



Wichita, Kansas

FEBRUARY 2017

Identifying weaknesses helps us move forward

Weakness. Why would anyone want to talk about our weaknesses? I am a “the glass is at least half full” kind of guy. I am positive, upbeat, or at least this is how I see myself. I don’t want to be one of those people that dwell on the negative. A “Debbie Downer” if you will. Wasn’t Jesus all about teaching the Good News?

I will admit that I was not completely comfortable when our Faith Forward process suggested we do a SWOT analysis of our parish. For those of you who don’t know, this is a process where you look at your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. As a positive, uplifting guy, I could see the value in talking about our strengths and building on them. I could understand that we have

many opportunities to do things better. But weaknesses – why do we need to spend much time there?

I have come to realize, in this



process of growing and healing, that we do need to spend some time in those areas where we have failed – or not done as well as we could have – to meet parishioners’ needs. There may even be times where we have caused hurt or division

within our community. We want to have healthy relationships within our family and within our parish.

Sometimes as a spouse or a parent, I can cause pain. Some of those hurts may be intentional and some may be unintentional. For those times we cause hurt in our marriage or in our parish family, we need to say we are sorry. Forgiveness can begin and healing

can help us grow stronger by first admitting we made a mistake.

Our weaknesses or past mistakes don’t need to define us. We do need to learn and grow from them.

Please continue to pray for our Faith Forward teams as they discern the will of the Holy Spirit for our parish. This is a time where our future plans as a parish are being formed. We listened. We prayed. We discerned the Holy Spirit’s will.

Our past strengths and weaknesses lead us toward opportunities to heal and grow as a parish. Your prayers for our parish renewal do matter. Our goals remain the same. To take an honest look at who we are today – warts and all – and see how we can grow closer to God as a parish family.

Let us each move our Faith Forward.

– Pat Burns, Director of Stewardship & Finance



Photo by Alyssa Standridge

Parishioners Clyde and Deanne Oster with Herb and Rita Shaner enjoy themselves at the Annual CYM Bingo. See p. 5 for more photos.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Life, Love and Mercy

Featuring Christopher West

March 3, 6:30 to 9 p.m., see p. 2

Catholic Man’s Conference (men only)
“This is My Body: Into the Wild of the Masculine Soul”

Featuring Christopher West

March 4, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., see p. 2

Confirmation Mass

March 14, 6:30 p.m., church

West explains importance of marriage, family, fatherhood to society

About the Author: West is the founder and president of the Cor Project, an international outreach devoted to spreading the liberating teaching of John Paul II's "Theology of the Body," and empowering others to learn, live and share it.

I recently returned from a couple of days in the Bronx. I took one of my sons to have an experience of volunteering with a men's homeless shelter run by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

It was quite an interesting experience. It caused me to reflect a great deal on the cause of homelessness and the kind of men who wind up on the streets. One of the friars and I got to chatting about it, and he said that from all his experience working with the down and out, he knew the root of the problem.

He challenged me: "Point to one social problem that does not come back to the absence of fathers."

I drew the conclusion many years ago that at the very root of the social problems in our world is the breakdown of the family. As I often say in my talks, "If society has a cancer, we need to treat that

cancer at the cellular level, and the fundamental cell of society is the family."

But to hear it put so plainly and directly by someone who's been working on the streets for years and knows the problems, knows the lay of the land, and knows what people are suffering, was quite compelling.

And what's the nucleus of the cell that is the family?

Marriage! As the family goes, so goes the world.

Here's an example: Did you know that the number one profile of people in poverty throughout the world is single mothers with their children? What does that tell us? Poverty in our world, particularly in Western culture, is

primarily a sexual problem – a problem that results from people who want the pleasure of sex, but not the responsibility that comes with it – the responsibility of raising a family.

Historically, the irresponsible use of sex has been driven primarily by men. Not that women aren't also prone to want sex without the responsibility of children, but only in the 20th century and beyond have we had the contraceptive technology, and the widespread availability of

abortion when that technology fails, that has allowed women to begin acting just as irresponsibly as men.

To all the men out there who have chosen to give their sexuality in support of the next generation and make all the sacrifices necessary to raise that generation, I salute you. You are making the world a better place.

– Christopher West



BAPTISMS

Kennedy Renae, daughter of Tyler and Katrina Martin, on Jan. 1

Jacob Dale, son of Jeffery and Elyse Janzen, on Jan. 7

Harper Joann, daughter of Luke and Mallory Duling, on Jan. 8

Reaghan Jane, daughter of Luke and Mallory Duling, on Jan. 8

Judah Chester, son of Isaiah and Malinda Sylvester, on Jan. 8

Coralynn Diane, daughter of Nicholas and Jaylen Meyer, on Jan. 28

Zebedee Simon Francis, son of Ryan and Hannah Oster, on Jan. 28

Maggie Rose, daughter of Peter and Amy Cleaves, on Jan. 29

West to speak at Catholic Man's Conference and to general public in March; both events at SFA

Catholic author and speaker Christopher West will highlight the annual Catholic Man's Conference of Wichita in March.

West, known for his work on St. John Paul II's "Theology of the Body," will speak at the event, which will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 4, at St. Francis of Assisi.

The theme of the event is "This is My Body: Into the Wild of the Masculine Soul," and is being presented by Knights of Columbus Council 4118.

West will also deliver a presentation, "Life, Love and Mercy," from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday evening, March 3, to the general public – also at St. Francis. Friday's event is

sponsored by the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

To register for either or both events, visit tinyurl.com/WestInWichita. For more information, call Jake Samour at 685-5240, Rick Riggs at 461-6481, or visit www.facebook.com/CatholicMenICT.

Two words with great power: 'I'm sorry'

Some people say they are the two most important words in the English language. "I'm sorry." In order for a person to say those words, it takes two things: humility and love.

What humility it takes to be able to speak those words! People who say, "I'm sorry," have been able to take an honest look at themselves and see the ways in which they have fallen short. Such persons are able to admit that they are not perfect and that they are actually at fault.

A true, "I'm sorry," is not an "I'm sorry ... but ...," as if one wants to justify their actions or somehow share the blame with others. A true "I'm sorry" is a courageous claim that a fault has been committed, the person expressing it is to be blamed, and the only way to heal the hurt is to ask for forgiveness.

What love it takes to say these words! What other possible motivation could there be to say "I'm sorry" except for love of the other person?

People who say, "I'm sorry," do so because they value the relationship more than the need to be right or to be self-justified. It is because one person loves another that they want to heal the hurt and run the risk of



Message From
THE PASTOR

being vulnerable enough to ask for forgiveness.

We are soon embarking on another Lenten season when we strive to be shriven of our sins by saying "I'm sorry" to both God and our neighbor. We say this to God in the sacrament of Confession. We say this to our neighbor anytime we admit a fault and ask for forgiveness. But, there is another "I'm sorry" that we need to hear, and we learned this from John Paul II.

"Shriven – past participle of "shrive" – To hear the confession of, assign penance to, and absolve someone. To present oneself to a priest for confession, penance and absolution."

At the turn of the millennium, John Paul II publicly asked forgiveness for sins committed by members of the Church. Some of these sins

caused divisions and scandal. The effects of these sins have left lasting bruises and bitterness in many hearts. He said, "I'm sorry" to heal those wounds.

In the same way, as the pastor of St. Francis, I will say "I'm sorry" on Ash Wednesday for the ways in which St. Francis priests or parishioners may have caused offense to others. Some persons have been offended by the weaknesses of the priest, the parishioners or the parish family. Some of those offenses may have gone unresolved or may have left bitterness in a person's heart.

Pope Francis called parishes "field hospitals." This means that a parish is where weak persons come to be cured. But sometimes those weaknesses can cause hurt, even while we are all members of the same "hospital."

And so I make the words of Scripture my own: "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the Lord" (1 Sam 15:25). In all humility, motivated by love, please join me on Ash Wednesday to heal the hurts of our parish by sharing in sincere forgiveness.

Stewardship Thought

Stewarding Our Gifts: Go in Peace Glorifying the Lord by Your Life

You are the light of the world! As a disciple of Jesus Christ, who is the true and original source of light in the world, YOU have been given the awesome task of carrying His light to the darkest corners of the Earth. Fortunately, you do not have to work alone; we have all been called to act as stewards of God's light ... sharing it with the hungry, the oppressed, and the homeless ... allowing it to reveal the truth to those living in ignorance and sin.

"Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall be quickly healed." Isaiah tells us that by doing God's work, our truest purpose can be attained, and our pain (perhaps from sin?) can be relieved. The light of God within us all draws others into His love. Much like a city set on top of a hill, the light cannot – and SHOULD not – be concealed. The Church and its people are meant to act as a beacon, so let that light shine!

SFA SOCIAL SITES



If you're on any of these social sites, please take a few minutes to follow or like us:

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- www.instagram.com/kssfachurch
- www.twitter.com/kssfachurch

Youth Ministry

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- www.twitter.com/sfacym

Fr. Jarrod Lies is online!

- Follow him at twitter.com/FrJLies
- Visit www.stfranciswichita.com and click on "Fr. Jarrod's homilies" to listen to any of his past sermons.

Spread the word!

Catholic Schools Week



Catholic Schools Week at SFA featured an all school mass, spelling bee, bingo with grandparents and other visitors, service day, basketball, Jam for the Lamb adoration, donuts with families, and religion bowl.



Catholic Schools Week



Photos by Ricardo Reitmeyer

Bingo proceeds to fund CYM retreat participants

Thank you to everyone who supported CYM at our annual Bingo event! It was a fun afternoon, and all the proceeds will go to the CYM members participating in Prayer and

Action this summer.

Prayer and Action is a weeklong retreat where high school students are given the opportunity to serve members of a nearby community.

Participants spend an equal amount of time in service, prayer and fellowship. Thank you again for your support. See you next year!

*– Emily Savage,
Director of Youth and
Young Adult Ministries*



Photos by Ricardo Reitmeyer



Photo by Mary Ruhl



Photo by Alyssa Standridge



Photo by Ricardo Reitmeyer

Stewardship lay witness: Chris & Maria Stewart

The following is from the testimony the Stewarts gave during one of the Stewardship Renewal masses in November.

Chris: My name is Chris Stewart and this is my wife, Maria. We are honored to share our stewardship journey today. Stewardship is defined as the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts, and who shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.

Maria: I first heard the definition of stewardship when I was 23 years old and just moved here from Orange County, Calif. I confess even with my 17 years of Catholic education, I had no idea what stewardship was. I was blessed to be brought up in a family where my parents searched out opportunities to nourish the faith, but it wasn't easy. On top of the tithing they did each week, they also paid about \$15,000 a year for our education at one of the Catholic high schools and more than \$6,000 per year on our Catholic school elementary education.

Everything had a price tag and most positions were not on a volunteer basis. I don't ever remember helping out with anything in the church when I was young, at least nothing consistent from week to week. If we wanted to go to Adoration, our Cathedral parish only had it the first Tuesday of the month. We had to consult the calendar to see which parish in the diocese had it any other day. Depending on the parish, that could be a 20-minute or one-hour commute.

I loved my parish, but I never felt like I could contribute or that it was a home to me. Chris and I couldn't even have our wedding reception in our parish hall because parishioners can't use it for personal use. We have something special here in Wichita. I am continually grateful for the ability to steward our gifts here in our parish.

Chris: While Maria did not grow up with a concept of stewardship, I on the other hand have grown up



Chris and Maria Stewart Family

Courtesy Photo

with the Stewardship Way of Life. I was raised in Wichita and attended Catholic schools K through high school. Thanks to Msgr. McGread and Bishop Gerber, the Stewardship Way of Life expanded beyond St. Francis to the rest of the diocese in 1985.

My pious single mother dove head first into this fundamental manner of walking with the Lord and from an early age she impressed upon me the need to return to the Giver of all Good Gifts my time, talent and treasure.

To be honest, because of her efforts I have never found it difficult to write a monthly check. I say that not to boast, because that is a virtue that I cannot take credit for; it belongs solely to my mother passing it on to me. However, time and talent I have always found to be the more difficult and intrusive gifts to return to the Lord. In all humility and gratitude, I can say I owe everything to the Stewardship Way of Life: the

person I am today, my wife, family and, yes, even my job is a fruit of this incredible way of living out Christianity in the Diocese of Wichita.

Maria: Although I appreciated the opportunities here at St. Francis, I admit that I am simply not a risk-taker and my fears often get the best of me. As a result, I was very stagnant in my stewardship at first. Ten years ago, I saw a bulletin announcement asking for a replacement Totus Tuus coordinator.

The first thing that flashed in my mind was "Somebody else will do it!" As the weeks passed by and I still saw the same announcement, I decided to call, but I was very reluctant. In fact, my exact words to her were, "If you don't find anybody who wants to do the job, let me know." Two weeks passed and I got a call. Guess what? Nobody had called. I realize now that

Stewardship lay witness...

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Stewardship lay witness...

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this opportunity has given my family and me so much more than I have ever given the program.

Then, it was Adoration. I was always reluctant to commit. I thought, "I'm a busy mom. What if it doesn't work out?" I just can't make a commitment. I'll go when I can each week. Then I saw in the bulletin "urgent need for adorer." Even then, my commitment began with "Can I try it out and see if it works?"

What I've noticed about each of these ministries is that we don't have to have it all together to volunteer. God takes us where we're at, and soon we realize what we can do with Him. I know as a busy mom I can't clean the church every week, but I've told the coordinator to schedule me as a sub or to call when there's a big project to do. The greatest thing about stewardship is involving the family to grow in stewardship. Each year opens up a new season of opportunity.

Years ago, I only dreamed about helping with the Lord's Diner because our kids were young, but now the two older girls volunteer with me. The lessons that they have learned are priceless and beyond what any textbook can teach. The last time I volunteered at the Diner, I went with an anxious heart. I was worrying about something. As God's providence would have it, my assignment for the evening was to sign people in. A homeless man walked in, and it was evident he carried all of his belongings in a little sack. I asked him how he was doing, and he gave me the most radiant smile. "I'm blessed! How are you?"

Suddenly my little worries faded away. He had given me a true gift, more than I could ever give to him. We are blessed in so many ways, and I've discovered I've received more than I have ever given in this journey of surrender to stewardship.

Chris: And that is just it, stewardship is a journey of surrender. Once we have made the decision to follow Christ, to become His disciple, stewardship is no longer an option.

Stewardship then becomes a constant challenge to us – are we all in with the Lord?

This is why we go through this process every year. I don't know where you are at in your walk with Christ and stewardship. You might be at the beginning of the journey or you may be 40 years into this beautiful experience.

But stewardship like any relationship is constantly challenging us to more, to go deeper. In human relationships, there are times when we fear going deeper, becoming more vulnerable. Perhaps it is because of pride, false humility, trust or concern that the other person will fail us, therefore we hold back. If we are honest with ourselves, there are times that we our holding back with Jesus. Why? Do we not trust Him? Do we

fear He will fail us? Do we believe that we will out give the Giver?

Today I ask you to prayerfully consider what is holding you back in your next step of the Stewardship Way of Life. To ask "Am I really all in?" If not, why? What am I holding onto? Ultimately Jesus wants you. But on this side of Heaven, time, talent and treasure are the measuring sticks, showing if we are surrendering ourselves to Him.

To be all in with Christ is authentic joy. If you are just starting this journey of stewardship, I am excited for you. If you are wrestling with going deeper, then let's pray for one another, knowing that the Holy Spirit will guide us closer to Christ and to one another.

God Bless.



Ladies Auxilliary volunteers serve cookies and punch to the parishioners attending the recent Faith Forward listening event.

Photo by Ann Walden

FUNERALS

Keith Bestgen, husband of Mary, father of Christopher Bestgen, Melissa Hempe and Angela Fowler, on Jan. 6

Marlene Kerschen, sister of Walt Kerschen and Sr. Lucille Kerschen, on Jan. 16.

NEW PARISHIONERS

Korye and Jaimie Garnett

John and Morgan Goetz, 2 children

Jon and Mary Hernandez-Blada, 1 child

Ryan and Rachel Lies, 2 children

Kristofer and Joy Mercer, 2 children

Nicholas and Hanna Vestering

The Vernacular

This monthly newsletter is published by and for the parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. It is mailed to each registered parish household by the end of each month.

To submit articles, photos or story ideas, send them via email to sfavernacular@gmail.com. Photos must be high-resolution print quality images.

Contacts for *the Vernacular* are news editor Lanette Belton, 722-3952, and copy editor Ann Walden, 249-2430.

Deadlines for submitting information are the beginning of each month.

New volunteers – especially reporters, photographers and layout editors – are always welcome.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a red rose underwater. The water is clear and blue, with light rays filtering through. The rose is the central focus, held gently in the palm of a hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white.

Shriven

*Now forgive my sin, and return with me,
that I may worship the Lord*

1 Samuel 15:25

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