

St. Leo's

PARISH COMMUNITY



THE LECTOR MINISTRY

Bringing God's Word to Life

By sharing her talents, Cheryl Aubery is opening the way for others to use theirs.

"The Lector Ministry is the one ministry that, literally, speaks to me," says Cheryl, who currently serves as the Coordinator of the Lector Ministry. "I was an English/Speech teacher for 32 years. I am a good sight reader — it is one of the gifts that God gave me. One of the best ways for me to show my gratitude for this gift is to use it, and to use it at Mass."

Lectors proclaim the Word of God and help it come alive during our parish Masses. They make use of public speaking skills, and strive to read the Sacred Scriptures with clarity, good tone and proper pitch, in order to touch the hearts of the congregation.

"It is an important ministry because the lector is the liaison between the written Word of God and the congregation," Cheryl says. "In order for the congregation to understand the message the Scriptures are trying to convey, the lector has to speak with great inflection and emotion."

A profound proclamation of the Scriptures helps the congregation to draw near to Our Lord and His Word in a powerful way. As St. John Chrysostom once said, "The Holy Scriptures were not given to us that we



Cheryl Aubery serving as lector

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TIME

The Foundation of Stewardship

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has told us that stewardship is part of discipleship and is a way of responding to God's call in every aspect of our lives. We refer to the three facets of stewardship as "Time, Talent and Treasure," and when we consider the importance of these three Ts of stewardship, the "time" component comes first by design.

When we talk about stewardship of time, we are referring to prayer time. Prayer is of the utmost importance in a disciple's life, and it serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom. Only by spending time in prayer each day and receiving the sacraments are we able to consistently and generously donate our talent and treasure to the Church.

When looking for examples of how to live our lives as disciples of Christ and as stewards of God's gifts, we can always turn to the great saints of our Church to guide us. And when it comes to the Stewardship of Time, the life of St. Damien is just one example of how prayer, or "Time," is the foundation for our lives of stewardship.

Shortly after being ordained a priest, St. Damien volunteered to serve a colony of lepers isolated on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. From May 1873 until his death in 1889 (at the age of 49) St. Damien worked to restore within the lepers a sense of personal worth and dignity.

Although for some time St. Damien took the necessary precautions to ensure that he did not contract leprosy, he knew that physical touch was necessary to communicate his love and concern to those afflicted with the disease. He embraced the lepers, dined with them, cared for them, and anointed them in the sacraments.



With great humility and sacrifice, St. Damien offered his own life in order to save the lives of others.

From where did St. Damien draw his strength? What was the source of his inspiration? "Were it not for the constant presence of our divine Master in our humble chapel, I would not have found it possible to persevere in sharing the lot of the lepers in Molokai," St. Damien wrote. "The Eucharist is the bread that gives strength... It is at once the most eloquent proof of His love and the most powerful means of fostering His love in us. He gives Himself every day so that our

hearts as burning coals may set afire the hearts of the faithful."

St. Damien found his strength in the Mass, the greatest prayer of the Church. Prayer was the impetus behind the generosity of this faithful servant of God, and is the fuel that ignites every heart to flame in love. Without prayer, without the grace that flows from the sacraments, we are incapable of leading lives of service and responding to God's call!

How much time do you dedicate to prayer each day? One hour? Fifteen minutes? None at all? Before you consider joining a parish ministry or volunteering your talents in service, and before you discern your gifts of treasure to the Church, be sure that prayer is your foundation. Identify a prayer schedule that is manageable. This may entail arising 20 minutes early each day to offer your work to the Lord, or attending daily Mass once a week. Every prayer commitment is unique and personal. Yet, no matter what, this time offering, this dedication to prayer, is the key to serving the Lord with faithfulness, generosity and joy.

A Letter From Our Pastor

This Month and Beyond, Let Us Share the Faith in
WORD and ACTION

Dear Parishioners,

When reading through our newsletter, it is clear that we often discuss and reflect upon the topic of ministries — within our community and beyond — and how Christ shares His ministry with us.

As a faith community that is committed to living out stewardship, we all share in Christ's ministry. And while we share our many gifts with God and His Church, we take the truths set forth in the readings from Scripture and apply them to present-day life. Of course, that's what you are supposed to do when you share your faith with your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

But what does it mean to "share our faith"? Well, it is exactly what parents — as the "domestic church" — are supposed to do with their children. Furthermore, lay people act as catechists when they teach religion classes in Catholic schools or help with religious education programs in their parishes.

"Sharing the faith" also encompasses serving and providing assistance to those in need, both within and beyond the parish community, or bringing the Eucharist to the ill or homebound who cannot regularly attend Mass. In these ways and more, lay people have many opportunities to participate directly in the ministry of the Church.

But as the Second Vatican Council reminded us, "An apostolate of this kind does not consist only in the witness of one's way of life; a true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a



view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 6).

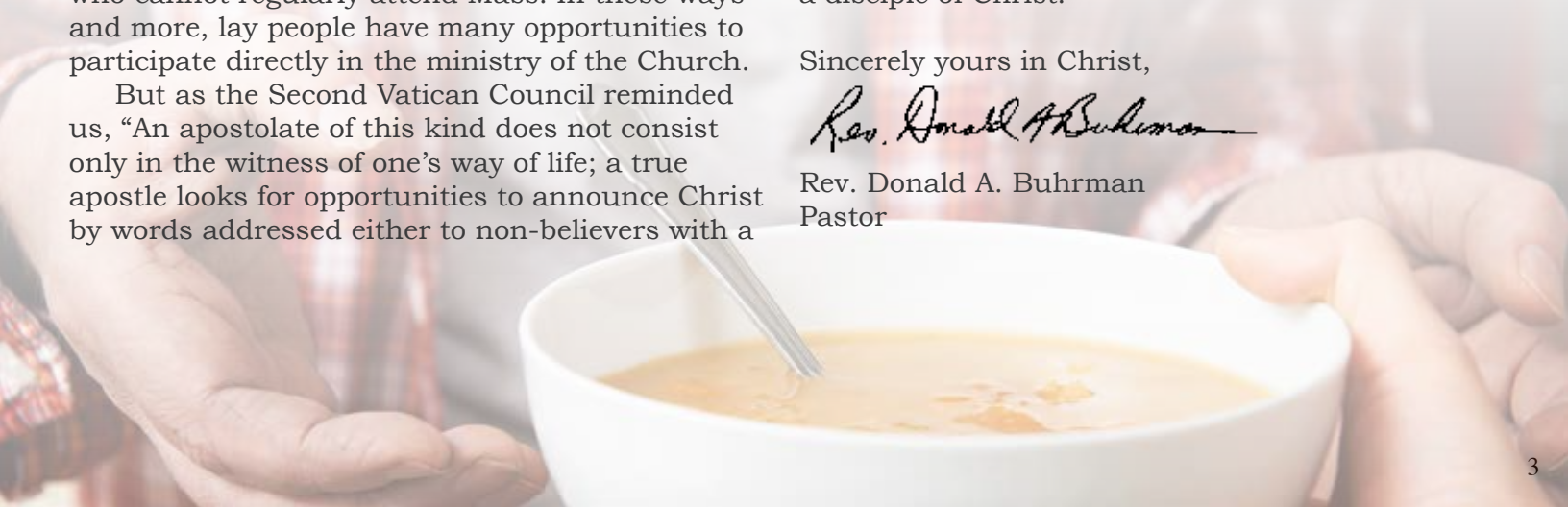
In other words, we must proclaim our Christian faith through our actions and how we live our lives — and also be prepared to share it in words if we are given the opportunity. With this in mind, we may each want to make a commitment of time to study the Scriptures and the Church's teachings so that we may be better prepared to share the faith!

Of course, the month of October draws us a little closer to the end of the year — thus, we are soon approaching the celebration of Thanksgiving, and the Advent and Christmas seasons. In the next few months, we will each have so many opportunities to share our faith through words and actions. I ask you to prayerfully consider how you will take advantage of these opportunities, living as stewards carrying out His ministry every day, for the rest of this year and beyond.

May God grant you the grace to share richly as a disciple of Christ!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Donald A. Buhrman
Pastor



NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING:

Whether it be a physical problem affecting one's reproductive health or a disconnect in one's marriage, Certified Fertility Care Practitioner Andrea Mack has spent nearly 15 years working to help women and couples discover the beauty of God's plan for fertility and sexuality through Natural Family Planning (NFP) with the Creighton Model FertilityCare System.

"Sometimes, I think that people are encouraged to quiet the stirring in their heart or gut and just conform to the way things are done in the world," Andrea says. "But people often have a feeling they can't really explain or a knowledge that something is wrong, but they can't find anyone who can name it."

Although her background is in occupational therapy, when Andrea and her husband discovered the Creighton Model during their marriage preparation, she immediately knew it was something she not only wanted to practice, but something she wanted to share with others.

NFP teaches women and couples to observe their cycles in such a way that it allows them to track their fertility, as well as discover underlying complications.

"My history is similar to a lot of the women I end up working with," says Andrea, explaining that she struggled with a variety of reproductive health problems, including infertility. "We weren't knowledgeable about the Church's teaching and about



Andrea Mack, her husband, Matt, and their three children, Aaron (10), Jared (8), and Willa (3), with Dr. Thomas Hilgers (center), the founder of Creighton Model FertilityCare. Willa was named after Dr. Hilger's middle name "William" and surrender to God's will in regards to fertility.

what Natural Family Planning was. But through the class, we heard the affirmation that, 'If you're having concerns about your cycles, those are legitimate signs of an underlying medical problem.' I clung to the promise that there was something else that could help me become whole again rather than just 'getting by.'"

Although the majority of women and couples that Andrea serves come to her either as part of their marriage preparation course or seeking help for infertility, she also helps women on both end of the fertility spectrum, from teenagers to women going through perimenopause.

According to Andrea, the value of NFP — for both health and marriages — is significant. One of the health benefits of NFP is

NaProTECHNOLOGY. Developed by Dr. Thomas Hilgers — director of the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction and the National Center for Women's Health in Omaha, Neb. — NaProTECHNOLOGY is a method to diagnosis and treat underlying reproductive problems. It offers hope and healing for those with painful periods (endometriosis), PMS, recurrent miscarriage, infertility, and polycystic ovarian syndrome or disease.

"This is one of the greatest gifts you could give your marriage," she says. "It switched our mindset to honoring each other and honoring the gift of fertility, rather than having chemicals control and override it for our pleasure."

"The Church says contraception stands between love and life,"

Serving Your Health and Your Marriage

adds Mary Dey, another local woman, who has spent the past 22 years sharing the message of NFP. “When you stop and think of it, all the side effects — that’s not love, and that’s not life.”

“I think that there is constant daily communication that is invited,” Andrea says. “I think your big, life picture is always in your mind and view.”

For those who struggle with health issues, particularly infertility or subfertility, the Creighton Model offers hope and solutions not often found in conventional fertility care. With the help of Creighton FertilityCare, Andrea

and her husband were able to conceive their three children.

Andrea and Mary both hope that people will consider the ways that NFP can benefit their health and their marriage.

“A lot of times, I think women are led to believe that we’re just meant to suffer,” Andrea says.

“But there is hope for healing.

“I want to empower parents

of teenagers who don’t have the knowledge of how their bodies worked throughout their reproductive years, to know what’s available to their daughters,” she adds.

“It will probably be one of the best things you’ve ever done [for your marriage],” Mary says. “I see better homes and more faithful couples.”

Those interested in learning more about Natural Family Planning or participating in an introductory course may contact Andrea Mack at 308-390-8857 or Fccgi@hotmail.com, or Mary Dey at 308-384-8472. Andrea is available for sessions both in person, as well as through video conference.

THE LECTOR MINISTRY:

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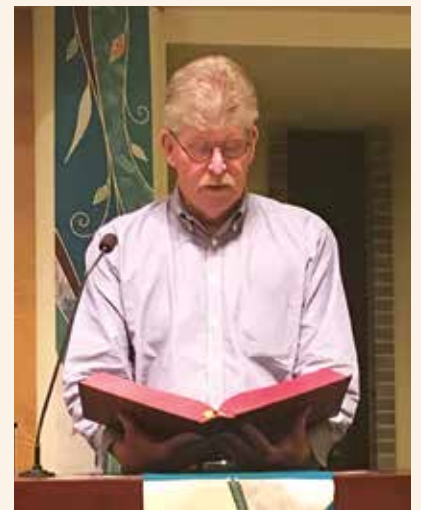
Bringing God's Word to Life

should enclose them in books, but that we should engrave them upon our hearts.”

“Serving as a lector has really helped me to learn to read the Bible better,” Cheryl says. “It has made it more personal to me, and easier to understand and follow. The Bible passages mean more to me simply because I read them with the idea that I will be proclaiming them to others. As a lector, I need to read the Scriptures ahead of time, which helps me spiritually prepare myself for Mass. It also gives me an opportunity to see how the readings relate to one another.”

Ultimately, Cheryl believes that being a successful lector is really a matter of loving God’s Word deeply, and wanting to share it from one’s heart.

“I often hear comments from people about how certain lectors did a really great job,” she says. “I think what helps any lector do a really good job is their desire, their open heart, and their willingness to practice and prepare. You don’t have to be a speech teacher or a public speaker to be a good lector.”



Chris Stinson serving as lector

More lectors are needed to fulfill this beautiful ministry. Those who would like to be lectors may contact Cheryl Aubery at 402-460-8679 or email her at cherylaubery@yahoo.com. The only requirement for becoming a lector is having received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

When we are talking about the idea of stewardship and how we care for the tools and gifts we have been given, it is not often that we stop to have a conversation about how we are caring for and using the gift of social media to positively spread Gospel values. However, this is an appropriate topic for us to consider when we are talking about the many young people, as well as adults, who gather online on a frequent basis. Therefore, it is important for us to think about how we are using the amazing gifts of technology.

If you are frequently online — especially on Pinterest — there is a popular acronym that you may have already come across. While it is used in many different contexts, it seems very appropriate to follow as we find ourselves posting statuses and pictures on various social media sites. The acronym is T.H.I.N.K., and it invites us to consider what we are saying and sharing, and whether or not it should be said!

Is what we are posting:

True? Are we sharing factual information or a rumor that we heard, and if we think our information is factual, what is our source? Is it trustworthy?

Helpful? Is the information we are sharing something that can be useful to another person? We don't need to over-examine all of our content to consider its "educational factor," but is the content we are posting going to help someone learn about us, learn about a place or an activity, think about the world, reflect on life, engage us in laughter, and so forth?

Inspirational? There is certainly no requirement to be a poet or an artist, but social media has become a wonderful outlet for positive self-expression. "Positive" is the key word — are we posting to inspire others about the good in our world, or are we posting to cut someone down or to simply rant?

Nice? Have we considered the feelings of others when we include them in a status or post a picture of them? Will they be embarrassed? Are we using social media to humiliate and intimidate others, or are we using it to try to better the world and the lives of others?

Kind? What a great tool to compliment, show gratitude, and build the self-esteem of those you care about!

People often speak of social media in a negative way because of the content they see posted. T.H.I.N.K. is a great way for us to remind ourselves that we can be good stewards of our own social media use. A major part of living out the Gospel has to do with the positive way we approach this life and bring God's light and love to others — and we can do just that by sharing an uplifting status on Facebook, a Tweet of gratitude to a friend, or a beautiful image of God's inspiring creation on Instagram. What a great way to build the Kingdom of God!



WOMEN'S JAIL MINISTRY

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Pope Francis speaks and writes often about how we as Catholics can live out and emphasize mercy as part of our lives. And only just a few years ago, Pope Francis proclaimed a Jubilee Holy Year of Mercy. During that Year of Mercy, he stated, "In many ways, our efforts at mercy are inspired by the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy, which I like to recall because it is important for us to hear them over and over — to give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead."

Much of what we do at our St. Leo's Catholic Parish follows and fulfills these important calls, with one particular ministry fulfilling one of the works of mercy — visiting the imprisoned. With this in mind, our parish is proud to have a Women's Jail Ministry, which is involved with the Hall County Department of Corrections.

"Our Women's Jail Ministry has been in existence for about 20 years," says ministry member Chris Wissing. "I have been involved for about 15 years. You might say we sow the seeds with the female inmates, and God does the rest. We want these women to know that they are not forgotten,

and that God and others love them."

The Hall County Department of Corrections is a county jail facility located at 110 Public Safety Drive in Grand Island. County jails tend to serve multiple functions and why a person is being detained in a jail facility helps determine many of the conditions of his or her incarceration. Jail is generally the first place a person is taken after being arrested.

"We visit the jail on Thursday afternoons each week," Chris says. "Normally, we are there from 1:30 until 3:30. During that time we meet with those women who choose to meet with us. We conduct a prayer service, then the readings for that Sunday, followed by discussion and more prayer. This is a great way for me to live out what Christ told all of us to do. Because we go during the day, not all women can volunteer to be part of our team. Of course, to be involved someone has to have a criminal background check and qualify for other security requirements."

The Hall County Correctional Institute normally houses about 300 prisoners, of which 20 percent tend to be women.

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"The number of women who spend time with us each week varies from about five to twelve. I know the women we meet with are very appreciative. They tell us that, and it is clear they appreciate the fact that someone cares. We meet with women of all faiths and some who have no faith." — Chris Wissing



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It's important for all of us to recognize the social goals of jail and prison ministries — to help the inmate function more positively within the prison environment and to provide connection between the community and inmates. And as people of faith, we must always recognize the spiritual goal of jail and prison ministry — to share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and God's unconditional love.



LITURGY SCHEDULE

Daily Mass: 9 a.m., **Saturday:** 5 p.m., **Sunday:** 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Confession: Saturday 4 - 4:30 p.m. **Adoration:** First Friday of the Month, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Abide Adoration: Fourth Sunday of the Month, 7 - 8 p.m.