

Spirit of Life

Roman Catholic Church

SPEAKING GOD'S WORDS: THE ROLE OF OUR LECTORS

In the 30 years that Dr. Louise Murphy had been attending Spirit of Life, she hadn't really thought about serving as a lector.

"But one day, it just sort of hit me," Dr. Murphy says. "I thought, 'With my busy lifestyle, I have to go to church on Sundays, so that would be a fit time-wise.' But there was also something bigger than that – something I can't explain, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. I was just drawn to it, for a reason I can't really tell you."

Dr. Murphy has now been serving our parish as a lector at Mass for nearly three years. She has found that the reason God called her to this ministry was to transform the way she encounters His Word, in the Scriptures.

"I get to dwell on these words, for a week, as a lector," she says. "I get to pray with these words and read them over and over. As I lector, I receive so much in dwelling upon Scripture as I prepare. It's an exciting thing for me to read, I love it when I get to read."

In preparation for reading at Mass, Dr. Murphy spends time praying and discerning what must be emphasized in the reading, with a desire to convey the message that the both the Divine and human authors intended. In the week leading up to the reading, she finds herself reading the verses many times over, and asking for guidance in prayer.

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Dr. Louise Murphy serves our parish as a lector, and through her experience, has found that she has grown in her love of Scripture.

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“At night when I pray, I pray to the person who wrote that passage,” Dr. Murphy explains. “For example, ‘Jeremiah, please help me to understand this, use me, let me read for you, and help me read your Word, rather than my word.’”

“It’s an oral interpretation, guided by the Holy Spirit, to speak this to the parish, as the author would’ve wanted it said and how the Holy Spirit wants it be understood,” she continues. “I need help to understand and know what to emphasize – that’s what triggered me to ask the intercession of the author.”

It is Dr. Murphy’s hope that the way she reads will also help others to encounter God more fully in His Word.

“The other piece of being a good lector is speaking in a way that draws the attention of the parish to what is being said, reminding them, ‘This is the Word, and this is exciting and this is for you,’” she says. “Especially in this culture where everything has to be stimulating, sometimes you can sit in the crowd and just think, ‘Oh here’s the Word, I’m not going to understand it. I’ll sit here until we get to the next part of Mass.’ But as a lector, it’s important to recognize that’s going on, and allow the Spirit to move you, to make this exciting to share.”

Dr. Murphy also hopes that her fellow parishioners will be awakened to realize the gift of love that God longs to share through the Scriptures.

“This Word is for you to hear the love of God,” she says. “He’s loving you through this Word. Christ is alive, He’s present right here, these are His words, and He’s showing you love. This Word is alive. I hope people feel the presence of His love.”

As a lector, Dr. Murphy also finds that she

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– Dr. Louise Murphy

is more aware of the humility of this role, being open and allowing God to speak His Word through her.

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Dr. Murphy encourages those who may be considering serving as lectors.

“If you’re even thinking about being a lector, thinking ‘I’d like to do that,’ that is enough to come and do it,” she says. “The more you can experience this kind of ministry, the more you will be blessed. To allow yourself to be used by the Spirit in this fashion, it is an honor.”

If you would like more information on becoming a lector at Spirit of Life, please contact Deb Rath at deb@myspiritoflife.com.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

“HERE I AM, LORD.” BUT ARE YOU REALLY THERE? ARE YOU RESPONDING TO GOD’S CALL?

Dear Parishioners,

Throughout the Bible we hear people say, “Here I am, Lord,” or something similar. Normally, it is a response to a communication, a call, from God. In the Old Testament Book of Exodus, for example, it states, “God called out to him from the bush: ‘Moses! Moses!’ He answered, ‘Here I am’” (Exodus 3:4). We often speak in the Church about the fact that we have each received a calling from God. We also regularly say that one way to respond to that call is to live a life of stewardship.

Of course, the truth is that many do not hear God’s call because they are either not listening or they do not want to hear it. Of course, that is not how we should feel. I could write about my own call, but right now, I would rather address your call.

This is a time of year when there are calls from those in need all around us. Some of those calling are ministries right here in our parish. Before I address our response, it is important to emphasize that we need to hear the call. To hear something, we have to be listening.

The second issue is our response to the call. Do we indeed say, “Here I am”? Or, do we choose to say and do nothing? Stewardship is a call to action, a call to do something to share with and to help others. In the Old Testament passage cit-



ed above, Moses responds, “Who am I?” (Exodus 3:11) – meaning he feels unworthy and unable to fulfill this call from the Lord. God’s answer is everything, as He says to Moses simply, “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12). Thus, we receive the call; we are to respond to God making it clear that we are ready. We may quite likely feel (as Moses did) that we are unprepared for what God may be asking us to do, but His response to Moses was the same as His response to us – “I will be with you.”

That is enough to empower us and strengthen us to try to serve God and fulfill His desires for us. Of course, there is one other call to which we need to respond. It is, as Christ said many times, “Come follow Me.”

As we enter this part of our personal year, this part of our calendar year, and this part of our Church year, may we be ready to listen, to respond, and then to do – full with the knowledge that the Lord is with us always!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Msgr. Chad Gion".

Msgr. Chad Gion,
Pastor

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GROWING CLOSER TO CHRIST THROUGH SERVICE

As many of us can certainly recall from our own experiences, high school is a very chaotic time in a young person's life. This is especially so today, with all of the technological and social "noise" that our youth currently face.

"It's a time when they are changing and growing a lot," says Spirit of Life's Youth Director Paige Rising. "So, it's particularly important that we as a church community really work together to support them through prayer and formation, making sure that they are spiritually prepared for when they enter college and then the work force."

With the mission of creating a welcoming environment where teens can grow together in Christian faith and fellowship, the Flame helps create that spiritual support system of our high school-aged youth. This is done first and foremost through its weekly Wednesday gatherings at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room. A unique blend of fun, fellowship and formation, these nights allow teens to experience the life of the Church in a fuller way.

"It's an opportunity for the kids to know about what the Church teaches, why we believe it, and to ultimately come to know the faith outside of Sunday Mass," Paige says. "It's not a formal class and it's not just a group for friends getting together. This is an opportunity for them to learn about the faith in a new way and to have new experiences – to become more fully part of the Catholic Church, even beyond our own parish, and to see that it really is universal."

Service, says Paige, is a key component of developing this understanding, as teens become



The Flame, says Youth Director Paige Rising, provides a unique way for teens to experience and become part of the Church.

active members of the faith community. Our teens help serve at parish events like the Lenten Simple Suppers and the annual Valentine's Dinner, continuously partake in various liturgical ministries, and generally work to lend a helping hand wherever they are needed.

The Flame also regularly participates in diocesan and other outside opportunities designed to further broaden the teens' understanding of and participation in the universal Church. On Oct. 11, for example, teens are invited to participate in the ROCK – Reaching Out to Christ's Kingdom – a quarterly event that takes place at St. Mary's Central High School in Bismarck,

"For me personally, working with the kids has taught me so much about my faith and how to approach it. Their questions regularly challenge me to go deeper into my own faith, coming to a fuller understanding of it so that I can more adequately answer their questions." – Paige Rising, Youth Director

AND EXAMPLE: SUPPORTING OUR PARISH YOUTH



Some of the youth from our parish Youth Group at the Steubenville Conference this summer.

N.D. Completely free, the event begins at 6:30 p.m. and includes a dynamic speaker, Eucharistic adoration and Reconciliation, food, music, fun activities, and even prizes.

Search for Christian Maturity is another beloved diocesan event from which our high school youth continue to benefit. Occurring this fall on Oct. 13-15, this peer-led retreat allows high school and college-aged youth 15 years and older to experience the love of Christ in a radically transforming way.

“A lot of our students are part of the Search program and they love it,” Paige says. “I’ve noticed that the students who go to Search have

become greater leaders in our own Church community. It really makes the faith come alive for them, and the parish actually pays for our teens to attend their first Search weekend.”

Parish teens are also looking forward to attending this year’s diocesan High School Youth Rally, which will be occurring on Thursday, Oct. 19, at the University of Mary, Bismarck. The day will include keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and music from the band Sonar. The cost of the event is \$25 and teens and adult chaperones can register at www.umary.edu/youthrally.

Yet, beyond these numerous events, another essential aspect to creating a successful youth ministry program is the service of our adult volunteers. By simply being present to and fostering relationships with the teens, these men and women help model what it means to be an authentic Catholic. This, perhaps more than anything else, helps truly bring our youth into the life of the Church. And in the process, the adults themselves can’t help but be challenged and pushed to grow.

“We need adult parishioners committed to praying for our youth and to just become a part of our program – adults who are willing to show them what it means to be a Catholic adult and to help give them that mentoring faith,” Paige says. “For me personally, working with the kids has taught me so much about my faith and how to approach it. Their questions regularly challenge me to go deeper into my own faith, coming to a fuller understanding of it so that I can more adequately answer their questions.”

We invite all parishioners to continue supporting the Flame with their prayers and to consider becoming a part of this important ministry.

To learn more about high school youth ministry opportunities, please contact Paige Rising at paige@myspiritoflife.com or Director of Faith Formation Karen Eggers at karen@myspiritoflife.com.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

When we are talking about the idea of stewardship and how we care for the tools and gifts we have been given, it is not often that we stop to have a conversation about how we are caring for and using the gift of social media to positively spread Gospel values. However, this is an appropriate topic for us to consider when we are talking about the many young people, as well as adults, who gather online on a frequent basis. Therefore, it is important for us to think about how we are using the amazing gifts of technology.

If you are frequently online – especially on Pinterest – there is a popular acronym that you may have already come across. While it is used in many different contexts, it seems very appropriate to follow as we find ourselves posting statuses and pictures on various social media sites. The acronym is T.H.I.N.K., and it invites us to consider what we are saying and sharing, and whether or not it should be said!

Is what we are posting:

True? Are we sharing factual information or a rumor that we heard, and if we think our information is factual, what is our source? Is it trustworthy?

Helpful? Is the information we are sharing something that can be useful to another person? We don't need to over-examine all of our content to consider its "educational factor," but is the content we are posting going to help someone learn about us, learn about a place or an activity,

think about the world, reflect on life, engage us in laughter, and so forth?

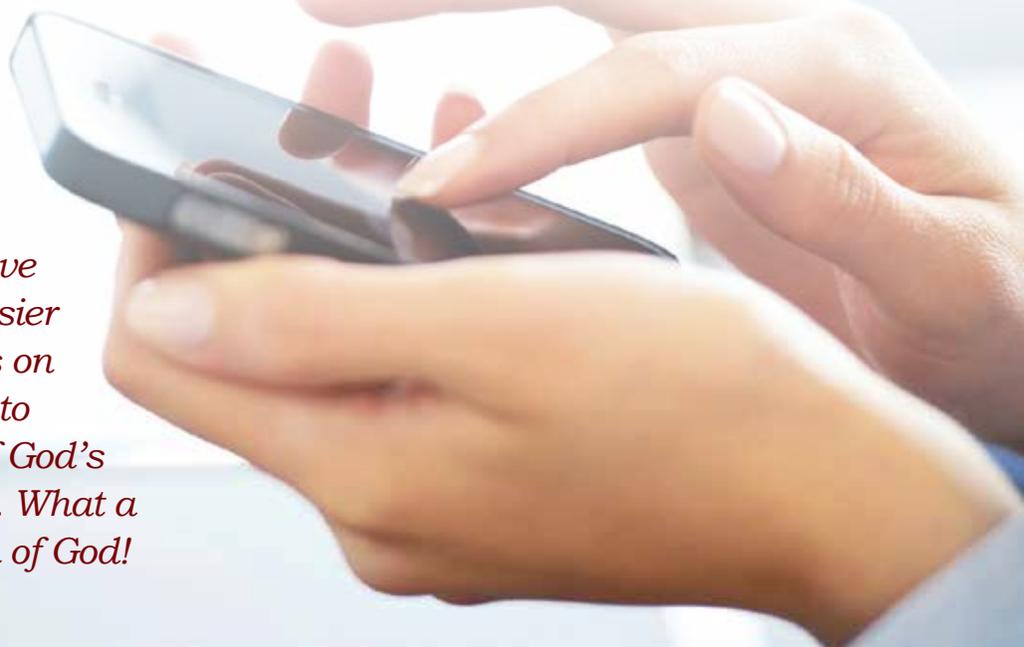
Inspirational? There is certainly no requirement to be a poet or an artist, but social media has become a wonderful outlet for positive self-expression. "Positive" is the key word – are we posting to inspire others about the good in our world, or are we posting to cut someone down or to simply rant?

Nice? Have we considered the feelings of others when we include them in a status or post a picture of them? Will they be embarrassed? Are we using social media to humiliate and intimidate others, or are we using it to try to better the world and the lives of others?

Kind? What a great tool to compliment, show gratitude, and build the self-esteem of those you care about!

People often speak of social media in a negative way because of the content they see posted. T.H.I.N.K. is a great way for us to remind ourselves that we can be good stewards of our own social media use. Remember that there are many ways to share the Gospel without writing out its words. Gospel living has to do with the positive way we approach this life and bring God's light and love to others – and it couldn't be easier than sharing an uplifting status on Facebook, a Tweet of gratitude to a friend, or a beautiful image of God's inspiring creation on Instagram. What a great way to build the Kingdom of God!

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BRINGING OUR PRECIOUS LITTLE ONES TO JESUS

Most of us have been there. We know what it's like to finally arrive at Mass with our young children, only to find ourselves feeling helpless. After recovering from the "whirlwind" of getting them bathed, fed and all dressed up for church, not to mention overcoming the sudden hurdles that came our way (like unexpected diaper changes, traffic jams and forgetting the baby bag), we are, at last, at church – phew! However, soon after we finally settle into our seats, the crying begins – first the toddler, who bumped his head on the corner of something, and then the baby, who is hungry all of a sudden even though we just fed her. As very busy parents, this most sacred hour of our week at Sunday Mass is often the only concrete time we have to worship God in peace. We can't help but feel frustrated, not to mention embarrassed.

The good news is that we don't have to feel alone in our frustration. We can take solace in the fact that the Spirit of Life community cares for our families, and provides ways for us to obtain the spiritual graces we need to carry on.

"The Nursery is here to make parents and their young children feel welcome at our parish Masses," says Sr. Josephine,



The Spirit of Life Nursery provides an opportunity for parents to attend Mass with their young children.

who coordinates the Nursery Ministry. "As Jesus says in the Gospels, 'Let the children come to Me.' We also want to help parents to be able to focus more on the Mass. We want to be of service to our young families."

The Nursery Ministry works

to create a warm, safe and comfortable environment for children ages 6 weeks to 3 years. It is offered during all four of our parish weekend Masses. Our fully furnished Nursery has a diaper-changing table, diapers, a cozy nursing chair, and other

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Change Service Requested

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Spirit of Life

Monday: 8 a.m.

Tuesday - Thursday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.

Friday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.,

Saturday: 9 a.m., 5 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m.

CONFESSIONS: Sunday: 8-8:30 a.m.

Saturday: 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 7-8:30 p.m., and 20 min. before
weekday Masses except Mondays

St. Martin's Parish

Even Months: 9 a.m.

Odd Months: 11 a.m.

St. Anthony's Parish

Even Months: 11 a.m.

Odd Months: 9 a.m.

BRINGING OUR PRECIOUS LITTLE ONES TO JESUS

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helpful childcare items. It also has a viewing screen so that people can hear and see what is going on during Holy Mass even though they are in the Nursery.

Volunteers are needed to be the “arms of Christ” and help take care of our little children during Mass in the Nursery. The ministry is a flexible, simple way to live out one’s stewardship commitment. Volunteers are scheduled by Sr. Josephine according to what is convenient for them. They are simply asked to come about 10 minutes before Mass begins, and stay a little afterward to clean up. High school students are welcome to earn service hours by helping out, as well.

“The Nursery is here to make parents and their young children feel welcome at our parish Masses. As Jesus says in the Gospels, ‘Let the children come to Me.’ We also want to help parents to be able to focus more on the Mass. We want to be of service to our young families.” – Sr. Josephine

If you would like more information about our Nursery, or if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Sr. Josephine at 701-989-3553.