

MARCH 2009

THE TWIN SPIRES

VOLUME 12 NO. 1

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, SAVANNAH GA



LENTEN THOUGHTS FROM JOHN PAUL II

“It is more blessed to give than to receive”

In searching for some thoughts to share in the Lenten article this year, I found some insights offered by John Paul II a couple of years ago which seemed particularly appropriate.

Lent is a season of intense prayer, fasting and concern for those in need. It offers all Christians an opportunity to prepare for Easter by serious discernment about their lives, with particular attention to the word of God which enlightens the daily journey of all who believe.

We are all familiar with phrase taken from the Acts of the Apostles: *“It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35). This is not simply a moral exhortation, but rather an inclination to give that is rooted in the depths of the human heart: every person is conscious of a desire to interact with others and everyone finds fulfillment in a free gift of self to others.

Our age is particularly susceptible to the temptation toward selfishness which always lurks within the human heart. In society generally, and in the media, people are bombarded by messages which are more or less momentary and hedonistic. The spirit of the world affects our inner desire to give ourselves unselfishly to others and drives us to satisfy our own particular interests. The urge to possess ever more is encouraged. The words of Paul to Timothy remain relevant in every age: *“The love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs”* (1 Tim 6:10).

As believers we are called to follow in the footsteps of

Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who, in perfect obedience to the will of the Father, emptied himself (cf. Phil 2:6 ff), and humbly gave himself to us in selfless and total love, even unto death on a cross. Calvary eloquently proclaims the message of the Blessed Trinity’s love for human beings of all times and places. When we respond to the inner impulse to give ourselves to others without expecting anything in return, we experience a profound interior satisfaction.

The Son of God loved us first, even though we are sinners, with an unconditional love which asks nothing in return. If this is so, how can we fail to see the season of Lent as an opportunity to make courageous decisions inspired by generosity? Lent offers us the practical and effective tools of fasting and almsgiving as a means of combating an excessive attachment to money. Giving not only from our abundance, but sacrificing something more in order to give to the needy, fosters that self-denial which is essential to authentic Christian living. Service to the needy can be a providential path leading to an encounter with Christ, since the Lord abundantly repays the good deeds done to one’s neighbor.

Lent is a favorable time for bearing witness to the Gospel of charity, so let us use these forty days well to prepare ourselves to meet the risen Christ on Easter.

Why We Walk

By Gretchen K. Reese



They ask us why we walk? What good does it do? The laws of the land have settled this issue. There is little or nothing that can be done. Besides, there is a new president now and we are all about change. The past divisiveness must end. Let's fight more important battles, like justice issues, work issues, helping the poor, the suffering and the downtrodden. And how about the economic situation...? Plenty of work to be done there...

And still we walk. We pray. We witness. Nor will we stop until the fight is over or we face St. Peter and say, "We did our best for the little ones created in God's image," the small and helpless whom justice has evaded, who will never have the chance to work, who are defenseless, who suffer the supreme indignity of complete discrimination, of being killed simply for existing. And how about that economic situation? Would it be so bad if those 50,000,000 lost children were around right now to populate our workforce and grasp their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

Today, we know when life begins. Thanks to ultra-sound technology, we see the child in the womb. We also know what abortion does to women. Doesn't everyone know someone who suffers silently because of abortion? Someone who drinks too much; someone who can't sleep well; someone who cannot quite get her marriage together?

But she didn't get like she is alone. We helped her. We made abortion legal, or we stood by and watched it happen. We did not fight. We are

not fighting now. We did not stand up for the oppressed. "Did we abort a statesman who would have changed the course of this country? Did we abort the musician who would have taken that art... to new heights? What cures, stories, jokes, athletic feats or technological innovations did we abort? What great actor is missing from our movies? What great teachers will never inspire our kids at school?" (National Catholic Register, Jan. 18-24, 2009, p. 8.)

Do we realize that the mother of 2007 Heisman Trophy Winner, Tim Tebow was told by her doctor that her child would likely be stillborn and was encouraged to get an abortion? Have you ever considered that Barack Obama was an unwanted child, abandoned by his mother, raised by his grandmother, who still rose to greatness? What does it take for us to understand that each life was created by God for HIS purposes. To reject that life is to reject our Maker's plan for us and for our world.

What will we do now? What will we do to end the oppression? Ignore it? Say it is "not my business?" Or will we walk, write letters to our congressmen, witness, join in the prayer chain in October, go to Washington to raise our voice?

Continued ►

On January 22, 95 members of the Diocese of Savannah, including three priests and your bishop, went to Washington on two buses to raise our collective voices. We did it for you. But you could have been there. We praised God at the Life Mass at the National Basilica; we listened to Fr. Pavone speak about the future of the life movement; we

met with Senators Chambliss and Isakson and heard them tell us that we must not be silent, or sit in our homes and watch. We must speak up. We must act. Now is the time.

Why do we walk? Do we have a choice?



Defibrillator Saves Lives

Dr. Anthony Costrini has generously donated a defibrillator to the Cathedral for use in the event that it is needed during Mass or some other event at the Cathedral or Parish Center.

Properly used, defibrillators have helped save the lives of people who have suddenly collapsed from a heart attack in public places. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a portable electronic device which automatically diagnoses possible life threatening cardiac conditions in a patient. Treating them with an AED will allow the heart to reestablish an effective rhythm, get the heart pumping again and quickly restore blood flow to the brain.

AEDs are designed for use by a layman, however proper training is essential to be used effectively. Training sessions were conducted by the Red Cross at the Cathedral Parish Center in mid-February to train the ushers in how to properly use a defibrillator so that it may be available in case of an emergency.

Love Thy Neighbor



In this Pauline Year we should all heed the words of St. Paul from Galatians 5:14, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Love forms the basis of all Christian morality. In the Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12; Lk 6:20-23) Jesus tells us that the reign of God belongs to the poor and lowly and to those who stand with them. Those who feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty will be saved for those are works of mercy and love.

The Christian Service committee's mission is to promote awareness of the social and spiritual ministry in the parish. We want to encourage involvement and participation from all parishioners. Lent offers an opportunity to rediscover the mercy of God, so that we become more merciful toward our brothers and sisters.

During the month of March, the Cathedral Parish will be responsible for contributing food to the Social Apostolate Food Basket Program, which provides meals to the needy of our city. "In these difficult economic times the need is great," according to Bill Wade, Chairman of the Christian Service Committee. "We'd like to see that basket just overflowing with food every Sunday in March. A can of soup is wel-

come but a bag of groceries each week is preferred. So put the bulletin insert on your refrigerator and bring a bag of groceries to church every week," commented Bill.

The drive starts Sunday, March 1st and runs through the entire month of March. Collection baskets will be maintained in the vestibule throughout the month and a reminder notice will appear in the Bulletin every week. You'll find a Food Drive insert in the Sunday bulletin. So put the bulletin insert on your refrigerator and bring a bag of groceries to church every week. Non-perishable food items such as canned foods, rice, macaroni, peanut butter and jelly are always needed for this worthy cause. Here is an opportunity to fulfill your Lenten responsibility for almsgiving before we get to Easter. The Food Drive is a chance to be of service to your fellow man. Remember, "From those to whom much is given, much is expected."

March Food Drive

**Support the Social Apostolate
Help the needy of Savannah**

**Canned meats and fish
Rice, macaroni & cheese
Canned vegetables & fruit
Peanut butter and jelly
Dry soups**

Toiletry items always needed

**Boxes will be maintained in the vestibule
of the Cathedral throughout the month**

Bring something each week

**Please be generous and support this
worthy cause**



Cold Temperatures, Warm Glow

On a cold Wednesday night in January, the Cathedral Parish Center was all aglow with beautiful winter decorations and full of parishioners who enjoyed the warm fellowship for our monthly Covered Dish Supper together.

Responding to the following announcement in the bulletin, "Bring your favorite dish, enough to feed your family and another hungry person. The meat and drinks are provided. If you've never attended, this is a great way to get to know your fellow parishioners," attendees enjoyed great food, great friends, and had a great time.

Old friendships were renewed and new ones kindled, and as usual, Sister

John's cheesecake was the hit of the dessert table.

The suppers are put on each month by the Parish Life Committee whose mission is to promote a spirit of social communion among all parishioners. The committee usually holds the monthly Covered Dish Suppers on the third Wednesday of the month and also puts on a Coffee and Doughnuts reception the first Sunday every month after the 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Masses. This year Sharon Wallace is the head of the committee ably assisted by her mother Jo Ann.

Right now, Sharon and her mother are shouldering this entire burden and they could use a little help. We need vol-

unteers to serve on the Parish Life Committee to help continue and expand this effort. People are needed to help decorate and setup the hall as well as cleanup after the various social events. Additionally, picking up supplies and food beforehand would also be helpful.

As Members of God's family we all have a responsibility to share fully in the life of our church. So why not put your faith into action and become a more active member of your parish community. If you are interested in joining the Parish Life Committee, please contact Sharon Wallace at swallace41@bellsouth.net or by phone at (912) 354-0913.



Clockwise from bottom left: Sharon Wallace; Jo Ann and Bill Sterritt; Jo Ann Wallace; Msgr. O'Neill and Mary Lawrence Kennickell; Sr. John and Cindy Postell.



The Cathedral's 2009 ornament features the St. Patrick window. Patrick is depicted instructing the King of Ireland at Tara. Besides being a memento of the Cathedral, this years offering is a nice remembrance of St. Patrick's Day '09 in Savannah.

The ornament is available in the rear of the church during regular business hours, at the rectory or by visiting www.savannahcathedral.org. (click on gift items). Donation: \$15 per piece



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