

Our Parish Newsletter

October-December 2011

**ST. MONICA CATHOLIC CHURCH —
OUR UNIQUE STEWARDSHIP PARISH**

Inside this issue. . .

Festival photos	2
Adult Faith Enrichment Events	3
Peru Ministry	4
Mass changes and Parish Mission	5
Our choir to perform in Italy	6
Pastoral Council News, Photo Page	7

New Strategies

2012 Stewardship of Time & Talent Campaign Begins

St. Monica Church was established in 1993 as the first parish in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to commit to "total stewardship." Now nearly 20 years later we still function as a unique stewardship community where parishioners give their resources to support the parish mission and their time and talent to perform the bulk of all the parish work.

Because we realize that these special God-given gifts or talents help us define who we are, we share our talents by helping others or working in our neighborhood, parish, community or diocese.

What's new is the way we sign up for ways to share our time and talent. Previously we visited various booths at Stewardship Fairs, set up to inform folks of what was available. Then we signed up for a year's commitment. Now we have an ongoing **Stewardship Corner** designed to focus on one particular ministry, committee or group all year long. Organized by four "Stewardship Pillars" the corners are set up each weekend in the church narthex so reps from the groups can visit with those who attend the various Masses. The following schedule will be used by parish groups within the various pillars to staff the Stewardship Corner.

January to March—Hospitality Pillar

April to June - Service Pillar

July-September - Formation Pillar

October-December - Prayer Pillar

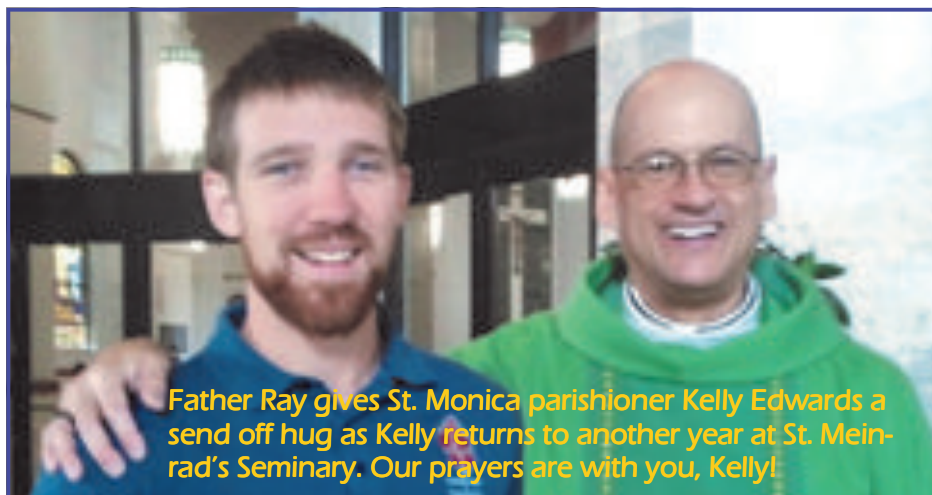
Parishioners can sign up (or drop out, if the fit doesn't seem right) for any ministry at any time during the year. Once signed up, the volunteer stays with the group until he or she opts to change.

Be sure to check out all the activities you can be involved in here at St. Monica. The Stewardship Board's goal is to get everyone involved in at least one opportunity. With over 100 committees or active groups within the parish there is something for everyone.

Make it a point to visit with fellow parishioners as they staff the stewardship corner each weekend. Getting involved in the various ministries under the four pillars is the very best way to grow in your Faith and earn an added bonus of getting to know other parishioners.



Look for this banner in our church narthex to locate the *Stewardship Corner*. Visit weekly with our volunteers as they share info about the ministries to which they have committed.



Father Ray gives St. Monica parishioner Kelly Edwards a send off hug as Kelly returns to another year at St. Meinrad's Seminary. Our prayers are with you, Kelly!



Burgers and hot dogs, so good! Dig right in!



Jumping for joy!



A Knight in shining apron on chef duty!

Another successful Parish Festival!

A great time was had by all as is evidenced by the happy faces of those in attendance. Special thanks to all our volunteers!

This annual event takes place every August around the feast day of our Patroness St. Monica.

Watch the weekly bulletin for news about our next great activity . . . **The Halloween Festival!** This fun and sometimes spooky event is another great way to enjoy family, friends, food and have lots of good-hearted fun!

To volunteer for this important ministry check out the Stewardship Corner focusing on the **Hospitality Pillar** and sign up for the **Activities Committee** or contact the parish office to get involved.

Love Thy Neighbor

Archbishop Coakley and panel visit parish

By Marka Acton

An Immigration Forum, welcoming 150 participants, was held recently at St. Monica Parish Center with various panel members including Archbishop Coakley. Attendees received his information regarding the Catholic Church's teachings on social justice, the right to dignity for all workers, and the call for common respect due each of God's children. An Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce representative also spoke about the economic impact that negative legislation would have on our community. The current status of a proposed state Congressional bill was explained by Dick Klinge with Catholic Charities. The Oklahoma Sponsoring Committee's Kris King and parishioners Dianne Wiggly and Gabriel Carreon also contributed to the panel discussion. The forum offered no political endorsements and presented only factual information to allow everyone present to make more informed decisions.

In related news the parish's **Love Thy Neighbor** group reports its support of efforts to see the abandoned school building at Britton Rd. near Broadway Ext. transformed into a Community Center for the northwest Oklahoma City area. Some initial steps have been achieved but more help is needed as the group continues to assess community needs and identify the services that feasibly can be offered.

If you are interested in being a part of this type of local community development, come along and find out more at our next meeting Oct. 20. To join the **Love Thy Neighbor** social action group, call or contact Marka Acton 918-724-8928 or sign up under the **Service Pillar** at the stewardship corner.



Picture perfect! Face paint applied by our talented parish youth group



Decisions, decisions. Some tough ones to make in the festival's Cake Walk!

Adult Faith Enrichment News

Bible Study Opportunities

The new school year is starting up and even though your school days may be long behind you, you are never finished with learning. Maybe the school bus doesn't stop for us anymore but we should still feel an eagerness to learn more about our faith. Here at St. Monica, adults have an opportunity to share their faith by participating in a variety of Bible Study classes.

This year, as we prepare for changes in the Mass, it is the perfect time to explore the Biblical roots of the words and gestures we experience in the Liturgy—from the opening Sign of the Cross to the closing "go forth, the Mass is ended". A *Biblical Walk Through the Mass* is a five week study to help us understand what we say and do in the Liturgy. The study is written by Dr. Edward Sri. This intriguing look at the Mass is sure to renew your faith and deepen your love and devotion to the Eucharist. A Thursday evening class will begin October 13th. Watch the Bulletin for details.

As Catholics we have a unique devotion to Mary. Beginning in October (a twelve week study) *The Bible and the Virgin Mary*, developed by Scott Hahn will be offered on Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:15. This study examines the role of Mary in salvation history. Through typology we study her role as the New Eve, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Queen Mother. This study also examines Catholic doctrine with regard to the Blessed Virgin, answering common objections along the way.

Other study groups meet regularly: one meets on Sunday mornings at 9:15; there's an evening study group, a mixed-gender group on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 and a daytime women's group. If you are interested in participating in any Bible study group or facilitating a group please contact Theresa Grochowsky at 341-2177 or call the parish office. You can also visit the Stewardship Corner and sign up under the Stewardship Pillar called **Formation**.



St. Monica Knights of Columbus Council presented Fr. Ray with a silver chalice on August 21 to commemorate the 20th Anniversary to the priesthood.

Glad You Asked

What is a Homily?

By Deacon Lee Hunt

It flows from the scripture readings of the day and is not necessarily to teach doctrine.

This article is in response to parishioners' questions about why homilies cover certain topics and not others. The article is guided by the document *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, published in 1982 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This cited document can be found online.

Bishops give priests and deacons the faculty of preaching. Pastors preach most of the time in a parish but when the parish has a deacon, the pastor is to allow the deacon to preach occasionally. At St. Monica, that is typically once per month.

The homily serves a particular function in the liturgy—the proclamation or announcement of the Gospel, the Good News of the Incarnation of Jesus the Christ. We hear the phrase "breaking open the Word" connected to preaching, but preaching is probably closer to letting the Word break us open, letting the Word of God enter and permeate our being. Sometimes the task of proclamation requires some groundwork, some prior education, explanation, or preparation in order that the assembly properly hears the proclamation.

The essential purpose of the homily, however, is proclamation, not education. Preaching should move the assembled to reflect prayerfully on the proclaimed Word of God as they prepare to receive the Eucharist. The homily flows from the Scriptures read at the liturgical celebration. A homily presupposes faith and does not primarily concern itself with a systematic theological understanding of faith.

Because some Catholics are somewhat ignorant of Scriptures, shouldn't the homily deal with the fundamentals of faith? Social science teaches that the oral presentation by one person is not a particularly effective way to impart new information to bring about a change in attitude or behavior. The homily is effective to reinforce attitudes or knowledge previously held. However, the homily does not exclude doctrinal instruction and moral exhortation where appropriate.

The deacon's preaching should have a diacanal character to bring to their preaching the perspectives of living, working, and ministering "in the world" and the impact of the Good News of Christ. (Continued on pp. 8)

Reaching out to others through stewardship

You too can make a difference

St. Monica Parish has been actively supporting the remote Peruvian village of La Piedra for several years through stewardship activities within the Peru Ministry. By stewardship participation in this ministry, members can sponsor a Peruvian family and/or work throughout the year gathering clothing and other supplies for the villagers. Some within that ministry, at their own expense, make the annual Pilgrimage to Peru to connect with the villagers and deliver the collected clothing, medicine, and gifts to their new "family" and friends. In addition to meeting their adopted families, the travelers also are able to minister to villagers, bring Communion to the homebound, celebrate liturgies, fiesta and dance, dance, dance with them during their missionary visit.

This year twelve participants in the group were from St. Monica and three from St. John the Baptist. Missionaries from our parish were Elean Ainette, Perry and Karen Filippo, Michael Gilbert, Jeff and BJ Higgins, Dan and Allison Weninger, Steve and Debbie Yandell and Deacon Lee and Lisa Hunt.

Deacon Hunt elaborated on this year's experience, "The core of what we did revolved around our sponsored families. If a missionary did not have a "family", one was soon adopted. We visited their homes and spent time getting to know them, prayed with them, blessed their houses, and attended Mass with them. Liturgies were held in the village Chapel built four years ago through funding from St. Monica's **Social Ministries** program. We prepared and delivered monthly food packages for families and were able to include

extra items such as clothing and furniture. Three houses were built or remodeled.

St. Monica Parish also supports a



girls' orphanage by providing 110 teen-age girls with food, hygiene materials, and electricity. We were able to deliver these materials to the orphanage and, in turn, the girls gave us a tour, performed dances, and made us feel especially welcome. The Yandells treated all to ice cream and an afternoon at the movies. A missionary from Michigan, who is a soccer coach, put on a soccer camp for the girls.

We were also able to tour a new school and even teach. Last year there was no school building but this year the school serves 460 children, some of whom are sponsored by their St. Monica families for \$550 per year. It's considered the best school in the metro area with a population of 500,000.

A date for the 2012 mission trip has been confirmed with the parish in Peru. The trip will be from June 8 to 17 and will cost roughly \$2000 total. Deacon Lee is looking for those who are interested.

To learn more about the need in Peru, view the video (link provided below) produced by OKC's Christ the King Parish: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XN8oCZxCapw&feature=related>.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of ministries discussed in this article, contact Deacon Lee, the parish office or visit the **Service Pillar** in the **Stewardship Corner**.

Top—Allison Weninger caresses a new-born as she visits her adopted family; Center—BJ Higgins shops for food in local market to deliver to villagers; Bottom—Deacon Hunt presides over a liturgy in the St. Monica Chapel as St. Monica missionaries and villagers celebrate.

Changes in the Roman Missal slated for Advent

By now you no doubt have heard that changes in the Roman Missal of the Mass are coming and will go into effect the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 25, 2011. While the flow of the Mass will not be changing at all, some words the priest recites and people's responses (in prayer and songs) will also change.

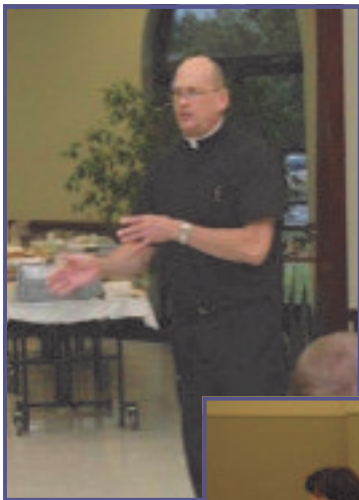
The changes have been approved by the Holy See and will formally appear in the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. In the new Roman Missal the prayers make a closer connection to the original prayers in Latin (in use by non-English speaking countries across the globe) rather than the contemporary English version to which we have become accustomed over the past few decades.

This is most assuredly not a step to returning the Mass to Latin; English is here to stay! The revised translation will root us more deeply in the Scriptures.

Father Ray has begun a series of presentations sifting through the details about why the changes are happening and focusing on what the actual changes are.

The first of this series was held Aug. 24 in the parish center following a pizza and salad dinner. The second in the series will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 12. Dinner is scheduled prior to the event as well (menu to be announced later). Watch the bulletin for more details.

If you are interested in joining a team to help plan similar inter-generational faith enrichment events contact Theresa Grochowsky or call the office to sign up for the **Growing Faith Team** under the **Formation Pillar**.



Fr. Shane Tharp conducts Fall Parish Mission

On September 18-20, Fr. Shane Tharp conducted our Fall Mission speaking to St. Monica parishioners and visitors from other parishes in the area. His goal was to unlock the *Language of the Liturgy*. Sunday's message covered The Language of Gestures explaining the signs, gestures, and symbols of the Mass. On Monday he discussed God's Covenants and Christ's New Covenant, and how these covenants are reflected in the Mass. On Tuesday he wrapped up with The Language of the Creed, tying the Creed and the Liturgy of the Mass together. Thank you, Fr. Sharp, for your inspiring message.

RCIA 2011-12 Report

The new RCIA team and coordinators Kelli and Jorge Pereira along with Alan Lipps have been meeting all summer to plan and set their schedule of presenters. They shared, "We are so thankful to Fayelene O'Connell (past coordinator) for all of her hard work; we are glad there are three of us because we don't know how she did it alone. We currently have 17 people enrolled in the RCIA program. To volunteer or learn more about the program contact Kelli Pereira or visit the **Formation Pillar** in the stewardship corner.

Blessing of Our Animals

On Sunday, Oct. 2, following the 1 p.m. Mass, a procession of animals, everything from dogs and cats to hamsters and even horses, will be led to the church for a special ceremony. The custom is conducted in remembrance of St. Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures and to commemorate his feastday (October 4). Be sure to come and bring your pets!

An estimated crowd of 350 (below) came to hear Father Ray's (left) introductory session on the Changes to the Roman Missal following a pizza and salad dinner in the parish center. Don't miss Session 2, scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 12.



St. Monica Choir invited to perform in Italy

An excited choir member Trish Kuper shared "It is an opportunity for us to offer our ministry, share our God-given gifts with others in Italy, especially our Catholic Brothers and Sisters. . . for many of us this is a spiritual pilgrimage. We are so honored and humbled to be a part of this experience. For many of us who have been in St. Monica's music ministry, the chance to sing in Rome at St. Peter's, at St. Mark's, just to sing in Italy, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity."

The choir was required to "audition" (send digital files of their singing) to be accepted to sing at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. What a wonderful tribute to our talented all-volunteer choir!

Kuper further explained, "We have at least 24 people going from the choir. We will be the main Mass choir there. . . and at the daily Mass at the high altar at St. Peter's in the Vatican. We will be able to attend a papal audience." In addition the choir will also perform in the Castle District outside of Rome and sing and share fellowship with a choir from the region."

The 11 day tour will take place in March 2013 and will include visits to Venice, Florence, Rome and of course the Vatican. Funds raised by the Taste of Italy Dinner and silent auction will help defer the cost of the trip. Typically with the emphasis on a stewardship mentality here at St. Monica Parish, a portion of the money they raise will go to charity. . . The Peru ministry.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations and wish you all *bon voyage*.

For those interested in joining the choir or being involved in the Music Ministry at St. Monica, visit with one of them in the stewardship corner under the Prayer Pillar.



Shelly Ferguson works the sign-up table for the choir's Taste of Italy dinner/auction. Because of newsletter deadlines, it was necessary to go to press before the event actually took place, but based on the choir's enthusiasm we know all will go well.

Mark Your Calendars

Fall Work Day — Saturday, Oct. 15. This activity allows folks to come together to complete some of the hands-on chores that need to be done before winter sets in. Tasks are both inside and outside, some require physical strength, others not. Everyone is encouraged to participate. Bring your work gloves and get ready for some great fun! Teens come get service hours!

Challenge, an exciting new club for Catholic girls is starting up. Girls from area parishes are putting their faith into action and helping with various apostolic projects within the community. It's a club for girls by girls. For more information contact Carrie Harkey at 550-0494.

National Health Care Crisis Moves The Good Samaritan Health Clinic in Edmond

By Deacon Lee Hunt

Nearly 47 million Americans are medically uninsured with 16 million struggling to manage serious chronic diseases like diabetes or high blood pressure. Most work at least part time, but as fewer companies offer health insurance, and healthcare costs are rising, over 105 million Americans have incomes less than 200% of the poverty level and are faced with impossible choices.

In Oklahoma County 18% (658,000) people are uninsured. In Edmond, there are about 15,000 uninsured. The most prevalent diseases are high blood pressure, diabetes, and hyperlipidemia—a combination of high cholesterol and lipids. Edmond is like much of the rest of the country.

The problem gets worse. Uninsured adults are three times more likely to delay medical care allowing diseases to advance without being diagnosed. For those who do access care, nearly 60% cannot afford the medicine prescribed to treat their condition and go without.

Good Samaritan Health Clinic opened in 2009 and has had 1,800 client visits through July 2011. It is a tax-exempt corporation and treats each client with human dignity; the only qualification is being uninsured.

The clinic is open on Saturday mornings from 9 to noon. It currently operates out of the Birth Choice of Edmond building at 11 E. Burton Street. Visit the clinic at goodsamaritanofedmond.com or on Facebook.

The clinic operates at only 65% capacity because of the shortage of primary care providers, such as physicians, physician assistants, and advanced nurse practitioners who volunteer on the average of about once per month. Needed expertise is in the area of family practice or internal medicine. There is also a need for nurses/medical assistants, Spanish translators, and receptionists.

To be a part of the solution to the health care crisis in Edmond, contact Deacon Lee Hunt at DeaconLee@cox.net or 348-9461. You can also sign up for the Good Samaritan Health Clinic ministry at the stewardship corner under the **Service Pillar**.



As the 2011-12 RE begins, 5th grade teachers, Jamie Sparks and Peggy Mueller take their class outside on a beautiful Sunday morning to study the story of creation. To volunteer in the RE ministry call Katie Gordy in parish office.



After the August wind storm tore off roof tiles, these choir campers exhibited the stewardship spirit by picking up the pieces.



Dan and Carol Short, Quinn Parker, Dianne Wigley, Marka Acton and Lisa Hunt helped serve lunch at the SonFest, a fun day organized to bring as many churches and neighbors together in order to provide awareness of a free summer program for youth at North Highlands Park. See related *JustFaith* story on page 8.



Left - David Munn hands out Tootsie Rolls to Josh and Jake Cranford during the Knights first pancake breakfast of the season. The money raised for Tootie Roll collections goes to the Center of Family Love in Okarche.

Outgoing Pastoral Council members-at-large to be replaced

By Nicole Owens

There is a need to replace three outgoing members-at-large. Parishioners who are interested in serving on the Pastoral Council (PC) should contact Fr. Ray or any PC member to submit their names into the selection process.

The PC is also in the process of updating the Constitution at the request of Fr. Ray. An ad hoc committee has drafted proposed changes that will reduce the number of PC members to just our members-at-large who will be required to serve as liaisons to our Boards, a PC officer, and/or serve on the Strategic Planning Committee for the PC. This change will unburden our various Board chairs from the expectation to attend the monthly PC meetings although, just like any other parishioner, they will always be welcome to attend and, when needed, may ask to be put on the agenda. This change is designed to lessen the pressure on volunteers so they can focus more on the area of stewardship they've volunteered to lead.

Editor's Note

Special thanks to all the contributors to this issue: By-Liners Deacon Lee Hunt, Marka Acton, Theresa Grochowsky, Nicole Owens; photographers Ken Biddle, Renee Gruntmeier, Stacy Sample, Lisa Hunt and Lauren Lacy; and other contributors including Helen O'Connor, Marcus Hammon, Angel Baker, Carrie Harkey, Jerry Krittenbrink, and anyone else who may have inadvertently been left off.

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schedules, committees, current and past
bulletins, parish history and more, visit
www.saintmonicaparish.com

Glad You Asked

(Continued from page 3) In a Church charged to read "the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel," deacons may offer invaluable reflections to the Church.

Sometimes preachers comfort the afflicted and other times they afflict the comfortable. It's the second of these that often brings much discussion after Mass. Modern preachers experience the pain of the prophets when they are attacked for preaching justice messages. They sometimes are accused of preaching "their thing"—as if they picked a personal favorite theme, which the congregation is forced to listen to. It can be very hard on preachers and other members of the community, as they proclaim and work for the rights of the unborn, elderly, death row inmates, immigrants, women, gays, as well as, economic justice, peace, ecology, etc. It is difficult to avoid these topics because on the average every sixth verse of the Bible says something about the poor. The homily has to flow from the scriptures. It seems the job description of the preacher has persecution written into it.

Ed. Note: Special thanks to Deacon Lee for this issue's *Glad You Asked* column. To hear more answers to other Catholic questions, be sure to attend our *Catholic Answer* sessions, held frequently. To volunteer for activities related to any Adult Faith Enrichment opportunities check out the Formation Pillar in the Stewardship Corner.

JustFaith Class graduates

By Marka Acton

The first group from St. Monica Parish to attend the *JustFaith* class has graduated! (See related photo on page 7.)

Graduates gave the following glowing report, "It was such a wonderful experience being part of a group that stops and looks at God's world and ponders our place within it. We worked through Catholic doctrine found in the Pope's Encyclicals, the Compendium of Catholic Social Teachings and our Catechism. We learned what we as a church was really founded to be. Amazing information!

This *JustFaith* experience was life changing and now we are a group of people forever bonded who want to do some small part toward making a change for the good in our community.

One of the most amazing lessons has been the call to reach out and help others find hope . . . acting out our baptismal call as Christians.

If you are interested in finding out more about the newest *JustFaith* group being formed or more about Social Justice in our parish, contact Dianne Wiggly at 405-330-3578 or visit the Service Pillar in the Stewardship Corner.

If each of us finds the way to reach out our hand in an effort to bring some small light into another's moment of pain and darkness, don't we give Jesus reason to smile?