentance, turning away from sin and towards a life of holiness and grace.



THE VOCATIONS COMMITTEE

Christ Calling Us to Serve the Church in Prayer

Christ calls each one of us to Himself, promising us life and fulfillment through Him. He also asks each one of us to live for Him so that others will come to know the truth and the life He has for them. Yet, as we are called to this mission, the way in which He calls us to serve is unique to each individual – it is our vocation. When we prayerfully consider the vocation to which Christ calls us and answer that call accordingly, we find ourselves more deeply fulfilled and the Church is able to fulfill Christ’s mission in a truly fruitful manner.

“As the Second Vatican Council reminds us in *Lumen Gentium*, every Christian has the primary vocation of holiness and conforming his or her life to Jesus Christ,” Fr. Pressley says. “But God calls each of us to a specific vocation in service to the Church. God has a place prepared for each one of us in His Church, a perfect plan for happiness that we sometimes need help finding.”

Unlike with the first twelve apostles, Christ is not walking among us or calling us by name in ways that we can audibly hear Him. For us, hearing Him involves much prayer and discernment – but the calls are just as real, and the fulfillment He offers us is just as deep as it was for those first disciples. But we must always make the effort to hear His call in our hearts.

This is where our parish’s Vocation Committee comes in. They commit to pray for vocations – that all of those who are still discerning would be open to whatever vocation Christ has planned for them, and that they would offer Him their “yes” in return.

“The Vocations Committee works to build a culture of vocations and an atmosphere of prayer and support



for those discerning to follow the will of God,” Fr. Pressley says.

In a particular way, the committee offers prayers for those called to a religious vocation, as hearing that call can often be particularly difficult today.

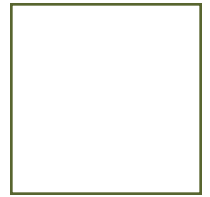
“Often in our secular world, the call to a religious vocation is hard to hear, so the committee encourages focusing on religious vocations,” Fr. Pressley says. “This focus does not diminish the beauty or importance of Holy Matrimony in any way but highlights the uphill battle of religious discernment in this secular world. Encouraging vocations is everyone’s responsibility. This group makes a special effort to pray for those considering the priesthood or religious life. Often someone may have a religious vocation but need some prompting and encouragement to pursue it.”

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“The priesthood brings Jesus Christ and the Grace of God in the sacraments. Religious orders are signs of God’s love and actions in the world. They remind us that God is greater than anything the world can offer.” — FR. PRESSLEY

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Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil: 4:30pm
Sunday: 7:45am, 9:30am, 11:30am

Weekday Masses

Wednesday, Friday: 7:00am
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 12:00pm

THE VOCATIONS COMMITTEE

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So they pray! Members of the Vocations Committee commit to pray regularly for those in our parish who are discerning a religious vocation. Currently, prayer is the only commitment of the members, but the committee plans to expand its activities as the ministry develops.

“The commitment is minimal right now,” he says. “But it is important. Praying for vocations is something we should all be doing. Joining the committee is a commitment of your time to that prayer.”

What’s more, Fr. Pressley encourages us to recognize the need the Church has for religious vocations and, in turn, to recognize the need for our prayers.

“The priesthood brings Jesus Christ and the Grace of God in the sacraments,” he says. “Religious orders are signs of God’s love and actions in the world. They remind us that God is greater than anything the world can offer. Contemplatives sustain the Church by their prayers, and the active orders reveal the face of Christ.”

If you think you may have a religious vocation and would like to talk to either Fr. Pressley or Fr. Quezada as you continue to discern Christ’s calling, do not hesitate. They are here, and they are eager to chat and pray! God is calling you to Himself, and your true fulfillment is found in Him. Give Him your “yes.” You won’t regret it.

If you are interested in becoming part of the Vocations Committee and committing to praying for vocations, or to speak about vocations, contact Fr. Pressley at the parish office, 719-598-3595.