

# Seek CHRIST

**An Inspiring View of Parish Life**

**November 2015 Volume 8**

## Faith † Family † Community

**Jim & Katie Kwiatt, Parishioners**

*We are humbled to be asked by the St. Dominic newsletter editors to share our story in Seek Christ.*

*Jim and I feel indebted to the parish community for the support that we have here. The witness statement inserted in this newsletter, which was given at Masses, was truthfully, a wonderful opportunity to say all the things I was thinking, but maybe not comfortable expressing in certain circles. It is my personal story, but, I am just one small person in this community of over 7,000. This article is less about us, and more about how we need this community to help us, for us all to help each*

**The Kwiatt Family: Katie, Jim, Jack, Charlie and Will at Will's baptism in 2014.**



*other. We are very grateful to have two fantastic priests leading our hearts closer to Christ, as well as our Deacons, Mrs. Fischer and the entire parish and day school staff. The bottom line is, that we do not think our relationship with Christ would be where it is today if it were not for our fellow parishioners and the entire community drawing us closer to Christ and challenging us to further our relationship with Christ.*

**What person, past or present inspires you? How do they live out their faith?**

Our grandparents and our parents definitely inspire us on many levels, not only in their marriages, but their example of what it means to be a Christian, to give of self, to give financially and to always be grateful for the gifts God has given us. Katie's 90-year old grandparents still attend daily Mass and are tireless in their encouragement of their family members to seek out faith building opportunities.

**What role has faith played in your marriage? How do you support one another in going deeper into your relationship with Christ?**

I would say our faith is central to our marriage. We were fortunate to meet at a Catholic university, so, attending Mass together and praying together with our community were always present in our relationship. We were married at Katie's home parish of Mother of Good Counsel in 2003.

But, the "conversation" has definitely changed in the past few years. That Man is You (TMIY), Surrender, Catholic ID, Women of Grace, etc. are all offering insight and challenges into furthering our relationships with Christ.

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We find it helpful to discuss with each other and to help motivate each other.

**Describe an experience when you came to a fuller understanding of what faith means to you.**

Having children has definitely helped us to better understand our faith, and teaching them about our faith has been a transforming experience.

Our older two children were baptized at other parishes in the Archdiocese. Our youngest son, Will, was baptized at St. Dominic in 2014. The baptism at St. Dominic, in front our entire community, was an amazing feeling for us and truly gave us a sense of belonging. St. Dominic felt like home for our family.

**Describe the challenges and the rewards of raising children in the faith.**

The excitement our children have for their faith, and watching them grow and learn the faith, makes us stronger Catholics.

At school, the students focus on one virtue a month. It provides a good avenue for discussion at home and a good reference point at teachable moments. i.e. – treating family members with respect. It is easy to draw on their lessons in the virtues.

Raising our children in the St. Dominic environment has helped us to face the challenges of raising young children. There are so many wonderful resources for parents and the chance to meet other parents who are on the same journey.

Last year, I took our oldest son, Jack, to Surrender. He was in the midst of preparing for his First Holy Communion and I decided it would be nice to attend together. As the Gospel was being read, he turned to me and said, “Mom, I remember this story, Mrs. Fischer told us this story this morning”. On the ride home, I asked Jack about hearing the Gospel earlier in the day. Jack informed me that Mrs. Fischer reads the Gospel of the day, every morning, on the announcements. I was so amazed. What a gift our children are receiving, and us too, as parents. I often remind myself that if my elementary school children are hearing the daily Gospel at school, I must

make it a priority to find the time to read the daily Gospel myself.

**Where is your faith journey taking you in the short term and in the long term?**

Our journey is definitely in the fast lane and is evolving every day. In the long term, we want to continue the intentional habits we are developing and to continue to further our relationship, and our children’s relationships, with Jesus Christ. I have a lot to work on, but I am grateful for the opportunities and the tools that have been placed in my path. This fall, I decided to try out *Catholic ID*. Our small group is geared towards Moms with small children. There are 8 members and quite a few children. I had never heard of *Catholic ID* prior to this summer. It has been a challenge, but one I definitely needed. The women in the group are motivating each other to further our relationships with Christ. Some of the intentional habits we are working on are: read and meditate on scripture daily, engage in silent prayer for 10 minutes a day (ideally before work, but, sometimes more realistically, at any point during the day), and seek out confession monthly. On a personal level, knowing that there are 7 other members of the group striving to do the same thing is extremely motivating.

These are the opportunities that I feel are a true blessing to all of us in the St. Dominic community. I went into the first meeting not sure what to expect and worried that I was not “holy” enough. But, these women are able to share in the challenges and rewards of trying to carve out time for our relationship with Christ while raising little people. It has been an extremely rewarding experience and has introduced me to 7 women in the parish whom I did not previously know.

**Jim, what have you taken away from “That Man Is You!”?**

TMIY has a focus on the role of men in the Christian family. The program includes practical faith-based information for men combined with fellowship and discussion. The concepts are simple, yet very powerful: pray with your children, control the media that enters your home, participate in Mass



Top: Charlie at his K4 graduation last spring with teacher, Mrs. Danita Stich.  
Bottom: Jack on the day of his 1st Holy Communion in 2015.



and the sacraments, read the Gospel, ask questions to better understand your faith in God. It challenges us to look at ourselves in order to be better men and fathers. Having a group of strong peers who are also trying to raise families with strong Catholic faith and values has provided an important outlet for me. I am indebted to the other men in TMIY for the refocus they have given me on my faith. It is also encouraging to be with so

many other fathers who are striving to do the right things for their spouses and families.

I joined TMIY when it was starting in Fall of 2014. The spiritual growth it has provided me has led to incredible things in my marriage, family, and professional life. Integrating my faith into my role as a husband, father, and physician has helped me gain a better understanding of God's calling for me in these roles.

### ***Why is it important for a father to be a role model for faith in a family?***

Pope Francis stated, "it is very important to reaffirm the family, which remains the essential cell of society and the Church." Fathers need to be present for their children and strong examples for their children. It is important for children to see their father at Mass in order to emphasize a sense of the immediate family belonging to a larger faith family. There is power in children, seeing their father admit their sins, and attend confession together. We discussed in TMIY that statistics show that the strongest predictor of further participation in religious activity in adulthood is in children whose fathers attended Church with them. We lead by example.

### ***How do you integrate faith into your daily life with the boys?***

Our children are young, but they have some powerful observations and influence on our faith life. We discuss the examples of the saints in our own daily lives and how the saints are examples of how to live. Will's baptism was a bonding moment for our family in how Jack and Charlie were so aware and able to participate. The entire family felt the sense of community as we walked through the doors to be introduced. Jack's first communion process was a faith building activity for Katie and I as well. It was a nice "refresher course".

The simplicity of the boys understanding of faith gives us reminders that prayer can be easily integrated into the hustle of everyday life.

### ***What is the most important lesson to teach our children?***

Your Mom and Dad love you no matter what.

### ***You are part of our Sharing the Vision Campaign team. What have you learned about St. Dominic through this experience?***

We are a large Parish which is a true blessing. There are many facets of the parish in regards to service to the community; adult faith formation and programming for all members. Being a school family, there is a lot of focus on the school, which is very positive. Being part of a parish-wide campaign helped me to understand not only the impact of the school, but also the importance of the many other aspects of parish life at St. Dominic. I have enjoyed being able to work with other members on the future of our Parish. I was grateful to collaborate with so many faith-filled and talented people. It opened my eyes to the dedication and tireless work of many in the Parish.

### ***Are there any "stories" or moments or people who have made an impact?***

Last year, when I was having some struggles at work, Katie gave me a St. Charles Borromeo medal. St. Charles had many positive attributes, including caring for the poor in his town and feeding the hungry during a time of famine. This is why he is the patron saint of digestive issues—and my specialty is gastroenterology. Since receiving this medal, I ask St. Charles to pray for me and my patients. Integrating prayer, in respect to my work, has really helped me focus on the greater good, and the power that God has in helping us use our talents to help others. It also reminds me that despite everything that science and medicine have accomplished, there are still so many things that are left in God's hands. I have been able to share this with some of my patients, who are also Catholic, which has helped some of them through their struggles with illness.

### ***How do you seek Christ each day?***

We pray as a family.

The Kwiatts after completing the Dominic Days Steeplechase Run/Walk in 2015.

