



# Life at the Spirit

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## *The Gift That Is Our Family A Mission Completed, A Mission Awaiting*

by Fr. Tom Knoblach

### **Church of the Holy Spirit**

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From October 22-25, our cluster was blessed to reflect on The Gift That Is Our Family in our mission. The series was a bit of an experiment, somewhat different from a typical parish mission. Rather than one speaker who developed a theme a little at a time over several nights, we had three speakers who approached the same themes of family and gift from different angles. While each of the speakers acknowledged the essential value of prayer and a strong spiritual life, they did so in the context of the vocation to married love, parenting, and creating a family life rooted in Christ's example. And while the mission was a few days long, we hope to extend this theme throughout the coming months in large and small ways.

About 170 people heard Steve and Kari Colella focus on marriage as a vocation that unfolds over the course of a couple's love and goes through various stages and seasons. As they note, it takes Three to Thrive ... wife, husband, and God. When conflict arises, a patient and listening heart by each spouse brings a new beginning and deeper understanding – of self, of the other, of God's mercy.

Some 175 people listened to Nic Davidson as he took an idea from St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body – that life and each person is a gift to given us by a loving Creator – and with great energy and humor, drew out the practical meaning of living life as a gift. His life story and many experiences illustrated how trust in God's plan draws us past our limited understanding and into divine blessings we could not imagine.

Dr. Ray Guarendi spoke to around 250 people about the importance of parental love, discipline, and drawing boundaries so children can develop toward mature, self-possessed, and generous adults. His many practical examples and clinical experience, shared regularly with TV and radio audiences around the country, brought the message alive.

On October 25, some 200 people gathered for Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School. A free-will offering was given to relief efforts for families in Puerto Rico; cards and letters were prepared to send to soldiers who are away from their families; our families enjoyed a Mexican fiesta supper; and we experienced our cluster family as a gift of support, faith, and community.

In this newsletter, you can read how the mission and its ideas of family and gift have impacted some of our parish family. You will learn more about new members of our staff – Fr. Placid and Andy Vinson. You will see how our school family is thriving ... and more.

I cannot say enough thanks to the committee that made all the details of the mission flow so smoothly, from logistics to advertising to child care to food to prayer. Jeff Feddema, Diane Hajicek, Mary Ann Rindelaub, Mark Rueter, and Roxann Storms repre-

**Parish Mission Statement:**  
*The members of Holy Spirit Parish, committed to God, guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and our Catholic Faith, with the power of the Holy Spirit welcome and support all on our journey of faith.*

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**Mark your Calendar for these  
events coming soon**

**Five Good Reasons  
Christmas Concert  
Sunday, December 17 - 7 PM**

**SEAS Christmas Concert  
Tuesday, December 19  
12:30 PM and 6:30 PM**

**Mardi Gras  
Friday, February 9, 2018**

## **Children's Corner**

What gift will you give to  
Jesus for Christmas?



**Rose Dvoracek**  
Home Schooled - 12 years old  
*"If I could give Jesus a Christmas  
present, I would give Him a nice,  
long, warm hug."*



**Seth Kroska**  
Oak Hill Elementary - 7 years old  
*"Nobody fighting and more  
sharing"*

sented Holy Spirit, joined by six others from the cluster; their attention to detail and their generosity was remarkable.

I felt very strongly the sense of Gift and Family during the mission, and I do so each day. To see how you live your faith, hope, and love is a gift to me, and I am honored to be part of this family centered on Jesus Christ. Seeds have been planted; God will give the growth. What might you do, today, to celebrate and enrich the Gift that is your family? That is the mission that awaits us each new day.

As we approach Christmas, we ponder the mystery of Jesus Who chose to enter into our human history through family life ... the original and greatest Christmas Gift. May God bless you with unprecedented joy.

## ***This Christmas, Interrupt A Stranger's Life***

*by Nic Davidson*

In my talk during the parish mission in October, I encouraged all of us to just pick up our feet and let God take us where He would like to. In general, it's not an easy thing to do, but during the holiday season, it's even harder. We have two voices vying for our attention; I don't know if you're like me, but if I have two people trying to talk to me, I can't hear either of them. If I'm on the phone and one of my kids asks me a question, it's like someone hits the mute button on both of them. I just stare like a deer in the headlights, usually until my kid walks away or the person on the phone assumes I have become unconscious and hangs up.



This time of year is one of tension, of friction. On one hand, from all sides, we're prompted, pushed, and prodded to give in to the pressures of this world. We must purchase and consume. We must accumulate. We must keep up with the trends. We must have the latest and greatest. We must, we must, we must.

On the other hand, we hear the Church whisper lovingly to us to prepare our hearts, empty our hands, and offer ourselves as God offered us His Son.

One of the voices has more volume, but the other has more truth. All around us here in St. Cloud, we have suffering, poverty, and need. Drive down any street in any neighborhood and you can be assured that inside each home, there are people in need of the true, powerful, and transforming love of God. In fact, I'd be willing to bet that the house right next to yours possesses the same need. Possibly even the house you live in.





**Kyle Kroska**

**Oak Hill Elementary - 10 yrs old**

***"Saying prayers together (with Jesus) and being nice to people."***



**Colton Midas**

**South Junior High - 7th Grade**

***"I would give Jesus love because Jesus asks us to love one another and because every one deserves someone to love and care about them. Christmas is not about presents; it's about being with your family and***



**Nihel Walz**

**Clearwater Elementary**

***"I would like to give Baby Jesus lots of love, honor, and I would trust Him."***

"But, Nic," you say, "How am I supposed to meet even one of the needs around me?!?! I'm broke and busy and tired!" My friends, you are in luck.

You don't need a dime, extra hours in a day, or a degree in theology. In my experience, there is one vehicle, one method for spreading the love of God that succeeds far beyond any trend, slogan, method, hype, or —yes— even every app. The most powerful way to bring this world closer to God, is to bring God into this world. That's why we bow during the Creed at the mention of God becoming man; because there was no better way for God to show His love than by descending to our level and loving us here, in the mire, amidst the temptations and voices.

And you can do the same this year, even starting today! I encourage you to keep your eyes open for the countless ways you can give of your very self each day. While you pay at the register, while you shop, while you work, be aware. Heck, walk out your front door and choose the next house in any direction. You don't need lofty words or a clever intro. Just say, "Hey, how can I help you today?" Then, let God do the miracles! Happy Advent and Merry Christmas.

## ***Re-Gifting: Living the Mission's Theme***

*by Roxann Storms*

The four day mission in October was dynamic and entertaining, filled with practical messages followed by good fellowship and delectable desserts. While it was exciting to participate in any or all of the presentations, the most important aspect is how the message of the mission's theme The Gift That Is Our Family continues to be lived in our day to day life.

For Deb Baggenstoss, Nic Davidson's challenge of "eyes up, hands out" stuck most with her. Jackie Schoenfelder felt inspired and charged by the mission's message. "There was so much to take in, I was awestruck by the number of people who attended and I felt connected to them. The whole mission theme brought us together as a parish community in balancing the important message of gift and recognizing our connection to each other as members of God's family." Dr. Ray's message of "dare to discipline" resonated with Dennis Zwilling. In addition to enjoying Dr. Ray's humor, he also saw those "teaching moments" as critical, from saying "please" and "thank you" to praying before meals. Dennis advised "even when it's hard for the kids, you have to be the parents so they know what you're telling them is important."



George Rindelaub connected with many of the speakers' messages, with Nic's focus on faith and optimism striking a chord: "What I really remember and live by is if you have faith, current short-term predicaments work themselves out in positive ways. Regardless of the situation, faith will carry you through and the unselfish decisions tend to have the best outcome." Dr. Ray's no-nonsense, but loving, perspective on parenting also made good sense. "Raising three kids, I could see how

his approach works.” George felt the way the mission was organized promoted dialogue: “the set-up allowed us to chat with others we didn’t know and get their perspective. That was really a great gift.”

The positive energy of the presenters stayed with Al Kersting, along with their message of having a greater perspective. Seeing how the light of faith is carried into the next generation was a theme Al took from the mission. “We received that gift of faith from our parents and are so thankful to pass it on.” The intergenerational message also hit home for Margy and Bob Biniek: “As grandparents, it was nice to hear Dr. Ray’s words of wisdom on how to navigate boundaries, especially with adult children and grandkids, and how it’s important to maintain those emotional bonds. You might not agree with how they’re raising the children, but it was affirmed it’s not our place to step in.” Margy was especially inspired by Nic’s message of “get moving!” While she thoroughly enjoyed his energy, saying she was in need of the laughter, she really valued his message of not letting opportunities go by, but letting the power of God work with you. Both Bob and Margy could relate to the phases/stages of marriage shared by Steve and Kari Colella, identifying through their 45 years together the various rough and calm waters they’ve navigated. “We’re still working at it, we’re two different people. Just don’t give up; don’t jump the boat, but stay with it and you’ll come to those calm waters.”

Audrey Woods was proud to share the mission and the important themes of gift and family with her own family members as sons Tim and Jeff Feddema attended the talks. According to Tim, the events of the mission days helped him re-focus on how important family really is, not only individual families but the family the parish community creates. “Families really are the foundation this world is built on,” he reflected, “and we all need to assume some sort of responsibility to keep them alive and well, both our individual families as well as our extended parish family.” “These events,” he said “also helped me appreciate the many opportunities Holy Spirit and the cluster parishes offer to serve, support, and enjoy our families.”

For Jeff, who was also instrumental in the behind the scenes organizational details, “hands down the most enjoyable and memorable part of the mission was sitting in back of the church and watching our church family listen to the speakers and get so much enjoyment from it. The laughing and smiles that I saw on so many faces were a reminder to me that we are truly connected in a special spiritual way.” He went on to say Fr. Tom’s prayer and message before and after each speaker had special meaning. “He was a reminder that no matter how secular our agenda for the evening may be, he is still the head of our church family and everything that goes on in these three churches.” Jeff said working with fellow parishioners offering so much of their time and talent is a refreshing treat. “Watching my mother, along with her friends, serve pie with such enjoyment on their faces was a joy – she’s such a good role model. Seeing the young adults take such an active roles in a number of different areas sends a great message to everyone.” Jeff went on to say “THE GIFT THAT IS OUR FAMILY has such a nice ring to it and has become a statement that I see in so many different pieces of literature at our churches. It really seems to be catching on and we need to work hard to keep it alive.”

Though an inspiring and energizing four day mission, the seeds will continue to grow though the year and beyond.



***What are the ways YOU are living The Gift That is Our Family?  
Let us know...really. The first five to call the Parish Office to  
convey ways you are living the gift will receive a gift in return.***

## **Father Placid - Missionary Priest**

*by John Koch*

The Spirit and Saints Cluster has a new parochial vicar, Fr. Placid Santhosh, a Benedictine priest from southern India. After Fr. Placid's appointment was announced in June and, as he wasn't able to arrive until November, many in the cluster were wondering if he was for real, or if he had encountered a government green-card snafu, or perhaps had reconsidered after learning about Minnesota winters. The actual reason was far more prosaic. Fr. Placid's Benedictine monastery was in the process of establishing a "daughter house" (known as Sat-cit-annada [God Son Spirit]) in a nearby Indian diocese and Fr. Placid was acting as its representative in completing the property acquisition process. He was vital to the transaction and could not be spared.

Fr. Placid is a 39-year-old Benedictine monk. He was born in Jawalgera, India, which he describes as a "village" of about 8,000. He had a traditional Indian upbringing, but his education was anything but routine by our standards: it included learning five separate Indian languages. At age 19, he was in a university setting near his home when he encountered Brother Martin, a visiting monk from the Asirvanam Benedictine Monastery in Bangalore. Fr. Placid was inspired by the Benedictine ideal, and entered the monastery at Bangalore in 1998. The Benedictines have a policy to expand their monks' horizons to the fullest. They pushed Fr. Placid to complete degrees in philosophy and theology. English became his primary language, and he obtained a degree in that as well. His presence in Central Minnesota is not to expose him to the cold, but to serve our needs while allowing him to expand his life experiences, cultivate his English, and develop his pastoral skills. In somewhat of a reversal of roles, he is the third Benedictine priest from India to serve our diocese and the fourth priest from his community in India in Minnesota.



When most Americans think of India, they may think of huddled masses living in more basic conditions. Although this might have been true a generation ago, the image of the desperate poor of Calcutta ministered by Mother Teresa is slowly vanishing. With a population of 1.3 billion, India is the sixth largest economy in the world and third largest in purchasing power parity. Over the last two decades, it has experienced an average 5.8% growth (compared to 2+% U.S. growth), and its GDP is projected to grow by an annual rate of 8% over the next four decades. Since 1980 431 million Indians have escaped poverty levels, and its middle class is expected to number 580 million by 2030. Education levels have also kept pace, doubling over the last 30 years and skyrocketing at the top end. Fr. Placid's monastic home in southern India, Bangalore, is a case in point of India's emergence. Its mushrooming industrial and technology business has caused it to double in size since 2000, making it one of the fastest growing cities in Asia with a population of 8.4 million, one notch below New York City on the list of the world's largest cities.

Fr. Placid's arrival has created an interesting phenomenon in our cluster. For a thousand years, the parish priest was generally considered the smartest and most accomplished person in the village he served. Although this claim may no longer be entirely valid, the Spirit and Saints cluster currently finds itself with a pastor and assistant pastor who are both intellectuals in the true Catholic tradition. Fr. Tom's achievements are well known: advanced degrees in theology, philosophy, and health care ethics; study in Rome and fluency in Italian; bookshelves lined with theological works, some which he reads in the original Latin; best of all, a natural facility for expressing complex subjects in simple, succinct language. In many ways, Fr. Placid is no less accomplished: degrees in three fields (four if you count agriculture), fluency in six languages, with a working knowledge of three more (Latin, Greek and Hebrew). His flat, Midwestern accent may be



a work in progress, but far more important than speech patterns, his first sermons have been a model of relevance and coherence.

Benedictine monks for centuries have had the option of choosing their own names. The name Fr. Placid selected is an honored one in Benedictine history, with the original St. Placid being one of St. Benedict's first disciples. As Fr. Placid is fond of saying, his name means calm and serene. This precisely matches his unassuming, amiable and approachable demeanor. We should all do everything possible to embrace his mission to minister to our needs.

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## *The Gift of Family - in India and Minnesota*

*by Fr. Placid*

I am blessed that I could not have had a better choice in picking my family, which includes my parents, four brothers and a sister who died in an accident at age 17. I really enjoyed the life and fullness with my family members. My family is a great gift from God; there is no one like them. I really enjoyed my early life with my siblings and family members. The home I was born in allowed me so much. Being the first born in my family, my parents and relatives gave me lots of love. In my childhood I was drawn to church as we lived close to the church. I was drawn very much to Christ, going to Masses and attending the prayer services.

My mom was the one who took me often to church and she would teach me about Christ and His life. I and my friends used to play cricket with the two parish priests; that was a nice time. Afterward we would share in fruits from their garden in the church courtyard. On Sunday evenings, the parish priests would project movies about Christ and the saints. I am the first one to join a religious congregation from my parish and the first priest from my parish, which has a 150 year history as an independent parish. I have good childhood memories of my whole parish community as we took part completely in the church activities of prayer and celebrations as one family.



At the age of 17, I encountered Br. Martin, a Benedictine monk, who became my vocation promoter. He was a very spiritual man and encouraged and guided me through difficult times in my formation. There were others in the monastery who shaped my spiritual development, such as Fr. Bernard who took care of nine of us novices, with three becoming priests – all of who are now serving in the United States. We learned of the life and Rule of St. Benedict.

In our monastery, everything is held common, from the table to prayer. We are one family, with Fr. Prior as the head of the family. They encouraged me being the first priest from the local state where my monastery is placed and they allowed for me to do secular studies like teacher training and agricultural training.

I was entrusted to start a monastery and build up a community in the remote interior of my own state in India. I was to bring the Gospel to the unpreached in that area. It was there that I heard the call to come to the United States, to this parish family of Holy Spirit. I believe that was God's call to me to serve in this cold climate, where the people are warm. It was difficult for me to not come to my family here in a timely manner – I was sorry for the delay in my arrival. But when I got here, I was welcomed with kind hearts and open spirits. It is a big family here at Holy Spirit and will take some time for me to get to know names, but I cherish the kindheartedness and am getting to know the faces of this new family.

I want to be a humble instrument where I can make use of my service to my new parish family through the love of

Christ. Christ is the gift that connects the whole universal Church as family in spite of differences in culture, dialects, or tradition: He is the true Gift. As we enter the Advent season, let us share the gifts of love, hope, peace, and charity with our own families, our parish family, and our worldwide family.

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## ***Scripture and Liturgy: Assisting Parents of Young Children***

*by Deacon Vern Schmitz*



As parents, we know we have an irreplaceable role in the formation of the Christian values of our children. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops advises us to speak naturally and simply about God and our faith, just as we do about other matters we want our children to understand and appreciate. But that is not always so easy, so we appreciate the efforts the Church makes to assist us.

In 1973, the Church addressed the need to help our children better understand and participate in the Liturgy of the Word portion of the Mass. They said, “it will be appropriate to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word, including the homily, with the children in a separate, but not too distant, room. Then, before the Eucharistic liturgy begins, the children return to where their parents are celebrating their own Liturgy of the Word.”

In 2005, Lisa Anderson took on the role of planning and implementing the Children’s Liturgy of the Word at our 10:30 AM Sunday Mass. It was started with a vision of “wanting

to help the kids to get more out of the Mass by putting it at a level they can better understand – helping them understand the scriptures and encourage discussion.” In the ensuing years, many dedicated people have assisted our young children to better appreciate God and our faith by participating in this special Liturgy of the Word.

Twelve years later, Sarah Dvoracek and Kathleen Thompson are continuing this ministry, now at the 9:30 Mass. They continue helping children better understand scripture and giving them an opportunity to ask questions. Sarah, a senior at Cathedral, says “we are trying to support families as they work to pass on our rich Catholic faith to their children.” She says she accepted this responsibility because she “wanted to give back for all the awesome opportunities I was given because others stepped up and taught me what’s important to them.”

Sarah also understands the difficulty of speaking naturally and simply about God and our faith. She says, “I’m not a natural grade-school teacher and it surprised me how difficult it can be to take an abstract concept and present it to children in a way that they will understand.” But she goes on to say that working with the children “has given me the opportunity to get excited about our faith.”

If you are a parent with a K - 5th grade child, she would love to have more new kids each time they gather.

Sarah and Kathleen, Holy Spirit parents thank you for modeling and bringing Christian values to their children.

## ***Welcoming Andy, What a Gift to Our Parish Family!***

Hailing from Euless, Texas, Andy Vinson didn't grow up attending church as faith wasn't a focus in his family. However, for about three years during that pivotal development time of ages 14 to 17, he "tagged along" with a friend and his family to a Catholic church. It was his first exposure to Catholicism and gave him a grounding that, unknown to him at the time, would more fully develop decades later. Andy moved on to the University of Texas, majoring in chemistry and physics and later served as a naval officer for 11 years. Entering into a whole new arena, he next turned to health care administration and, while recruited to Minnesota to work in the Vet System, ended up working for 16 years as the Executive Director of HealthPartners Central MN Clinics.



Settling in St. Cloud, Andy met Kathy and they created a blended family built on love and support for each other. He went through RCIA at St. Anthony's and received the sacraments from Fr. Tim Wensel. Andy said the years of raising their family was a great gift. While active and involved in Catholic school, with some of the kids going to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and all to John XXIII and Cathedral High School, the family's focus revolved around activities and creating life experiences. "We spent a lot of time on the Cathedral soccer field, it went by all too fast," Andy reflected. He and Kathy have made a special effort to take a trip with each child individually, noting they've gone on a Baltic cruise, went to Alaska, Israel, and, of course, to Disney World. This past summer they took two of the grandkids to Nebraska for the eclipse and in the coming summer will be going to Rome. Spending time together, having that sense of belonging and of giving to each other, is an on-going gift to Andy.

Giving back in meaningful ways is also of importance to Andy. After a brief break following his early retirement, he was ready for something more, to find ways to "give part of your time and treasure, to support others who need it." When he heard about the bookkeeper position he saw it as an opportunity to engage in important and meaningful work. While, according to him, he's needing to brush up on accounting lingo, Andy's great skill and laid back style is a tremendous gift to Holy Spirit. He feels that gift is mutual as he's expanded his family concept to more fully include the parish family, stating "Now that I see things from an inside perspective, I feel a part of a larger community that I never imagined. There are so many ways you can connect in and to the church and ways to build relationships. There's a little bit for everyone." What a gift to have Andy as part of our parish staff and parish family. Welcome, Andy!

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## ***Baptisms, Deaths, New Parishioners***

### **Baptisms:**

#### **Parents:**

<b>Aubrey Jean Pickering</b>	daughter of Cody and Rana
<b>William Clyde Christensen</b>	twin son of Jamie and Carrie
<b>Elin Diana Christensen</b>	twin daughter of Jamie and Carrie
<b>Gabriela Clare Frieler</b>	daughter of Scott and Karey
<b>Matthew Leroy Lintgen</b>	son of Brian and Laura
<b>Gustavo David Garza</b>	son of Alejandro and Elizabeth

### **New Parishioners:**

**Rodrigo and Gabriella Rivera**  
**Alejandro and Elizabeth Garza**  
**Thomas and Joan Young**  
**Leither and Katherine Leither**

### **Deaths:**

**Dale Vanderwerf**  
**Agnes (Aggie) scharenbroich**  
**Thomas (Tom) Landwehr**  
**James (Diz) Gillespie**  
**Eileen Hartung**





### What Shall We Give The Children

Christmas is almost here.  
Toys and games and playthings,  
as we do every year?

Yes, for the magic of Toyland  
is part of the yuletide lore  
to gladden the heart of childhood,  
But I shall give something more,  
a more sympathetic ear,  
a little more time for laughter,  
or tenderly dry a tear...  
I shall take time to teach them  
the joy of doing some task.

I'll try to find some time to answer  
more of the questions they ask.  
And take long walks in the sun.  
Time for a bedtime story,  
after the day is done.

I shall give these to my children,  
weaving a closer tie,  
knitting our lives together  
with gifts that money can't buy.