

SPIRITLINK

St. Gerald Parish newsletter † Ralston/Omaha

August 2007 † Volume 11, Number 2



PARISHIONER JIM BURNS:

Finding his Volunteer Niche through Scouting

By Eric Olson, Parishioner

Jim Burns got his start in volunteerism quite by accident. His oldest son had recently joined the Cub Scouts, and an organizational meeting was being held for Pack 83 at Meadows School. Someone announced that the pack was in jeopardy because there was no leader. Jim, who was sitting between two moms, felt the two women elbow him.

"I had no choice at that point," he said, laughing.

After thinking about it for, oh, two minutes, Jim volunteered to be the new Cubmaster. Now Jim says he's grateful for the nudge that has led him to 18 years of distinguished scout leadership. He is in his third year as Assistant Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 377, based at St. Gerald, after serving seven years as Scoutmaster.

"In his 10 years with Troop 377, more than 30 Boy Scouts (23 since 2002), have earned Eagle Scout status, including Jim's two sons." That's a remarkable number, considering only 2 percent of all Boy Scouts nationally achieve that distinction.

Jim shares credit with scout leaders such as Jeff White and Terry Jordan and a good many other adults for making Troop 377 one of the most successful in the area. And while Jim takes pride in his charges' accomplishments, he derives even greater joy from helping the youngsters develop their character.

"The biggest reward is to see these boys grow into fine young men," he said.

"You need to give back ..."

Jim encourages everyone to think about what he or she can do to contribute to the well-being of the community, whether it's his or her parish, school, neighborhood, or club.

"You need to give back," he said. "You can play a small part or a large part. You don't have to be the leader. There are a lot of other jobs. If you try it, you will enjoy it."

Jim Burns, 50, is Senior Vice President of American National Bank. He and his wife, Lori, and sons James, 23, and Brian, 20, have been parishioners at St. Gerald for 22 years. He is a past president of the Ralston Lion's Club, but he found his niche in volunteerism through scouting.

"Everybody has a talent to share ..."

If there was anything that made him hesitate about assuming leadership positions, it was his concern about the time commitment. He said folks shouldn't let that stop them from participating in stewardship. Any amount of volunteer service one can do is better than doing none at all.

"Everybody has a talent to share," he said. "You don't have to stand behind the ambo if that's not in your personality. There are many behind-the-scene jobs that need to be done. All you have to do is ask."

Jim said he has been personally rewarded through scout leadership. He participated in many activities with his sons that he otherwise would not have, such as camping, sailing the ocean for six days, hiking the mountains of New Mexico and Colorado, and canoeing the Boundary Waters of Minnesota and Canada.

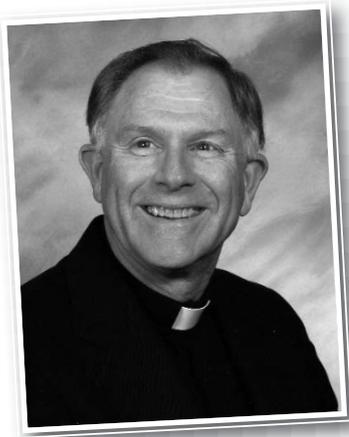
"I was nervous when I took my first step," he said. "I don't look back because I've enjoyed it so much." †

* * *

*God has chosen you
and loves you unconditionally.
Jesus asks us to commit ourselves to be
good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us,
to share what we have been given as an
outward sign of the love and gratitude we have
for Him.*

ST. GERALD PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

We, as St. Gerald Parish, are a Eucharistic community who will help each other to be good and faithful stewards of God's love.
With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will accomplish this through prayer, worship, education and service.



“I believe in endowments.

Please consider making a gift to the school or parish endowments in your will.”

Planting Grass and Planting Trees

By Rev. Gary Ostrander, Pastor

There is a difference between planting some grass and planting an oak acorn. A few weeks ago, part of my front yard was torn up by machinery repairing the collapsed retaining wall. Tony Jones and I planted some grass seed and faithfully watered it every day. Within days little shoots of green blades began to push their way through the soil. In a few weeks, it’s going to be thick enough to mow.

To get a tree to grow is a different story. I have lots of “volunteer” oak trees growing in my flower bed from the acorns that squirrels bury. If by some miracle, they would survive, it would be a number of years before they would become full-grown mature trees. I probably won’t even be alive by the time that happens.

Passing on the faith is like planting seeds. We’d all like to see the seeds of faith shoot up quickly and bear fruit immediately. But planting the seeds of faith is more like planting oak acorns than grass seed. It takes a lot of faith, patience, and love to plant the seed, and maybe not even be alive to see the full fruit of those planted seeds.

“A gift to the endowment is an act of faith.”

This is certainly the case when you leave a gift in your will to your parish and school endowments. Endowments generate funds that help our school and religious education programs. A gift to the endowment is an act of faith. You probably won’t be around to see little children receiving the gift of faith mature into adult Catholics. That’s okay. Seeds grow. We don’t have to see the growth.

I believe in endowments. If I have anything left when I die, most of it will go to school endowments. Please consider making a gift to the school or parish endowments in your will. †

We Celebrate 50 Years as a Family of Faith – 1957-2007

A. Chairs of the 50th Anniversary Committee, (l to r) Kathy D’Ercole and Cheryl Bolin, volunteered to handle the tickets for meals at the June 2nd Sausagefest, part of our weekend long celebration.

A Brief History

May 2007

St. Gerald Chapel and School, 78th & Lakeview, Ralston



The Catholic community in Ralston, Nebraska celebrated their first Mass in September, 1957. 120 families were registered with the new St. Gerald Parish. Fifty years later our parish has grown to over 2,400 families.

Mass was celebrated first in the town hall, later at the Hillcrest shopping center, and finally, in March, 1959 in a church built at 78th and Lakeview. By 1974 there was a need for additional space. Sunday Masses were added in the gymnasium of Hitchcock School.

Construction of a modest church began in 1975 at 96th and Q Street. St. Gerald Parish would now have two worship sites, one at 78th and Lakeview and a second at 96th and Q Streets.

The Christian Steward as a Disciple of Christ

We all hear about the importance of stewardship, and being good stewards of God's gifts. What does that mean? *First of all, it is a way of life—an attitude of being grateful for what we have, so much so that we want to give to God and others. We then adapt this in our lifestyles.* The U.S. Bishops describe this lifestyle as **living as a Disciple of Christ**. In their pastoral letter about stewardship, the U.S. Bishops write, "Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step forward, one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God's will. Being a disciple is not just something else to do, alongside many other things suitable for Christians, it is a total way of life and requires continuing conversion."

This "total way of life" is reflected in a number of characteristics found perfectly in Jesus, and therefore key to anyone who desires to grow as a Christian steward. These characteristics include: prayer, humility, trust, patience, responsibility, gratitude, generosity, simplicity, mercy, and perseverance. As good Christians, we strive for these qualities in our life.

Each of these characteristics is an important part of stewardship, and presents their own unique challenges. Yet all are connected to one another. As we make progress in one area, we will continually grow in other areas, too, because all of these qualities are bound together by the virtue of love. *This love calls all of us to totally give of ourselves to God and others—similar to Jesus' love.* With this love and lifestyle, we are good stewards ... with this lifestyle we are Disciples of Christ."

(Further information can be found on the documents, **Stewardship, a Disciples Response**, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and **Characteristics of a Christian Steward**, The Catholic Archdiocese of Wichita, Kansas.) †

We Celebrate!



B. Many parish Knights of Columbus volunteered to serve the food to the hungry crowd that turned out for the Saturday Sausagefest. Pictured are (l to r) Tom Perkins, Verl Squire, and Bryan Reichmuth.

of our Parish

May 2007

St. Gerald Church, 96th and Q, Omaha

Continued parish growth resulted in the need for a bigger church. Ground was broken in 1995 at the 96th and Q site. The first Mass in the new church was celebrated in February, 1997.

A school for grades 1-8 was opened in September, 1959 at 78th and Lakeview. Later it would serve grades K-6, and in 2006 grades 7 and 8 were once more educated in the expanded school building. Today St. Gerald School serves 380 students in the 5-day school and about 420 in Religious Ed.

Founding Pastor, Father William Foster, served St. Gerald from 1957 until his retirement in 1989. At that time the reins of the parish were turned over to Father Larry Dorsey. To honor the first two pastors of St. Gerald, the parish gymnasium at 78th and Lakeview has been named the Father William Foster Parish Center, and the fellowship hall at 96th and Q has been named the Father Larry Dorsey Fellowship Hall.

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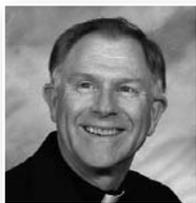
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* * *

Stewardship is giving thanks by giving back.



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St. Gerald Catholic Church

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We Celebrate 50 Years as a Family of Faith – 1957-2007

C. Our children's choir performed Sunday evening, June 3rd, during the Celebration Concert, and enjoyed the ice cream social that followed.

D. Our St. Gerald Music Ministry is second to none. Members spent many hours rehearsing for the inspirational Celebration Concert, performing before a record-breaking crowd.



E. Archbishop Elden Francis Curtiss poses with Joe and Cathie Palensky at the social after 10:30 Mass on June 3rd. Joe serves as an acolyte and Cathie as an usher at our parish funeral Masses.

ST. GERALD CATHOLIC CHURCH MASS AND CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Weekend Masses

Saturday 5:00 p.m.	Church, 96th & Q
Sunday 7:00 a.m.	Chapel, 78th & Lakeview
7:30 a.m.	Church, 96th & Q
9:00 a.m.	Church, 96th & Q
10:30 a.m.	Church, 96th & Q
12:00 p.m.	Church, 96th & Q

Weekday Masses

8:15 a.m.	Chapel, 78th & Lakeview
5:30 p.m.	Church, 96th & Q

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Saturday 3:30 – 4:45 p.m., Church, 96th & Q
Anytime by appointment

