

THE STILLWATER CATHOLIC

SERVING ST. FRANCIS XAVIER AND ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISHES

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The Intercession of Fr. Rother *“Remember His Bravery and Determination”*

Kaitlin Hamilton was a student athlete at Oklahoma State University when she suffered a pulmonary embolism on Jan. 28, 2010. Her heart stopped beating, which resulted in a brain injury.

The following day, her parents and parishioners Dianna and Judge Walter Hamilton started praying to Fr. Stanley Rother.

“We began praying for his intercession on Jan. 29,” Dianna says. “Nurse Marilyn Seiler from Stillwater visited us and encouraged us to ask for Fr. Rother’s intercession.”

The Hamilton family has a personal connection to Fr. Rother. Similar to Bishop Mueggenborg’s family, the Hamilton family is a “farm family” from rural Oklahoma.

“Some of Fr. Stanley Rother’s friends have become our dearest friends,” Dianna says.

At first, Katie’s doctors gave her family a bleak prognosis. One doctor suggested bringing Katie home and giving her morphine to help manage the pain until her death. Another encouraged the Hamiltons to euthanize her because the belief was that she would never recover and “only prove to be a burden.”

In these dark moments, the Hamiltons found and continue to find strength through their faith community.

“One of our family’s lowest points in Katie’s fight was when she was in Denver, Colorado, at the Craig Institute (a rehab facility.) We were told Katie’s condition was hopeless. Five minutes later Auxiliary Bishop James Conley [now bishop of Lincoln] burst into Katie’s hospital room. [Bishop Conley and Fr. Rother attended the same seminary]. Bishop consoled us and anointed Katie. He prayed for her recovery and said Mass in front of 2,000 people the next day. They prayed for



“Fr. Rother is an example of heroic Christian virtue and courage. Remember his bravery and determination when you want to give up. Never give up.” – Dianna Hamilton

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The Challenge of Discipleship

God calls us to give Him everything – our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole mind. This is the challenge of discipleship – a lifelong process of more fully placing our lives under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

The reason that God can ask such complete service from us is that He made us. Everything we have belongs to Him! This includes our intelligence, our physical ability, our artistic talent, our family, our finances, our government – anything we may typically think of as “ours.”

It takes courage to recognize that we are not the masters of our possessions and ourselves. Furthermore, as Christians, we believe that because everything we have is a gift from God, we are called to give Him thanks. We express our thanks by using our gifts to further His kingdom on earth. This is the basis for our understanding of stewardship.

We refer to “time,” “talent,” and “treasure” in order to differentiate between the various parts of our life that belong to God. “Time” is the duration of life that God has given us. “Talent” includes the special gifts or strengths God has nurtured in us. “Treasure” is what we have earned through our time and talent.

Even though we identify these three aspects of stewardship, they are still part of the same Gospel-based concept. And even when we focus separately on these parts, this should not signal that one is more

important than the other. Instead, focusing on each aspect one at a time helps us to better concentrate on that area in our lives.

Stewardship is, after all, an attitude. If our goal is to become better stewards, we must have a reason in our minds to do so. Here are the basics of a stewardship attitude:

“God made everything!”

A wholehearted trust that God made all things is essential to understanding stewardship. Recognizing God as the Creator is one of the most basic and profound beliefs of Christianity.

“I am truly blessed!”

It takes humility in order to truly acknowledge God’s goodness. Every great triumph and every little pleasure is a blessing from above, and every strong character trait we possess is a gift from God.

“I believe I am to use God’s gifts for His glory!”

What better way to thank God for His goodness than by using our personal gifts to glorify Him? We are not the owners of our time, talent or treasure. But we are caretakers given the responsibility of spreading God’s kingdom on earth.





A Letter From Our Pastors

Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?

Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

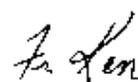
There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: “What is mine and what is God's?” The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of

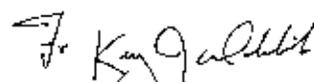
time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Kenneth Harder and Fr. Kerry Wakulich
Pastors



An Update on Our D

In spite of heavy rain during the first week of July, reasonable progress has continued on our new church. As of this writing (second week in July), asphalt paving of the east side drive and the south parking lots has been essentially completed, as well as 75 percent of the concrete drive and sidewalks on the north side of the church (Photo 1). Installation of Bermuda grass sod has been completed in the two large green spaces/water detention areas on the south side (Photo 2).



Photo 1, July 7, 2017 – north drive and sidewalks, looking southwest, by Larry Hoberock.

More than 95 percent of masonry work has been completed on the east, north, and west sides of the building complex, and masonry on the south face of the administration wing and south and west sides of the gym have also been completed (Photos 3 and 4).

Carpeting of the education wing has now been completed (Photo 5), and interior sheetrock installation has continued in the nave (Photo 6). Final trim installation has also begun in the parish hall, and installation of bathroom partitions and fixtures throughout the facility is well underway. Interior doors have arrived, and preparation and painting is almost complete. Installation is expected before the end of July.

Due to the continuing generosity of a number of our parishioners, we have secured sufficient pledges for selected liturgical items to place an order for Phase 2 with Stufferer, our Italian custom liturgical manufacturer, consisting of: statues in color of St. Mary with child, statue in color of St. Joseph, ambo, baptismal font, two shrines to contain Mary and Joseph statues, and 14 gothic frames for Stations of the Cross. Painting reproductions of Leonard Porter's art for the Stations of the Cross have also been ordered to be used for the stations themselves. Except for the reproductions of the painted Stations, these items would not arrive until Lent 2018.



Photo 2, July 7, 2017 – Bermuda grass sod installed in green areas/water detention areas, together with south asphalt center drive, looking north, by Larry Hoberock.

New Church Project

There has been a delay in the manufacture of custom metal steeples for the large and small towers on the front of the church. The delay was caused by inability of our sub-contractor to secure in timely fashion the custom patina-colored metal panels that are key elements of these steeples. Accordingly, these steeples are not expected to arrive until sometime in August. Since this is within a few months of our expected occupancy of the facility, we have decided to cancel the steeple-signing event that we had originally planned, but we will have photos and videos posted on our website to show the installation.

Please continue with your pledge payments and prayers for successful completion of this iconic facility.



Photo 5, June 21, 2017 – Carpeting and some finishing installed in typical classroom, by Mark Pruitt.



Photo 3, July 7, 2017 – Masonry progress on south face of administration wing, looking northwest, by Larry Hoberock.



Photo 4, July 7, 2017 – Masonry progress on south and west faces of gym, looking northeast, by Larry Hoberock.

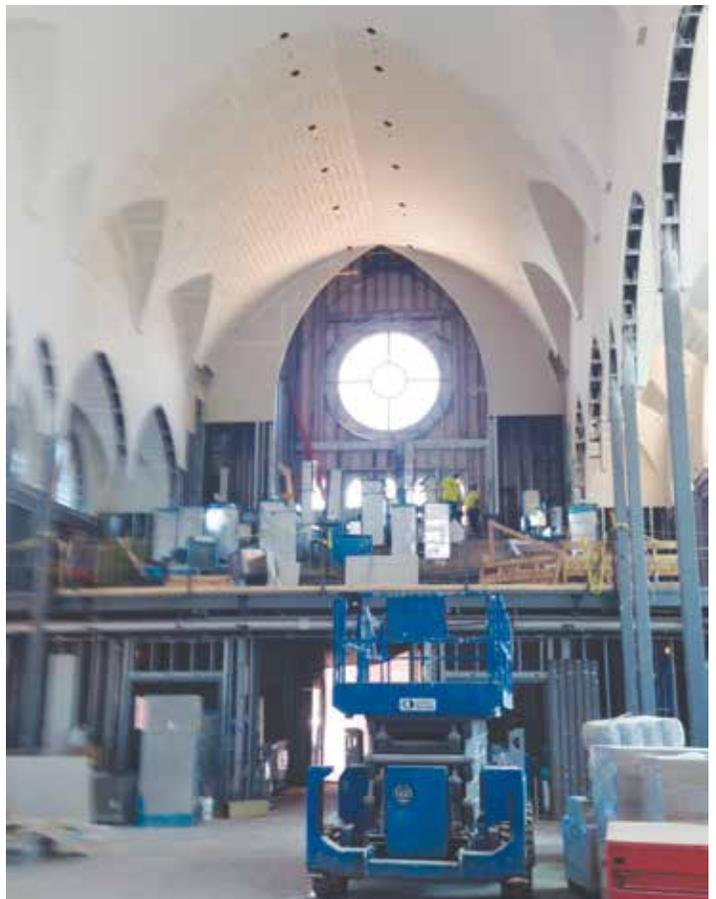


Photo 6, July 7, 2017 – Sheetrock installation progress in nave, looking south, by Larry Hoberock.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: Returning to the Father

Those of us who have children know what it's like when they come to us apologetically after having done something they know is wrong. As parents, it melts our hearts, and we can't help but forgive them freely, and take them into our arms – sometimes squeezing them with tears in our eyes! At times, we may even feel closer to them than we did before the event occurred.

This, we can assume, is how God feels, being our most clement Father. In His magnanimous love, He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to redeem the world, freeing it from the haunting grips of sin and death. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation through His Church to offer sinners forgiveness for the offenses they committed against God.

As the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas writes so beautifully, “[The Sacrament of Confession is a] sacrament of healing and a sacrament of conversion, returning us to the Father after we have sinned. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and

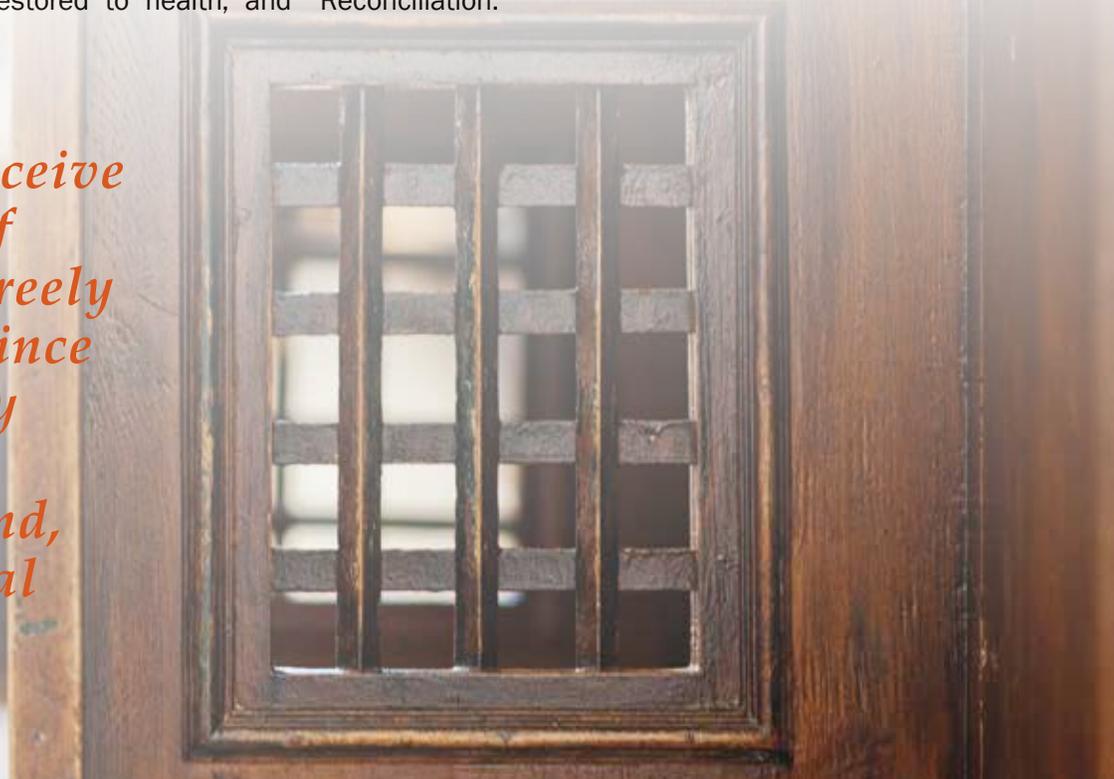
this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

As far as the details for the reception of this sacrament are concerned, three conditions are necessary – contrition, which is genuine sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works. A priest is gravely bound to keeping total confidentiality for all confessions they hear.

Church law requires Catholics to confess mortal sins – the most serious kind of sins – to a priest at least once per year, and to confess them before ever receiving Holy Communion, as well. However, this is by far the minimum; Catholics are encouraged to receive the sacrament freely and frequently since it is so extremely beneficial to the health of the mind, soul and spiritual life in general.

To honor the Sacraments is to honor God and the entire Christian community. To receive the Sacraments is to live in God's love and to strengthen our love for each other. Christ, our tenderhearted paschal lamb, awaits us, His beloved children, to come to Him with all of our hearts. Let us each take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Catholics are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation freely and frequently since it is so extremely beneficial to the health of the mind, soul and spiritual life in general.



IRA Distributions: Your Talent and Treasure Can Help the Parish

You have worked hard all your life, and you have used your God-given talents to earn a living for your family. And along the way, you have made plans for your financial future by opening an IRA – or Individual Retirement Account – so you could set aside some of your earnings to see you through your retired years.

But now, after having reached the age of 70.5 years old, you must begin taking the minimum distribution, or withdrawal, from that account. You're calling upon your treasure, so to speak, for a living, knowing that this treasure that was protected from taxation in the IRA, now will be subject to being taxed.

Where do God and the parish fit into this picture?

Very nicely, with an opportunity for you to live in stewardship by sharing your treasure as you help our parish!

The mechanism is called a “qualified charitable distribution,” and it can be advantageous to you and to our parish.

“One of the things that is most important to remember is that the contribution has to come directly from the IRA,” says Patricia Huffman, a parishioner and financial advisor with Edward Jones in Stillwater. “You can't get the distribution and send it on to the church, or it changes the tax component of the distribution. The check to the church actually has to be distributed from the IRA. For example, for a client, Edward Jones would actually issue the check to the church. So, you need to discuss this with your financial advisor and see if it is an appropriate strategy for you. You should work with that financial advisor to have it done.”

There may be tax advantages for you if you are making a qualified charitable distribution. However, Patricia strongly recommends speaking to your financial advisor to learn all the facets of such a step.

“My role as a financial advisor is always to help you meet your long-term financial goal, whether it is retire-



Patricia Huffman, a financial advisor with Edward Jones and a parishioner, says to check with your financial advisor to see if making a qualified charitable distribution from an IRA is a wise choice.

ment, education, or supporting the charity of choice, like the church,” she says.

“This is an opportunity to put your stewardship in action,” Patricia agrees. “I think that it gives someone the opportunity to give larger gifts to the church, and again, if it is appropriate, there can be a tax advantage. It definitely is an advantage for the church. One of the things to remember is that all situations are different.”

Patricia notes that if an IRA holder who has not yet reached the age of 70.5, makes a contribution to the church from a distribution, the tax treatment of that contribution will be different.

“It really depends on each person's situation,” Patricia says. “But it is a great way to do a charitable contribution that you were intending to do, and it would have a better tax advantage. It's a great way to be part of that stewardship. The options are out there to view.”

If you would like more information about making a qualified charitable distribution from an IRA, please consult your own financial advisor.

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF STILLWATER

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

PO Box 909 • Stillwater, OK 74076

Web: www.stfrancisxavierstillwater.org

Phone: (405) 372-6886

St. John University Parish and Catholic Student Center

201 N. Knoblock St. • Stillwater, OK 74075

Web: www.catholicpokes.com

Phone: (405) 372-6408

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St. Francis Xavier

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil, 5 p.m.

Sunday, 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 1 p.m. (Español)

Daily Mass

Tuesday - Thursday, 8 a.m., Friday, 12:10 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesday, 5:45 - 7 p.m.

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

St. John the Evangelist

Sunday Mass

Sunday, 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5 p.m. during semester

Daily Mass

Mondays at 12:10 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 5:10 p.m.

Wednesday, 12:10 p.m. & 9 p.m. during semester

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Change Service Requested

The Intercession of Fr. Rother *continued from front cover*

healing through the intercession of Fr. Rother. The next day, an expert at Craig Institute revised Katie's diagnosis and told us she had a chance of recovery."

Many individuals joined with the Hamiltons in praying to Fr. Rother for Katie's recovery, including her brother and sister; members of the St. John the Evangelist University Parish and Student Center; St. John Vianney seminarians in Denver; Archbishop Beltran; local priests and parishioners; and other Catholic friends throughout the country.

For the family, his intercession is evident in Katie's continuing recovery.

"Katie survived the injury when doctors initially thought she would not," Dianna says. "She woke from her coma, and she continues to improve."

On Sept. 23 at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City, Fr. Rother, the first American-born martyr, will be beatified. Alongside many others, the Hamiltons believe he truly is a saint.

"He gave his life for the faith while fighting for the good of the people of his parish," Dianna says.

It was Fr. Rother's life that impacted Bishop Mueggenborg as he discerned his vocation. He remembers being an altar server at a Mass Fr. Rother celebrated in the spring of 1981. Bishop Mueggenborg's brief encounter with the saintly man was an essential moment for him as he discerned his vocation.

"He died a martyr because of who he was as a man, and as a priest," Bishop Mueggenborg says. "It was his life and his deep, spiritual presence as a priest that impacted me."

Fr. Rother's life and death, his struggle to become a priest, and his determination in the face of trials, teaches all of us to turn to our faith and to persevere in the face of great difficulties.

"Fr. Rother is an example of heroic Christian virtue and courage," Dianna says. "Remember his bravery and determination when you want to give up. Never give up."

St. John's will charter three buses for those who would like to attend Fr. Rother's beatification on Sept. 23. If you would like to make the trip, please call the parish office at 405-372-6408 to reserve a spot.