



CHURCH OF ST. STEPHEN BULLETIN

all are welcome

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March 6, 2011 | 9th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Turn Up the Flame - St. Stephen's Capital Campaign to Grow in Faith *Fr. Mike Van Sloun*

Where It All Started

The Original Concept. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

Bishop Sheen's Insight. Bishop Sheen was quite impressed with how parishes everywhere gear up to raise money for church and school building projects and other needs. Committees would be formed. Feasibility studies conducted. Outside consulting firms hired. Intense planning would follow. A three year campaign would be established. There would be door-to-door visits, telephone calls, and mailings; homilies and bulletin articles; signs and hosts of other gimmicks. Pledges would be made. Special collections would be taken. The whole parish would make a gigantic effort to raise money, and in most cases, large sums were raised and major worthwhile projects were funded.

Bishop Sheen's Disappointment. How is it that pastors and parishes can put forth so much extra effort to raise money, yet it is so rare to see a parish put forth an equal amount of effort to raise its faith? While it is important and legitimate to raise money to support the work of the church, it is more important to raise faith, to believe in God more strongly, to love God more dearly, to follow God more nearly, to obey God more readily, to give our lives to God more completely, and to bond with the Body of Christ more firmly.

Bishop Sheen's Suggestion. Why not conduct a three-year parish spiritual renewal or revival with the same level of effort and organizing principles as a capital campaign?

Where We Have Been

Program Motto or Slogan. Turn Up the Flame.

Scriptural Foundations. "Trim your lamps" (Mt 25:7).

"Your light must shine before others" (Mt 5:16).

"Tongues as of fire came to rest on each one of them"(Acts 2:3).

Extra program slogan. Higher! Hotter! Brighter!

Campaign length. Three years.

Campaign Kick Off. First Sunday of Lent, 2008.

Campaign History. A three-year program in four years:

2008-2009, Phase I,
Learn Your Faith

2009-2010, Phase II,
Practice Your Faith

2010-2011, a one-year
interlude

2011-2012, Phase III, Share Your Faith

Campaign Pledges. Not one pledge for three years, but one pledge per year.

- Special pledges for adults, youth and children.
- Not one pledge per household, but one pledge per person.
- Phases I and II, check off sheets.
- Phase III, fill-in and check off sheets.

Wrist Bands. Three so far in hot reds and yellows.

- Excellent ways to give witness.
- Great conversation starters.
- Imprinted with campaign slogans.
- In a variety of sizes: medium, large, and extra large.
- One of the hottest items of the campaign.

E-Flames. Monthly e-mails that are reminders, reflections, and motivators.

- Sign up on your pledge sheet or call the parish office.

Hymns. Christ Be Our Light and Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning.



Higher, Hotter, Brighter!



Higher, Hotter, Brighter!



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Where We Are Going

Year III Catchphrase. Share Your Faith.

Scriptural Foundations. "Go tell what you hear and see" (Mt 11:4).

"Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you" (Mk 5:19).

"Peter stood up, raised his voice, and proclaimed" (Acts 2:14).

Program Obstacles. To reflect upon the quality and depth of our own faith when we tend to be over-busy and unreflective.

- To go public about our faith when we often prefer to be private.
- To speak about our faith when we often prefer to be silent.
- To risk sharing about our faith when it is safer to just go along.

Program Goals. To get a better handle on our own faith situation.

- To continue to learn more about our faith and practice it better.
- To engage others in conversations about matters of faith:
 - to listen to them share their faith stories, and to be able to share our faith stories with them.
- For those whose faith is sporadic, dormant, or inactive:
 - to invite them to reactivate or renew their faith,
 - to invite them to reconnect with church,
 - to invite them to attend a Mass or another parish function, and possibly to accompany them on their journey.
- To reflect about what it means to be a welcoming community, to better practice "All are welcome in this place."

Segment Length. One Year, the last Sunday of Early Ordinary Time, 2011, to the last Sunday or Early Ordinary Time, 2012.

Pledge Sheets. Seize this golden opportunity to Turn Up Your Flame and grow in faith like never before.



Higher, Hotter, Brighter!

Pledge Sheets (continued)

- A new style, fill-in the blank and check off.
- Four age-appropriate options: adult, high school, middle school and elementary.
- Build upon your earlier foundation, state how you would like to learn more about your faith and practice it better.
- Take this opportunity to decide who you might approach to share your faith and evangelize.
- The pledge is confidential, share only first names or initials.
- There is no pressure, choose only as many categories as you wish.
- Participate in Commitment Sunday on March 19-20, 2011: bring your completed pledge sheet forward at Offertory time; be a bold witness and make a public statement about your willingness to share your faith.
- Or, return your pledge sheet in any weekend collection, or return your pledge sheet to the parish office by mail or in person.
- Take the opportunity to request E-Flames by providing your e-mail address on the pledge sheet.

Wrist bands, the next generation. Blue in color, a particularly hot flame.

- Available at all church entrances on kick-off weekend.
- Phase III challenge: wear your wristband whenever you can, let others know how you treasure your faith!

Refrigerator Magnets. Mailed to each household, they are another reminder and motivator.

- It has the parish weekend worship schedule.
- Display them proudly in your homes/office.

Year III Special Hymns. All are Welcome and Fan the Flame.