



CHURCH OF

Saint Mary

GET TO KNOW PARISHIONERS Helen and Donnie Van Drehle: *Serving Christ with United Hearts*

Helen Van Drehle loves cooking, her husband Donnie, and caring for others. Thanks to her involvement with the Funeral Luncheon Ministry, she can enjoy them all at the same time.

"Donnie is my sidekick," Helen says. "He and I help out with the ministry together. I order food for it from various places and I do a lot of the cooking for the luncheons. I have a talent for cooking and I have always loved doing it. We farmed, and I always liked cooking for our hired hands, such as when we were building a building. I also cooked at the local public school for a while, and I now serve lunch at St. Mary's School one day a week as well."

Since Helen began coordinating the ministry in 2008, she has found it to be a very fulfilling way to share Christ's compassion with her fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

"I like to volunteer with this ministry because it really helps the grieving families in their time of need," Helen says. "Being involved with this has helped Donnie and I grow in our faith. It keeps us closer to our parish family, and makes us really feel that we are part of the parish."

Helen also appreciates the help of Barb O'Brien, who

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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



Helen and Donnie Van Drehle

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: *Returning to the Father*

Those of us who have children know what it's like when they come to us apologetically after having done something they know is wrong. As parents, it melts our hearts, and we can't help but forgive them freely, and take them into our arms — sometimes squeezing them with tears in our eyes! At times, we may even feel closer to them than we did before the event occurred.

This, we can assume, is how God feels, being our most clement Father. In His magnanimous love, He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to redeem the world, freeing it from the haunting grips of sin and death. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation through His Church to offer sinners forgiveness for the offenses they committed against God.

As the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas writes so beautifully, “[The Sacrament of Confession is a] sacrament of healing and a sacrament of conversion, returning us to the Father after we have sinned. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is

bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

As far as the details for the reception of this sacrament are concerned, three conditions are necessary — contrition, which is genuine sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works. A priest is gravely bound to keep total confidentiality for all confessions they hear.

Church law requires Catholics to confess mortal sins — the most serious kind of sins — to a priest at least once per year, and to confess them before ever receiving Holy Communion, as well. However, this is by far the minimum; Catholics are encouraged to receive the sacrament freely and frequently since it is so extremely beneficial to the health of the mind, soul, and spiritual life in general.

To honor the Sacraments is to honor God and the entire Christian community. To receive the Sacraments is to live in God's love and to strengthen our love for each other. Christ, our tenderhearted, Paschal Lamb, awaits us, His beloved children, to come to Him with all of our hearts.



Reflections on Lent and Stewardship From Pope Benedict XVI

Dear Parishioners,

With the passing from this life of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on Dec. 31, I found it fitting to share with you some of his teachings and reflections on Lent, as we have now embarked on our own Lenten journeys.

Pope Benedict was a lifelong scholar, a priest for 71 years, and pope from 2005 to 2013. Throughout his papacy, he offered us all a treasure trove of reflections, prayers, and advice for our Lenten journeys and constantly reminded and encouraged us during this 40-day journey to increase our faith and charity. In other words, through conversion of heart, we must intensify our commitment to stewardship with the sharing of our gifts during Lent.

In his final Lenten message as pope in 2013, he wrote: *"The celebration of Lent... offers us a valuable opportunity to meditate on the relationship between faith and charity: between believing in God – the God of Jesus Christ – and love, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and which guides us on the path of devotion to God and others."*

While Lent is a time when we tend to ramp up our prayer lives, Pope Benedict always pushed us to do even more, and he encouraged us to take the next step as good and faithful stewards. He explained how faith leads to charity, which is a response to God's love for us, thus urging us to use our renewed faith by sharing our time, talent, and treasure with others.

He wrote: *"The entire Christian life is a response to God's love. The first response is precisely faith as the acceptance, filled*



with wonder and gratitude, of the unprecedented divine initiative that precedes us and summons us. And the 'yes' of faith marks the beginning of a radiant story of friendship with the Lord, which fills and gives full meaning to our whole life. But it is not enough for God that we simply accept his gratuitous love. Not only does he love us, but he wants to draw us to himself, to transform us in such a profound way as to bring us to say with Saint Paul: 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me'" (cf. Gal 2:20).

Pope Benedict continued his 2013 Lenten message, saying: *"For its part, charity ushers us into the love of God manifested in Christ and joins us in a personal and existential way to the total and unconditional self-giving of Jesus to the Father and to his brothers and sisters. By filling our hearts with his love, the Holy Spirit makes us sharers in Jesus' filial devotion to God and fraternal devotion to every man" (cf. Rom 5:5).*

While we grieve that he is no longer with us here, I remain grateful to our Lord for Pope Benedict XVI and his ministry and invite you to reflect on his teachings and messages on Lent as you continue your own Lenten journeys with trust and joy.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Marvin Enneking".

Fr. Marvin Enneking
Pastor

Want to read more from Pope Benedict XVI on the Lenten journey? Pick up his 2006 book, Journey to Easter: Spiritual Reflections for the Lenten Season, and his 2012 book, Lent with Pope Benedict XVI: Meditations for Every Day.

SACRISTANS Blessed to Share *Time* and *Talents*, Ensuring *Every Mass Goes Smoothly*

“I Get a Lot More Out of It Than I Put into It”

There are many details to make the Mass run smoothly, whether for a Sunday, a weekday, or a funeral. There are also a lot of specific items that are needed for the celebration. When everything goes smoothly, the congregation doesn't see all the details involved. For every Mass at St. Mary's, a sacristan is behind the scenes making it all happen.

Sacristans arrive at least 30 minutes early for weekend Masses. Their task list is quite long, including dressing the altar, getting the gifts ready, setting out extra items for Communion, lighting candles, bringing up the Lectionary, and checking that the correct lights are on. They also set up for Baptisms and check in with the priest to ensure everything is in order. After Mass, they clean up, purify the vessels and lock the tabernacle. Sacristans often serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

Sacristan Ruth Traeger began serving with this ministry in 2006, upon an invitation from Irma Kettler. Since then, Ruth has been serving as a weekend Mass sacristan and often helping with funerals and weekday Masses.

“I get a lot more out of it than I put into it, that's for sure,” she says.

Ruth most enjoys serving as a sacristan at funerals. She feels it's a beautiful way to give back to the deceased's family. Sometimes there will be a visiting priest, and she enjoys being able to offer some extra help. The sacristans do some of the altar server duties at funerals without servers, as well.

“I feel blessed to have the opportunity to be at the funeral,” she says. “It's a blessing to hear the eulogy. It gives you a connection to the deceased. It's very rewarding for me. I learn so much about the goodness of the person.”

For Ruth, serving as a sacristan is the perfect way to live out stewardship — she is already attending Mass, and all she has to do is arrive at the church a bit early. She is also the keeper of the candles, making sure they are ordered when needed and ensuring the taller candles are used for weddings, funerals, and holy

days. She enjoys keeping everything in order for the priest. This ministry is especially helpful when there's a visiting priest. He doesn't need to worry that he won't have what he needs. Also, sometimes our priests don't have extra time before Mass. The sacristans allow them to truly focus on the Mass.

“It's enjoyable,” she says. “It doesn't necessarily require a lot of your time. It's just getting to Mass a little extra early. It's very rewarding — at least it is to me.”



Ruth Traeger enjoys serving as a sacristan at St. Mary's.

*To get involved as a
sacristan, contact Ruth Traeger
at ruth56352@gmail.com
or 320-492-4583.*



The Importance of Catholic Faith Formation

*Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the 2022 book, **Stewardship Starts at Home: Using God's Gifts To Grow As Disciples Of Christ In Our Domestic Church**, written by stewardship expert/retreat leader Lisa McArdle and published by Catholic Stewardship Consultants. This excerpt is reprinted with permission from CSC.*

There are Four Pillars of a Stewardship Parish — Prayer, Hospitality, Formation, and Service. The third pillar — Formation — teaches us to know and love our God and our faith.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005, #20), there are six tasks of faith formation that constitute a unified whole by which faith formation seeks to achieve its objective. This primary objective is the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.

The six tasks of formation promote knowledge of the faith, promote knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, promote moral formation in Jesus Christ, teach us how to pray, prepare one to live in community, and participate actively in the life of the Church, and promote a missionary spirit that prepares one to be present as Christians in society.

Take a moment to consider how fully you are currently formed. When is the last time you read a book about the Catholic faith? When is the last time you participated in a Bible study? When is the last time you read and reflected on the readings before Mass? Or looked up something in the *Catechism*?

Frequently, the last faith formation parishioners receive dates back to when they completed their Confirmation preparation or attended their last religious formation class as a middle or high school student.

This means decades may have gone by since parishioners and family members have experienced formation.

If that is the last time that you have formed yourself or that members of your families have formed themselves, don't panic. You are not alone.

This realization is an opportunity for growth. A chance to dip your toe back in the water of faith formation and even to learn alongside the members of your family, including the youngest members who are also learning. Don't ever feel embarrassed that you don't know an answer to the faith questions asked to you by your children or grandchildren. Instead, learn together!

Remember, the more fully you are formed, the better you will understand God's calling for your family. Furthermore, the more you are formed in the faith the easier it will be to answer the call of discipleship.

Being properly formed in our faith and listening to God's call allows us to understand if we are on the right path or if we need to redirect. Being prayerful and well-formed are key to our following His plan for our lives instead of our own wishes and desires. Remember, as stewards, we strive to listen to God and use the gifts He has given us to serve those he places in our paths. Thankfully, it is easier now more than ever to form ourselves and our families.

There is no need to search for faith-formation opportunities. These options can be sent directly to our

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The Importance of Catholic Faith Formation

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smartphones and tablets. Bishop Barron's *Word on Fire* ministry sends free daily readings along with a brief gospel reflection straight to our inboxes. Matthew Kelly's *Dynamic Catholic* offers Lenten and Advent opportunities with free, reflective videos that also arrive via email. *Blessed is She* even provides an endearing female faith formation perspective — perfect for women young and old. Plus, if you want to form yourself specifically in Scripture, you can also opt for the free podcast, *The Bible in a Year* featuring the entertaining Fr. Mike Schmitz, from *Ascension Presents*. Honestly, the possibilities are endless.

Formation is the fuel that keeps your family moving forward as stewards and in becoming all that Christ is calling you to be. Have confidence as you incorporate this ongoing learning into your daily routines.



To find out more about the Stewardship Starts at Home book, visit www.stewardship-starts-at-home.company.site.

Helen and Donnie Van Drehle *continued from front cover*

calls people to help serve the funeral and also takes care of the serving line.

Furthermore, Donnie is an usher, and he and Helen also serve as greeters.

"I choose to volunteer for these ministries because I like people, and I enjoy welcoming them and talking to them when they come in," Donnie says. "I like to be kind to them and help them however I can. People really enjoy that — they really need to feel welcome at our parish."

Indeed, being an integral part of our parish family has been really important to both Donnie and Helen for a very long time.

"We have been married for over 53 years, and we have belonged to St. Mary's since 1997," Helen says. "The parishioners are very friendly and there are so many great ministries here. We are also really happy to be in this beautiful new church building. It is our church home."

Donnie and Helen have four children and nine grandchildren. One of their children, June Ellering, and her husband, Cory, attend our parish along with their four children, all of whom have attended

St. Mary's School.

Over the years, the Van Drehles have found that the Blessed Mother is the one they can turn to when they need strength, peace, and joy.

"We have always had a special devotion to Mary, and we pray the Rosary every day, as well as a number of other prayers," Helen says. "Prayer keeps us strong in our faith."

To share the mercy of Christ with those who are grieving through the Funeral Luncheon Ministry, please contact the parish office at 320-256-4207.