

Saint Francis Solanus



OCTOBER 2014

Bible Studies Relate Ancient Text to Modern Faith

“Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.” — Hebrews 4:12

Through its Bible study programs, St. Francis Solanus works to give its parishioners an understanding of how the Bible is just as relevant today as it was when it was first written. Since 2012, the parish has offered programs through Jeff Cavins’ *Great Adventure* series, helping parishioners to grow in their faith, in their relationship with God, and as people.

“Our faith requires us to strive for knowledge and to continue to grow in our faith throughout life – what better way to grow in faith than to learn how to read the Bible and use it as part of our daily lives?” says program facilitator/coordinator Brad Kendrick. “It is so easy to sit back and be complacent. But by actively engaging in study, we develop into better, more Christ-centered individuals. We can also take that newfound



knowledge and spread the Gospel in our communities.”

St. Francis’ Bible study program first began when Brad had the opportunity to meet Jeff Cavins at a seminar, and subsequently brought the *Great Adventure* series to the parish. At its inception, the program had 23 participants – it has grown significantly over the past two years, now numbering 72

participants in its current study. The studies usually begin in late August and run through April of the following year, taking time off for the summer. Throughout the duration of the study, two sessions are held on Wednesdays – one from 1 to 3 p.m., and another from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

“Since starting the study in 2012, we have held *A Quick Journey through the Bible* by Jeff Cavins, *A Biblical Walk through the Mass* by Edward Sri, and *The Bible Timeline* by Jeff Cavins,” Brad says. “Our current study is *Matthew: The King and His Kingdom*. We spend the first half of each session in small-group discussion. This is when participants can discuss, within a confidential small group, what they learned and what they continue to struggle with

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Time: *The Foundation of Stewardship*

The American Catholic Bishops have told us that stewardship is part of discipleship and is a way of responding to God's call in every aspect of our lives. We refer to the three facets of stewardship as "Time, Talent and Treasure," and when we consider the importance of these three Ts of stewardship, the "time" component comes first by design.

When we talk about stewardship of time, we are referring to prayer time. Prayer is of the utmost importance in a disciple's life, and it serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom. Only by spending time in prayer each day and receiving the sacraments are we able to consistently and generously donate our talent and treasure to the Church.

When looking for examples of how to live our lives as disciples of Christ and as stewards of God's gifts, we can always turn to the great saints of our Church to guide us. And when it comes to the Stewardship of Time, the life of St. Damien is just one example of how prayer, or "Time," is the foundation for our lives of stewardship.

Shortly after being ordained a

priest, St. Damien volunteered to serve a colony of lepers isolated on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. From May 1873 until his death in 1889 (at the age of 49) St. Damien worked to restore within the lepers a sense of personal worth and dignity.

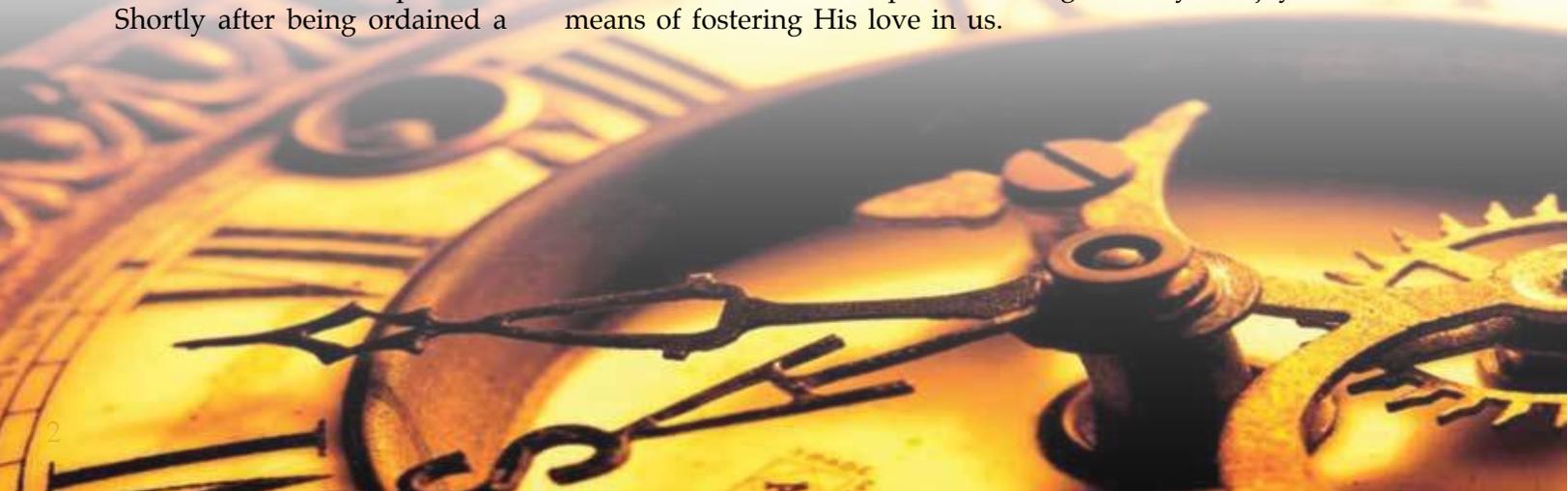
Although for some time St. Damien took the necessary precautions to ensure that he did not contract leprosy, he knew that physical touch was necessary to communicate his love and concern to those inflicted with the disease. He embraced the lepers, dined with them, cared for them, and anointed them in the sacraments. With great humility and sacrifice, St. Damien offered his own life in order to save the lives of others.

From where did St. Damien draw his strength? What was the source of his inspiration? "Were it not for the constant presence of our divine Master in our humble chapel, I would not have found it possible to persevere in sharing the lot of the lepers in Molokai," St. Damien wrote. "The Eucharist is the bread that gives strength... It is at once the most eloquent proof of His love and the most powerful means of fostering His love in us.

He gives Himself every day so that our hearts as burning coals may set afire the hearts of the faithful."

St. Damien found his strength in the Mass, the greatest prayer of the Church. Prayer was the impetus behind the generosity of this faithful servant of God, and is the fuel that ignites every heart to flame in love. Without prayer, without the grace that flows from the sacraments, we are incapable of leading lives of service and responding to God's call!

How much time do you dedicate to prayer each day? One hour? Fifteen minutes? None at all? Before you consider joining a parish ministry or volunteering your talents in service, and before you discern your gifts of treasure to the Church, be sure that prayer is your foundation. Identify a prayer schedule that is manageable. This may entail arising 20 minutes early each day to offer your work to the Lord, or attending daily Mass once a week. Every prayer commitment is unique and personal. Yet no matter what, this time offering, this dedication to prayer, is the key to serving the Lord with faithfulness, generosity, and joy.



..... A Letter From Our Pastor

Make October a Spiritually Fulfilling Month

Dear Parishioners,

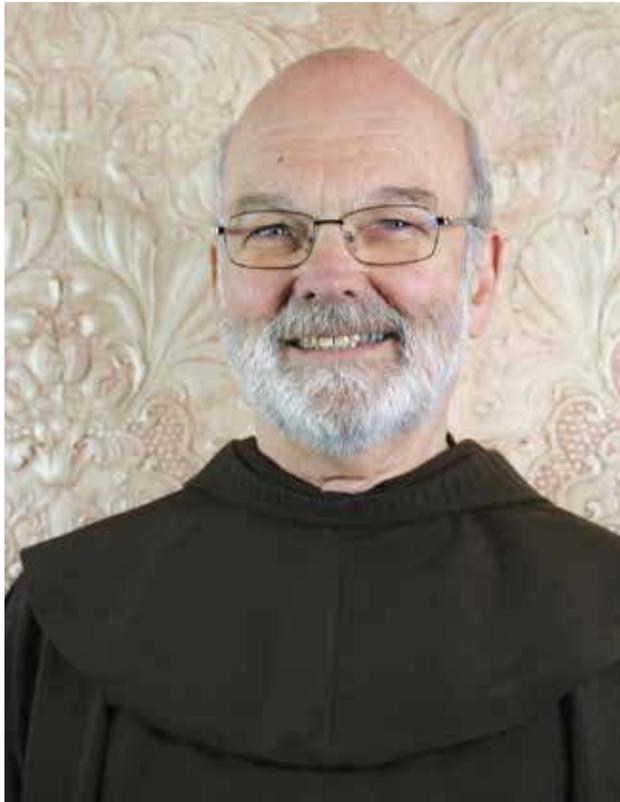
Through the centuries, the Church has developed and established a theme and devotion for each month of the year. Officially, October is the month of the Rosary, highlighted by the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on Oct. 7.

The Rosary and its importance to our prayer lives is a fixture of our Catholic faith. It is satisfying and affirming for me to see people with rosaries at church. However, this is not as prevalent today as it was one generation ago.

A family praying the Rosary together was once the norm. Since October is the month we highlight this devotion, there is no better time to bring it back to the forefront of our faith lives.

So, this month, I invite you to do two things. First, find your rosary. If you don't have one, ask your friends in the parish who might have one you can use, or find one online for purchase. And, second, make a concerted effort to pray the Rosary this month — either individually, or more importantly, with your family.

Families and family life are under attack from secular society. Last year, Pope Francis announced an Extraordinary Synod of Bishops to occur this month from October 5-19. The topic of discussion will be the "Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization." Participants will include the presidents of national bishops' conferences (our president is Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville), the heads of the Eastern Catholic Churches, and the leaders of major Vatican offices. It will be interesting to see what comes out of this significant meeting.



The pope has consistently emphasized the importance of the family to our Church. One of his comments contained "food for thought" for each of us in relation to our own families. He said, "People should take Sundays off so they can be with their families." Of course, we all understand this can be difficult given the busy and complex world in which we live. The Holy Father added, "Turn off the television during family meals and set aside time to play with or to talk with your children." In addition to praying the Rosary, I would recommend that our families make an effort to heed Pope Francis' words.

Finally, I would like to suggest a couple of words and one phrase that would make our relationships to one another stronger and more comfortable, whether in our families, or right here in our faith family. The words are "please" and "sorry," and the phrase is "thank you." It is amazing what these words might mean to someone. I do not think we can say them enough. As we approach our busy fall season with all the joy it brings, let us keep in mind how the Lord has gifted us, and respond with the heart of a generous steward.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Don, ofm". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr. Don Blaeser, O.F.M.
Pastor

..... Seeing the *Face of*

For Rose Gott, facilitator of the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, helping the poor is a beautiful way to behold the face of Christ.

"We are witnessing to the poor that we serve," Rose says. "They are able to see Christ in us, in the way we minister to them by being kind, generous, thoughtful, and friendly. We encourage those who volunteer for this ministry to keep in mind that our clients really need people who care about them and want to build them up. It is important for our clients to feel that they

elderly and disabled, and the pantry is a big service to them. There are a lot of residents of low-income areas in Quincy that we serve."

About 75 percent of the pantry food items are purchased from donations or grant money, such as the diocesan Rice Bowl program. Many of the food pantry items are donated by St. Francis parishioners, particularly on the first weekend of each month, when our parish food drive takes place. Furthermore, there are also a couple of larger food drives

our parish, which is dedicated to helping those most in need in the name of Christ. The organization is chaired by Rose, while Tammy Schmitz serves as treasurer and Judy Akers as the phone volunteer. It meets on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Tuesday Club Room of St. Francis School. Basically anyone who contributes in any way to their charitable works is considered a participant in the organization. Therefore, informally speaking, it has hundreds of participants,

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— Rose Gott

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The St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry of St. Francis Parish distributes food staples to about 3,500 people a year in our community. Once every eight weeks, clients in need may receive two bags of groceries and one of hygiene products. The items are delivered to clients' homes by about 30 various St. Vincent de Paul, or SVdP, volunteers.

"There really is a need in Quincy for a food pantry that can deliver food to people's homes," Rose says. "Our intention is to keep the pantry small so we can help people who really don't have any way to get around. A lot of our clients are

that take place at St. Francis each year, such as around Thanksgiving time. Panera Bread very generously donates leftover bread on a frequent basis, and it is distributed either through the pantry or simply through the parish. About 75 percent of our parishioners also kindly donate funds, so that SVdP volunteers are able to order and shop for additional pantry staples that are needed. Roberta Talken, Phyllis Maxwell, Tammy Schmitz and Rose work hard at stacking the pantry shelves and keeping them in order as well.

The pantry is an outreach of the St. Vincent de Paul organization at

although there are about 10 people who regularly come to the meetings and strive to live out the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul daily.

"We volunteers feel that we are so blessed, and that by helping out with this ministry, we can give back and show our gratitude for everything that God has given us," Rose says. "As the old saying goes, 'But for the grace of God, go I.' We are living out the Gospels by what we do."

Some of the main outreaches of the SVdP organization, in addition to the pantry, include sending birthday cards to parishioners over 80 years old; taking birthday

Christ in the Poor

gifts to parishioners who are nursing home residents; having Masses offered for any family members of parishioners who have passed away; and giving Christmas poinsettias to people over 90 living in their own home.

Those who are interested in receiving the pantry's services may call 217-430-1025 for assistance. Pantry item needs are listed in the parish bulletin from time to time. Monetary donations can be placed in the Poor Box or placed the offertory in an envelope labeled "St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry." For more information about the St. Vincent de Paul organization or pantry, please contact Rose Gott at 217-233-9650 or Tammy Schmitz at 217-223-5018.



St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry receives Rice Bowl check

Bible Studies *continued from front cover*

understanding. In the second half of the session, they watch the DVD presentation done by Jeff Cavins."

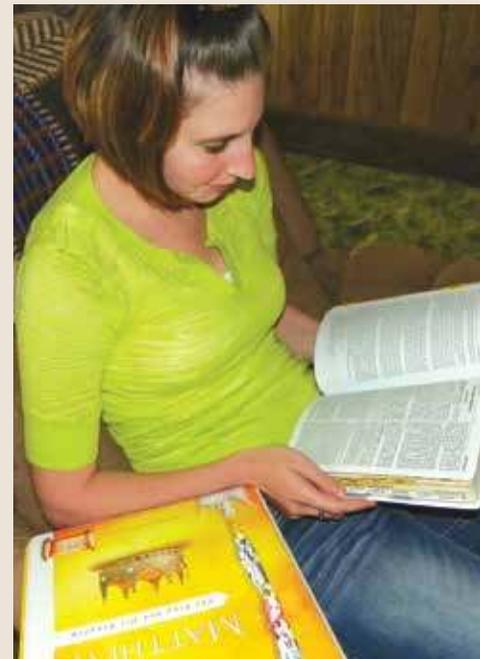
Studying the Bible doesn't just deepen your relationship with God and with your faith – it can also deepen your relationship with your fellow parishioners.

"Study is all about learning and developing into the person we want to be – when you have the opportunity to do this along with fellow parishioners, it has the potential of bringing those involved into a more personal and encouraging friendship," Brad points out. "You also have the opportunity to meet fellow parishioners that you may never really have had an opportunity to encounter in any other setting. It is great to see strong, trusting and encouraging support groups develop."

In the future, the program has plans for many more studies, including studies that focus on the Acts of the Apostles and Church history.

"Anyone interested in learning more about the Bible, our Catholic faith and our role as Christians in the world are encouraged to attend," Brad says.

For more information about current or future studies, please contact Brad Kendrick by email at bdken11.1@gmail.com, or by phone at 217-430-2593. Information is also available at the parish rectory.



St. Francis of Assisi

Revealing the Beauty of Lady Poverty

Material possessions are easily treasured. Indeed, it is often what we own and how we dress that defines who we are. But during the month of October, we are given the opportunity to reshape that outlook, as the Church celebrates the feast of a great saint who has much to teach about the virtues of “Lady Poverty.”

St. Francis of Assisi was born in 1181 or 1182, in Assisi, Italy. He was given the baptismal name Giovanni di Bernardone, in honor of John the Baptist, by his mother. She longed for her son to grow up to be a great religious leader. Francis’ father, not interested in his son becoming a man of the Church, changed his son’s name to Francesco.

So began the life of St. Francis, laden with conflict, all under the direction of God’s hand.

Francis was already disillusioned with the pleasures of the world from a young age. Despite coming from a prominent and wealthy family, he was rebellious towards his father’s eager pursuit of material possessions. As a young man, while Francis was bantering with his friends, a beggar stopped to ask for alms. While the others simply ignored the beggar, Francis promptly emptied his pockets, giving all that he had. But his charitable actions served only to earn

teasing from his friends and scorn from his father.

The year 1201 saw Francis join a military expedition against Perugia. He was taken prisoner and spent a year in captivity. It was at this time that his major life conversion began. When he returned



home, Francis questioned his formerly carefree life and began to embrace the virtue of poverty. He eventually renounced his father, who sternly disagreed with the direction of his life, and cast aside all material possessions. Francis began begging for food and caring for lepers.

Then, while in a state of deep prayer in the ruins of the church of San Damiano, just outside of Assisi, Francis heard the following words issue forth from an icon of Christ crucified: “Francis, Francis, go and repair my church which, as you can

see, is falling into ruins.” Francis began to rebuild the crumbling chapel of San Damiano. It was only later that he realized that the “church” in need of repair was the Holy Catholic Church, which would be transformed by his Franciscan Order of Friars, guided by his example of holy poverty.

It is time to celebrate the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi! The lives of the saints have much to teach, and following their example throughout the liturgical calendar yields a rich experience of faith. Mark your calendar for Oct. 4 and find a way to celebrate!

You may honor Francis’ devotion to “Lady Poverty” by seeking out means to simplify your own life. One way is to serve a humble dinner of soup and bread, taking the time to discuss the

fleeting nature of material possessions. Encourage each member of your family to choose at least one item they can live without, and donate the items to those in need. Finish the meal by reading Matthew 10:9, the Scriptural passage that transformed the life of St. Francis.

Although we are not all called to take the strict Franciscan vow of poverty, the life of St. Francis serves as a strong reminder that hearts dedicated to simplicity are more readily devoted to Christ’s work on earth. “Lady Poverty” is a truly sublime treasure!

“The Simple Joy of Seeing God in All Creation”

The Order of Secular Franciscans

As a Franciscan parish, St. Francis Solanus embraces many facets of the Franciscan charism. In the early 13th century, St. Francis of Assisi created a particular order for lay men and women who want to take a step further in embracing Franciscan spirituality.

“St. Francis recognized that in every age, there are people who feel a calling to a level of holiness but who can’t leave everything behind,” says Rosanne Roy, OFS, Minister of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity. “St. Francis recognized this and established the Third Order, so lay people could still follow his rule in the confines of their own life circumstances. The Secular Franciscan Order is a true, canonically established order under the direction of the pope.”

St. Francis established the Secular Franciscan Order, once called the Third Order of St. Francis, as one of the three orders of the Franciscans. Each order lives the charism of St. Francis within different life circumstances. While the First Order Franciscans are active in the world proclaiming the Word, the Second Order, commonly known as Poor Clares, are devoted to a life of cloistered prayer.

“The Third Order focuses on penance, conversion, and living an example of a holy life in the world,” Rosanne says. “Our lives are supposed to be ongoing conversion and formation, a formation that continues even after we join the order. We’re all human and sinners. God is not done with us yet.”

In the United States, there are 30 regions of Secular Franciscans with fraternities under each region. The Franciscans of the Prairie contains 12 fraternities, including the Fraternity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, which gathers at St. Francis of Solanus School.

“Our fraternity is one of the oldest Secular Franciscan fraternities in the United States, and we celebrated our 150th anniversary in 2011,” Rosanne says. “Our regular gatherings include ongoing formation for all of our members, prayer, socialization, and the discussion of business matters. Right now, we’re studying the different articles of the Rule and going through a study of Catholic Social Teaching.”

The process of becoming a Secular Franciscan is a three-part journey of orientation, inquiry and candidacy.



Dwayne Goodwin's profession as a Secular Franciscan, 2013

For Dennis R. Dowell, OFS – who will celebrate his Silver Jubilee as a member of the Secular Franciscan Order this year – this process lasted approximately two years and began when he felt called to investigate the life of St. Francis further.

“I was doing a lot of thinking about my faith, and I always had a fond recollection of St. Francis and his predilection for taking care of the environment and his simple, peaceful way of doing things,” Dennis says. “Being a Secular Franciscan makes one hold St. Francis up as a mirror to look into.”

Rosanne also always felt a kinship with the Franciscan charism as she grew up surrounded by nature and felt a wonder for the natural world around her. Becoming a Secular Franciscan impacted her daily attitude and prayer life.

“Every day, you wake up so grateful for every little thing,” Rosanne says. “It’s changed my attitude towards people and my compassion toward animals and creation. I could pray better and pray more, but I’m continually trying to keep my mind focused on God, which is what prayer is. Being a Secular Franciscan has changed my heart.”

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St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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The Order of Secular Franciscans *continued from page 7*

Though he was originally involved administratively with the Secular Franciscans, Dennis describes gradually shifting from an active role to a meditative role in the order.

“For me, it’s the matter of simplicity,” Dennis says. “St. Francis asks us to shed the material world as the primary focus of our lives. If we look honestly at our faith, St. Francis calls us to be better Christians by following his example and not being so concerned by the things of this world. Both St. Francis and Pope Francis are calling us to go back to the basics – to believing that people are more important than things, to a style of faith where we concern ourselves with others and with the poor.”

In emulation of his namesake, Pope Francis continues the call to simplicity and to serving others, challenging each of us to imitate St. Francis within each of our

own individual life circumstances.

“Becoming a Secular Franciscan is definitely a calling,” Rosanne says. “You have to feel God calling you and wanting you for a particular purpose, more than just being on this earth. Pope Francis has been a true blessing to the Church. The Secular Franciscans are for those who feel an attraction to St. Francis and his spirituality, the simple joy of seeing God in all creation, being a part of it, and living in that joy.”

For more information about the Order of Secular Franciscans, please visit the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order website at nafra-sfo.org. To learn more about and to contact the Franciscans of the Prairie, please visit their website at franciscansoftheprairie.org.

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 6:30, 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 a.m.

Weekday Mass: M, T, W, Th, F, 6:30 a.m. | M, T, W, Th, F, S, 8:00 a.m. | W, F, 8:35 a.m. during school year

Confessions: Saturdays 8:30 a.m., 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Holy Days of Obligation: Vigil 5:30 p.m.; Holy Day: 6:30 a.m.; 8:35 a.m. on school days; 8:00 a.m. during summer; 5:30 p.m.