



**St. Victoria  
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# Path to a Man's Spiritual Growth

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## Did You Know . . .

- There are 69 children preparing for their First Reconciliation in January and First Communion that will be celebrated at St. Victoria the first weekend in May.
- There are 57 youth preparing for their Confirmation in April at the Basilica of Mary in Minneapolis.
- There are five RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) candidates. They will be welcomed into our Catholic Faith during the Easter Vigil.



Over the years, visiting priests have come in to sub

for me on weekends when I've been away from the parish. Apart from my annual winter ski trip out west, most of my weekends away from the parish have been devoted to working on teams that lead men's retreats. The question has been asked of me, "What kind of men's retreats? And how did you get involved in that kind of work?"

It started in the winter of 2002 when I attended a talk given by Fr. Richard Rohr. For the last thirty years, Fr. Rohr has worked extensively in the area of men's spirituality. That night I learned about a retreat called Men's Rites of Passage. That summer I participated in a Men's Rites of Passage retreat in Ghost Ranch, New Mexico. Also attending was Fr. Kevin Anderson from the Diocese of St. Cloud.

Following that retreat we were encouraged to form a circle of men who could bring Men's Rites of Passage (MROP) to Minnesota. With that as our goal, we launched our first MROP in Minnesota in August of 2005. Fr. Rohr came to Minnesota to help mentor our team throughout the retreat.

Since then, every other year on the last weekend in June our Minnesota team has hosted a Men's Rites of Passage retreat. We've now done six of them.

The retreat is held at an environmental learning center north of Sandstone. The camp overlooks Grindstone Lake, the third deepest in Minnesota. In addition to the Minnesota MROP, this last year I've worked on the team for MROP retreats held in Texas and Colorado. They've all provided an incredible learning experiences for me.

So how did the Men's Rites of Passage model come about? Fr. Richard Rohr wanted to develop a retreat experience that would be transformational for a man's spiritual development. He began by studying the patterns of male initiation from cultures of every age. In ancient cultures, initiation rites and vision quests helped boys make the journey into adulthood. But over the years, as cultures became more industrialized, opening the door to this kind of journey became harder to access.

In the research he did on male initiation rites, Rohr noted a common theme. Most all male initiation rites were to teach the young novice how to use his power to be in service of something greater than himself.

Drawing on that theme, Rohr wanted to develop an experience that would help awaken men to the adventure and

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# Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)

In this season of Advent, we wait in joyful expectation for the coming of Jesus. But while we wait, we are not idle. We have shopping to do, cookies to bake, parties to plan, and packages to prepare. The Church reminds us that to truly prepare ourselves we also have prayers to proclaim! The first chapter of Luke's Gospel precedes the Infancy Narrative with Mary's beloved hymn of praise to the Lord. Joy begins with the Good News that Christ is coming.

This Advent, we invite you to pray the Canticle of Mary as evening descends, especially in the final week before Christmas when the holiday season gets most hurried. Beginning December 17, you may wish to conclude your prayer with the Antiphon of the Day (below). May our Advent prayers make each of us truly mindful of the goodness and glory of God that is coming.



*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my savior  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.*

*He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.*

*He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

*He has come to the help of his servant Israel  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children forever.*

- December 17: O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.
- December 18: O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.
- December 19: O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.
- December 20: O Key of David, O Royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of heaven: come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.
- December 21: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.
- December 22: O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from dust.
- December 23: O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.

# Celebrating Our Heritage

## Early History

Saturday, June 3, was the “official” 160th anniversary of the founding of St. Victoria. On that day in 1857, three children were baptized at the home of Michael Diethelm by Fr. P. Benedict Haindl, O.S.B. They were: Catharine Schitzl, daughter of Thomas and Catharine (Schmit) Schitzl; Elizabeth Schmit, daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth (Schitzl) Schmit; and Carl Fessler, son of Martin and Elizabeth (Stein) Fessler. (All of the early Baptismal records were recorded at St. Mark’s Church in Shakopee and remain there.)

Thanks to a history compiled by John A. Diethelm in 1957, we have a fairly complete history of St. Victoria and the surrounding area beginning in 1852 when Michael Diethelm and his wife first came to the area, the Territory of Minnesota. The land was opened to settlement by pioneers following the Treaty of Mendota signed by the Dakota Indians on August 5, 1851.

Michael Diethelm was followed shortly thereafter by his brother Carl and his family. Additional settlers continued to arrive (most all were Swiss or German) as they heard of the fertile land that was available. They were followed by Belgian and Dutch families and eventually Irish immigrants. By 1855, there were already at least 32 Catholic families in the area, many with names still familiar today in the community.

Living and surviving in those early days represented never-ending hard work. Families lived in small cabins they built from trees on their land and furnished them with the few possessions they brought with them or built themselves. In addition to clearing land to plant crops, families grew food, foraged for wild fruits and other edibles

and found the woods and lakes teeming with wild game and fish.

## One Thing was missing

One thing that was missing was a church. It’s believed that the first Mass at the home of Michael Diethelm was celebrated by Fr. Ravoux in 1853 and may have been the first Mass in Carver County. Until the spring of 1857, there was no Catholic Church in Scott or Carver Counties.

Occasionally, perhaps once a year, a wandering missionary priest came to the settlement that became Victoria. In 1856, plans to build a permanent church in Shakopee led to the decision to build a church in Victoria. After much discussion about where the church should be built — some wanted the church south on Lake Bavaria and others, the present site. The decision to build on the present site was made easier thanks to the donation of the land.

The folks who wanted the church at the southern site, however, chose to name the church St. Victoria after a favorite saint of several families. The small log church and nearby school were built entirely by volunteers with logs cleared off the land. The school was important because the majority of settlers had attended Catholic schools prior to coming to America and, of course, public education was not available.

Fourteen priests served the St. Victoria mission from August 1860 to October 1876, each staying one to three months. From 1876 to 1996, 32 Franciscan Priests served, with the last one the beloved Fr. Elstan. Fr. Bob arrived in 1996. He was the first Diocesan Priest and he has the longest tenure here.

## A growing community

As the community grew, more families arrived and the children of

those early pioneers married and had families of their own, farms prospered, small businesses popped up, the railroad came through and the little log church was no longer big enough. So, in 1870 the decision was made to build a larger and more permanent church using locally available Chaska Brick. The existing steeple on the Historic Church was added in 1884 and the main altar and two side altars were added about 1890.

In 1875 a frame school was built. Lay teachers taught until 1881 when Franciscan Sisters of Milwaukee arrived. They taught until July 1888 when Sisters of Christian Charity, along with an occasional lay teacher, were installed. In 1900, Sisters of St. Benedict from St. Joseph, MN, were installed and they served until the school was closed in 1971.

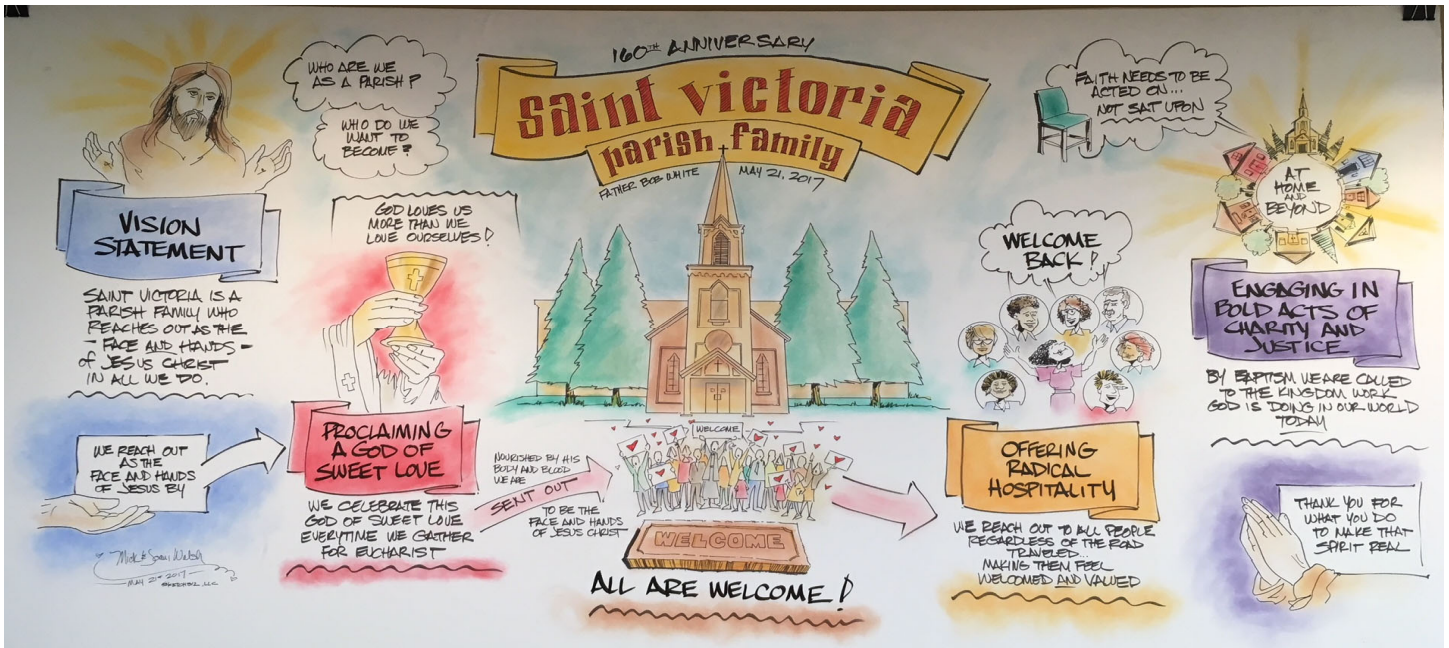
Also established along with the church and school was the cemetery located about 300 yards from the Historic Church. This was the first Catholic cemetery in Carver County.

For the hard-working families living in the area, the church and the school were important not only as a place to worship and educate their children, but as an opportunity to socialize. The women formed missions, sewing circles and an Altar Society. The young men and women formed “sodalities,” while married women joined the Christian Mothers Society and married men the St. Joseph Society.

Many traditions in the church were different in those early days. Members rented their pews in lieu of weekly collections. That, no doubt, resulted in people sitting in the same place each week. Children did not sit with their

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# Picturing St. Victoria's Vision and Mission



“Last spring we did something different during Mass,” Fr. Bob said. “As I delivered my homily, our former parishioner Mick Walsh visually recorded what I was saying. (His drawing is above.)

The Gospel that Sunday said that the night before he died Jesus assured his disciples, saying ‘I will send you the Spirit who will be with you always.’

“Every once in a while we get a glimpse of what the Spirit at work is really doing,” Father said. “It was the summer of 1997 and I was sitting in the old parish office with Gene Okocki who was our parish administrator at the time.

“We were talking about what a parish can be when Gene said something that struck me. ‘What if everyone in the parish could be the face and hands of Jesus to each other? That’s what a parish is about.’ That image stayed with me.”

Father said 10 years ago, in 2007, as we celebrated our 150th Anniversary just after moving into our new church, we engaged in a strategic planning process.

That’s when the image of being the face and hands of Jesus really took root. Since then, that vision has

continued to develop. “Ten years later, as we celebrated our 160th Anniversary, in conversation with the Parish Council that vision is taking on even more energy. I share that vision with you now.”

## Mission and Vision

What are we called to be as a parish and who do we want to become? We are a parish family that reaches out as the face and hands of Jesus by proclaiming a God of sweet love, by offering radical hospitality and by engaging in bold acts of charity and justice. That’s our mission and vision.

First, we are a parish family that proclaims a God of sweet love. What does that mean? For a parish to be a true spiritual home for people, we need to hear about a God who accepts us as we are and not just as we should be. As Catholics, we celebrate this God of sweet love every time we gather for Eucharist. Nourished by his body and blood, we are then sent out to be the face and hands of Jesus.

Two, we are a parish family that reaches out as the face and hands of Jesus by offering radical hospitality. What does that mean? Why is that some people are hesitant to come back to church? In

some cases it’s because they have been met with judgment, questioning or just a set of rules and nothing more. People need more than that. They need to be welcomed and accepted for who they are.

Three, we are a parish family that reaches out as the face and hands of Jesus by engaging in bold acts of charity and justice. What does that mean? Faith needs to be acted on, not sat on. So we reach out to the hurting, to those among us and to those beyond us. Wherever people are hurting, that’s where the church needs to be. In that sense, the church is more of an outpost than a self-contained fortress, or as Pope Francis likes to say, a “field hospital” more than a filling station.

Reaching out as the face and hands of Jesus, over the years there has been great energy in that for us. And the more we commit to that, the more energy is unleashed. I see this happening all over. Thank you for what you do to make that of spirit real for people. The night before he died Jesus assured his disciples, “I will send you the Spirit who will be with you always.” May that same Spirit continue to be the energy that breathes new life into to us as a parish.

# Men's Rites of Passage

*Continued from page one*

mystery of their own masculinity, their longing for a deep spirituality, their desire to find greater meaning and purpose for their lives, and the opportunity to develop their potential for leadership.

Based on this vision, over time Rohr developed an intensive retreat experience that we now know as the Men's Rites of Passage (MROP). The retreat is a five-day/four-night, deeply prayerful and soulful experience that builds on the classic patterns of male initiation through simple and moving rituals and teaching.

Each day includes participating in group prayer, teachings on central masculine spirituality themes, quiet time for reflection, and sharing in the context of a "home group." Locations for the retreats are chosen for their access to the outdoors and nature that often speak to a man's soul.

What has been my involvement in the area of men's spirituality meant to me? Yes, the commitment I give to men's work calls for a considerable amount of time and work on my part. And the meetings and retreats I attend annually have me away from the parish about three or four weekends a year. But it's all been worth it.

My work in the area of men's spirituality has been profoundly enriching, not only for me personally but for my ministry as a parish priest. I am particularly grateful to our parish staff team who cover for me when I'm gone. I could not do it without them. Just as importantly, they support and encourage me in the work I do in the area of men's spirituality. The work is all about making men better and they

understand that. And that's what I look for in my life, opportunities: like the Men's Rites of Passage retreat that will help make me a better man.

**Please Note:** if you are interested in learning more about Men's Rites of Passage, feel free to ask me at any time.

*Fr. Bob*

## It's a Dog's Life

*By Arlo White*

As you many of you know, Fr. Bob lost his beloved dog, Betsy. While she was not a "trained service dog," Father and his Golden Retriever Betsy had almost 14 wonderful years together. When Betsy was gone, he decided to wait a bit before getting another dog.

After a year and a half, he was ready. That's when I came into his life. Thanks to the folks at Helping Paws, it's been a perfect fit. Like with Betsy, the parish has fallen in love with me.

Most Sundays I am with Fr. Bob when he begins Mass. With the help of the Mass Servers, I'm right at home wagging my tail or just sitting quietly at Father's side. Or, at one Mass when I was rolling around on my back, Father said I was "break dancing." Another time, he said when I start break dancing it is because I am bored with his homily. That's not true!

After Mass, I stand with Father as he greets people. Sometimes people wait in line just to have the chance to say hello. Father says that knowing I will be at Mass, little kids beg their parents to bring them to church. After Mass they flock to me offering their hugs and kisses. And, I do love kids!

Father says that I have a beautiful way of making the experience of going to church more real for people. My presence there lets people know that it's okay to smile. in church

because that's what everyone does when they see me.

I recently graduated from Helping Paws and now Father and I are working on "fine-tuning" some of my dog manners.

While I was not able to attend my graduation, I have enjoyed some other social events. I was invited to my first wedding and I was a star attraction at a Holy Family football game where I also met the opposing team's cheerleaders and was able to demonstrate my great speed. Maybe I could join the cross-country team.



**Fr. Bob and Arlo who is looking quite dapper in his very fancy wedding attire.**

# Celebrating on Our Heritage

*Continued from page three*

but instead with their class in the front of the church. The children also attended Mass every day. In the early days, everything was in German. By 1931, only sermons and announcements were in German and beginning in November 1945 the German language was no longer used.

In 1953, due to overcrowded conditions (once again), the entire interior of the church was

Church was remodeled to make room for more worshippers.

In 1998, with Victoria no longer a quiet farming community, parishioners again came together to build a bigger church. After a successful Capital Campaign, the Church where we worship today was built while preserving the Historic Church. The parish family gathered to witness the first Liturgy and the dedication celebrated by Archbishop Harry

Flynn on Mother’s Day, May 8, 2005. The worship space was designed to eventually seat 1,200 people, so new construction is no doubt many years off.

(To read more about the early days of St. Victoria, go to our website at [www.stvictoria.net](http://www.stvictoria.net) and click on About Us, then Mission and History. Both the “History of St. Victoria” and 2005 Dedication booklet can be read in their entirety.)

## How About a Polite Game of Base Ball?

Eric Wahlund, our Maintenance Supervisor, has an unusual hobby. Eric plays “vintage base ball” and is a member of the Mankato Baltics, one of about ten teams in the area. Eric said that the sport may be unusual in these parts, but it is much more popular on the East Coast.

Eric explained that the sport is based on the rules players developed in the Civil War era when soldiers and local farmers played the game, often to relieve boredom. He also said it was “base ball” and not today’s baseball.

Eric joined the Baltics about nine years ago at the urging of a couple friends. “I played baseball in high school and softball for several years after that, so I decided to give it a try. Honestly, I hated it at first because it is so different, but I eventually found it to be fun.”

Eric said it is much different than today’s baseball. “It is a gentlemanly game. There’s no spitting, no swearing and if it is hot, the players are required to ask the ladies present if they can roll up their sleeves.”

Teams prefer to play on grassy fields as compared to regulation baseball or softball fields, wear vintage uniforms, use special bats (much bigger around and heavier than today’s bats) and use a special ball that is somewhat bigger than a baseball but smaller than a softball. The team in Rochester has their own field.

“The balls start out hard at the beginning of a game, but soften during play,” Eric said. “And, that’s a good thing, because the players do not wear gloves, but catch the ball with their bare hands.” Other differences include

that if a ball bounces, the batter is out even if he reaches first base before the ball, there’s no sliding or no stealing bases, players cannot over run first base or they can be tagged out and if the fielder catches the ball on one bounce, the hitter is out.

Eric says he plays about 20 games a season and that teams are often invited to events like harvest festivals, tractor pulls – typical rural activities – or events like Civil War reenactments. Check with Eric next spring if you would like to attend a game.



**The Mankato Baltics and Eric Wahlund at the right.**

# Who Is St. Victoria?

History says that in ancient Rome, the sufferings of St. Anatolia (Victoria's sister) were the result of her refusal, because of a vision, to accept her suitor, Aurelius. He went to her sister Victoria and asked her to persuade Anatolia to marry him. Victoria's efforts were not only unsuccessful, but she converted to her sister's views and broke off her own betrothal with Eugenius.

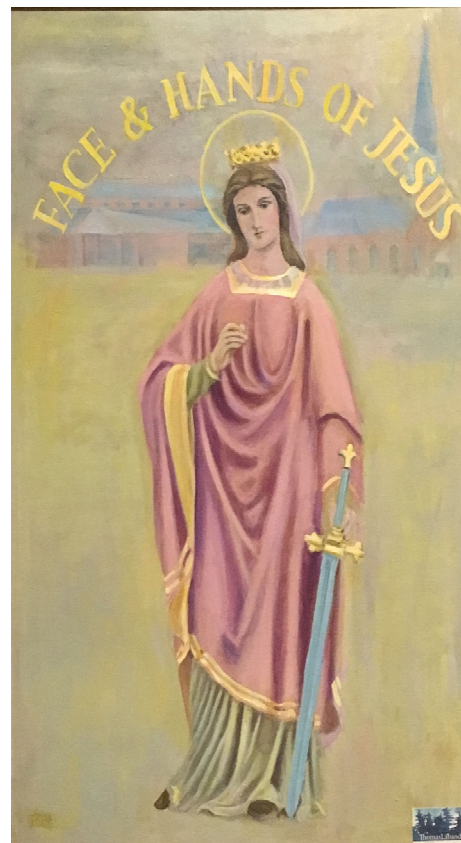
The young men then removed the maidens from Rome to their respective country villas where they tried to starve them into changing their minds.

Anatolia was denounced as a Christian and it is said that "after she had healed many throughout the Province of Picenum who were suffering from various diseases and had brought them to believe in Christ, she suffered several punishments by order of the Judge Faustinian until lifting up her hands in prayer, she was pierced with a sword by executioner Audax who she had converted prior to her death. Victoria met with a similar

Fate, perhaps at Tribulanon in the Sabine Hills. She refused either to marry Eugenius or to sacrifice and, after working many miracles whereby numerous maidens were gathered to God, she was 'smitten in the heart' by the executioner's sword's at the request of her betrothed.

(While traveling in Italy in 2014, parishioner Bob Wendt discovered a shrine to Santa Victoria in the tiny town of Civita di Bagnoregio, about two hours from Rome. While exploring the town, he came across the local Catholic Church, Chiesa San Donato. The church dates back to the 7th Century. It was severely damaged in a 17th Century earthquake and in 1967 was restored to its 13th Century form. It is believed that many of St. Victoria's relics may be stored within the altar. Bob also found a painted memorial to St. Victoria at the gates to the town.)

There is only one other St. Victoria Catholic Church in the U.S. It is a much smaller church located in Hurt, PA, established in 1964.



The recently acquired oil painting of St. Victoria based on the statue in the Worship Space with our church in the background is the work of local artist Tom Labandz.



A happy day for a young lady about ready to move into her own apartment. Jason, a director at Launch celebrates with her. She will have several tubs of new household supplies ranging from kitchen appliances to blankets and towels — all thanks to the generosity of St. Victoria parishioners who donated items for Launch clients who qualify for help in finding permanent housing. Launch provides support for young adults, 18 to 29, who are experiencing difficulties in today's society. To learn more, visit [launchministry.org](http://launchministry.org).

# The Time When Love Shines Through

*“You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have.” Bob Marley*

This past July 19, I was attending a music sampler seminar. About fifteen minutes into the session, something compelled me to take a peek at my phone. I’ll never forget the feeling in the pit of my stomach when I looked down and saw five missed calls and a text that read simply, “Elizabeth, call me as soon as you get this.”

I knew something was terribly wrong. I left the room and dialed the number with trembling fingers. “Elizabeth, there’s been an accident. Justin...died.” In every tragic Hollywood movie, this call is usually followed up with a blood-curdling scream from someone who has just received horrific news. I’m here to tell you that that depiction is completely accurate. I remember falling to the ground and screaming repeatedly, until a stranger came to my side. There are no worse words for a young wife and mother to have to utter than, “My husband was in an accident. My husband...died.” The next few hours, days, even weeks are a blur of all of the things that come with surviving a spouse and taking over as the sole parent of a preschooler.

When tragedy strikes and something is taken from us, we become cognizant of the things that are left. I realized very quickly that St. Victoria would be the safe place from which to draw strength. If you’ve ever experienced the loss of a loved one and had the funeral here, you already know that our parish truly journeys with each grieving family, offering compassion and love during funeral preparations and beyond. It’s humbling to be on the other side of the fence and I learned so much about the care

and cooperation that goes into each funeral experience. A funeral is a massive and emotional effort put forth by each of our staff members, luncheon volunteers, and bereavement team.

Justin was a proud member of the St. Victoria Agape Singers. At first, I had to muscle him into it, but it didn’t take long for him to start looking forward to Thursday evening rehearsals and it was fun to look into the back row and see him there. He quickly connected with other outdoorsmen, trading pheasant meat for crappie filets, comparing notes on hunting and fishing spots and enjoying a cold brew with other singers following rehearsal.

As much as he loved being a part of this group, I’ve been touched to see the imprint he left on many of their hearts as well. This group rallied in his memory and for our family. More than 40 musicians, including choir alumni, gathered to share their gifts of music in Justin’s honor. The love that poured out of each note was

brehtaking and the support and care that they’ve showered upon Calvin and me in the days since have been truly overwhelming.

The question people ask me most is “How do you keep going?” Frankly, there hasn’t been any other choice. The last couple of months have been the hardest of my life, but I’ve drawn strength I didn’t know I had from each time my son throws his little arms around my neck, each laugh shared with coworkers and friends, each tear shed with family, each note sung at Mass, and each card, email, hug, helping hand, and prayer sent by this St. Victoria Parish Family.

Know that your prayers have lifted us up and given us strength to put one foot in front of the other day after day. I am so very thankful for the opportunity to continue to serve you as you have served our family during this most difficult time in our lives. This is our family, our home, our rock.

*All our love, Elizabeth, Calvin,  
and the Nowaks*



**Power Rangers Justin and Calvin**



# Mission Trip to Crow Indian Reservation

In July, 28 kids and six adults, including Emily Klinker, Ann Esping and Tanya Hisey, loaded six vans and set out for central Montana and the Crow Indian Reservation. (Father Bob joined them a day later.) Along the way, they visited historical sites including the Lewis and Clark Memorial in Chamberlain, SD, and the Bad Lands National Park before an overnight stay at Blessed Sacrament Church in Rapid City, SD. The group was welcomed there with open arms and a great place to stay. Before setting out on Sunday, the travelers joined Blessed Sacrament parishioners for Mass.

On Sunday afternoon the caravan arrived in Lodge Grass, MT and settled in to the “deluxe accommodations,” an old high school gym and classroom. The St. Victoria teens and adults wasted no time in getting to know others in groups from Nebraska and Wisconsin. (Youth Works organizes mission trips for churches and groups throughout the U.S. to a wide variety of locations.) The first evening was a typical getting-to-know-you gathering with planned activities and orientation.

The first day in Lodge Grass was a busy one – there were opportunities to serve the community in a number of ways, from painting and staining and playing basketball with kids to cleaning out a family’s shed and making crafts with younger children. Monday evening there was a trip to Little Bighorn Battlefield (“Custer’s Last Stand”). The group agreed words and pictures can’t possibly tell the story.

On Tuesday, half of the group continued with service projects while the rest of the group met an amazingly faithful man named Adrian. He put himself through college, earned three degrees and is a civil engineer who came back to the reservation to be with his people and make a difference back home. He is the maintenance supervisor at the school where the group stayed. During the day, more games were played with the young residents and additional homes were painted. An evening event brought the group together at Willow Creek Dam to watch the sunset. Consensus again was that words couldn’t begin to describe the beauty.

*“At the kids camp that we ran in Montana, I saw more joy and desire for interaction and relationships than I have ever experienced. I am grateful to the three to eight year olds who showed me the value of being present in life.”*

**Abbie Hegarty**

Wednesday found everyone switching from work crews to kids

club and vice versa. Wednesday evening was an opportunity to participate in cultural activities with their hosts. First, the group was treated to Indian Fry Bread followed by a meeting with an Elder from the community. They had the chance to watch (and help) him construct a tipi (lodge). With each step, he explained how it was significant to the Crow Indian traditions. The evening ended with the group worshipping together at the local Catholic Church.

*“The mission trip gave me the opportunity to develop faith-based connections and a role model that I think is vital to bring me close to God.”*

**Lily Esping**

Thursday began like each day with devotional time as participants continued to explore what is the Good Life which God desires for them. The rest of the day was the final day of service followed by a special dinner that participants cooked for and then shared with the community. The evening concluded with group church time.

The last church group time was especially spiritual for all the participants. It started by reading *John 13:1-20 (the foot washing)*. Then, the Youth Works staff washed the feet of all the adult leaders, who, in turn, washed the feet of the teens while praying over them. The spirit-led evening ended with tearful goodbyes with new-found friends.

*I was on fire with my faith on this trip. In the past, this feeling usually faded but this time was different. I’ve been praying much more to stay connected to God.”*

**Kathryn Wise**

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# Mission Trip to Montana

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Friday found the travelers headed east back to Rapid City and the long ride home. There was time for some sight-seeing with stops at Devil's Tower in Wyoming that included an impromptu geology lesson led by Tanya Hisey. After arriving in Rapid City, all enjoyed dinner and the illumination and presentation at Mt. Rushmore.

On Saturday, the tired travelers were focused on getting home safe and sound.

The leaders said, "Thanks to a wonderful group of youth and chaperones, and with the prayers and support of the parish, it was truly a wonderful experience and one everyone will remember for a long time to come."

*"On the mission trip we were able to interact with people from another culture. I loved building relationships with them, with God and with friends throughout the week. It was incredible to see the differences made in their lives and ours."*

**Lydia Jackels**

## Men's Prayer Breakfast

The annual Men Building Bridges Prayer Breakfast is Saturday, January 13, starting at 8 a.m. The speaker this year is Matt Birk, a graduate of Cretin Derham Hall High School and Harvard University. He was drafted by the Minnesota Vikings in 1998 and also played for the Baltimore Ravens.

Matt and his wife Adrianna started HIKE (Hope, Inspiration, Knowledge, Education) to provide educational opportunities for at-risk kids, a subject he will share. Today, Matt and Adrianna live in Mendota Heights with their eight children.

Tickets go on sale soon!



The group gathered for an outing at the Willow Creek Dam near Lodgegrass to enjoy the sunset.

## Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is the process by which adults who are not Catholic can be initiated and welcomed into the Catholic Church. The RCIA process reaches out to everyone . . . inviting birth and rebirth in faith.

Our welcome also includes cradle Catholics and anyone else who wants to learn more about the treasures of their Catholic faith. RCIA is a wonderful opportunity to renew your knowledge of Catholicism, and more importantly to recommit yourself to the faith you profess as an adult Catholic.

This is the time to give this opportunity serious consideration. Sessions started in October and will be completed

during Holy Week. You may still be able to join the current group of candidates. If you are interested in joining this year, call Deacon Ray Ortman in the parish office for information and to see if it is still possible for you to be a candidate this year.

In addition, the RCIA Team has started something new this year. They are emphasizing that the RCIA curriculum may often include information that others might be interested in exploring. Therefore, they are going to publish the topics to be covered each week in the bulletin and on our website. You are invited to attend any (or all) sessions that sound interesting. RCIA meets each week on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Feel free to drop in on any occasion.

# Take Time Out With Your Kids

Sometimes simple is best. The following was in the Faith Formation *Faith & Family Link*:

- Let them try.
- Let them make mistakes.
- Tell them you love them every day.
- Tell them you love them no matter the circumstance.
- Tell them you are proud of them.
- Fight for them.
- Let them learn to fight for themselves.
- Do not let fear dictate.
- Goal set with them.
- Hold them accountable.
- Give them grace.
- Emphasize the beauty in rest.
- Make a schedule.
- Schedule fun.
- Schedule work.
- Let them earn money.
- Volunteer.
- Teach about giving back.
- Spend time together.
- Play games.
- Listen, listen, listen to them.
- Teach them how to cook.
- Teach them how to do laundry.
- Model intentionality.
- Model grace.
- Model love.
- Teach them about gratitude.
- Establish boundaries.
- Establish media boundaries.
- Get to know their friends.

- Let their friends come over.
- Let them see you dream.
- Take breaks.
- Learn to adapt.
- Let them end the hug.
- Care more about their hearts.
- Forgive.
- Learn from the past, but move forward.
- Laugh.
- Teach them to manage stress.
- Talk.
- Look them in the eye when they are talking.
- Put your phone down at dinner.
- Let them dream.
- Let them create.
- Let them imagine.
- Embrace who they are.
- Go to bed thankful for them.
- Be thankful for time together.
- Remember the blessings.
- And enjoy this day, live it fully and look for joy.

## Help Us Keep in Touch With You

Your parish family wants to stay connected with you! If you have moved, changed your phone number, dropped a land line, or have a new email address, please drop us a line by simply emailing Julie in the parish office at [jschmieg@stvictoria.org](mailto:jschmieg@stvictoria.org) or call 443-2661 x201. There is always something going on at St. Victoria and we want to keep

you in the loop. Whether it be through our newsletter, website, emails, Facebook, Twitter, Evite or phone calls, we like to cover all the bases. Also, liking us on Facebook is a great way to stay connected and offers fantastic pictures from all sorts of parish events like Vacation Bible School, Sunset Fest, Mission Trips and so much more!

### Holiday Schedule

#### La Noche Azul

Monday, December 4, 6 p.m.

#### Parish Communal Reconciliation

Tuesday, December 5, 6 p.m.

#### Individual Confessions

Friday, December 22, 6 p.m.; Saturday, December 23, after Mass

#### Christmas Concert and Children's Pageant

Sunday, December 17, 5 p.m.

#### Christmas Eve Masses, December 24

4 p.m., 6 p.m., 10 p.m.

#### Christmas Day Mass, December 25

9 a.m.



Photo by Julie Schmieg

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