

Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.

Parish Life! from OSV



News and resources for your parish

May 2007

Welcome to **Parish Life!** from Our Sunday Visitor. As a parish leader who has ordered from Our Sunday Visitor in the past, you're receiving this fourth edition of our special e-newsletter just for parishes!

Each month you'll find timely content, practical information, and insightful inspiration delivered right to your inbox. We'd love to hear from you as well, so please e-mail us with questions or topics you would like to see discussed in future editions: yyoung@osv.com.

To continue receiving this monthly e-newsletter, you need do nothing. To unsubscribe, please follow the instructions at the bottom of the page.

Feel free to forward this email to a friend who might be interested.

The Gift of Summer by Lorene Hanley Duquin

First: In most parishes summer is that special time when life quiets down. It offers parish staff members the gift of time to reflect, reassess, revitalize and restore themselves and their ministries.

How will you use the gift of summer? Here are some suggestions:

- Identify Needs: Are there people or groups in the parish that fall through the cracks? Who are they? What do they need?
- Reassess Priorities: Look back on the busy times of the year and determine whether your priorities were on target. Do you need to make some changes?
- Plan: Do some things happen haphazardly throughout the year?

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This month in U.S. Church history

June 20

The first Eucharistic congress ever held in the United States begins in Chicago, 1926.

The Eucharistic Congress in Chicago lasted four days and brought some 500,000 people to Soldier Field to make a public expression of their faith

Now's a good time to put together a plan for the whole year.

- Identify Gifts: Are you looking for new volunteers to help in different ministries? This is a good time to identify folks that you would like to get involved.
- Catch up on your reading: Summer offers the time to tackle that pile of unread articles and books.
- Take a course: Check out the offerings at summer institutes and update yourself spiritually or professionally.
- Rest: Shorter summer hours - even if it means closing the office an hour early or half-days on Fridays - can help to restore energy levels.
- Recreation: Do something fun with the parish staff this summer. Whether it's a morning of reflection, a picnic or a day trip, getting together for spiritual or social events can help staff members bond.

Celebrate Summer Sundays!

Summer Sundays are often those most delicious hours of the year, when life is more relaxed and the usual bustle of school schedules gives way to play time. Whether highly scheduled or free, we all create rituals through which we live life.

Make a ritual of ritual. Think of some ways that the ordinary Sundays of summer might become unique and something to look forward to. Designate a theme for each Sunday - for example, Ice Cream Sunday or Wear Your Sandals to Church Sunday. Here's three to get you started. For more, [click here to visit the OSV web site](#).

- The Most Holy Trinity, June 3: Honor graduates and celebrate the end of the school year. Acknowledge and encourage all students for a job well-done.
- The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, June 10: Eat all your meals aware of all who helped provide it. Prepare ahead of time; let each member of the family be responsible for some part of the meal.
- Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, June, 17: On Father's Day, honor Dad's with a special blessing, telling them thanks for what you appreciate most about them.

A Steward Reflects: Many Languages, One Voice

"Today we celebrate the great beginning of your Church ... and created from the many languages of man one voice to profess one faith." The preface for the solemnity of Pentecost in the Roman Missal reminds us we've always had different languages in the Church, but with one voice we profess one faith.

Every weekend Mass is celebrated in more than 30 languages in some dioceses -- three languages in some parishes. As humans we can let differences separate us, or we can use the diversity as a reminder that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Does your parish treat all as one? In how many languages does your parish worship? Do you have parishioners of other cultures registered in your parish and attending Mass? What does the parish do for all its faithful to make them feel they are one voice professing one faith?

Take a Step Back -- Read a Book

How many times do you get asked if it's OK to read the Harry Potter books? Turn your calendar to July and multiply that number times 10.

in the Real Presence and adore the Blessed Sacrament. On the final day of the congress, a procession estimated at 750,000 strong escorted the Sacred Host along the shores of Lake Michigan.

Why do we do what we do?

Burning candles is a time-honored Catholic expression of hope and prayer. For more on why this practice is so important to Catholics, read Thomas Craughwell's explanation at Our Sunday Visitor's website: [Burning Candles Is a Longtime Tradition](#)

Quick links!

- ▼ www.OSV.com
- ▼ Parish leaders' resources
- ▼ Q&A with Dr. Joseph White
- ▼ 7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free Small Group Study Program
- ▼ New VBS program: Great Bible Reef
- ▼ Register to win free programs and materials for YOUR parish

Even youth who've had little previous interest in all things Potter are likely to get caught up in the media frenzy as the release date of the seventh and final book approaches.

While, the adventures of the boy wizard have provoked a vigorous debate among Catholics, you now have the resources to help your parish families sort it all out. The *Mystery of Harry Potter: A Catholic Family Guide* will help you appreciate and address the series' underlying moral and spiritual themes, including questions like:

- Are the stories compatible with our Catholic faith?
- What moral and spiritual issues are addressed?
- What kind of role model is Harry Potter?
- How can I talk about these issues with my children?
- Could children learn spells from the books?
- How will you know when your child is ready?
- How are the movies different from the books?

Using her natural teaching skills and parenting experience, author Nancy Carpentier Brown provides a must-read guide through Pottermania for you and all your Catholic families.

[New from OSV: The Mystery of Harry Potter: A Catholic Family Guide by Nancy C. Brown](#)

Jesus of Nazareth by Pope Benedict XVI

Jesus of Nazareth is often eloquent and always clear, but it does not oversimplify its lofty subject or talk down to readers. Pope Benedict stresses that the book is not an exercise of papal teaching authority but an expression of his "personal search 'for the face of the Lord'". . .

"Everyone is free . . . to contradict me," he modestly remarks. But wise readers will seek to learn rather than contradict. "Jesus of Nazareth" is a classic in the making. - From Russell Shaw's review of "Jesus of Nazareth" in *Our Sunday Visitor* (May 27)

[Pope Benedict's new book: Jesus of Nazareth](#)

A Time Away by Kelley Renz

Then He said to them, "Come away, all of you, to a quiet place, and rest awhile." (Mark 6:31) During this summer, take time to rest with the Lord. Use one verse a week in your prayer. Ask the Lord to speak to you through this verse. Write down your thoughts. Note impressions made as you ponder God's word.

June 3: Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Proverbs 8:22-31

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

"Thus says the wisdom of God ... 'When the Lord established the heavens, I was there and I found delight in the human race.'" (Proverbs 8)

Does it surprise you to learn that wisdom "found delight" in the human race?

This wisdom is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit finds delight in us, how accessible to us, then, must wisdom be? How do you open yourself on a

regular basis to the wisdom of God?

June 10: Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood

Genesis 14:18-20

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Luke 9:11b-17

"... and blessed be God Most High who delivered your foes into your hand." (Genesis 14)

The ancient view of God's power was seen in conquering and triumph. The view of God's power as taught by the Son of God is quite different and yet is still triumphant. It is a triumph over sin. It is a triumph over forces within and without that would threaten our proximity to God. All of these "foes" will indeed be delivered into our hands.

From what foes have you been delivered?

June 17: Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13

Galatians 2:16, 19-21

Luke 7:36-8:3

"The Lord ... has forgiven your sin. You shall not die." (2Samuel 12)

Think of the power of sin - it is deadly. How well do you see its deadly effects in our culture, our community, our world? What lengths do people go to in order to convince themselves that sin is "no big deal?" How well does your life witness against this prevailing view?

June 24: Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Isaiah 49:1-6

Acts 13:22-26

Luke 1:57-66, 80

"What, then, will this child be?" (Luke 1)

Zechariah is struck dumb on one day. His friends know that something happened to him when he was inside the temple. His motions indicate an angel, but who really knows what he's trying to tell them? Then, his child is born -- a miraculous birth because Elizabeth was so old, well beyond child-bearing age. And they name him something very strange. And just at that naming, Zechariah begins to speak, to proclaim, to shout all that has occurred in these past months! The atmosphere was charged with knowledge that God had indeed done something grand. But how long did the amazement last? Did people continue to wonder? Did people sustain that watchful eye on what God was going to bring about through this child? Do you watch the hand of God? Do you ponder what God is doing in your life? In the lives of those around you? Do you know how to watch God?

Let us know what you think!

We hope you've enjoyed our Parish Life! newsletter! Let us know what you think--we appreciate your comments, questions, suggestions, and requests! Email yyoung@osv.com.

York Young

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