

## Sharing Hope in Tough Times

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### Reflections & Prayer Intention Suggestions for Your Bulletin: April 2009

#### **April 5, 2009:**

**Reflection:** Jesus never sought worldly glory; He humbly accepted help from Simon of Cyrene while carrying His cross. Don't be afraid to allow your Simon help you make ends meet.

**Prayer Intention:** That we learn to graciously help others as they carry their daily burdens, and that we are humble enough to accept help from others when we are carrying ours.

#### **April 12, 2009:**

**Reflection:** Even if we face losing our income, Christ's Resurrection reminds us that a new life awaits us on the other side of darkness.

**Prayer Intention:** That the stresses and fears of our uncertain economy are destroyed by the new beginning promised in the Resurrection of Jesus.

#### **April 19, 2009:**

**Reflection:** When one of us suffers, we all suffer. Inviting a family who is experiencing an employment layoff to dinner can ease much suffering.

**Prayer Intention:** That in response to difficult financial times, Christians everywhere generously celebrate community with their friends and neighbors and share in a daily meal.

#### **April 26, 2009:**

**Reflection:** During the Great Depression, the homeless left a special mark on the sidewalks of friendly homes. With what sign shall we mark our homes today?

**Prayer Intention:** That Christians everywhere be a sign of Christ with their very lives, bringing the hope of the gospel to those in need.

#### **Alternate/Extra #1:**

**Reflection:** Charity's Latin root "caritas" suggests "deariness" in its meaning. In caring for those whom we hold dear, charity becomes more than just writing a check.

**Prayer Intention:** That all people come to a deeper understanding of charity and graciously love all of their neighbors as Christ taught us.

#### **Alternate/Extra #2:**

**Reflection:** When giving, never let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. What prevents us from sending a grocery store gift card to the family struggling with unemployment?

**Prayer Intention:** That all Christians recognize the Gospel's call to give of themselves, and to help those in need without seeking recognition.

## Stewardship Bulletin Inserts for April / May 2009

April 5, 2009 (Palm Sunday)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Good stewards strive to conform their lives to that of Christ – emptying themselves of all pride and putting themselves at the service of others.

April 19, 2009 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

The Christian community described in Acts understood and practiced *total* stewardship. St. Paul reports that the believers did not claim anything for their own, but held everything in common and distributed to each other whatever was needed.

May 3, 2009 (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

To be good stewards we must be good shepherds, willing to lay down our lives for those committed to our care, not mere hired hands who run off, “leaving the sheep to be snatched and scattered by the wolf.”

May 17, 2009 (6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In today’s Gospel, Jesus commanded His disciples to love one another, even to the point of laying down their lives if necessary. What gifts of myself – my skills and talents, my time and resources – will best demonstrate my love for God’s people?

May 31, 2009 (Pentecost)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In today’s second reading, St. Paul reminds us that all of our gifts have their source in the Holy Spirit and that those gifts are given “for the common good.” What gifts are mine to share?

April 12, 2009 (Easter)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Alleluia! Christ is risen and is victorious over sin and death! We are good stewards of our faith if, like St. Paul, we share this good news whenever and wherever we can.

April 26, 2009 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

The two disciples in today’s Gospel came to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread. When we share what we have with those in need, we too, will discover Jesus in our midst.

May 10, 2009 (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

The good steward lives the advice of St. John that was recited in today’s second reading, loving in deed and in truth, rather than just talking about it.

May 24, 2009 (7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Jesus is the perfect steward – watching carefully over all who had been entrusted to Him by the Father and then sending them all out into the world in service. May I similarly protect and wisely use the gifts entrusted to me!

**April 5<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday**

It is from God that men and women receive their essential dignity and the capacity to seek truth and goodness. ... When humanity's spiritual dimension is brought to light, individual's hearts and minds are drawn to God and to the marvels of human life: being itself, truth, beauty, moral values, and other persons.

--Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to Ambassador of Australia to the Holy See, Feb. 2, 2009*

**April 12th Easter Sunday**

Through his radical love for us, in which the heart of God and the heart of man touched, Jesus Christ truly took light from heaven and brought it to the earth – the light of truth and the fire of love that transform man's being. He brought the light, and now we know who God is and what God is like. Thus we also know what our human situation is: what we are, and for what purpose we exist. ... Yes, I believe that the world and my life are not the product of chance, but of eternal Reason and eternal Love, they are created by Almighty God. Yes, I believe that in Jesus Christ ... the face of God has been revealed; that in him, God is present in our midst, he unites us and leads us towards our goal, towards eternal Love.

--Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily at Easter Vigil Mass, March 22, 2008*

**April 19<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)**

We have great hope in *the Lord's power to heal our land* of the painful wound of legalized abortion. Every abortion is a personal tragedy. Its dread impact falls not only on a little boy or a little girl, but on the child's parents, grandparents, siblings and everyone involved. Knowing that God's mercy is greater than all of our sins, tonight we pray for all these people. We pray for the conversion of all those who promote death as a solution to social ills or to an unplanned pregnancy. We pray for legislators, educators, counselors and all health care professionals who put their skills and training at the service of life. We lift up Project Rachel and other post-abortion counseling ministries, pro-life pregnancy centers, and organizations that work every day to usher in a culture of life.

--Homily of Cardinal Justin Rigali, *Vigil Mass for Life, Jan. 21, 2009*

**April 26<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Easter**

Approximately a third of women who have recourse to artificial procreation succeed in having a baby. It should be recognized, however, that given the proportion between the total number of embryos produced and those eventually born, *the number of embryos sacrificed is extremely high*. These losses are accepted by the practitioners of *in vitro* fertilization as the price to be paid for positive results. In reality, it is deeply disturbing that research in this area aims principally at obtaining better results in terms of the percentage of babies born to women who begin the process, but does not manifest a concrete interest in the right to life of each individual embryo.

--Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dignitas Personae, no. 14*

**Office of Pro-Life, Marriage and Family Ministry**  
**Diocese of Youngstown**  
**Natural Family Planning Bulletin Quotes**

**April 5<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday**

Couples who practice Natural Family Planning find that by discussing and prayerfully discerning their aspirations and concerns about the size of their family, they find it more easy to address issues in other critical areas of their marriages: finances, "in-law" strategies, how to rear their children, and many other issues.

*--Couple to Couple League website*

**April 12<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday**

**What is natural family planning?**

Natural family planning is a general name for the methods of family planning that are based on a woman's menstrual cycle. A man is fertile throughout his life, while a woman is fertile for only a few days each cycle during the child-bearing years. Some believe that NFP involves using a calendar to predict the fertile time. That is not what NFP is today.

*--Married Love & The Gift of Life: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

**April 19<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)**

If parents are not living the sexual ethic taught by the Church, then they cannot teach these values to their children. If parents are not living chastity in their marriage, then they cannot expect their sons and daughters to live chastity as single persons. If parents refuse to practice periodic abstinence, as required by natural family planning, then how can they expect their vibrant teenagers to practice total abstinence?

*-- Fr. Matthew Habiger, O.S.B., Ph.D.*

**April 26<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Easter**

Contraception does not exist to welcome another person into the world. It is intended to prevent the *coming into being* of another person. Its action is to separate, or suppress. Contraception is not family planning--it is family avoidance. That is radically different from being a good steward over one's fertility and co-operating with God *and His design* to space and limit births in a marriage. The latter perspective honors God as author of life, the former does not.

*--Theresa Notare, Director of Natural Family Planning, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

**Wednesday May 6, 2009**

St. Charles Borromeo Parish  
7345 Westview Dr. Boardman, OH 44512

**7:00 – 9:00 PM**

THE  
*Gift*

*Come Discover*  
**Your Call To Greatness**



There is a “great mystery” chiseled in us by God – a call to greatness stamped in our humanity. This call to greatness is a sheer gift. It is the gift of all gifts. Learn how to open more fully to this gift and live it more abundantly.

- **What are your deepest desires?**
- **Are you looking for happiness, contentment, satisfaction?**
- **Do you know what will bring the true happiness you long for?**

The key to discovering our “greatness” is to get in touch with our deepest desires. If our desires often cause us trouble, the problem is not that we desire *too* much – but that we desire *too* little.

## **Christopher West**

is recognized around the globe for his work promoting an integral, biblical vision of human life and love. He serves as a research fellow and faculty member for the Theology of the Body Institute and is the best-selling author of five books. He and his wife, Wendy, live with their five children near Lancaster, PA.

**\$10 – Advance Registration / \$15 – Payable at the door** Religious Education Certification hours available

### ***The Gift: Come Discover Your Call to Greatness***

**Advance Registration due by April 23, 2009**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10  
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