



# Northern Lights

Fall 2013—Volume 59

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Matthew 5:14*

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## From the Desk of the Dean

In a talk given just prior to his election as Pope Francis, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio cautioned about the danger of what he called a “self-referential” faith.

By “self-referential,” he referred to the type of Christian faith that existed only for the sake of the active members of the Church. In other words, a self-referential faith neglects to look outward. It fails to reach out toward those who have grown cold or indifferent to the mission of Christ in the Church.

To be sure, the words “evangelical” or “evangelizing” don’t come readily to mind when people think about the Catholic Church. Yet, Pope Francis is reminding us that these words are constitutive of who we are as the People of God. As an evangelizing people, we are all missionaries. We are all called to draw others toward the Gospel message. And let’s be clear: Our purpose as missionaries is not to make others more like ourselves but more like Christ, the source of all holiness.

Many of the parish communities in the St. Marys Deanery are having conversations about how they can better live out their evangelical character. Please take a few minutes to find out more about how the Holy Spirit is continually renewing our part of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. I hope you enjoy this edition of Northern Lights.



## Ride for Life in Minster By: Marlene Rutschilling

*“Thanks to faith we have come to understand the unique dignity of each person.” Pope Francis, Lumen Fidei (#54)*

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, 30 cyclists embarked upon a four day, 240 mile bicycling trip from the University of Dayton to the University of Notre Dame as a fundraiser for life. Minster served as the host town for the riders on the first evening of the journey, providing shelter in the High School.



The first bicyclists to arrive in Minster

Minster/New Bremen Right To Life provided meals as well as a welcoming pep rally for the riders. The rally included music by the MHS band as well as Dan and Laura Klosterman. Prayers were lead by Deacon Klosterman. Paul Coudron, Director of the Life Resource Centre and Life Ride, provided a powerful message: *“ We are all precious gifts from God! God gave each one of us a special talent! NOW is the time we should be using that talent to help save our nation and promote family life and an end to abortion!”*

Fr. Rick Nieberding gave the riders a blessing for safe travel and promotion of life before they departed for DeCatur, Indiana.

## New Pastor Serving In Deanery

By: Katie Eilerman

When we surrender our lives to the will of God, we never know where we may be called. Nothing could be truer for Fr. Alfons Minja C.PP.S, who recently became the pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Montezuma. Fr. Alfons was born and raised in Tanzania. When he received word that he was to be transferred to the U.S. he thought his superior was joking with him. After realizing the reality of his calling, he left everything behind and traveled many miles to serve where God needed him.

There were many anxieties about moving to another country for Fr. Alfons, mostly the change of culture. Fr. Alfons feared he would not be accepted because of his accent and other differences. However, he states that the parishioners of OLOG have been gracious and most welcoming, opening up their homes and preparing meals for him. Providing food is very important, he noted, because he is far from a chef. In his culture, men are not allowed in the kitchen. I told Father that if my husband knew of this custom, he would highly consider moving to Tanzania.



Fr. Alfons Minja, C.PP.S

Fr. Alfons is one of twelve children, although two of his siblings have passed away. He reflected on the effect faith had in his home, noting that both of his parents were Catholic. He recalls praying with his family every day before beginning activities and again before going to bed. He told me that his mother had desired to be a nun but was unable. Fortunately, her missionary spirit was passed on to her children, with two becoming nuns and Alfons a priest.

**The Call of the First Disciples.** As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Matthew 4:18-20

Fr. Alfons completed his theological studies at St. Thomas Aquinas University in Rome. He was then ordained on July 4, 1998 in Tanzania and served several parishes in his home country before moving to the states in 2008. Prior to becoming the pastor of OLOG in June, Father served as the Associate Pastor at Sts. Peter and Paul parish in Ottawa, OH.

After meeting with Fr. Alfons, it was apparent that he has made many sacrifices in order to listen to God's will. Father finds the most difficult thing about his calling is being away from family, as well as moving at any given time. His story reminded me of the first disciples Jesus called. They left everything: possessions, family and way of life to follow the Lord. We would like to thank Fr. Alfons for his sacrifices and willingness to serve the parishioners of the St. Marys Deanery and welcome him to our home.

## Spiritual Center of Maria Stein By: Robin Goettemoeller

It has been a busy and exciting summer at The Spiritual Center of Maria Stein with many retreats, events and even a Christian concert! There are many opportunities throughout the fall to join us for an hour, a day, or even a weekend retreat. For those that enjoy reading, we are starting a new book club that will meet the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

Other events include a presentation entitled "The Practice of the Presence of God" on Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 10:00-3:00 by Father Al Naseman and Fr. James Dugal. Dr. Jim Schwieterman will lead an "Evening of Reflection" called "Falling Upward" on Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup>-Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> marks the date of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Perfectly Imperfect Woman Retreat". On Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> Scott Frey will present "Sharing and Living Our Catholic Faith" from 1:30-6:00 p.m. A "National Night of Prayer" will take place in the Chapel on Sunday, December 8 from 9:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. for all who would like to pray for the unborn.

Our year will conclude with Father Naseman leading "God So Colorful" as a New Year's Eve retreat. For more information or to register for events, please see our website at [www.spiritualcenter.net](http://www.spiritualcenter.net) or call us at 419-925-7625.

# What did You do this Summer?

The age old question as students return to school in the fall: What did you do this summer? Although summer time is known for swimming pools and campouts, check out what area students did this summer to enrich their faith.

## St. Paul's Kingdom Rock VBS By: Kathy Gonzalez, CRE

St. Paul's church in Sharpsburg put on a fun-filled Vacation Bible School called Kingdom Rock this summer. Nearly 80 kids from preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> grade moved through stations around the kingdom learning God's word through music, games, crafts, science experiments, snack making and Bible skits. Each night a Bible verse and Bible story were taught in a fun, simple way that made it easy for kids to remember what they learned. This wonderful, fun filled week helps to remind the kids and their families to stand strong in their faith in Jesus Christ and remind them to share His love with others!



Children participating in an activity at Kingdom Rock VBS.

## Youth Faith & Fun Fest By: Cindy Muhlenkamp, CRE

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, St. Anthony Catholic Church of the Coldwater cluster hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Youth Faith and Fun Fest on its parish grounds. Approximately 40 youth from several area parishes were in attendance. The evening began with an outdoor Mass said by Fr. Tim Ralston. After Mass, the youth enjoyed a light meal and participated in a team-based trivia competition. Dr. John Wood, author of *Ordinary Lives Extraordinary Mission*, was the speaker for the evening. Dr. Wood is an optometrist from the Findlay area who is very involved in his parish and passionate about his Catholic faith. His talk addressed how we are all made for and called to sainthood. He spoke of the main obstacles that we face in our lives and the weapons we have at our disposal to fight these obstacles. He blended humorous stories and scripture for a very effective talk for the youth. Dr. Wood was joined by SimplyRC, two teen girls whose beautiful music and song was a wonderful accompaniment to Dr. Wood's talk. We were blessed with beautiful weather and a gorgeous sunset and look forward to next year's event.

## Visit to Women's Center By: Katie Schuerger, Youth Minister



Student volunteers outside of the Women's Center.

Six youth from St. Joseph Parish in Wapakoneta visited the Sidney Women's Center this summer to learn about the local pro-life movement and volunteer for the organization. They learned about the "earn while you learn" program and were able to check out the baby boutique and even the ultrasound room! The teens were moved by the stories of the women, men and children that the center serves as well as the statistics they heard about abortion. After getting the tour, the teens helped by cleaning, weeding and sorting maternity clothes. Thank you to the Women's Center for the great experience and for the amazing way they serve our community!

## Women Defending the Faith

By: Ginny Gehret

Faith brought a group of us women together initially, and love for our faith has kept us together! Meeting through a bible study, our friendship, desire to learn about our Catholic faith and passion for sharing brings us to the sixth year of hosting the "Little Magnificat Women's" Conference. This year's conference will be held on September 21, 2013 at St. Charles Center, Carthage.

From our first year in 2007 we have featured both local and national speakers from all walks of life. This year we are excited to host two authors, Dr. Ronald Sobecks of the Cleveland Clinic and Dr. John Wood. Dr. Sobecks will be speaking on his book, *Divine Mercy, Triumph over Cancer*. He will discuss the Christian meaning of suffering and how individuals can receive the strength and healing they need through Divine Mercy spirituality. His second talk entitled, "A Spiritual Approach to Caring for the Sick" will discuss how one can best serve patients. He will describe spiritual strategies to enhance care for the sick and how to best approach those who are dying. In addition, Dr. John Wood will be speaking on his book, *Ordinary Lives Extraordinary Mission*. He will share his new program on how to become a saint, giving us practical tools and resources to use in sharing our faith.

Our first year of the conference, we were thrilled to have approximately 60 women in attendance. Each year the number has increased, with over 200 women in attendance last year! We would love for you to join us for this faith enriching experience. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, the conference will begin at 8:00 am with rosary and Mass, followed by a continental breakfast, retreat, lunch and confessions. The conference will conclude at 3:00 pm. To register, please send \$20 payable to Coldwater Holy Trinity Church to Rene Klosterman at 912 West Vine St. Coldwater, OH 45828. For questions contact Rene Klosterman at 419-678-4700 or Ginny Gehret at 419-942-2473.



Members of the St. Marys Deanery Center Board recently hosted a booth which highlighted the Catholic faith at the Auglaize County Fair. Included in the display were informative pamphlets and parish bulletins as well as pictures and locations of the Catholic churches in Auglaize county. Copies of *Rediscover Catholicism*, *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* and *Mega Church Pastor* were available for the taking. In addition, rosaries, made by parish women, and a variety of items for children were available.

Board members of all parishes were at the booth throughout the week to answer questions and proudly spread Catholicism to all the fairgoers. Members of the deanery board include Therese Brown of the Minster cluster, Judy Bell of St. Joseph, Dcn. Greg Bornhorst of Holy Redeemer and Anna Mae Saum of Holy Rosary. **Submitted by: Anna Mae Saum**

## Defending the Faith As A Man

By: Ken Katt

ATTENTION ALL MEN who are looking to become STRONGER MEN; stronger in the faith and stronger as fathers and leaders of their family and community! We welcome you to attend our annual Catholic Men's Conference at St. Charles Center in Carthage, Ohio on October 26<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. The conference includes breakfast, lunch, Mass, confession, the rosary and dynamic speakers who will strengthen all men in their faith. As steel sharpens steel, so do men sharpen men!

Come join us for a day of friendship, fellowship and strengthening one another. This year's conference is titled, "Defending the Faith As a Man!" Reserve a seat now for \$20.00 for the entire day which includes all the above. Please send registration payment to Ken Katt at 777 State Route 29 Celina, OH 45822. Ken may be contacted at 419-942-2473 with any questions. We hope you join us!

## Welcoming of New CCD Year

By: Katie Eilerman

Although September marks the beginning of a new CCD year, preparation begins many months prior. I recently sat down with Joyce Johnson, Coordinator of Religious Education at Immaculate Conception parish in Celina, and discussed her role in the CCD program.

Joyce is a graduate of Wright State University with a degree in education. She taught for 29 years at St. Joseph School in Wapakoneta before beginning her new ministry as CRE in August of 2011. She will soon graduate from the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program in October, where she has been receiving a theological and pastoral education. As a CRE, Joyce leads the entire CCD program. This entails finding and managing catechists, creating medical and permission forms, sacramental preparation and much more. Joyce works full time year round and also has an assistant, Linda Schoen.



Joyce Johnson, I.C. CRE

Immaculate Conception will have approximately 270 students in its religious education program this school year. Several retreats are planned for students, including a Confirmation retreat for tenth grade students at Bergamo in Dayton. Each grade plans to complete a service project, such as collecting canned goods or creating cards for the homebound. Most importantly, students will learn about their faith each week from their catechists.

In order to prepare spiritually for her job, Joyce attends Mass daily, reads and meditates. As a CRE, Joyce loves being involved in education and showing children that they are valued. Joyce, along with all of the religious educators of the deanery, work tirelessly to ensure our children receive the best knowledge and guidance in their faith. As our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews begin their CCD year, let us not forget the great people who make CCD possible.

A Prayer for Students by St. Thomas Aquinas: “Creator of all things ...Give me a keen understanding, a retentive memory, and the ability to grasp things correctly and fundamentally. Grant me the talent of being exact in my explanations and the ability to express myself with thoroughness and charm. Point out the beginning, direct the progress, and help in the completion. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

## St. Charles Senior Living Community

By: Sister Martha Bertke, C.PP.S.

*Making a Difference-* A famous primate researcher and author was asked what she saw as “the most important thing individuals can do to affect positive change for the environment.” She responded: “The most important thing we can do is remember that every single day one of us makes a difference.” She went on to say, “The big problem today is that so many people feel insignificant.”



There is a tendency to think the common things done or spoken are of little worth. Sometimes ordinary words and actions are given little notice or merit. Yet, those seemingly small comments or actions often make a difference to another person. The next time you hesitate to lend a hand, write a letter, recycle an item, offer some affirmation or give a donation, just think of the nourishment and joy you may give to another person.

We have wonderful people living at Saint Charles who often make a difference in the lives of others. Living in the apartments are priests, brothers, married people, widows and widowers, single and divorced. We have both Catholic and non-Catholics here. It is a very good mix. We are all one in the Body of Christ. Consider living at Saint Charles, a great place where you can feel at home and secure in a peaceful setting. Come and visit us. For a tour or an appointment, call 419-925-4516, ext 112 or e-mail: [smbertke@bright.net](mailto:smbertke@bright.net).

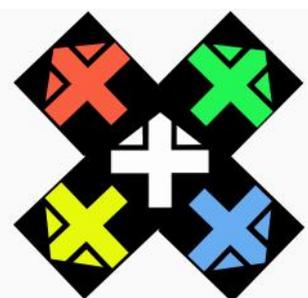
## Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics      By: Don Rosenbeck

*Kreuzweg: Bicycle Pilgrimage of the Land of the Cross-Tipped Churches*—Kreuzweg, German for “Way of the Cross”, is a cycling pilgrimage through the Land of the Cross Tipped Churches. This one day event is planned for Saturday, September 28, 2013.

The day begins with a blessing of pilgrims at the Maria Stein Shrine at 8:00 am before beginning the Kreuzweg journey. You can bring the whole family and enjoy the lovely rural countryside and the beautiful churches along one of the three routes of 20, 36 or 45 miles. It is a comfortable ride for all biking abilities! The routes are mainly flat terrain on country roads with short distances on state routes.

Churches on each route will be open to pilgrims for guided tours and comfort stops. Snacks or a light meal may be obtained at restaurants and taverns along the way. Get your Pilgrimage Passport stamped at each church you visit along the route. The cost is \$20 per participant with a maximum cost of \$80 for immediate families of four or more.

For more information you may visit  
<https://sites.google.com/site/kreuzwegpilgrim/home> or call 800-860-4726  
for a registration form.



The logo with colorful cross arrows represents geographically and culturally the 5 "ways" or routes, varying from 20 up to 60 miles. The "ways" radiate from the village of Maria Stein, located at the heart of the Cross Tipped Church region. (*Kreuzweg website*)