



Stewardship

in Motion

August 2007

Welcoming our Visitors!



At this time of year, many parishes begin to see unfamiliar faces at the services of the Mass. Some are folks on vacation and attending Mass while

visiting in town. Others may have just moved into their new home in time for their children to start school. These new faces present us with a golden opportunity to show great hospitality to Jesus Christ and those who are members of His family.

Recollect those focused words of Jesus from the Gospel: *I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and You welcomed me* (Matthew 25:35).

Treasure also His great promise in verse 40 of the same chapter: *...just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.*

To welcome strangers involves more than merely saying hello and shaking hands during the "passing of the Peace". It may mean you could sit with them in worship, explain your parish's ministries, offer to take them to lunch, answer any questions they may have about the city, your society, or your parish. It simply may mean being willing to become their friend.

If we were to sense that this really were Christ Himself, would we not be quick and ready to reach out and do so? If we carefully read that 40th verse again, we understand this really is the same.

Therefore, every parishioner should feel chosen to be the one who offers these new faces a home away from home at your parish. Don't let them down. Don't let the Lord down. ■



Wisdom from the "Center"

† Did you know that Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter in the Bible?

If not, then you probably didn't know that Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible.

Well, right in between Psalms 117 and 119 is the chapter that is also the very center of the Bible, Psalm 118.

Yes, there are 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and exactly 594 chapters after Psalm 118.

(Continued on page 2)

WISDOM FROM THE CENTER
(Continued from page 1)

Now, add these numbers up and you get 1188.

† Can you guess what is the center verse of the Bible? Psalm 118:8

Interestingly, this verse has something very significant to say about God's perfect will for our lives. The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives and that they want to be in the center of His will,

A Child's Point of View

An email that has been around for a while sent to us by a parish secretary.



A Sunday school teacher asked her children as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo while I asked, "No, how are we alike?" "You're both old," he replied.

After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "The priest said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys."



The Blessed Are Called to Bless

In the blessed little book *Mornings with Henri J. M. Nouwen* Father Henri declares, "The blessed one always blesses. And people want to be blessed!"

How often do we take the time and make the effort to count our blessings? The vast majority of us are gifted by nature. All of us are freely offered the grace of Almighty God.

Yet, how often do we vitiate our appreciation for nature's bounty by being envious of someone else's gifts? How often do we move through a day without a single thought to God's intervention into our daily lives? How many times do we offer a curse rather than a blessing to the people we meet?

Father Henri decries the fact that curses, gossip, accusations and blaming are rife in our society. He maintains that no one is brought to life through such negative, sinful behavior. On the contrary, he says, "...it calls forth only darkness, destruction and death."

We must become the "blessed ones" who walk through this world offering blessings. It doesn't require much effort. It can flow naturally from our hearts. When we alert ourselves to the voice calling us by name and blessing us, the darkness will no longer distract us.

Father Henri maintains, "The voice that calls us the Beloved will give us words to bless others and reveal to them that they are no less blessed than we."

In effect, he is urging us to become

The Stewards of Blessings

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