

Saint Francis Solanus



MAY 2017

“Together in Community” The St. Francis Solanus Parish Picnic

Nicole Costigan has spent almost her entire life as a member of St. Francis Solanus, and she has many fond memories of attending the annual Parish Picnic each year.

“I have been attending the Parish Picnic since I was a little girl,” she says. “For me and many others, it represents the official start of summer, I think. It is a highlight each summer for our parish, our parishioners, our families, and really people from all over Quincy. It is a reflection of what our St. Francis Solanus community is – people coming together in community, people working together in community, and being the warm welcoming community we are called to be.”

On Saturday, June 10, beginning at 5 p.m. St. Francis Solanus will hold our 2017 Parish Picnic. The Co-Chairs of the picnic this year include Nicole and Jason Costigan, Katie and Corie Kessler, and Penny and Steve Obert.

Our parish community is working very hard to be a stewardship parish, and to have the people of our parish embrace stewardship as a way of life. Parishioners of a stewardship parish seek to see the face of Christ in one another. We must seek out and



welcome new members to the parish family, for a stewardship parish is a welcoming parish. And for Nicole, the Parish Picnic is a perfect example of hospitality – one of the Four Pillars of Parish Stewardship.

“We do not even know how many people from the community and from other churches come to our parish for this festival,” she says. “We do know that our people smile and welcome them and, quite frankly, work very hard to make sure that they have a good time and that they get a sense of what a great

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“Together in Community”

The St. Francis Solanus Parish Picnic *continued from front cover*



community we have. In that, you might also say this is evangelization. In fact, our own people have a wonderful time doing this and participating in it. Most of all it is fun. It is also the biggest fundraiser we have each year.”

The picnic opens at 5 p.m. and it goes until midnight. There is no charge to attend – it is open to all, with entertainment and activities for all ages. There is a kids’ area with games, a train to ride, face painting, and balloons. And there are games and activities for the adults, such as Bingo, a silent auction, and a big cash raffle in with a \$2,000 total prize.

“There is always good music, and 2017 is no exception,” Nicole says. “The Heidelberg Band will play first, and they

are continually both good and enjoyable. They are followed by the group Raised on Radio, who play a wide variety of music spanning many years of popular music. In addition there is loads of good food that will

appeal to a broad spectrum of tastes.”

This is Nicole’s second year on the committee, and as she notes, the method of organization and leadership has really developed in an effective way.

“Basically, a couple agrees to serve for two years,” she says. “Each year, there are six couples on the committee to plan and prepare for the picnic. The six of us who are Co-Chairs this year were on the committee last year. There are three other couples on the committee this year who will chair next year’s picnic, and will be assisted by three new couples.”

The reason the picnic is always so successful is because of the willingness of so many parishioners to get involved and to volunteer. Money is raised – but more importantly, the event truly brings us all closer together. We thank the committee for their stewardship and their leadership!



If you would like more information about the annual Parish Picnic, please contact the Costigans at 217-430-7801; the Kesslers at 217-242-0793; or the Oberts at 217-224-5336.

A Letter From Our Pastor

We Cannot Be Part-Time Christians

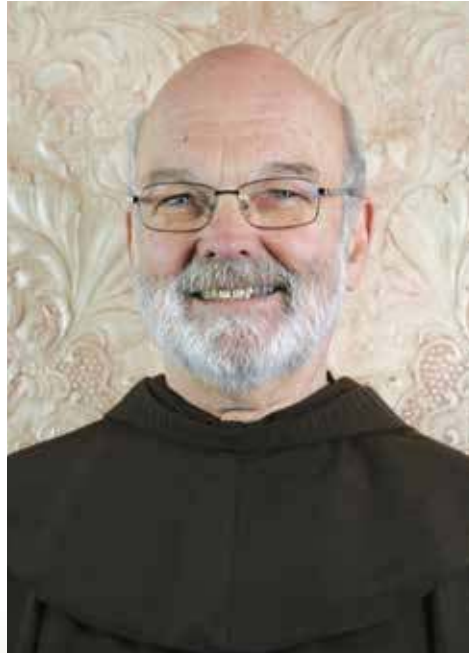
Dear Parishioners,

May is traditionally celebrated in the Church as the month of Mary, our Blessed Mother. As the Mother of the Church, she provides us with an example of what it means to be a servant of God and our fellow humans, as well as how to obediently fulfill the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholics, we are called to model the life of Jesus. That can be difficult, and there are certainly challenges to living as a disciple of Christ. But living stewardship and discipleship brings intense contentment and joy to those who take that risk. As we hear in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, "All things work for good for those who love God."

After Jesus Himself, we look to our Blessed Mother as an ideal steward and an example of what stewardship means. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her life and her ministry in a total spirit of faithfulness and service. She responded to the call to be a disciple. For us to be disciples, we also need to be good stewards of the gifts we have received. Our Church and our parish are gifts to us from God.

At no point in Holy Scripture does Jesus tell us that following Him is easy. We know it is not always simple and effortless. It requires dedication and commitment. Pope Francis has said on more than one occasion, "We cannot be part-time Christians



and Catholics! We should seek to live our faith at every moment of every day."

I suspect that is how Mary lived her life from that moment she turned it over to God and His Will. So, let us vow together during this month of Mary to follow her example, and seek to be the kinds of good stewards that will make our faith community even stronger and more effective.

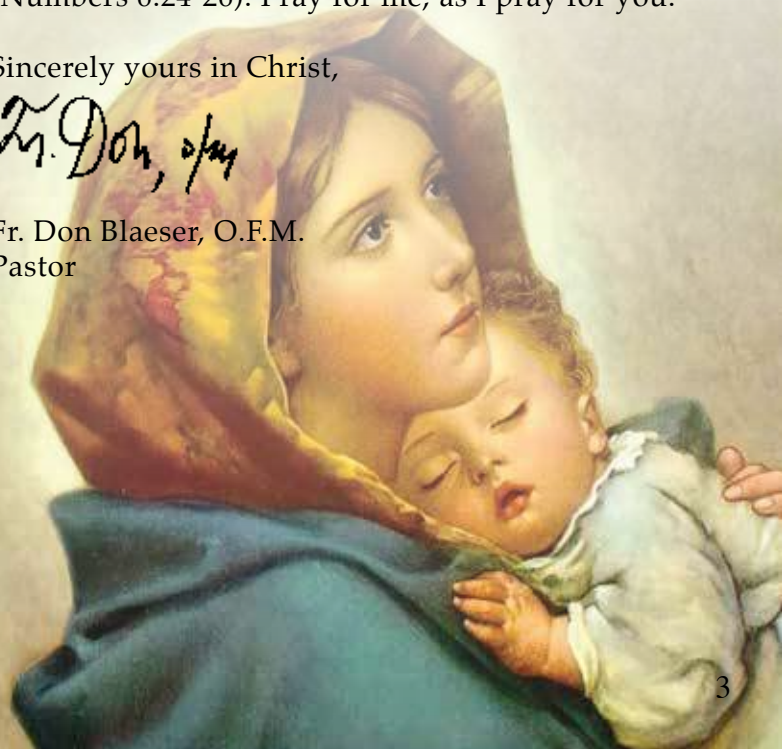
I pray that we all can find the strength to live and practice our faith as we should. This means being faithful to the sacraments and looking for ways to help and serve one another. We have a great parish – let us make it even greater.

As we hear in Holy Scripture, "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). Pray for me, as I pray for you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Don, O.F.M." with a small flourish at the end.

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



Called to Follow Closely Life in the Secular

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“If anyone has a stirring in their heart – maybe they heard about St. Francis and how free and happy he was, giving away his earthly burdens so he could praise and worship – whatever stirrings draw someone in is the first and best way. But it is also important to be a witness for people to see someone living this way. The Holy Spirit draws you to it. You come and immerse yourself in the life and let God have His way with you.”

– Rosanne Roy, OFS

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If you have been a parishioner of St. Francis Solanus for long, chances are that you have met or spoken with a member of the Secular Franciscan Order at some point in time. In fact, our local Fraternity of the Order, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, currently has over 40 members. In the 13th century, St. Francis of Assisi himself wrote the Rule for the Secular Franciscan Order –which used to be called the Third Order – for lay men and women who desired to follow his example of a closer walk with Christ. The Secular Franciscan Order is one of few canonically established orders, with its authority coming directly from the pope.

Two questions that members of the Secular Franciscan Order often hear are, “What does it mean to live by the Rule of St. Francis?” and “What led you to become a member of this Order?” When Catholics choose to follow the Rule, they are pledging themselves to live the Gospel as fully as possible. The spirit of this way of life is summed up in article 4 of the Rule: “The rule and the life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus

Christ following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.”

So what does this kind of life look like in practice? Rosanne Roy, OFS, the Minister of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity here in Quincy, describes what the daily life of a member of the Secular Franciscan Order is really all about.

“Basically it’s going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel,” Rosanne says. “Our commitment is to be people of prayer and penance. Our mission is to be leaven in the world – to be penitential people – which means we are reforming our lives and hopefully our communities. Another part of our role is to support the Church, and that doesn’t necessarily mean we give them all our money, but it means we try to be an effective Catholic witness in the world and live the Catholic values.”

As Rosanne tells us, the essence of the Rule is that members – who make a permanent profession to live the Gospel – are called to be the best possible Catholic Christians they can be. As part of a Fraternity, group

members are considered family. And just as families gather regularly to check in and care for one another, the Fraternity meets monthly to grow spiritually through prayer and faith formation. Outside of the meetings, the members’ commitment to living the Rule becomes a part of their daily life. Members are asked to be a people of prayer, praying the Liturgy of the Hours in the morning and evening.

In all things, members of the Secular Franciscan Order strive to make their lifestyle reflect the Gospel teachings.

“You make a commitment to living a life of simplicity within the station of life that you’ve been given,” Rosanne says. “It means trying to disassociate yourself from things and not going after all the material goods you can get. You look out for other people and you try to live in peace. Also, we are stewards of creation and we try not to waste. And being a really good Catholic is about 99 percent of it – not just showing up to Mass and going through the motions, but really immersing yourself in what you’re called to be. We try to follow

in the Footsteps of Christ Franciscan Order



the Gospel to the best of our ability and bring Christ to the world by our witness.”

Rosanne was herself brought to Christ through the witness of others. While Rosanne was not raised Catholic, she found that, as a young girl, she was drawn to her Catholic neighbor’s house and the special sense of peace there. Looking back, she knows that she had always sensed God’s presence in her life, even as a child. At age 14, she first experienced a true yearning to become Catholic, and when she was 30, she took a Knights of Columbus correspondence course. At the end of the study, she

was instructed to choose a saint’s name. Not knowing any of the saints, Rosanne put a collection of saints’ names in a hat and chose one at random. The saint that she picked? St. Clare, who, with St. Francis, founded the Poor Clares, the Second Franciscan Order to be established.

Returning to Quincy following her conversion, Rosanne soon discovered that the area was a “hotbed of Franciscan life.” Like the random drawing of St. Clare’s name, Rosanne considers this discovery to be yet another instance of God putting her in the right place at the right time. The Holy Spirit inspired Rosanne to make her profession in

the Secular Franciscan Order in 1982, and she is always pleased to see the Spirit working in others who come to inquire and learn more about this way of life.

“Vocations is one of those things,” she says. “If anyone has a stirring in their heart – maybe they heard about St. Francis and how free and happy he was, giving away his earthly burdens so he could praise and worship – whatever stirrings draw someone in is the first and best way. But it is also important to be a witness for people to see someone living this way. The Holy Spirit draws you to it. You come and immerse yourself in the life and let God have His way with you.”

Anyone who is interested in finding out more about life in the Secular Franciscan Order is welcome to attend one of the gatherings of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, held in the St. Francis Solanus parish hall on the third Sunday of each month. Meetings begin with refreshments and social time at 12:30 p.m. and then follow with formation, group prayer, and a bit of business.

As Rosanne emphasizes, anyone is invited to attend a meeting, without any obligation – and you just never know where the Holy Spirit may end up taking you!

“Come to a gathering,” Rosanne says. “You are welcome to come and see, have a snack after church, and meet some pretty nice people. It may change your life!”

*If you would like more information, please visit the local and regional websites:
<https://sites.google.com/site/stelizabethofsqincy/> and <http://www.prairiestfrancis.org/>.*



Stewardship: *The Four Pillars*

You've heard about the three Ts of stewardship, but what about the four Ps?

The three Ts – Time, Talent, and Treasure – describe the personal gifts we offer to the Church. The four Ps are the Four Pillars of Parish Stewardship described by the renowned pastor Msgr. Thomas McGread. They are the hallmark of a stewardship parish – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Let's take a look at each of them to understand how we can improve in each area.

Hospitality *Christian Kindness*

"When I was a stranger, you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). The Gospel teaches that whenever we welcome the least of our brothers or sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. That is why the first mark of a stewardship parish is hospitality. Being friendly is one of the first ways we can be Christ-like toward others.

Modern Catholic parishes are often so large and have so many Masses that many parishioners don't know one another. To create a sense of community, be sure to smile and greet others as you enter and exit the Church. Let's try harder than ever to be a welcoming community.

Prayer *Heart-to-Heart with God*

"Do not become so involved in the work of the Lord that you forget the Lord of the work," a seminary professor once taught. In other words, don't get so caught up with parish projects and outreach efforts that you forget to draw aside to spend time with God in prayer. Every great saint has taught that prayer is the most essential component in the life of the Christian. Through prayer, we nurture our most important relationship – the one that will last for all eternity.

A healthy prayer life should include communal prayer such as Mass, as well as personal prayer and family prayer. The two biggest obstacles to prayer are lack

of time and lack of understanding of how to pray. We have to schedule time for prayer just as we would for an important appointment. And we have to learn how to pray from other people. Many saints have written spiritual books that describe different methods of prayer.

Formation *Continuous Conversion*

Pope John Paul II always emphasized ongoing conversion. From childhood through adulthood, our whole life must be a process of drawing closer to God. He never stops calling us forward to learn more and to examine ourselves more deeply.

Very often our society values material things more than interior virtues. But as personal experience shows, when we finally acquire the car or house or "toy" that we wanted so badly, it doesn't really satisfy. On the other hand, we don't tend to desire spiritual virtues with the same kind of longing, but when we actually have them, we find them far more rewarding than material things.

Service *Love in Action*

"Amen I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). This Scripture was one of St. Teresa of Calcutta's favorites. Each time she picked up a poor and hungry child, she knew she was ministering to Christ. While we may not view ourselves as saints, we too are called to such heroic service right within our own community. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "To be a saint is not the privilege of a few, but the duty of everyone."

We have many service opportunities right here within our own parish. If you have the willingness to serve and take the initiative to find where you are needed, you'll find that there is no end to the families and individuals who truly need help. How can you reach out to them in love?

“A Wider Picture of What the Church Is All About”

“We hope that this gives our students a wider picture of what the Church is all about, and helps them to discern what kind of involvement they want to have after Confirmation.”

– Carol Seifert, Director of Religious Education

On May 24, eighth-grade students from St. Francis Solanus will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through Confirmation, these teens complete their Sacraments of Initiation and are welcomed fully into the life of the Church. In their preparation for this sacrament, teens are able to figure out what their faith means to them, and how they will live out that faith going forward. As they are sealed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, they are empowered to live the Gifts of the Spirit in their everyday lives.

Students from St. Francis prepare for Confirmation through a citywide program, and will receive the sacrament along with students from Blessed Sacrament in Quincy and St. Thomas in Camp Point.

“The meetings that are required are open to other parishes – so if a St. Francis student cannot attend one of our meetings, they can go to a meeting at one of the other parishes,” says Director of Religious Education Carol Seifert. “We use the Decision Point program from Dynamic Catholic. The catechists love the program, and we have seen an impact on many of the students. Many of them are getting more interested in reading the Bible on a daily basis, and learn what it means to be a Catholic and the ‘best version



Last year's Confirmation class. Photo by Coonrod Photography, Quincy, Ill.

of themselves,’ as Matthew Kelly reminds us.”

All the materials for the program are available for free online, which allows sponsors and parents to be fully involved in the formation process.

“This enables our sponsors and parents to view the videos that students are being shown in the classrooms,” Carol says. “We encourage them to talk about the videos and grow in faith together.”

“We really want them to find things they can talk about together, discuss together, and pray as a family together,” Fr. Don Blaeser says.

The program also educates

students about the different ways in which they can get involved in parish life after Confirmation. As part of their preparation, students share their time and talent with the parish through various enrichment opportunities.

“We hope that this gives our students a wider picture of what the Church is all about, and helps them to discern what kind of involvement they want to have after Confirmation,” Carol says.

The parish is also developing a youth ministry program to directly serve the needs of the newly confirmed students.

“We really want to keep them

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St. Francis Solanus

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“A Wider Picture of What the Church Is All About”

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involved,” Fr. Don says. “Youth ministry is a great way to do that, and now that we have a parish center, we have the space where this can take place.”

Finally, as one of the last steps in the preparation process, the parish priests conduct individual interviews with all who are going to be confirmed.

“We think it’s important to make that contact with them,” Fr. Don says. “We talk about what it means to be confirmed, and how they plan to live it out as they go on with their lives.”

If you would like more information about the process of preparing for Confirmation, please contact 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.