

# Saint Francis Solanus



SEPTEMBER 2018

## Handling Money God's Way: *Financial Peace University*

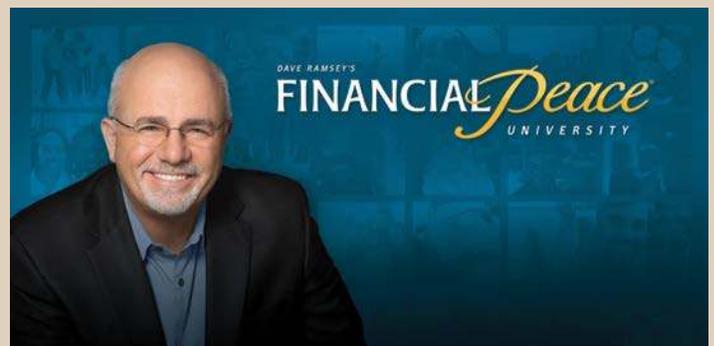
Sometimes you experience something so impactful in your own life that you can't help but share it with others. For parishioner Rick Gengenbacher, learning to work for financial peace and freedom through the wisdom of Dave Ramsey was one such experience.

"It changed my wife's and my life and I thought, 'I want to share this with everyone!'" says Rick, who began facilitating Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University classes about four years ago at St. Francis Solanus. "It teaches people how to handle money God's way. Our parish has talked a lot about stewardship — not just being a theme, but truly a way of life. And I believe that's what the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace class is — it's a way of life."

The course, which takes place over nine consecutive weeks, is held in the parish center. The evenings include an introduction, a video of Dave Ramsey presenting the topics of the evening, and a time for both group and individual — or couple — exercises. The course covers topics such as budgeting, dealing with debt, planning for the future, tithing, and more.

"Dave Ramsey has got a great sense of humor," Rick says. "We try to make it fun, and afterwards, there are exercises we do as a group. The group stuff is very important because it gives people different ideas and to have some accountability with each other as well."

Learning to be a better steward of his financial resources has impacted Rick in many different ways, particularly in realizing that everything is a gift from God and that giving back to God should take first priority.



*Dave Ramsey, creator of Financial Peace University*

"Now I realize, it's not my money — I'm just a caretaker of this money," Rick says. "Everything I have, it's been given to me by God. We're very blessed and we try to be generous."

"It's a freedom, and I feel like I've lived such a blessed life and I try to live a life of gratitude — I'm so thankful for everything I have," he adds. "I just want everybody to have this peace."

Rick's marriage and relationship with his wife has also improved as they have learned to work together on their finances and communicate more clearly about money.

"It's strengthened our marriage because before, in our marriage, we were going in two different directions and didn't realize it," Rick says. "We're clearly on the same team together now."

According to Rick, the Financial Peace University course could benefit just about anyone.

*continued on back cover*

# Formation Transformed Through Christ

*"Jesus not only calls people to him but also forms them and sends them out in his service."*

*From Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*

This month, we are emphasizing the third pillar of parish stewardship — formation. Formation is the process of studying Christ's teachings and incorporating them deeply into our lives. It is a lifelong effort by which we "put on Christ" (Rom 13:14) and are "transformed by the renewal of our minds" (Rom 12:2).

Above all, our formation should include studying Scripture and Church teaching. It should also include discussion with other Catholics and honest self-assessment. Its goal is to "discern the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect" (Rom 12:2).

Because formation helps us understand God's will, it therefore leads naturally to good stewardship. When our minds are transformed through Christ, we become like Him — as Christ gave His life for us, so we give our lives to others.

Formation is not just an individual task. Instead, it is a communal responsibility that, when applied, will further help St. Francis Solanus to grow as a stewardship parish. Each one of us has an inherent need to give — to move from "selfishness to selflessness," as the Diocese of Wichita's document *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* aptly states. Formation is a process of spiritual growth, and it leads to a deeper understanding of loving others as God loves us.

Naturally, then, our Catholic formation should not end upon celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation, or turning 18 years old. Formation is a formidable task that we as Catholics should participate in for the duration of our lives. It involves "education of the mind and conversion of the heart" (*The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*), and helps us to lead the stewardship way of life rather than just understand it.

Start off by reading 10 minutes of Sacred Scripture

a day, or by studying a chapter of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on a daily basis. Read a biography of your favorite saint for an example of an individual who lived as a disciple of Christ, and use this person as a role model when tending to your daily tasks. Keep an eye on our weekly parish bulletin for faith formation opportunities at the parish. Before long, your commitment to formation will lead you to naturally live the Catholic faith and understand stewardship in ways that you never imagined before.



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## Christ Becomes One With Us Through the Eucharist

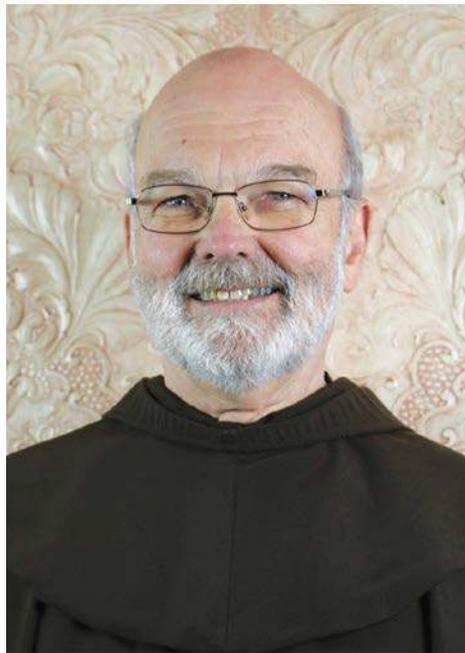
Dear Parishioners,

Any of us who are old enough to remember the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, had to have been marked by that experience. As I reflect on this solemn date in our country's history, I also faithfully reflect upon our celebration of the Eucharist. As Catholics, we are offered the Eucharist to keep it alive by consciously being bread broken and wine poured out for others each day of our lives. We are called to become what we receive.

Throughout the calendar year, certain dates are commemorated to inspire us to remember and honor those who may have been lost. These kinds of days — like 9/11 — are testimony to the reality that we, as human beings, are consciously connected to one another. There are unfortunately some who would have us believe that we are independent, separated from those around us.

For us as Catholics, the reception of the Eucharist is the most intimate union with God Himself on this earth. It is through the Body of Christ that we are unified to God and one another, and reminds us that we are invited to be bread broken and wine poured out for our world.

We gather as a community around the table of the Eucharist. We receive the gift of Christ's Body and Blood so that we may become the embodiment



of God's love among us. As we receive Christ, we should recommit ourselves to following in Jesus' footsteps and reaching out to those around us with mercy, encouragement and compassion. By doing that, we reaffirm our identity as disciples and our Baptismal commitment to be His body and blood given for others.

Unfortunately to some, the Eucharist has been diluted to the point that it is viewed as merely a ritual or a symbol. As Catholics, we know that it is Christ's real presence among us — we are to accept that gift and personally become Christ's presence everywhere we go and in everything we do.

The very word "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving." When we live a Eucharistic life, it has everything to do with gratitude. Let us be thankful for the Eucharist and thankful for one another, and let us demonstrate that through the love that pours out of us.

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



St. Fra

“Forever R

*“This is our opportunity to instill our Catholic doctrine, values and moral fiber in our students. With this foundation, they will continue to grow in their faith life and become future leaders of our church. They will then pass their faith-filled traditions down to their own children, and the members of the church will continue to grow and populate.”*

— Ms. Lori Shepard, Principal

For as long as she can remember, Ms. Lori Shepard’s mother, recently deceased, had a collection of outdoor frogs. Yet, Ms. Shepard never knew the deeper meaning behind this collection until learning about a conversation between her mother and sister.

“Do you like frogs?” asked Ms. Shepard’s sister.

“Oh, no,” replied her mother. “But they remind me to rely on God.”

Inspired by this simple remind-

er, FROG — “Forever Rely on God” — has become the 2018-2019 theme for St. Francis Solanus School.

“What an easy way to remember to place our entire trust and heart with our Creator,” says Ms. Shepard, Principal. “Now every time a child sees a frog, they will be reminded of the Proverb, ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart’ (Proverbs 3:5).”

This year’s theme is just another way that our parish school continues to fulfill its main

purpose of “teach[ing] by word and example the living Christ and His message.” Another element that sets Catholic education apart is parents and teachers collaborating together in forming our parish children in the faith.

“This is our opportunity to instill our Catholic doctrine, values and moral fiber in our students,” Ms. Shepard says. “With this foundation, they will continue to grow in their faith life and become future leaders of our Church. They will then pass their faith-filled traditions down to their own children, and the members of the Church will continue to grow and populate.”

Ms. Shepard says that she and her staff are excited to continue building upon the rich traditions and values of our parish school. Continually working to grow and improve, they — along with male volunteers from the Holy Name Society — have spent the summer months painting, cleaning and preparing for the new academic year. The school is also eager to welcome new faculty members Marsha Collins, Rochelle Neuman, Becky Payne, and Jake Tadeo, and a new



*St. Francis Solanus students during a Lenten Mass.*

# Francis Solanus Students Ready to “Rely on God” as School Year Begins

staff member, Scott Neisen, maintenance — as well as to continue the curriculum mapping process so as to ensure more cohesive instruction.

And, of course, the school continues to incorporate our Catholic faith into every aspect of the school day, helping our students internalize and grow increasingly active in the faith. This begins, Ms. Shepard says, with the excellent leadership of Fr. Don Blaeser and Fr. Bob Bar-ko, and continues throughout every discipline, helping our students see faith in relation to their daily lives and learning.

“Our priests have truly laid the groundwork for a strong faith relationship with God by word and example,” Ms. Shepard says. “Students feel empowered to participate in the liturgy through serving, reading the Word, bringing up the gifts, and singing in the choir because of their encouragement and affirmation. Our eighth-grade students leave us equipped to continue their faith journey. They truly let their light shine for all the world to see!”

This is only possible, however, through the help and support of our parish family. Only by working with and aiding each other, Ms. Shepard says, can the school and parish continue to thrive.

“I believe that it is critical to have a strong support system in place for the future of our parish and school,” Ms. Shepard says. “Each component ‘feeds’ the other. The young students provide the



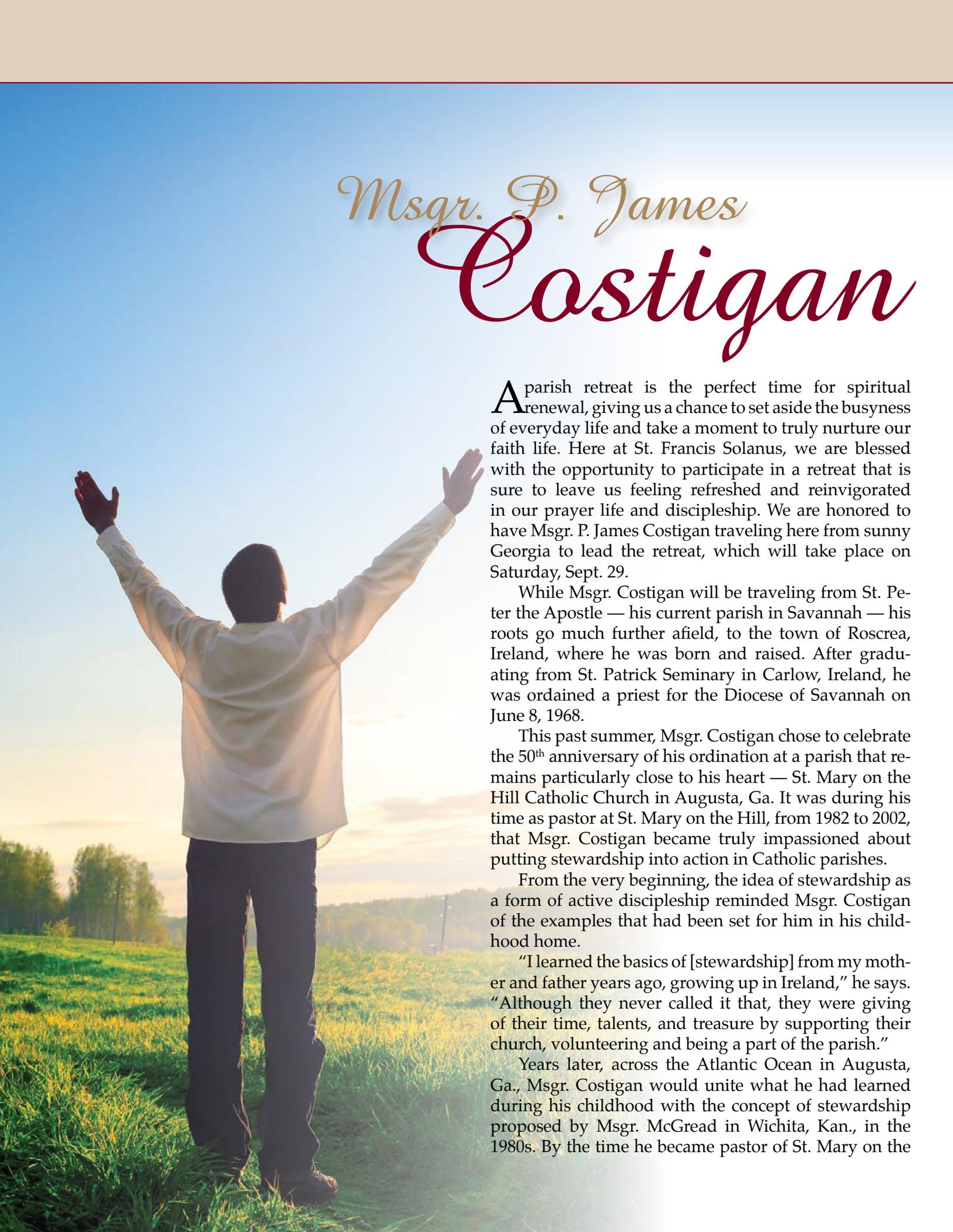
*Students embodying the Catholic faith by collecting food for those in need.*

foundation of the future Church, and the older parishioners provide financial and emotional support for the school. Without the children, there will be no future Church to continue — without the current and continued support of the older generation, there would be no school. Both groups must come together to create an ongoing faith-based opportunity where all can thrive and grow together.”

Ms. Shepard is eager to see the school and parish continue to grow in unity with one another. Parishioners are invited to become part of one of the school’s two volunteer programs — Solanus Saints and Austin’s Army — to support school events and, most importantly, to lift up the school family in prayer.

“We are one family, working for the common good,” Ms. Shepard says. “That is, to ensure that all are on the path to heaven and that everyone within our school and church are given the same opportunity to love and serve Our Lord — to ‘Forever Rely on God’ together.”

*If you would like more information about the 2018-2019 school year or to get involved as a school volunteer, please contact the school office at 217-222-4077.*



*Msgr. P. James*  
*Costigan*

A parish retreat is the perfect time for spiritual renewal, giving us a chance to set aside the busyness of everyday life and take a moment to truly nurture our faith life. Here at St. Francis Solanus, we are blessed with the opportunity to participate in a retreat that is sure to leave us feeling refreshed and reinvigorated in our prayer life and discipleship. We are honored to have Msgr. P. James Costigan traveling here from sunny Georgia to lead the retreat, which will take place on Saturday, Sept. 29.

While Msgr. Costigan will be traveling from St. Peter the Apostle — his current parish in Savannah — his roots go much further afield, to the town of Roscrea, Ireland, where he was born and raised. After graduating from St. Patrick Seminary in Carlow, Ireland, he was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Savannah on June 8, 1968.

This past summer, Msgr. Costigan chose to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination at a parish that remains particularly close to his heart — St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church in Augusta, Ga. It was during his time as pastor at St. Mary on the Hill, from 1982 to 2002, that Msgr. Costigan became truly impassioned about putting stewardship into action in Catholic parishes.

From the very beginning, the idea of stewardship as a form of active discipleship reminded Msgr. Costigan of the examples that had been set for him in his childhood home.

“I learned the basics of [stewardship] from my mother and father years ago, growing up in Ireland,” he says. “Although they never called it that, they were giving of their time, talents, and treasure by supporting their church, volunteering and being a part of the parish.”

Years later, across the Atlantic Ocean in Augusta, Ga., Msgr. Costigan would unite what he had learned during his childhood with the concept of stewardship proposed by Msgr. McGread in Wichita, Kan., in the 1980s. By the time he became pastor of St. Mary on the

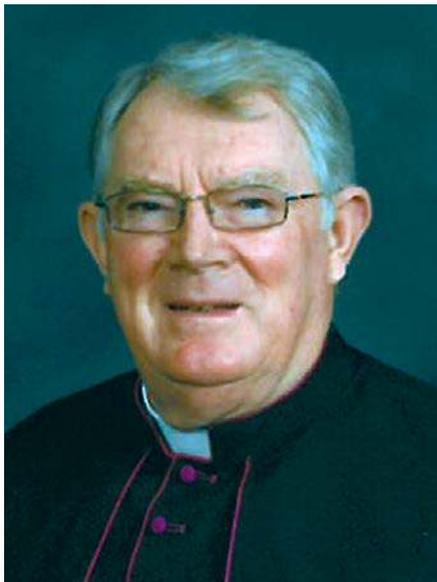
## to Lead Parish Retreat on *“Prayer and the Christian Steward”*

Hill, he was able to make stewardship a true centerpiece of spiritual life there.

One of Msgr. Costigan’s greatest accomplishments during his time in Augusta was the replacement of tuition-based funding at the parish school with a stewardship model.

“What spurred me on at St. Mary was that we had a large school and I saw that, if Catholic education was going to survive and continue, it had to be something to be embraced by the whole parish, not just people with children in the school,” he says. “I’m a firm believer that Catholic education is for everybody, and everyone should be able to participate regardless of income. And St. Mary fit that model — you had doctors and lawyers, but you also had working fathers and mothers, and the school had to be within their reach, too.”

In keeping with Msgr. Costigan’s passion for spreading the good news about the blessings that come with a life of stewardship, the topic of next month’s retreat here at St. Francis Solanus is “Prayer and the Christian Steward.” The day will not be a workshop or conference, but will instead focus on reflection and prayer. Beginning with a reflection on God as Love, the retreat will then move on to the topic of God as Creator, as



*Msgr. P. James Costigan*

Jesus, and as a Presence in the Church, sacraments, Bible and community.

Next, a discussion on discipleship and the role of prayer in the life of an active disciple of Christ will culminate with a call to action inviting parishioners to contemplate how they may best live out their faith.

For Msgr. Costigan, discipleship and stewardship always go hand in hand.

“Stewardship is an outgrowth of discipleship — it’s like the hand is to the body,” he says. “The faith is the basis of who we are as Christian people, but the outgrowth of that is discipleship. We can say the Creed on Sundays, but are we going to do something concrete with that?”

The parish retreat promises to offer a valuable time for parishioners to come together and reflect on the roles of prayer and discipleship in their lives. Msgr. Costigan encourages everyone at St. Francis Solanus to take advantage of this unique opportunity for spiritual renewal.

“It’s a time of reflection, and time well spent,” he says. “It’s a short retreat, but it’s very intense and brings people together. They’ll get to know people they haven’t sat down with before, and it will bring them closer to God and to the Church.”

*“Stewardship is an outgrowth of discipleship — it’s like the hand is to the body. The faith is the basis of who we are as Christian people, but the outgrowth of that is discipleship. We can say the Creed on Sundays, but are we going to do something concrete with that?” — Msgr. P. James Costigan*

# St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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## Financial Peace University

*continued from front cover*

"I think anybody can benefit from this class, but I especially think it's true of young people who are raising families and struggling to get by and have never been taught to handle their money," Rick says. "It's for those people who are struggling financially, but also those who are looking to buy a home or trying to plan for retirement. Or maybe you're doing well, but you want to learn more about tithing or feel like God is calling you to do something more.

"Anybody can benefit," he adds.

The next Financial Peace University course will be held on Sunday nights and will begin early September. The cost for registration and course materials is \$99 — however, there are scholarships available. Rick hopes that many St. Francis Solanus parishioners will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to transform the way they view their finances.

"This program is all about stewardship — Financial Peace University is all about learning to handle your treasure," Rick says. "It's about sound principles that if you do, you're going to be successful. It doesn't matter your income — the principles are the same for everyone. I know how this has changed my life and I want other people — my brothers and sisters, and everyone in our parish — to have this."

*If you would like more information, or if you have questions about registration, scholarships, etc., please call or text Rick Gengenbacher at 217-257-5670. The course will begin Sunday, Sept. 9, at 6:30 p.m. All are invited to attend the first session for free to see what the course is all about. To register, please visit [www.FPU.com/1067310](http://www.FPU.com/1067310).*

### 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.