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The Witness

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

DECEMBER 2009

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The Glory of God Shines Through Us

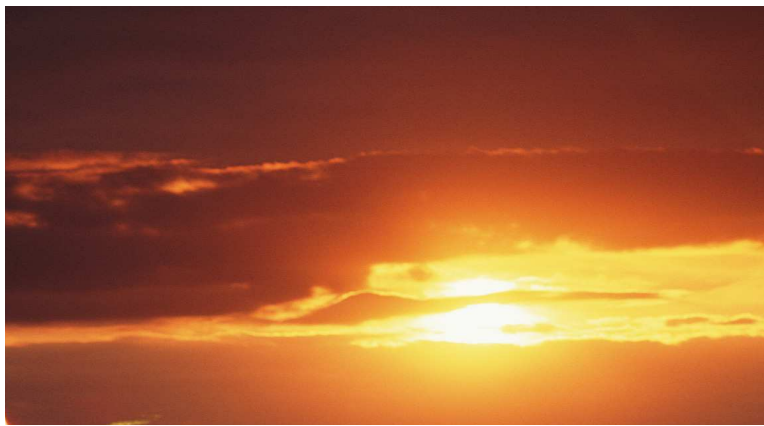
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StrengthsFinder

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I Just Can't Add Another Thing to My Already Busy Schedule!

Glory and Thankfulness—Hallmarks of Stewardship The Glory of God Shines Through Us



"Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth" is the phrase that stayed with me from Mass a few weeks ago. Afterwards, a friend standing next to me in the coffee line at the parish center remarked that we rarely read of thankfulness in the newspaper. The words, "glory" and "thankfulness" set the tone for my week.

We mortals witness divine glory in nature, in the order of things, in the beauty surrounding us, in the creation of our bodies, soul and intellect. God gives us the sky and the landscapes, the body and the spirit as gift, just as He gave us Jesus, His son. The glory of God is present in all.

Human glory, being held in high esteem among others for our character, good works, position, etc., is a positive motivator for us. With the humble recognition that God is the source of our achievements, His glory shines through in our gratitude, our thankfulness. Why did God put these words and thoughts in my heart? What purpose will come from reflecting on them? Glory - the divinity of God. Thankfulness - my bended knee. Perhaps it is simply so I can give hope to others as a good steward of all that God has given me. My friend is right in saying there is little in the news about being thankful. We hear of and are affected by job losses, war, terrorist threats, and the injuries human beings impose on each other. Our fears rise and our hopes diminish.

But when we place ourselves humbly in the glory of God, our fears diminish. When we kneel in thankfulness for the gifts we have received, our hopes tend to rise. With God as our source, our manna, our truth, we are equipped with everything we need to be His face and hands and feet to serve others; to be part of His glory in a spirit of thankfulness.

Adapted from an article by E. Jane Rutter, Director of Stewardship, Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri

StrengthsFinder

By Kaitlin Depuydt

Statistics show a decreasing amount of people who find a deep connection with the Church, explaining the decreased attendance and lack of enthusiasm within some Catholics.

Albert L. Winseman, former pastor of the United Methodist Church for 15 years, is co-author of "Living your Strengths." "Living your Strengths" focuses on identifying gifts, or strengths, one has by using the Clifton Strengthsfinder tool, which is a personality assessment tool that identifies the interests and motivators for individuals and defines each person by 5 unique gifts. For example, my own 5 strengths are: Empathy, Arranger, Relator, Responsibility, and Connectedness. Knowing the gifts of an individual on a staff, project team, or parish ministry group helps to understand what parts of another's personality will shine through in given situations. The staff members at St. John's have used the Strengthfinder assessment, and together, we use the tool to understand how our individual personalities and strengths will shape our ministries and the parish community through our leadership. (continued page 2)

Living Well-Christian Practices I Just Can't Add Another Thing to My Already Busy Schedule!

A major concern about becoming involved in community is that we are just too busy. We just don't want to add another thing to our already busy day. But participating in community isn't just another thing you 'gotta' do. When we participate, we are serving a world in need. The work is important. We are bringing God's care and concern, compassion and healing to a hurting world.

Practicing our faith in everyday life, through this love in action, deepens our relationship with God. By modeling our living after Jesus, we are responding in action to God's love for us. This December, Generations of Faith is exploring this practice of participating in community. Helping others can give our lives a sense of meaning and purpose that nothing else can.

Consider the early Christians and how they practiced community. "Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God."—1 Peter 4:10

This participating in community is a good thing but how do we get started? Participating in community doesn't have to be boring or drudgery. First figure out what you like to do, what you are good at and then find something in our community that fits with your gifts.

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"Helping others can give our lives a sense of meaning
and purpose that nothing else can."
.....

When we serve God with our gifts, we are energized. We wonder how did the time pass so quickly, we were so engaged in the work. If this is not the way you feel, maybe God is telling you to move on to something else.

If you like to sing, join the choir. If you like to talk or listen, visit the homebound. If you like to cook, volunteer at the Salvation Army kitchen. If you like to work with your hands, build houses for Habitat for Humanity.

At the December 15th/16th session of Generations of Faith you'll have a chance to reflect on the gifts you have, the things you like to do and where in our community they may fit. Not only will you be able to explore the different ministry opportunities available at St. John's but also community-wide organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, VINE or Echo Food Shelf who will have representatives for you to talk to.

There is a lot of joy and satisfaction in serving the needs of others plus we build relationships and togetherness with God and each other. Now isn't that worth spending time in your busy schedule?

**Generations of Faith starts with a meal in Matthews Hall
December 15th at 4:30pm, December 16th at 5:30pm**

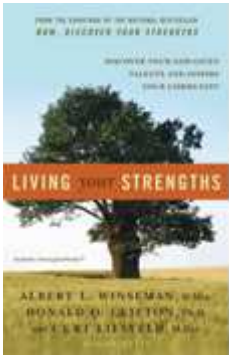
StrengthsFinder

(continued from page 1)

I believe that the StrengthsFinder assessment has helped our staff to grow intrapersonally, and in turn, that understanding of self will help us to shape the relationships within our staff and parish ministries.

The StrengthsFinder tool is used through the "Living your Strengths" book to approach every personality type as a God-given gift and Winseman suggests that a parish can thrive if its parishioners are offered opportunities that complement their gifts. The concept of pairing people up with ministries that they excel in is simple and not new to parish life; however to identify individuals with certain strengths and providing ministries that will cater to the individual is the focused issue in Winseman's book. The vitality will arise as parishioners are engaged in a particular ministry that suites them is the heart of Winseman's idea.

The "Living your Strengths" book has a Catholic edition and is [acclaimed/encouraged/approved] by a Catholic bishop in its preface and foreword. Bishop Murphy of Rockville Centre, New York, has a challenge for the Catholic community as a result of Winseman's, book. He challenges us to not only live out the Gospel message through the sacraments, but to also "harness our own gifts and talents as individuals and as a community to make the good news live in our hearts and in our communities."



Living Your Strengths

If you would like to know more about your own strengths and the online StrengthsFinder assessment tool, stop in at St. John's parish office or visit this website...

www.GallupPress.com and scroll down and click "Society & Religion" (on the right) then scroll down to the book titled "Living Your Strengths".