

Saint Francis Solanus



OCTOBER 2017

The Hinkamper Family: *Embracing a Lifelong Commitment to Stewardship*

When Monica Hinkamper was growing up, she “lived and breathed” the call to stewardship.

“Our house was right next to St. Francis Parish, and my mother, Carolyn, actually still lives there,” she says. “As a child, I helped out a lot at church and was very involved. You could say I was doing stewardship before it was technically called ‘stewardship.’”

In fact, it wasn’t too rare that Monica’s family would get a phone call at 5 a.m. in the middle of the winter, from someone asking them to shovel snow before the 8 a.m. Mass.

“We did it all by hand!” she says. “I had seven siblings. My brothers were all altar servers, and my parents were heavily involved in helping at St. Francis, as well. I have a family history of Franciscan spirituality, as well – it has been part of our family’s ‘fabric’ for a long time. We grew up the ‘Franciscan way.’ It is very special to be in a Franciscan parish. Franciscan priests take a vow of poverty and have a reverence for the faith and for the Mass.”

Monica also attended St. Francis School, as well as Quincy Notre Dame High School, along with Ric.

“Ric’s family lived only about a mile away from St. Francis, and we knew of each other,” she says. “They



(From left) Ric and Monica with their son, Ian, and daughter, Ashley Dietrich, and her husband, Peter Dietrich

were members of St. Francis, too, but it was only after high school that we started dating. This parish community definitely means a lot to us.”

Further, Ric and Monica sent their two children,

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Stewardship

Becoming Fishers of Men

Whether you hold a high-profile position, such as parish council president, or have more of a behind-the-scenes role as a coordinator of a parish ministry, God has called you – as a parish leader – to help build His Church.

This challenge is just as important as the call of any other Catholic leader, including the earliest disciples.

When Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He urged a group of fishermen, “Come follow me.” Jesus promised if they laid down their nets and followed Him, He would make them fishers of men. These men were among His original disciples, and they knew Christ’s call was so important that they left their secular occupation to follow Him.

Just as He did with the fishermen, Jesus calls each of us today. He is not necessarily asking us to leave our secular careers, but He *is* asking us to put Him first in our lives and to share His message of love with others.

God truly wants us to serve Him and to build His Church through the secular occupations we have chosen. It is through the Church that new disciples are born, and it is in the Church that disciples continue to mature. Forming disciples of Christ is the most important work that can be done on earth, and each of us has been called to play an active role in this work.

So, how do we go about building the Church? Where do we find the plans?

Some people mistakenly think that building the Church – in particular, building our own parish or diocese – is no different than building a successful business. Indeed, the purpose of building the Church is to change

hearts – a goal that only God can accomplish.

Secular society has not prepared us for this work. However, the Holy Spirit – sometimes referred to as the “Architect of the Church” – has the plan. In order to implement this plan, we must become good listeners. We must open ourselves to the workings of the Holy Spirit as He transforms us and guides us to carry out God’s work and to serve as His instruments on earth, building the Church together with Him.

This is where spiritual exercises, such as retreats, come into play. A retreat offers the individual an opportunity to spend time alone with the Lord, allowing God to draw the person deeper into the mystery of who He is, who we are and what He is doing in our lives. Stewardship retreats can offer parish leaders the opportunity each year to spend time with the Lord as He directs them in the ways of discipleship. As leaders, we must take time to meditate on the Scriptures and allow Jesus to open up His Word to us. Then, as we grow deeper in our understanding of what God wants of us, we can exclaim, just as the first disciples did on the road to Emmaus, “Our hearts are burning within us” (Lk 24:32).

God has placed an extremely important call on the lives of all parish leaders, no matter how big or small the role. It is vital to understand how we, as parish leaders, can best answer His call. What, in particular, is the Lord calling each one of us to do? He most likely is not asking us to drop our nets, but to pick them up and become “fishers of men.” We must discern how we can most effectively cast our nets for Him.



A Letter From Our Pastor

“Here I Am, Lord.” But Are You Really There? Are You Responding to God’s Call?

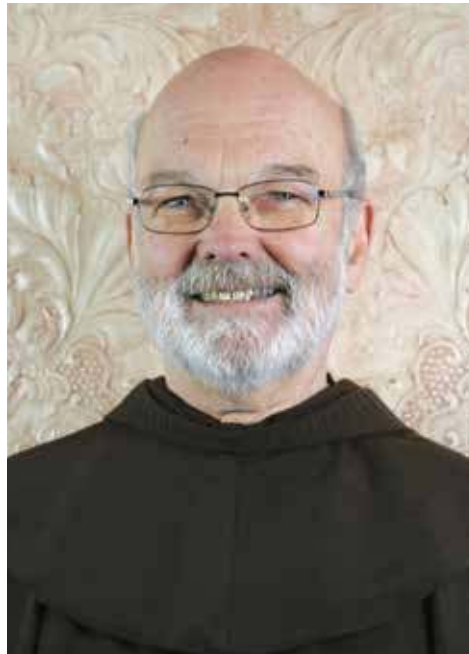
Dear Parishioners,

Throughout the Bible we hear people say, “Here I am, Lord,” or something similar. Normally, it is a response to a communication, a call, from God. In the Old Testament Book of Exodus, for example, it states, “God called out to him from the bush: ‘Moses! Moses!’ He answered, ‘Here I am’” (Exodus 3:4). We often speak in the Church about the fact that we have each received a calling from God. We also regularly say that one way to respond to that call is to live a life of stewardship.

Of course, the truth is that many do not hear God’s call because they are either not listening or they do not want to hear it. Of course, that is not how we should feel. I could write about my own call, but right now, I would rather address your call.

This is a time of year when there are calls from those in need all around us. Some of those calling are ministries right here in our parish. Before I address our response, it is important to emphasize that we need to hear the call. To hear something, we have to be listening.

The second issue is our response to the call. Do we indeed say, “Here I am”? Or, do we choose to say and do nothing? Stewardship is a call to action, a call to do something to share with and to help others. In the Old Testament passage cited above, Moses responds,



“Who am I?” (Exodus 3:11) – meaning he feels unworthy and unable to fulfill this call from the Lord. God’s answer is everything, as He says to Moses simply, “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12). Thus, we receive the call; we are to respond to God making it clear that we are ready. We may quite likely feel (as Moses did) that we are unprepared for what God may be asking us to do, but His response to Moses was the same as His response to us – “I will be with you.”

That is enough to empower us and strengthen us to try to serve God and fulfill His desires for us. Of course, there is one other call to which we need to respond. It is, as Christ said many times, “Come follow Me.”

As we enter this part of our personal year, this part of our calendar year, and this part of our Church year, may we be ready to listen, to respond, and then to do – full with the knowledge that the Lord is with us always!

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

That is enough to empower us and strengthen us to try to serve God and fulfill His desires for us. Of course, there is one other call to which we need to respond. It is, as Christ said many times, “Come follow Me.”

Faith and Science: Can They

There have long been scientists who claimed that their work was “incompatible” with faith in God. But as our world has become increasingly polarized, more and more people seem to believe that there must be a disconnect between faith and reason. For many scientists – and secular scholars in other fields, as well – religion and academics are deemed mutually exclusive. If something cannot be proven empirically, they posit, it is foolhardy to stake one’s life on it. And yet, this is exactly what we as Catholic Christians do – every time we say the word “amen,” in fact, we are declaring that we believe Church teachings to be an absolute truth.

So is all this to say that the Church really is “anti-science,” as some of its detractors claim? Certainly not! In fact, most people – Catholics and non-believers alike – would probably be very surprised to know just how many Catholic thinkers have played a major role in the development of modern scientific thought.

Most of us are familiar with some of the earliest scientific advances made by famous Catholic scholars like Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, and Leonardo da Vinci. But fast-forward to the 19th century – when countless innovations in modern science began kicking into high gear – and the contributions made by Catholic scientists are astounding! For example, the Mercalli scale used to measure earthquakes was developed by an Italian Catholic volcanologist, Giuseppe Mercalli, at the turn of the last century. You may also remember some of the laws of Mendelian inheritance from your high school biology class – Augustinian friar and botanist Gregor Mendel first discovered these recessive and dominant “factors” (which would later come to be called genes) in the 1800s, becoming the founder of genetics.

Of course, these are just a few of the more widely known examples. Those who work in the specific fields of physics and cosmology have several priests to thank for the incredible advances made in this area of study over the last century. Fr. Georges Lemaître was a Catholic priest living in Belgium during the first half of the 20th century. A professor of astronomy and physics at the Catholic University of Leuven, Fr. Lemaître was the first scientist to pro-

pose the Big Bang theory – which he referred to as the “primeval atom” or the “Cosmic Egg” – and the theory of the expansion of the universe. Fr. Lemaître’s brilliant and meticulous research won over even the most skeptical scientists in his field – reportedly, upon hearing Fr. Lemaître present his theories at a conference in California, Albert Einstein declared, “This is the most beautiful and satisfactory explanation of creation to which I have ever listened.”

For Fr. Lemaître, who served as president of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences from 1960 until his death in 1966, balancing the worlds of priesthood and cosmology research was not always easy. Sometimes, Catholic believers misunderstood his quest to discover the origin of the universe as a desire to put limits on God. On the other side, secular scientists questioned his ability to formulate theories of the universe objectively, suspecting that he was seeking to manipulate his scientific finds to fit them within Church teaching. In reality, Fr. Lemaître always advocated for a strict separation between science and faith, claiming that the Bible was not intended to be read as a science textbook and that “God could not be reduced to a scientific hypothesis.” For this Catholic scientist, although faith and science may have each answered separate questions, they were certainly not incompatible.

In contrast to Lemaître’s careful separation of questions of science and faith, another famous physicist priest takes the opposite approach. Fr. Michal Heller, professor of philosophy at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków, Poland, and member of the Vatican Observatory staff, seeks to bring together the fields of science, philosophy, and theology. In an interview with *The New York Times* upon his receipt of the acclaimed Templeton Prize for science and religion in 2008, Heller explained: “I always wanted to do the most important things, and what can be more important than science and religion? Science gives us knowledge, and religion gives us meaning. Both are prerequisites of the decent existence.” Fr. Heller, whose current research focuses on general relativity and quantum mechanics, strives to study the known elements of science within the

Mix?

context of a universe that has an (empirically) unknowable God as its creator.

In a similar way, yet another scientist priest of the past century successfully reconciled science and faith in his life's work. Fr. Stanley Jaki (1924-2009) was a Hungarian Benedictine priest who held doctorates in theology and physics, and authored over 40 books in these fields –and in the history of science – during his lifetime. Fr. Jaki is perhaps best known for his claim that modern science and cosmology were only made possible through the Christian understanding of creation that took root in medieval Europe. Fr. Jaki believed that faith and science must work together, and he warned against the tendency of modern society to seek omniscience through scientific study, thus letting science take the place of God.

Certainly, the list of Catholic scientists who have deservedly become renowned in their fields of study is longer than most people probably imagine. Still today, scientists like astronomer Fr. George Coyne, former director of the Vatican Observatory and current professor at Le Moyne College in New York, continue to make significant contributions to the study of modern science worldwide. Contrary to those who may try to claim that faith and science are incompatible, the Church has proven over the centuries that understanding the science behind how our world works absolutely can – and *should* – go hand in hand with the pursuit of fully knowing and serving our God.

*Are you interested in learning about the Church's teachings on the relationship between faith and reason? The papal encyclicals *Humani Generis* and *Fides et Ratio* provide in-depth explorations of this important topic.*

A Note From Fr. Don Blaeser Regarding Our Parish Finances

St. Francis has been through five years or more of very unusual financial challenges – the building of the Parish Center, and then the repairs on the church following the storm of July 13, 2015. All of this required added costs to the parish, including supervision of the projects, added insurance costs, a substantial investment of time by the staff from added paperwork – to verify billing, pay the bills, and to maintain detailed records for future financial and building needs. And during this time, the mission of the parish continued on with its own financial needs.

In addition to the projects mentioned above, two of the school’s restrooms were renovated, a new security system was installed in the school, a new phone system was installed in the entire complex, and the lower level of the Parish Center was renovated providing much needed space for the food pantry and the quilting ladies. None of this could have been accomplished without the generosity of you, our parishioners.

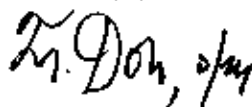
Spending, where possible, has been curbed and the school has established a purchase order system to oversee expenditures. The parish office and the school office work together to reduce costs whenever they can. Austin’s Army has saved the parish thousands of dollars. These men are extraordinary craftsmen who tackle special projects and repairs, and generally keep the parish and school buildings running like clockwork. They are far better at their craft than any commercial maintenance company we could hire.

All this being said, like all multi-million-dollar operations, the parish continues to need your support to educate our children and adults in the faith, to provide ministry to the community, to keep our qualified, dedicated personnel employed, and to maintain the physical plant. Thank you for all that you contribute!

In addition to the printed report dealing with the day-to-day operation of the parish, we should add that we have received several bequests and donations that we have applied to reduce the debt on the Parish Center, which, as of Aug. 31, 2017, is now down to \$567,081.35. There have also been those restrooms in the school that have been renovated partly through a grant, and partly through giving, costing \$64,567; and the improvements to the basement of the Parish Center, costing \$45,892, which have been paid for through gifts and regular income.

All in all, we’ve been on a wild rollercoaster ride, but through it all, the Lord continues to bless us. All is a gift, and I for one am very grateful to God every day of my life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



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

St. Francis Solanus Parish Financial Report *July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017*

OPERATING RECEIPTS

Church Support	\$	1, 076,747
Other Donations Bequests Memorials, Etc.		139,107
Fundraisers & Church Activities		42,064
All School Income		960,596
Investments Income		<u>12,316</u>
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$	2,230,830

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St. Francis Solanus Parish Financial Report *continued from page 6*

OPERATING EXPENDITURES

Wages, Benefits, Payroll Taxes	\$	1,637,071
Utilities		75,708
Insurance – Property & Liability		37,432
Repairs, Maintenance, Supplies, Equipment		247,948
Education Religious, Fees, Hospitality		20,178
Other		163,656
Interest on Debt		<u>30,158</u>
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$	2,212,151
 OPERATING SURPLUS	 \$	 18,679

Pope St. John Paul II's Prayer for the Revitalization of the Culture of Life

*O Mary,
bright dawn of the new world,
Mother of the living,
to you do we entrust the cause of life
Look down, O Mother,
upon the vast numbers
of babies not allowed to be born,
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
of men and women who are victims of brutal
violence, of the elderly and the sick killed
by indifference or out of misguided mercy.*

*Grant that all who believe in your Son
may proclaim the Gospel of life
with honesty and love to the people of our time.*

*Obtain for them the grace
to accept that Gospel
as a gift ever new,
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude
throughout their lives and
the courage to bear witness to it
resolutely, in order to build,
together with all people of good will,
the civilization of truth and love,
to the praise and glory of God,
the Creator and lover of life.*

-Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae

St. Francis Solanus

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The Hinkamper Family *continued from front cover*

Ian and Ashley, to our parish school, and kept them involved in our church and school community. Ashley and Ian were both altar servers, and Ashley sang in the Youth Choir.

“They had a great experience at St. Francis School,” Monica says. “Over the years, we have supported the school in many ways. We have always been very involved in our children’s activities – Ric did Eagle Scouts with Ian, and I did Girl Scouts with Ashley. We have also helped out a lot with the school’s sports activities. At one point, I coached women’s tennis at Quincy Notre Dame High School.”

Now that their children are grown, Ric and Monica are glad to be able to share even more of their time, talent, and treasure with our parish family.

“We both grew up with a commitment to

stewardship, and we continue to live it out in our adult lives,” Monica says. “We enjoy simply helping those who need help, and we are glad to be there for them. We also believe in saying ‘yes’ when our priest asks us to do something.”

Currently, Monica serves as Secretary of the Pastoral Council, and just completed a term of service with the Foundation Board at the high school. She is a lector at Mass, while Ric serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. They also love to attend parish social events, and remember the needs of the poor through the Giving Tree at Christmastime.

“You need to be involved in your parish community to really capture the essence of the Catholic faith,” Monica says. “The more you are involved, the more you grow spiritually, and the better you feel.”

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.