

## Local author inspires with lecture on spiritual wellness



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Last week, I had the pleasure of attending a presentation at St. Germaine Church given by Evergreen Park resident and author Joe Paprocki. He had been invited by the parish council and the church's pastor, the Rev. Michael J. Furan, to speak about his newest book entitled "7 Keys to Spiritual Wellness."

Only hours prior to his evening talk, Paprocki was interviewed about his book live on the WGN-TV Morning News with Robin Baumgarten and Larry Potash. If you missed it, you may view it via the Internet at <http://www.wgntv.com/videogallery/69100838/News/7-Keys-To-Spiritual-Wellness>.

Paprocki is the national consultant for faith formation at Loyola Press in Chicago. He is the author of numerous books on pastoral ministry and catechesis. In fact, his bestselling "The Catechist's Toolbox" is a guide for religious education used in many parochial schools.

Paprocki and his wife Joanne have been married for almost 30 years and have two grown children. His older brother is Thomas Paprocki, who currently serves as Catholic bishop of Springfield.

Paprocki's message to the audience of about 100 was quite timely. His presentation offered much food for reflection while still in the Lenten season - in preparation to celebrate today's highest holy day of Easter Sunday.

He went into detail about his "7 Keys" and, in a remarkable way, he revealed that they are actually a positive spin on the "7 Deadly Sins" and how to avoid them.

Paprocki told the crowd that spiritual wellness requires us to strive for "something more" than meets the eye. Catholics are constantly asked to stretch our imaginations to focus on the kingdom of God, which is actually in our midst.

According to Paprocki, attaining heaven on earth includes realizing that we are not the center of the universe. We need to adopt a humble spirit and come to understand that we are all on this journey together.

He advises thinking and praying before acting upon anything. In the heat of the moment, our emotions can take over the brain and could cause long-lasting damage in our relationships. As Paprocki mentioned to Larry Potash, being



**Joe Paprocki and his wife, Joanne**

impulsive and "shooting from the hip" is not the answer. We need to "stop, slow down, take a deep breath, and think" to avoid hurting others.

One of my favorite topics was what Paprocki calls "holding on loosely." Ultimately, he said, "we need our hands free to hold onto God." Surprisingly, this is not about denying ourselves all earthly possessions and pleasures. Rather, it is a realization that true happiness doesn't come from amassing possessions to fill that void in our lives.

As the song "Soak Up the Sun" says, "It's not having what you want. It's wanting what you've got." Actually, sharing our time and talents (stewardship) does a much better job of filling that void.

He ended the evening by saying that a healthy spirituality recognizes our human desires but channels them in a positive way.

For more insight about Joe Paprocki's compelling and inspiring message, please visit his website at: <http://authors.loyolapress.com/author/joe-paprocki/>.

A most blessed Easter to all. Alleluia, He is Risen!