

Dear Parishioners of NW8 Family of Parishes,

I begin this letter recognizing special sacraments and celebrations throughout our Northwest 8 family of parishes. Earlier in April we celebrated the great feast of Easter and welcomed new members into our faith community through the waters of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion. It is a blessing to welcome and witness new members in our Catholic faith who help all of us celebrate the gift of our faith. More recently we have been celebrating our children receiving First Holy Communion, the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus himself. Let us pray that they may be united more closely to the Lord Jesus through the gift of his body and blood and reverence the gift of the Eucharist all the days of their lives. This weekend we celebrate the amazing gift of our mothers, those who are here to celebrate with us and those who have gone to their heavenly reward. We give thanks for the blessings they are and the many things they do, especially as they witness and share the self-sacrificing love of Jesus with us. And congratulations to our High School Seniors celebrating graduation these coming weekends. May they listen in hope and love to the Lord's voice and always remain close to him, knowing that they always are welcome and have a home in our community of faith.

Since April, 2022, our eight parishes have become well known as the NW8 Family of Parishes. While such geographical names have been helpful initially, you may be hearing new names for other families of parishes in our part of the archdiocese. For example, NW2 made up of parishes in Celina, Rockford, Montezuma, St. Marys and Glynwood recently announced their new patronal name is the St. Isidore Family of Parishes. Likewise, NW7 including Ft. Loramie, Newport, McCartyville, and Sidney have recently been named St. Joseph, Pillar of Families. So you may be wondering, when will NW8 have a new name to give us a more sacred identity?

A committee of parishioners is currently working on that exact plan. Starting next weekend, our process will begin to unfold. You will find in next weekend's bulletin a nomination form. Parishioners are encouraged to use that nomination form to suggest up to three different names for our family of parishes and some brief reasoning for your recommendation. Please keep in mind that these names must follow a few guidelines outlined by the archdiocese:

1. The new name cannot be the name of any one of our current parishes in NW8, nor can it be a name already chosen by a family of parishes in the Archdiocese.
2. The name must be:
 - a. A canonized saint
 - b. A mystery of the Lord (example: Holy Trinity, Blessed Sacrament, Lamb of God)
 - c. A title under the Blessed Virgin (example: Assumption, Immaculate Conception)



Nomination forms can be completed by any NW8 parishioner who has been confirmed, or older. Forms should be returned in any of the eight parish collection baskets or dropped off in any of the parish offices during regular office hours. The final date to turn in nomination forms will be Sunday, June 18th. Nominations will then be tallied by the naming committee and the field of possibilities will be narrowed to 3-4 possible patrons. These patron names will be revealed throughout the month of July. More information on the voting process will be shared after the nominations are completed in June.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to share your thoughts and recommendations for a new name for our family of parishes. This is a monumental time for our family and one that I hope you will take advantage of.

The NW8 Vision Team continues to meet and discern a family wide visioning process that will lead and facilitate the creation of a vision that expresses what our new family aspires to be in the next 5-10 years. It will provide direction and discernment resources to allow aligned decisions on where to focus resources and efforts to enable the family to achieve the vision together. Visioning is a work in progress that will become more clear over time and with the cooperation and collaboration of many.

In the midst of visioning and naming, our parish staff and volunteers continue serving each of our parishes and looking for ways to work and minister together. One such example is



Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministry consists of trained caregivers who provide one-to-one Christian care to people in our community who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. They provide confidential care and support to parishioners who experiencing difficulties such as loss of a loved one, loneliness or discouragement, a terminal illness, aging, chronic illness or many other life challenges.

Shortly after the NW8 family of parishes was implemented last year, several parishioners contacted us about training new Stephen Ministry caregivers for Holy Redeemer and offering it to the NW8 family of parishes. We encouraged them to contact staff and parish leaders in each of our NW8 parishes, explaining the ministry and training involved. 10 parishioners from across our NW8 parishes committed to 50 hours of training and were commissioned as caregivers for our NW8 Stephen Ministry. If you know of anyone who might benefit from this ministry call Linda Kuening at 419-302-223 or Ellen Topp at 419-733-4440.

There are many other examples of staff and parishioners sharing and working together on a variety of ministries and programs throughout NW8. I am truly grateful for all the ways our staff and parishioners are supporting and stepping forward in our efforts to be a beacon of light for all in NW8 and beyond.

Blessings and prayers, Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S., Pastor