

From the Deacon's Wife

Summer is over and school has started. Are you ready to get back into the learning mode when it comes to your spiritual life? Are you growing or stagnating? Have you done anything to grow in your faith since your confirmation? Well, it is never too late to start. Every year at this time, you should ask yourself, "What have I done lately for me? For my relationship with God?"

You don't have to go back to school literally, though it is never a waste of time to seek more knowledge or education. There are plenty of opportunities around you everyday if you are open to them. **Perhaps making an annual retreat is something you should consider.** There are many good ones here in Omaha like offerings at the Servite Center of Compassion (attached to Marian High School, check out: www.osms.org/osm2006_currentevents.htm), Mercy Knolls (www.kmscenter.org/), a Christians Encounter Christ weekend (www.cecomaha.org/), or the Benedictine Retreat Center in Schuyler, NE (www.stbenedictcenter.com/). Even just a day of recollection (mini-retreat) would be good. Many parishes offer them throughout the year on many topics. Watch the bulletin and the Catholic Voice for notices.

Something as simple and getting more involved in your parish activities may be all you need. **The Holy Name Confraternity of the Holy Family is open to all women of the parish.** They bring in speakers on many different topics – something different each month! Take a look at the bulletin insert this weekend and consider joining. Come to the Salad Supper at 6 PM on Wednesday, September 8th to see what it is all about!

Men can join the Knights of Columbus, an organization founded to protect the faith and the families of Catholics. I've heard a rumor that they are looking at some great ideas to help families have fun while growing in faith. Watch the bulletin for announcements about Knight activities, or call Aaron Lee and join! You can grow in faith simply by surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals that share your values about faith and family. Make a difference for your family at the same time!

Perhaps you need to grow in your prayer life. There are so many ways to do this – either on your own, by reading a book or two, practicing contemplative prayer, *lexio divina*, – or perhaps by taking a class on the Exercises of St. Ignatius. Just saying extra prayers on a regular basis may be where you need to start. For example, a family rosary once a week, a 5-10 minute break each day to sit quietly and listen for whatever God puts on your heart to ponder, or an extra Mass one day a week. Whatever helps you to be more thankful to God, to be more at peace trusting in His providence, **whatever enlightens you to a deeper understanding of who God is and what God expects of you, is what growing spiritually is all about.**

We often send our children to Catholic school thinking that they will learn the faith. What we really need to do is help them to practice their faith. Lead them by your example by practicing your faith every day in some way. Learn from them when they bring material home from school. When they have questions for you, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know. Let's look it up in the catechism together." The catechism of the Catholic faith and a Catholic bible should be readily available in every Catholic home. If you do nothing else, just peruse either for a topic to ponder. **There is no such thing as learning too much!**