



At every Sunday Mass, we at St. Benedict open our Missals/Hymnals to the inside covers and say our parish prayer, committing ourselves to God and to each other. We ask the Holy Spirit and Mary to be intercessors for us that we might grow in grace and might carry the Lord's presence to the larger world. We then ask God to bless our parish with a great passion to live this mission, and we conclude by offering praise and glory to God.

As a newcomer, this parishioner wondered how this mighty prayer came to evolve. Because it expresses so deeply what the parish is and does, it makes one question whether the parish DNA inspired the prayer or if the prayer inspired the parish or both.

Recalls Bob Moquin of the Stewardship Ministry, a small committee was formed a few years ago to address how St. Benedict would nurture spirituality as it experienced growth. The parish turned to Tom Sonni, president of Greater Mission, a consultant to Catholic parishes. As Sonni explored our parish, he learned that at its foundation lies the crucifix logo, based on the Moline or Benedictine cross with its open-ended treatment and four hearts. He also saw a connection between St. Benedict parish life and Mark 12: 30, 31 where Mark records Jesus teaching that the two greatest commandments are that you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. And that you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

By taking these verses from Mark and incorporating committee members' ideas and what he himself had uncovered about St. Benedict, Sonni wrote our parish prayer. But he didn't stop there. In working with other parishes, Sonni had developed a program involving four hearts—the heart to pray, the heart to serve, the heart to witness and the heart to share. Notes Sonni, "The logo designed for St. Benedict parish, patterned after the traditional Moline cross with four open hearts, presented a perfect visual link for the With All Your Heart model."

When we launched the With All Your Heart vision for spiritual renewal within St. Benedict a year ago, Father Dan recommended that our new parish prayer be put in the Missal. He wanted to make it easily accessible since it's an intricate part of the Prayer of the Faithful. Saying this powerful prayer together as a parish, thus committing ourselves to being soldiers in God's army, seems especially fitting since St. Benedict is known for having taught men how to live in God's service.

# The Raven

St. Benedict

## Newsletter

July, August, September 2014



### Angel Tree Christmas 2014



"The Christmas liturgy reminds us of how God came to us as a child, and in the children we have an opportunity to experience His presence and minister to that presence in a most endearing way," notes Father Dan. Although giving joy to children is the essence of Christmas, some children would not receive gifts if it weren't for the generosity of others. Thus, the tradition of the Angel Tree!

This Christmas, St. Benedict is embracing about 150 children at the St. James-Santee elementary school in McClellanville. Our Youth Group prepares angels and places them on the Angel Tree in the narthex. Each angel on the tree has a label that represents a child with a list of gifts that child desires, usually very simple things.

To participate, simply take an angel from the Angel Tree, fill the child's requests, add personal touches if you like, and then wrap the gift and return with the angel attached. The deadline is December 14. This Christmas tradition of the Angel Tree has a way of giving joy to givers as well as to children.

Religious Education has 240 students registered in Grades 1-8. We have 21 students who celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation on November 20. On December 13, 48 of our children will celebrate First Reconciliation. Some of the parents of the children in the Religious Education Program are participating in a weekly Book Discussion Group while the children are in class. Our first book is *Rome, Sweet Home* by Scott and Kimberly Hahn. The Religious Education students are sponsoring three children through the Unbound organization. One child is from the Philippines, one is from India and the third is from Guatemala. On November 3 the children of St. Benedict lit up the Church in prayer as they become a Living Rosary. On December 1st the children will attend an Advent Workshop along with their parents during class times.



### St. Benedict News

Through the generosity of a parishioner, Saint Benedict now has a gift shop, just in time for Christmas shopping! Hours are from 10 am to 3 pm on days the office is open. Among the beautiful items on the shelves, you'll find gifts for Confirmation and Baptism, books, greeting cards, jewelry and more as new things are always being added. It may be a perfect place for children to shop for parents as well as parents for children.

St. Benedict Parish Extraordinary Ministers are now bringing Communion to Catholic patients at Roper Mt. Pleasant Hospital. This is in addition to the parish's recent extension of its Extraordinary Ministers' Outreach ministry to Vibra Hospital and Rehab.

## Spotlight



In *Down Strong*, Martha Hoover celebrates the life of her son Trampus, who with his folks, is a parishioner here at St. Benedict. Begun as daily journals, the book reveals how Martha called on her faith to survive the daily challenges of having a Down Syndrome child. That faith, shared by her husband, empowered the two to help Trampus grow into a confident and talented young man.

Martha especially hopes her story will find its way into the hands of expectant and new Moms and Dads of DS babies as well as physicians and educators. Her message is to raise your expectations. “Don’t let a diagnosis make your decision or a physician tell you what your child will or won’t do. Every person created by God is well thought out and has a purpose.”

At 39, Martha wanted a third child. She knew that her age left her open to having a DS baby, but she had lost her first child after just three days of life and believed it just wouldn’t happen to her. When told her baby had an extra chromosome, Martha was very scared. “My first thought was that I don’t know how to do this. But God told me in a soft, still voice just to love him,” she recalls. Martha asked God not to let the baby sense her fear.

That first week, Martha questioned God and her faith. They’d have Trampus for life, they were told, but Vincent turned that around, later saying to Martha, “Do you know what’s good about this baby? What I have here is a fishing partner for life!” Martha says the three cuddled, and a bonding that she’ll treasure forever then began and grows today.

Martha and Vincent wanted Trampus to know he was loved, to be confident in who he was and to be given every opportunity to find what his God-given gift might be. He was to abide by the rules of the family unit like his sister Ashley and brother Tripp. Martha believes in full access to regular classes for special-needs children, especially at the elementary level, and she was an untiring advocate for Trampus, a pioneer in being the first included special-needs child at Whiteside Elementary. His successes paved the way for others after him.

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Trampus took up the trumpet, and throughout school it was his life. He combined his passion for music with his love to perform. In senior year at Wando High, Trampus was crowned Mr. Wando for his talent in playing the trumpet. Among many other honors, Trampus also won a Yes I Can! International Award, given by the Foundation for Exceptional Children, for being an extraordinary trumpeter.

Trampus lives a full life. His Dad is his buddy, and they share all things sports. He’s a Special Olympics athlete and enjoys boating and jet skiing with his folks. Trampus works at Publix and at the family business. But his heart lies in his music. He’s taken up the guitar and plays locally with friends, and is sometimes accompanied by his brother singing.

A songwriter for Zac Brown, Wyatt Durrett, recently stopped Martha and Trampus as they were leaving the gym, singing the lyrics of a Zac Brown song. He wrote the song they were singing, he told them. Then he recalled how one day he was struggling in the gym, and Trampus encouraged him saying, “You’ve just gotta believe!” That’s something Trampus has always done. He’s currently writing his own song titled *Down Strong*.

Heart to Witness

With All Your Heart – Heart to Witness

### **Come Watch the Mt. Pleasant Christmas Light Parade with St. Benedict!**

**St. Benedict will have a tent illuminated with Christmas lights at the corner of Coleman and Chuck Dawley (in front of Christ Our King School). As a part of Heart to Witness our children will spread the joy and hand out glow sticks to children with a Christmas message attached to them. Arrive EARLY as the roads start to fill VERY early.**

More than 100 floats will march down Coleman Boulevard as the Mount Pleasant Christmas Light Parade sets sail to the delight of thousands of residents and visitors. The tree lighting and fireworks display begins at approximately 5:30 pm at Moultrie Middle School, immediately followed by the parade beginning at 5:45 PM.

