

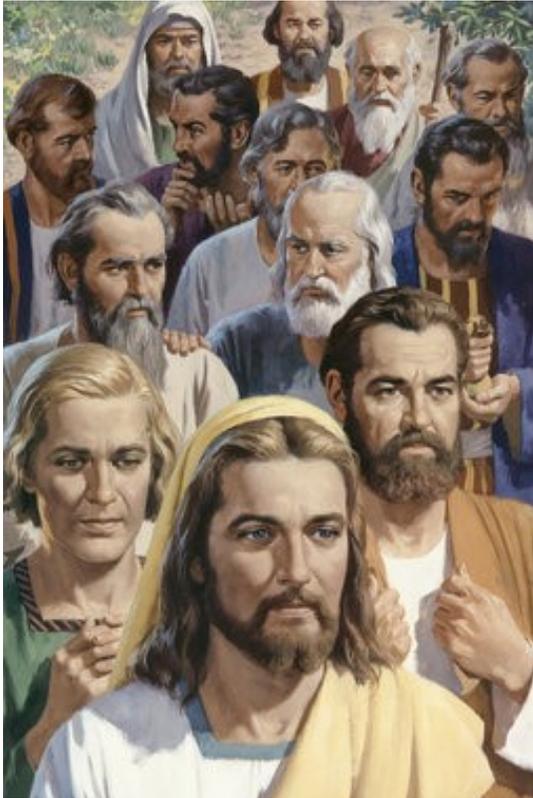
CROSSTALK

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of
the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”.
Matthew 28:19

† † † *DISCIPLESHIP* † † †



DISCIPLESHIP - WHAT IS IT?



Discipleship, or more appropriately, *Catholic discipleship* is the theme of this issue. Many of us, myself included, probably believe that they have a good idea of what discipleship is. We might think of the closest disciples of Jesus, the 12 Apostles, Mary Magdalene, perhaps one of the 72 followers sent forth by Christ (Luke 10.1) and, of course, St. Paul who had many of his own disciples. Mary, our Blessed Mother, who risked her own life by saying "fiat" to God, is the greatest of Jesus' disciples. Can any of us say "yes" to His call?

The root of the word "disciple" comes from the Latin *discipulus*, *pupil*, and from *discere*, *to learn*. So, in brief, a disciple is a learner, pupil, or student in this context. Plato was a disciple of Socrates, Coach K is a disciple of Bobby Knight and so on. As Catholics, we're more likely to think of disciples as followers of Jesus Christ and saints and martyrs of days gone by. Who do we think are disciples of Jesus in modern times? Blessed Mother Teresa comes to mind as do recent saints Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII.

As I researched this topic, one theme kept hitting home ... it's not easy to be a Catholic disciple. The Catholic Church defines discipleship as actively engaging in acts of corporal and spiritual mercy and requires placing allegiance to God above all other relationships or obligations. The call to be Jesus Christ's disciple is quite serious. John Paul II said, "entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith." Our faith must not be compromised by our secular, materialistic, and relativistic culture. The Catechism defines a disciple this way: "The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1816). Divided priorities drain the ability of the person to be a disciple.

At first, I found my research to be somewhat discouraging. For example, it seems almost impossible to support a family and be a disciple at the same time. After more reading and thought, I concluded that being a good Catholic but not being "disciple material" are not states of mutual exclusion. We never know when God's call to Catholic discipleship will come, but we can always prepare for it through faith-filled and prayer-filled lives. Perhaps we can find our inspiration in the stories that follow.

The apparent sternness of God in the way Moses was punished raised the question of how could the wrathful God of the Old Testament be reconciled with the merciful God portrayed in Paul's letter to the Romans. That led to a discussion of the heresy of a famous second century Gnostic, Marcion of Sinope, who taught that the God of the Old Testament was wrathful and stern, but was an inferior god. Marcion taught that Jesus was sent by a higher God with his message of love and redemption. In history, the Gnostic heresies were refuted and we believe that the God Old and New Testament is the same, and even though God appears to be stern in the Old Testament, after many rebukes and apostasies, He never abandoned His people, and sent His only Son to save them. This is just a small example of the discussions that can arise from an unremarkable section of the Bible.

By John Maloney

OUR YOUNG DISCIPLES ON THE JOURNEY: High School Youth Group

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”
Matthew 5:14-16

Growing up as a teenager in today’s world isn’t easy. Growing up a teenager in today’s world and being Catholic is a bigger challenge. Not many things in the life of a teenager are figured out, known fully or understood. Often they will tell you that they are misunderstood. And they are. The life of a teenager is in constant flux – emotionally, physically, socially, intellectually and spiritually. But, throughout all of this confusion there is great **zeal**, a desire and enthusiasm that can illuminate and easily rub off on others. It’s an absolute joy to witness *Young Disciples* at work.

When we think *Discipleship*, we often think of the Twelve Apostles, those original followers of Jesus who embraced and assisted Him in spreading the Father’s Word and Will. Yet, the apostles still faltered from time to time – even Peter, “the Rock”, renounced Jesus three times during His Passion. Discipleship isn’t a goal reached or the pinnacle achievement to which one can go no further. It’s fluid, constantly needing our attention. A tweak here, a tweak there. It is intertwined in our lives. It *is* the spiritual journey. We cannot, and should not demand it of others. We must witness it! St. Francis of Assisi says, “Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary, use words.”

There’s great witness of this going on right now with the teens of our High School Youth Group. This past February, the teens gave an appeal to the Parish. This appeal was about our annual participation in a summer youth conference called *Steubenville*. At each Mass, one teen shared from the pulpit their experiences at the conference. He or she talked about their faith being uplifted and strengthened. They talked about their personal encounter with Christ throughout the weekend and how it has given them fulfillment, joy and renewed direction.

This gift has ignited a fire in them that is spreading. After Mass, many parishioners spoke with the teens – thanking them, encouraging them, supporting them and promising that they would pray for them. The teens shared their gratitude, what’s happening in our youth group and invited others to join them – spreading the *Good News!* The beauty of those exchanges was the joy, the smiles, the enthusiasm – the *buzz* that was created. It’s real...true...lasting...and it’s spreading!

In another of our Youth Group nights, typically in April, we gather to support a local charitable organization, *A Baby’s Breath*. The teens learn about A Baby’s Breath and its pro-life mission, how our Parish and individuals of the parish assists regularly. At this meeting we make baby blankets and the teens challenge themselves to fill empty baby bottles with loose change however they can. Finally, the teens spend the last 10 minutes of the meeting in the Chapel reflecting on our experience.

Here’s a few observations from the night: “It’s one of our most attended nights and usually more guys attend than girls”, “Every teen had a blast – even the guys!” (*Secret – make everything into a competition for the guys, we love it – competitive blanket making!*) “A few of our teens bring a friend with them” (= evangelization).

The life of a teenager isn’t easy and nor should it be. It’s a time of questioning, learning, growing, trial and error, mistakes, and pressures. It’s incomplete, but they embrace it and that’s the key. Their life is all about beginning to figure out who they are and what lies ahead. That’s why our Parish has a High School Youth Group. It’s not a religion class! It’s a place where teens can come and begin figuring out *discipleship – together. Their zeal is the driving force.*

To keep up with all things High School Youth Group at Saint Helena, find us on Instagram:



SaintHelenaBBPA
by Kurt Zampier

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Shawls have been made for centuries; they are universal and embracing; they comfort and enfold; wrap and warm; mother and hug; shelter and beauty. Those who knit/crochet and also receive shawls are loved and blessed.

In 2006, while attending a General Chapter in Reading, PA, one of my sisters taught me a shawl pattern and introduced me to the "Prayer Shawl Ministry". After some research, I began to create shawls and blankets for members of my family and some special friends.



I approached (then) Father Nicolo about starting this ministry in the parish. His immediate response was "yes". At our initial meeting, 20-24 women showed an interest. Membership varies between 8 and 10 faithful women. Some retired because of ill health and a few others contribute when they are available. Initially, blankets were created for the monthly baptisms and blankets/shawls for those in the RCIA program after their reception into the Church on Holy Saturday. Soon persons in the parish who were experiencing health issues and/or celebrating special occasions were included. One Christmas we were able to give them to the heads of the various ministries in the parish. Christmas stockings were created for a sixth grade project to the poor in another parish. Eventually Monsignor Nicolo requested shawls/blankets for the bereaved in the parish.

The outreach of the Prayer Shawl Ministry has expanded these past 8-9 years. As we knit/crochet, we pray for the recipient offering love, comfort and blessings.

A young boy once asked his mother, "Where is my blanket?" She knew what he meant because a blanket was given to him when he was very sick. "I need to feel its comfort." Her husband also received one when he was near death. He always placed his blanket on the side affected by the stroke (he was not a believer). There are many other such stories.

The ministry began in 1998 at the first Women's Leadership Institute at Hartford Seminary. Vicky Galo presented shawls to women undergoing treatment for breast cancer and other ailments. Janet Bristow knitted shawls for new mothers. Other members of the Institute knit shawls for family and friends and anyone needing a shawl. Shawls may celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, friendship, love, professional and personal achievements, thanks, or for any expression of care and concern.

Here at St. Helena, we have maintained a few albums with the names of most of the recipients and their expressions of gratitude.

It is our privilege and honor to share our talents, love, and prayers with others. Sometimes the needs of the parish stretch and challenge our abilities to meet the demands. God has provided for what we need. Prayer shawls are not for sale. They are creations and expressions of prayer. However, we do accept monetary donations and/or gift cards to help defray the cost of the yarn.

Anyone who is interested may join us. We usually meet on the first Monday of the month in the Parish Meeting Room (noon – about 2:30). This is subject to change due to weather, illness, commitments, holidays, etc. Usually we do not meet over the summer, except to socialize, but continue to knit/crochet. The needs do not take a holiday.

You may contact Sister Francis at 610-279-1804 or any member of the ministry.

By Sr. Francis Reinhardt, O.S.F.



THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



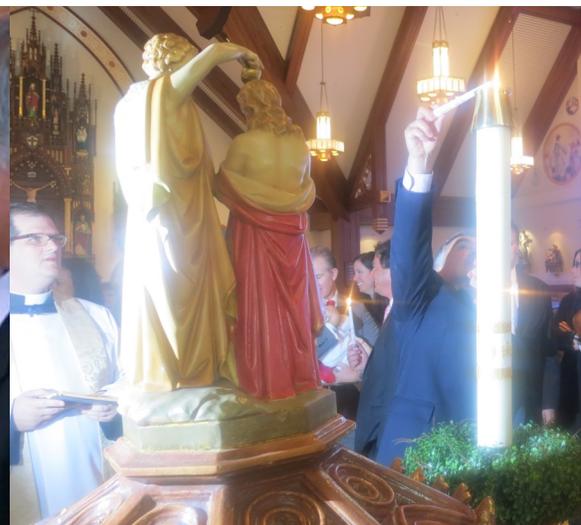
As we read in the Gospel of Matthew, each of us is called to be a disciple when we are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is such a significant and richly symbolic event reflecting God's infinite love for us that the Church celebrates it as well as all the significant events in our lives as a Sacrament. The Sacrament of Baptism is often referred to as "The Door of the Church" because it is the first of the Sacraments of Initiation (the other two being Holy Eucharist and Confirmation) and because reception of other Sacraments depends upon it.

The rite of Baptism is rich in beautiful symbolism and celebrates the breadth of human experiences including life, death, growth, and cleansing. The pouring of water or immersion of the baptized recalls both the flood waters of Noah and the saving waters of the Red Sea as parted by Moses. The lighted paschal candle symbolizes our status as an "Easter people" and signifies the way the Church passes the torch of Christian discipleship to those being baptized. The lighted fire is also a symbol of the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the baptized. The white garment represents the Church's belief that in Baptism we die to original sin and are born again in the new life of Christ. Finally, anointing with the sacred oils marks the baptized as a child of God, anointed with the sign of our salvation.

As a lovely reminder of these beautiful rites performed during the Sacrament of Baptism, all the newly baptized at St. Helena Parish are given their own Baptismal Candle, Certificate and a book for the parents "The One Thing" by Matthew Kelly. In addition, a beautiful Prayer Blanket and Baptismal Bib are lovingly handmade by our own parish disciples.

It is important to remember that the Sacrament of Baptism affects not only the one being baptized but all of us as the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. It is we, the community of believers, who are welcoming the Church's newest members into our own journey of faith as together we seek to follow the Gospel message, "making disciples of all men"!

by Dorothy Barry



A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES

Somewhere around 2000 or 2001, our Parish adopted a Lenten Devotion called Disciples in Mission. It consisted of group study of the Sunday readings for Lent, usually held in the facilitator's house, and it followed a developed program which allowed the participants to delve deeply into the lessons contained in the reading, and an examination of how these lessons affected our daily lives. The Sunday Lectionary is on a three year cycle, each year focusing on one of the synoptic evangelists, with readings from the Gospel of John interspersed in each cycle. The three year length of the program was designed to allow the participants to view the Lenten journey through Christ's public ministry, His arrest, trial, and crucifixion through the eyes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. At the end of the program, the participants were uplifted by the Paschal Miracle of the Resurrection of Jesus.

There were several groups of varying sizes meeting once a week. There was a daytime group which met at the Education Center.

In our Spring, 2006, issue we remarked that the program was so popular that the participants did not want to stop after the three years, and that they moved into a similar program called Community of Disciples.

Dorothy Barry described the program as follows.

One very powerful way to evangelize and connect the Gospel to our everyday lives is by participating in a faith sharing group such as Community of Disciples.



Faith sharing is at the heart of Community of Disciples and is rooted in the belief that God is present and active in our everyday lives. A faith sharing group is simply a group of people who gather each week to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the coming Sunday. In an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance, members of the group are invited to show how the readings speak to them as they strive to integrate the Gospel message into their everyday lives. Faith sharing is bringing awareness and articulating God's way not only into our own lives but into the community as well. This coming together with others is a time of special grace for each one present and for all those whose lives we touch.

Dorothy went on to note that this program was an outgrowth of Disciples in Mission, and had been in operation for six years. Here we are in 2015, nine years after Dorothy's article and almost 15 years after the beginning of the program, and it is still ongoing.

The groups have not remained static, and there has been some turnover in the membership. Some have left their original group to be a facilitator in another group. Other groups have modified the format to meet their needs.

This has to be considered one of the most successful Lenten programs our Parish has had. It has been led for all these years by Jo-Anne Belanger with the strong support of the facilitators and participants.

Right now, there are three groups. The first group, which I'll call the Belanger group, meets at Deacon Ken Belanger's residence on Monday evenings. Some, such as Joan and Jeff McQuade, and Jean Phalan have been in the group since its beginning. Other members have joined at various times since then. Some came over from Dot Barry's former group. Even though they are no longer using the Disciples in Mission booklets as guidance, the format of the meeting is similar to that program. The meeting is always focused on the readings for the upcoming Sunday readings.

Continued on page 11

SHS DISCIPLES

Saint Helena School is a place of Hospitality and Welcome, truly marks of disciples of Jesus! It has been stated more often than not, that "A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words". Never one to be without words, let's illustrate these values through the following pictures! You will see, that our SHS children take seriously the Mission of Jesus to be and build a Community of Faith, Leadership and Service!

Our 8th Grade Basketball Team raising our Honorary Boys Basketball Team manager to new heights!

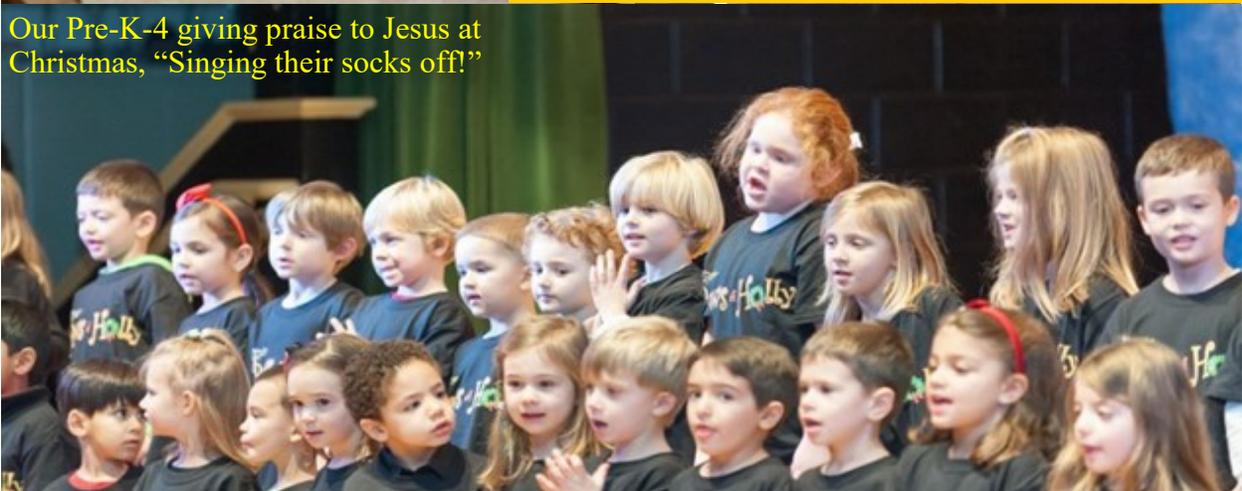


These three young ladies were chosen to participate in the Archdiocesan Show Choir.



Our very youngest bearing witness to their good friend Jesus, by receiving and proudly "wearing" Holy Ashes!

Our Pre-K-4 giving praise to Jesus at Christmas, "Singing their socks off!"





Some of our twenty-two eighth grade students who have been recognized academically at the top Five percent of our Nation – Proud Johns Hopkins Scholars!

Our 8th Grade high School Scholarship Winners!!!

We were awarded over \$300,000.00 in High School Scholarships!



The three young gentlemen pictured here auditioned for the Archdiocesan Band Competition. They were chosen for the following positions! Zach Malloy – Honors Band playing the trombone; Santi Sturla and Charlie Huntley made the Festival band, both playing tenor sax!

Serving our Community by visiting and entertaining our Senior Citizens!



Building International relationships with our Chinese visitors!

DISCIPLESHIP IN PREP

Our religious education program at St. Helena Parish has as its biblical prototype in Chapter 10 of St. Luke's Gospel, where Jesus commissions 72 disciples to go ahead of Him in pairs to every town He intended to visit to preach that the Kingdom of God is at hand. St. Luke notes that the "...Harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few..."

In our PREP, Madeleine Fitzgerald and teachers are fulfilling the role of the 72 described in Luke's Gospel, spreading the Good News to school age children so that they may also be Disciples of Christ. The laborers in this case are very experienced Catechists, some of whom have been in the program for twenty-five years or more.

The following is a synopsis of the Parish Religious Education Program.

Levels One thru Eight What students gain from Parish Religious Education

- Learn all about God's love for us
- To grow closer to God
- To become aware of others that are less fortunate
- To enhance prayer time with God, rosary, talking with God
- To understand our beliefs as Catholics
- A closer relationship with God
- Preparation for First Holy Communion
- To learn the meaning of Communion
- Basic understanding of Catholic Faith/Principles
- Gain educated knowledge of Catholic Faith
- Knowledge of God
- Knowledge of prayers- learn prayers
- Knowledge of Mass rituals
- How God is wonderful in our lives
- Increased spirituality
- Familiarity with the Sacraments
- Fundamental understanding of God
- Curiosity to learn more
- Learn more about Jesus
- A deeper love for Jesus Christ
- Understand the different parts of the Mass and its prayers
- To reflect inwardly for a closer relationship with God
- To learn how to be a good Christian
- Learn to value family, friendship & church

- Deeper and better understanding of God
- Make friends and be a part of this Church community
- To answer questions that she/he have about God
- To strengthen their faith
- Learn how important it is to love and care for other people
- Learn the importance of forgiveness
- To Love God, Obey God, Follow God
- Understand why Jesus died for us
- What it means to live a Christian life
- Practice values at home
- Discuss questions about God & faith
- Demonstrate a spiritual life
- Talk about the importance of faith, family traditions during Lent, Easter, Christmas

Saint Helena Catechists Commitment to Levels One thru Eight

- Teach from the text books to enhance with world examples of how God does amazing things
- Making all aware of people that are less fortunate and how to help
- Laying ground work for our Catholic faith
- Teaching the importance of the different parts of the Mass
- Encourage a love of God and others
- Provide homework or handouts, assignments/reading
- Encourage the children to share what they learn
- Teaching the stories of the Bible
- Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion
- Discussing Catholic principles
- Use examples that the children will understand
- Teaching the kids about Jesus, the Gospel, the Mass





- Reinforce the lessons of the Bible
- Stress the lessons of the Scripture
- Have the kids participate in active role playing
- Set a good example/ role model
- Provide guidance
- Modeling what you teach
- Teaching our faith and practices
- Praying
- Teach about Jesus and His life
- Teach about the meaning and purpose of prayer
- Draw parallels between being a good Catholic and having good morals and values
- Teach well
- Be warm and loving
- Guiding with prayer
- Have an open line of communication with children and parents
- Being positive and joyful about the Word of God
- To teach, encourage & guide
- Being accepting but firm when needed
- Making the class warm with good memories
- By living the faith
- Making PREP enjoyable
- Connect and bond with the children
- Teach values of Catholic faith
- Letting parents know how to help
- Take time to explain and answer questions/ concerns
- Show love and faith in what the kids do
- Introduce Bible principles
- Teaching forgiveness and understanding
- Encourage the importance of love and respect regarding family and God
- Teach Catholic Faith
- Teach the prayers

- Relate stories to real life everyday situations
- Being patient & loving
- Being a good spiritual leader
- Teach the importance of God in our lives
- Keeping them involved
- Teach God's love
- Pray for them
- By knowing the Biblical passages to back up the Eucharist
- Maintain order in class, teach from the curriculum, encourage questions
- To learn to turn to God in times of need
- To learn to take time to thank God for what we have

This work accomplishes the task that Jesus gave the original 72 disciples that He sent out before Him to bring the Good News.

Bill Bogle deserves special recognition for his 27 years of service teaching fourth grade, and special recognition is deserved by the Hammonds, who have for 24 years run a program for 7th and 8th grade students. The Hammonds' unique program is described at page 10 of our summer 2011 edition.

Saint Helena Catechists are: Lori Iannello, Anna Shoppe, Helen Winterbottom, Maria Mitchell, Dolores Bird, Terry Reigle, Alice Buettler, Debra Erthal, Pam Ohler, Bill Bogle, Joanne Palmer, Sarah Finnegan, Wit and Sue Hammond.

However, when you go through the roster of catechists, you will find several who have more than two decades of service.

Madeleine Fitzgerald
Director of Religious Education

STEPHEN MINISTRY

One of the most edifying examples of Discipleship being alive and well at St. Helena Parish is the initiation of our own Stephen Ministry Program. Under the dedicated leadership of certified Stephen Leaders Deacon Ken Belanger and Michele Gerstemeier, we have recruited, trained and commissioned twelve members of our parish as Stephen Ministers. As such, they received fifty hours of training to prepare them to provide one-on-one Christian care to a care receiver who may be anyone in our community going through a tough time. The Stephen Minister and care receiver meet once a week, as confidantes, in an effort to provide a source of healing for anyone experiencing grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, loss of a home, spiritual crisis, loneliness, or any life crisis.

The Stephen Ministry training emphasizes that Jesus is always there with us on our journey through life whether that journey is joyful or sad. Each Minister's training includes practical ways to handle counseling situations, including role-playing. They also learn how and when to seek the assistance of a professional should the need become apparent. Most of all, each Stephen Minister is trained to be a listener, a companion on the journey for their care receiver.

We offer our warmest and most sincere Congratulations to our own special twelve who accepted this heroic call to Discipleship and were commissioned last summer as Stephen Ministers: John Schieve, John Janick, Anne Keane, Janet De Sante, Hilda Carr, Elizabeth Wilson, Helen De Leonard, James McLaughlin, III, Kathleen Sheehan, William McKernan, III and Karen Kelly.

Please continue to pray in gratitude for these Stephen Ministers on their own journey of Discipleship and in sup-



A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES Continued from page 6

to lively discussions. For instance, the reading from the Old Testament for the Third Sunday in Lent dealt with the Hebrew people's doubt of God's love for them when they were thirsty at Massah and Meribah. This was accompanied by a near mutiny against Moses. The Hebrews complained that Moses led them from a land where they had food and water just to die of thirst in the desert. Moses raised the rebellion to God, who intervened in a miraculous manner to save the Hebrews. Moses followed God's command and struck a rock, from which water flowed to satisfy their thirst. We find out later in Deuteronomy that this sin on the part of the Hebrews imputed to Moses was the reason Moses never gets into the Promised Land. That brings up the question of whether Moses was saved. The answer to that is that Moses was with Jesus at the Transfiguration which was recounted in the previous Sunday's Gospel.

By Matt Rieder

