

Munchraths Set Family Faith Foundation

By Sherry Wachtler

For someone whose business is in concrete, foundations are awfully important. So it's no surprise that Roger and Maryann Munchrath's Catholic faith is the foundation for their lives. Celebrating 50 years of marriage this year, they have set a strong foundation of prayer, hard work, devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary, humility and dedication to St. Gerald Church and School for their family. Roger started his own business, RAM (which stands for "Roger And Maryann) Concrete, 47 years ago with Maryann helping as bookkeeper.

Their children - Jim, Brian, Mark and wife Jennifer, and Renee and husband Mike Meier and their families - all live within three miles of each other and St. Gerald Church. All of them can be found just about any time doing something to serve their parish. Like his father before him, Roger, active in the Knights of Columbus, is proud that his sons, Jim, Mark and Brian, grandson Zachary, and son-in-law Mike followed in their footsteps making four generations of Munchraths holding Knights of Columbus membership. They

not only joined but they jumped in with both feet. Brian has served as Grand Knight of St. Gerald Council #9518. You can find them all - Roger, Brian, Jim, Mark, Zach and Mike - working tirelessly at just about any K of C function from fish fries and Tootsie Roll drives to pancake breakfasts.

Jim, Brian, Mark and Renee all attended St. Gerald School where Roger and Maryann volunteered in numerous capacities. In those early years, Roger was tapped by founding pastor Fr. William Foster, for all kinds of tasks, shoveling snow, construction and overseeing work on the Parish Center. Roger, who often didn't bill the parish for his work, remembers a phone call he received from Foster setting him up for more responsibility. "Roger, I hope you're not going to be mad at me, but the Archdiocese called and wanted to know who the parish council president was, and I gave them your name," Father Foster said. Sometime later, when Foster was preparing to retire, he asked another favor of Roger. "Would you stay on (as parish council president) one more year?" Roger said the entire council stayed another year.

The grandchildren - Zach (18), Megan (15) and William (10) Munchrath: and Joey (14), Nick (12), Elizabeth (10), and Claire (7) Meier are attending or graduated from St. Gerald School. Abby Meier, 4, will soon attend. The older grandchildren have been altar servers, a source of great pride for Roger and Maryann since they handled altar server training and scheduling years ago.

"Roger and Maryann are perfect examples of serving the Lord and they have taught that to their own children," said Jennifer. Renee and Jennifer have volunteered at the school's outdoor



Roger and Maryann with (left to right) Zach (back row), Meghan, and Will

garden, library, room parties, and Home and School and more. The entire family helps with the festival. Mike has coached many sports over the years and Mark, who also coaches basketball, is active in "That Man Is You."

"I have been blessed to be a part of this family," Jennifer said. "You don't just marry your spouse, you marry the entire family and they have been welcoming from Day One." For several years, the entire family takes part in Life Chain, a pro-life rally held in October on Dodge Street. Mark and Jennifer (who was adopted herself) proudly hold a sign "Adoption - the Loving Option," every year in the Life Chain in honor of their three children - all adopted.

It was Maryann who started Perpetual Adoration, although she insists there were several others who got it off the ground also. When was that? All we know is that Mark has had the same hour for 27 years. Faith-filled, hard-working and humble are words that describe the Munchrath family. But Jennifer sums it up this way, "St. Gerald's (parish) has given more to us than we've given to them."

Roger and Maryann have set a strong foundation of faith not only for their family but for the entire parish. Roger sees it this way, "It's our home. I don't want to go anywhere else. I love it."



Roger and Maryann with (left to right) Joe (back row), Abby, Ellie, Nick, and Claire

"Father Mark, What Makes You Tick?"



By Mark Nelson

It was a great joy to be able sit down with Fr. Mark at the rectory recently. As the fireplace was warming the room, I interviewed him for this article. We spent over two hours talking. I'm happy to share that interview with you in the next few editions of the Spirit Link. Below are the first seven questions and answers.

Q: What is one of your favorite childhood memories?

A: Well, my dad was a busy man, but he really tried to spend time with us. I remember that he had a large swing set built for us. Because it was so big, you could swing really high. Sometimes when he came home from work he would play with us in the yard. He would swing with us on his lap. After we got going pretty high he would plant his heels in the ground and the momentum would send us flying off his lap. We landed in a stack of old track and field mats that the local high school had given away. We loved that. That was great fun!

Q: I bet there's some spiritual application to that too. Do you think?

A: Oh, yeah. I was actually talking to my spiritual director the other day and I was reminded of the playfulness of God. Sometimes we get so caught up in our responsibilities. We need to get some playtime. He desires that for all of us.

Q: What makes you tick? What motivates you?

A: What drives me is that I just really want people to know Jesus. I want people to know him personally, not just to know about him. There is such joy that comes from knowing Him.

Q: Why do you want so badly for others to have that joy?

A: Well, when I was in spiritual direction yesterday the Lord helped me name some inner vows I had made in my life, lies that I told myself and have since believed. God showed me that because I had gotten hurt, I shut down some of the excitement that had previously been natural to me.

Both in childhood and more recently, there have been many times that I've been really excited about something. When that happens, I just can't keep quiet. I just have to share it.

One quick story - I remember being a kid and going on our only family vacation. We had stopped for a break on a road trip down to Galveston, Texas. I pulled a grape juice box out

of the cooler and it was half frozen. I was so excited, I was running around telling my whole family, "Man, you gotta taste this. It takes just like a grape icee!" Some of my family members told me, "Shut up, Mark! Just, shut up." Since then, there have been a number of times where my excitement gets completely shut down by someone else's reaction. It's just a part of my woundedness.

But, the Lord has been telling me, "That's you, Mark. Don't shut that down. That's who I created you to be. You're that little kid whose says, 'Wow, you gotta taste this!'"

On my recent retreat, I gave Him permission to go in and heal those wounds from childhood.

The reason I share this story is that I get really excited about Jesus too. I've experienced the joy of knowing Him personally and I want to share Him. He's totally selfless. I want other people to know Jesus and that joy and excitement He brings to our lives. He wants to be with you - in your joys, your pains, your excitement, and in every part of your life.

Q: What do you presently see happening at St. Gerald's that is life giving?

A: I sense a real movement of the Holy Spirit, an excitement about the Lord and about the direction He is taking us. God has us on a journey of healing and I can sense a real hunger for God and relationship with Jesus within our parish.

Q: What else do you see God doing at St. Gerald's?

A: I think He wants the people of St. Gerald to know His excitement, His passion, His desire for them. He wants so much more for them - personally and collectively. As I ask God what He wants for the parish, He has shown me that His desires can also be found in my heart. The desire that I have for the parish to experience joy and deep relationship with Jesus is also His desire for each person. There is such beauty in the simple things. God helps us see the beauty in each other and all around us. We can be 'on retreat' every day. It just means opening our eyes to what God has surrounded us with. We need to be Jesus for one another.

Q: If you could choose only one sentence that you wanted to share with every parishioner, what would that be?

A: Thank you for all your love, your prayers, your support over these first two and a half years and for making my transition here to St. Gerald's such a delight; I feel loved by you.

Where Two or Three are Gathered...

By Joan Squire

On any given Wednesday you will find a gathering in Christ's name at Waterford Assisted Living. I live just a few blocks from Waterford and had noticed that the mass was listed on the parish mass schedule each week in the bulletin. When I decided that I should check it out three years ago I found a lovely small chapel and a small group waiting for the Mass to begin. Since then, from time to time, as my schedule allows, I attend this mass and it is humbling to see the faith of these dedicated Catholics.

On a recent Wednesday Fr. Michael came to celebrate Mass with residents gathered in the Waterford chapel. His homily included a reminder about a spiritual communion when unable to attend mass. Fr. Michael told the residents that while praying they can simply ask their guardian angel to bring them Holy Communion. "Your Guardian Angel will fly to the nearest church and bring you Holy Communion. It is that easy."

Five to 10 residents regularly attend the Wednesday Mass. One of the Wednesday Mass regulars is Clara, 96 years old. She says that she always prays for her children. Jay, another regular, says weekly mass is important to her because she was always "used to going to mass. And when you get away from it you lose that." Annie says she could "watch Mass on TV but then there is no communion." On Wednesdays the priest is also available to hear confession, offer a special blessing or a healing anointing. If our priests are unable to offer mass Deacon Doug March is usually available for a communion service.

Kathy D'Ercole leads the team of volunteers who assist at the Wednesday masses. The volunteer arrives early to set up the chapel. She sets out the water and wine, turns on the battery candles, and puts the chalice and missal on the altar. A volunteer then knocks on the door of all the Catholic residents to remind them that mass will be celebrated at 11:00 am. Kathy has been the lead for this ministry for 10 years. She says, "One of the commands that Our Lord gave us was 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my



Kathy D'Ercole prepares for Mass.

brethren you did it to me.' Matthew (25:40) What better and more fulfilling way is there to serve the elderly every week by assisting them in attending mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist." The other volunteers include Kathy Jackson, Flo Edge, Darlene Drefs, and Dorothy (Max) Nachtigall.

Sunday mornings the Waterford residents gather to attend a communion service led by one of St. Gerald's deacons. At a recent service led by Deacon John True 10 residents and guests were in attendance. Deacon John began the service with the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy" and the small gathering joined in and was lifted up in song. Residents unable to attend the service are still able to receive communion as the deacon will take communion to their apartment. Resident Marie says that she is glad that the communion service is offered. She says, "We appreciate everything they do for us."

Fun and games are important too. Bingo is played each Mon, Wed and Friday after lunch. I started helping with Bingo shortly after I attended my first Mass at Waterford. Monday is my day of choice because I can come early and sing along with community volunteers Nancy and Anthony. During those 45 minute hymn sing alongs I have learned some really great old time gospel songs. Many of the residents can sing several verses of many of the songs and not even look at the song book.

The bingo volunteer helps residents get seated, makes sure all have bingo cards and chips, calls Bingo if needed and hands out the prizes. Some residents also need assistance playing their cards. Max Nachtigall was a Wednesday volunteer for 5 years and recently reluctantly gave it up due to health problems. Max speaks fondly of the residents when she talks about them. Another St. Gerald volunteer Jackie Cherep helps with various other social activities as needed.

I have gotten to know many of the residents and it certainly is a joy seeing them each week. I speak for all the St. Gerald volunteers at Waterford, we receive so much more than we give. Honoring and serving our elderly transforms my life as much as it transforms theirs.

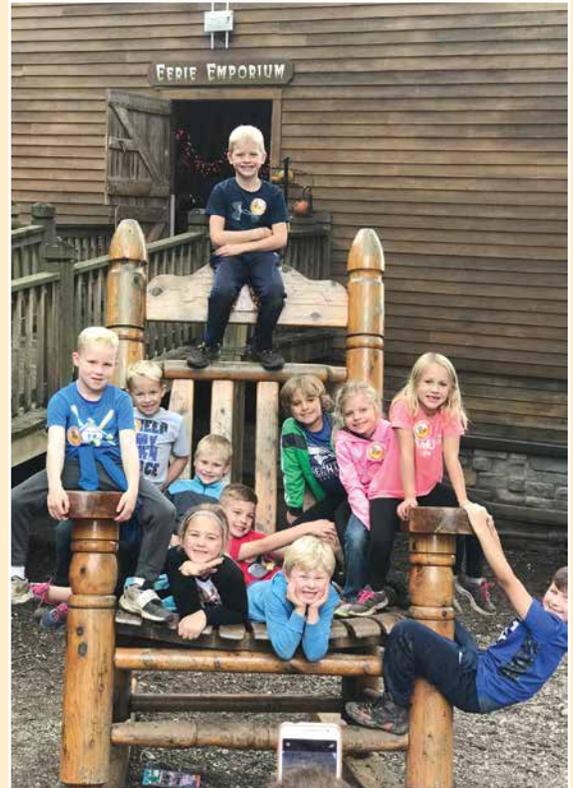


Joan Squire hands out bingo prizes.



Council #9518 of the Knights of Columbus were able to purchase over 275 coats to be distributed to Ralston area school children who might normally not have had a new coat.

Pictured with Deputy Chief Hanson of the Ralston Police Department are Knights Dave Fowler, Ken True and Fred Kambach.



St. Gerald's Catholic School 2nd Graders took a fall field trip to Vala's Pumpkin Patch.



Parishioner John Riesburg receiving a present at the November 9th Veteran's Day Mass from members of Student Council. All service men and women present received gifts handmade by the students.



On October 28 Deacon Lonnie and Mary Dineen celebrated the 25 year anniversary of Lonnie's ordination to the Deaconate. Deacon Lonnie was the first Deacon ordained to serve St. Gerald Parish.



Each year the candidates for Confirmation participate in the Saint Wax Museum. The students dress as their Confirmation saint and give a short speech about their saint's life. Donations are collected for the parish Angel Tree. These are the students who presented after the 12pm mass, November 4th, 2018. A total of \$260 was collected after all the masses.



St. Gerald youth, as part of the parish Glow ministry, participated in the Steubenville Conference held in Rochester MN this past July.



Second graders celebrating the 2018 Walk of Pride.

The Walk of Pride raised over \$36,000!

Thank you to our parish community for your support.



Officers for the Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Assembly #3431

Jim Lukaszewicz, Ron Morss, Bob McWilliams, Terry Fletcher, Tony Jones, Phil Tamisiea, District Master Rich Lowerey, Fr. Gary Ostrander, Tom Stanton, Lou D'Ercole, Brian Munchrath, Don Kleffner, Fred Kambach, Jim McNamara.

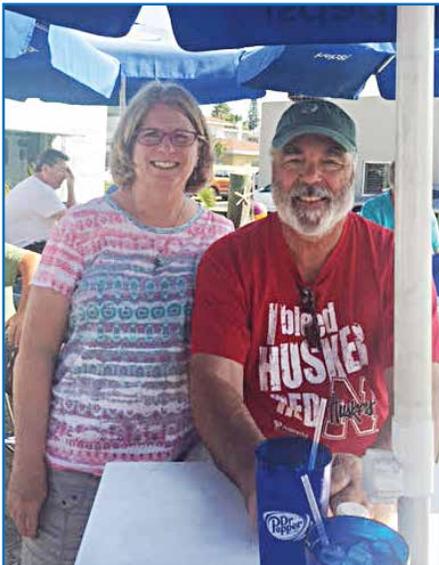
A Catholic Convert

By Bonni Pulte

I am a former Lutheran (Missouri Synod) who married a Catholic. A couple of months after Ralph and I were engaged he informed me that we would raise our kids Catholic. What! I was fairly liberal back then (not by today's standards) but I was a bit put off by it. Oh well, I thought to myself, we will have to wait and see what happens. Our wedding was held at St. Gerald with only Fr. Foster presiding as my Lutheran minister was not willing to share in the wedding at a Catholic church.

We moved to Grand Island in 1976, where Ralph's parents lived at the time and started going to church at Resurrection. We started our family and our son Andrew and then our daughter Megan were baptized at Resurrection. The priest, Father Harry Kurtenbach became a good friend to our family. He suggested to me shortly after our daughter was baptized that I start the lessons to become Catholic. But wait a minute, I'm still not on board with Mary and Confession.

My usual response to why I was going to the Catholic church was, "I'm just doing it to keep the family together in one church and besides it's not all that



Bonni and Ralph Pulte

different than the Lutheran church." I went to the lessons and lo and behold, I ended up becoming Catholic at Easter in 1981. We had our third child, Matthew in 1987. As our kids grew, we ended up going to Blessed Sacrament which was closer to our house. I became a CCD teacher and started getting involved in church activities.

But something was still missing. I was not all in Catholic. I was not totally sold on Mary and confession was still so foreign to me. I had Protestant friends who seemed more knowledgeable about the Bible than most Catholics I knew, so I joined Protestant Bible Studies and started learning about scripture. Finally, after being Catholic for many years, one day at church they had a sign-up table for Bible Studies. My husband and I jumped at the chance. It ended up being a wonderful study with a chance to share our faith with other Catholics. This is where our hunger for scripture began.

Fast-forward to 2007, Ralph calls me one day at work and says we're moving to Omaha, quit your job today. Ralph had attended a funeral at St. Gerald with Father Gary Ostrander and the Holy Spirit moved him with a message that we needed to move to Omaha. By that time, both of our Mom's were in Omaha and two of our kids along with extended family. It was an emotional time as our youngest son, Matthew, had decided to join the Marines. Our faith held us together as we prayed for our son's safety in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is when the rosary gave us strength.

We moved to Omaha and after being at St. Gerald for a several months, we noticed in the bulletin that a four year Biblical School through the Archdiocese of Omaha was going to start in the fall. Ralph and I joined the study which ended up being an intense study of scripture and of the Catholic

Church. I was finally putting together some of the missing pieces that I was still looking for.

I had been listening to Protestant radio for years when I discovered KVSS Spirit Catholic Radio. What a treasure. About six years ago we discovered the Universal Catholic Bible Study taught here in Omaha by Sharon Doran. It has taken us on a journey of faith through scripture that teaches the fullness of the Catholic faith and historical evidence of our faith. Through St. Gerald I got involved in a Spiritual Book Club that introduced me to wonderful books on the Catholic Church, saints, doctrine and teachings of the church. In book club we have read the stories of protestants like Scott Hahn and Patrick Madrid who made the journey home to the Catholic Church. Ralph and I were able to go on two pilgrimages, The Footsteps of St. Paul with Catholic convert Steve Ray and to the Holy Land with Sharon Doran.

I'm all in now, with Mary, with all the Sacraments, yes, even Reconciliation. I know that I am in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Church that Christ founded in Matthew 16:18, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." I believe that we have the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist as is told to us in John Chapter 6. I'm finally home.

This is my story, if you are a Catholic convert or a Catholic who has discovered the richness of your Catholic heritage and have a story to tell, please contact me and we would love to share it in our Spirit Link. My email is rbpulte@yahoo.com.



The St. Gerald annual Stewardship Fair was held the weekend of Oct 20-21. Over 40 St. Gerald Ministries had representatives available to greet and inform parishioners about the activities and services of their ministries.



SAVE *the* DATE

St. Gerald Guardian Angel Auction

ANCHORS AWEIGH

Soiree

March 2, 2019

Fellowship Hall

Confession Times – Advent 2018

Saturdays of Advent Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22	Confessions (Both Priests)	3:00-4:45pm	96th & Q
Sunday, Dec 16	PENANCE SERVICE	7:00-8:00pm	96th & Q
Monday, Dec 17 through Friday, Dec 21	Confessions	11:45am-12:15pm	96th & Q

Christmas and New Year's Mass Schedule

Monday, December 24	Christmas Eve	3:30pm	Children & Adult Choir prior to 4:00pm Mass
Monday, December 24	Christmas Eve	4:00pm, 6:30pm, Midnight	96th and Q
Monday, December 24	Christmas Eve	6:00pm	Adult Choir prior to 6:30pm Mass
Tuesday, December 25	Christmas Day	7:00am	Lakeview
Tuesday, December 25	Christmas Day	8:00am, 10:00am	96th and Q
Tuesday, January 1	Mary, Mother of God	8:15am, 12:15pm	96th and Q

Daily Mass Schedule

Dec 24: 8:15am (LV) Dec 26: 8:15am (LV), 12:15pm (96th) Dec 27: 8:15am (LV), 12:15pm (96th)
Dec 28: 8:15am (LV), 12:15pm (96th) Dec 29: 8:15am (LV) Dec 31: 8:15am (LV), 12:15pm (96th)

Living Nativity and Parish Reconciliation

Sunday, December 16th
St. Gerald Church, 96th & Q

Parish Reconciliation Service at 7:00pm
Living Nativity with live animals at 7:30pm - 8:30pm

There will be a reception with cookies and hot chocolate in the fellowship hall... all are invited!





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SPIRIT + LINK

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ST. GERALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

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MASS TIMES

Church - 96th and Q Street

Saturday: 5:00pm

Sunday: 8:00am, 10:00 am, 12:00pm

Daily: 12:15pm (M-F), Rosary begins at 11:45am

Holy Days: check the bulletin and online

Chapel - 78th and Lakeview

Sunday: 7:00am

Daily: 8:15am (M-Sat), Rosary begins at 7:45am

Holy Days: check the bulletin and online

RECONCILIATION TIMES

Church - 96th and Q Street

Saturday: 3:00-4:30pm

Monday-Friday: 12:00-12:15pm

First Fridays at 11:45am

Chapel - 78th and Lakeview

Monday-Saturday: 8:00-8:15am

First Fridays and Saturdays at 7:45am

St. Gerald Parish Mission Statement:

Led by the Holy Spirit, we are a Catholic community of faith whose primary purpose is to know Jesus, to love Him, and to serve Him in serving others. Sent to make disciples, we invite and welcome everyone to come and share our Master's joy.