BLESSINGS
Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries at Mass

Summer often brings a plethora of weddings, although fall’s cooler temps and bright colors also make it a popular season for making promises and beginning new lives together. Summer, then, is also a time for celebrating wedding anniversaries. My parents, for example, celebrated their 60th anniversary on June 27.

If you’re a couple anticipating what we might call a “milestone anniversary,” I’d encourage you to allow the parish to have a small role in your celebration. Specifically, I am hoping we can develop a tradition of acknowledging 25, 50, 60, 65, 70 (and higher) anniversaries at Mass. This is simply a matter of identifying the couple and praying for God’s blessing. There’s a very learnable and singable blessing song that we might offer, as well as a succinct spoken prayer.

This adds very little time to the length of the liturgy, to alleviate fears of any clock-watchers among us, while giving us a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge sacramental love and fidelity, and to call upon God’s grace for the couple being honored.

A few years ago I knew of a couple’s approaching 50th anniversary and mentioned offering a blessing at Mass. TheSee BLESSINGS on Page 2

INPUT
SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Nominations are being sought for our parish’s reformulated Pastoral Council. Essentially we are streamlining a leadership structure that has been in place since 2010, and implementing a model common in other parishes of the diocese that includes a Pastoral Council, Finance Council and committees addressing Worship, Faith Formation, Social Justice and Community Outreach.

The immediate need is to identify four new members for the Pastoral Council. They will join the existing members who will begin transitioning off the Council in the next few years as they complete their terms.

The new Pastoral Council, once it’s fully established, will consist of 12 members. Nine will be identified through nomination or a selection process such as an election or drawing names. Three members will be appointed by the pastor, largely to assure diversity of interest and age. Members will be eligible to serve two three-year terms.

The primary role of the Pastoral Council is consultation, which Bishop John Paul in a 1985 pastoral letter described as “a conversation between pastors and their people.” “We need each other in the Church,” wrote Bishop Paul, who died in 2006. “Parishioners look to their pastor for spiritual nourishment, instruction, and guidance in the Christian life, and their pastor looks to them for the witness of Christian living in every aspect of life and for encouragement and

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SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Any parishioner is eligible to serve on the Pastoral Council. Four new members are needed.

You may nominate someone, or nominate yourself, by sending an email to Joan Kleist of the Pastoral Council, at kleist1150@gmail.com, or by contacting the parish office. Nominations will be confirmed with the nominee. If there are more than four nominees, names will be drawn at random.

Terms are for three years, with members eligible to serve two terms. The Council meets approximately six times a year for, usually, no more than an hour!

The deadline for nominations is July 28, the Solemnity of St. Anne, our parish patron.

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wife replied, “Oh, we don’t need that.” “That may be true,” I replied, even though I think we all and always need God’s grace. I added, more to the point, “Our parish needs to know and recognize that there are people among us who make and honor promises.” I think that awareness is especially important for teens and young adults.

Another couple, anticipating their 69th wedding anniversary, asked if we would offer a blessing at Mass, even though it wasn’t one of the usual five- or 10-year milestones. I said, “Sandy after you hit 65, we’re going to do it every year for as long as we can.” I believe a blessing was offered for that couple just this past February.

Birthdays also are worthy of our attention and prayer. While it would be ideal to acknowledge and pray for everyone as they celebrate the start of a new year of life, 90 years and higher seems commendable in terms of a blessing at Mass. Again, the community needs to acknowledge that there are people in that age group among us each Lord’s Day, and we want to call upon God’s blessing for them.

If you’re willing to share your birthday or anniversary with us, and allow us to pray for you, please let us know the date and Mass time that best coincides with your birthday or anniversary, or your family’s celebration. Call the parish office or send an email to mail@stanneswausau.org.

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The Beatification of a potential Saint is, I would think, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And that’s what this pilgrimage offers — the experience of participating in the Beatification Mass of Brother James Miller, a Central Wisconsin native martyred in Guatemala in 1982.

While the Beatification Mass on Dec. 7 will be the culmination of the pilgrimage, our time in Guatemala also will include a day in Santiago Atitlan, where we’ll visit the church where Blessed Stanley Rother of Oklahoma City was martyred in 1981. We’ll also visit the beautiful, ancient city of Antigua and experience some of the Mayan culture at a parish mission in San Lucas Toliman.

Brochures with a complete itinerary and other details are available at church entranceways. There’s an early-booking discount if you register by July 7. Please consider joining us for what promises to be a wonderful experience.

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The Boards of our two Endowment Trusts – The St. Anne Parish Endowment Trust and the George L. Geisler Educational Endowment Trust — are happy to report results for the 2019 Fiscal Year.

Current and accumulated income generated by the St. Anne Parish Endowment for Fiscal Year 2019 amounted to just over $82,000. This income funded the following projects:

- Replacing existing lighting with high efficiency LED lighting - $5,824;
- School classroom carpeting replacement - $8,995;
- School door replacements - $21,705;
- Tractor salt spreader attachment - $5,130;
- Heating/Cooling control upgrade - $40,798.

The Geisler endowment allowed us to award a four-year scholarship of $1,400 per year to Karianna Severson, a 2019 Newman Catholic High School graduate.

We also are happy to report that in the last three years, parishioners have continued to make gifts to our endowments. The parish endowment received $17,975, and the educational endowment received $1,370. Endowment income allows us to continue to support Catholic education, as well as to fund parish operations and capital projects.

To learn more about how you can support our endowments with a current or legacy gift, please contact Bobbi Gadke, Parish Finance Director, at 849-3930, ext. 310.
As our 39 youth and adults (our largest group ever) prepare for the summer youth mission trip to Topeka, Kan., July 6-13, I am often asked the question: Why can’t they do that work here? There is plenty of need here in the Wausau community. There are homes and decks in need of repair in Marathon County, the same as Topeka. Why spend all the resources to head 10 hours away to help total strangers?

I will be the first to say I totally understand that concern. However, there are a number of factors in a mission trip, rather a pilgrimage of faith, which simply cannot be replicated in our own hometown. NOW I do not claim to deem Topeka a center of our faith when I describe our trip as a pilgrimage of faith. However, a pilgrimage is primarily a mindset of the traveler; it’s a matter of approach more than destination. If we are true to the call to see God in everyone we meet or everywhere we go, everyone and everyplace we go is holy.

Since 2012, St. Anne Youth Ministry has partnered with groupmissiontrips.com to assist with our mission trip experience. Their philosophy starts with the idea that mission trips aren’t just about what you’re doing. They’re about the whole complex process of pushing teens out of their comfort zone for the sake of building relationships and creating space for them to experience God.

Here’s how it works…

**ISOLATION:** No, this doesn’t mean the trip is to a deserted island! Isolation means getting away from a familiar environment where no one can escape. Let’s face it, when you try to do a project locally this is what happens: Sure I can be there…except Tuesday when my Mom wants me to take my brother to swim lessons. Oh, and Wednesday coach wants us in the weight room by one so I’ll just be there in the morning.

My boss won’t let me off Thursday and Friday my friends are taking off early to go to Tommy’s parents lake house. But I can be there the rest of the week. I’ll be there but I’m coming late every day ‘cause I promised my Dad I’d clean out the garage.

Sure, maybe the work gets done, but the youth will miss the real impact of going on a mission trip if we stayed home. When you go away from home you cut the connection. Being a few hundred miles away eliminates all the excuses. Work gets done but everyone gets so much more, including stronger bonds with each other.

**CONCENTRATION:** If you’ve ever had a spoonful of frozen juice concentrate you know what a powerful experience that can be. Once you add water it’s just juice but if you want something out of the ordinary there’s nothing quite like juice concentrate. The same is true with mission experiences. Do one around home and your young people might see it as just helping out around home. Go to a community unlike yours, spend 24/7 with members of your group and get busy doing things you don’t normally do (like swing a hammer or paint a house) and WHAM! you’ve tasted concentrate.

You’ve been challenged and stretched in a way that just doesn’t happen at home. You’ve seen your friends in their extremes when pretend doesn’t hold up and masks fall off. Now you’re getting down to what’s real. Top it off with the fact that you get to interpret this concentrated experience through the eyes of faith and nothing can match the power of going away for a mission trip.

**INSPIRATION:** Moving away from what you know and spending time

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In practice, the Pastoral Council identifies matters of importance to the parish and then proceeds to discuss, encourage, challenge and make recommendations as to specific and general aspects of parish life. It is the primary, official body of consultation for the pastor with the parish. The committees, which will be organized in the fall, work in collaboration with the Council. The reformulated Council replaces a leadership structure that, while effective initially, has waned under the burden of complex procedures and a heavy demand for people. The new model is simpler and, hopefully, more helpful and beneficial. The new Pastoral Council includes parishioners who were part of the former leadership team. They include John Prey, Bob Polesnak, Deb Chittum, Joan Kleist, Kathy Maves, Michelle Allen, Jill Warsaw, Evie Nielsen, Tony Cicha, Deb Jarosz, Gary Jarosz, John Schmitt, Kristine Lato, Deacon Erv Burkhardt and Fr. Tom Lindner.