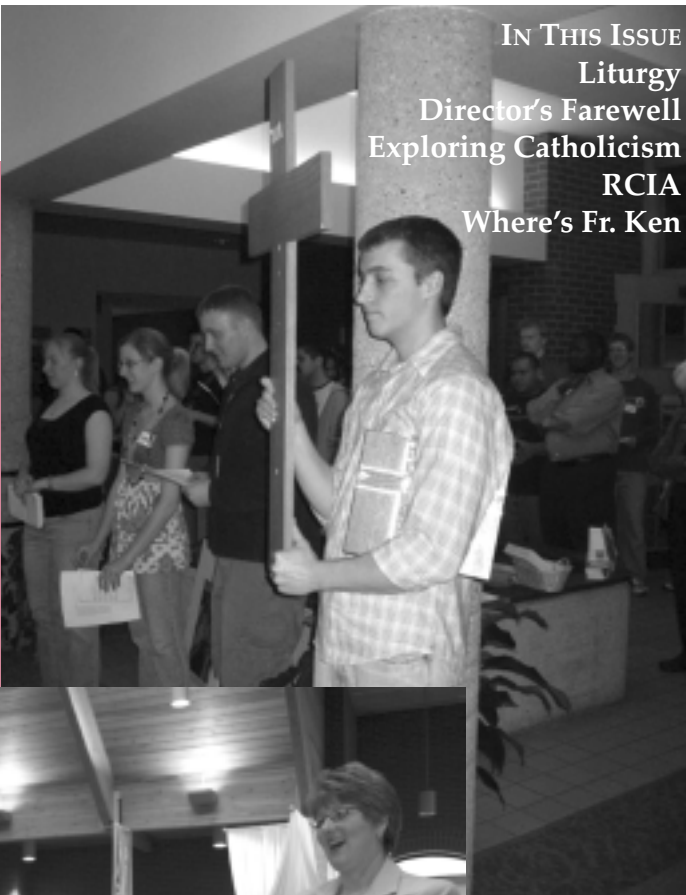


SPRING/SUMMER 2008

St. Stephen the Witness Catholic Student Center

WITNESSTHE NEWS



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Liturgy

Liturgy has the power to transform. While I always knew this, never have I experienced this statement's truth more than since beginning as the Director of Liturgy and Music here at St. Stephen the Witness Catholic Student Center in August 2007. Witnessing the prayer lives of the students and how they integrate faith into their lives is truly humbling to me, and it has been an honor journeying in discipleship together this year.

My goal in this position has been to help others use their God-given gifts and talents to the glory of God and the good of God's people. I hope to help others gain the courage and humility necessary to share their light with our faith community and their world.

I have witnessed the light of Christ truly shining at St. Stephen. This year, we had the blessing of training a record number of students for liturgical ministry roles. From lector or sacristan to active participant at Mass, each person's presence makes a difference, and we are deeply grateful. As **Eric Faurote**, graduate student from Cedar Rapids, said, "As Confirmed members of the church we are called by the Holy Spirit to serve one another."

Our students and community members have various reasons for taking part in liturgical ministry, but all mention their desire to serve God's people and to further God's kingdom here on earth. "The most enjoyable part of liturgical ministry is being able to serve others," said **Adam Bormann**, senior from West Bend, Iowa. "As a Eucharistic Minister, I am able to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ to others. I strongly encourage others to take part in this ministry."

"As a greeter, I am able to meet a variety of students and show them how brilliant, amazing and wonderful the atmosphere of God's followers really can be even in the twilight of Sunday," said **Chris Meyer**, senior from Eldridge, Iowa, who often ministers at the 9pm Mass. "Also as a collection counter, I get a sense of how truly charitable college kids really can be."

"Choir is another way I can voice my prayer," said **Nathan Link**, senior from Dubuque. "To me song is very powerful. Also, choir practices give me a chance to get to know others on a deeper level through insightful stories and prayer. God gave me a voice so I could sing of His glory."

Students and other community members also serve on the liturgy committee, a group



that helps plan Mass and other liturgies and prayer experiences. We typically begin by reading or choosing the Scripture of the prayer experience, Break Open the Word together, and then discuss how these reflections could positively impact environment, prayers, songs, and actions.

"Liturgy committee is an opportunity for me to grow in my faith both by reflecting on the Scripture and by listening to the reflections of the other members of the group. It always amazes me how the same Scripture can speak to people in so many different ways," said **Michael Cronin**, junior from Holstein, Iowa.

"I've loved being involved with the liturgy committee at St. Stephen," said **Margaret Hart** from Waterloo. "It's been such a great experience getting more involved in the church and giving back to a place that has done so much for me this year. It's helped me to better understand what is going on around me during Mass and other prayer services as well."

Tracy Chapman, junior from Williamsburg, Iowa, agreed that Breaking

Open the Word together in the liturgy committee makes worship come more alive. "Mass has a deeper meaning when I spend more time with it."

"Being part of liturgy committee makes me feel more a part of the Mass," agreed **Molly Gill**, freshman from Naperville, Illinois. "It's like reading the book before you go to class."

"Once I got involved in the (liturgy) committee, I started to understand the seasons of Mass," echoed **Jewelette Botello**, junior from San Antonio, Texas.

At other times, members of the liturgical environment committee decorate the chapel together for the various seasons of the church year and also take part in other behind-the-scenes tasks.

For some, participation in liturgy and prayer experiences at St. Stephen is an extension of the students' parish life, while others have just begun their ministry here. Either way, parishes from all over can benefit from the students' ministry experience at St. Stephen. As **Anne Rohde**, freshman from Muscatine, Iowa, said, "It's nice to give back to the Church and community that has given so much to me." She enjoys being able to share her God-given gifts with others. "It makes me want to do this when I go forward from here."

Liturgy has the power to transform. I have witnessed this transformation in others and in myself during my first year. I feel the palpable presence of the Holy Spirit while planning with the liturgy committee. I hear the voice of God in the voices of the choir. I see the shepherding of God in the reverence of prayer leaders during Taize or Eucharistic Adoration. I am immersed in the love of God when hearing students build community with one another after Wednesday night Prime Time. The risen Lord is among us through our liturgy and prayer. Amen. Alleluia!

~Anastasia Nicklaus Schmelzer, Dir. Liturgy & Music

Director's Farewell

Ten years ago, my Congregational leader informed me about an opening at St. Stephen the Witness for a religious Sister in campus ministry. I remember my feelings of excitement and before I knew it I was on my way to Cedar Falls to begin a new ministry. As I reminisce over these years, so many memories are etched on my heart. I remember all the students I have met over the years and walked with daily, beginning

our relationship with the children of El Faro, meeting new freshman parents on welcome weekend, the laughter in the gathering space after liturgy, cheering at all the Panther games, our staff prayer and dinners, my appointment as Director of Campus Ministry and the many cherished friendships I have developed over the years. I am very grateful for the many gifts I have received from this community and know it

has been an honor to serve you. In remembering all these joyous moments, there is also sadness as I depart to begin my new ministry in New Orleans. I will keep you in my prayers and I ask you to do the same as I transition.

Blessings always,

~Sr. Mary Lou Specha, PBVM, 1998-2008

Exploring Catholicism

What are students searching for today?

There are a variety of answers to this question. Here are a few examples:

- ~A purpose in life.
- ~An understanding of their role in society.
- ~An education that will prepare them for the future.
- ~A deeper understanding and commitment to their faith.

If you are reading the newspapers and watching the news each week, there is information about the new generation of Christians in the world. Historically, faith was part of the family structure and of society. Recently this has been under scrutiny and new trends are developing. For past generations, the Church or the Sunday gatherings were the culmination of the faith experience. Today that is no longer the case. It has become much more individualized.

It is interesting if you ask a person if they are religious; many will respond, "no". However, many will say they are spiritual. They are looking and connecting with those organizations and things that allow them to grow closer to their God without having to make a large commitment of time.

Here at St. Stephen the Witness, we are trying to fill this gap with a class entitled "Exploring Catholicism". It has been offered for the past two years and has

looked different each semester. The first semester discussed topics that students had submitted for consideration. One semester looked closer at the Sacraments of the Church; yet another time we reflected upon chapters of The United States Catechism of the Church for Adults. This semester students were interested in learning more about the historical components of our faith such as the liturgical year, our baptismal call, Vatican II, and historical developments.

The purpose of the classes is to allow students to grow in their faith and at the same time be able to ask questions and discuss their experiences with others. For many it is the first time they have taken a serious look at their faith as a young adult, and for others the first time they have questioned what makes us Catholic and the many practices of our faith.

As a priest, these classes have been very rewarding and life-giving. It is here where I can walk with the students as they discover a truth they have always known but are now able to articulate for themselves. It is here where the students feel comfortable asking questions they have always been afraid to verbalize. It is here



where students realize they are not alone, but that others have the same questions and concerns as they do.

Exploring Catholicism will again be offered in the Fall of 2008. Students have asked that we return to the United States Catechism of the Catholic Church. The chapters are short, the connection to every day life is present and it is a great way to walk with others in discovering God's presence as a young adult.

These classes are intended for the everyday Catholic, no prerequisite is needed, no degree in Theology or Philosophy is expected--simply a desire to want to grow in faith and to share that desire and intention with other young adults.

~Fr. Ken Glaser, Dir. Campus Ministry

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

I have been blessed this year to help with the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). This year, we had seven individuals receive Full Communion into the Catholic Church. I enjoyed it because it was an opportunity for me to walk with the candidates and team members, giving me the ability to grow in my own faith, as well. It was an opportunity to find out why we believe what we believe, and it gave me the ability to look at things from the perspective of "cradle-born Catholics," candidates of RCIA, fellow students, and adults.

Our newly initiated were very committed to the RCIA process. They attended weekly classes and Breaking Open the Word sessions, and spent time in prayer and discernment. In classes, we covered topics such as the Communion of Saints, Sacraments, Lenten Practices, and Prayer. We also went on a tour of the Archdiocese of Dubuque that included visits to the New Mallery Abbey in Peosta, the Franciscan Mother House and St. Raphael Cathedral in Dubuque, and St. Francis Xavier Basilica in Dyersville. This tour allowed me to experience the rich tradition and

peacefulness of religious communities I had never visited before.

Holy Week was an awesome experience, and it is one that I will never forget. Seeing the candidates' smiles at the Easter Vigil while being initiated brought such joy to my heart and the hearts of the entire community.

Each candidate will have special memories of the RCIA process. Jaime Lyon, a graduate TESOL student, says her most memorable part of the Vigil was during Fr. Ken's homily when he asked how many present had joined the Church through RCIA. "I never realized how many people have chosen to go through RCIA to join the Catholic Church. We are part of a larger number who are welcomed and who can truly become a part of the Church."

RCIA has been a wonderful experience for me, and I pray that this Easter Season may be a time of continued prayer and growth for our newly initiated

and all members of the Church.

~Michael Cronin, Peer Minister



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*We are a Catholic faith community.
Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel and build up God's Kingdom.*

Where in Iowa is Fr. Ken?!?

As Director and Sacramental Priest, I will be on the road this summer personally thanking those parishes and sharing the "Good News" of Campus Ministry. Campus ministry is one of our best-kept secrets in the state and I want to shed light on the good things that are happening. The best way to do this is to travel the state and meet our students and their families on their turf, in their home parish. Without the foundation established by the parents and

the students' faith communities, our liturgies, retreats and activities would not be a success. This summer I have expanded my travels. I will be celebrating weekend liturgies in the following parishes:

~May 24 & 25: Sacred Heart, Maquoketa
~July 12 & 13: St. Mark, Iowa Falls & St. Mary, Eldora
~August 2 & 3: St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines
~August 9 & 10: St. Mark, Edgewood &

St. Patrick, Colesburg.

If you live near one of these parishes, I invite you to come and join us for the weekend liturgies. I would enjoy meeting you, but more importantly being able to thank you personally for your prayerful and financial support and for providing a foundation of faith for our students.

~Fr. Ken Glaser, Dir. Campus Ministry

Upcoming Events

May 20: 12TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

August 25: UNI FALL SEMESTER BEGINS

September 20: FAMILY WEEKEND

October 11: UNI HOMECOMING

For more information on these and other events, please call (319) 266-9863 or visit our website at www.ststephenuni.org

Cover Photos

Jason Dole carries the cross during stations; Sr. Mary Lou Specha, PBVM, receives an original watercolor portrait at her farewell event, and Sr. Norma Jean Holthaus, Rebecca Thayer & Megan Kass enjoy breakfast.

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SUMMER LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays 10:30 AM

Wednesdays 5:30 PM

Witness the News, Spring/Summer 2008

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