

## **Faith Tidbits..** *a little food for thought*

*This monthly series will answer questions you always wondered about or questions you never even thought to ask... all about our Catholic Faith.*

*If you have a question you want answered, call Diane Hardick at 633-3672.*

### **Why do we call ourselves Catholics instead of Christians?**

It is not either/or but both/and. We are called Catholics and Christians. The word "catholic" is derived from a Greek work meaning "universal." We call ourselves Catholic because it describes the scope of Christ's saving mission and the extent of the community he founded. The Catholic Church is the "universal" community founded by Jesus Christ, the Savior of the whole world. St. Ignatius first used the word "Katholicos" for the first time in his writings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. When speaking about the church of Jesus Christ, he called it the Catholic Church 240 times in his writings.

### **Why do we call our Priests "Father?"**

Genesis 1:26-27 teaches us that God made us human beings in His own image and likeness. He is the "original" of any power or goodness we may have. We are only faint copies of that perfect Original. Human fatherhood itself is derived from God's fatherhood. Calling priests and prophets "Fathers" is Biblical language. The Bible is filled with people being called Fathers: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David are all called fathers. Our Priests are the "Fathers" of our parish family - our faith community. In Matthew 23:1-12, when Jesus tells us to call no man "father", he is using figurative language to emphasize that all legitimate authority and truth ultimately come from God. We are not to take this passage literally.

### **Can the Pope resign?**

Canon 322 of the Canon Law of the Catholic Church states that if it happens that the Pope wishes to resign, his decision it must be made freely of his own will. Canon 331 states that a resignation of any Pope does not need acceptance or rejection by anyone, because he is the "top" person. A Pope can make provision in writing that if he becomes completely incapacitated in his judgment, his resignation would be automatic. But there is no law requiring him to do so.

### **Why are those who help with Communion called "extraordinary ministers?"**

The Bishops, priests and deacons are the Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Lay ministers are used based on need. If there are enough priests and deacons present, there would be no need for "Extra-ordinary Ministers." In our Church today there is a great need for their ministry and so we have many Extraordinary Ministers who assist with Holy Communion.

### **Why do Catholics believe in seven sacraments, while Protestants believe in only two?**

Catholics believe in seven sacraments because Christ instituted seven; because the Apostles and Church Fathers believed in seven; because the second Ecumenical Council of Lyons (1274) defined seven; and because the Ecumenical Council of Trent (1545-1563) confirmed seven. In short, the enumeration "seven" arises from the perpetual tradition of Christian belief.