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OCTOBER 2025

Watch
for your next
bi-monthly
newsletter at the
beginning
of December

Adoration in creation

ACC outdoor service draws nearly 200 to the lakeside



BY BEN SONNEK | STAFF WRITER

In the Gospels, Jesus often taught his followers by the Sea of Galilee. On Sept. 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, He again returned to the seaside in the form of the Blessed Sacrament as the Parishes on the Prairie Area Catholic Community held an outdoor adoration service, praying and singing for a couple of hours at the bandshell in Sinclair Lewis Park, right on the shore of Sauk Lake.

Allison Norgren brought her children to the service, enjoying the nice weather, beautiful music and meaningful adoration, followed by a meal at the nearby park shelter.

"It was a nice way to celebrate a fall Sunday with Jesus in the Eucharist," she said. "(It's) a good way to worship Jesus in public, ... and hopefully, people stopped in to see what we were doing."



Adoration page 2

Adoration

from front

Joe and Becky Eibensteiner also came to the service, and while they found it a little busy to pray the rosary, they enjoyed offering their prayers through the music, which they enjoyed. They also liked seeing the range of people who were there, from older parishioners to the children.

“I would definitely come again,” Becky said. “On the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, it’s nice to do something special.”

For Fr. Kevin Soenneker, the service went even better than he anticipated.

“We were very pleased to have around 175 people join us in adoring Jesus, and four choirs gave their gift of time and talents to lead those in attendance with praise and worship music,” he said. “We had multiple unseen heroes as well — getting the power set up, preparing the meal, setting up and cleaning up as well. All in all, it was a beautiful day.”

Fr. Soenneker has already received calls from musicians



willing to volunteer to sing if the outdoor adoration service is held again next year. So far, the ACC definitely plans to make it an annual event, with September being a fitting month between the busy summer months and various mid-autumn festivities.

While planning for the next outdoor adoration, Fr. Soenneker also encourages people to participate in the 24-hour adoration that is ongoing

at St. Paul’s Church in Sauk Centre.

“There is just something special about praying and worshipping in front of the Blessed Sacrament,” he said. “I know that Jesus is always near us when we pray; He’s present in every Catholic Church tabernacle as well, but when He is

present and we can see the Eucharist, ... it’s like you’re no longer apart from Him. Prayer can seem like a phone call or text message, but in Adoration, He’s there in a unique way, listening and smiling back at you, and I can really sense His love and peace.”



Local ACC youth living out their faith *Faith*

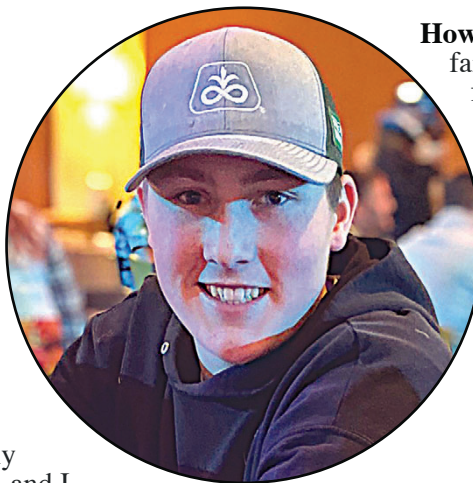
Bennett Wurm

Parish: St. Donatus

Parents' names: Thomas and Sarah Wurm

Favorite prayer and why? The Our Father; it was the first prayer I learned as a child, and I believe it helps us with guidance in our daily lives.

What draws you to Catholicism? My family is Catholic. I was raised in the Catholic faith, and I believe in this because I want to go to heaven.



How do you live out your faith? I live out my faith by praying before bed, at meals and for people who need our prayers. Also by attending Mass, praying the rosary with my family, and trying to show kindness and respect to others.

Who has been a great mentor in your faith and why? Papa Lenny has been a great mentor for me. He has shown me in his actions how to be a good and faithful servant of God and to keep my Catholic faith strong.

Clara Deters

Parish: St. Alexius

Parents' names: Shane Deters and Amanda Deters

Favorite prayer and why? My favorite prayer is Hail Mary because it is beautiful, to me, to ask Jesus' mother to intercede for us. Mary is the finest example of a person who lived out their life with grace. Her example is one I always look at whenever I am in need of answers and guidance.

What draws you to Catholicism? The church and the practices of Catholicism draw me to it, but the main magnet for me is the Eucharist! I could go on and on, but I will just say that my faith took off when I realized how important the Eucharist is. The Catholic community is so welcoming as well, and to me, Catholicism lives out the faith with the right center point — Jesus in the Eucharist!



How do you live out your faith? I try to live out my faith by surrounding myself with people who will help me get to heaven. I go to church every Sunday, and I try to go about my day thinking about how I can live and show my faith through my actions. I also make frequent trips to the chapel whenever I can!

Who has been a great mentor in your faith and why? My parents have been great mentors in my faith. They were the ones to bring me to church when I was not interested when I was younger. They helped me start my prayer life, and they made me realize how important my faith is. They have supported and let me go to retreats to ingress and grow my faith! Another big mentor in my faith is my grandma, Karen Deters. She has always been an amazing example of how to live your faith. She has answered many questions that I have had about the faith, and she has never made me feel inadequate for asking these questions!

Leading in our faith continued...

Teagan Dingmann

Parish: St. Francis de Sales

Parents' names: Mathew and Josie Dingmann

Favorite prayer and why? St. Michael the Archangel because I remember learning it in the car in the morning on the way to school with my brothers.

What draws you to Catholicism? Knowing that God is always there for me and I can give him all of my worries.



How do you live out your faith? I pray every day and try to remember to thank God for all he has given me. God has given me many talents, so I try to use them in positive ways. I try to make good decisions and be a good person.

Who has been a great mentor in your faith and why? My parents are good mentors for me in my faith because they remind me to trust God. We pray before meals as a family, and we go to church together.

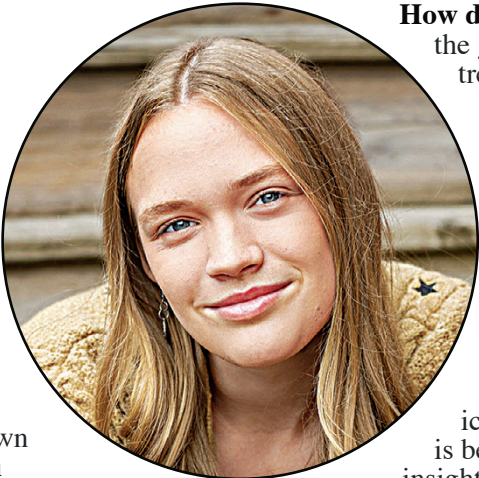
Maizie Jennissen

Parish: Our Lady of the Angels

Parents' names: Patrick and Brenda Jennissen

Favorite prayer and why? I really enjoy the personal prayer where you talk and listen to God. It helps me stay focused on what I'm praying for, and I feel more connected to God.

What draws you to Catholicism? I am drawn to Catholicism because it's consistent. If you have a question about something, you can go ask a priest, and the answer is going to be roughly the same throughout the world.



How do you live out your faith? I think one of the greatest ways to live out your faith is by treating everyone with respect and kindness. It's certainly not easy, and in today's culture, it's really easy to hate someone when they don't share your beliefs, but God calls us to love one another as if they are ourselves.

Who has been a great mentor in your faith and why? My confirmation sponsor, Jacque Polipnick, has been a huge influence in my Catholic faith. It seems like whenever I have a question about Catholicism, she already knows what the question is before I say it, and she has an answer. Her insight and advice have truly shaped me.

Also, the deep roots of the Catholic church testify to the truth of the faith. Nothing that was built on lies could have survived this long.

How do you live out your faith? I live out my faith by bringing my family and friends to church, inviting them to youth groups, participating in Bible studies, and going on trips with the diocese.

Who has been a great mentor in your faith and why? One of the biggest mentors in my faith has been my older brother. When I was younger, he always brought me to youth groups and Mass, and he was always a resource for me if I had questions. We have always been able to talk about difficult subjects and help each other grow in faith.

Parish: St. Paul's

Parents' names: John and Varina Drevlow

Favorite prayer and why? Prayer to St Michael because it gives me a sense of calm whenever I feel anxious or nervous.

What draws you to Catholicism? I am drawn to Catholicism because of the opportunities to have an intimate relationship with Jesus. Whether it is a daily prayer, adoration or confession, you can truly feel his love in any situation.



Ask a priest

Fr. Kevin fields parishioner questions

Parishioners came to the Centre for Christ Sept. 19 for ice cream cones and answers from the new pastor. Fr. Kevin Soenneker took all kinds of questions from those at the Ask a Priest event, queries coming from young and old parishioners alike.

The following is a sample of some of the questions and answers from the evening:

What's your favorite cake? My favorite cake is actually the birthday cake my mom always made me. I'm a twin, so she had to make two cakes; my brother liked angel food cake with coconut frosting, but I always liked chocolate cake with a bunch of peanut butter frosting, and not just a little.

Why did God make mosquitos? I forget which saint who was given the vision and the wisdom from God the Father that, before the fall of Adam and Eve, there were no mosquitos or pestilence. But, as a result of the fall, God, in His divine plan, then made mosquitos and all these other creepy, crawly things; even though it says they were created in Genesis, He changed their "nature" to bug us.

Why do priests get moved from parish to parish, and what prompts the move? A priest is assigned for a six-year stay, and then he can ask to extend that assignment. The people get different homilies, different perspectives, different leadership roles; a voice can get stagnant after a while, and there are only so many ways a priest can look at the readings, so it just shakes things up. As for what prompts the move, there's a committee at the chancery, a group of maybe six or eight priests who go over the personnel board. A priest can always send in a move request, but it's based on whether or not they feel this is a good fit for them.

How do you explain the intercession of Mary and the saints? It's not like we're praying to them and they're going to God, like, "Knock knock, God, Father Kevin is asking for this." God



knows before we ask what we're going to be praying for, but the way He set up the relationship, He wants us to ask. Through the beatific vision, all the saints in heaven see the glory and wisdom and knowledge and power of God. God communicates to the saint: "St. Christopher, Father Kevin is asking for your intercession," and in those moments, St. Christopher, before God in the beatific vision, would bring the prayer to Christ because Christ intercedes for all of us. There starts the domino effect of how God the Father hears and sees everything, relays it to the saint from whom we're asking intercession, and then the saint will take it to Christ and start praying for us.

How do you explain to a student why bad things happen — specifically, why does God allow it? God allows evil. God doesn't cause evil. Evil is not necessarily a real thing; the actual definition of evil is an absence of good. In God's plan, even though the bad thing happened, God creates good out of everything. We're never going to know those answers why. As for why Jesus had to die, we know why now, after the fact, but when He was going to his apostles, they were like, "There's no way a bad thing can happen to Jesus." To a student, I would say, regardless of how bad it is, God is going to bring something good out of it; in the meantime, just stay in touch with God.

Ask a Priest page 7



The religion class of life

Our Area Catholic Community's religious education this school year started in early September with GIFT (Growing In Faith Together) and confirmation classes. We had great attendance, and I was very pleased with the parents' attendance as well because it really does back up the Church's position that the parents are the ones who set the tone for the household as far as how they will worship Christ and learn about the faith.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 2223 says, "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children, and it's to bear witness to this responsibility by first creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule." The teachers have the students twice a month — unless they're coming to youth groups or some other function where we can pray with them — but parents have their kids every single day.

Religious education and schoolteachers can give children the rules of the Faith, but it is so vital for the parents to be the first teachers. We can help children with sacramental prep and getting to know a deeper prayer life, but this is just laying the groundwork for the parents who have a grave responsibility to be good role models for their children.

However, the good news is you don't have to know everything about faith. Children learn by example, so if they see parents going to church, praying before meals and praying in the home, and if they see holy objects on the walls or St. Christopher medals in the car, those are ingrained in them. So, continue to do holy, Catholic things for your children. Otherwise, they will do and see what society does, which is obviously not Christ-centered at all lately.

Parents have to be active participants in the sacraments they have already received so they become an example and model to their children who are going through the same sacramental prep. If your child is preparing for first



reconciliation, maybe they could see you going to reconciliation — while not being in the confessional with you, of course — so they understand they're not the only ones doing it. Before their First Communion, they can see you receiving the Eucharist. Confirmation is often misunderstood or questioned: "What does it mean to be confirmed?" It's about living out your faith, taking ownership of it. As parents, you can talk about what it means to be a public witness of the faith.

To be honest with you, when I was in my 20s, I forgot practically everything I learned in religion classes. By the grace of God, He led me to looking into what the Catechism actually is, and I would read a page a night; then, I would see how I lived up to those commandments. I encourage everyone, parents especially, to study the faith or read the Bible, maybe a chapter per day with your children.

For prayer, there's no necessary school of prayer because it's the Holy Spirit who teaches us how to pray. Children learn memorized prayers, but it is also important they learn to bring Jesus with them throughout their day and talk to Him: "Jesus, I need you right now, I'm feeling lonely and vulnerable," "Jesus, I have a test today," or "Lord, help me throughout this, day and help us get home safely tonight." Those are prayers from the heart, and they bring a smile to Christ's face, too.

We do classes as an ACC, but religious education happens every single day of our lives, whether we know it or not. Either God is trying to teach us a lesson by chastising us — for those who He loves, He chastises (Hebrews 12:6) — or we're receiving God's grace just by being upright and alive. So often, I hear people say, "I never learned that in religion classes." Continue to learn about God, who literally died to be in a relationship with you!

God Bless,
Fr. Kevin



Upcoming EVENTS



Ask a Priest

from page 5

What is the Catholic view on cremation? In the Cold Spring-Richmond area I came from, 70% of funerals were cremation funerals; here, not so much, but it's perfectly allowed in the Catholic Church. The only thing the Church asks you to do is not divide the ashes, wear them or bury some and keep some on display. The cremated remains must be buried in a Catholic cemetery. What about saints' relics in churches, though? Well, those are on for public display, while private cremation remains, unburied, are for holding on.

How do you battle a lack of purity of intention — doing something good for the Church, but part of you wants to be noticed? I go through this a lot when I decide what I'm going to do for Lent, because I say, "Lord, I'm going to give this up. I've always wanted to give it up, so now, I'm going to give it up for You," but it's more so for me than it is for God. I have to get away from that, remove myself from this and say, "Lord, this is for You, and if I could just disappear, I would love that. Lord, let me glorify You through my actions and thoughts." Still, there is a sense that you are going to be noticed. That's a good thing, because, in being noticed, you may be stirring up something in someone's heart; that's a good example.

Why do you love being a priest? I wasn't always the best Catholic. When I was in my 20s, I was away from the Church; I lived in Sauk Centre for seven years, and every weekend, my house was the party house, and then I'd make sure I went to Mass on Sunday so I didn't go to hell. The way the Lord is merciful and gracious and kind and sought me out, I'm so happy and grateful, and I want to share that love with others and share the sacraments.



First Saturday Devotions

Saturday, Oct. 4

Our Lady of the Angels

St. Paul's, if sidewalk not done

Confession: 7:45 a.m.

Adoration: 8 a.m.

Rosary: 8:30 a.m.

Mass: 9 a.m.

St. Alexius Sausage Supper

Sunday, Oct. 5

All stands open at 11 a.m.

Serving from noon to 6 p.m.

Baptism Class

Wednesday, Oct. 8

St. Paul's Meeting Room

7 p.m.

Chow Mein Supper

Thursday, Oct. 16

Our Lady of the Angels

4-7 p.m.

ACC Musician Meeting with Fr Kevin

Saturday, Oct. 25

Centre for Christ

8 a.m.

Memorial Mass

Saturday, Nov. 1

Sts. Peter & Paul

10 a.m.

First Saturday Devotions

Saturday, Nov. 1

Our Lady of the Angels

Confession: 7:45 a.m.

Adoration: 8 a.m.

Rosary: 8:30 a.m.

Mass: 9 a.m.



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Parish Office: 304 Sinclair Lewis Ave.
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
(320) 352-2196
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We are excited to be launching a podcast!



**TRUE
WITNESS**
A CATHOLIC PODCAST

Truth isn't subjective. In a world that says otherwise, Catholics are called to live boldly, love deeply, and witness clearly to Christ and His Church. The True Witness podcast, co-hosted by Adam Saltmarsh and Laura Lange, seeks to continue building up our Parishes on the Prairie community and those beyond.

Launch date: October 1

Streaming on Spotify,
Apple Podcasts, and Amazon

**We hope to hear from
parishioners and grow
in community!**