

Saint Francis Solanus



JUNE 2016

Susana Loza Grows Closer to the Parish Family Through Service

For Susana Loza, the opportunity to serve at St. Francis Solanus Parish has truly been a blessing over the past 16 years.

"It's always been important for Hispanic parishioners to come together as a community, and I think we've had a great opportunity to do that here," she says. "The community has grown a lot over the years – the priests here have been a great support, and they have helped to increase our participation in parish ministries and activities. The [English-speaking] parishioners have also been very kind and welcoming to us. I really love the people of this parish."

Originally from Ciudad Manuel Doblado in Guanajuato, Mexico, Susana first came to the United States in 1998. Two years later, she and her family moved from Los Angeles to Quincy and became St. Francis Solanus parishioners. Susana and her husband, Rodrigo Reyes, have six adult children and 19 grandchildren who range in age from 4 to 28 years old.

Since she first came to the parish, Susana has served as a Communion Minister for the Spanish Mass, and has also served at English Masses from time to time, as well.

"I really wanted to become active in parish life, and thankfully, the priests at the time were able to give me that wonderful opportunity," she says. "It has really been a beautiful blessing and has helped me to grow personally. I think that I've grown much closer to our Lord and to Jesus."



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Susana Loza





STEWARDSHIP
GIVING DURING THE
Summer
Season

“We’ve stopped delivery of the newspaper and mail. We’ve taken the dog to the kennel. The iron is unplugged, and the stove is turned off. Is there anything else we need to do before we leave on vacation?”

Aren’t you forgetting something? Did you remember to write a check to your parish for the Sundays you’ll be gone?

“But I won’t be at Mass at home those Sundays. Can’t I skip those envelopes when I’m away? After all, I’ll put a dollar or two, or maybe even five, in the collection at the church where we visit. Isn’t that enough?”

Many Americans, whether we have school-aged children at home or not, mentally operate on a school year calendar. We assume our organizations operate September through May and then take it easy during June, July and August. And to some extent, many parish activities do function on such a schedule. Our parish may not hold Religious Education classes during the summer. Our choirs frequently take a break. Even many of the parish staff members take summer vacations! Can’t our giving take a vacation during the summer, too?

Even as we form the question in our mind, we know the answer. The prime reason for keeping up our pledge all summer long is that God doesn’t go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass wherever we trav-

el. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are called to be faithful in our commitments to Him and our parish family, even during our vacation time.

God’s steadfastness in giving to us is the primary reason for us to respond by being faithful in our stewardship toward Him. But there is also a practical reason why we need to keep up our pledges of time, talent and treasure throughout the summer – the Church needs our involvement year-round.

Even though some parish activities are reduced during the summer months, the parish’s expenses are not. After all, there are still Sunday Masses and weekday Masses, too. The parish staff members still need their salaries. And of course, we need to run the air conditioning in our church during the hot summer months. Despite the fact that some parish functions are suspended, other activities may take place, such as Vacation Bible School. And although the regular parish Religious Education program may be suspended, the summer expenses are often the highest, as textbooks and other supplies are bought for the upcoming school year. Our parish has to pay its bills on a year-round basis, just like your family.

Our parish plans a budget for the year, taking into account the commitments that you, the members, have made. If parishioners do not live out their financial commitments to the parish, the budget will not balance.

Our giving needs to be maintained throughout the summer, just as God maintains His generosity to us. Our stewardship is a response to God’s gifts. And God pours out His gifts and His grace upon us all year long.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Prayer – By Us and For Us

Dear Parishioners,

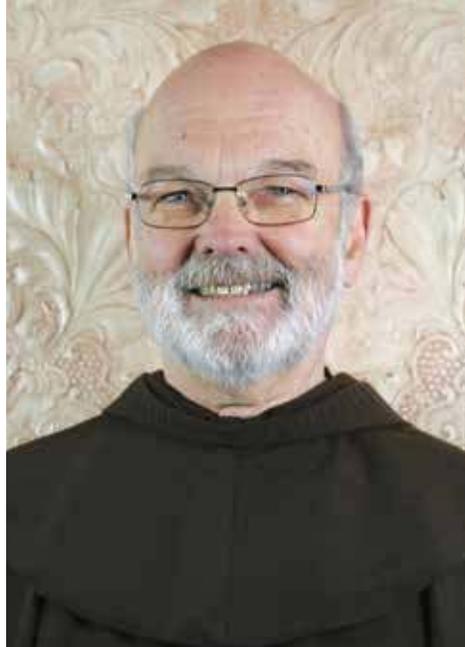
Pope Francis has certainly had an impact on our Church, and maybe even on each of us individually. Do you recall his first words to the world and to us when he appeared on the balcony following his election as pope? He said quite simply, “Pray for me.” That is a feeling I share sometimes when I consider what needs to be done, and what I personally need to do. It may be a feeling each of us has – not just now and then, but relatively consistently.

Prayer – one of the four Pillars of Stewardship – is foundational to our faith and the practice of it. It is through prayer and the sacraments that we prepare ourselves to accept God’s plentiful gifts and blessings.

Each of us needs to develop a consistent prayer life. We should set time aside each day to pray. It is through prayer that we cultivate our personal relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We provide many opportunities for prayer as part of our parish life. This includes time for us to pray as individuals and time to pray as a community.

Our prayer lives culminate at Mass in the Eucharist. The Eucharist, prayer and stewardship are interconnected. In *Lumen Gentium*, we are reminded that the Eucharist is the “Source and Summit” of our Catholic faith. With the gift of the Eucharist and an active prayer life, we are better equipped to carry out the other three Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Formation and Service. You might say we pray to help us seek and find how to serve the Lord and others.

This is a time of year when we enjoy numerous opportunities to kick back and relax. One of the best ways to spend time is in prayer. In both our individual and communal prayer, we turn to God to perceive our gifts and talents – and then, as stewards,



we need to place those gifts at the service of one another, and especially of the Lord.

You and I are on a journey together – a journey toward holiness. That journey involves an existence of daily conversion and an awareness of how grateful we need to be. Through prayer, we can better see ourselves as God sees us, and we can seek to find who God is calling us to be.

I want to assure you of my constant and daily prayers for you. Like the Holy Father, however, I also must admit that I need you to “pray for me.” I thank you for your prayers. I am blessed to be your pastor.

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



Funeral Dinners Provide Comfort

Our Funeral Dinners Ministry can be counted on to provide luncheons for grieving families, and by doing so, the group extends Christ's mercy in a time of sorrow.

"One of the corporal works of mercy is burying the dead," says ministry coordinator David Hildebrand. "For a grieving family, a luncheon is a service to them. A lot of times, the families have the mother and father living here, but the kids aren't in Quincy anymore. They all will be together for the funeral. There's lots of picture taking after the dinners, and sometimes they sit and reminisce, and tell stories. It's a nice gesture for the family to come together, and this is a time for them to be together. This is time for family."

The Funeral Dinners Ministry is made up of five groups of between 35 to 40 volunteers with leaders for each group. The volunteers set up Solanus Hall, prepare the entrée and side dishes, serve the meal, and clean up afterward. There are additional volunteers on call to provide salads and desserts. David coordinates this ministry along with Marcia Tushaus.

Each group takes care of funeral luncheons for a particular day of the week. David's group, for example, serves Monday funerals.

"Another group takes Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday," David says. "If someone comes in on Saturday, we step in and help out."

"There are three funeral directors in town," Marcia says. "They tell the families about the luncheons, and 95 percent of them like to have it."



Leaders of the Funeral Dinners teams gather in the church kitchen. The leaders agree that they depend totally on the rest of the many volunteers who help with the serving, and they could never do this without them. (From left) David Hildebrand, Mary Ann Hildebrand, Sis Obert, Charlotte Huner, Ed Huner, Mary Ohnemus (the newest member of the leaders), Marcia Tushaus, and Carolyn Vonderheide.

The funeral directors call Marcia with the contact information for the family. She discusses the arrangements with the family, and explains the cost of \$2 per person. Then she calls the appropriate team. The size of the luncheon will determine how many volunteers in each group are called out.

Marcia says the custom of funeral luncheons provided by the parish had been ongoing for a long time. But when the expenses became too great, the luncheons were discontinued.

"David and I said we thought they should be held," Marcia says. "It is a comfort to the family, and

many times it's the last time a family gets together, if they are from out of town."

The \$2 per person fee was set to cover the expenses without burdening the family – the parish does not pay for the luncheons.

The team leaders for the ministry are Marcia and Sis Obert; David and Mary Ann Hildebrand; Ed and Charlotte Huner; and Carolyn Vonder Heide.

David has been volunteering in the ministry for six years.

"When we joined the parish about eight years ago, we helped at different things," David says. "There was a need for the Monday lun-

Port and Solace in Times of Grief

cheons, and I said if I could do Mondays, it would work for me. They let us step in and get started.”

David reflects on what it means to help families who are dealing with loss.

“This gives me a good feeling because we’re doing something good for the family,” he says. “They are appreciative and so grateful and thankful. They have a place to go. Most don’t have room in their house to do it, and it’s a

burden to go to a restaurant. It gives me a good feeling because I’ve done something for someone in trying times.”

Volunteers are welcome to sign on to provide food, Marcia says.

“We always need help for that,” she says. “I want to give credit to the people who are volunteers, food-wise. They all do a wonderful job. Without their help we couldn’t do it.”

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If you would like more information, or if you are interested in volunteering with the Funeral Dinners Ministry, please call Marcia Tushaus at 217-222-3370.

Susana Loza Grows Closer to the Parish Family Through Service

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Susana also occasionally serves as a lector at the Spanish Mass, and helps to clean the church, as well. As an active member of the Hispanic community, she participates in many events and activities. One such event is the Our Lady of Guadalupe feast day celebration in December. She has also helped to coordinate the Hispanic community’s contribution to the parish’s Lenten Soup Suppers for the past several years. Through the Hispanic community, Susana has been able to grow in fellowship and form lasting

bonds with other Hispanic parishioners.

“It’s been a great way to meet people – we sometimes say that it’s a small world, but it’s really quite big!” she says. “For us, though, it’s so important to come together as one. We might have some small differences between the different Hispanic cultures, but we really feel like one big family. We’re always trying to get more people involved, and to continue to grow as a community!”

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Keeping in Touch With the Holy Father: There's an App for That!

“Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.”

These words from Pope Francis weren't delivered during a homily in St. Peter's or in a speech from St. Peter's Square – nor were they written in a papal bull or apostolic letter. Rather, they were delivered in an instant to millions of Catholics around the world through the pope's very own Twitter account.

The technology of communication has perhaps changed more in the past century than in the previous 20 combined. And with these developments, the Catholic Church – led by our Holy Fathers from Pope St. John Paul II through Pope Francis – strongly encourages that the faithful adopt and adapt these resources for the all-important task of spreading the Gospel throughout the whole world.

Just as St. Paul used every convenience at his disposal to spread the Gospel throughout the far reaches of the Roman empire, today's evangelists are using every resource available to them. Examples of Catholic figures using the new media with great success abound.

Only a few months into his pontificate, Pope Francis took the Vatican's social media efforts to a whole new level. In spring 2013, the Vatican released *The Pope App*, which features a live webcam from the Vatican, along with quotes, news, images and videos of all the Holy Father's latest doings.

Following the pope's lead, bishops, priests and apologists are taking the technological gifts at their fingertips and utilizing them to spread the Gospel throughout the world in a variety of ways.

One great example is Bishop Robert Barron of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, whose Word On Fire Ministry has produced wildly popular YouTube videos discussing everything from controversial Church teachings to movie reviews from a Catholic perspective. His website also includes articles, interviews and his weekly homilies. Word

On Fire also released the critically acclaimed *Catholicism* DVD documentary series.

Independent Catholic bloggers and Web-based media are also widely established and provide their audiences and readership with Catholic news and cultural commentary.

Here in America, parishes, Catholic schools, dioceses, and even the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are utilizing these tools as well, creating first-rate websites, maintaining Twitter and Facebook accounts, and more.

All of these resources are geared toward a wide variety of audiences, from the un-churched and fallen-away Catholics to active parishioners.

Being knowledgeable of the new media tools available to us as Catholics is a great way to be more effective in our universal call to evangelization. Take some time to see what media resources your parish, school and diocese are using, and be sure to pass them along to those in your sphere of influence!

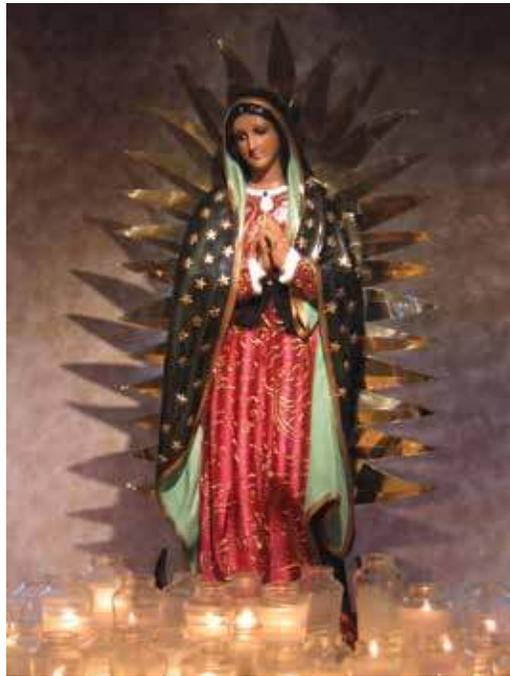


Spanish Mass Making St. Francis Solanus a Home for Spanish-Speaking Faithful

As a Catholic parish, it is vitally important for us to reach out to all our brothers and sisters in faith, regardless of language or culture. Here at St. Francis Solanus, we provide a Mass in Spanish for all Spanish-speaking Catholics in the area, on a twice-monthly basis. As the Spanish-speaking community continues to grow, we hope not only to strengthen them as members of our faith community, but also for our entire community to come together as One Body in Christ.

“We need to be united, period,” says Fr. Moré Torres-Torres, who ministers to the Hispanic community. “The mystical Body of Christ is just one, which is the Church. However, at the same time, we need to keep in mind that the body is composed of different parts, and each part has a specific function. Even St. Paul has a beautiful letter to the Romans, in which he preaches that while the parts of the body are different, they all work perfectly together.”

The origins of the Spanish Mass began with prior St. Francis priest Fr. Tom Shaughnessy, who ministered to the Hispanic community in the Quincy area. Since most Hispanic Catholics in the area worked in the restaurant industry, it was often difficult for them to get to Sunday Mass. Thus, Fr. Shaughnessy had the idea to bring the Mass to them, and celebrated Sunday Mass once a month in these restaurants. While the Mass is no longer celebrated in the restaurants, these early Masses helped to build the Hispanic Catholic community here in Quincy.



After Fr. Moré arrived at St. Francis, he was able to increase the frequency of the Spanish Mass to twice a month. Ever since November 2014, Mass has been celebrated in Spanish on the first and third Sundays of each month. For the Spanish Mass, Fr. Moré has trained a group of Hispanic parishioners to serve as acolytes – there is also a ministry for Spanish-speaking lectors and Eucharistic Ministers. Although attendance varies from month to month, it is clear that the Spanish Mass has been a welcome addition to the parish schedule.

“It seems as though people have been very happy with it,” Fr. Moré says. “Sometimes, I have 25 people come, sometimes I have 40, and

sometimes I even have up to 80! But what’s important is that people from the towns around here know that we have a Spanish Mass. The community in itself is very multicultural. We have people from Mexico, Venezuela, El Salvador, Guatemala – wherever they are from, though, they know that there’s a place for them to go, and that we have a Hispanic priest here.”

While he believes that it is important for the Hispanic community to come together as one, Fr. Moré also believes it is important for them to come together with the English-speaking community. The Hispanic community prepares one of the Lenten Soup Suppers for the parish each year, and also participates by preparing food for the Parish Picnic. They also invite the Anglo community to participate in Hispanic cultural

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St. Francis Solanus

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Making St. Francis Solanus a Home for Spanish Speakers *continued from page 7*

events, such as the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

"In the past, the Mass was entirely in Spanish, and it was a nice celebration," Fr. Moré says. "This past year, I thought we could do things a little differently – I thought it would be a good idea not just to include the Spanish-speaking community, but the Anglo community as well. So I worked with a liturgical team and with the acolytes, and we had a very lovely and solemn bilingual celebration. We had more than 200 people attend, and afterwards we had a reception with authentic Mexican food. Things like this, and the people that I worked with, are all helping us to make this community stronger, and to make us more united."

In the future, Fr. Moré is hopeful that this Hispanic community will continue to grow across the board – in number, involvement and faith. He hopes to continue to build the relationship between the English and Spanish-speaking communities, and to serve

Hispanic parishioners and local Hispanic Catholics to the best of his abilities.

"There are many ways to improve, and I think it's important to hear their opinions," he says. "It's very important that they let me know what they need. I have always tried to emphasize that I am not here to be served – I am here to serve them. Our community is growing and improving!"

The Spanish Mass is celebrated at 1:30 p.m. on the first and third Sunday of each month. For more information about the Hispanic community at St. Francis Solanus, please call the parish office at 217-222-2898.

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, 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.