

THE GOOD NEWS

St. Francis Church, Peoria/Dunlap, IL

FEBRUARY, 2010

Care Craft Ministry

Future dates through May of 2010
2/21; 3/7; 4/18; 5/16.

Save the dates on your calendar and Join us!
Bring your lunch. Bring a friend and bring
your craft.

We also have brochures to hand out to your
friends.

Lets Craft away for others.

St. Francis Library A Neglected Treasure

Calling all treasure hunters. When was
the last time you checked a book out from
the Church Library? There are many good
spiritual books to pick from. With Lent
approaching, browse through the books and
see if God sparks a title just for you.

My very own quote just for you: "Treasures
are found only if you look for them" by
Candice Hogden.

Special Announcement

We are looking desperately for a librarian
to tend the various treasures. Prayerfully
consider if you are that person. If interested
contact Fr. John

Women Bible Studies

Calling all St. Francis Women! St. Francis
has purchased in the last two years 2 Beth
Moore Bible Studies. These are treasures
waiting to be discovered.

1. **"To Live Is Christ: The life and
Ministry of Paul"**: 11 weeks of videos,
discussion and daily Bible study. One
person is the facilitator of the group but all
are to be equally there learning and sharing
together. Each will purchase a member
workbook

This is an in depth study which will deepen
your understanding of God's Grace. It will
demonstrate God's ability to use anyone
who is willing to serve him and how one
surrendered life can have an impact. It will
teach a lot of new testament church history
while encouraging you to be a bold witness
to Christ. Your passion for Jesus will
increase as you delve into his Holy Word.
The outcome are many which include
helping us in our relationships with others.

2. **"Living Beyond Yourself: Exploring the
Fruit of the Spirit"**: 11 weeks of videos,
discussion and daily Bible study. One
person is the facilitator of the group but all
are to be equally there for learning and
sharing together. Each will purchase a
member workbook.

This is an in depth study that focuses on the
each of the fruit of the Spirit. You will learn
how to live a life of freedom filled with the
fruit of the Spirit. You cannot achieve the
fruit on your own. You need to maintain an
intimate relationship with the Spirit of God.
As you walk with God, He develops in you

the fruit of the Spirit. Then your life is living beyond yourself.

You will not be disappointed in either study. They both are rich in helping you grow your faith on whatever level you are at. Your commitment and discipline to do the daily studies only makes your faith more alive and you'll want to know more.

If interested in starting one of these Beth Moore Studies please contact Candice Hogden. She has led the Bible studies and can help you get started.

A New Beth Moore Study Begins by Hot Demand!!

Our new study is "A Woman's heart". This study is taken primarily from the old Testament book of Exodus. She explores the parallels between the Physical tabernacle and the tabernacle of the human heart where God dwells. The study starts February 13, 2010 from 9:00 to 11:15 a.m. for 11 consecutive Saturdays. Our host for this study will be Susan Stranski. Directions from St. Francis: Go south on Knoxville to Hickory Grove (stop light). Turn left, go 9/10 of a mile. Turn left on Hickory Grove Lane. Last house on the right 12105 Old Hickory Grove Lane. Facilitator of the Bible Study will be Candice Hogden.

If interested please call Candice. We need a number for planning purposes. You can purchase your member workbook at www.lifeway.com. The member books are 14.95.

Please have the workbook by 2/13/10 and bring to your first session. This time together can only be "very good".

Kenya Africa Ministry presentation

Save the date: March 13, 2010 at 2:30 PM at St. Francis. Snacks and drink will be provided.

Ann and Steve Wiegand are two local servants of Christ who are involved in a world sports and women ministry in Kenya Africa. They have jewelry to sell that the women of Africa have made. All proceeds goes to the sports ministry. They have recently returned and have a slide presentation. Their experiences are rich with testimonies that will touch your heart. Bring a friend.! 5:00 p.m. Mass is as scheduled.

Lenten Soup Suppers

We will once again have our soup supper during Lent, beginning February 18th. There are 6 Thursdays, so six opportunities to sign up to bring soup. 1 meat, one meatless, bread or rolls and a beverage. Sign up alone or with a buddy. Please see Martha for available dates.

New Sunday Evening Service Schedule

Starting in February, 2010 aside from the standard Eucharist service, the Sunday evening 5:00 p.m. worship services will include the following:

- First Sunday - Outreach prayer meeting for St. Francis, and the parish family.
- Second Sunday - Youth mass (currently to be alternated with St. Andrew's Peoria).
- Third Sunday - Healing mass.
- Fourth Sunday - Pot luck and game night.

Learn More About The Bible

Our Thursday night Bible Study, led by Fr. Spencer, is a wonderful opportunity to join with others in reading, discussing, and gaining a deeper understanding of the word of the Lord. We have embarked on a study of the first five books of the Old Testament and are currently reading Exodus. Some of our recent discussions have centered around the issue of judgment. Is the promise of eternal life contingent upon obeying the

laws given to Moses? Is it even possible to obey the 10 Commandments? If not, then how are we to be judged? These are just a few of the questions we have explored. What questions would you like to explore? We invite you to join us Thursday evenings at 6:30 as we continue our journey through the Bible.

Come join us for these wonderful worship and fellowship opportunities!!!!!!

Lorie Harris

Peoria Deanery Youth Mass

Sunday February 14, 5:00 to 8:00 pm, at St. Francis. Youth of all ages are welcome. Dinner will be provided. Please RSVP to youthmissioner@dioceseofquincy.org by February 11th.

Is Christ Ringing In Your Heart?

--By Candice Hogden

Christmas has gone in terms of the church calendar. But the Spirit of Christmas can still be in our hearts and lives daily throughout the year. The Bells of Christmas are still ringing. So, I ask you again, "Are you letting Christ ring in your heart? Are you hearing the sweet sounds from his heart to yours? May He who is your Creator, Redeemer, And Savior be your true Valentine this month.

You may say to yourself, "How do I let Christ ring in my heart?" "What do you mean let Him be my true Valentine?" I will give you 4 ways to answer your questions.

The first thing is, you need to decide that you **need** God the Father, Jesus His son and the Holy Spirit in your life. If you don't need him and believe you are doing just fine without him, a wall between you and God has formed and you may not hear the sweet sounds of Christ in the ringing of his bells of hope, truth, and grace, the bells of his love for you just as you are, his peace and joy! But if you are looking his direction, reaching for Him by asking questions on faith, thinking of Him in your mind, or sending prayers

of all lengths to him, you will hear the sweet sound of Christ. Your prayers may be only a few words such as, "Help me lord!", "Forgive me", "Jesus I don't know what to do," "Lead me," or "Show me what to do." Any look in God's direction softens your heart and a soft heart will hear the bells. You have allowed your ears to hear. In Revelation starting with Chapter 2 there are letters from Jesus to the different churches. At the end of each letter he says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Christ wants us to have ears that hear what he has to say. In Ezekiel 3:27b, the Lord God said, "he that will hear, let him hear..." The rest of the verse says, "and he that will refuse to hear, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house." I don't think we want to be rebellious do you? we want to welcome God by listening ears. We want to be "the sheep that hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out (John 10: 3).

The second thing is to slow down. Take the clutter of activities and the clutter of all those things you think and worry about in your mind and get rid of them. Slow down and say "no" to more activities, even things you enjoy like TV. My grandmother Hogden once told me the devil was in that box, referring to the TV. I told her that was crazy. I now begin to wonder. Check out the various channels on TV and see what you think. I think that TV has been an excellent means for the enemy.

Another way to slow down is to say no to some duties such as cleaning your house for a day or doing the dishes. They can wait. Create a boundary between so many work hours and so many hours for other things including playtime. It may take you saying out loud "I will stop working at this time, no what ifs or buts, and be done."

Saying no or lessening your time to some responsibilities you have taken on is yet another way to slow down. Maybe saying, "I can't do that anymore" or "I can do this particular responsibility 2 times a month." When you do these suggestions you create a space for God.

Imagine that, deliberately creating a lull so God has an opportunity to fill your heart, mind, body and soul. Try it you might like it.

The third thing is to be silent. Scripture says to “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). In Psalm 37:7a it says “be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him.” In our noisy, busy world, sitting, doing nothing, being silent may take time to get used to. I suggest you find a place inside your home or outside that becomes a sacred place for you and God. Keep this place from distractions. Your mind will get distracted enough on its own with the enemies help. If you find yourself distracted just ask the Holy Spirit to keep you focused. Say the word Jesus. Philippians 2:10 says, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. The name of Jesus will clear the air and help you focus. In Ephesians 6 it tells us to keep alert and pray, “to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” This includes the powers of the air. Some places that have helped me be silent is to go sit in the woods in my back yard, be in the church by myself before the altar, sitting on my deck, sitting in a room with no light, sitting in a comfy chair, or find a place in the park. Experiment with your places of quiet. This can be a fun task.

The fourth thing is to wait in silence. For a person who is a doer, an extrovert, a go getter, a talker, a driving personality, or an antsy person, this can be difficult, but not hopeless. Being silent will be like art, which takes a while to learn how to do. “The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him (Lamentations 3:25). Verse 26 continues “It is good that one should **wait quietly** for the salvation of the Lord. And in Isaiah 40:31 “but they who wait for the lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” In Hosea 12:6 it says,

“So you , by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God.” Waiting in the lord will improve. All you need to do is to take the first step and “do it”. Then “do it” again and again.

As you learn to be silent and wait you will then notice Christ all around in what you see. You’ll see him in the beauty of nature that he created. You’ll see him in the people you encounter and you will be able to discern who does and does not have the characteristics of Christ, the fruits of his spirit. See Galatians 5 for both sides of discernment. Your antennae will be up, your ears open. You now will be able to hear God’s Christmas bells ring to your heart and then ring within. Your hunger for knowing God personally will grow. You will hear the sweet sounds of bells louder and louder and you will follow the sound wherever they ring. You will know this is the right thing to do. The Triune God will be your leader into the bell of all truth. He will grow you into your purposes in life. You will want to read His Holy Word more. You may want to read a devotional book and pray to him more, for you are now hearing the call from the bells to your heart. The bells reach you and touch your heart. You may feel a warmth, a sense of his presence, or a word or a phrase may come to your mind. You may feel excited because the mighty God who sits on his throne has melted your heart towards him and **you** have been touched by **His** hand. Pretty soon you will feel his love for you, a sinner, but a member of his flock of sheep. This love will then pour out in what you do and say. Christ now lives in you to do his work on earth and this love will pour out and you will realize he is the best Valentine ever. He does not disappoint. He empowers. The Good news is, even if we have a cold heart towards him like a prideful heart or a stubborn heart, he still rings the bells to you your heart hoping you will need him in your life, hoping you will slow your life down to notice him and hear his call, hoping you will create a space in your life for him and be silent while waiting for him to talk to you. He longs for each and every one of us.

Does this sound too personal? Well, we have a personal God. He wants a personal relationship with you. He created you to be in His Fold, his personal family. He loves you. He cares about you. He wanted us to be redeemed and saved for all eternity. So, he came to earth at Christmas time with the purpose of paying for our sin through the ultimate personal sacrifice of dying on the cross. That's why he is God over all gods and religions. Yes, this **is** very personal. So, I ask again. Is Christ ringing in your heart today. . . ? Hear those bells. They are still

ringing today for you. Let Christ be your Loving Valentine for all time and let him ring in your heart his love song.

Lenten Series

“ Giving Ourselves in Eucharist”, is the topic. Thursday schedule is as follows:
5:45 Evening Prayer, 6:00 Holy Eucharist,
6:30 Soup Supper, 7:00 Meditation.

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