

Saint Francis Solanus



AUGUST 2017

Fostering a Spiritual Community Through Hospitality

Over the years, we have grown accustomed to associating the words “time,” “talent,” and “treasure” with the concept of stewardship – the three things we are invited daily to share with God and others. Yet, there is another important aspect of stewardship that we may sometimes forget – namely, the stewardship pillar of hospitality.

“It’s hard to want to get involved in a place where you don’t feel like you belong,” says St. Francis Solanus parishioner Marcia Steinkamp. “I think we need to cultivate that sense of belonging and sharing – to create an atmosphere where we can share our stories with and come to truly know one another. It truly transforms everything.”

This was the idea that inspired the parish’s new Hospitality Host/Hostess Ministry. Born out of a desire to help “make people feel welcomed and further build community,” the ministry exists to help serve and facilitate parish social events in a wide variety of ways. This includes planning and executing large parish receptions, hosting small socials such as coffee and donuts after Sunday Masses, and bringing desserts or dishes to ministry gatherings.

“Our ministry is really still in its infancy, and



By organizing, providing food for, and serving parish receptions, the Hospitality Host/Hostess Ministry helps ensure that St. Francis Solanus remains a welcoming environment for all parishioners.

I welcome ideas and input,” Marcia says. “There is plenty of room for growth and expansion. One thing that I would like to see happen is to host three larger events throughout the year, rotating around the different Sunday Masses. Maybe one would be centered on welcoming new parishioners and getting them more involved. Another could be a breakfast after the 9:30 a.m. Mass so that any of the morning Mass-goers could be incorporated. And

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Living According to God's Will

Forming a Conscience and Moral Code

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong – both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid fear, selfishness and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of continually forming our own consciences, and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good

moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. As Donald Cardinal Wuerl aptly states in *The Teaching of Christ*, "To conform to the mind of Christ is to conform to the mind of the Father" (p. 244). In other words, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

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A Letter From Our Pastor

Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?

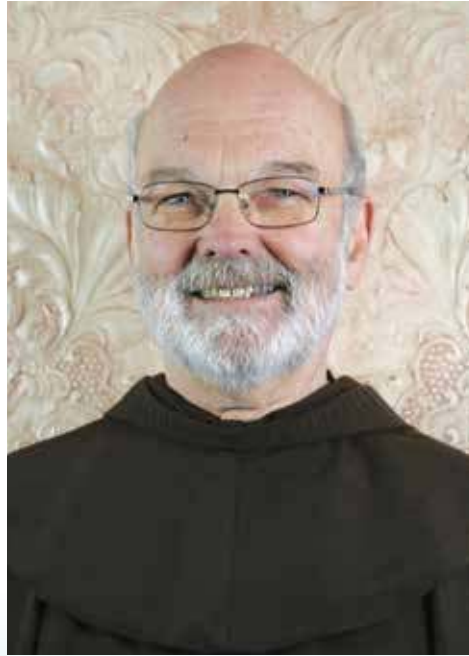
Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, "Now, it's time to work."

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: "What is mine and what is God's?" The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to



get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it

is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

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



An Update on the Repairs fr

“Praise the Lord! On July 21, 2017, for the first time since June of 2016, we are able to see the front of the church – unobstructed by scaffolding, that is. How beautiful it is, now that the brickwork on the bell tower is completed along with new finials in place, new liners on the louvers of the bells tower, and all with a coat of fresh paint.” – Fr. Don Blaeser, O.F.M.

Our historic parish of St. Francis Solanus came into existence in 1860, and our church building was constructed in 1885. Our church has been a hallmark of the Quincy area since that time, and we are proud to be a warm welcoming parish with an active faith community.

Great misfortune struck on Monday, July 13, 2015, when a powerful thunderstorm with winds over 80 miles per hour struck the Quincy area and our beloved St. Francis Solanus Church. Our property sustained significant damage, as did all of Quincy. The storm took finials and even bricks off the church tower, downed trees, and did significant damage to the school roof. Soon after the storm, the repairs were made to the school roof and, in retrospect, seem minor compared to what had happened to the church.

Work began immediately – but as is often the case in these instances, insurance coverage, meetings and bids on repair took some time. In January 2016,



we held a pre-bid meeting concerning repairs to the church roof, bell tower and steeple. In March 2016, a contract was signed with Renaissance Roofing for the repairs to the church. The estimate was well in excess of \$1 million – however, insurance would completely cover it. The work to be done included putting a new roof on the church, the steeple and the cupola, as well as repairing the masonry on the clock tower, including new finials and some painting.

Because of weather and other factors, work did not begin until May 2016, a full 10 months after the storm had wreaked its havoc. By June 2016, the shingles on the roof were being replaced and scaffolding



om the 2015 Storm Damage

had been erected for the work to be done.

Some delays occurred in late summer and fall because of engineers' decisions that more supports needed to be installed. However, work began on the cupola (small steeple). By October, the cupola was completed with new shingles and the trim was painted. As it was winter, nothing continued until January 2017. By March, the slate shingles on the steeple had been installed. On July 21, 2017, the last of the scaffolding had been removed, bringing to closure all the repairs and work. The work was completed!

"Praise the Lord!" says our Pastor, Fr. Don Blaeser, O.F.M. "On July 21, 2017, for the first time since June of 2016, we are able to see the front of the church – unobstructed by scaffolding, that is. How beautiful it is, now that the brickwork on the bell tower is completed along with new finials in place, new liners on the louvers of the bells tower, and all with a coat of fresh paint."

Note that the repair work has actually improved the church in a variety of ways.

"Several of the jobs involved in this project were given to local trades, such as VonderHaar Masonry, Kemner Painting, and Waterkotte Construction," Father says. "Our diocesan insurance paid the entire amount, which was approximately \$1,200,000. We added one or two repairs at our own expense, which made sense to do while the scaffolding was up. It is a joy to have the whole project completed, and we can enjoy the beauty of this 132-year-old church once again."

Thank God, for we are blessed.



This series of images documents the stages of repairs – from just after the storm, to during the repair process and, finally, with the repairs completed.



The Blessings of the Catholic Mass

Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally re-presented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would

we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to *receive* the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces to fill us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.



Bill and Pattie Paxton: “Faith Without Works Is Not Faith”



The Paxton family – Bill and Pattie with their sons Ian (left) and Bo (right)

Bill and Pattie Paxton met at a Nebraska-Oklahoma football game. Both graduates of the University of Nebraska – he was raised Methodist, and she was a lifelong Catholic. They were married and participated in separate churches, until a few years ago. That was when Bill attended a life-changing Cursillo retreat that inspired him to enter RCIA at St. Francis Solanus.

“Faith without works is not faith,” Bill says. “When you get involved, when you go through something like Cursillo, you experience a spiritual awakening, and your level of commitment changes. You have to get out and do something.”

Today, Bill and Pattie and their two sons, Ian and Bo, regularly attend the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass and have frequently all been involved in the celebration in different positions as liturgical ministers.

“Being involved helps you have a deeper personal relationship with God,” Pattie says. “In high school, I sang at Mass, and recently I’ve served as a lector, Eucharistic Minister and a member of the Finance Council.”

Before joining St. Francis, Bill was an active member in his Methodist church. Within a week of finishing RCIA, he inquired about becoming a Eucharistic Minister, and today he remains active with his Cursillo team.

“I have met some wonderful Catholic Christians that I look up to and learn from,” Bill says. “Don’t feel intimidated about getting involved. Ask a fellow parishioner or call the rectory. People are very receptive.”

Catholic education is a large part of the Paxton family, as Ian is a seventh-grader at St. Peter’s and Bo is a sophomore at Quincy Notre Dame.

“The advantages of Catholic education are worth giving generously to make sure that it continues in Quincy,” Bill says. “They start the day off with prayer, pray with lunch and go to Mass with their school once a week. It has made a noticeable difference in our children.”

Ian and Bo have both enjoyed attending Catholic schools and giving back to the faith community as altar servers at Mass.

“I like Catholic school because you can interact more with the priest to learn about your faith and the priest as a person,” Ian says. “Being an altar server gives me the opportunity to help with the parish at a young age.”

Bo has enjoyed Catholic education because of the supportive family atmosphere at school and the mutual respect that he observes between teachers and students. He also believes that being an altar server is a wonderful way for young people to become active in the liturgy and deepen their faith.

“Being an altar server helps me understand what happens ‘behind the scenes’ at Mass,” Bo says. “It also keeps my focus on the liturgy. It’s important to form good habits of practicing your faith.”

The Paxtons would like to thank everyone who makes the faith community of St. Francis Solanus such a warm and friendly environment in which to worship and serve together.

“When you put forth an effort to help out or participate in something, even if it is just a little, God notices and rewards you many times over,” Pattie says. “The people we attend Mass with have become our extended family. Thank you for being our family.”

“I have met some wonderful Catholic Christians that I look up to and learn from. Don’t feel intimidated about getting involved. Ask a fellow parishioner or call the rectory. People are very receptive.” – Bill Paxton

St. Francis Solanus

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Fostering a Spiritual Community Through Hospitality

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then, the last one would be some kind of luncheon after the 11 a.m. Mass.”

One of the unique aspects of this ministry, adds Marcia, is that it’s one in which everyone can be involved – men, women and children. Couples or whole families can easily serve in the ministry together. Volunteers are also able to choose the manner in which they prefer to get involved, from planning, decorating and serving, to simply providing an extra dessert or side dish for a reception. There is room for everyone as the ministry works to continue making our parish a more hospitable place.

For Marcia, the Hospitality Host/Hostess Ministry’s purpose is best defined by C.S. Lewis’ quote, “Don’t shine so others can see you. Shine so that through you, others can see Him.” It’s about spreading the love

of Christ through a warm smile, a meal, or a heartfelt conversation – about creating an environment where others can share and come to know one another.

“Hospitality is so much more than just being social,” Marcia says. “It’s about growing on a spiritual level by becoming Jesus to each other and seeing Jesus in one another.”

We invite all parishioners to consider joining this new ministry, helping it continue to grow and evolve into its fullest potential. If you would like more information, please contact Marcia Steinkamp at either steinkamp1974@gmail.com or 217-224-5665.

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.