



Beacon of Hope . . . Light of Christ

Volume 1, Issue 1

For Catholics in the Fox Valley

October 2004

Welcome to Beacon of Hope-Light of Christ

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Hello friends. As we introduce this newsletter, designed for progressive Catholics and Catholics who wish to learn about and lead Christ-centered lives, we are called to invite the Holy Spirit into your life and to these pages.

Beacon of Hope is a newsletter designed to inform, to promote and to grow Christ's Church on this earth, with particular reference to our Fox Valley.

In our efforts to inform, we will bring you articles by contemporary thought leaders, national and local, on matters of "faith in action". We will also try to keep readers informed regarding matters of local significance.

In our efforts to promote, we will champion causes, promote events, and recommend activities to enliven the faith lives of our readers.

In our efforts to grow Christ's Church, we will invite our readers to involve themselves in making commitments of faith in their homes, their work, their churches and in our communities. The initial audience of this newsletter is limited but can and will grow.

We hope you fully enjoy *Beacon of Hope-Light of Christ* now and in days to come.

God bless, *The Staff*

**NOTHING is
Impossible with
GOD**

A Focus On..

- **St. Mary Greenville**
- **Father Zickert**
- **Open Forum**

Building God's Kingdom on earth through Christ-centered action is not easy. Such action require constant change ... changes of heart, of mind, and of spirit. Many times, changes that come about are unwanted, resisted, or even despised. Such has been the case with the changes in the Church

Change in the Church

brought by Vatican II.

Pope John XXIII and many bishops of the time saw a need for change, for reform. For forty years, different initiatives have been made to adopt the spirit of Vatican II, as the movement for change has been called. Some reforms were Church-wide; other reforms and

changes were done within individual parishes or in a diocese.

Future articles of *Beacon of Hope* will review historical truths and current trends to keep our readership informed. (see page three.)

OPEN FORUM IN OCTOBER

“Youth, teens and young adults are encouraged to attend.”

Many members of St. Mary’s Parish in Greenville have been asking for an opportunity to come together in prayer, mutual support, and discussion of future options for themselves and other disaffected members of St. Mary’s Parish.

While this forum offers some of the thoughts of a volunteer steering committee,

some of whom are former Parish Council members, Trustees or Elders, this group does not want to assume that it has all of the ideas, answers, or options for all who are concerned.

What the committee is proposing is an **Open Forum** be held at **Grange Hall** corner of Hwy 76 and BB in Greenville on **October 10th at 1:00 PM**. We will welcome all who are

interested to come together in fellowship, prayer, and discussion.

Preceding the Forum, there will be a potluck meal beginning at noon. If you wish to attend both the potluck and forum, please consider bringing a dish to pass and your own beverages. Youth, teens and young adults are encouraged to attend.



Special Support and Administrative Fund Established

An account to cover the administrative costs associated with supporting Father John Zickert’s transition from St. Mary’s in Greenville, and the costs of communications and other administrative requirements has been established at Prospera Credit Union. If you

are able to donate, please send your donation to:

Prospera Credit Union
Attn: Account 50023
4830 N. Ballard Road
Appleton, WI 54911

NOTE: Donations are not presently tax deductible.

However, that will change. An effort is underway to establish a 501C3 non-profit organization to support the cause of Father John and initiatives determined to be of significance by area Catholics interested in preserving the Christ-centered spirit of Vatican II.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE CHURCH TODAY?

As many Christian people who live in the Green Bay Diocese are aware, there has been a movement on the part of some groups to re-interpret the historic reforms of Vatican II. Some proponents of this movement claim that there have been too many excessive changes in area Catholic Churches, where clergy have gone beyond the reforms intended by Pope John XXIII and the Bishops of that time. Other proponents believe that Vatican II itself was illegal and any reforms that were made are thereby unacceptable.

Their desire seems to be a return to strict adherence to ritual observance, marked by a more silent reverence, and a church environment in which activities and beliefs were directed only by the ordained, while the only response of the baptized is compliance.

In reality, Vatican II

was legally initiated by Pope John XXIII to bring needed changes to the Catholic Church. These were not to be changes of faith, but changes of function. Pope John recognized that in the modern Church, just as in the



forming Church that Christ founded, it is the right and the responsibility of the baptized...not just the clergy...to determine the function of the Church. It is the recognition that the Holy Spirit works through all of the baptized, not just the clergy, that was a critical tenet of Vatican II.

Many Catholics, including clergy, have rebelled at some of the

reforms of Vatican II. More engaging and contemporary liturgies, youth oriented music, pre- and post-mass activities, greater involvement of women in church and liturgy, and community outreach initiatives are

examples of Christ-centered reforms that may see rejection.

In many cases, the clergy and religious who have led or embraced

Vatican II reforms have been the subject of ridicule, abandonment, or retaliation. Even efforts to expose church misdeeds, or to guide the church into social actions that might not be seen as politically correct, have also been scorned and their leaders chastised.

At the turn of the twentieth century, much of the world was illiterate and

uninformed. Today, in the early 21st century, circumstances are very different.

While illiteracy is still a worldwide challenge, rates have improved. The uninformed have been transformed to either the informed or the misinformed. Vatican II recognized this transformation and the need to bring the Catholic Church forward. One of the underlying objectives of this newsletter is to try to keep the spirit of Vatican II alive and well in the Fox Valley area, and to invite all Catholics and Catholics who are committed to the reforms of Vatican II to walk with us. It will be our effort to let our readers know "***What is going on in the Church today?***"

The Staff

Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness." (Paul Tillich)

STEERING COMMITTEES, OPTIONS

For several weeks now, both current and formerly active members of St. Mary's Parish have been meeting to assess the options they and other parishioners have, given the departure of Father John and the current climate within the parish. At each step, prayer has been offered and an invitation of the Holy Spirit has been made to guide deliberations.

While the forced resignation and departure of Father John Zickert served as the catalyst for these discussions, a much broader and significant picture has emerged. And with that picture have come challenging questions, new opportunities and the need for more prayer and thoughtful reflection.

Each member of St. Mary's has always had the freedom to choose to join, to stay, to grow, and to become active in our church. Many of us labored under the illusion, that although priests and deacons may come and go, it was the body of our local church, the baptized, who provided direction to our parish in our worship, our children's teaching, and in the ways we demonstrated our Christ-centered commitment as a parish to "love one another".

In our recent experience with losing Father John, we also discovered how naive we have been to think that the diocesan hierarchy would allow the Holy Spirit to work through the baptized and elected leadership of our parish. While we fully respect and acknowledge the legitimacy of our ordained clergy in matters of faith, we are one in believing that this legitimacy does not extend to competence, *expertise*, or effectiveness in matters of local church function *and management*.

Clergy are trained in matters of theology...trained to guide the faithful in their spiritual journeys. The Holy Spirit blesses many clergy with other gifts, such as oratory, discernment, musical talent, compassion, empathy and wise counsel. But the Holy Spirit has also gifted those who are the baptized in the parish, many of whom are trained and experienced in matters related to managing the functions of an organization, as are only a few clergy.

What we will not do.

In our process of reviewing options for those seeking either justice for Father John or an alternative to returning to St. Mary's if it moves down a different path, the members of the steering committee from St. Mary's are exploring numerous options for those interested in preserving an active, Christ-centered journey, consistent with *Scripture*, and embracing the reforms of Vatican II.

Let us make it clear. **We are not forming another church, Catholic or otherwise.**

We are not planning legal action against St. Mary's or any parishioners.

We are not encouraging people to leave the Catholic faith or leave St. Mary's Church.

Continued on next page

<p>Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come, endure them patiently; steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer." (Romans 12:12)</p>



OPTIONS (continued)

What we will seek to do.

We are exploring independent options that are designed to provide a means for individuals to explore, expand, and practice our Catholic faith.

We are seeking to find a means of supporting the active role of youth, teens and young adults in all aspects of their lives, including church celebrations.

We are seeking to address and reform the processes that led to Father John's forced resignation.

We are seeking to restore Father John to active ministry in the Green Bay Diocese.

Our goals are to re-capture the spirit of Christ's commandment to love through the guidance of the Holy Spirit; to engender an atmosphere that engages our youth; and to function in a manner consistent with the reforms of Vatican II.

While some may freely choose to pursue this as an addition to their membership in a parish, including St. Mary's, others many choose to belong to other parishes, or be roaming Catholics.

The steering committee will be holding an Open Forum to share our thoughts and recommendations with all who are interested.

"Our goals are to re-capture the spirit of Christ's commandment to love through the guidance of the Holy Spirit"

WHERE'S FATHER JOHN?

For those of you who haven't seen the book series titled *Where's Waldo*, please picture a very hectic, highly congested scene with hundreds of people all moving around and looking nearly, but not quite the same. Some folks are in full view, while others are only partially in view because of some object in the scene...maybe a car, maybe a lamp post, or almost anything. Hustle and bustle is everywhere.

That could almost be a portrayal of Father John these many weeks since his forced resignation was announce last

July. After he left St. Mary's in August, he has been enjoying the hospitality of many well-wishers, he has been consulting with members of his Capuchin order, and he has been working with many others both to clear his good name and to insure that such injustice does not occur for other clergy in the future.

Through this newsletter, Father John extends his good wishes and peace to all members of St. Mary's, especially the youth upon whom the future depends.



If I have a
faith

that can move
mountains,

but I have not

love

I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2

GLAD YOU ASKED!

Answers to questions regarding Father John

What is the status of the legal activity with Steve Zangl? What was the situation behind Sister Lynne Marie leaving?

Both of these questions are personnel matters between the individual and Saint Mary Parish and as such, we are unable to address them.

Is there any truth to the rumor that Father John has started a new church?

This rumor is similar to many others that are floating around. Rumors should be treated as rumors - there is no basis of truth behind them. No, Father has not started a new church.

What did Bishop Zubik mean when he stated that we have division in the parish?

As in any organization (and family) there are different viewpoints on what should be

“Since the previous mailing, a handful of questions have been asked....”

accomplished and how things are accomplished. These differences had been misinterpreted as division in the parish. At the Monday meeting

with Bishop Zubik, parish council committed to reviewing the decision making process making sure that all voices were heard and considered. Again, there never was a feeling of division, only differing viewpoints.

If you have any questions/concerns, no longer wish to receive this newsletter or wish to receive addition information not included in this newsletter, please contact us at :

BeaconOfHopeNews@yahoo.com

or

Beacon of Hope
PO Box 2524

Appleton, WI 54912

NO PAIN, NO GAIN

The letter on page 7 of *Beacon of Hope* comes from Fr. David Beaudry, the pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Community in Newton, Wisconsin. The letter was sent to the parish community of St. Mary Catholic Community in Greenville, with the hopes that members of the parish would know that they have a sister parish that has experienced much pain as well.

Fr. Beaudry is working with the Parish Council to lead his new parish out of the pain that comes out of behaviors related to change, anger, and long-standing feuds.

Just as in St. Paul's second letter to Timothy, Chapter two, we are reminded by Fr. Beaudry that we are to make every effort to remain steadfast in our efforts to be Christ-centered, to be understanding of others in pain, and to move

forward in truth.

Timothy was faced by the challenges brought about in the new church, when members of the church began spreading falsehoods that created division. Around the division came pain and recrimination or blame. Paul challenged Timothy to focus on the truth, rather than the agitators and falsehoods, and to learn from the pain Timothy had by furthering Christ's message and God's kingdom as the only objective.

Thank you Fr. Beaudry for the compassion and concern reflected in your letter, and for the reminder of our primary purpose in faith...to love one another and further His kingdom for all generations to come.

September 2004

To the Church in Greenville:

Grace and Peace! Word has come to us of a great wound that has been opened in the heart of your community, brought into the light by the recent departure of your pastor Fr. John.

We write as the sister Church of St. Thomas, sisters and brothers who understand the pain of loss, division and anger as the result of merging four local communities into one. We write to offer hope and assurance that you are not alone – ever. We have lived through what we call “old” behaviors that harm more than help: secret meetings, door-to-door campaigns to determine which “side” one supported and at times, even condescension and a lack of respect. We discovered the painful lesson that we must always appeal to charity (love) and truth, no matter what position or opinion we may embrace within the Church. There are no exceptions. The soul of justice is love.

As a result, some families were torn apart and long-time friends have (had) a hard time even playing cards together. A truce simply exists not to speak about the local Church and the events that surrounded the birth of St. Thomas as a new community borne by the spark of our ancestors’ faith. An old axiom may ring true: one can never communicate too much. A local Church will never know what divides her until the wound is embraced and, through honest dialogue that respects integrity, the divisions are brought to light and allowed to begin healing. In this way, there are no more “casualties,” both priest and people then live in peace.

Perhaps some of these thoughts may ring true within your own experience. We beg you, make no mistake: our process of “healing” will take a generation or even longer to tend. One even learns that a word from a pastor does not “make it all better.” You are intelligent, insightful, and intuitive. Time is needed to sort things out for yourselves. Perhaps our words here may be scrutinized and fall under a cloud of suspicion, some looking for hidden or layered meanings. We pray this is not the case.

In the words of J.R.R. Tolkien’s character Samwise Gamgee to Frodo Baggins in *The Return of the King*, “And yet the only place I really want to be in, is here. I am that torn in two,” said Sam. “Poor Sam! It will feel like that, I am afraid,” said Frodo. “But you will be healed. You were meant to be solid and whole, and you will be.” Know that our people journey with you in thought and prayer, together finding strength, justice and peace.

Godspeed,

Rev. David B. Beaudry and the
Pastoral Council Community

St. Mary's in Greenville - Then and Now

The year 1997 was a watershed year for parishioners at St. Mary Catholic Community in Greenville. The embattled parish was once again struggling with conflicts coming from within.

A division was pitting day school and religious education parents against one another; they had just lost long time pastor Fr. Justin Werner under a cloud of controversy, and they were concluding a "healing process" through an appointed *Blue Ribbon Committee*, led by Mark Mogilka from the Offices of the Diocese of Green Bay.

Importantly, St. Mary's was taking on a new pastor who was to be charged with leading reforms that had been identified by the *Blue Ribbon Committee*.

Yet, 1997 wasn't the first time

that controversy had raged in the rural Catholic parish, nor would it be the last.

Rural parishes can face tough challenges when they grow quickly. Many long time members can feel alienated in a church they have come to believe as theirs. After all, they were there first, the longest, and have invested more. And all parishes can face the challenge of differences of opinion; both on matters of faith and function...especially function. *When will services be held? How will services be held? What will be the curriculum of the school? Who will have a say on "important matters" like music, athletics, and homilies? What are the social beliefs of the pastor...conservative or liberal?*

New members of a growing

parish want to feel they belong. After all, they are Catholics too... some lifelong, others by choice.

At the beginning of 2004, St. Mary's was not so different than many rural Catholic Communities faced with rapid growth. But nine months into the year, it is back to where it was seven years ago...divided and in need of healing.

Again there is a fight for control. And this time the Diocese of Green Bay has stepped in again. The results have been a catastrophe.

Father John Zickert, the new pastor brought into St. Mary's in 1997 to implement the changes from the Blue Ribbon Committee, has been dismissed and the old divide has returned, bigger than ever. Mark Mogilka is back to try again.

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