

# SAINT *Vincent de Paul*



CATHOLIC CHURCH | SEWARD, NEBRASKA

## MEET THE PTO

PARENTS AND TEACHERS WORKING TOGETHER TO  
SUPPORT CURRENT AND FUTURE SCHOOL FAMILIES

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 3 Every Day is a New Day to be Grateful
- 4 Our Annual Parish SPIRIT Dinner and Auction: *Food, Fun and Fellowship for a Cause*
- 6 Praying Together, Staying Together: *The Importance of Family Prayer*
- 7 Another Exciting School Year Underway at St. Vincent de Paul School

When former President Aaron Busse first got involved in our school's Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) he initially saw it as a way to help his own children while they were at St. Vincent de Paul School. In fact, he had planned to simply move on once his children's journey with the school concluded. Yet, over the years Aaron has come to see the PTO in a much broader light — a way to make a lasting difference not only in the lives of his own children but in the many school families yet to come.

"I've seen how much work people have put into the school before my children were able to attend so that families like ours would have the opportunity to enroll in Catholic education," Aaron says. "I want to make sure that I do what I can now to help ensure that the school remains vibrant and available for families in the future, so that they can enjoy the blessing of sending their



*The community enjoys the PTO's annual Fourth of July float in the Seward parade.*

*continued on page 2*

## MEET THE PTO *continued from front cover*

children to a Catholic school as well.”

Ultimately, the PTO exists to assist teachers and staff in fulfilling their mission to educate the whole child — spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. They accomplish this by fostering better communication between the parents and school staff, fundraising, and by organizing and promoting volunteerism.

“Our mission is essentially to help the teachers and staff at St. Vincent’s, not just with monetary donations, but also by helping out in the classroom when needed and organizing special events,” says current PTO President Kathy Summa. “We’re there to become that connection, linking parents and staff members — to help out with whatever is needed so our school can thrive.”

This support is essential to the overall longevity of our school. Through their fundraising efforts, the PTO has been able to take some of the burden off the school budget and to purchase needed equipment and materials. In the past, this has included field trip funds, playground equipment, new iPads and curriculum updates. The PTO also coordinates room parents for each classroom and hosts special events such as the



*Parish youth participate in last year’s 5K Run, despite rainy weather.*

Back to School Night, Bedtime Story Night, the Soup Supper, Kindergarten Round Up, and last-day-of-school activities.

Not only do these events and endeavors support the school financially, but they also build a greater sense of community among our school families. For both Aaron and Kathy, this has been the great blessing of their involvement in the PTO over the years.

“It really keeps parents connected with the school as a whole, rather than focusing exclusively on their individual child,” Kathy says. “It also builds friendships among the parents. We always call it our St. Vincent de Paul School family and I really believe that it is like a family. This

is a small school and people tend to maybe watch out for each other more than at a bigger institute. So I would really encourage our newer parents to get involved because it truly is the best way to get to know people.”

“Through being involved with the PTO, both my wife and I feel that we’ve been able to meet and make such strong friendships with other school families,” Aaron says. “Then too, by being active with the PTO we know that we are currently helping our school while also becoming a part of things that will make our school stronger in the future.”



*We encourage all school parents to consider getting more involved in the Parent/Teacher Organization this school year. For more information about upcoming events and volunteer needs, please text or call Kathy Summa at 402-416-3980 or email her at [kagmo@wildblue.net](mailto:kagmo@wildblue.net).*



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

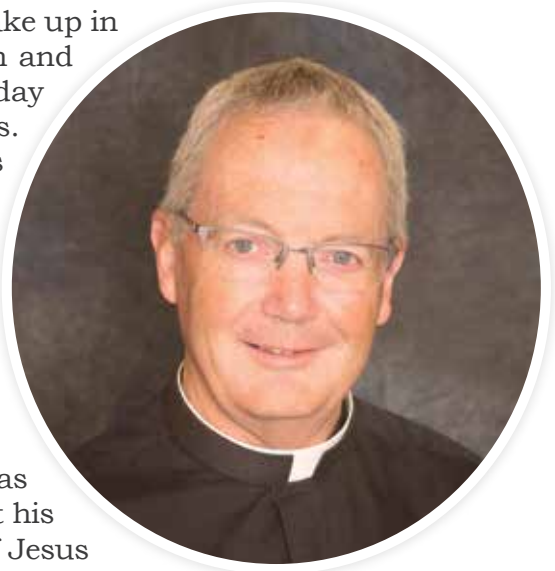
# EVERY DAY IS A NEW DAY TO BE GRATEFUL

Dear Parishioners,

I once heard a question about how we begin our day. When we wake up in the morning, do we say, “Good morning, God”? Or do we groan and say, “Oh God, it’s morning”? Gratitude helps us to begin our day saying “Good morning, God” as we look to what He has in store for us.

One morning as I was reading the Office of Readings, I was reminded of the truth that everything is a gift to us from God. God made the earth and all that is in it for us. He made us and gave us everything in the world. Just think of the last beautiful sunset that you saw. God made that for you! One morning after Mass, two parishioners came rushing back in to tell me that there were two full rainbows in the sky. God made that for them, because it was gone by the time I went out to look. Every day, God has a new gift for us. Recognizing His goodness fills our hearts with gratitude.

On the weekend of Aug. 3-4, Fr. Michael, who lives in Uganda, was here as a part of the Missionary Cooperative program. He spoke about his parish work, and he asked us to assist him to spread the message of Jesus in his country. Fr. Michael stayed with us for a week and I was fortunate to get to know him. I was impressed with his life of stewardship. He is a grateful man and sees everything as a gift. He received a small bowl made out of mulberry wood from a parish member. His expression of gratitude was extensive. We went to the Serra Club golf outing dinner, spending time with priests from the diocese and the bishop and Serra Club members. He was grateful for everything that happened on that day.



In his Sunday homily, he made a very simple statement that emphasizes how a steward is to live each day. Everything that we have is to help us know God, to help us on the road to heaven and to help others get to heaven. We talked about how a bicycle can help us get to heaven and help others get to heaven. A bicycle helps us to be healthy, so we will have energy to help others. A bicycle can carry us to people’s homes to bring them Communion. A bicycle can carry us to visit others, and then we can talk about Jesus. When he said this, I said, “I like this guy!”

Everything we have is a gift, and every day, God gives us gifts. As we recognize these gifts from God, we will be grateful, and joy flows from gratitude. I think everyone who met Fr. Michael will concur that he is a man filled with joy. He is joyful, because He knows God is good, and everything that he has is a gift from God. Every day is a new day, and every day is full of new gifts from God!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Robert Tucker  
Pastor

## OUR ANNUAL PARISH SPIRIT *FOOD, FUN AND FELLOWSHIP*

When you walk into a SPIRIT dinner and auction night at our parish, you may be transported to the ballpark, an Irish village, or even back in time to the Roarin' Twenties! No matter what the setting, this annual spring event is always a wonderful way to bring our parishioners and school families together for a great cause.

As a member of the SPIRIT committee, Nicole Wegman has a great appreciation of this night and the fun, fellowship and fundraising it brings to St. Vincent de Paul each year.

"Not only does it give the parish as a community a night out, but it helps raise funds for the parish and school to purchase larger items that are needed," she says.

With over 350 people purchasing tickets for the catered dinner and live auction this past March, the SPIRIT event continues to be successful after many years at our parish. Typically, funds raised during the evening are used to purchase things that will benefit both

the parish and school. For example, a recent SPIRIT night enabled the purchase of the van shared by our church and school communities.

With delicious food, an exciting and fast-paced auction, and a playful theme, this event never fails to entertain!

"Every year has a different theme," Nicole says. "Not long ago, we did a 'Catch the Spirit' baseball theme. This year's theme was planned around St. Patrick's Day, and with next year being 2020, we'll have a Roarin' Twenties theme. The MCs dress up and bring some excitement to it, and the costumes people wear have made some fun memories."

One of Nicole's favorite aspects of being involved with the SPIRIT night is the opportunity it has afforded her to meet new people. Between working with a great group of couples and individuals on the committee and getting to know many of the parishioners and school families who attend the dinner and auction, Nicole has been able to forge friendships with people she





# IT DINNER AND AUCTION: FELLOWSHIP FOR A CAUSE

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might never have otherwise encountered.

Nicki Wintz, who began serving on the SPIRIT committee two years ago, also considers the fellowship provided by the dinner and auction to be a great benefit to our faith community.

“I think it really unifies our parish as a church and school,” Nicki says. “So you have a whole span of age ranges there, and it’s just a fun event. Then at the end when you give your receipt, it’s a donation you’ve made, but you also get a fun item to bring home.”

Throughout the year, there are many opportunities for members of the community to get involved with the SPIRIT dinner and auction. Smaller social events — for example, football watch parties and Wii Bowling competitions — are offered to help offset the costs of some of the larger auction items. Parishioners may solicit donations for the auction from local businesses, and many generously donate items themselves, including anything from time at a vacation home to a round of golf or dinner out. The day and night of the event, volunteers set up and decorate, run the computers, and clean up.

By participating in the St. Vincent de Paul SPIRIT dinner and auction, members of our faith community feel a part of the larger picture here in our parish.

“[With the SPIRIT event], you see the grand scheme of things and the mission of building our

church,” Nicki says. “I would encourage people to go — anyone who would be able to help in any way or even just attend the dinner and auction that night. It’s a great event, and the people on the committee are a lot of fun. We would love for anyone to share their time, talent and treasure with us!”



*Interested in lending your time, talent or treasure to the 2020 Roarin’ Twenties SPIRIT dinner and auction? There are many ways for parishioners and school families to contribute — please contact Nicole Wegman at 402-440-4196 or [klmnwegman@gmail.com](mailto:klmnwegman@gmail.com), or Nicki Wintz at 402-659-3528.*

## *Praying Together, Staying Together:* THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY PRAYER

“The family that prays together stays together.” This famous slogan was coined in 1947 by writer Al Scalpone, and has been frequently referenced ever since. The phrase pinpoints the true power of prayer, and the importance of making family prayer a consistent practice in our lives.

As Christian disciples, we are striving to follow Jesus — to grow in our love of Him and to serve Him through the use of our time, talent and treasure. If we desire to follow in His footsteps, we must first begin by getting to know Him. Spending time with the Lord in prayer forms a foundation on which we can build our lives as Christian disciples, much in the same way that spending time with a girlfriend or boyfriend forms the foundation of a strong relationship.

The Christian family is the first place where children learn to pray. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls the family unit “*Ecclesia domestica*,” or “the Domestic Church” (1656). Thus, parents have a responsibility to set an example by taking time for personal prayer every day, and making family prayer a regular practice. This not only sets an example for the children, but also provides them with a faith-filled foundation and brings them closer to the Lord — forming them as grateful stewards of their time.

There are many ways in which a family can pray together. One of the most important times for prayer is before meals, where we thank God for His blessings, and for the food on our family table. Families may also share in the formal prayers of the Church, or perhaps pray a Rosary together every night. We can also thank the Lord aloud, asking Him to answer our prayers and offering Him our daily petitions. One often-suggested method of family prayer is ACTS, where we offer Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Supplication. Families may also go to their church and kneel together before the Blessed Sacrament, offering

prayers in Christ’s Presence.

These are just several of the many opportunities for families to pray together. Of course, prayer will be influenced by each family’s dynamics and personalities. But no matter how we pray, it is important that we make the time to do so. This will deepen the family’s relationship with the Lord, our commitment as His disciples will be stronger, and we may continually renew and foster our families’ bonds.

### **PRAYER OF PARENTS:**

*God, our Father, I thank You for the gift of my children and for the privilege and responsibility of being a parent, for this is my way of holiness. May I regard each of my children as a sacred pledge of Your love and a beautiful sign of Your confidence in me. Help me to pass on to my children our greatest treasures —faith in Your truths, hope in Your goodness, love in Your name for all. I entrust my children to Your loving care. Banish from our home any bitterness or lack of forgiveness. Let us have time, deep concern, and a sense of sacrifice for one another. Teach us never to be ashamed that we are, in name and in fact, a Catholic family striving to live in the way of Jesus, Who is head of our home. Give us Your Holy Spirit to unite us throughout this life and let the circle of our family be unbroken in the Kingdom of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*



## ANOTHER EXCITING SCHOOL YEAR UNDERWAY AT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SCHOOL

**A**n important aspect of our faith is building relationships — whether that is a relationship with God or the relationships between the members of our parish and school communities.

“Relationships really create the climate and culture in our school,” says Mrs. Denise Ray, Principal at St. Vincent de Paul School. “It’s all about the relationships between parents, students, colleagues and administrators.”

Mrs. Ray has been an educator for 28 years, and this is her second school year as St. Vincent de Paul Principal. She is excited to make this year one of growth.

“Last year was a year of learning and figuring things out,” she says. “I learned a lot and gained a lot.”

Mrs. Ray has enjoyed her time so far at St. Vincent de Paul and says it has been a good move for her family.

“I am really excited to be a part of St. Vincent de Paul,” she says.

One thing Mrs. Ray is most excited for in the 2019-2020 school year is a new writing curriculum for all grade levels.

“We are working diligently to get this into the hands of every student,” Mrs. Ray says. “I am

also going through the training myself to help the teachers.”

St. Vincent de Paul has never had a formal curriculum for writing — Mrs. Ray felt such a curriculum is necessary to help boost test scores. This curriculum will help students write for their audience, create their own writing ideas and work on “putting things on paper,” as Mrs. Ray says. They will also practice sharing their writing with their class.

“Our teachers are very excited about it,” she says.

Mrs. Ray is also excited to have all the same staff returning for the 2019-2020 school year. This provides stability, which she appreciates.

“Some of our teachers have been in the profession for 25 years,” Mrs. Ray says. “They are a ‘go-to’ for those who are newer to the profession.”

Mrs. Ray is also looking forward to the goals she has identified for the school year. One particular goal is to improve test scores.

“Right now, we are average,” she says. “Test scores are not everything, by any means, but they are used as a benchmark. The writing curriculum will help with the scores.”

She also wants to make



*Mrs. Ray is excited to be back for her second year as Principal at St. Vincent de Paul School.*

sure all children are being served in the way they need to be — ensuring all students are “moving forward” is of the utmost importance.

One of Mrs. Ray’s hopes is to implement a larger preschool program. This year is the first with half days, five days per week for preschool students.

“My huge goal is to grow enrollment,” she says. “I want to make sure we are serving the needs of the preschool parents. We have a phenomenal program with Mrs. Tina.”

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## ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SCHOOL *continued from page 7*

Mrs. Ray would also like to see overall school enrollment grow. This year will mark the largest kindergarten class in many years, at 15 students.

“I am ready to dig in and make this a great year,” she says.

Mrs. Ray wants to thank all the families and parishioners for their generous and constant support of the school.

“We have phenomenal parishioners, and alumni are very supportive of us, as well,” she says. “This school is a collective partnership of the entire parish.”

Most of all, Mrs. Ray wants to continue the mission of ensuring that every child forms a relationship with Christ before they “leave the four walls of this school.” She invites all parishioners to participate in events, including the Soup Supper in January, the 5K run in October and the Spirit Auction in March, where some of the money raised supports the school.

***“Relationships really create the climate and culture in our school. It’s all about the relationships between parents, students, colleagues and administrators.”***

***— Mrs. Denise Ray,  
Principal***

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### LITURGY SCHEDULE

***Daily Masses:*** Monday thru Friday at 7:00 a.m., Saturday at 8:00 a.m.

***Sunday Obligation Masses:*** Saturday at 5:30 p.m., Sunday at 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

***Confession:*** Monday thru Saturday: 20 minutes before each daily Mass, Saturday: 4:30 to 5:20 p.m., Sunday: 7:30 to 7:50 a.m. & 9:30 to 9:50 a.m. Other confession times available by appointment.