

Saint Francis Solanus



OCTOBER 2015

Parish Office Staff Keeping it All Going With Faith and Family

Imagine yourself being the center of a big wheel. As you remain still, the spokes of the wheel whirl around you, seemingly in constant motion. A perpetual hub of action and activity, members of the parish office staff often find themselves at the center of just such a scenario as they keep the parish running smoothly. Between answering questions, creating schedules and juggling responsibilities, parish Administrative Assistants Barb

Girouard and Misty Cramsey describe a role that goes far beyond just Sunday morning.

"We handle requests from the parishioners, anything from 'What time is Mass?' to 'How do I get my child baptized?'" Barb says. "We are the liaison between the parishioners and the priest. Any question that a parishioner asks, we try to direct them in the right path."

With help from volunteers Emmie Venvertloh and Mary Musholt, the two ladies also produce the weekly bulletin, assist with funeral arrangements, and arrange volunteer and ministry schedules.

We handle the weekly collections and the financial obligations of the parish, such as paying bills and payroll," Barb says. "We do the tuition invoicing and receipt of payment for the school. It's a variety of things. No one day is the same. We can come in to the office and think this just might be a quiet day and within minutes, that can all change. There is so much that goes on here that an article such as this does not skim the surface."

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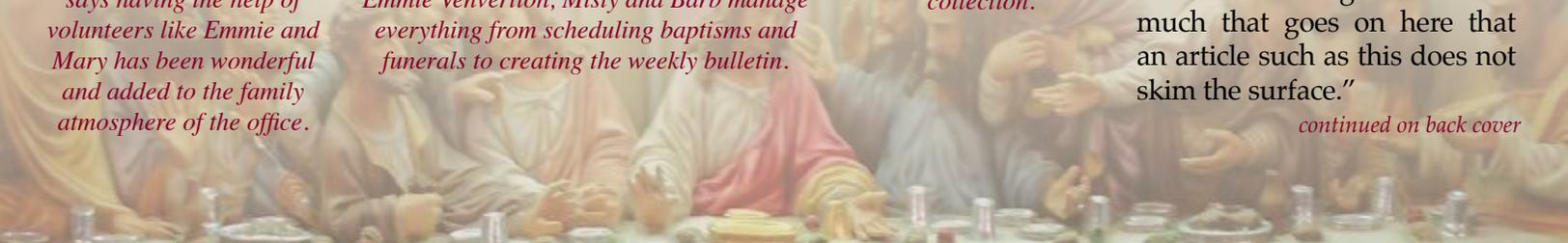
Office volunteer Emmie Venvertloh helps round out a staff that includes Mary Musholt, Misty Cramsey, and Barb Girouard. Misty says having the help of volunteers like Emmie and Mary has been wonderful and added to the family atmosphere of the office.



(From left) Parish Administrative Assistants Misty Cramsey and Barb Girouard say they never know what the day will bring when they step through the office doors. With the help of volunteers Mary Musholt and Emmie Venvertloh, Misty and Barb manage everything from scheduling baptisms and funerals to creating the weekly bulletin.



Office volunteer Mary Musholt helps with parish needs such as answering the phone and the weekly collection.



“Pray for an Outpouring of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit”

The Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops from Oct. 4 to Oct. 25, 2015

Daily, we experience the challenges that buffet the family in the contemporary world. Their presence trickles through our social media. We witness struggling families. Our own family might be embroiled in tensions as we endeavor to live a countercultural testimony.

In light of these challenges, our Holy Father Pope Francis called for two consecutive gatherings of the Synod of Bishops on the themes of the family and evangelization. It is a historic moment for our Church — for the first time the Synod will have two related assemblies on related topics.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Synod of Bishops is “a permanent institution of the Catholic Church.” Following the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI established the Synod “to continue the spirit of collegiality and communion that was present at the Council.” Consisting of bishops from around the world, the Synod meets when requested by the Holy Father to offer counsel on questions facing the Church.

The Synod convenes in General Assemblies, which concern matters for the universal Church, and Special Assemblies, which concern matters for a select region of the Church, such as the Church in Europe or in the Middle East.

General Assemblies may be extraordinary or ordinary in nature. Last October an Extraordinary General Assembly, meaning on topics “which require a speedy solution,” transpired, and the related second assembly taking place this October will

be an Ordinary General Assembly, meaning on topics “for the good of the universal Church” (2014-2015 *Synods of Bishops on the Family*, usccb.org).

The XIV Ordinary General Assembly will continue to address concerns regarding the family as the prior Extraordinary Assembly did. Its theme will specifically be “the vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world.”

Unsurprisingly, both religious and secular media sources are expected to provide thorough coverage of the assembly, which will take place from Oct. 4 to Oct. 25.

And with the recent legalization of same-sex unions in our country, as well as the recent atrocities caught on video that Planned Parenthood has executed, the synodal topics will most likely result in significant coverage by all the media. Thus, as the dizzying flurry of media coverage initiates, we must take care to weigh our sources carefully.

Particularly throughout the month of October, let us remember as individuals and families to pray together for Church, to be discerning in our sources and to try and imitate our Holy Father by looking at each other through eyes of mercy and love.

Pope Francis provided this prayer for the Synod of Bishops on the Family in his Angelus address on the Feast of the Holy Family on Dec. 29, 2013:

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love, to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic Churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division: may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, may the approaching Synod of Bishops make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer.

For more information and news regarding the Synod of Bishops, visit the Catholic News Service at catholicnews.com and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website at usccb.org.

A Letter From Our Pastor

October: Helping to Feed Spiritual Hunger

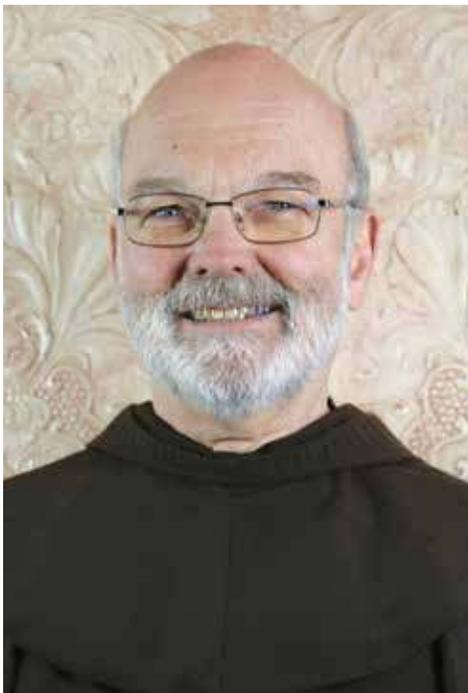
Dear Parishioners,

Have you ever been hungry — really hungry? When asked that question, most of us probably think of a time when we had pangs of hunger because we were fasting, we were on a diet to lose weight, we had saved up for a big dinner, or we just decided not to indulge what we wanted. However, there are people right here in our own community who go to bed at night with real hunger. And that hunger is not without real pain.

If we expand that to our diocese, our country, and the world, untold numbers of people go to bed hungry every night. Yet, while Jesus instructed us to “feed the hungry,” He did not want us to stop at satiating simply physical hunger.

All around us, there is spiritual hunger. We all know people who have plenty to fill their stomachs, but are not really sure exactly what they want in life, living unsatisfied. Some of these people are our siblings, our children, our parents, or even our spouses.

Although so many are spiritually hungry, it may not be as apparent to us as physical hunger, because the spirit is within us and we are weakened more slowly. Life goes on when we are spiritually hungry — but truly addressing that need is just as important for us as a Church as physically feeding the hungry. Spiritual malnourishment can be just as devastating as physical famine.



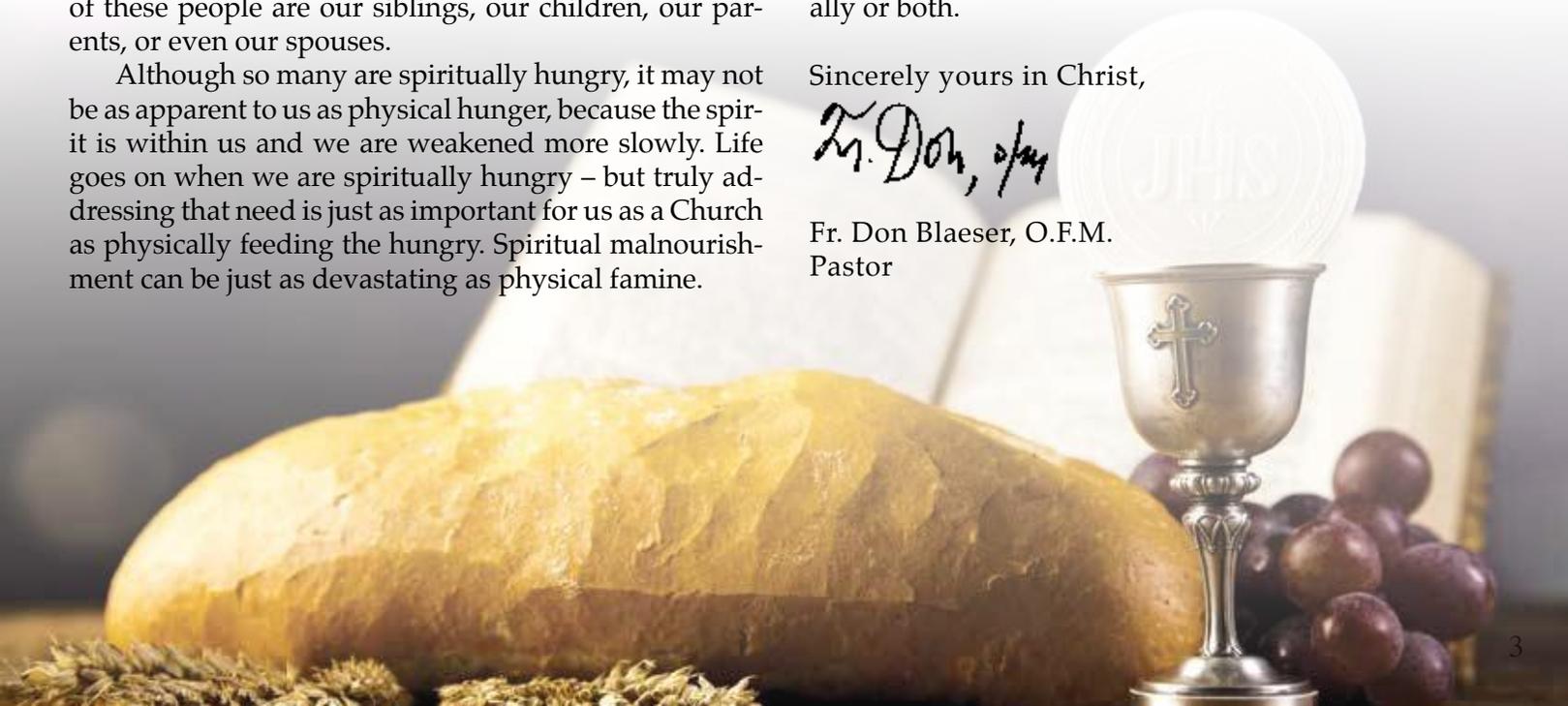
While we are aware of the reality that we, as a faith community, cannot completely eradicate physical hunger, we must do what we can to feed those around us. Both physically and spiritually, we have opportunities every day to reach out to those in need. Sometimes, it may be as simple as praying for someone. Or it may mean giving of our time, talent or treasure to those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Yet, we always have an opportunity to share the greatest gift with others that alone can satiate the human heart — the love of Christ. There is no time better than today to begin. Will you reach out in love to those in need by sharing the love Christ has poured into you?

Blessed Mother Teresa advised us, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” Let each of us vow to find that one, and feed him or her — whether physically, spiritually or both.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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

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





Questions and Answers

I feel like my life is already too full with family obligations and work obligations. I barely even have time to relax. How can I possibly share my time and talents with St. Francis Solanus?

We all have many obligations to our families, jobs, schools, and other endeavors. But we also all have the same number of hours in the day with which to accomplish these things. The issue is not how much time we have, but how we prioritize that time.

Before you fill out your Commitment Card, take some time to reflect on your priorities, and where God fits into your day-to-day life. Remember, living as true stewards of God's gifts involves giving back the first fruits of what He has given to us in thanksgiving, not the "leftovers."

I am happy with my current level of parish participation. Why do I need to keep filling out a Commitment Card every year?

As part of the renewal process, it is important that we consider our current level of participation in parish life at St. Francis Solanus. Sometimes, the call to stewardship involves the quality of service in addition to its quantity. In looking through the opportunities for ministry available at the parish, you may find yourself drawn to a new ministry you haven't tried before, or new ways to share of your time with God to enrich and enlighten your prayer life. So, even though your current level of parish participation might not change drastically, the ways in which you participate may evolve as you grow in living the stewardship way of life.

Even if you end up continuing to participate in the exact same ministries as you have in the past, marking and turning in a Commitment Card means you have reviewed your present ministries and re-committed yourself to them.

I'm not very active in the Church and, frankly, feel like it may be too late to get involved. Why should I fill out a Commitment Card?

It's never too late to renew your faith life, and filling out a Commitment Card is a simple step through which you can immediately re-enter the life of the parish. Our parish community is not here to judge you, but to welcome and nourish you in your faith journey. Begin by checking the box that says, "Attend weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation," and take some time to discern additional ways in which God is calling you from that starting point.

I'm physically unable to attend Mass or be active in parish life at St. Francis Solanus. Is there any reason for me to submit a Commitment Card?

Of course! Your prayers are just as important to the success of our parish community in carrying out its mission as ministry participation and financial contributions. Take a moment to look over some of the opportunities to spend quiet time with God listed in the "Stewardship of Time" section of the Commitment Card, and take a step towards growing in your relationship with Christ and His Church.



About Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

With such a tough economy, I'm reluctant to make a financial pledge for the year, in case my circumstances change and I'm unable to fulfill it. Should I?

Your Commitment Card is not a legally binding contract; it is a pledge of intentions. Make your pledge based on what you are setting out to do to give back to God, and do your best to fulfill that pledge. If your financial circumstances change, your gift will likely change, as well, but it is still important to prioritize God first. Nobody is going to send the bill collector to your house if you can't fulfill your pledge due to a change in your financial situation! But we've all got to start somewhere, and it's important that we begin our commitment by writing down our goals for giving back of our gifts to God.

I've expressed interest in a ministry in the past through filling out a Commitment Card, but nobody from the parish ever followed up with me about it.

While we do our best to consistently follow up with everyone who has shown interest in the opportunities for ministry at St. Francis Solanus, we are human, and we sometimes fall short in our follow-up. If this has happened to you in the past, we sincerely apologize, and we encourage you to renew your interest in any activities in which you might like to participate by filling out a Commitment Card this year. Every year, we go into the renewal with every intention of making sure that everyone who has expressed interest is contacted with more information, and we will do so again this year.

I don't agree with everything that goes on at St. Francis Solanus. I feel like when I fill out a Commitment Card, it condones the things I disagree with.

In filling out a Commitment Card, you are not making a pledge between yourself and St. Francis Solanus; you are making a pledge between yourself and God. Disagreements occur

in life. This is a part of being human, and we respect the opinions of each and every member of our parish family. But it is of utmost importance that each of us fulfills our discipleship of Christ by growing in our relationship with Him and utilizing the gifts He has given us to carry out His mission on Earth, regardless of disagreements or misunderstandings. Beyond helping the parish, filling out a Commitment Card expresses a devotion to spiritual growth and a strong belief in the Catholic Faith.



Welcoming Christ

Saint Francis Solanus
Roman Catholic Parish

2015 Commitment Card
My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

First & Last Name (One card per family) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone (important) _____

Email _____

Please bring your completed card to Mass on
Commitment Sunday, **October 24/25**,
or mail to the parish office.

Time
Spending Time with God in Prayer

Circle next to your prayer:

_____ every Sunday and Holy Day

_____ every Mass at least once a week

_____ every week in Adoration of the Eucharist

_____ every day in personal prayer

_____ at least once a week

_____ at least every other week

_____ with my spouse each day

Talent
Using My Talents in Parish Ministries

You can read about each of the ministries listed below in the Stewardship Handbook. When you sign up, the ministry leader will call to explain how to get involved.

Currently Involved Interested in Joining

Please clearly write the **first name** of interested family member on the line.

Adult Formation

Divorce & Beyond

Evenings with Engaged

RCIA - Sponsor

RCIA - Team Member

Youth Formation

Liturgy of the Word for Children - Leader

PSR Catechist

Parish Picnic Volunteer

Vacation Bible School Adult or Teen Volunteer

Parish Life

Fall Bazaar Volunteer

Holy Name Society

Ladies of St. Francis

Parish Picnic Volunteer

Quilters

Boy Scouts

Girl Scouts

continued on back panel

Treasure
Making a Consistent Gift to the Offertory

In thanksgiving for God's gifts, each household at St. Francis Solanus is asked to give a specific percentage of income based on the biblical rite:

5% to Saint Francis Solanus
and 4% to other charities

My Gift to Saint Francis Solanus

Please complete either a Weekly or Monthly offering gift.

Weekly: \$ _____

Monthly: \$ _____

Weekly giving based on proportion of income

At Saint Francis Solanus, each household is asked to work toward giving 5% of their income to the parish. Some families may have difficulty reaching this goal at first. If so, try increasing your weekly gift incrementally until you reach your goal.

% of Household Income	10%	5%	4%	1%
\$30,000	\$30	\$15	\$12	\$3
\$50,000	\$50	\$25	\$20	\$5
\$70,000	\$70	\$35	\$28	\$7
\$100,000	\$100	\$50	\$40	\$10

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Aaron and Alice Arnold

Stewardship: Faith in Action

Life is busy. Between work, raising children and family obligations, it may seem as if there isn't a lot of extra time for anything – including parish involvement. In fact, in the stewardship motto of “time, talent and treasure,” it's often *time* that is the most elusive. But parishioners Aaron and Alice Arnold believe that when you start with faith and make a conscious decision to live that faith through stewardship, then

finding time is not only possible, but well worth it.

Of course, for stewardship to be spiritually meaningful, it has to be firmly grounded in faith, and both Aaron and Alice grew up in families who lived and practiced their faith. Originally from Quincy, Aaron and his older sister and brother had a typical Catholic upbringing – which meant attending St. Anthony parish and school, and then graduating from Quincy Notre Dame High

School. And Alice had a similar childhood growing up in the Chicago suburb of Clarendon Hills. Like Aaron, she was one of three siblings – the middle child between an older brother and a younger sister – whose family strongly believed in Catholic education, which included Notre Dame Grade School and Nazareth Academy.

“Our parents both raised us in the Catholic faith and taught us the importance of treating others as you want to be treated,” Alice says. “It was always more than just about going to church. Our parents gave us the gift of faith and showed us how to live that faith. And now that we're parents, it's important to instill in our children what the world needs – things like God, love, compassion, and forgiveness.”

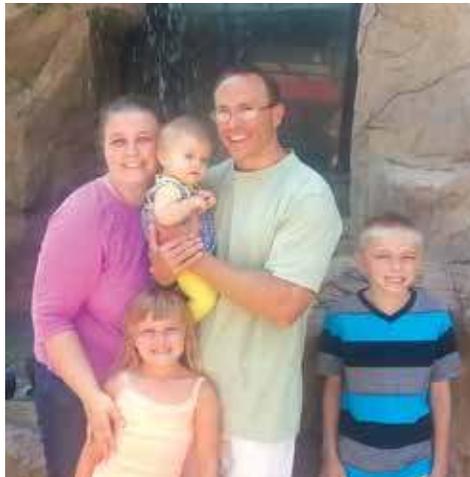
Through their parents, Aaron and Alice were not only given the gift of faith, but were also taught how stewardship is the means to put our faith into action. Their parents may not have used the same language we do today – using terms such as “time, talent and treasure” – but the concept is the same. The new language simply helps us put a name to what we are called to do.

“While attending church is important to me, practicing what my faith teaches me is just as important,” Alice says. “You can attend church every Sunday, but if you don't get out and help those in need or donate when troubles arise, then what is the purpose of our faith? I can tell my children

“While attending church is important to me, practicing what my faith teaches me is just as important. You can attend church every Sunday, but if you don't get out and help those in need or donate when troubles arise, then what is the purpose of our faith? I can tell my children over and over again to do something – but if I don't practice what I preach, it will not make one bit of difference.” – Alice Arnold



The Arnold children: Spencer (10) holding Catarina (8 months), and Erica (6).



Aaron and Alice Arnold with their children, Catarina (in Aaron's arms), Spencer (far right) and Erica (center).

continued on page 7

Aaron and Alice Arnold *continued from page 6*



Aaron and Alice Arnold were married here at St. Francis Solanus and just celebrated 11 years of marriage.

over and over again to do something – but if I don't practice what I preach, it will not make one bit of difference."

Of course, as for many of us, life gets busy and it's hard to fit everything in during a 24-hour period. But Alice believes that living as good stewards isn't about *having* the time, but about *making* the time, even if it's not always easy. There are full-time jobs – Alice is a Special Education Teacher for the Chaddock School in Quincy, while Aaron is a Juvenile Detention Officer for the Adams County Juvenile Detentions Center. And with three children – Spencer, 10; Erica, 6; and Catarina, 8 months – their days are

full. But they still manage to give back by serving as lectors and Eucharistic ministers, volunteering as a Girl and Boy Scout leaders, helping out with the parish picnic – especially with the Cookie Walk and the Kiddie Korner – coaching t-ball, and giving of their time to the parish school such as with the Home & School Association and Market Day.

"It's amazing how much time I have to waste when I say that I don't have any free time," Alice says, "If I don't volunteer, then I would do stupid stuff – like spend a ridiculous amount of time on the computer – so I always have more time than I think I do."

In the end, faith is a gift nurtured in love and put into action through stewardship. Both Aaron and Alice have taken the faith of their childhood and made it a central part of their day-to-day life, viewing their involvement in the parish as a vocation embraced by their entire family. And to them, the very concept of stewardship is best taught by example. So when their daughter, Erica, leads grace before meals, or when the children volunteer alongside their parents, then the gift is one that keeps on giving.

"Ultimately, life isn't about what you can do for yourself," Alice says. "But rather how you can better the world."

St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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Parish Office Staff *continued from front cover*

Misty, who works a split shift with Barb five days a week, says working in the parish feels like family to her.

"I have been here two years," she says. "I was hired to write the bulletin and it transitioned into a job sharing. It's like being part of a family. There's a lot going on from day to day, which makes it busy."

Barb is married to Bob and the couple has three children. She has often volunteered where needed in various capacities within the parish. She accepted the office job three and a half years ago upon the retirement of Marcia Tushaus. Barb says that the family element and the chance to get to know parishioners on a deeper level is what makes the busy days worth it.

"The variety and interaction with the people is what I enjoy" Barb says. "I love it when people come in here and there's time to hear their stories. Working in the parish office lends a spiritual element to the job that most of us don't usually find in

our workplaces. It's an extension of faith, and I really appreciate the opportunity given to me of being here."

Misty is married to Jason and they have 2 daughters. She became a Catholic in 2005 and has been actively involved volunteering in many areas, mostly at St. Francis Solanus School since that time.

"I didn't necessarily think the Catholic faith would be the perfect fit, so coming into the Church was a slow process for me." Misty adds. "This job has increased my faith"

Volunteers are sometimes needed to assist the staff with bigger projects. Parishioners who are interested in helping out can contact either Barb Girouard or Misty Cramsey in the office at 217-222-2898, or by email at church@stfrancissolanus.com.

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.