

Saint Francis Solanus



MAY 2016

The Bickhaus Family

FAITH AND STEWARDSHIP

For parents, teaching our children the Catholic faith is a legacy that is passed down through the generations. Parents teach the faith to their children who, in turn, pass it along once they become parents. Such is the case with parishioners Mike and Kristine Bickhaus, who have very traditional ideas about faith,

family and their Catholic identity, all of which they learned from their own parents. For them, a big part of living, learning and passing on that faith is rooted in family.

And, it is a big family. Not only do Mike and Kristine have seven children of their own, but they both also come from large families that

gave them a strong faith foundation. Originally hailing from Missouri, Kristine was the oldest of eight children, and she has fond memories of her father leading the family in prayer after mealtimes, and of her mother telling the children to “offer it up” when things didn’t go their way. Mike, who is from Quincy, was the youngest of seven and says that his first faith lessons came from his family – lessons that were then reinforced through Catholic education.

With generations of both families deeply rooted in the parish, when Mike and Kristine met at Quincy College – now Quincy University – they immediately knew they had much in common: a Catholic faith, a strong sense of family, and the fact that they both came from large families. Then, when they married and decided to start their own family, there was never any doubt as to how they would



Mike and Kristine Bickhaus with Fr. Don at the baptism of their daughter, Margaret. Serving as godparents were Margaret's sister, Katherine, and her brother, William.

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The Bickhaus Family *continued from front cover*

raise their own children – Katherine, 17; William, 15; Victoria, 13; Isabella, 11; James, 9; David, 6; and Margaret, 7 months. And with nine people living under one roof, you can be sure that life is never dull – or quiet! But Mike and Kristine were prepared.

“You learn to go moment to moment, and you learn to be flexible,” Kristine says. “For example, this morning we had an early breakfast in order to not be late, but then someone broke a plate. We cleaned it up, and just when I thought we would be able to leave on time, the baby needed to be changed which, of course, definitely made us late. So, when things don’t often go your way, you learn to laugh, otherwise you might cry. But it’s all such a blessing – every bit of it.”

And like their parents before them, Mike and Kristine not only know the value of teaching the faith by word and example, but they also recognize that the faith taught in the home can be reinforced within the parish community and through Catholic education. In fact, their oldest children, Katherine and William, attend Quincy Notre Dame High School, and all the children have attended, are attending or will attend St. Francis Solanus School.

“Our faith is extremely important to us,” Mike says. “We try

to pray together as a family each evening, and Kristine and I do our best to practice our faith in our actions, as well as by our words to our children. We try and teach our children the basis for faith and why it is important for everyday living.”

Of course, life gets busy. Mike is a managing partner at the law firm of Schmiedeskamp Robertson Neu & Mitchell LLP, in Quincy. Kristine, who used to work as a teacher, now stays home full-time. And with juggling work, homework, after school activities, sports, and family obligations, it often seems as if there isn’t a lot of extra time for anything – including trying to live out the stewardship way of life. But Mike says the key to incorporating stewardship into our busy lives is to realize that it is a lifelong process of doing what you can, when you can, however you can. Furthermore, stewardship offers concrete ways to put our faith into action.

Over the years, Mike and Kristine have found ways to be involved. Mike is a lector, serves on the Parish Hall Committee, volunteers as the unofficial attorney for the parish, and is part of a Cursillo men’s group. Kristine is a greeter, serves on the School Board, and volunteers at the school in various capacities, such as with recess duty and book

fairs. And, while they don’t have all the answers on how to make it all work, with prayer, practice and perseverance, it becomes possible to be committed and to grow in faith.

“You really don’t have to do it all,” Mike says. “Just say ‘yes’ to a small part. And don’t feel like you have nothing to give – remember, God *qualifies the called* and doesn’t necessarily *call the qualified*. For us, stewardship reinforces our present belief that faith is something you practice every day, not just Sunday. In other words, Sunday should be the culmination of your week of practicing your faith, and if sometimes we fall short, you just begin again the next week.”

Ultimately, faith is a gift nurtured in love and best taught by example – which Mike and Kristine learned from their parents, and which they are now passing on to their own children. And by making faith a priority in their family, stewardship becomes the means to put that faith into action at home, at work, in school, and in our parish community.



Mike and Kristine Bickhaus’ children – (back, from left) Isabella, William and Katherine; (front, from left) David, Victoria (holding Margaret) and James.

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– Mike Bickhaus

A Letter From Our Pastor

We Are All Part of the Ministry of Hospitality

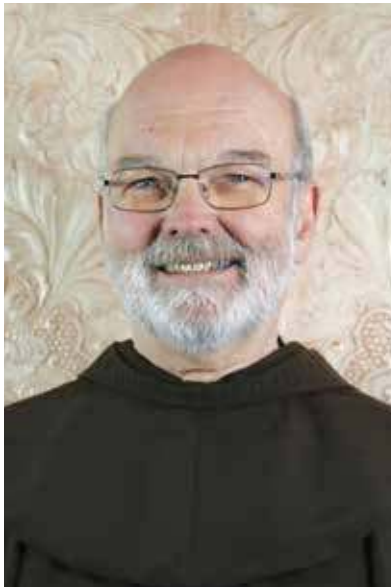
Dear Parishioners,

This is a time of many celebrations in the Church. The list is almost endless at this time of year – First Communions, Confirmations, graduations, and weddings. There are so many events that bring people who are not from the parish, or even members of the Church, into our parish.

You may recall that we speak of the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. I want to particularly speak of that pillar of Hospitality this month. It is important every day of every year and at everything we do as a parish community. However, at this time of year, when there may be strangers and newcomers in our midst, it becomes even more important.

Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith. In Matthew 25:35, the Lord speaks to us in terms of expectations when He says, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” He makes it clear to us that whenever we welcome any of His brothers and sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. Sometimes, we may think that this concept of hospitality is the responsibility of a committee, ministry or group of people assigned that task – but the truth is that we are all part of the parish hospitality effort.

If we are going to be a stewardship parish, and if each of us is going to be a good steward, we need to be aware that we need to seek and find Christ in everyone



around us, everyone we meet, and certainly everyone who enters our church or other parish facilities.

Hospitality is a parish priority that each of us must take to heart. It is not so challenging to greet someone, smile at them and welcome them – yet, it may require a little extra effort on our part. That means we must have an awareness of those near us, of those who may appear to be alone or new. We may not always think of Christ in this way, but if we carefully listen to Holy Scripture, we must realize that He was a caring, welcoming and friendly person. If we are to be His disciples, we need to be the same.

As stated, Jesus assures us that when we welcome others, we are welcoming

Him, as well. St. Paul once said that people who are hospitable sometimes entertain angels. For us, parish hospitality is not an option. It is our way to model the Kingdom of God right here and right now.

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

Caring for People

The Parish Nurse

When Helen Zimmerman was in nursing school, she had a special opportunity to follow a parish nurse here in town.

"It was just so wonderful, the relationship that she was able to build with those people," Helen says. "She went into their homes and it was like she was a family member. It was so neat. At the time, I thought, 'That would be a great job.'"

Little did Helen realize that, years later, when her husband, Deacon Wayne Zimmerman, was assigned to St. Francis Solanus, she'd have the opportunity to serve in just this way.

Five years ago, Helen took a course in Parish Nursing, a discipline also known as Faith Community Nursing. Parish Nursing is an opportunity for registered nurses to serve their community by encouraging the physical and spiritual health of parishioners, while also seeking to address health issues, and provide support and resources to those in need, within the parish.

Although the Parish Nursing program has existed

for years at St. Francis Solanus, providing valuable services such as blood pressure screenings, Helen and several other nurses have, in recent years, begun providing other services, such as home visits. These visits, rather than caring for specific physical needs such as bathing or giving medication, are focused on meeting people and spending time with them.

"A lot of them didn't have physical (needs), but sometimes it was just a matter of loneliness, needing someone to talk to, someone to pray with them," says Helen of the parishioners she and her fellow nurses visit.

For Helen, who has worked as a nurse for many years, parish nursing is a unique position that has given her the opportunity to volunteer her gifts in a way that she loves.

"We talk about whole person care all the time, no matter what area you're in," Helen says. "But when you're working in the hospital, your focus has to be on that physical care, giving medicines and injections, whereas in parish nursing, your main focus is the spiritual care, the spiritual side of that person. Sometimes, the best care you can give is just praying with them, just being present and talking with



Donna Schutte, R.N. takes Stephen Davis' blood pressure at a monthly blood pressure screening.



Parishioners are encouraged to stay on top of their health by taking advantage of opportunities such as blood pressure screenings. Here, Cynthia Smith, R.N. checks the blood pressure of parishioner Marilyn Willer.

e, Inside and Out

Nursing Program

them. Parish nurses don't go into the home and replace home care, so we're not going into the home giving meds or giving shots or doing dressing changes. We're there for their spiritual care; their spiritual help.

From health advisor, to educator, to advocate, the role of parish nurses is to help people understand their options and get the care they need. Answering questions, helping locate resources, and educating people on health-related topics are only a few of the ways that parish nurses seek to assist those they care for.

"Every person is different because what they need is different," Helen says. "It's really looking at that person and deciding, with them, or their family member, to decide what is it that person needs."

The Parish Nursing program is also looking to expand, providing health education opportunities for parishioners. From bulletin articles to classes, the nurses hope to help empower other members of the parish to care for their physical and spiritual wellness.

"Our bodies are a gift from God, and it's our responsibility to care for that gift, to take care of ourselves and do the best that we can," Helen says. "The weight loss and eating right, it's not easy, but having support is a huge benefit."

She also reminds people to take advantage of the health screenings offered by the nurses, especially the monthly blood pressure screenings.



"Our bodies are a gift from God and it's our responsibility to care for that gift," says Helen Zimmerman, R.N., who coordinates the Parish Nursing program.

"Any time we're doing a screening, it's a good way for people to be able to stay on top of those things," Helen says. "Blood pressure can cause so many other issues. The nurses are there to tell you if your blood pressure is a little high and they can guide you. Sometimes, it's easier to talk to a parish nurse than to call the doctor."

She also encourages other nurses, as well as other health care professionals, to get involved with this valuable ministry.

"It's part of our Christian faith," she says. "Jesus cared for the poor and the sick, and now it's our mission – our ministry is to care for those people. And much of it is focused on the elderly, but it's not just

the elderly – maybe it's a brand new mom, a single mom who needs assistance, or maybe a parent dealing with a teenager. We have all kinds of nurses, obstetrics nurses, pediatric nurses, oncology nurses – we could use all their talent. And as we get into education, we may not be limited to nurses, but all health care professionals, there's no limit to what we could be doing."

According to Helen, the blessings aren't just for those being served, but also for those nurses who choose to give of their time.

"Truly, as much as it's a gift to them, it's a gift to us," she says. "To be able to know that we're doing something to touch their spirits to touch their hearts, it's so important and it's really care of their whole body mind and spirit."

If you or a loved one would benefit from the services provided by the nurses, or if you are a nurse or health care professional who would like to get involved in serving, please contact the parish office at 217-222-2898.

The parish nurses encourage you to take advantage of the monthly blood pressure screenings that take place the first weekend of every month, after all the Masses.

The Bible

The Textbook of Stewardship

Have you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there *is* such a manual — the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the "textbook of stewardship," the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, expressed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: "When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you har-

vest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, will choose for the dwelling place of his name... 'Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.' And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence" (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, "In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It

shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefited from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church — St. Paul — preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return — all most certainly important topics of discussion for any steward-in-the-making.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.



THE *Power* OF A *Smile*

Hospitality is an essential ingredient to evangelization. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta once said, "Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing." If we want to change minds and hearts for Christ, we must first show them His love through the "simple" things – a smile, a warm handshake, and a genuine caring. According to Cindy Reichert, the leader of St. Francis Solanus' Greeter Ministry, these are the qualities that make a good greeter, a liturgical role that she describes as "vital to parish life."

"When you make someone feel like they are welcomed and also an important member of our church family, they in turn will want to become more involved," Cindy says. "It is just like a smile – you smile and the world smiles back! The same is true of stewardship. Actions speak louder than words, and people will be drawn to the happiness you project and the kindness you have shown them."

Inspired several years ago by a similar ministry at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, the Greeter Ministry has grown from its original 15-20 volunteers to its present number of 70 committed members. Working in pairs, these men and women begin their time of service with a short prayer, seeking guidance and wisdom so that they can radiate Christ's joy to



Parishioner Cindy Reichert has discovered that smiles truly are contagious – her day always seems brighter when she serves as a greeter for Mass

parishioners as they enter His church. Arriving 15-20 minutes before their scheduled Mass, ministry volunteers then stand at each of the church's front entrances opening doors for parishioners, greeting them by name, offering smiles and a firm handshake, and introducing themselves to guests and newcomers.

"When you have a guest come to your home, you welcome them and greet them at the door to show how happy you are to see them and to make them feel comfortable," Cindy says. "The same holds true for our parish church. The greeters are at the door, ready to welcome everyone that enters God's House. We want each person to feel like a part of our family – the family of God."

Recently, says Cindy, greeters have also been tasked with choosing a family, couple or individual to bring up the gifts during the offertory. This provides yet another opportunity to welcome parishioners, while also further engaging them in the liturgy.

When it comes to getting involved in parish ministries, people are often hesitant due to their limited time. For Cindy, this is one of the unique aspects about the Greeter Ministry, because it requires no prior preparation and only a small increase in the time already being given each Sunday.

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"I think most people feel that stewardship means to donate your time, talent and treasure to benefit our Church, but I don't know if they are aware of the blessings you receive when you reach out. I have been blessed in so many ways while being involved in this ministry. You never know when someone you meet will touch your heart with a lasting impression." – Cindy Reichert

St. Francis Solanus

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"If you think you don't have any time for stewardship, this is the perfect ministry for you," Cindy says. "You are going to church anyway, and you only need to go 15 minutes early."

As the saying goes, smiles are contagious. This is one of the things that Cindy loves most about the Greeter Ministry, having noticed how much brighter her day seems when she gives of her time in this small, simple way.

"I know this ministry is about smiling and making other people feel welcomed – but honestly, it brightens my day, too," Cindy says. "I think most people feel that stewardship means to donate your time, talent and treasure to benefit our Church, but I don't know if they are aware of the blessings you

receive when you reach out. I have been blessed in so many ways while being involved in this ministry. You never know when someone you meet will touch your heart with a lasting impression."

If you are interested in becoming involved in this wonderful ministry, please contact Cindy Reichert at 217-224-9694 or cindyr0814@yahoo.com, or call the rectory 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.