

Saint Francis Solanus



JULY 2018

Follow the Lead — And Sing! *The Ministry of Cantors at the Mass*

Raise your hand if you think you don't have to sing during Mass if the cantor, ensemble singers or choir is present.

Thought so!

Roger Begley, Director of Music, would like us all to sing, following the lead of the cantor or the choir.

"What the cantor does is assist the congregation in singing," he says. "Sometimes, there is a great misconception about the role of the cantor and the choir. Some think when the cantor or the choir is singing, they don't have to."

Although St. Francis Solanus currently has only one cantor, the choir or an ensemble is always present during Mass, so everyone is encouraged to sing either with the cantor, ensemble or the choir.

"They're there to assist in getting the congregation singing," Roger says of the cantor. "By no means are they a soloist. They are there to help support and engage the singing from the assembly."

A cantor's duties call for the person to be, of course, musical, with the knowledge of a wide range of songs



and hymns, and to be comfortable with them.

Although the role of the cantor has roots in the early Church, and is a part of the Jewish tradition, the use of the cantor during Mass experienced something of a revival after Vatican II.

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Stewardship: A Need to Give

When the church needs a new roof or the local food bank needs donations, we jump at the chance to give for the sake of the need. It's part of our human nature — we identify a need, and we want to give of our time, talent, and treasure to help.

But as a stewardship people, we are called to give of ourselves not simply because the Church has needs, but because each of us has a *need to give*. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "We need to give our money to individuals and families in need, to the Church, and to other worthwhile charitable organizations because giving money is good for the soul and because we need to return thanks to a loving God for all of the many blessings each of us has received" (67).

As fellow members of the Body of Christ, created in God's image, we should strive to go beyond simply co-existing with one another on earth. The life we live should be fueled by love for each other. This love should dictate how we live — by giving of ourselves.

Jesus Christ showed us the perfect example of this self-giving love when He died on the cross. His death was a completely selfless act. He gave of Himself for our

sake, offering us — through that gift — life everlasting.

As Christ's disciples, we follow His example, and we give of ourselves for the sake of others, out of love and an inherent need to give.

That's not to say that we gain nothing through our gifts. In fact, in His goodness, God sees to it that we do. Most of us have experienced what happens when we give of our time, talent, or treasure. We feel as though we get more out of it than we give. If you speak to someone who serves at the food pantry or someone who has made it a regular practice to tithe to the Church, you are likely to find that he or she feels blessed to be able to give. As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops points out, "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 21).

Find out for yourself. Get involved in a ministry. Make a commitment to put some money in the collection basket next Sunday. Don't wait to find out if there is a need — give of yourself right now. You will be richly blessed for doing so.



A Letter From Our Pastor

What Is the *Real Purpose* of Our Lives?

Dear Parishioners,

Do you ever think about your purpose in life? Even as a priest, I certainly do. There are days and times of frustration when I think, “What am I really supposed to do? What does God want me to do? Why am I here?” For eons, philosophers have considered these very questions and written about them.

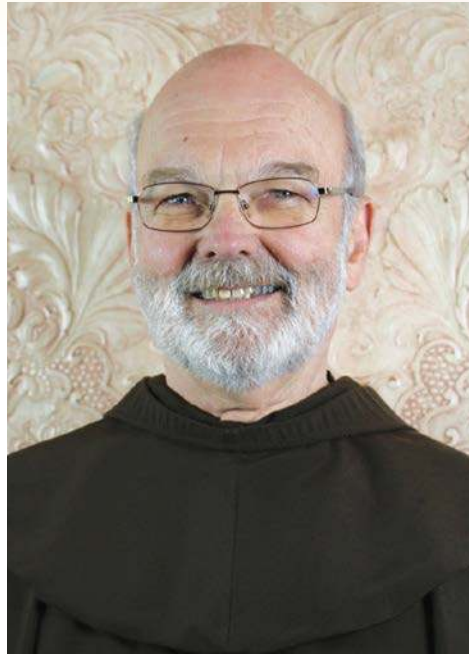
But the truth is that we, as Catholics, already know the answers.

When we consider the many facets of life in our parish community, there are numerous activities and endeavors that go beyond attending Mass. From fundraising efforts, to social outreach/service, childcare and more, there are many ways in which we serve our community.

Yet, as we undertake these important pursuits — both within and outside of the parish — we must always remember that our ultimate goal is salvation. After all, the only reason we exist, the only reason our Church exists, is the same as the reason Jesus joined us and became a part of us here on earth — He came to save humanity.

We use the term the “body of Christ” to describe the Church with Christ as the head. We are all parts of that body, and the parts of the body must move in the same direction as the body itself — it simply won’t function if the parts are moving in different directions. We are all in this together.

When our lives are complete, we do not base our



success or failure on how much money we have, or whether or not we are famous. Nor does our success or failure depend upon the difference between health and sickness, or pleasure and pain, or even being nice or nasty. Rather, it is the difference between being saved and not being saved.

I often think of my family members who have already crossed the bridge of salvation, and as a priest, I deal with that issue with others on a very regular basis. Sometimes, I wonder if they ever fully realized that salvation was the answer to so many of our questions in life.

I am surrounded by memories of those who have gone before, as are almost all of you. We are apt to use the term “the communion of saints” in many ways in our Church. Someday, we will know more about the “communion of saints” and how it all works. In the meantime, we pray for everyone who has gone before us, hoping they have made it home.

Pray for me as I pray for you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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

Community Assistance Ministry



When our volunteers from the Community Assistance Ministry work at the Horizons Soup Kitchen, they wear these aprons designed by parishioner Sarah Venvertloh. The brown pays homage to our patron saint, St. Francis Solanus, who wore the traditional brown Franciscan robe.

What would St. Francis do to serve the hungry? Simply this — he would do what our St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry is doing each month at the Horizons Soup Kitchen.

A team of 24 volunteers, coordinated by Deborah Schulte, helps with food preparation, serving and clean-up on the last Tuesday of each month at the Horizons Soup Kitchen.

“The volunteers have a choice of whether they want

“These people are hungry. We can tell you it’s a joy, the satisfaction of knowing you’re meeting a need. You’re out there representing Christ — not you. It’s Christ within you, that’s doing it.” — Deborah Schulte

to work the 9:30-11:30 a.m. preparation shift, or 11:30-1:30 shift for serving the food and clean up,” Deborah says. “I contact them about 10 days before when we’ll serve and they let me know so I can let Horizons know how many to expect that day.”

The group has been volunteering as a parish at the soup kitchen since June 2017.

“A group of about five of us went to see how the soup kitchen worked, and if we wanted to get Community Assistance involved,” Deborah says. “We got Fr. Don’s permission to volunteer. At first, he thought we’d be taking on too much — but when he thought about it, he said, ‘We want to do it and there are people willing to do it. We’re St. Francis [Parish], and this is something St. Francis would do, so we are carrying on his work. He helped the poor people.’”

The need for the soup kitchen is most apparent

Volunteers Following Work of St. Francis

when our St. Francis volunteers arrive for their turn late in each month.

“People don’t have money left at the end of the month and we’re really seeing it when we serve between 150 to 200 people in an hour,” Deborah says.

The Horizons staff has been trying to conduct a fund drive to enable the soup kitchen to serve on weekends or for the evening meal, but so far has been unable to reach that goal.

“The need is there, but just being able to come up with the funds to do it is the problem,” she says.

During the summer months, our volunteers observe many children coming in for the noon meal.

“Your heart just aches for them,” Deborah says. “You feel like you’re really seeing that church is beyond the doors. If we’re really church, we need to reach people outside of us, too.”

The Horizons Soup Kitchen patrons always know when our St. Francis group is working there, thanks to the brown aprons secured by Mary Beth McGee, who heads up the St. Francis Community Assistance Program. The brown recalls St. Francis and his traditional attire.

“If you really have the desire to serve others, this group meets that,” Deborah says. “The reward is — there is no price to it. I always wanted to do something for others, and I realize I’ve been blessed beyond — I don’t know what it’s like to be hungry. These people are hungry. We can tell you it’s a joy, the satisfaction of knowing you’re meeting a need. You’re out there representing Christ — not you. It’s Christ within you, that’s doing it.”



Anyone interested in volunteering with the Horizons group may contact Deborah Schulte at 217-430-5144

Follow the Lead — And Sing!

The Ministry of Cantors at the Mass continued from front cover

With the influx of new music and songs being written after Vatican II, congregations had to be taught how to sing during Mass. Before Vatican II, the congregations had no part in the singing.

“The singing of hymns was relatively new for Catholics,” Roger says. “Prior to [Vatican II] it was all done by the choirs. I’d say the role of cantor was something new put in place after Vatican II to help people learn the new songs being written and being brought over from the Protestant faith.”

What compels someone to volunteer to serve as cantor — or to sing in the choir — is the desire to help not only the priest during Mass, but also to help the congregation fully engage in the Mass.

Although there currently is only one cantor ministering in our parish, anyone interested in learning more about becoming a cantor may contact Roger Begley at 573-406-3933.

Getting to Know The *Summertime Saints*

School is out, and summer is now in full swing. The days are longer, warmer and filled with plenty of fun summertime activities.

This summer, as we take family vacations, get together for barbecues, spend time by the pool, and enjoy all of the usual summertime activities, we can also take the time to reflect on some of the saints who are associated with the summer.

Family vacations are perhaps the most iconic of all summertime activities. Although there is no patron saint of vacations, there are a number of saints associated with traveling. One of the most popular is St. Christopher. According to his story, St. Christopher was an extremely tall and strong man who served Christ by helping people cross an especially dangerous river. That is why many people wear St. Christopher medals while traveling — to ask for his blessing and protection.

For those of us who are taking road trips this summer, there is St. Frances of Rome, the patron saint of cars and drivers. While St. Frances died well before cars were invented, her story says that her guardian angel went ahead of her when she traveled at night and lit the road with a lantern to keep St. Frances safe.

There are also saints we can look to when traveling by plane. St. Joseph of Cupertino was a Franciscan friar who is said to have frequently and miraculously levitated off the ground during intense prayer sessions. Because of this levitation, he is recognized as the patron saint of air travelers. St. Therese of Lisieux is also associated with aviators and flying.

If you are going on a cruise this summer, you can ask for the intercession of St. Brendan the Navigator, an Irish monk who founded the Clonfert monastery and monastic school, and is the patron saint of mariners and

sailors. He and his brothers sailed the Atlantic Ocean and evangelized on a number of islands, and may have even reached the Americas.

Another favorite summer activity is swimming. Whether you choose a pool, a lake or the ocean, seek the intercession of St. Adjutor of Vernon, a knight who was captured in the First Crusade. His captors tried to force him to give up his faith, but St. Adjutor escaped by swimming to his freedom. For this reason, he is the patron saint against drowning, and for drowning victims, sailors and swimmers.

The summer is also a time of amusement and enjoyment. One of the biggest national celebrations of the summer is the Fourth of July. For this type of summertime activity, we look to St. Barbara, the patron saint of fireworks.

There are also a number of saints with feast days during the summer. The feast day of St. Anne, the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus, is celebrated on July 26. July 31 is the feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who is also associated with stewardship. These are just two of the many saints whose feasts we celebrate this summer.

No matter what kinds of activities we choose to enjoy during the summertime, let us remember to honor the saints who have gone before us, and give their intercession for us as we walk through our own journeys of faith.



Vacation Bible School Makes Successful Voyage with “Shipwrecked — Rescued by Jesus!”

For one exciting week in June, nearly 100 youngsters set out on an exciting voyage of salvation when they took part in this year’s Vacation Bible School program, “Shipwrecked — Rescued by Jesus!”

Wendy Steinkamp, Director, led the evening activities from June 18-22 at the St. Francis Solanus Parish Center. Children from ages 3 through those in fifth grade took part, all under the guidance of a willing troupe of helpers — from junior high, high school and college students, to our parishioners.

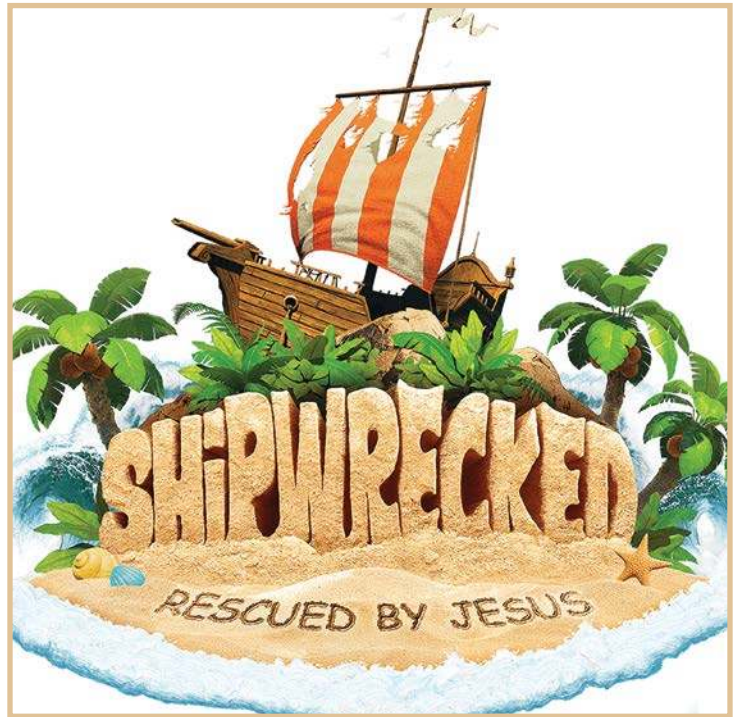
“We had five different stations that we sent the kids through,” Mrs. Steinkamp says. “They had different activities such as praise and worship music, and an opening skit with the Bible Point of the Day. They had a live-action Bible story that they were a part of. It was a well-written re-enactment of a Bible story. There was a snack station. The stations all were tied to the theme of ‘Shipwrecked.’ A favorite was the ‘Kid Vid Cinema,’ that took a Bible verse and showed kids who are living it out.”

One of the best parts of each day would take place when the parents would arrive to pick up their children.

“We had a little audience area set up with chairs, and throughout the day we took pictures of the kids, and we had the kids recap the Bible stories with their re-enactment,” Mrs. Steinkamp says. “The parents could see what the kids were doing.”

Our Vacation Bible School has meant special time for grandparents, as well.

“There are grandparents who planned their visits



with their grandchildren so they could have extra visiting fun,” she says.

As might be expected, the youngsters sometimes had a first night case of nervous giggles, but usually one-half of them attending had taken part before and knew what to expect.

“By the time we got to the third night, it got to be a well-oiled machine,” Mrs. Steinkamp says. “They were sad, as always, when Friday night came.”

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“I try to use the gifts they have. Some are natural-born leaders when it comes to songs. And we have some who are into sports, so they are the games leaders. One college-age volunteer was an elementary education major and it was a good way for him to have the experience with the kids. As for decorating, there are always people who are creative and we like to use their artistic talents. We had a woman who does the Bible Story station, and she’s a gifted musician and storyteller. She pulls the kids into the theme. They all have many gifts to come together.” — Wendy Steinkamp, Director

St. Francis Solanus

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Vacation Bible School *continued from page 7*

Throughout the week, the youngsters were given living examples of stewardship with the volunteer work of the helpers.

"I try to use the gifts they have," Mrs. Steinkamp says. "Some are natural-born leaders when it comes to songs. And we have some who are into sports, so they are the games leaders. One college-age volunteer was an elementary education major and it was a good way for him to have the experience with the kids. As for decorating, there are always people who are creative and we like to use their artistic talents. We had a woman who does the Bible Story station,

and she's a gifted musician and storyteller. She pulls the kids into the theme. They all have many gifts to come together."

For our eighth-grade Confirmation candidates, Vacation Bible School meant an opportunity for them to volunteer their time to help them decide where their gifts lie. They could volunteer in the community and the parish.

We extend our thanks to all who gave of their time and talents to make this year's Vacation Bible School possible, and of course, to the young members of our community who attended.

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.