Commitment Takes Many Forms . . .

Caring deeply about something can sometimes be a calling from God to serve Him in a way that He has chosen. Following through with commitments to a calling, whether it be to religious life, marriage, or serving others, is often difficult to sustain over a lifetime. This issue of the newsletter examines the callings of several parishioners and religious leaders and queries them about the sustainability of their commitment to the Sacrament of Marriage, religious calling, or the Sacred Heart ministries.

The long-term commitment to religious life can significantly and positively influence society and multiple generations of individuals. This year has been a year of celebration for many religious leaders who have shared their spirituality with our Sacred Heart Parish. From the ordination of 7 new priests for the diocese, to the 150 year anniversary of the Sisters of Mercy, to the celebration of Fr. Matt Blank’s first mass, Sacred Heart has been blessed to share in a number of religious events this year.

Religious Life,

The calling to marriage is coupled with a life-long commitment to this Sacrament. Sacred Heart now offers several programs designed to help individuals with their commitment.

Parish Ministries

In September, parishioners received a booklet describing the various Parish Ministries and the responsibilities of the ministers. In his introduction, Rev. Msgr. Walton stated, “I invite each of you to consider sharing some of your time, your energy, and your faith with others.”

In this issue of the Spirit we will focus on several of those ministries.
Religious Commitment

I am happy to share with you a few thoughts on fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We are all called by God to a life of holiness and prayer. The Latin root for the word vocation is vocationem, literally “a calling”. Vocations are gifts from God. We prepare ourselves to hear God’s call by living a life open to the will of God. How do we do this? We do this by developing the habit of daily prayer, living a life of virtue, practicing good works, and fostering an abiding awareness of the presence of God in our lives. These are all hallmarks of a Christian life. We see the good example of people who instinctively judge things in light of the Gospel, who are sensible and cheerful in their service of God and neighbor. At Sacred Heart Parish, let us strive to be an example of good Christian living so that the men and women called by God to a life of ministry in the priesthood or religious life are surrounded and encouraged by the witness that we give with our lives of love and service to one another.

Join me in encouraging young men and women to consider dedicating their life in service as a priest or member of a religious order. Sometimes, a respectful, thoughtful question posed by a friend or family member will ignite the courage and curiosity in another person to ask the question, “Should I look into becoming a priest? Should I explore the possibility of becoming a Sister or Brother? How best may I serve God?”

Our love of God leads us to follow Jesus Christ wherever He calls us to be. I believe God is calling some young men and women in our midst to priesthood and religious life. Let us support them by our prayers, our good example. Let Sacred Heart Parish be a place where vocations to the priesthood and religious life are seriously considered and enthusiastically supported by all.

The Bishop Ordains New Priests

On June 29, 2007, seven new priests for the diocese of Sacramento were ordained by Bishop William K. Weigand at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. Sacred Heart Parish had a special connection to this event since two of the ordained, Matt Blank and Derek LaBranch, did part of their internship under the guidance of Msgr. Walton. Both are congratulated for their commitment to serve Christ through their priesthood.

Father John Healy, Chaplain at Mercy General Hospital and Coordinator of the Sacramento Diocesan Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry received a Heroes of Human Services Award. This award is presented by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in recognition of an individual’s service to the community of Sacramento.
Parishioners were especially honored to have Fr. Matt say his first Mass at Sacred Heart Church on Saturday, June 30th. This Mass was a Celebration of the Mass of Thanksgiving and included 8 concelebrating priests, 2 deacons, and several assistants including Fr. Matt’s classmates and several of his family members. Donald Kendrick and Sacred Heart’s Schola Cantorum provided the musical accompaniment throughout the Mass.
Sister Katherine was baptized in Sacred Heart church where her parents were active members of the parish. In addition to her family and her faith formation at church and at school, Sister attributes much of her inspiration and motivation to becoming a sister to her teachers and mentors at Sacred Heart, St. Francis, and Bishop Armstrong schools. Throughout her education, she was nurtured by sisters who were rooted in a relationship of commitment and caring. They instilled in her a sense of community and a vocation to care for others. At an early age she knew she wanted to give her life to God and to make a difference.

She remembers participating in the “Banana Boat” project at Armstrong High School. This service program was designed to help feed the elderly and poor who lived in “cottages” run by the county. The cottages were located close to where UC Davis Medical Center is now, and bananas were donated by the high school to provide the elderly with a nutritious soft food diet. Sister Katherine, along with other student volunteers, brought them bananas on a weekly basis. Sister Katherine was profoundly moved by her interaction with the poor and the elderly in this program. She left high school with a deep love for the Eucharist and a sense of commitment to service.

By the time Sr. Katherine was in high school, the seeds for a life of service and prayer had been planted. As a freshman student, she volunteered as a catechist at St. Mary’s parish where she taught the second graders. It was there that she fell in love with teaching. Her commitment to God, her compassion for caring for others, and her love for teaching lead her to commit to a lifetime of serving Christ through being a Sister of Mercy.

The sustainability of Sr. Katherine’s devotion to Christ is consistent with the vision and the commitment of the Sisters of Mercy. Adversity and change is considered a part of life. Instead of running away from conflict and change, the Sisters of Mercy embrace life’s challenges and fall back on the roots of their faith to sustain their struggle to “make a difference.” The seeds of a life of service and commitment are the same roots that sustain faith. Their vision is to empower people to carry on with the work they have started so that they can move on and tend to the changing needs of society.

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The Altar Society

The Altar Society is one of the oldest ministries in the history of Sacred Heart. Currently Vivian Buletti heads this ministry and, along with a very dedicated group of parishioners, works behind the scenes to provide an invisible support which enhances the religious experience we feel when we enter our extraordinary church.

Imagine, if you will, our beautiful Sacred Heart Church without flowers on its main and side altars. Imagine no altar cloths, vestments, garments, or other linens that are a traditional part of every Mass celebration. The dedicated and committed work of the members of the Altar Society makes sure that flowers and fresh linens are available at all the Masses.

Members of the Altar Society share responsibilities in preparing the flower arrangements for the altars. They are assigned specific months where they purchase, arrange and maintain the flowers. They usually work in pairs, placing fresh flowers in the church on Saturday, in time for the evening Mass, and making sure the arrangements remain fresh through the week.

Betty Baumgartner, along with Vivian Buletti and Patricia Norris have been members of the Altar Society for over 15 years. Their long-term commitment to the ministry has provided reliability and continuity to the program.

Betty has a strong commitment to this ministry. Her month to provide flowers is October. During at least one week that month she gets a reprieve from shopping for flowers as her backyard is filled with a magnificent array of yellow flowers (Helianthus) which she places on the altar to share them generously with the members of Sacred Heart Parish.

Betty has also volunteered to be in charge of caring for the church linens. She washes and irons the altar cloths on a regular basis. She has even resurrected old linens that were used in the past and that she has modified to make them appropriate for modern Masses.

At every seasonal change Betty is responsible for the preparation of all of the appropriate altar and Mass linens. She shares the work with Patricia who launders and irons the purificators (the little towels that are used in every Mass) and from Vivian who tends to the priest and servers vestments.

Betty is also the treasurer of the Altar Society and in that capacity she spearheads four fundraisers throughout the year: donations for flowers during the Christmas and Easter seasons, a membership drive (for $5.00, parishioners can be a member of the Altar Society), and the “White Elephant Booth” at the Fall Festival.

When asked about her commitment to this ministry, Betty explains, “I like to see Sacred Heart look nice. It is the house of God. I am so thankful for my health and I feel good about my work with the Altar Society…I don’t quit easily.”

Betty has been a lifetime parishioner at Sacred Heart, and she’s not a stranger to volunteer work. For 21 years she worked with a sandwich program that provided food to the poor. She stopped working for this program only when she realized the program could be sustained by other sources. At her side throughout all her work is her equally dedicated husband, Don Baumgartner. Together, they are the invisible hands that help us realize

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Recognizing that a healthy marriage is the key to having a strong family, 10 Great Dates was started at Sacred Heart Church in September, 2006. The program is divided into 10 weekly meetings and dates, where couples gather as a group and then enjoy an evening out with just their spouse, discussing questions and thoughts about that week’s topic. The themes center around helping spouses reconnect, providing positive communication strategies, helping couples find a balance in their roles as husband/father and wife/mother and finding ways to have a spiritual marriage. We’ve completed two 10 week sessions, capping off the last week with a potluck dinner for the couples and their families. Each session had at least eight participating couples and in our last group, we had one couple miss the last session because they had a baby and another couple announced that they were expecting. We’ve had couples from each session offer to come back in the future to help facilitate future groups and we are currently planning our next session for Spring ’08, just after Easter. Childcare is provided and we couldn’t do this without our dedicated babysitters. We hope to see many

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Evening for the Engaged  
By Denis and Dona Zilaff

Evenings for the Engaged is an extremely rewarding ministry which helps prepare engaged couples to experience the sacrament of matrimony as a vocation to love each other and to share that love with family and community. Each engaged couple is matched with a married couple who invites them into their home once a week for two-hour sessions over a period of five or six weeks. Married couples participating in the program find that their marriage is strengthened and enriched. The program is very flexible and can easily adapt to the varied schedules of both couples. The facilitators receive written guides and weekly session material that makes the training interesting and thought-provoking. In addition, they attend a training session that actually mimics the training the couple will provide.

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Marriage Coordination

You may not be aware that Sacred Heart Church has a ministry dedicated to coordinating weddings held at the church.

Every three months, Diane Bierman, chair, publishes a calendar of upcoming weddings and assigns a couple to each wedding, based on their availability. The coordinating couple contacts the bride three to four weeks prior to the wedding to conduct a telephone interview. A form has been developed to aid in the interview.

The coordinating couple conducts the rehearsal with or without the participation of the celebrating priest. New coordinators are trained by veterans and participate in shadowing a veteran couple before taking on a wedding on their own. Rehearsal guidelines are published for reference. Of course, each wedding is unique and flexibility is a must.

The day of the wedding, the coordinating couple acts as sacristans in preparation for the ceremony. They also coordinate the seating of the guests and the entrances of the wedding party. They sit on the sideline during the ceremony to ensure things go

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Every week during Advent, volunteers from the Giving Tree Ministry can be seen moving gifts from the Giving Tree, and replenishing the tree with tags. According to Sharon Rich, coordinator, the participants in this ministry feel blessed to be called to this very meaningful program where the Sacred Heart community generously provides gifts from their hearts to needy families and individuals. Sharon provides an inside look at what happens to individuals involved in this ministry.

Part of the joy of serving in the Giving Tree Ministry is to witness the individuals and families who commit to participating in the gift giving. Some parishioners close their eyes and pick a tag, “letting God decide whom they will help.” Others browse with careful deliberation. Several parents have told me that they look for a tag listing a child of about the same age as their own, so that their children could offer insight into choosing a gift and also to make more relevant the lesson of charity that is imparted on them. Giving Tree volunteers also have the joy of examining the love and tenderness with which Sacred Heart parishioners include heartfelt messages, beautiful packaging, and thoughtful extra goodies along the gifts. We volunteers also have the opportunity to hear of the gratitude that the recipients of the gifts feel.

By and large Sacred Heart will be the only charitable organization giving gifts to the individuals placed on our tree. After last year’s participation in our program one senior living in a government-subsidized apartment complex in the Arden area wrote a letter describing how the gifts we provided were passed out at the Christmas party. The seniors were taken completely by surprise, and upon receiving the gifts some of the delighted residents even wept with joy. The emotion was caused both by knowing that some “secret Santa” cared enough to think of them during the holidays, as well as the prospect of using supermarket gift cards to buy a few favorite foods for Christmas.

A sentiment that I have heard repeatedly from those living in temporary housing at Mather Community is that while the children love the presents from us that they unwrap, it is the parents who feel that they have been given the gift. One mother wrote that she felt “truly blessed” to be able to give her daughter a nice Christmas present. Two parents wrote of how a gift from Sacred Heart brought a smile to their son’s face that they hadn’t seen for months, and that they felt that the giver of that gift had answered their prayers. Another offered his thanks for allowing him to offer a gift to his son to open for Christmas, as he was unable to buy anything himself. He continued that “your lending caring hands made me feel more complete as a father.”

Like those living with the stigma of poverty, the stigma of mental illness is terribly isolating. The generosity summoned within our Parish to include adults coping with these conditions at Halcyon Place I find tremendously touching. I know that our gifts provide comfort to them.

I have heard directly from the children living in the Sisters of Mercy’s low-income housing community, St. Francis Terrace, how much they appreciate the Christmas presents provided by Sacred Heart. I imagine that these children will take it to heart that, as they grow up, the same Catholic Church, year
Sister Katherine reflects, “The Sisters of Mercy have a remarkable ‘hang in there faith’ during challenging times. They have been able to sustain vision and commitment despite opposition….The vocation is not to doing a job but to embracing a way of life with meaningful relationships. Clarity of vision during difficult times is part of our struggle to share the Cross of Christ.”

Sister Katherine draws a parallel between the sustainability of marriage and the sustainability of religious life. “One of the things we learn from Jesus is about the hardships of life. In relationships, hard times come. Despite the difficulties, we should not give up. Sisters of Mercy embrace conflict despite its painfulness. We find enrichment in providence and constancy.”

Sister Katherine, the archivist for the Sisters of Mercy, is currently in charge of adult faith formation at Holy Spirit parish and also works out of the retreat center in Auburn.

The Altar Society

we are in a house of worship when we enter the sacred sanctuary of Sacred Heart. The parish is thankful to Betty, her husband Don, and all of the dedicated ministers of the Altar Society for their sustained commitment to serving Christ through their chosen ministries.

Evening for the Engaged

This program has been very successful and highly acclaimed by the couples that have participated. The trainers, in many cases, have had follow-up dinners and other get-togethers to share the joys of newly married couples. It is exceptionally rewarding to see that one’s efforts have helped young couples enjoy a loving marriage and to see the start of a new family. Facilitators are rewarded for their volunteer efforts every time they receive a Christmas card or a birth announcement. If you think you have a strong marriage and would like to share your success with an engaged couple, this is the ministry for you and you can contact Denis and Dona Zilaff at 451-9976.

Marriage Coordination

smoothly. They also close up the church following the photography.

In summary, a couple can expect to coordinate a wedding approximately once a month, spending twenty minutes on a telephone interview, approximately 90 minutes for the rehearsal, and approximately two and one-half hours for the wedding itself.

The ministry is a joyful one as coordinating couples participate in each family’s celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony and reflect on their own marriage. Currently, three couples are involved. We would like to welcome at least two additional couples. If you are interested, contact Sr. Martin at 452-4830.

Ten Great Dates

more couples join us for this great program where the focus is on you, and your happiness and confidence in having a strong, faith filled marriage. Your strong, loving marriage will have a lasting effect on your children.

The Giving Tree

after year, cares enough to obtain and fill their special gift request. For these children, as for the Giving Tree volunteers, Sacred Heart Parish serves as a model regarding Christian love, dedication and service.
Did You Know?

- the Sisters of Mercy celebrated 150 years of service in the Diocese of Sacramento? A big celebration was held in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament followed by the unveiling of a statue dedicated to Sr. Mary Baptist Russell, the Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy on the West coast. The statue can be seen near the H Street entrance to the Capitol Park.
- Sacred Heart Church did not have a celebration of the Eucharist for three days in October due to a convention for the priests in the diocese? This is the first time in the history of Sacred Heart that Mass was not celebrated in the church during the week.
- Father Matt is now Associate Pastor at the Good Shepherd parish in Elk Grove?
- Children’s Church started this year without Nina liff? However, we are blessed that she left the program in great shape and in the hands of a wonderful staff headed by Rachelle Cook.
- 40 people responded to the Ministry campaign on Ministry Sunday? We thank them for their willingness to share their gifts with the church.
- Sr. Martin changed her residence from 39th Street to 41st & H Streets? Although she misses her 39th Street bungalow, she enjoys her new abode.
- we are planning a welcome party for the new families who have come into Sacred Heart parish during the past years? Look for the date in the upcoming bulletins.
- Bishop Francis Quinn who moved into Mercy McMahon Terrace in October, is celebrating one the Sunday Masses. We welcome the Bishop into the Sacred Heart Parish.
- the Disciples on the Journey started their planning meetings in October? Amy Sparks is chairing this program and her committee is excited about their new journey.
- the R.C.I.A. class is moving right along? They prepared for their first retreat which was held on November 2nd? The retreat was held in anticipation of the Rite of Acceptance on December 2nd. Fr. Matt Blank and Monsignor Walton conducted that retreat? The class thoroughly enjoyed the presentation.
- a new session of Catholics returning home will start on January 3rd?
- the 6th grade class of Sacred Heart School and their teacher were featured on Channel 10’s Good News/Good People segment for knitting baby caps for the neonatal unit at Mercy hospital?

Sacred Heart Holiday Home Tour Celebrates another successful year

Congratulations to the many people who made the annual Sacred Heart Holiday Home Tour another success. The many hours of hard work that parents and volunteers went through to produce such a wonderful tour are greatly appreciated by all. In particular Linda Brida, Gina Doll, Grace Spencer and Tracy Reginato are recognized for their vision and dedicated work.

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Marion and I have had occasional “worse” times, illnesses, problems with children, even quarrels between the two of us. The important thing for me has been to fall in love again, to remember those early days when I first saw how beautiful she was and how much I wanted to be with her, to see again how beautiful she still is, to again resolve that I’m not going to allow anything to destroy our life together. After fifty-five years, our love is stronger than ever.

We have also been blessed with four children, three daughters-in-law, and eight grandchildren.

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difference was that marriage was a Sacrament. From it flowed the graces to make a marriage work. Marriage is a vocation and one has to work at that every day. Adjustments are necessary even when you thought you really knew your spouse. Times can be difficult. A lot of doing without, a lot of moving, a long illness. Yet, when one looks on marriage as a vocation, tremendous help comes from prayer, from knowing love and practicing love oneself. Days together become more precious; prayer together is very sustaining. At fifty-five it only gets better.
The Sacred Heart Family

In Memoriam . . . January - June 2007

“May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.”

Frank Lukenbill
Cathy Cheatam
Gerard Davis
Catherine Flynn
Agnes Costamagna

John Bianucci
Elizabeth Comstock
Richard Lastrup
Mary Dillon-Long
Frances G. Skinner

Leandra Gallegos
Marie DeMarchi
Dolores Blucher
Fr. David Schwartz, S.J.

Baptisms . . . January-June 2007

“May the grace of the Lord be with you.” (Rite of Baptism)

Ruby Luz Copher
Quinn Tamblyn
Julian S. Largaespada
Kevin Conrad Matundan Torres
Isabelle Jean Harper
Simone Emery Anderson
Alessandro J. Gonzalez
Dean Richard Cwynar
Carolina Abigail Ann Urkofsky
Damion Emillano arraza
Winston Holtkamp
Lauren Emily Lujan
Adrian Johnny Facio
Miles James Talbert

Adyson Lea Anthony
Jack Francis Dalske
Mia Lauren Lederer
Julian Bilbao
Alejandro Francisco
Laney Gardner Shea
Audrey Smith
Anne Maly Lindgren
Isabella Rose Andrews
Gianna Acquisto
Delayne Christopher Hawkins
Maricela Isabel Ayala
Harry Fabian Inderbitzen
Elyse Loren Bouillon

August Paul Irbarne
Eliana Gloria Andrea
Marin Michelle Swanston
Taylor Rain Swanston
Joseph Christopher Knego
Catherine Allison Corsaut
Daniela Maria Lopez
Matthew Michael Becker
Preston Cooper Weninger
Camren Taylor
Raphael Corban Divinagracia
Aiden Taylor

Marriages . . . January-June 2007

“I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.” (Rite of Marriage)

Kris Reilly & Kelli Mangini
Eric Steele & Stephanie Hernandez
John Popjevalo & Jessica Reeves
James Maday & Natalie Stanley

Daniel Gill & Janelle Jensen
Michael Couch & Ellen Peterson
Mark Taylor & Lynsay Evans
Matthew Ahmu & Jennifer De Smet

RCIA 2007

“May the grace of the Lord be with you.” (Rite of Baptism)

Michael Azar
Karin Boston
Rich Cazneaux
Eugene Dunn

Mark Fitch
Kim Garcia
Janelle Jensen
Amanda McNulty

Ryan Parker
Ann Perkins
Courtney Roberts
Annalia Graziano
Parish Ministries

**WORSHIP**  
Father Aldrin  452-4136  
*Adoration*
Bill Riehl ......................... 564-4506  
*Altar Servers*
MaryDoll  ......................... 452-1037  
*Altar Society*
Vivian Buletti .................... 731-7131  
*Art & Environment*
Gabrielle Spallings .................. 446-6778  
*Choirs*
Donald Kendrick ..................... 278-6805  
*Eucharistic Ministers*
Maureen Sharp-Huhn .............. 454-1327  
*Lectors*
Dick Maly  .......................... 455-8709  
*Ministry to the Homebound*
Cynthia Speed ...................... 448-1519  
*Ushers*
Eugene Sirois ....................... 925-5545  

**FAITH FORMATION**  
Rita Spillane  455-8724  
*Baptism Catechesis*
Deacon Gil Parra ................... 451-1669  
*High School Group*

**JESUS, LOVE, & FRIENDSHIP**  
Joe Sison .......................... 529-3907  
*Legion of Mary*
Clarence O’Day ...................... 455-2407  
*Religious Education—CCD*
Kristin Hansen ..................... 454-9257  
*Sacred Heart School*
Peggy Romero ...................... 456-1576  
*Theology Study*
Tom Slakey ......................... 455-7186  

**EVANGELIZATION**  
Laurlyn Jones  442-4431  
*Catholics Returning Home*
Stephen McCurdy .................. 739-6705  
*Disciples on the Journey*
Amy Sparks  ......................... 456-7442  
*Newsletter Committee*
Pam Milchrist ....................... 731-5199  
*RCIA Team*
Sr. Mary Martin, RSM ............. 452-4830  
Josette Borland ..................... 457-4469  

**COMMUNITY**  
Nina Iliff  451-4259  
*Advent Giving Tree*
Sharon Rich ....................... 736-3925  
*Children’s Church*
Rachelle Cook ...................... 453-1966  

**Food Bank**  
Hospitality/Welcome  
Nina Iliff .......................... 451-4259  
*Knights of Columbus*
Dick Cutting ....................... 451-8601  
*Koffee Klatch*
Amy Sparks  ......................... 456-7442  
*Lenten Soup Supper*
Martin Bailey ....................... 452-8906  
*Parish Book Club*
Rita Spillane ....................... 455-8724  
*Parish Picnic*
Dale Edward ......................... 359-2412  
*Post Requiem Social*
Carolyn Granucci .................. 457-7938  
*Social Justice*
Ashley Dyer  ......................... 454-6440  
*Special Events*
Renee Cook  ......................... 457-8010  

**MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT**  
Denis & Dona Zilaff  451-9976  
*Evening for the Engaged*
Dona & Denis Zilaff ................ 451-9976  
*Ten Great Dates*
John & Gail Kuzmich ............... 363-3856  
*Wedding Coordinators*
Dave & Diane Bierman ............. 515-1266