



Living Our Faith... Sharing Our Blessings

SAINT ANNE - SAINT CATHERINE COLLABORATIVE

Homebound Ministries Bring Christ to Those in Need

We often hear that we are “the hands and feet of Christ” to those around us. For some members of our local Catholic community, this idea often becomes quite literal as they use their hands to bring the Body of Christ to their fellow parishioners.

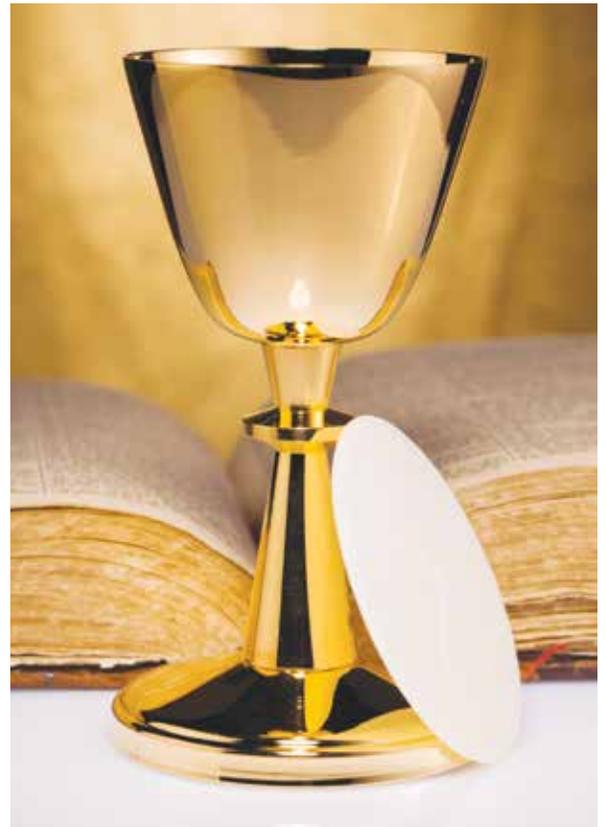
Being an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is a special role that allows Catholics to directly participate in delivering the Eucharist to those homebound by age or illness. At St. Anne — St. Catherine, Homebound Ministers bring Communion to parishioners who cannot attend Mass regularly on their own.

“We bring Communion to those who are not able to come to Mass, be it for short-term reasons like surgery or long-term because they can no longer drive or are physically unable to come,” says St. Catherine’s ministry coordinator Therese Keoseian. “Sometimes, it’s requested by a son or daughter, or the people themselves can make the request. We make arrangements to bring Communion on a weekly basis or whenever the communicant would like.”

For the communicant, receiving Communion at home can be a vital link to our parish community. Therese says Extraordinary Ministers who have served the homebound over a number of years will often form connections with them that enhance the spiritual lives of both people.

“Some of us have followed the people to whom we bring Communion for eight-plus years, and you really do form a loving bond with the homebound,” she says. “You see their limitations and you feel compassion for those who are caring for them, but you also see how important it is to the homebound person to receive the Body of Christ.”

In addition to having the distinction of being Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, members of the Homebound Ministries have also passed Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks and are held to a



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Stewardship

Becoming Fishers of People

Whether you hold a high-profile position, such as Collaborative Parish Pastoral Council Co-chair, or have more of a behind-the-scenes role as a Ministry Leader of a parish ministry, God has called you – as a parish leader – to help build His Church.

This challenge is just as important as the call of any other Catholic leader, including the earliest disciples.

When Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He urged a group of fishermen, “Come follow me.” Jesus promised if they laid down their nets and followed Him, He would make them fishers of people. These men were joined by other men and women disciples who knew Christ’s call was so important that they left their secular occupation to follow Him.

Just as He did with the fishermen, Jesus calls each of us today. He is not necessarily asking us to leave our secular careers, but He *is* asking us to put Him first in our lives and to share His message of love with others.

God truly wants us to serve Him and to build His Church through the secular occupations we have chosen. It is through the Church that new disciples are born, and it is in the Church that disciples continue to mature. Forming disciples of Christ is the most important work that can be done on earth, and each of us has been called to play an active role in this work.

So, how do we go about building the Church? Where do we find the plans?

Some people mistakenly think that building the Church — in particular, building our own collaborative or diocese — is no different than building a successful

business. Indeed, the purpose of building the Church is to change hearts — a goal that only God can accomplish.

Secular society has not prepared us for this work. However, the Holy Spirit – sometimes referred to as the “Architect of the Church” — has the plan. In order to implement this plan, we must become good listeners. We must open ourselves to the workings of the Holy Spirit as He transforms us and guides us to carry out God’s work and to serve as His instruments on earth, building the Church together with Him.

This is where spiritual exercises, such as retreats, come into play. A retreat offers the individual an opportunity to spend time alone with the Lord, allowing God to draw the person deeper into the mystery of who He is, who we are and what He is doing in our lives. Retreats can offer parish leaders the opportunity each year to spend time with the Lord as He directs them in the ways of discipleship. As leaders, we must take time to meditate on the Scriptures and allow Jesus to open up His Word to us. Then, as we grow deeper in our understanding of what God wants of us, we can exclaim, just as the first disciples did on the road to Emmaus, “Our hearts are burning within us” (Lk 24:32).

When God call us, no matter how big or small our role, it is vital to understand how we, as parish leaders, can best answer His call. What, in particular, is the Lord calling each one of us to do? He most likely is not asking us to drop our nets, but to pick them up and become “fishers of people.” We must discern how we can most effectively cast our nets for Him.



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

A Word of Thanks to Those Who Have Opened Up Our Faith to Others

Dear Parishioners,

Fr. Bill O'Malley, a Jesuit priest, has taught skeptical college and high school students for over 50 years. He is a popularizer who strives to make the Catholic faith more meaningful and understandable in our secular society. His book (I love the title), *Choosing to be Catholic, For the First Time or Once Again* is for **adults becoming adults in their faith**. His aim is to open up the faith of Catholics to more than a mere childlike understanding. It is a great read.

On June 24, Todd Westerhoff, a member of St. Catherine Parish, made a public decision to become a Catholic at St. Anne Church. In doing so, he has opened the faith of many parishioners to a deeper understanding and meaning of their faith and what Church is. Todd's wife, Anne and their two children, Kristen and Mark, have been longstanding and involved parishioners at St. Catherine. Even though he was very familiar with St. Catherine Church and its people, he was delighted to celebrate the Rite of Acceptance at St. Anne. It made no difference to Todd where he received the Rite of Acceptance. What was central to Todd was being received into the Church, no matter where that occurred.

I first met Todd 10 years ago on our collaborative mission trips to hurricane victims in Mississippi. He was our technical advisor. Many of us never even knew Todd was not Catholic. However, over the years it seems Todd listened and responded to the gentle whisper of the Holy Spirit nudging him to discover more about God and the



Catholic Church. This led to his decision to enter the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* process and begin a formal inquiry of study and reflection. Over time, this led him to a decision to enter the Church and become a Catholic.

Thank you, Todd, and all the other parishioners who have opened up the faith of our parishioners in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, as Fr. O'Malley would say, to a more than a childlike understanding.

God Love,

Fr. Peter Quinn, Pastor

Adult Faith Presenting Wonderful Opportunities

Several decades ago, Peg Hicks noticed parents waiting in their cars while their children attended religious education classes, which were held at Westford Academy before St. Catherine's had a parish center.

At that moment, she was inspired to offer a "Catholic Basics" session, and the parents began coming in from their cold cars for coffee and conversation about the faith.

"Sharing sacramental and liturgical theology, Church history and Scripture with adults continues to be my favorite ministry," says Peg, Pastoral Associate. "I always end up learning and understanding more by listening to and sharing insights with those who participate."

Adult Faith Formation programs for the St. Anne-St. Catherine Collaborative offer all faith community members the opportunity to ask questions and explore the faith further, building upon the religious education they received as children.

"Many Catholics ended their formal religious education when they were confirmed as youth," Peg says. "They had just barely begun skimming the surface of a rich religious tradition that has such

depth, wisdom and inspiration."

Last year, our collaborative sponsored over 25 courses, classes, lectures and workshops for adults. To accommodate varying schedules, sessions were offered at multiple times, including weekday mornings, evenings and over the weekend. Topics included Christology, Sacraments, the Church, the Mass, the Saints, Teaching Catholicism, What is Catholicism and Bible Study.

"Some of the programs used video-discussion format, while others used lecture and discussion," Peg says. "About 300 adults participated in our six-week Lenten Faith sharing groups."

All interested adults are welcome to attend any of the Adult Faith Formation programs. Additionally, parishioners are particularly needed to serve as small-group facilitators, especially to lead the Lenten discussion groups.

"We also could use assistance with publicizing courses, workshops and events," Peg says. "In early September, watch for our annual Adult Faith Formation booklet listing upcoming offerings for 2018 and 2019 and look for notices in the bulletin and on Facebook."



This past year, St. Anne hosted collaborative morning sessions using videos and discussion.



Guest lecturer Tom Groome leads a workshop for catechists in the fall of 2017 at St. Catherine.

Formation Classes for Those Seeking Understanding

For Peg, who has been a parishioner with her husband, Alan, for 38 years, offering that first session of “Catholic Basics” led her to study theology at Boston College and later to teach with the Archdiocesan Institute for Ministry.

“I learned that I loved doing the research and preparation work to present the classes,” Peg says. “This continues to deepen my faith, keeping me connected with the Master Teacher.”

Some adult Catholics might hesitate to come and

ask questions for fear of showing lack of knowledge. Peg would encourage any such parishioners to not let that fear keep them from taking a step to further their understanding of God and the faith.

“If you’ve got a question, it’s very likely others are wondering the same thing!” Peg says. “Theology, means ‘study of God.’ St. Anselm defined theology as ‘faith seeking understanding.’ Basic trust in God leads us to want to better understand, and understanding leads to a deeper trust in God.”

If you would like more information about Adult Faith Formation at the St. Anne-St. Catherine Collaborative, please reach out to Peg Hicks at PegH@LWCatholic.org.

Homebound Ministries continued from front cover

standard of confidentiality.

“I think it’s important for people to know that the homebound ministers have been CORI checked on an annual basis, so they can feel safe and secure,” Therese says. “That relationship is very important and it’s always with respect to confidentiality. We don’t discuss what happens in our homes.”

The Homebound Ministry at St. Catherine currently has 25 members and there are 12 members involved in the Homebound Ministry at St. Anne. Teresa Decelles recently agreed to become the coordinator for the ministry at St. Anne. Selina Gibbons, the previous coordinator, had to step down because she will soon be heading off to college.

Therese says she hopes families with a homebound loved one will take advantage of the opportunity that these ministries present. “If you have a parent or a spouse or someone you know is in need, please take the initiative to call one of the offices and make arrangements,” she says. “We have more people who want to bring Communion to the homebound than we have homebound right now. If there’s a need or a desire, please contact the office because there are people who like to do this for you as a service.”

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Those who would like to have Communion brought to their home or the home of a loved one should call one of the parish offices: St. Anne 978-486-4100 or St. Catherine 978-692-6353

Offering Our Love and Adoration to Jesus

Eucharistic Adoration is the adoration of Jesus Christ present in the Holy Eucharist. Churches that offer Eucharistic Adoration display the Eucharist in a special holder called a monstrance, and people come to pray and worship Jesus.

Christ's great love for us was shown when He was crucified on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and offer us eternal life. He loves us without limit, and offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Can we not give Jesus a few minutes of love and adoration in return?

What is the importance of Eucharistic Adoration?

Eucharistic Adoration is the respect and worship we give to Jesus, who is truly present to us under the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharist is a priceless treasure; when we pray before it outside of Mass, we make contact with the very wellspring of grace.

What are the fruits of Eucharistic Adoration?

People who pray before the Eucharist experience a deeper devotion to Jesus, and this manifests itself in countless ways. The primary fruits are repentance and conversion, which lead to increased charity — that is, the love of Christ alive in His people. The adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist also leads to greater reverence at Mass, a deeper desire for personal holiness, and a stronger sense of union with the parish and the whole Church. Ever since the early centuries of Christianity, the Church has linked Eucharistic Devotion to service to the poor. The practice has, more recently, led to an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.



What is proper etiquette during Eucharistic Adoration?

When we are not taking part in vocal prayers and hymns with other adorers, we should be praying silently. Whenever we pass before the place where the Sacred Host is reserved, we should genuflect. We should observe the modest dress and decorum that are appropriate to very solemn occasions. We should avoid any actions that might disturb or distract others, or otherwise draw attention to ourselves rather than Jesus.

How should we pray during Eucharistic Adoration?

There are many ways to pray. We may meditate in silence by gazing on the Sacred Host. We may silently speak to Jesus from our mind and heart. We may also rely on devotions and prayers from Catholic

tradition, such as the reading of Scripture, recitation of the Rosary, or the litanies. Prayer booklets are available in the Chapel for your use during Adoration. When two or more are gathered before the Sacrament, they may pray or sing hymns together.

What is the best way to promote Eucharistic Adoration?

The best way to promote Eucharistic Adoration is by doing it! Make frequent visits to Jesus at the tabernacle. Invite your spouse, your children, your neighbors and co-workers to join you. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, "Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. 'To visit the Blessed Sacrament is ... a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord'" (1418).

Adoration takes place in the Chapel at St. Anne Parish. Adoration is typically scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month from 8:30 a.m. to noon, and on the fourth Saturday of the month from 2-3 p.m. Please check the bulletin to confirm the schedule.

VIRTUS/PGC Program Answers the Call to Faithfully Protect Our Youngest Parishioners

While it's most certainly a difficult subject for many to face or openly discuss, we are all called to protect our children from the horrors of abuse. And here in the St. Anne — St. Catherine Collaborative, the PGC Team — Protecting God's Children — serves as a way to ensure that our young parishioners as well as those who may be vulnerable for other reasons, are safe as members of our faith family.

PGC was formerly called the CAP (Child Abuse Prevention) program, and is part of the national VIRTUS program, which was developed in the late 1980s and updated many times in the years since. VIRTUS was created by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group under the direction of Msgr. Kevin McCoy. As Msgr. McCoy asked of prominent experts in many disciplines, "Can child sexual abuse be prevented?" In turn, the VIRTUS program was created from these discussions.

Ted Doucette has facilitated Virtus/PGC at our parishes for the past two years. He was trained and certified as an instructor through the Archdiocese, along with other members of our collaborative's VIRTUS team.

"There is no question that this can be a difficult subject, but it is so necessary for us to have this," Ted says. "This is an incredibly important program. It is unfortunate the way it got started, but that does not lessen how essential and valuable it is to today's Catholic Church. I am proud to be involved with it, and I am equally fulfilled by what we do and what we offer."

The United States Council of Catholic Bishops has strongly encouraged all of the archdioceses and dioceses to adopt the VIRTUS program. Importantly, VIRTUS complies with Article 12 of the

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Saint Anne - Saint Catherine Collaborative
75 King St. • Littleton, MA 01460
978-486-4100 (St. Anne) • 978-692-6353 (St. Catherine)
www.LittletonCatholic.org • www.StCatherineParish.org

MASS SCHEDULE:

St. Anne Parish:

75 King St., Littleton, MA 01460

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish:

107 North Main St., Westford, MA 01886

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Collaborative Weekday Schedule:

Monday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Anne

Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Anne

Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. Prayer Service - St. Anne

Thursday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Catherine

Friday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Catherine

Confessions:

Saturdays: 3:00-3:45 p.m. at both parishes

(or as requested)

VIRTUS/PGC Program *continued from page 7*

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Our archdiocese requires that “all adult volunteers who may potentially have contact with children and/or youth are required to submit to background checks prior to any contact with young people. In addition, all employees, clergy and adult volunteers are required to attend a VIRTUS session.

“For me, this coincided with our efforts to appeal to people regarding stewardship and sharing gifts,” Ted says. “I recognized the value of this program, and I thought that would be a good way for me to get involved. Now I am one of the facilitators of the program for both parishes.”

Our collaborative VIRTUS team offers sessions four to five times a year at St. Anne and St. Catherine parishes. Adults can also sign up for VIRTUS sessions at parishes throughout the Archdiocese through www.virtusonline.org (go to FAQ’s, then “View upcoming session schedule”, then select “Boston Archdiocese” for a list of places and times).

“To work with young people you must go through this program, so we will be contacting those who need it,” Ted says. “I would also advise that people be alert to announcements as the schedule is set.” Though attendance isn’t required, we certainly encourage parents — and any other interested parishioners to attend.

The Church takes its responsibilities in relationship to children very seriously, especially in recent years. As a result of concerns about abuse of children, the Archdiocese of Boston mandated and instituted the VIRTUS program in all parishes several years ago. For further information, please contact Peg Hicks at PegH@LWCatholic.org or call Liz Newton at 978-692-6353.