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ST. VINCENT FERRER PARISH

LIVING
CHURCH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

Dennison Keller: **Lifting the Talent of Music Back Up to God**

Ever since Dennison Keller was a child, the vibrant joy of music has filled his life.

"Music was all around our home," he says. "My father helped produce pageants, such as the Miss Texas Pageant, so there was always a steady stream of dancers and musicians coming in and out of our house. I developed my love for music that way. My dad was blessed with musical ability and he used his talents to serve the Lord, and I followed in his footsteps. My dad, my sister and I all played for Mass at our small-town parish, and I have sung for church and been in choirs all throughout my life. I began playing the organ at my church when I was only 10 years old."

These days, Dennison continues to embrace the tremendous gift that both his Heavenly Father and his earthly father gave to



him by serving as a cantor. He usually sings for our Saturday evening Masses, as well as for special Masses such as Christmas.

"Being a cantor ties into my stewardship commitment," Dennison says. "I believe, as my dad always taught me, that if you are blessed with the ability to do something, you have a responsibility to lift that talent back up to God. Being a cantor is my way to give thanks to the Lord for my talent."

Over the years, he has witnessed the impact that music can have on the worship experience, and he is grateful to share the joy.

"Music is such an important part of the spiritual life, and it can really lift you up emotionally," he says. "Some of the texts of the hymns are so beautiful, and when

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Lifting the Talent of Music Back Up to God *continued from front cover*

you believe in what they say, singing them can be a very uplifting experience. When you are knee-deep into a fine choral performance, you feel it down your spine and in your heart. If you are in a choir setting with other people in that situation, as well, it can be even more powerful. When you are a cantor, you come to know the power of the emotions that music generates. When you sing a beautiful hymn well, you can tell that you have reached the congregation by looking at their faces. My goal is to elevate the spiritual experience of the people who are at the Mass. I take this responsibility seriously.”

Dennison also enjoys working with the rest of the music ministry team at our parish, and is truly inspired by what they do.

“Our Music Director, Jim McCormick, is so phenomenal, and he has a great music ministry going,” Dennison says. “It is a pleasure to perform with him, and he covers up all of my bad pitch problems! Music can take you to a different level emotionally and spiritually. One of the best examples of that would be when Jim plays ‘Bless This House’ every year at Thanksgiving Mass. Everyone in the congregation is there for only one reason – because they feel they should give thanks to God for their blessings, and this song helps them do that. Every year when he plays it, it is so moving that it takes the entire congregation to a whole different place than they would have been without the music. This is a tangible example of what good music can do. This is what we strive to do in the music ministry every day.”

THE LORD IS ALWAYS WITH US

In December, as we approached Christmas, this rainbow appeared above our school. One of our parents, Lisa Samson, snapped this photo!

“And this, God said, is the sign of the covenant which I now make between myself and you and every living creature for all ages to come” (Genesis 9:12).



Photo by Lisa Samson

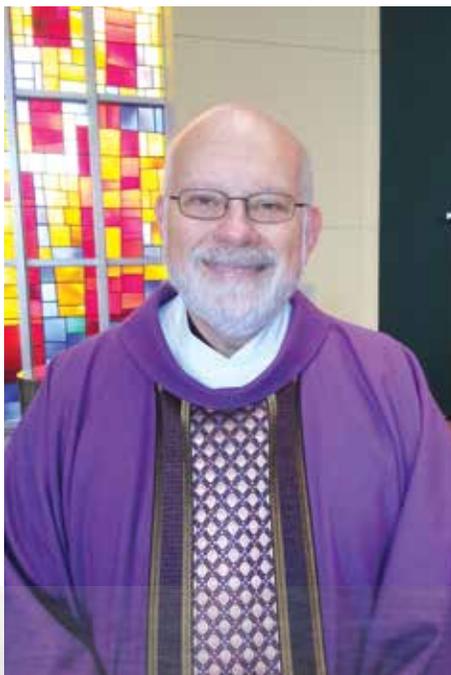
LENT – A TIME OF PREPARATION, INTROSPECTION AND CHANGE

Dear Parishioners,

This is the holiest time of year for Catholics. Lent, of course, officially begins on Ash Wednesday. Most of us are familiar with the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Those are important in relation to repentance and renewal. Everything we do should remind us that Lent is a penitential season.

In the midst of this serious time, however, we must keep in mind that the word “Lent” comes from a Middle English word, which means “springtime,” and the time of lengthening of days. When we think springtime, our thoughts tend to be lighter and brighter. That is how we need to view Lent, just as we recognize the joy, colors and brightness of Easter.

In the Church over the past few decades, we as Catholics have come to the insight that Lent is more than a time to give something up. It is also a time to add something, to take action about our faith in ways that make it more meaningful and real. This does not mean we should not make sacrifices – we need to consider that while sacrifices may mean denying ourselves something, they can also



mean we are filling that denial with a positive action.

We are talking about conversion again. We are speaking of stewardship again. This is a time when we should be looking within ourselves. It is a time for introspection. How can we improve? Maybe we need to be a bit more patient with people in our lives – perhaps we need to adjust some of our attitudes. One thing we all need to do is to see

and find the good in many small things in our lives.

Do we spend quality time with God, and with our families? Do we help someone in need? Do we set aside a time each day to pray? The possibilities for change and positive action seem quite endless. The point is to do it. Stewardship is a life of action – Lent should be a time of action.

Rather than being concerned about how others see us, this is a time for us to look at ourselves. We may need to rethink and re-evaluate our faith and especially our relationship with God. The Lord has called each of us to love and serve. Every day and every season is a time for us to carry out that call – but now, during Lent in preparation for Easter, this is very important indeed.

The 40 days of Lent are a time for us to live life as a disciple and as a steward of our God-given gifts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. George Kunkel
Fr. George Kunkel



ST. VINCENT FERRER SCHOOL LIBRARY

Fostering a Love for Reading in Our Children

In her 25 years as librarian at St. Vincent Ferrer School, Jane Callan's goal has been to foster a love for reading in every student she meets. As a former language arts teacher, Mrs. Callan finds great joy in introducing students to literature and expanding their minds through stories.

"I want to develop an excitement for reading in our children," Mrs. Callan says. "I love to read to them, and I love it when they come to me and suggest a book they think I should get for the library. That's so exciting! They love to read, and that's such a joy to me. Kids read books and they develop an empathy for people from other cultures and other walks of life. You can gain so much when you find out what people are doing in other parts of the world. There's a real lesson there."

Mrs. Callan began her career as librarian for our beloved school library after teaching in the classroom for 12 years. At the time, her children were small, so working part time in the library was perfect for her schedule, and her love for reading and language arts made a librarian position a great fit for her. Now, after 25 years as librarian, Mrs. Callan says that working with the children is what keeps her coming back, year after year.

"It's the kids, the interaction with them, that I love most about being librarian," she says. "I am amazed at

how those minds work, from junior high all the way down to the little guys. They teach me. They open me up to so many ideas I don't even think of myself. I love the interaction with the kids. Our Lord has said we all have to be like little children, and I get to work with these little children. It's just a very rewarding experience."

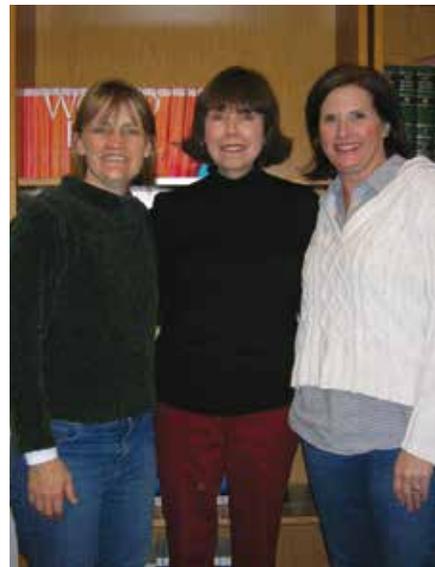
Although she has devoted her time and talent over the years to teaching the children and helping them to develop a love for reading, Mrs. Callan shares that she is the one who has been truly blessed by her time as librarian.

"I feel really blessed," she says. "I feel like I've been led here. I felt the Lord saying, 'This is the place for you.' He definitely found the right place for me!"

Students come into the library for 40-minute periods, to read, check out books, or work on projects. Mrs. Callan loves to read to the children when they come to the library, but there is much more to running a library than reading with the children. Mrs. Callan credits her many dedicated volunteers with making it possible for her to spend time with each child, helping them to read or to find books they are interested in.

"My volunteers are wonderful!" Mrs. Callan says. "They will do anything. When the classes come in, my volunteers usually do the checking-out procedure, and that frees me up to help the kids find books. They

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Jane Callan (center), school librarian, with volunteers Lisa Samson (left) and Susan Harder (right)



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Mrs. Mary Kay Lynch (library volunteer) checks out books for fourth-graders



Mrs. Jane Callan with first-graders Adam, Max, and Patrick



Mrs. Jane Callan sharing a story with the fifth-graders

are priceless to me, sitting there checking out books and keeping up with the over-dues so that I can read to the children. They are giving their time, and are just there to help me and the kids. That's what Jesus wants us to do – to serve others. Those ladies are there on their own time, and it's such a good witness to the children. Time is so precious, and we appreciate them so much and they are wonderful role models for our kids."

Susan Harder is one such volunteer, who has helped out in the library for four years now. Susan also chairs the Library Book Fair every year, and loves getting to know the children through her work in the library.

"It is such a warm and inviting atmosphere," Susan says. "I have always enjoyed books and worked in libraries through

college. Mrs. Callan does such a great job of giving the kids a love for literature of all types, and I think it is a great way to get to know each child and their personalities!"

Mrs. Callan would like to extend an invitation to all parishioners to come by the library for a visit. She has enjoyed the support of our parishioners for many years, and loves to give library tours.

If you would like more information on the school library, or to schedule a visit, please contact Jane Callan at 513-791-6320, ext. 106, or callanjane@yahoo.com.

"Kids read books and they develop an empathy for people from other cultures and other walks of life. You can gain so much when you find out what people are doing in other parts of the world. There's a real lesson there."

– Mrs. Jane Callan, librarian



FORMED: A NEW WAY TO ENRICH YOUR FAITH EXPERIENCE

By BETH HIMES

SVF has purchased a subscription for an online platform called *Formed*. From formed.org parishioners can access Catholic-oriented videos that are both entertaining and instructive. These can be played on smartphones, home computers, and tablets – any tech device with good Internet access.

On the *Formed* platform, there are movies of interest to Catholics, the *Catholicism* video series by Bishop Robert Barron, the *Symbolon* series of catechism videos, a Bible study series, and many other media items.

Some of the materials can be used to supplement parish sacramental programs, including marriage preparation. Imagine logging on to your smartphone to do part of your sacramental preparation!

Parishioners can begin at any time on their own devices. Log in to formed.org using our parish code QM3HYB. You will need to set up a username and password to continue. Then, check out what they have to offer. If you find something of interest, simply start watching. It's easy!

As this is a new offering for St. Vincent Ferrer Parish, any feedback to the Faith Formation Office is greatly appreciated.

YEAR OF MERCY 2016 *Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy*

Since Medieval times, the Church has named 14 ways in which mercy can be demonstrated. Seven are corporal, meaning they affect the body in some way. The other seven are spiritual. These affect the religious, intellectual or psychological aspects of persons. Each month, we will focus on one of these ways of practicing mercy, in our local church and in our homes.

BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY

Being patient with someone we know who has hurt us can be a tougher challenge than finding a few bucks for the poor. This Spiritual Work of Mercy involves the painful process of reconciliation and forgiveness.

We bear wrongs patiently as a community when we withhold harsh judgments about the intentions of accused wrongdoers, waiting instead for their fair defense. This can be tough when there is a school shooting or a deadly wreck involving impaired driving.

In our homes, we give our children plenty of chances to learn from their mistakes. It is harder when one's child is an adult who rarely visits or who has squandered an inheritance. Harder still is the patience needed when a spouse has been less than faithful.

Reconciliation is never easy, but it is God's work that we undertake.



Ladies enjoying fellowship and fun at the Bridge Marathon. From left: Helen Sherman, Mary Jutze, and Pat Wordeman.

Bridge Marathon Is “HANDS DOWN” A GREAT PLACE FOR FRIENDSHIP

It's a tradition that's been ongoing at St. Vincent Ferrer since 1958, and it shows no signs of slowing down.

It's the St. Vincent Ferrer Bridge Marathon, and this dedicated group of 32 members keeps the bidding and camaraderie going at 1:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the school cafeteria.

Marisa Moussa serves as the marathon's coordinator. She took it over on an emergency basis several years ago when the coordinator passed away. Marisa decided to continue the duties in her honor.

"It was organized just for the women to get together," Marisa says. "They were playing couples bridge, but they went on to all-ladies, and played it at each others' homes. As the group aged, many wouldn't go out at night, so they started playing

in the school cafeteria in the afternoon. The idea of the group is to keep together, have recreation, friendship, and enjoy the time together."

The group plays with 16 couples, or teams, at 18 tables with the season running from September to May. A list of "flights" is compiled in August. The partners stay with each other throughout the season, but the teams are moved from table to table each month, so opportunity abounds to become acquainted with the other enthusiasts.

Each member pays \$16 at the start of the season, and this money is used for prizes awarded at the year-end luncheon held at Kenwood Country Club. The funds left over are donated to the church for the use of parish facilities. Marisa is in charge of the arrangements. The Bridge Club from St.

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MASSES

SATURDAY VIGIL: 5:00 P.M.

SUNDAY: 9:00 A.M. AND 11:00 A.M.

CHAPEL (PARISH CENTER):

MON-FRI: 8:30 A.M.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

SATURDAY: 3:30-4:30 P.M.

Bridge Marathon *continued from page 7*

Gertrude Parish has taken part in the luncheon, as well.

"The Bridge Marathon is very important," Marisa says. "We like to play bridge, and we develop friendships throughout the years. Members come back each year. It's mostly the camaraderie, getting to see each other."

Barbara Dahl, who has been a member for about 10 years, says the benefit of playing with the group is "getting to know people on a social level. It's a fun group."

If someone likes to play bridge but doesn't want to commit to a nine-month schedule, that person is welcome to join the group as a substitute player.

"It's harder now to get someone to sit in for a day," Barbara says. "We're always looking for subs who can't commit for the whole season."

And, of course, new members are welcome to sign up for the marathon in August.

Those interested in either joining for the full year or serving as a substitute player may call Marisa Moussa at 513-315-2915.



(From left) Sarah Williams and Marisa Moussa