



THE VOICE

FOR THE FULLER LIFE OF OUR ASCENSION FAMILY

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Over 10 years ago, Fr. Dave began a pastoral planning process at Ascension with the help of Strategic Leadership Associates. As a result of this process the wonderful spirit at Ascension continued to grow. One of the thrusts of the last process was spiritual renewal, and Christ Renews His Parish grew out of that. The vision of the pastoral plan included an emphasis on a broad vision of youth ministry. The renovation of the Witzman center and the building of the connector between the school and the church were a result of looking at our buildings and grounds in the light of growing needs. Our current commission and committee structure grew out of the original process. These are just a few examples of how the initial plan impacted Ascension over the last number of years.

Much has changed in the last 10 years. For the first time, we now have only one full time priest. Ascension is now collaborating with Immaculate Conception and St. Helen's in areas such as catechesis and liturgical celebrations. The Dayton deanery is developing a way that all the schools in this area can work together more efficiently and effectively. In addition, the demographics in Kettering have changed quite a bit in recent years.

In order to face these new challenges and others, Ascension has begun a new pastoral plan. This new plan addresses a number of areas that will have far reaching effects for the future of Ascension. The plan incorporates new core strategies that build on the strengths of Ascension, as well as identifying new areas of growth. In addition, we are looking at ways to organize the parish structure and create a staffing plan to best meet our developing ministerial needs.

This is an exciting time for the parish. Up to this point, parish members from various commissions and councils, as well as staff have been involved in the process. However, we don't want to move on with a new plan without giving the whole community an opportunity to hear and react to the new vision.

Consequently, we will have three meetings to

present the new pastoral plan. There will be an opportunity to discuss and give feedback. Our expectation is that the plan will be modified based on the feedback that we get from these three sessions.

- Tuesday, September 18 @ 7:00 p.m. - Witzman Room 118
- Thursday, September 20 @ 7:00 p.m. - Witzman Room 118
- Sunday, September 30 @ 6:30 p.m. - Witzman Room 118

I encourage everyone to try to make one of these meetings. Since the commission / committee structure may be affected, I encourage those currently on a commission or committee to make a special effort to attend. It is important that this plan be the vision of **Ascension parish** and not just a few individuals. Your input is necessary to make this work.

Ascension has been a great parish for over 50 years. If we continue to evaluate who we are and where Christ is calling us, then I am confident that Ascension will be a great parish for many years to come.

Fr. Chris

CHRIST RENEWS HIS PARISH

To date, exactly 261 men and women have attended Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) renewal weekends since Christ Renews was introduced at Ascension in November 2003, with the encouragement of Fr. Dave Brinkmoeller before he left Ascension. Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) is a spiritual renewal process, which brings together the members of our parish, to grow with each other in Christ.

Many participants enter the weekend with some hesitation. Some come searching for a closer relationship for the Lord, while others come only at the urging of a spouse or friend. But the most common statement made by participants after

(Continued on page 2)

attending the weekend is that it helped them recharge their faith life and examine their priorities. Many say the experience made them a better spouse, parent or friend because the weekend helped improve their relationship with Christ.

The CRHP process begins with a renewal weekend that starts on a Saturday morning and goes through Sunday afternoon. The weekend is organized and conducted by members of Ascension and takes place in the Witzman Center. The goal of the weekend is to focus on improving our relationship with Christ. If our relationship with Christ grows, our relationship with our immediate family members, relatives, friends and community can't help but grow. Many participants say that the best part of the CRHP process is that it offers the opportunity to continue your spiritual growth after the weekend. However, no one is required to continue in the ongoing process after the weekend, although many choose to do so.

Attendance at the CRHP weekend brings you together with other men or women who were merely faces in the pews. It includes personal testimonies, discussions, Sunday Mass, the sacrament of Reconciliation, laughter and great food. The personal testimonies, or "witnesses" focus on how people, just like you, strive to bring Christ into their daily lives. Participants have the opportunity to share their reflections as much or as little as they like without pressure. One man who originally attended just because his wife encouraged him said he felt so comfortable with his new brothers in Christ, that he couldn't believe he was so nervous about attending.

Come to one of the weekends and gain new friends with values like yours; friends, with whom you can speak about topics much deeper than sports scores or the latest diet (although we share those too). Come give CRHP the test, there is nothing to lose and much to gain. Become a better husband or wife, father or mother, co-worker or friend, and most importantly, a better Disciple of Christ.

The next **men's** CRHP weekend is **November 4-5, 2007**. The next **women's** weekend will take place **March 1-2, 2008**. Adults age 19 and up are welcome. The best way to learn more about CRHP is to experience it. Feel free to call Deacon Vic (253-5171) for information or go to the parish web site at www.ascensionkettering.org. Also watch for specific information in the bulletin and at the church entrances.

LEISURE CLUB NEWS



Pictured here are some members of the Leisure Club who took a one-day trip to St. Anne Convent and Moye Spirituality Center in Melbourne, KY. They had a guided tour of the buildings followed by lunch in the Sisters' dining room.

In the afternoon they visited the World Peace Bell in Newport, KY and enjoyed a presentation by Debbie Case, who happened to be a friend of Father Rudy.

The Leisure Club is a parish organization for those 55 and over. It's a good way to meet other seniors and enjoy their company. The group meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. in the Witzman Center. For more information, call Helen at 293-4977 or Celeste at 426-4919.

ALEX KOTLOWITZ TO SPEAK AT ASCENSION ON OCT. 2

Ascension Parish is honored to have been chosen to host the annual social justice event sponsored by Archdiocesan Catholic Social Services and Catholic Social Action. Alex Kotlowitz will speak on the topic of racism and poverty. Kotlowitz is noted for his book, *There Are No Children Here: The story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*. In his book, he tells the true story of two brothers growing up in the poverty and violence of inner-city Chicago. The New York Public Library selected his book as one of the 150 most important books of the century. His book was adapted for television as an ABC Movie of the Week.

Kotlowitz's presentation will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the church on October 2, and will be followed by a question and answer period. There is no charge to hear Kotlowitz speak. The event will actually begin at 5:30 p.m. with a pasta dinner in the Witzman Center. Dinner is \$10 and reservations are needed. At 7:15 p.m. there will be a silent auction of artwork by area young people. Event proceeds will benefit the Mission Services Department of Catholic Social Services. For reservations for the pasta dinner or more information call (937) 223-7217 ext. 1136 or email clarkn@cssmv.org. Reservations are not required to attend Kotlowitz's presentation.

ASCENSION SCHOOL OPENS!

Ascension School students returned to classrooms Thursday, August 23. Parents and students had a chance to visit school before the first day at a "Meet the Teacher" Open House on August 21. Regular full day Kindergarten classes began on Monday, August 27. Teachers arrived earlier for in-service on August 20, 21, 22. We have 388 registered students for 2007-08 including 38 kindergarten children.

ASCENSION SCHOOL IS REACCREDITED

In March of this past spring Ascension School was visited by four area school administrators and one administrator from outside the Archdiocese to validate our School Improvement Plan in one of the final steps towards reaccreditation with the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association (OCSAA). Final revisions to the plan were submitted in response to the visit. Accreditation for Ascension was announced in August and our Accreditation plaque was presented on September 5 at the annual Archdiocesan Principals' Meeting in Cincinnati. The emphasis of accreditation in this era is on school improvement. The Ascension School Improvement Plan has specific measurable goals in the areas of improving students writing skills and helping students demonstrate an understanding of the principals of Catholic Social Teaching. Our local OCSAA Accreditation Steering Committee - Sherry Smith, Brent Devitt, Peggy Brun thanks all staff, students, parents and parish stakeholders for your input and participation in this process.

NEWLY ADOPTED SCHOOL MISSION & BELIEFS

During the recent accreditation process the following mission and belief statement was developed for our school:

Ascension Catholic School provides a welcoming atmosphere in which spiritual, emotional and educational formation is centered on Christ, our Catholic faith and our Baptismal promises; where all are called to greater reverence, respect and responsibility; and the good that is learned here is to be shared with all of God's creation.

We Believe that...

All students are children of God, gifted with the ability to learn. Students, teachers, staff, and parents share the responsibility to be actively engaged as lifelong learners.

By virtue of our Baptism we are to treat everyone with respect, responsibility and reverence, creating a safe learning environment.

Committed to continuous improvement, we will better impart and model the traditions and Gospel values of our Roman Catholic faith.

DAYTON DEANERY SCHOOL COLLABORATION

Ascension School has expressed its willingness to participate as a partner school in the Dayton Deanery School Collaboration Process. The process enables schools in the Dayton Area to collectively support one another and work together to continue providing quality Catholic Education. As a partner Ascension School and Parish will be eligible to receive discounted services provided by vendors, utilities and other agencies in the Miami Valley.

EUCCHARISTIC EXPOSITION and ADORATION

Second Monday of each month - 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Eucharistic adoration is the act of worshipping Jesus Christ as He is present in the Eucharist. Exposition and adoration of Jesus, present in the Eucharist, invites us to the spiritual union with Jesus that culminates in sacramental communion during Mass. St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us."

We have a special opportunity for communal adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Ascension's chapel on the second Monday of each month. Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration starts at 6:00 p.m. with hymns, a reading and prayers, during which time the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the monstrance. Times of silent prayer alternate with times of group prayer until 8:30, at which time a closing ritual is held. Again there are hymns and prayers, during which the Blessed Sacrament is reposed back into the tabernacle.

Watch the bulletin for notice of the monthly Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration that takes place in Ascension's chapel. Come and pray for all or part of the time when our Blessed Lord is exposed specifically for communal adoration.

As Pope John Paul II tells us, "The Eucharist is a priceless treasure: by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace."

O HAPPY DAY!

Call it what you will, but something was in the air August 29 and God was among us for a grace-filled evening. Many people in our parish gathered to celebrate the Queenship of Mary in union with the people of our twinning parish in Lima, Peru, Nuestra Senora de la Luz. They had to dash into church to avoid the driving rain and frequent lightening from a surprise pop-up thunderstorm. Besides the storm, there were two other surprises that gave this year's prayer service a deep sense of God's participation in our lives.

Johnson Romero had accepted the invitation to be the presider. He arrived with an ecstatic glow. The first surprise was that his diploma for his Master's Degree had arrived in the mail that very day. This was significant to him because it linked his faith that inspired him to work for his degree to the faith of Mary and the people in his parish in Lima. The second surprise was that he would be sharing the role of presider with Father Joe Deardorff (the former pastor of NSL.)

The Queenship of Mary prayer service was truly a community event. Everyone participated in the opening procession by placing flowers around the statue of Mary and the picture of Our Lady of the Light. Ed Mykytkka and his daughter, Mary, were the lectors for the readings from scripture. Steve Mueller and Bud Nickelman read the petitions. Lois Keil, Jacquie Hittle and Norma Colussi led the prayer of the litany. Sister Rose McCrate directed the music with several members from both the contemporary and traditional choirs. They sang beautifully! The Bete Family crowned the statue of Mary. Father Joe presided and Johnson shared his reflections concerning the significance of the feast of the Queenship of Mary.

Johnson noted that Mary's "Fiat" brought to mind the Beatles song "Let It Be." God's request seems irrational in human eyes and, yet Mary takes the radical step to trust God. This makes her the "Queen" within humanity. Johnson reminded us that true faith in action requires us to say to God "Let It Be." The challenge though is to allow our intellects to comply with the seemingly irrational will of God. This was Johnson's inspiration to accept the invitation to come to Dayton, Ohio and study for his degree. He knew his English was minimal and he would be with total strangers. Through prayer and dialogue he decided to trust that God's will was working in all of this. Now he thanks God, Father Joe and all of us as he holds his well-earned degree.

Father Joe has been here in the U.S. for most of this summer on a sabbatical. He has been studying

in Chicago and preparing for his new work as pastor of a parish in the mountains outside Lima. He told us that it is in an area with extreme air pollution. Some of his work will include the justice issue concerning the health of the poor versus the economic situations that produce the pollution. He asked for our prayers for him and the people he will be serving.

An ice cream social closed the evening with fellowship and food. It was also an opportunity to offer congratulations to Johnson and bon voyage to Father Joe as he would be returning to Peru the following day.

WHY CATHOLIC?

Connect your Catholic faith to your everyday life. Ascension and St. Helen's have launched this faith formation endeavor to help adults grow in their relationship with Christ, understanding of Catholic teachings and scripture, and connect to their faith communities more fully. Over recent years parishioners and parish leaders have voiced the need for and interest in sessions on basic Catholic beliefs and teachings. Development of small faith communities in the parish in the past and more recently with Christ Renews His Parish illustrates the power these groups play in one's spiritual journey. *Why Catholic?* blends these two together for a rich experience in adult faith formation.

Sign ups for *Why Catholic?* small groups began September 9 and run through the 23rd. Approximately 25 group meeting times will be offered at Ascension along with a similar number at St. Helen, involving hundreds of parishioners. Groups will begin meeting weekly October 7 for 6-week, 90 minute sessions. This year's book is *Life in Christ: Walking with God*. Topics include: Beatitudes, Freedom & Responsibility of Human Acts, Conscience, Virtues, Sin, Mercy, and Moral Solidarity, Moral Law, Grace and the Church.

We are excited about this opportunity for enriching both the knowledge and faith of adults in our faith communities. Over the next four years, 6-week sessions will be offered in the fall and in Lent. An adult faith formation event and retreat, open to all parishioners, will be offered as well in collaboration with other parishes in the area involved in the *Why Catholic?* program. To learn more contact Jim Murray or Deacon Vic Hildebrand 253-5171 or visit the parish web site.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

The Fall Kick-Off for parish high school youth ministry and the LIFE Group small Christian communities for teens was held August 26. A large group of teens were in attendance for this special photo scavenger hunt event. The youth leadership team sparked the idea for this creative kick-off to allow new youth in attendance to be highly engaged in fun and friendship building right from the start. Seven groups of youth with their adult drivers went about Kettering in search of twenty photographs worth various point levels. The team returning with ten photos of the highest value won prizes. Parents joined the end of the event to share in viewing the fun photos and to learn about LIFE Groups and high school youth ministry.



250 - All Team in someone's tub (not a group member's home)



125 - All Team hanging upside down

To see all the photos, visit:
www.ascensionkettering.org/youth-ministry.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Religious education classes for the 2007-2008 school year gets underway this month. We have a new Coordinator of Religious Education. Sue Graham assumed the duties on July 1, after serving as programs assistant for more than 12 years. Maryellen Fargey has semi-retired, becoming our Sacramental Prep Coordinator. A big thanks to Maryellen for her dedication to the program over the past 12 1/2 years, and welcome and best wishes to Sue in her new role. We also have over 65 dedicated parish volunteers who serve the children enrolled in the various programs. Volunteers were commissioned at the 9:00 a.m. Mass on September 9.

The Middle School program began with a parent-student session and prayer service on September 9. Tim Colbert, Regional Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry presented information from the National Study of Youth and Religion.

Opening day for elementary classes on September 17 concludes in the church with a prayer service. Early Childhood classes begin on September 23; the children will soon be preparing for their All Saints' celebration with parish seniors on October 28.

Religious Education classes will again participate in the "Growing Peace at Ascension" process, focusing on living the Pledge of Nonviolence, and families will be invited to take the pledge at home.

It's never too late — Parents who are interested in enrolling their children for religious education may contact the Religious Education Office at 254-0622. Classes will not meet on October 8, in order that catechists and assistants may attend in-service training.

PARISH WEB SITE

Have you surfed our parish web site lately? You'll find parish bulletins, reflections on the Sunday Scriptures, parish calendar, and a new multimedia page currently featuring a podcast of Archbishop Kelly's presentation in August. Make www.ascensionkettering.org your homepage today!

CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION

As John Paul II wrote, "In our service of charity, we must be inspired and distinguished by a specific attitude: We must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible." How many of us, though, when we read this passage, are overwhelmed by fears and sense of helplessness? But, our local church is suggesting realistic ways to respond to the Holy Father's imperative.

The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Social Action is providing a series of events and activities this fall that give us the tools to understand the conditions that create poverty and homelessness as well as ways we each can act, in everyday ways, to address these terrible conditions. Full descriptions and details are available at www.catholicsocialaction.org and on Ascension's web site at www.ascensionkettering.org.

Here is a quick overview of what is happening. The array of opportunities allows for many different schedules and interests.

At the **Trinity Center** on Bainbridge Street, a four week course is being offered on Homelessness in the Dayton region. Evening dates in **September are 5, 12, 19, and 26** (from 7:00-9:00 p.m.). If daytime is better, **October/November dates are 17, 24, 31, and Nov. 7** (11:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m. with lunch included). The course will cover the recommendations put forth in the *10-Year Plan to End Chronic*

Homelessness and Reduce Overall Homelessness in Dayton and Montgomery County. Special attention will be given to how parish communities can prepare to be involved in the efforts.

A diocesan "Book Read" discussion will take place at **St. Helen's Parish** in the Smith Building on **September 18**. The book to be discussed is *There are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*. Books are available at the Ascension parish office or from the Office of Catholic Social Action on Bainbridge Street. The evening will prepare us for the Distinguished Speaker series on **October 2**.

This exciting event will be held at **Ascension Church** and will feature a talk with Alex Kotlowitz, author of the book mentioned above. Dinner, music, a silent auction, and the presentation by Mr. Kotlowitz all begin at 5:30 p.m. Look for more information in coming bulletins.

And, for those who are interested in a deeper study of this issues, the Salt and Light program is being held at **Holy Angels Parish (September 4, 11, 18, 25 and October 9)** and the evening of **October 22** when John Carr from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will come to **Incarnation Parish** to discuss the efforts and priorities of the bishops around social justice, as well as provide insight into the work of parish social ministry.

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 873
DAYTON, OHIO



CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
2025 WOODMAN DRIVE
KETTERING, OHIO 45420