



CHURCH OF

Saint Mary

Meet Troy and Jenny Tomford

Making a Home and Finding Hope in Our Faith

For Troy and Jenny Tomford, being involved at St. Mary's means more than just serving – it's setting an example for their three sons, Grant, 21; Seth, 15; and Blake, 12.

"I feel that philanthropy and giving back is a huge

part of our church community," Troy says. "I hope that by being involved in the church, in various capacities, this will instill in my children to want to give back and help in our community and church."

Jenny helps with Children's Liturgy, and Troy is on the Parish Council, where he serves as the liaison for St. Mary's School and the endowment. He recently started serving as an usher and previously helped with the St. Mary's School Partners in Art Program. While Troy is a past member of the St. Mary's School Board, he currently attends all School Board meetings in his Parish Council liaison role.

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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.



Jenny and Troy with their sons Grant (21), Seth (15), and Blake (12)

VER AL DORSO
PARA ESPAÑOL



(320) 256-4207

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HOSPITALITY: *The Cornerstone of Stewardship*

The dictionary defines “hospitality” as “the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way.”

A Christian worldview can refer to hospitality as “Christian kindness.”

We see the effects of hospitality – or the lack thereof – time and time again throughout the Bible. Christ speaks of hospitality in Matthew’s Gospel when He says, “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Old Testament told of the Israelites, as they wandered the desert for 40 years in search of hospitable environs. Even the Holy Family spent ample time searching for shelter before the birth of Our Lord.

It is safe to say that hospitality is, and most likely has always been, of great importance to people everywhere. Modern hotels and hostels often use the image of a pineapple to advertise their special brand of hospitality. There is no doubt that in ancient times, the distant lights of an inn or tavern struck a chord of hope within weary travelers’ hearts.

Indeed, hospitality’s meaning has not diminished at all over the years, decades, and millennia.

Christians view the presence of hospitality as meaning the difference between calling others “guests” and “strangers.” Guests are welcomed with open arms and warm smiles, but strangers aren’t. Guests feel the genuine love present in a

hearty welcome, but strangers don’t. Guests often return for second or third visits, while strangers don’t.

As a parish, do we find ourselves surrounded by guests, or burdened by strangers?

Hospitality is, in many respects, a mindset. The same person may be treated as a guest at the church just down the road, but as a stranger here.

Matthew’s Gospel tells of Christ as He reveals a profound truth about hospitality: “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” That is, “I used to be a stranger, but you fixed that when you welcomed me.” It’s a classic example of before-and-after. All it took was a change of heart.

Stewardship holds hospitality as an immensely important concept. Remember the “Three Ts” of stewardship – Time, Talent, and Treasure? Well, there are also “Four Ps,” the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Hospitality is mentioned first. Why? If not for hospitality, none of the other pillars will ever take hold. Hospitality is the cornerstone of stewardship because it opens the door to a person’s heart and allows them to receive joy, grace, and love.

Hospitality must become second nature if stewardship is to truly take hold within a parish. So, when a stranger visits our parish, welcome them as a guest. Perhaps one day, they’ll pay us a second visit.





A Letter From Our Pastor

All Things and All People Are Made New

Dear Parishioners,

We associate the Easter season with springtime — a time of new life and new beginnings — and Holy Scripture addresses this idea of newness many times. The Lord declares, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

This idea of being “new” is important to us as Catholics, and it is important to our parish. We need to strive to do this on a regular basis — even on a *daily* basis. Think of the fact that all was once new. Regardless of how you view the development of this earth and those of us who occupy it, all was once new.

During this Easter season, we need to retain that idea of being “new.” And being “new” means conversion, and we have often pointed out that conversion is at the heart of a life of stewardship.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it, “The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life” (654).

In other words, Christ’s Resurrection is the source of our new life — our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans (Rom 6:5) — “For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.”

Hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven is the result of Jesus’ Resurrection. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope? We should



sing with joy about God’s promise to us, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5).

St. Paul also wrote (Col 3:1-2), “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.” Jesus’ Resurrection and His promise of a new life for us mean that we need to live in conformity with our status as adopted children of God.

How do we show our joy and our gratitude to God for this amazing gift He has given us? We join in worship and praise God by word and song. We share the Good News of Jesus’ victory over death with our family, friends, and neighbors. And we offer back to the Lord a portion of the time, talent, and treasure He has entrusted to us.

Yes, the Easter message that we share in the benefits of Christ’s Resurrection indeed makes all things new — the ultimate foundation for all Christian stewardship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia.

In Christ,

Fr. Marvin Enneking
Pastor

STEADFAST IN FAITH AND DEVOTION: *St. Catherine of Siena*

On April 29, we celebrate the feast day of a doctor of the Church – one who remained absolutely devoted to living her life for Christ, even in the face of familial misunderstanding in her youth, and through societal opposition and turmoil during her later years. As stewards in our fast-paced, highly technical – and often fractured – world, we can always look to the life and example of St. Catherine of Siena, and strive to remain steadfast in our faith while facing our own modern-day challenges.

Born in mid-14th-century Italy to a large family, and in the midst of a plague outbreak, St. Catherine of Siena was her parents' 25th child, although half of her siblings did not survive through childhood. Young Catherine resisted her family's desire for her to marry – she even went so far as to begin fasting and cutting her hair short in protest. Her parents eventually relented, as Catherine strived to humbly serve her own family, treating her own father as Jesus, her mother as Mary, and her brothers as the apostles.

Such was Catherine's desire to remain in service to her own family that instead of entering a convent, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic at age 18. This enabled her to continue serving her family at home, even as she was part of a religious society. In time, she learned to read and began giving her family's own possessions to those in need – even though her parents didn't necessarily approve of her entirely altruistic approach to service.

Continuing with her faithful devotion as part of the Third Order of St. Dominic, Catherine developed a following of her own, as she wrote letters offering spiritual encouragement and instruction. Controversy would ensue, as her writings began to comment on public matters through her firm lens of faith.

In the midst of these spiritual developments, at age 21, Catherine underwent a profound change, as she experienced what she called her "mystical marriage to Christ." Through this experience, she was directed to help the poor and the sick.

Catherine began serving those in need in hospitals and homes, which inspired followers to assist in these important missions of service, love and mercy. Furthermore, she continued to comment on public matters, petitioning for peace in the midst of political fracture and strife. This continued through the Great Schism, beginning in 1378, as Catherine spent

two years – the last years of her life – in Rome, praying and pleading for unity in the Church, and for the cause of Pope Urban VI.

By January 1380, Catherine was gravely ill, unable to eat or drink – shortly thereafter, she lost the use of her legs. At only 33 years old, she would pass away on April 29, 1380. She was canonized nearly a century later, in 1461.

Despite her short life, St. Catherine of Siena made a profound impact on the Church through her spiritually direct writings, her work serving those in need, and in preserving the unity of the Church in the face of great societal upheavals – all while being singularly devoted to living a life for Christ. Her status led her to be declared a co-patron of Italy (alongside St. Francis of Assisi) in 1939. And in 1970, Pope Paul VI declared St. Catherine of Siena a doctor of the Church.



Baptism Preparation

GUIDING OUR PARENTS, LEADING CHILDREN TO CHRIST



As Catholics, we recognize the utmost importance of the Sacrament of Baptism. It is through Baptism that we are cleansed of original sin and are brought into the Church family as beloved sons and daughters of Christ. Because this is such an important step in the faith journey, it is critical to have the proper catechesis and formation to understand what one is entering into.

“For Christians, community has always been an essential part of life — Christ at the center, and the community built around Him,” says Deacon Ernie Kociemba, director and catechist of the Baptism Ministry at St. Mary’s. “Baptism is the way we enter that community and become members of the Body of Christ, the Church.”

For children ages 8 to 14, this includes participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC) classes. For anyone over 14, this includes attending Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Children under 8, however, may not be ready to make such a big commitment on their own, so the preparation focuses on the parents and godparents of the child being baptized.

“By having your child baptized, you are making a commitment for them for which they will need the parents’ and godparents’ help,” Deacon Ernie says. “The Rite of Baptism asks, ‘Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking,’ in accepting the responsibility for training them in the practice of the faith? This responsibility includes enabling the child to know God, to pray, to learn to serve others. It also presumes that you as the parents have an ongoing life of personal, lived faith within the parish.”

Therefore, the main focus of the Baptism Ministry is to make sure that the parents and godparents fully understand what they are undertaking by having their child baptized. This is accomplished through catechesis and formation, as well as making sure that the child and family are introduced to the parish. These introductions take place in several ways — in person, through petition and prayer, and through other parish activities.

“The primary responsibility for a child’s faith rests upon the parents,” Deacon Ernie says. “However, parents also need the support of other

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Baptism Preparation

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families, godparents, and the Christian community. That is where I come in. What I have learned is not all Catholics know their faith equally. I enjoy teaching the parents why Baptism is so important to the lives of the recipient, but also how important their role is in making disciples of our children."

Certain steps must be followed when preparing for the Baptism, and parents may reach out to the parish office for more details. Parents should call as soon as possible to allow parish staff the time to gather and complete the necessary paperwork.

"Currently, I am the only formation minister for the Baptism Ministry, and would welcome more," Deacon Ernie says. "Of all of the ministries I am involved in, this ministry brings me the greatest joy."



Any adult that would like to be a part of the ministry may help lead and form parents as they prepare to have their children baptized. Formation for this ministry will include instructions and materials. If you are interested in getting involved as a formation minister, please reach out to Deacon Ernie Kociemba at 320-248-5124 or kociemba@meltel.net.

Meet Troy and Jenny Tomford

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"With all the different boards and committees I have been involved with, I can honestly say that this group works very well with each other," Troy says. "Although we all have very differing opinions, we work for the common good of our parish."

Troy and Jenny have been members at St. Mary's for their whole life — it is truly home.

"The thing I love the most is the welcoming and family feeling I get every time I step in the church building," Troy says. "This is a reflection of the people who make up our parish. They make it such a great parish to be a part of."

As a cradle Catholic, Troy is so thankful for his faith. When times are hard, he has that to fall back on — and

it's the same when times are good. When Troy thinks of the Catholic faith, one word comes to mind — hope.

"The Catholic faith provides me hope for all things in life," he says. "When things are going bad, I can turn to my faith and rely on the hope it brings me that things will always be taken care of and will work themselves out, even in our most difficult times and situations."

Troy and Jenny keep busy with their careers and the three boys — Jenny is a physician assistant at CentraCare, and Troy is an insurance adjuster. Troy enjoys anything sports-related and spending time with family and friends playing cards and board games.