



ST. ISIDORE

CATHOLIC CHURCH



Altar Care Ministry

BRINGS MEMBERS CLOSER TO GOD THROUGH SERVICE

From the more visible, well-known ministries to the smaller, behind-the-scenes groups, everyone here at St. Isidore plays a part. The Altar Care Ministry is one important piece of the puzzle and a wonderful example of stewardship in the simple and unseen things. For Bibiana Mansanalán, this is a way for her to grow closer to God and gain strength from being in His presence. Bibiana, who has been involved with this ministry for over 12 years, enjoys serving because it helps to bring her closer to God.

“My husband has Alzheimer’s and dementia — I used to go to Mass every day, but I can’t do that anymore since I can’t leave my husband alone,” she says. “But when I go to the church to clean, I always bring him with me. Serving and

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MASS TIMES: Saturday: 8 a.m. Bilingual | 6 p.m. Bilingual / Sunday: 8 a.m. Bilingual | 10 a.m. English | 12 p.m. Spanish
Weekdays: Monday - Friday | 12 p.m. Bilingual

CONFESSION TIMES: Wednesday: 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Thursday - Saturday: 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

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CHRISTMASTIME STEWARDSHIP

How We Can Bring His Son to the World

It is not uncommon to give gifts during Advent and Christmas, but it is never enough just to leave it at that. True, Jesus gave *Himself* to us at the first Christmas. And, as always, we should strive to imitate Him by giving of *ourselves* in some way as we celebrate the anniversary of His birth. But there is a way to give even more than just ourselves — by giving the gift of Christ to others. The seasons of Advent and Christmas are perfect opportunities to share the love and message of Jesus with others in a beautiful way.

Of course, giving of ourselves in imitation of Jesus is a beautiful thing. But it is just as important to remember that, as human beings, we bear the likeness of God. As Christians, Jesus Himself inhabits our very souls. As Catholics, our Lord literally dwells within us when we receive Him in the Eucharist. Based upon this logic, we do so much more than imitate Jesus when we selflessly give of ourselves to others. Indeed, just as Mary carried Christ in her womb when she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, and just as she brought Him in her arms to Simeon as a newborn child, we can also literally bring Jesus Christ to the world.

What a profound task Our Lord has laid out for us this season! As He grew in Mary's womb, Jesus could only go where Mary chose to take Him. Of course, He couldn't do anything — He couldn't even speak. Mary became His hands and feet, and even His voice. Mary could have stayed at home during her pregnancy, resting and preparing for life with a newborn, as most mothers do. But instead, the Blessed Mother helped her Son begin His mission by bringing Him to her cousin, Elizabeth. Today, in much the same way, Christ invites us to share Him with the rest of the world. He chooses to make His presence known through us. And so, as the spiritual writer Caryll Houselander beautifully stated, "We must carry Jesus in our hearts wherever He wants us to go, and there



are many places to which He may *never* go unless we take Him to them."

How do we bring Jesus to those in our parish and community? There are many ways. We might visit with a sick parishioner over the holidays, providing fellowship and support in their time of need. We may consider serving a local soup kitchen or food bank, and doing our part to make sure that the hungry are fed. We can sing Christmas carols for our neighbors, bringing true joy and love to their homes. Perhaps we could help a tired friend clean her house, making her life a little bit easier during this busy season. Or we can share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. We might even try going

to work with a cheery disposition, or donating money so that a starving child in a poor country can have something to eat. These are just a few examples of how we can practice stewardship.

We may sometimes feel as if our efforts are in vain — especially when it is hard to see the effects of our evangelization. This temptation is particularly strong when we offer our treasure as a gift to God. The positive effects of monetary gifts aren't always as visible as gifts of time or talent. But when we give of our treasure, the love of Jesus can travel to places we could never go. While our gift may not directly affect someone in a positive way, it very well may enable someone else to do it for us. Sometimes, God doesn't just ask *us* to be His hands and feet, but to enable *someone else* to be them, as well.

Advent and Christmas give us the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' call to live as stewards and disciples of His Word. God has put us in a particular place, given us a certain amount of time, and asked us to perform particular tasks and selflessly share a portion of our gifts. This is all for a singular purpose — to bring His Son into the world, and make Christ's presence just as real as when He first became man more than 2,000 years ago.

A Letter From Our Pastor

STEWARDSHIP POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS AT CHRISTMAS

Dear Parishioners,

When I think of December, the first thing that comes to my mind is Christmas. While that may seem obvious, there are several other possibilities. I could think of Advent, which prepares us for Christmas. I could think of the Immaculate Conception, a Holy Day of Obligation, and the patronal festival of the United States. I could think of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose popularity has spread far beyond the Hispanic community. December also brings the winter solstice. And it brings the end of the secular calendar year, which means getting my financials together for the upcoming income tax season.

But instead, I think of Christmas — one of the greatest feasts of the Christian year, along with Easter and Pentecost. The basic truth of Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus the Messiah, God Incarnate, is plenty of reason for us all to rejoice and worship. But we've piled so much extra baggage on our Christmas observance, and worship is often almost lost in the shuffle.

We send Christmas cards to people we contact at no other time of the year. We put up wreaths, Christmas trees, and lights. We host parties for family and friends. We visit relatives. We plan and prepare Christmas meals. And we have Christmas gifts to buy. No wonder the Christ Mass becomes an afterthought!

Maybe, though, we can combine our Christmas activities with our stewardship commitments.

Treasure is the simplest. Shouldn't the most expensive Christmas present we give be the one to Jesus whose birthday we're celebrating? Risen and glorified, He needs nothing we have. But His Body — the Church — continues Jesus' mission here on earth and always needs additional resources.

Time and Talent may be a little more complicated, but can't we spend a little more of our time in worship and prayer? Stop by the church for a visit to the Christmas Crib and offer a prayer of thanks



for the gift of God's Son. Attend Mass each day of the Christmas Octave. Gather your family for prayers together in the morning or at dinner in preparation for Christmas Day and through the Christmas season.

And Talent? There are lots of possibilities: Sing in the choir for the Christmas Masses. Help decorate the Church. Cook or bake for someone who is homebound. Invite someone who will be alone to share Christmas dinner with your

family. Offer to work in a soup kitchen if you will be alone. The possibilities are endless.

Yes, December means Christmas. But with some planning, we can make this hectic time a real blessing both for ourselves and others. Pray for me that I can keep Christmas properly, and I'll pray for you. And by the way, have a Merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Avram Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Avram Brown
Pastor



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THE THOMPSON FAMILY: *Embracing Stewardship, Growing in Faith and Community*

For the members of the Thompson family, community has been an integral part of their faith life. By serving the parish, they have been able to grow closer to others who share their faith and, in turn, have grown closer to Christ.

“We’re made to be a gift to others, to give of ourselves,” says Greg Thompson. “That is what brings happiness. I realized that I really need to connect — I can’t really be a disciple if I don’t do that. We all need people around us who are faithful, and want to grow in their faith, to encourage one another.”

Greg and his wife, Jill, first got involved in parish life through an Adult Faith Formation class taught by Susan Burky. Now, Jill is an instructor for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) at Our Lady of Lourdes, helped establish the program and create materials for St. Isidore’s CGS program, and helps with Confirmation class and the Altar Linens Ministry. Prior to the pandemic, they both participated in the St. Paul’s Street Evangelization Ministry, handing out rosaries and talking about the faith to others in the local community. Greg and Jill are also both Third Order Dominicans, which was also a balm throughout the pandemic since they were able to continue to meet, study the faith, and be part of an



The Thompson family supports daughter Hayley’s entry to the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa on Aug. 6, 2021.

active community.

The Thompsons have five children — Marina, Carl, Hayley, Clare, and Orin. Their youngest two, who still live at home, enjoy participating in parish life through groups for teens. About a year ago, Greg was inspired to go on a Fraternus retreat in North Carolina with sons Carl and Orin, which was a huge turning point for Greg’s faith journey.

“For most of my life I kept people at a distance, and I didn’t realize how important community is,” he says. “The retreat really helped me to see that it’s so important for Catholic men to be connected to one another.”

When Greg returned from the retreat, he knew he had to keep that sense of community going. He started a men’s

group which would meet regularly to pray the Rosary around the campfire. Eventually, he helped found a Fraternus chapter here at the parish, which provides fellowship for adult men and a mentorship program for youth.

“It’s a brotherhood of Catholic men helping each other grow in virtue,” Greg says. “We inspire each other to serve, and we serve because that is what Christ calls us to do. If I don’t get involved, I miss out. God is in charge, and it’s an adventure! It’s really by God’s grace and His mercy that I’m where I am today.”

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THE LECTORS MINISTRY: *Reverently Proclaiming His Word and Touching the Hearts of the Faithful*

For us as Catholics, the Word of God nourishes our faith and our hearts in a particular way. The Scripture readings at Mass guide us through the liturgical year, calling our attention to important events in the Gospel or to the themes during Lent or Advent. Often, the First and Second Readings and the Gospel all together convey a deeper message than they would alone. A great portion of the Mass is dedicated to proclaiming Scripture, and this is done with the service of the dedicated readers in our Lectors Ministry.

John Thoo has served as a reader for five years. He began this service as part of his formation for the permanent diaconate and has found a great deal of meaning in this ministry.

“At Mass, we are fed at both the Table of the Word and the Table of the Eucharist,” John says. “While not everyone may participate in Communion, everyone can be fed by God’s Word.”

Serving as a lector is about more than just reading. How a lector reads a Scripture passage can help the listener understand the Scripture more clearly.

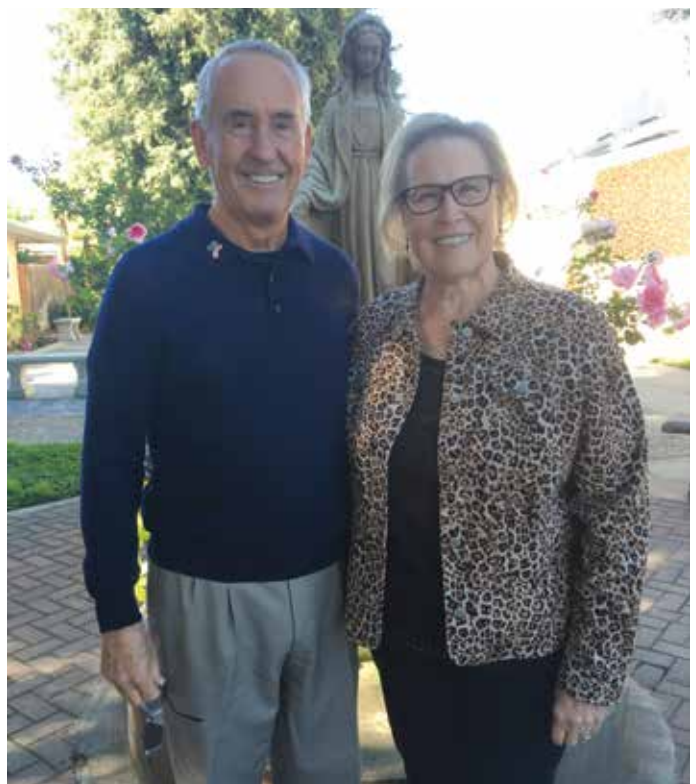
“A reader not only reads the Scripture,” John says. “A reader, by their manner of reading, interprets the reading. Thus, a reader proclaims God’s Word in a similar way that the prophets did, thereby exercising the prophetic office that they received in Baptism.”

In order to effectively serve in this way, a reader should incorporate prayer into their daily life and

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(From left) Griselda Cobian, Beatriz Alba, Gela Solis



(From left) John Guth and Irene Tindel

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THE LECTORS MINISTRY

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pray with the Scripture frequently.

“So, it is important that a reader not only possess technical skills in reading aloud but that he or she also studies Scripture,” John says.

Prayerful study of Scripture will help a reader approach their task with the help of the Holy Spirit. In turn, they can trust that their small, but important task will touch the hearts of the listeners. Speaking loudly and clearly and pronouncing difficult words correctly is important, but secondary to proclaiming Scripture with reverence.

Standing up in front of the entire church may be nerve-wracking, and John says that after five years, he still gets nervous. However, with a little preparation and prayer, a reader can rest assured that

the Lord will use this ministry for the benefit of all present.

The Lectors Ministry is in need of both Spanish and English readers. Men and women alike are invited to consider this important ministry.

“Everyone in the parish is encouraged to examine their gifts,” John says. “If anyone thinks that being a reader is one of the talents that God has blessed him or her with, then do not be afraid to give it a try. Reading at Mass is an excellent way towards sharing one’s time, talent, and treasure.”

Consider joining the Lectors Ministry to share the treasures of Sacred Scripture.

“Pray about it,” John says. “Discern if this is God’s call for you. God initiates, we respond.”

If you would like to learn more about the Lectors Ministry, or to if you would like to serve as a reader, please email lectorministry@stisidore-yubacity.org.

Altar Care Ministry

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being [physically] closer to God gives me strength and courage not to surrender. It really helps me and strengthens my faith.”

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, ministry members would rotate weekly duties to clean and dust the church, altar, confessional, vestibule, statues, and tabernacle. They would also remove burnt-down candles, clean the candle holders, change holy water,

organize the books in the pews, and tidy and clean the sacristy. Since the onset of COVID-19, Bibiana has been taking care of these duties every week, but the ministry hopes to return to a regular schedule soon.

The ministry also launders the altar linens once a week — this has recently returned to a rotational basis. Usually, each member will launder the linens three times each year.

*The Altar Care Ministry hopes to welcome new volunteers soon!
If you would like more information, or to get involved, please contact
Bibiana Mansanalán at 530-674-9618 or Pat Larson at 530-674-9917.*