

# Blessed SACRAMENT

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Helping Parishioners Grow in Faith *Books Change Lives*

MAY 2017  
*Inside*

How many times have you heard someone say, “That book changed my life”? You might think they’re exaggerating, but books truly have the power to make a difference in readers’ lives. Here at Blessed Sacrament, the Books Change Lives Ministry dives deep into our rich catalog of Catholic and Christian literature. Through the ministry, its members have been able to continue their faith formation and spiritual journey.

Books Change Lives was started in 2014 as a response to a parish survey, in which many parishioners asked for more opportunities for adult education and fellowship. The ministry is led by John and Judy Halberda, Carl and Jean Syms, and Jack McGovern.

“We currently have about 36 people involved in the ministry – and we’re continuing to grow,” John says. “We read a chapter or two of a book each week, and then gather for a discussion. Most books have a study guide with suggested questions for discussion.”

The ministry has two weekly opportunities for members to meet for dis-

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*Books Change Lives members gather for a meeting*

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# Blessed SACRAMENT

## The Bible

### *The Textbook of Stewardship*

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**H**ave you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there *is* such a manual – the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the “textbook of stewardship,” the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, expressed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: “When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, will choose for the

dwelling place of his name... ‘Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence” (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, “In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefitted from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church – St. Paul – preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.



## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

### *We Cannot Be Part-Time Christians*

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Dear Parishioners,

May is traditionally celebrated in the Church as the month of Mary, our Blessed Mother. As the Mother of the Church, she provides us with an example of what it means to be a servant of God and our fellow humans, as well as how to obediently fulfill the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholics, we are called to model the life of Jesus. That can be difficult, and there are certainly challenges to living as a disciple of Christ. But living stewardship and discipleship brings intense contentment and joy to those who take that risk. As we hear in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, "All things work for good for those who love God."

After Jesus Himself, we look to our Blessed Mother as an ideal steward and an example of what stewardship means. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her life and her ministry in a total spirit of faithfulness and service. She responded to the call to be a disciple. For us to be disciples, we also need to be good stewards of the gifts we have received. Our Church and our parish are gifts to us from God.

At no point in Holy Scripture does Jesus tell us that following Him is easy. We know it is not always simple and effortless. It requires dedication and commitment. Pope Francis has said on more than one occasion, "We cannot be part-time Christians



and Catholics! We should seek to live our faith at every moment of every day."

I suspect that is how Mary lived her life from that moment she turned it over to God and His Will. So, let us vow together during this month of Mary to follow her example, and seek to be the kinds of good stewards that will make our faith community even stronger and more effective.

I pray that we all can find the strength to live and

practice our faith as we should. This means being faithful to the sacraments and looking for ways to help and serve one another. We have a great parish – let us make it even greater.

As we hear in Holy Scripture, "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). Pray for me, as I pray for you.

In Jesus' Sacred Heart,

Very Rev. Joseph V. Romanoski, V.F.  
Pastor

# Blessed SACRAMENT

## “A Way I Can Give Back to Our Blessed Sacrament Cath

The Finance Council is certainly one of the key lay advisory groups at our Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. While the pastor is directly accountable to the bishop for the administration and stewardship of temporal affairs of the parish, an active and well-formed Finance Council is a key element in promoting the financial health of the parish.

In fact, a Parish Finance Council is mandated in the Code of Canon Law: “In each parish there is to be a finance council which is governed, in addition to universal law, by norms issued by the diocesan bishop and in which the Christian faithful, selected according to these same norms, are to assist the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to the pre-script of Canon 532” (537). In turn, Canon 532 states clearly that the pastor is the responsible party – the duty of making decisions is his, with the advice of lay boards like the Finance Council.

“Our parish Finance Council serves as advisors to the pastor concerning financial affairs,” says Henry Wilson, who has served as the Chair for the parish Finance Council for the past 18 years. “We monitor and keep track of various parish and school funds, income and expenses, to assure that we are able to meet the needs of the parish, the school, and our many ministries and programs.”

The Finance Council consists of six laypersons. They meet with Pastor Fr. Joseph Romanoski every month. The meetings begin at 4:30 p.m.

“We begin with prayer, and then we follow the normal procedures of a meeting – reviewing



and approving the minutes from the previous meeting, analyzing and discussing the various financial reports, and hearing reports from various people and committees on the status of certain projects and plans,” Henry says. “Father, of course, can present things to us for our feedback. One of the people who attends the meetings and reports to us on various things is Jack McGovern, our Director of Stewardship. Jack keeps us apprised of our efforts to be a stewardship parish from all perspectives.

“Father is great to work with,” he continues. “He genuinely is interested in hearing from us, and he values our opinions. He listens and in

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*He listens and in almost all cases, he confirms our recommendations. We have a great working relationship.”*

*– Henry Wilson, Finance Council Chair*

## the Parish and the Church” Catholic Church Finance Council

almost all cases, he confirms our recommendations. We have a great working relationship. He and I meet about a week before a scheduled meeting to discuss and set the agenda.”

For Henry, serving on the Finance Council is a great way to live out stewardship.

“Being on the Finance Council is a way I can give back to the parish and the Church,” he says. “I think it is a position which matches well my own talents, experience, training, and knowledge. That makes it a natural thing for me to do. As a CPA, I do understand financial matters, and my involvement in the Finance Council really affirms my faith and my trust in the Church.”

Twice a year, the Council provides a financial report to the people of the parish.

“There is a certain amount of turnover among the membership of the Council,” Henry says. “In theory, we serve three-year terms and each year, two new people may be named to the Council. Father officially appoints them, but we are interested in knowing of anyone who might be interested in being a part of it.”

Our Finance Council stands as an excellent example of stewardship – people giving of their time and talents in service to others in the parish. We thank them for their dedication and commitment.

*If you have any questions about the Finance Council, or are interested in perhaps serving on it, please contact Jack McGovern in the parish office at 843-813-8161 or by email at baronfi@comcast.net.*

## Books Change Lives *continued from front cover*

cussion – 10 a.m. (after the 9 a.m. Mass) on Sunday mornings, and 6:30 p.m. on Monday evenings. After the completion of each book, the two groups gather together for a Wine & Cheese party to share their experience and to select the next book to be read.

“We read spiritual books on subjects pertaining to the Catholic faith,” John says. “In the past, we have read *Living the Mass*, *7 Secrets of Confession*, and books by C.S. Lewis, Matthew Kelly and Scott Hahn.”

Through these books and discussions, ministry members are able to learn more about the Church and continue to grow in their relationship with God.

“This is an important ministry because it gives parishioners opportunities to further develop their

faith,” John says. “It has helped me to grow in faith by sharing a more detailed understanding of the Mass, confession, and various ways to ‘rediscover Catholicism.’”

The Halberdas have also been able to grow in fellowship through their participation in Books Change Lives.

“Our relationship with fellow parishioners has grown because of the many open discussions we have enjoyed,” John says. “You get to know each other at a much deeper level than just attending Mass together. Looking back on our time in the ministry, many fond memories occur to me – discussion of faith struggles, faith development, sharing personal histories, gaining insights from one another, and growing personally and spiritually as a result.”

*The ministry always welcomes new members to join in! For more information, please contact John Halberda at 843-670-5852 or johnhalberda@yahoo.com, or Judy Halberda at 843-412-8274 or jhalew@aol.com.*

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## Celebrating the Coronation of Mary *The May Crowning*

For many Catholics, May Crownings of statues or icons of the Blessed Mother have become rites of spring. Like flowers blooming or Mother's Day, this annual Marian devotion reminds us that the cold of winter is behind us, and it ushers in a month during which the Catholic Church pays special homage to Mary as the Queen of Heaven and Mother of God.

Generally taking place during the first weekend of the month, May Crownings bring children – often, recent First Communicants – out in their Sunday best to participate in processions and adorn statues of the Blessed Mother with crowns of flowers or actual gold crowns. Additionally, the children often place roses at her feet, and Catholics carry out similar practices in their homes by placing roses around statues of the Blessed Virgin, or even adding ornamentation to images of Mary. But where did this practice come from, and how did it develop into the tradition that we currently know and love?

The Coronation of Mary had been a popular subject in European art and literature for centuries, but the tradition of the May Crowning can be most accurately traced back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps inspired by the practice of adding ornamentation to Marian icons that had been carried out by some Eastern churches, Pope Clement VIII added two crowns to the icon of Mary with the Infant Jesus in the St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome. The crowns were eventually lost, but were replaced by Gregory XVI in 1837 in a rite that was to become

the standard practice for crowning.

While the May Crowning is not an official liturgical celebration on the Church calendar, it is an important practice in honoring Mary as the Queen of the Universe, and its imagery is especially influential in the faith formation of children. As Liz Kelly writes in *May Crowning, Mass, and Merton and Other Reasons I Love Being Catholic*, “One of the defining aspects of being Catholic is devotion to Mary. I favor no Marian celebration more highly than May Crowning, the feast that recognizes Mary as queen of heaven and earth. To a person of any age, this is a mighty big title, but to a child of five or six or seven, it expands to enchanting, magical proportions. How many queens does one get a chance to meet in a lifetime, much less crown?”

This year, make a special effort to honor the coronation of Mary through participation in a personal or public May Crowning devotion.



### *Bring Flowers of the Rarest*

*Bring flow'rs of the fairest,  
Bring flow'rs of the rarest,  
From garden and woodland  
And hillside and vale;  
Our full hearts are swelling,  
Our glad voices telling  
The praise of the loveliest  
Rose of the vale.*

*O Mary! we crown thee with  
blossoms today,  
Queen of the Angels, Queen of  
the May,  
O Mary! we crown thee with  
blossoms today,  
Queen of the Angels, Queen of  
the May.*

## Vacation Bible School Popular With Kids and Volunteers

What parents could refuse this request from their kids: “Please don’t take us out of town during Vacation Bible School! I want to go to Vacation Bible School!”

And indeed, it’s not only our kids who want to come to Blessed Sacrament’s Vacation Bible School, but our adult volunteers also want to return to help. After all, they most likely had attended Vacation Bible School themselves!

Kathleen Ferri again is coordinating our Vacation Bible School – and she has heard about children making that request to stay home for Vacation Bible School.

“Our dates are June 12 through June 16, from 9 a.m. until noon, at the church,” Kathleen says. “Children have to be age 3 at the time of Vacation Bible School, and up until fifth grade. We divide them in groups by age. If they are a rising sixth-grader, they can be ‘crew leaders.’”

Registration can be done on the parish website, and there is a \$30 fee.

“This year’s theme is ‘Maker Fun Factory,’ and the message is that ‘God made you for a purpose,’” Kathleen says. “The theme permeates all sections of the activities.”



*There were lots of happy campers during last year’s Vacation Bible School, and fun and faith-filled activities await the kids again this year.*

The activities at Vacation Bible School are all geared to helping the children grow in faith.

“The lessons aren’t memorization, but experience-based,” Kathleen says. “There are crafts, and Christian contemporary music.”

Kathleen recounts that one year, the children were learning the story about Jonah in the whale. An entire classroom was darkened with material and resembled a cave when the children entered.

“They had little fish around and a misting device so it was cold and dark,” Kathleen says. “It actually felt like you were in the

belly of a whale.”

Caring for others also is part of the program, as the children bring in items for the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry.

“We have a competition between the Pre-K and the elementary school kids to see who can bring in the most canned goods,” Kathleen says.

Adults who want to volunteer have two requirements.

“You have to have a kind and willing heart, and love little children,” Kathleen says. “I think there are some volunteers who come back each year, they enjoy it so much. Many high school kids came

*continued on back cover*

*“You have to have a kind and willing heart, and love little children. I think there are some volunteers who come back each year, they enjoy it so much. Many high school kids came as kids, and now they come back as volunteers.” – Kathleen Ferri*

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## *Vacation Bible School Popular With Kids and Volunteers* continued from page 7

as kids, and now they come back as volunteers.”

Volunteers also must attend the “Safe Haven” training and have a background check.

“We also ask for a \$10 donation from the teenage helpers because we serve a snack and they get a t-shirt,” Kathleen says. “They can also get 25 service hours as a volunteer and they also have to come to a training class.”

Last year, enrollment capped at 110, and there were about 50 teen volunteers and 20 adult volunteers. Looking towards this year, Kathleen encourages parents to sign up their children early.

“Many years, it fills up and we have a waiting list,” Kathleen says. “And we have to order our crafts supplies based on the number.”



*Songs and skits with messages about God’s love are all part of each day at Vacation Bible School.*

*If you would like to register, or to learn more, please log on to [www.blsac.org](http://www.blsac.org).*

### LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Saturday Vigil:** 5 p.m. | **Sunday:** 9 & 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m. (En Español) & 5 p.m. (LifeTeen)

**Daily Mass:** Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m.

**Confessions:** Saturday: 3:30 p.m. & after 5 p.m. Mass, Sunday: 1 p.m.

### PERPETUAL ADORATION

**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**