

St. Margaret's Bulletin

Early, 9:00 am Mass twice in September. The first and second Sundays in September Geraldine will have 9:00 am Mass. In October we will return to regular schedule of 9:00 am Mass only on first Sunday of the month.

Altar Servers—It is time to train altar servers. Altar Servers have not been a part of our liturgy ministries since COVID. It would be good to have 5 or 6 people to rotate in this ministry. Everyone is eligible, women, men, youth and adult. There will be 2 opportunities for training, on Sunday, September 6, after 9:00 am Mass and Sunday, September 20, after 11:00 am Mass.

Faith Sharing Group led by Trish E will meet Tuesday's at 1:30 at the Geraldine Senior Center. First session is September 22. We will be discussing the book: THE GIFT OF YEARS-Growing Old Gracefully by Joan Chittister. Please contact Trish if you wish to participate so she can order enough books for everyone. Text or call – 406-781-0076.

Reflection by Trish—Purge

Several years ago, a friend was moving from a home she had lived in for 30 years. She had raised her daughters in this home, entertained friends here, and enjoyed working in the yard. She was moving to a very small, tiny apartment near Los Angeles to be near her daughter and grandchildren. She needed to purge nearly everything. She only took half of the clothes she had, basics from the kitchen, a few pieces of furniture, and a select few keepsakes. In return she would be closing the gap of the 1,250 miles between them.

At her new apartment she would be available to help care for her 2 small grandchildren. She could share in the life of her daughter and family more readily. She was purging material items to fill her heart with the presence of those she loved.

In Scripture Matthew, Mark and Luke all say something very similar, "If you want to follow me deny yourself and take up your cross." I think it is important to note that denying yourself does not mean to inflict suffering, pain, or misery upon yourself. This statement means that we are to learn to prioritize what is really important.

My friend had many things that were meaningful to her, but in order to live near her daughter's family she had to evaluate what she really needed, not what she wanted. If we desire a close relationship with The Divine, it is likely that we need to reflect and ask ourselves, "What fills my thoughts and desires the most?"

Is it more important to be right in a discussion than to maintain relationships? Can we only associate with people who hold our political viewpoints and religious beliefs? Or can we be gracious and welcoming to people of all sides of an issue? We don't have agree with

everyone, but we can focus on what we do have in common which is often much more than we disagree on. Nurturing relationships with friends and family is an important task. We are all one family in God.

Having a spirit of gratitude for everything helps us put life in focus. The Great Mystery has gifted each of us our abilities. We may have studied hard and worked hard, but the opportunity to do this is a gift. Our possessions and comforts are a blessing. When we focus on what we own and the desire to obtain more, we can easily lose sight of what is necessary for a full life. It is common in our society for people to continue to consume to fill an emptiness they feel inside. This emptiness can more readily be filled by focusing on living a simpler life and counting our blessings.

Getting rid of what takes our focus, our time, and energy away from the Great Love is freeing. They say when we die, all we take with us is love. After we die, what we held onto in life can keep us from experiencing all the love offered by the Great Love. Some say when we enter our new life we will grow into the healing presence of God by purging all that is unnecessary. Our spiritual life is an ongoing process of becoming more like Christ.

My friend's heart was filled by being immersed in her grandchildren's life and being closer to her daughter. She left much behind but gained so much more. The process of focusing on what improves our inner Being through gratitude, prayer and purging, increases our sense of contentment. It takes time, discernment, and prayer. The journey will likely be very difficult, muddy and rocky, and will end in a more comfortable space.

Source of Our Being,
Help us to grow in our belief that all we have, both materially and in relationships
Is gift from a Loving God,
So that we may find more contentment and peace in our lives.