



CHURCH OF

Saint Mary

Altar Servers:

Assisting God, Our Clergy and the Congregation During the Liturgy

Every Sunday, many members of our parish and clergy help to make the celebration of Mass available for our parish community. A key component of this team is the participation of our altar servers, who assist in the liturgy.

Deacon Ernie Kociemba trains our altar servers and teaches them about the important role they have during the Mass. As he notes, participation as an altar server is a unique and special opportunity.

“By serving the priests and deacons, you serve the people of God, and above all, you serve Christ,” Deacon Ernie says. “Altar servers are involved in the holiest and most sacred event in our tradition of Catholic worship. Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed to so closely play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist.”

The duties of an altar server primarily include assisting the priests and deacons during the liturgy. This includes carrying the processional cross, processional candles, incense and boat, assisting with the *Roman Missal* and other liturgical books used in the liturgy, and preparing the altar for the Eucharist.

While assisting the deacon and priest in the Mass holds great responsibility and importance, the altar servers are firstly serving God. But they also act as assistants to the congregation, as examples of reverence and worship. Altar servers are required to respond to the Mass parts, engaging with the service, and in doing so, encourage the congregation to do the same.



Church of Saint Mary
755 Kraft Drive SE
Melrose, MN 56352

MASS TIMES:

Saturday: 5:00 p.m. (English)

Sunday: 10:00 a.m. (English) & 12:30 p.m. (Spanish)

DAILY MASS:

Monday: 6:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m.

VER AL DORSO
PARA ESPAÑOL



(320) 256-4207

www.oneinfaith.org/stmarys

STEWARDSHIP

*The Wise Men's Gifts Symbolize Our
Lenten Obligations*



We experience great joy when we celebrate the coming of the Magi at Epiphany each year. For many of us, it is the completion of Christmas. Yet, the gifts offered by the Magi — gold, frankincense, and myrrh — can serve to guide us as we observe Lent this month.

It may seem strange to connect the joyful celebration of Epiphany with the penitential season of Lent. Yet, our spiritual life should not be divided into separate bits that have no connection to each other. In the same way, the Church's liturgical year should also flow from one season to another. The different feasts and seasons certainly have different emphases, but they are intended to build on each other. So, let's see if we can connect what the Magi gave Jesus with what we're going to offer Him this Lent.

The basic ingredients for our Lenten rule come from what is termed the "Three Notable Duties" — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

These in turn come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

How do we connect the wise men's gifts with the Three Notable Duties? Actually, what the gifts symbolize matches up surprisingly well.

Frankincense is the basic ingredient in the incense used in the worship of God, in the ancient world, and in the Church today. Offering it to Jesus points out His divine nature, and so it symbolizes prayer. Our Lenten rule needs to include prayer and worship. Of course, we are bound to worship at Sunday Mass year-round. Maybe during Lent, we might add a weekday Mass. Perhaps we can increase the time we devote to private prayer at home or at adoration. Devotional reading from the Bible or another appropriate book can be added. In addition, don't forget the possibility of adding family devotions during Lent, so that the whole family prays together.

When we offer our gold to Christ to build His Church and to help His poor, we are engaged in almsgiving.

While giving from the treasure God has entrusted to us is a duty throughout the whole year, maybe this Lent we can practice being a little more generous than usual. If our giving is a thankful response to the gift of eternal life that God has given us, we will find that the giving is indeed a means of grace.

For centuries, myrrh has been associated with fasting. Although myrrh comes from the same family of plants as frankincense, it has a more pungent scent and bitter taste. In the ancient world, it was regularly used in embalming. Generations of theological writers have seen the gift of myrrh as a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings. And fasting strengthens us in holiness and prepares us to come into God's presence after our own deaths. St. Thomas Aquinas himself linked myrrh with repentance and fasting when he wrote that myrrh represents the penance by which we preserve our souls from the corruption of sin.

Fasting may be the most difficult

continued on page 6

The Joy of Lent

Dear Parishioners,

Have you ever thought about the joy in sacrifice that Lent provides? Most of us don't delight in sacrifice; in fact, in our daily lives, we often do our best to avoid challenges and practices that push us outside of our comfort zones.

In Christianity, there is a beautiful irony between joy and sacrifice, and we are presented with a wonderful opportunity to embrace this uniquely during Lent. In one of his Lenten messages, Pope Francis shared, "Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty."

While giving up sweets in favor of healthy snacks for Lent is a common and noble endeavor, the goal of Lent should not only be a spiritual excuse to lose weight! In choosing acts of self-denial, we are saying "no" to things in order to get into the practice of saying "no" when inclined towards sin, ultimately deepening our faith and our relationship with the Lord. Victory can be found when we deny ourselves and pick up our crosses and hardships in order to grow closer to Christ!

Therein lies the joy. When we grow closer to God by denying our will, we say "yes" to a life of abundance with Him. Our God is a benevolent God; He will not hold back His grace from those who honor Him and choose



challenging things to grow and give Him glory. Christ even tells us Himself, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Without question, Lent is a time for conscious penitence and spiritual preparation for Easter. And it is important to remember that God loves us whether we make Lenten changes or not. At the same time, Lent provides us an opportunity to make God a greater part of our life, and to take our faith to new levels. Stewardship is a God-centered way of life — a spiritual way of living that, above all, acknowledges God's presence in all we do.

Lent is a time for every one of us to do more than simply deny ourselves; we need to welcome God into our lives in greater ways so that when we get to Holy Week and Easter, we have an even greater appreciation for the sacrifice the Lord made for us. Talk about pure joy!

May you and your loved ones enjoy a holy and joyous Lenten journey.

In Christ,

Fr. Marvin Enneking
Pastor



Gail

Practicing Stewardsh



Gail crafted the chalices and ciborium.

Like many parishioners, Gail Schlicht was sorry to lose our old building following the fire in 2016.

“It was sad to see it taken down, but I feel that church served its purpose for 120 years,” she says.

In fact, thanks to Gail’s donation of time and talent, elements of the former church building are present in the current one, serving a new purpose. An amateur woodturner, Gail turned pews salvaged from the fire into bowls, chalices, and a ciborium that are used at Mass. “It’s very heartwarming to see that something I created is now used to hold the

precious Body and Blood,” Gail says.

This is just one of many contributions that Gail, now 86, has made to our parish over the years. Her heart for service, parish community, and even woodworking began when she was a girl growing up as part of St. Patrick Church, which later combined with St. Mary’s Parish.

“My parents were very dedicated to the church,” Gail says. “Dad was in the choir. Fr. Julig lived right across the street, so Dad and he would go fishing together. We were very close to all the activities in the church at the time, and being

involved in the church was part of my comfort zone.”

Gail’s father ran a grocery store, and one of her jobs as a child was to break apart the wooden boxes in which the oranges and apples were delivered. That’s when she discovered her interest in building things from wood.

“I made birdhouses, and a barn for one of my brothers for Christmas,” Gail says.

In junior high, Gail joined the church choir and continued to be involved in choir, at whatever parish she belonged.

Schlicht.

Stewardship in Ways Big and Small

While a Benedictine Sister, Gail served for 10 years as a nurse at St. Cloud Hospital. It was there that she met a man who worked in the boiler room and came from a family of cabinet makers. He kept a lathe in the boiler room, and Gail asked him to show her how to use it.

After her aunt died and bequeathed to Gail her condo in Melrose, Gail returned to our parish in 1991 and joined several ministries including the church choir. In addition to singing in the choir, she is currently a Eucharistic Minister, and has served as Trustee and on the Parish Council.

“I just love being involved in the parish, with other parish members,” Gail says. “The more you’re in it, the more you get involved, the deeper your faith gets — you see others and you learn from them.”

Serving on the Parish Council also gave Gail a deeper understanding and appreciation for all that goes into maintaining and running a parish church.

“You learn more about a parish and what makes it operate,” Gail says. “If you don’t have that opportunity, it’s hard to understand all the things that are involved in a parish operation. It’s important to understand that because the Church is your spiritual foundation, and the more you learn about your church and how it operates and what goes into it, the more you understand. I think it deepens your faith.”

Participating in the choir and serving as a Eucharistic Minister has

helped Gail to both build community within the parish, and to give her gifts to the Lord.

“As a Eucharistic Minister, you get to bring joy and bring Christ to the homebound who might not see people a lot,” she says. “Many times, they just want to talk and to know what’s going on in church and in the parish. They’re so happy to receive Communion. I think it’s very important that if you’re blessed with the ability to bring Christ to the homebound, you do it.

“Whatever gifts God gives you, it’s good to make use of them,” she adds. “At 86 years old, I don’t have a perfect voice, but we need choir members. They say singing is ‘twice praying’ and I do experience it that way, especially if you get engaged in the words you’re singing. Additionally, you’re giving your voice, whatever it is — if it’s a good voice or a poor voice — back to God.”

Giving a return to the Lord from the talents He’s given you is something Gail was able to do with her woodworking hobby, due to her creativity and her persistence in honing her skills. An avid fisherwoman, Gail was attending a banquet for the Minnesota Darkhouse and Angling Association as a member of its board of directors, when she met a very skilled woodworker and asked him to teach her. Regularly traveling 30 minutes to his house to receive lessons, Gail honed her craft over time.

She remained open and alert to how she might be able to use this skill for the Lord, and, after the fire,



Gail shares her stewardship gifts.

made bowls out of the salvaged pews, selling them to raise money for the church. When Fr. Marv saw the bowls, he asked her to make the chalices and ciborium.

A lifestyle of practicing stewardship in ways big and small is something that, in a way, Gail inherited.

“My mom had a very optimistic attitude about life,” she says. “It was always her intent to see the good in everyone. She always did the little jobs in a graceful way. Hopefully, I am following her lead and finding joy in the small things that I do.”

The Wise Men's Gifts *continued from page 2*

of the Three Notable Duties for modern Americans. After all, most of the advertising and many of the magazine articles we see are devoted to making us more, not less, comfortable. We usually think of fasting only under the heading of dieting to lose weight. Instead, try to think of fasting as a way to become more spiritually fit. Body and spirit affect each other. The whole sacramental system is built on the truth that we can receive spiritual grace through material things and physical actions. Our specific requirements of fasting are limited — abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, and a reduction in the quantity of food we eat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. But the discipline of our physical bodies for our spiritual well-being does not have to be limited to Lent!

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were indeed valuable gifts for the wise men to present to the Child Jesus. When we look at their symbolism, we can see their relationship to the Three Notable Duties of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. What gifts are we going to offer to Jesus this Lent?

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Altar Servers *continued from front cover*

“Being an active participant in the Holy Mass is setting an example for the rest of the congregation,” Deacon Ernie says.

While they are there to assist God, the clergy, and the congregation, altar servers also benefit from their own participation. The Altar Server Ministry provides its members with an avenue for a personal encounter with

God in the liturgy. Deacon Ernie says he hopes this ultimately leads to a lifelong friendship with God.

Morgan Kempenich, Director of Liturgy and Music, assists with the schedule for altar serving. She says this ministry helps its members to grow in their faith.

“Many of the altar servers join other ministries to be involved in the liturgies,” she says.

Anyone who has received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Communion, and is in fourth grade or older, is welcome to join the Altar Servers Ministry. Those who are interested may contact Deacon Ernie Kociemba at ewkociemba@stmarysofmelrose.com or Morgan Kempenich at liturgy@stmarysofmelrose.com. Altar servers may choose at which Mass they would like to assist.