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Finding Balance

by Sheila Munafo-Kanoza

As we go through life, and especially in grief, we are in the process of examining our values and beliefs. As children and then as adults we define our own values and beliefs. When grieving we are struggling with a cluster of emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt, frustration, fear, and anxiety that automatically occur when someone has experienced a loss. In this time especially it is important have a balance in life in order for us to heal and find ourselves.

Often in grief we ask ourselves the questions: Who am I? What am I do with the rest of my life. In everyday life we often keep ourselves so busy that we have little time. It is how we live and how we cope. When someone we love dies it brings life to a complete halt. Our natural response is to keep busy; we want to run away from the silence of death.

Each our lives are full of many activities and events. Below are activities that fill our everyday lives. Write the percentage of your day that each of these takes and list any ones not listed.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Work _____ | Children _____ |
| Family _____ | Friends _____ |
| School _____ | Activities/hobbies _____ |
| House work/chores _____ | Time for you _____ |
| Prayer _____ | Sleep _____ |
| Play _____ | Other _____ |

It is important to take time for you and to look at your life to see what area you need to give attention to.

We need time to discovery who we are and what we are to do with the rest of our lives. When we give little time to God and to ourselves we become stressed, anxious or overwhelmed. It is important to assess your daily life in order to find a balance. Ask God to help you to sort through your day. Allow yourself to discovery.



A Message from Fr. Terry

Dear People of St. Max,

It is difficult to believe that six years have passed since I moved here. I am a little bit older, a bit more gray on the top, but definitely richer for having been here. There have been tears, laughter and some wonderfully great times! We have disagreed on some things, agreed on others and worked out some compromises on some other issues. This is part of the stuff of life. If I could not honor a request, I would always try to give the reason why I was unable to do so. If I have hurt anyone, please accept my apology.

Some parishioners recently asked me: "What would I see as an important accomplishment during my time here?" I had to pause and think because I seldom think in terms of accomplishments. My response was: more people have become involved in the life of our parish community and we have had two long range planning convocations. Most of what has come from that long range planning effort has been put in place or is in process. The Ministry of Care has been developed in an effort to make a huge parish a bit more welcoming and more personal. This is no small thing. All of these are due to much that has been given by you to the life of this faith community.

In a parish as large as ours, there are many needs and many wants. There is no way for all of these to be addressed. The important thing is that we address what best builds up the body of Christ here at St. Max and focus on the common good and growing our faith in this community. This means that personal agendas need to be set aside. This is difficult for all of us, but part of the call to be disciples of Christ is to let go of certain things for the good of others.

When I moved here six years ago, I encouraged people to participate more at our Sunday Eucharists with a bit more umph and vigor. We have come a long way. But there is still work to be done in this area.

On a personal note, I wish to mention two things: First, I have come to know a number of you. That I treasure. I will miss you as I try to get to know new people. Thanks for opening your life to me, sometimes at very vulnerable times. Feel free to stay in touch as you are able, while maintaining your loyalty to St. Max. Secondly, with the number of children we have, I could not help but be moved and inspired by them. They have made me a more caring, loving human person. They have helped me to see the world with new and wonderful eyes. Thanks so much.

I have mentioned often, this parish has an embarrassment of talent. Thanks so much for bringing that to the service of God's people whether in the confines of our parish or wherever else your lives take you.

Once again, thanks so much. Let us continue to keep one another in prayer as we gather at the Lord's Table for the days ahead are rich and exciting, but challenging as well.

Six years ago, I began a column in the weekly bulletin: *Things I Have Heard and Seen* now changed to *Times of Transition*. I have concluded the column each time with the same words. I now conclude this letter with those words.

Take special care.

Sincerely,
Fr. Terry



"The important thing is that we address what best builds up the body of Christ here at St. Max and focus on the common good and growing our faith in this community."

Kyle's First Communion Journey

by Tammi Stauber

From Romans 12:

"...in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us."

Mhe smile of God's love is how we describe our son's face after receiving his First Holy Communion, but the journey to this most blessed day was anything but ordinary. Kyle decided to arrive four months early at birth, at 1-1/2 pounds. He spent three months fighting for his life in the NICU. He's been in speech, occupational and a variety of therapies most of his life, and for years we had little hope that he would be able to participate in the Eucharist.

He is now diagnosed with autism spectrum severe speech delay and social deficits. He is so much more, though, than the diagnosis. He's a great reader, mathematician, swimmer and musician. He enjoys Mass, and is good at reciting the Creeds, rosary and prayers.

To inquire about making his First Communion, we contacted Colleen Gerke, Director of Faith Formation. Colleen arranged a one-on-one mentor. Special study materials and regular First Communion books were used at the weekly meetings. Kyle practiced receiving the Host and the Cup many times, and attended the First Communion retreat. For First Reconciliation, we wrote out his "sins" to read (because he does not initiate communication yet). Father McCarthy practiced with us and was so patient with our needs. It was a gift and it was grace, and Kyle felt the membership in one body.

Down syndrome, Cerebral palsy, Autism, Tuberous sclerosis, ADHD: the list goes on and on. At St. Max, we are represented by a wide variety of diverse people, experiences and backgrounds. Many of our families are dealing with these and a host of other diagnoses.

Several parents who have children with special needs have recently come together to discuss ways to get our loved

ones more involved, and to support each other as parents, guardians and Christians. Many of us need God's strength, and we need each other. We don't want to be isolated or separated. Some families are unaware of how their children can be more involved, using their unique gifts.

How can you become more involved? At St. Max, we celebrate and include all of our parish members, and have a variety of opportunities for our children to share their beautiful God-given gifts. Colleen Gerke and Carol Heuser would be happy to talk with you about your child's participation through greeters, ushers at Mass, taking up the gifts at Mass, Adoration, RFY (class or home study), First Communion preparation, Confirmation preparation, Adopt a "Scape" (landscaping) help.

More ministries and ideas are in the works, including much-needed support for the parents, grandparents and caregivers. And a web page is being added to the St. Max website. Contact Colleen at St. Max, or Sheryl Hudson (310-0883), or Tammi Stauber (779-3316) if you have questions or would like to become more involved in this ministry. ✠



Kyle Stauber with his mentor, Debi LaFrankie, and Father McCarthy, on Kyle's 1st Communion day.

Tap Into Faith Formation

by Colleen Gerke – Director of Faith Formation

Parent Question of the Month

Who are adolescents today? According to recent research by Frank Mercadante, Executive Director and Founder of Cultivation Ministries and author of *Growing Disciples*, our teens are the millennial generation. They share their parents' values, value political engagement, work collaboratively, are tolerant of diversity and believe in service. Seventy percent of teens today volunteer weekly. They want to be involved in parish life, not merely attend mass and watch as others work. They are happy to work alongside adults and want to be part of making the world a better place.

Website of the Month:

Check out what happening in schools at School Tube: <http://www.schooltube.com/>. You can also find out what area Catholic Educators experienced at the National Catholic Education Association annual convention April 14 – 16, 2009. Colleen Gerke, Director of Faith Formation here at St. Max was interviewed at the convention.

“Bring Theology on Tap to West Chester”

Theology on Tap is an internationally recognized endeavor by young adults for young adults. Recognizing the need and desire to engage with peers as Catholics, young adults in the area are working to bring this popular event to our area. TOT (Theology on Tap) reaches young adults where they are by exploring topics they choose and at locations where they normally gather such as restaurants, coffee houses and bars. This ministry for those in their 20s and 30s serves to welcome exploration of faith as well as lead young adults into other opportunities of involvement in parish life with follow up programs at local parishes.

In May young adults throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati who plan and lead TOT in Cincinnati, Dayton

and Sydney had the opportunity to meet at Champps in Union Center with Most Reverend Archbishop Schnurr, coadjutor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Archbishop Schnurr strongly supports youth and young adult ministry. The event began with an invitation for young adult leaders to dine with the new Archbishop and followed with an opportunity to meet with others involved with TOT in the Archdiocese as well as gratitude from the Archdiocese for their efforts to support their peers' journey of faith.

We at St. Max are blessed to be part of this growing ministry in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. We support the desire of young adults in the area to gather around the hungers of faith by providing staff support, meeting rooms and start up money to bring this much desired and needed ministry to our area. We ask for your prayers and encouragement as we continue to “Bring Theology on Tap to West Chester.” We also pray in thanksgiving to the area parish that has joined us this effort to reach out to other young adults. You can e-mail us at YAM@saint-max.org or find out more by going to the Facebook group “Bring Theology on Tap to West Chester.”

For more information on TOT go to: <http://www.renewtot.org/> and http://www.totcincinnati.org/TOT_Cincinnati.html. ✠

**Special thanks
for supporting
the 2009
St. Max Festival!**

Watch the St. Max Family Grow!

Welcome New Parishioners!

Gerri Allen

Stephanie Allen

Rich & Nicole Bing and child Reagan

Matt & Julie Brehm and child Luke

David & Karen Byrne and children Robert and Matthew

Matt & Nicole Crossin and child Gavin

Jason & Stacy Flick

Victorine Fombo and children Prima and Paigel

Jeffrey & Andrea Fox and child Eleanor

Dan & Michelle Healey and child Sarah

Annette Holt

Stephen & Donna Kroeger

Michael & Angela Lawson and children Sidney,
Hailey, Michael and Andrew

Michael McNamara

Darrin & Kelley Middendorf and child Madison

Henry & Karol Rimcom and children Adriana,
Danilo and Sebastian

Alfred & Sarah Samaniego and child Lillian

Married in Christ

*Couples married in the parish from
November, 2008 through April, 2009*

Adam Weber & Gina Milillo

Adam Borchers & Kathleen Donoghue

Forrest Gregg Beilby & Shannon Marie McCune

Matthew Alan Shesman & Megan Leah Kamphaus

Ryan Kevin Helbach & Andrea Jane Kors

St. Max Welcomes our

Baptisms

Newest & Smallest Parishioners

Brooke Christine daughter of Michael & April
Davenport

Connor Jeffrey son of Jeffrey & Kristin Foley

Alexa Renee daughter of Benjamin & Gina Gilchrist

Addison Grace daughter of John Abell &
Holly Hampton

Faith Elle daughter of Douglas & Kathleen Heffner

William Douglas son of Douglas & Kathleen
Heffner

Emma Davi daughter of David & Kathleen Muha

Logan Thomas son of Thomas & Ashlee Pucke

Bradley Scott son of Brian & Kim Reining

Dax Braden son of Steve & Shana Renville

Dylan Christopher son of Brad & Jennifer
Ringwald

Hayes Joseph son of Daniel & Amy Schneider

Alaya Grace daughter of Scott & Debra Seger

Lillian Grace daughter of Scott & Misty Teets

Jack Allan son of Joseph & Tracy Toepfer

Aidan Christopher son of Brian & Jennifer Uhl

Andrianna Rose daughter of Patrick & Maryrose
Woodall

Retreat Opportunity for Parents and Teens

By Amy Krzmarzick – Peer Minister

When my brothers and I return from one of our Youth Ministry Retreats, my parents greet us with their version of twenty questions: “How was the retreat? Who was there? What’d you learn?” The usual response is, “Fine, people, stuff about God.” It’s not that I don’t want to tell my parents what we do at a retreat; it’s just that it is difficult to describe my retreat experiences. Now parents will have a chance to get the inside scoop on what happens at a Youth Ministry Retreat. Parents are invited to attend a special retreat with their teenagers on July 25th-26th. The retreat will be led by the peer ministers and youth ministry adults. This is a day event for adults; however, youth will be invited to spend the night. During the retreat, there will be activities, music, small groups, and talks that will focus on the theme of Joseph from the Old Testament. This is a great opportunity for parents and



teenagers to discover new aspects of their faith along with strengthening their relationship with each other. We hope to see you there! Details are on the St. Max website. ✦



MND National Honor Society Induction

Saint Max parishioners and MND students were recently inducted into the National Honor Society.

*From left to right:
Rachel Drumm '11, Chloe
Meyer '11, Mary Lutz '11
and Rebecca Knue '10*

Eagles Wings

by Joe Epplen, Principal SGCS

Our last six weeks of school have found our students and staff in the center of a whirlwind of activities.

A successful Race for Education, in which all students participated, showed a sponsorship rate of nearly one thousand. Many friends, relatives and immediate families saw this day as an opportunity to provide funds for our technology projects here at school. At this writing, the donations are still being tabulated and monies continue to come in. We are so blessed and thankful for the financial support, especially in these tough economic times.

Our annual Grandparents' Day for grades 2, 3 and 4 showed that grandparents continue to find ways to remain involved in the lives of their grandchildren. St. Gabriel Church was packed with grandparents on April 30th to share in the Eucharist and then a concert provided by all of the students present. Amazing Grace proved to be a fitting finale to the program. Grandparents then had the opportunity to visit classrooms and have refreshments with their grandchildren.

On May 27th in an evening ceremony at St. Max, 48 students received awards and certificates of graduation as part of their final prayer service as a student of St. Gabriel Consolidated School. All of these activities strengthen our family bonds and help us to recognize and maintain our roles as members of the body of Christ. Happy Summer to all of you. ✠



May Crowning is always a special time at St. Gabriel and this year was no exception. "Bring Flowers of the Rarest" could be heard all over our campus as 400 voices sang strong the verses to this traditional song while 8th grader Gabrielle Young gently placed a crown of flowers on the head of our statue of Mary.

The Modern Saint

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EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

Father Terry Smith

EDITOR

Dianne Feltz

LAYOUT EDITOR

Michael Hunter

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER

Danielle Johnson

WRITERS & CONTRIBUTORS

Colleen Gerke

Jeff Merrill

Sheila Munafo-Kanoza

Kathie Roberts

Taylor Simmons

Chuck Wojciechowski

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jenny Willicut

John Terzin

Joy Hunter

COMMENTS

The Modern Saint

5720 Hamilton-Mason Rd.

Liberty Twp., Ohio 45011

email: modernsaint1@yahoo.com



ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE PARISH
5720 Hamilton-Mason Rd.
Liberty Township, OH 45011

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THE MODERN SAINT



St. Max Fashion Show

Carol Heuser won two baskets at the 17th annual Fashion Show at Saint Max. She is pictured here with her husband, Gary, who volunteered during the evening selling raffle tickets. 298 people attended this year's show, and all proceeds benefit the 20/20 Debt Reduction Fund.