

# Saint Francis Solanus



JUNE 2018

## Parish Reach Ministry *Building Connections in Our Community*

Many of us social media users have inquired into the nature of our digital connections and friendships. How “connected” are we to the other individuals in our lives and our community?

Here at St. Francis Solanus, we have a committee of parishioners devoted to the shared mission of making sure each faith community member is seen and heard and knows that the parish cares.

“Our parish and the Catholic Church, as a whole, is a community, a family,” says Helen Zimmerman. “I believe it is important for all parts of that community to be involved, to bring their ideas and thoughts to the table to make sure their needs are met.”

The members of St. Francis’ Parish Reach Ministry intend to visit parishioners each year until all have been visited and heard.

“Being a member of this committee is one of the best things I’ve ever done because you really get to connect with other parishioners on a personal level,” says Linda Rull. “Together we will be speaking with parishioners and will be making strategic plans about where the parish is headed.”

Committee members, in teams of two, meet with parishioners in their own homes to discuss the parish, including general concerns and suggestions for ways to support parishioners’ faith lives. They also ask if pa-



*Parishioner Donna Clarke (left) with Helen Zimmerman of the Parish Reach Ministry*



*Parish Reach Ministry members (from left) Roseann Gosnell and Stephanie Ohnemus*

rishioners have any prayer intentions to share.

“These visits are relaxed and informal,” Helen says. “Although we have planned questions, each visit may be a little different. These are an opportunity to get to know others in the parish and for them to voice their thoughts and ideas.”

Many of the visiting teams are couples or friends. Linda visits parishioners with her sister, Jan Zeidler, and their visits are usually a half an hour and begin with a prayer.

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# Explaining Our Sacramental Worldview

## *How Ordinary Things Are Crucial in the Christian Life*

Why does a parish need money? Some parishes might need a new building, such as a new education center. Other parishes might need to hire new staff members, such as a talented new music director to further the mission of the parish. But what is that mission?

The mission of any Catholic parish should be to locally perform the mission of the Universal Church — which is to bring people into a living relationship with God and each other, through Jesus Christ. A parish staff, its buildings, ministries, programs, and finances must all ultimately work toward this goal.

Various aspects of parish life may seem more directly connected to this mission than others. Sunday morning Mass obviously brings people into communion with each other and with God, as do many other parish ministries. But what might be regarded as the “ordinary” aspects — such as the Thursday night finance committee meeting, the new office computer system or new landscaping on church grounds — are also essential to the parish mission. We may think of these tasks merely as administrative, and having no connection to the spiritual elements of Catholicism.

However, this line of thought is thoroughly non-Catholic. Catholicism does not separate the temporal from the spiritual. It is no more unseemly to speak of money at Mass than it is to use water to baptize — or, for that matter, to speak of Christ as both human and divine. The Catholic worldview demonstrates that ordinary things are always conjoined with unseen realities. This is exactly how the Sacraments of the Catholic Church work — the bodily conveying spiritual grace.

Indeed, a sagging parish budget or peeling paint in the church building aren't simply administrative issues unrelated to the parish's spiritual mission. The two may be distinguished, but they should never be divorced. The entire operation of the parish is of one piece — everything sacred *and* ordinary should be incorporated into a singular mission.

Of course, the same is true for our personal lives.

An authentic Christian doesn't compartmentalize his or her life into “time for God” and “time for me,” or even “God's money” and “my money.” Instead, a Christian is always conscious that everything is under the umbrella of God's providence. A Christian understands that he or she fits into an ultimate plan that transcends the workaday world, yet also includes it.

As strange as it may seem, things like time and money — and parish budgets, candles and missalettes — are rungs on the ladder to heaven. St. Thomas Aquinas disagreed with philosophers who thought that material things, and even our own bodies, were shackles on the soul. He instead believed that we are extremely fortunate to exist as embodied creatures, being able to see God in physical things like mountains, smiling faces and, of course, bread and wine.

Catholics reject any notion of spirituality that excludes the material world. Instead, we believe that the same principle behind the Seven Sacraments — that God works through ordinary things — is applicable to our whole lives. So being conscious of how we spend our money and our time is, indeed, very Catholic.



### **Correction**

A photo caption in the April edition of this newsletter incorrectly identified two women who were depicted helping beloved former Quincy Public Schools crossing guard, Mr. Carroll Range, open his birthday cards. The women in the photo were Arjee Weisheit, a Quincy Public Schools security guard and crossing guard coordinator, and Mr. Range's daughter, Carol.

## A Letter From Our Pastor

# Surrounded by Saints and Good Stewards

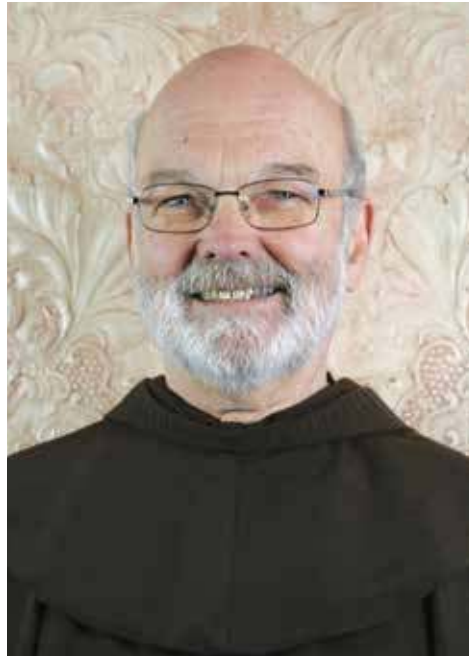
Dear Parishioners,

It is June — not quite the heart of the summer, but certainly a time when everything seems to be wrapping up. From school and religious education, to many of our ministries, much is winding down and going on hiatus.

Last month, we celebrated the month of our Blessed Mother Mary. This month, I would like to turn our attention to the idea of stewardship, although that concept is important every month and every day throughout the year.

We do not have to look far to find good stewards. They are all around us. They may be sitting near us at Mass. They may be part of our own families and households. Pay attention at our liturgies as they are always there, serving in a variety of ways. I suppose the big question is, “Do people look at us and see a good steward?” We are talking about more than our parish and the Church here. There are people in our communities and neighborhoods who show us what it means to be a good steward, and they do not have to be Catholic.

In June, we celebrate Father’s Day. St. Joseph, the earthly father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may seem to be overlooked, but we do need to look at him always and especially on Father’s Day. He humbly accepted his role much in the same way that St. Mary did. He does not have much to say in the Bible, indicative of his humility and understanding. Yet he, like Mary, was obedient. He was selfless. He was a worker, and in his own quiet way he was a leader — an example to all of us.



St. Joseph is, as you know, the patron saint of fathers, workers and the universal Church. If we could all emulate Joseph in some small part each day, we would be closer to being the disciples Christ has called us to be.

Sometimes, we Catholics are criticized for using statues, and some may be under the misguided impression that we worship statues. Our country and our lives are filled with statues — for instance, look at Washington, D.C. and its various monuments. Think of Mount Rushmore. People go to see these statues and stand in front of them, sometimes bowing their heads in prayer, or looking at the statue or piece of

marble in awe. Does this mean these people are worshipping these statues? Absolutely not.

Let us be proud of our Catholic heritage and let us not be afraid to honor and respect our saints and the saints in our midst, the good stewards all around us. In fact, we must each try to be more like them.

God bless you in all you do.

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 Blaeser, O.F.M.  
Pastor

*We do not have to look far to find good stewards. They are all around us. They may be sitting near us at Mass. They may be part of our own families and households.*

*Pay attention at our liturgies as they are always there, serving in a variety of ways. I suppose the big question is, “Do people look at us and see a good steward?”*

# Graduation EMBRACES Faith

Graduation is always an exciting occasion, but this year on May 18, our 26 St. Francis Solanus School graduates had the honor of starting a new tradition whose memory they will cherish for years to come.

For the first time during the graduation ceremony, the students wore gold gowns and caps topped with brown tassels, the school colors.

“This display gives our students a sense of pride in their school, and a realization that they have completed an important chapter in their life and are ready to move on to the next academic level,” says Lori Shepard, Principal.

Although the students already had their individual class photos taken before May 18, this year they had their group photo taken in their graduation gowns, which is another new tradition beginning this year.

The Graduation Mass was well-attended by family and friends, and began with an introduction to the Scriptures. The eighth-grade students not only helped to plan the essential parts of their Graduation Mass, such as choosing the music, but they also served as readers and gift bearers.

A longstanding tradition at St. Francis Solanus School was again carried on during the Mass. A large altar cloth is used during the Mass, and it holds the signatures of not only all eighth-grade classes in the past, but also those of this year’s graduates.

“This is held in high esteem and respect, and is part of a tradition here at St. Francis Solanus,” Ms. Shepard says.

After the Mass, the gifts and talents of the entire class were acknowledged in the awards presented in the areas of academic, music or service. Students



# ful Traditions OLD AND NEW

were recognized for outstanding accomplishments such as perfect attendance, choral and band groups, and altar servers.

Once the Graduation Mass was completed, the students welcomed their guests to a reception held in the Parish Center. There were wonderful memories made and shared as everyone watched a slide show of photos of the students when they were younger, as well as photos of them in groups during their growing years. And of course, everyone enjoyed refreshments.

The Graduation Mass offered an opportunity for reflection by Ms. Shepard.

“Over the last five years, I have come to know these students in a very personal way,” she says. “I have seen them play together as young children, go through challenges, and grow and mature into the spectacular young adults that they have become. Their talents have blossomed and they represent our school in the best way possible. Their lives have changed, due to some circumstances beyond their control, but they are stronger and more resilient than ever before to succeed. They inspire me to keep things in perspective. They remind me of what is important: God, family and friends. Their smiling faces and laughter uplift me on a daily basis and the bond that they share with one another is impressive.

And as Ms. Shepard notes, while the students are now ready to branch out and make new friends in new and larger settings, they will remain faithful to their old friends from St. Francis.

“When they attend class reunions, I hope they will reflect on the struggles, but remember the triumphs with overwhelming pride,” she says. “They will be a class that I will dearly miss, and have appreciated their gifts and talents. It has been a pleasure to watch them evolve into productive young adults. My hope is that they will continue this faith journey they have started with us.”

The benefit of their having attending St. Francis Solanus School is that not only have these young graduates received a solid educational foundation that will carry them through their lives, but they also have received a solid foundation in their Catholic faith that also will sustain them through their futures.

“Their sacramental preparation has been a part of their lives from Baptism to First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and finally, Confirmation,” Ms. Shepard says. “They have been enriched with the grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and are young disciples of our Catholic faith.

In closing, Ms. Shepard offers a prayerful reflection as our graduates proceed to their next stage of education and life.

“My prayer for them is that they stand up for their faith anytime someone from their peer group challenges it — or invites them to do something that they know is immoral,” she says. “I feel that we, with their parents, have given them a strong foundation on which to build, and I hope it grows deeper every day. I pray the Lord watches over them as they move on to high school, and they become active in HAFOC and Catholic HEART Workcamp. I pray that they continue their stewardship and always serve others. I pray that they eventually become pillars of St. Francis Solanus Church, and foster this tradition in their own families. And finally, I pray that they become the future leaders of the Church that the Lord has designed them for.”

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— Ms. Lori Shepard, Principal

# The Church — a Universal Family

## Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul

On June 29, Catholics celebrate the feast of two of our Lord's principal Apostles, foundational human cornerstones of the Church of Rome.

The first missal reading of this feast day tells us of the miraculous deliverance of Peter from prison. This illustrates the concrete fact that despite persecutions, Christ and His chosen followers will be triumphant in this world, and in the world to come.

The second is of Paul summarizing his own "pouring out" of his life as a libation. The way in which he poured it out is overwhelmingly significant — he gave his life as a missionary to gather all nations into God's unified Kingdom.

The Holy Gospel recounts Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah. After this confession, the "keys of the kingdom" were conferred onto him. These "keys" became the fundamental building block supporting the ordained priesthood and episcopal government of the Church.

In his homily on June 29, 2005, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI shared: "The Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul is at the same time a grateful memorial of the great witnesses of Jesus Christ and a solemn confession for the Church — *one, holy, catholic and apostolic*. It is first and foremost a feast of *catholicity*."

The celebration of our catholicity is a celebration of our unity in Christ. This unity endures unto the end, as our strength and fortress in the face of evil and the trials of earthly life.

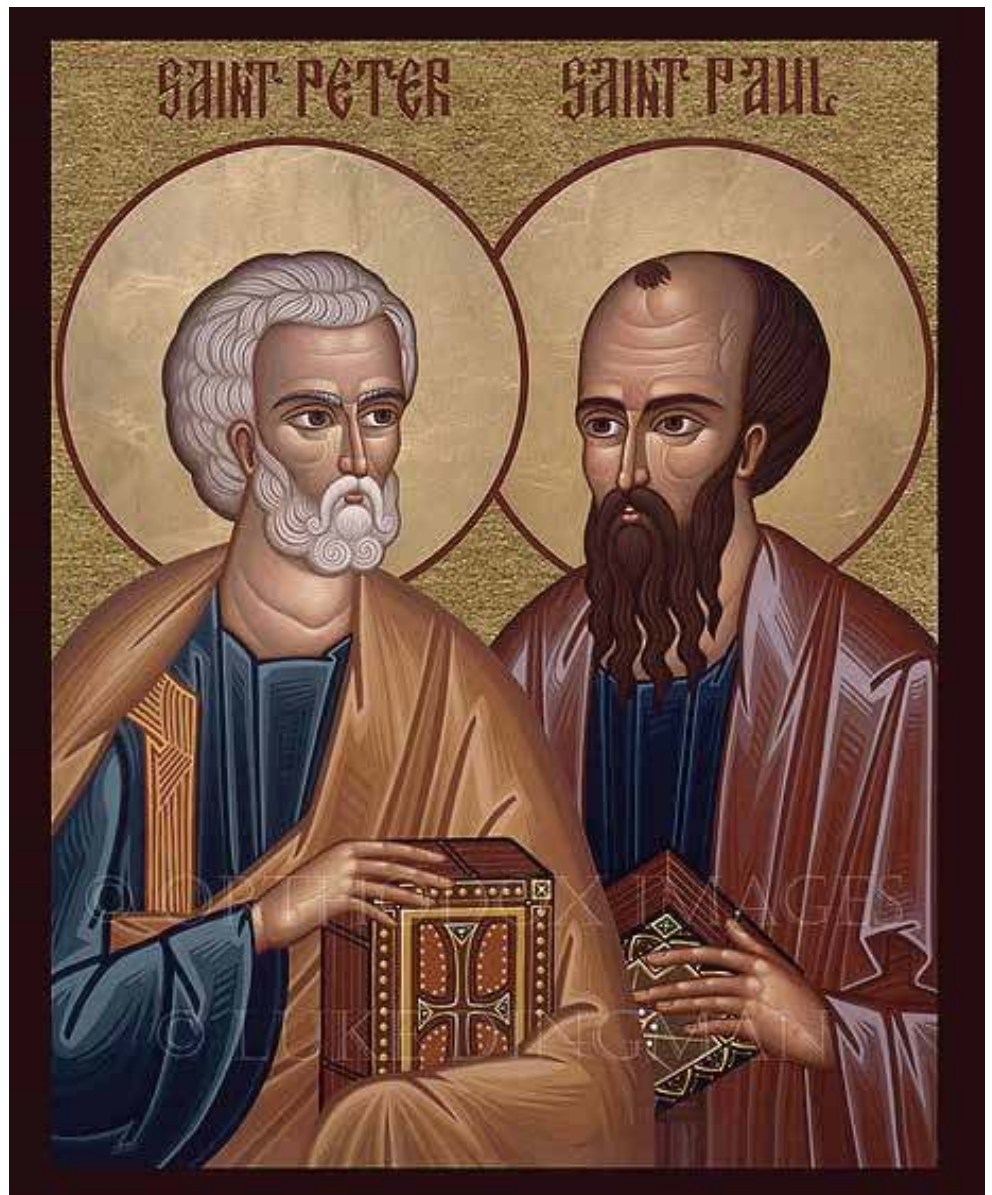
Sts. Peter and Paul remind us that our faith is founded on some-

thing much higher than ourselves, on an entity which raises horizons beyond our human frailties and imaginings. Our holy faith is founded upon the rock, Jesus Christ.

Pope Emeritus Benedict describes further: "When Peter and Paul came to Rome, the Lord on the Cross who had uttered the first line of that Psalm was risen; God's victory now had to

be proclaimed to all the nations..."

Let us embrace all of the graces which these beloved saints have won for us. Let us imitate their example, and so follow Christ with unwavering resolution. As did the Blessed Virgin, let us persevere in serving the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church in all that we say and do.



## Annual Parish Picnic

### *A Favorite Tradition of Family and Community*

It's a longstanding, beloved parish tradition — the St. Francis Parish Picnic — and what an opportunity it is to share good times and a welcome to our community, rain or shine!

Jenny and Steve Eling are among the six couples chairing the variety of activities for the picnic that will run from 5:00 p.m. to midnight on Saturday, June 9, at the school parking lot. But be sure not to miss the Cookie Walk and Bake Sale inside the Parish Center, along with additional food choices, and, of course, Bingo.

Willing volunteers step up each year to help run the different picnic activities.

"The chairs for most areas have been there for several years," Jenny says. "The Holy Name Society, the Ladies of St. Francis, the Quilters — they and different groups all have been heavily involved in the Parish Picnic. There are past committee members who always come and help out, as well."

Everyone works to make the picnic a welcoming place to be — a place where our love of Christ is put into action and we are able to practice stewardship not only in the sharing of our time and talents, but also in our hospitality.

"We do it in terms of just sharing a sense of community, along with stewardship in general," Jenny says.

The Parish Picnic is more than food, games and music in that it allows us to come together in fellowship not only among ourselves, but with the community around us. With our location right in town, our neighbors can enjoy an easy walk to attend.

"It brings the parish together as a group and brings us together as a family," Jenny says. "The picnic also welcomes our neighbors and the city of Quincy to experience our parish community, as well. It's a great, good evening that feels like a family with everyone together."

And who doesn't enjoy picnic food? Our Parish Picnic will have plenty to satisfy every taste.

"Outside, we'll have burgers and tenderloins,



onion rings, fries and corn dogs," Jenny says. "Inside, there will be roast beef, pulled pork, burgers, hot dogs, and French fries."

There will be games in the Kiddie Korner. For older guests, there will be Poker, Chuck-a-luck, Plinko and Bingo. Basket raffles and the silent auction also add to the fun.

Entertainment will be by the Heidelberg Band, followed by the group Eleven from 7:30 p.m. to midnight.

Proceeds from sales at the picnic will come right back to the parish. Admission is free.

"Our goal is to increase our proceeds from the previous year," Jenny says.

*It's not too late to volunteer, as willing hands always are needed. Anyone wanting to help may call Jenny Eling at 217-779-0861.*

# St. Francis Solanus

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## Parish Reach Ministry *continued from front cover*

“For me, it was rewarding because they would share about the parish and about their own lives and struggles,” Linda says. “In many cases, they simply want someone to listen to them.”

This July and August, there will be several training opportunities for parishioners who would like to join the Parish Reach Ministry committee.

“Each team is asked to visit 10 homes, and the names are chosen at random,” Linda says. “If we had more committee members, we could reach even more parishioners this fall.”

Many parishioners have responded with overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the visits. The compiled results and visitor comments were shared with the Pastoral Council and shared with the congregation in the bulletin.

The Council will discuss the concerns and ideas to set goals.

“Some of the comments shared include that they think this personal connection is the foundation for building a faith community,” Helen says. “Topics being discussed are training ministers, babysitting and youth group, among others. We take all the comments seriously.”

Helen and Linda would like to encourage parishioners who are contacted by the Parish Reach Ministry to consider opening their homes and welcoming this personal opportunity to build our faith community.

“These visits are an opportunity to share your thoughts and ideas to make our parish a more vibrant, active and welcoming parish,” Helen says. “Our main goal is to help all parishioners feel truly cared about and an important part of the parish community.”

*If you feel called to join the Parish Reach Ministry or would like more information, reach out to Fr. Don Blaeser 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.