

SACRED HEART

A Stewardship Parish

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The Gillelands:

Living Family Life to the Fullest in Christ

In 2009, Clifford and Maureen Gilleland celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at our parish. During the ceremony, they invited all 10 of their children with their spouses, their 25 grandchildren (including one to be born soon), and their one great-grandchild to come up to the altar. It was truly an incredible sight to see.

"It was quite a crowd!" Maureen says. "We both came from large families, and before we got married we agreed we wanted to have a large family as well. We even tossed around the hope of having 12 children! We have been very, very blessed."

It was, in essence, a testimony to the goodness and glory of God.



"We have tried hard to instill good Christian values in our children, and be involved in the life of the Church together," Maureen says. "Our Catholic faith is very important to us. We are especially thankful for the opportunity to belong to the Sacred Heart Parish community. It has really been a great support system for us."

Today, several of the Gilleland children and their families are parishioners of Sacred Heart. Greg Gilleland (married to Sheila) is presently on the Pastoral Council and does electrical work at our parish with two of his sons. Mike and Debra Blair and their four children, as well as Tom and Karen Oechsner and their two sons, are also related to Clifford and Maureen.

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SACRED HEART

Stewardship Our Spiritual Home

Where do you go to church?

We've all answered that question hundreds of times before. But have you ever stopped to think about what it truly means?

"I go to Sacred Heart," is the usual response, and rightly so, because we do "go to" the church to celebrate Mass together. But as Catholics and as stewards of God's gifts, the Church is much more than a building within which we worship. The Church, as we understand it, is the universal body of believers, the society that Christ established to help us grow in holiness, to bring us closer to Him through the giving of our time, talent, and treasure, and to lead the world to the truth.

Before Jesus ascended to the Father, He commissioned the disciples, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). That is the Church's mission in the world today – to make disciples of all nations, to bring all men to Christ.

Sacred Heart Parish plays a key part in that. As members of Sacred Heart, we are local representatives of the universal Church. Together, as members of this parish family, we work to carry out the Church's mission on a local level. We worship the Lord at Mass, offering Him our praise and thanksgiving, and then we go forth on a mission to make disciples – to encourage our fellow parishioners in their lives of faith and to bring unbelievers into knowledge of the truth.

In addition to being a "local representation of the universal Church," the parish is much like a family. We are communal beings. We are created to live with others, and so, as Catholics, we are members of the Church and, on a more immediate level, of the parish. As such, we gather together for the Eucharistic meal and we grow in faith together throughout the week, supporting one another through our participation in many parish ministries, through prayer, and through the friendships that many of us share.



In a letter written to parish priests throughout the nation, the United States bishops explained the important place of the parish in the lives of Catholic faithful: "The parish is a privileged place to announce the Word of God. It includes a variety of forms and each of the faithful is called to take an active part, especially with the witness of a Christian life and the explicit proclamation of the Gospel to non-believers to lead them to the faith, or to believers to instruct them, confirm them and encourage them to a more fervent life."

So, we ought to feel truly blessed to be a part of this parish family. We ought to make a conscious effort to be actively involved, to build relationships with our fellow parishioners and to celebrate the Mass together as often as possible (most especially every Sunday). Then, we are bound to grow closer to others, to grow deeper in faith and closer to Christ and then, together as a parish family, we are bound to proclaim the Gospel to others, inviting them to a life of discipleship, thereby, building the kingdom of God.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Farewell, and Thank You to My Sacred Heart Family

Dear Parishioners,

It's hard to believe that I have been at Sacred Heart for almost six years. My time here is winding down and I want to write this farewell note to thank you for all the support you have given me and the parish these past years. We all know that "hello" and "goodbye" are parts of life, yet it's still never easy for us to say goodbye to those we love. I have grown in love with the people of Sacred Heart, and this community has truly become my family. In this time of transition it is easy for us to focus on what we are about to lose, or on my part, what I have to leave behind, and thus become sad and bitter. But rather we ought to focus more on what we have shared and accomplished together as a community in the little time that God has allowed us to minister to one another.

In the past six years we have grown in many wonderful ways. We have awakened Christ in our midst and have become more attuned to the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. The number of families actively involved continues to grow. Our parish has become more youth — friendly and our children enjoy their time here at church. Our spiritual and religious formation programs have progressively improved. Ministries that support young families with children, like the Moms' group, Mother's Day Out, and the nursery have been enhanced to better serve our families. Our social outreach programs work together with Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Interfaith Ministries, Faith Mission, and Circle of Hope to serve the poor and homeless, reflecting Jesus in our midst.

All of these things cannot be done without the support of our many volunteers and staff. I want to thank the staff and our deacons for working very hard supporting me and the vision of the church. They have answered the call to increase their time and service in order to accommodate the growing demands of the activities in the parish. I want to thank those who have served on the Pastoral Council, the Finance Council, and the Stewardship Committee; through your wisdom and knowledge you have advised and guided me to better serve our people as a shepherd. I want to thank all the volunteers in the Religious Formation program and all those who support our youth ministry, without your help our formation and youth programs would not be fruitful.

The Eucharistic celebration is central to our faith and without those who volunteer to serve as Ushers, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers, altar servers, musicians and choir members, our Mass would not be as inspiring as we have experienced. I want to thank all

of our liturgical ministers for their service.

To those who visit the sick, the homebound, and those who bring Holy Communion to them, I also want to say thank you. I want to thank those who have assumed leadership roles in organizations and ministries such as the Sacred Heart Altar Society, the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters of America, Boy Scouts, and Stephen Ministries, among others. You have led your organizations to grow together with the church community to support her mission as a whole. Truly, I have felt more connected here at Sacred Heart than at any other communities that I previously served. There are many more people that I wish to thank, but space requires me to be brief! Let me just say that I give thanks to God everyday for all of you and for your generous support of His ministry here at our church. May God reward your kindness.

As I move to my new assignment, I ask you to continue to support Sacred Heart and your new pastor, Fr. Jack McKone. The work here is not yet finished. I pray that God will lead you and strengthen you to complete what He has begun in you. Be patient in this time of transition and be open to a new direction that God may lead you to through your new shepherd. Please pray for the community of Sacred Heart and for your new pastor that you will function together as a community of love, a community of Christ's disciples making God's Kingdom more visible in our midst. Please also pray for me, that as I accept this new challenge may God help me to step back in humility so that Christ can become more visible in me.

The people of Sacred Heart will always have a special place in my heart and my prayers are with you always. As St. Paul encourages us in Philippians (3:12-16), let us take the baton now and run to compete, pressing on toward the goal to win the prize, holding fast to what we have already won.

May God bless you and keep you always in His peace,

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Hoa Nguyen, Pastor





SACRED HEART

Called to Parish Youth Giving Back

Kick back, relax, and lay out by the pool, because summer is here! This summer, the youth of Sacred Heart are taking some of their time away from school and spending it with the poor, the elderly, the downtrodden and in service of our brothers and sisters in Christ through the blessing of service camps.

The organization of the summer service camps is headed up by Cassie Erazo, the Coordinator of Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis who has a special place in her heart for service.

“The whole reason that I work in ministry, for the church is because of the service experiences in my life,” Cassie says. “I had a great Grandma and growing up. We would bring cupcakes and visit the elderly and homebound. We spent a lot of time at the nursing homes talking with the residents and of course, playing bingo. I didn’t see it as service at the time. This wasn’t a church organization, my grandma just loved to give. The fact that our youth are able to have this opportunity for service is changing their lives.”

First up on the summer service camp calendar was the middle school camp, Just 5 Days. Just 5 Days is a service experience offered nationally. Ten middle school youth and two adult chaperones arrived on Monday, June 11 and stayed through Friday at St. Mark the Evangelist in Norman, Okla.

From this home site, the youth were sent out into the community for 3 days to engage in some hand’s-on service projects. They spent this time organizing clothing donations at a homeless shelter, serving a retired, homebound employee of the Catholic Church around her home, and multiple other odd jobs, such as painting.

The evenings throughout the week were comprised of free time, sharing, prayer, and community with the 34

other participants from parishes across Oklahoma and Texas. The theme of this year’s Just 5 Days was ‘Called to Be the Body of Christ’.

“Leading up to the week of service, we discussed our different gifts, how to discover those gifts, and how we can use them to serve others,” Cassie says. “Just 5 Days really gave the youth an opportunity to understand more deeply our Baptismal call to serve others.”



A closing service was held on the fifth day, which included Mass. The homilist shared that serving others, isn’t about just doing it for 5 days. Service is not a weeklong call, but a lifelong call.



The youth stayed on in Oklahoma City an extra night at Our Lady of Perpetual Help’s youth building. They prayed at the Oklahoma City National Memorial, went out for pizza and some friendly go-kart racing, and visited the zoo. On Sunday, the Just 5 Days participants and chaperones attended

the 10 a.m. Mass, which was followed by a reception complete with a slide show of photos from the week.

Camp Fort Worth, the high school service camp, kicked off at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls on Sunday, June 17 and ended Friday, June 22. Started in 1998 by a youth minister, Camp Fort Worth focuses on service work, friendships, prayer time, praise and worship, and includes daily Mass.

All three Sacred Heart participants received the Sacrament of Confirmation on June 10 and left for service camp one week later. The teens spent their time of service sorting donations and helping prepare a meal at the local homeless shelter, working on the grounds of Our Lady of Queen of Peace, helping the boys and girls clubs in the

Go Serve: Back to the Community

area, and going to the Grace Care Center, a local nursing home.

“One of the greatest service projects that Camp Fort Worth does is building baby beds from scratch to be donated to pregnancy centers,” Cassie says. “The teens use power tools to put them together, sand them, and when they are finished each bed is blessed. It is a really awesome, hands-on project.”

Evenings at Camp Fort Worth are spent praying, hanging with the teens from other parishes, in praise and worship, and in sharing sessions. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was also offered. On Friday, the families of the participants were all invited to attend the closing session complete with a slide show of photos and a lot of fun.

“The Just 5 Days and Camp Fort Worth experiences and programming are great,” Cassie says. “It brings the teachings of the Church on service full circle. It’s more than just ‘I did good,’ so I feel good. It takes the youth deeper into the fact that in giving we receive and shows them how much we are ministered to by the people we are ministering to.”

A special thanks goes out to the Stewards of Sacred Heart, who, through their fundraising efforts, made camp possible for many of the youth. A heartfelt thank you also goes out to the adult leaders for each of the camps, Maria Weaver, Matt Malone, Seminarian Eugene Flynn, and Kendall Neu. Without the support of chaperones, these camps would not have been possible.





St. Bartholomew: *The Vocation to Holiness*

As baptized Catholics, we are all called to lives of supreme holiness. As Pope John Paul II explained in his message on the 39th annual World Day of Prayer for Vocations, “Since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God... it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity... The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living.”

Yet, in a culture that glorifies sin and, in many ways, looks down upon holiness, where do we turn for inspiration, for encouragement, and for strength to live out our baptismal call to holiness?

We turn to Christ and His Church. In a particular way, we can focus on the saints. These many men and women are ordinary humans like you and me who rose above the norms of the day, embraced the call to holiness, and they lived the call to the best of their abilities until the end of their lives. In some cases, in fact, it was their courage to live the call to holiness that brought them to the end of their lives!

St. Bartholomew is one such man. One of the 12 apostles living in the time of Christ, St. Bartholomew lived a life of extraordinary holiness. Throughout the Gospels, we see him going from town to town, preaching the message of Christ. Then, according to tradition, as it is recorded in the Roman Martyrology, he was skinned alive and then crucified upside down after preaching in and around India. St. Bartholomew displayed tremendous courage in the face of trial and tribulation. He serves us as



an amazing example of strong faith and a real commitment to live Christ’s call – even if that means death (even, in his case, death on a cross)!

Most of us in the modern world will never face the prospect of martyrdom, as did most of the Apostles and so many of the early Christians. Our challenge is to remember that “to give your life for Christ” means to live for Him – not necessarily to accept martyrdom in witness of our faith. We have opportunities every single day to live our faith, to witness by our actions that Jesus Christ is the Lord of our lives. As we face obstacles and challenges in this world – even in the small arenas in which most of us live our lives

– we might call on the intercession of St. Bartholomew. We can look to him as an example of courage as we strive to live out our Catholic call, even when it seems incredibly difficult!

For more inspiration from St. Bartholomew and from our many brothers and sisters who have preceded us into eternal life, why not challenge yourself to become acquainted with the saints? There are volumes of stories of the ways in which people like us have met the challenges of their own lives with courage born of faith, with the many virtues in which we might grow by taking our faith seriously and keeping Christ at the center of our lives. Reading about the lives of the saints is a great way to be a good steward of your time, and meeting those who now live with the Lord can be a precious blessing in your life. Think about it!

“All holy men and women, pray for us!”

The Stephen Ministry: *A Ministry of Caring*

It begins with a few simple, thought-provoking questions: What more can we do for people? How can we show others we care? How can we assist our pastor in ministering to everyone? The answer to these questions can be found in the Stephen Ministry, in which trained lay ministers strive to be the face of Christ to others in need. Quite simply, it's a ministry of caring.

Taking inspiration from St. Stephen, the first lay person commissioned by the apostles to provide a caring ministry to those in need, the Stephen Ministry is about training and organizing lay persons to provide one-on-one care to people who are going through difficult situations such as divorce, terminal illness, loneliness, or grief. Admittedly, pastors do a wonderful job of ministering to these individuals, but sometimes there are so many needs that they can't possibly help everyone. And so the Stephen Ministry uses lay leaders from the parish to fill this gap.

Because it is a ministry which requires extensive training and organization for it to be implemented in a parish, those who wish to serve as a Stephen Leader must first attend a Leader's Training Course (LTC). Upon completion of the course, they are commissioned as Stephen Leaders who will, in turn, recruit and train members of the parish to serve as Stephen Ministers.

"Presently Dawn Loeffler and I have been trained to be Stephen Leaders, and David Bindel will attend a Leader Training Course in July," explains parishioner Gayle Mullen. "We also have 12 parishioners who have stepped forward and are being trained to be Stephen Ministers. We will be ready to start sometime in November."

Training for the ministers doesn't happen overnight. The program is detailed and thorough, and over the course of 20 weeks Stephen Ministers learn skills such as the art of listening, feelings (yours, mine, and ours), distinctively Christian caring, maintaining boundaries, assertiveness (relating gently and firmly), and crisis intervention; furthermore, each Stephen Minister is trained to recognize when a care receiver's needs go beyond what the ministry can provide. When this is the



case, there are specific steps detailing how and where to refer the care receiver for additional, professional care.

Once someone has been referred to the ministry, a Stephen Minister will be assigned to that person. The caregiver and the care receiver meet one-on-one once a week for about an hour. The meetings are strictly confidential and, although the time is not about solving problems, it is about listening and showing compassion for their situation. It is important to note that while Stephen Ministers are not counselors, they are there to listen, to care, to console, and to pray with and/or for the care receiver.

"Listening is one of the most important things we can do," explains Gayle. "People want someone to hear and to listen; people need to express themselves and to talk to someone who is present for them. A Stephen Minister, by showing empathy and compassion, lets the care receiver know that they matter. The psychologist Carl Rogers liked to use the term individual and positive regard, which is exactly what a Stephen minister does. There is no judgment; rather, they are simply there for the care receiver."

Finally, the underlying principle of the Stephen Ministry is acknowledging that, although ministers provide the care, it is God who provides the cure; that is, only through the transforming power of Jesus' cross can a person journey from brokenness to wholeness.

If you are interested in training to become a Stephen Minister, there will be a new training session beginning in January or February. Please check the bulletin for details.

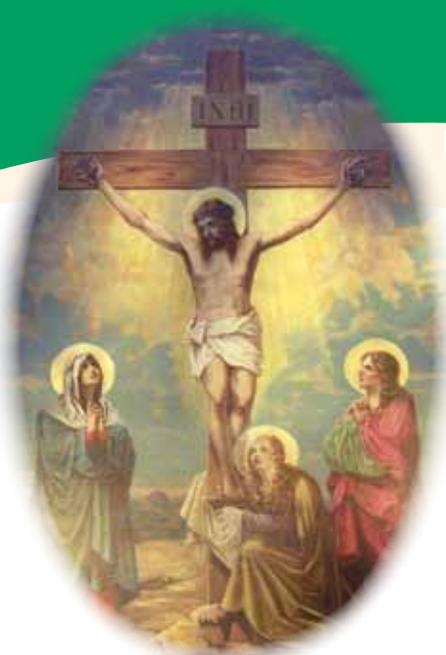
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The Gillelands *continued from front cover*

In addition to raising a beautiful family for the Lord, Clifford and Maureen have also enjoyed giving of themselves to our parish community in many ways.

When Cliff retired from a life-long career as a brick layer, he decided he was not going to bury his talents. Since then, he has been doing everything around our parish from brick work to painting fences to building room dividers for our parish day care center.

"I enjoy doing this kind of work," Clifford says. "I have tried to volunteer for various things, such as on the Parish Council, but have finally discovered that doing things with my hands is what I really my gift."

Maureen appreciates being active in Catholic Daughters and the Altar Society.

"I have been a Catholic Daughter for more than 30 years," Maureen says. "I have served as an officer for most of those years and have been very active in our work in the parish and community. Whenever I do Meals on Wheels, Clifford helps me deliver meals to shut-ins in the community. I also do hospitality and prison ministry."

Furthermore, as a couple, they have been involved with Why Catholic, go to Eucharistic Adoration and daily Masses regularly, and volunteer as facilitators for engaged couples.

They also both serve on the

Stewardship Committee and on the Continuation Committee for Christ Renews His Parish.

"Our fellow parishioners really feel like family to us," Cliff says. "When we greet them, we can't help but give them a hug!"

