

Saint Francis Solanus



NOVEMBER 2018

More Fully Embracing Christian Life Through CURSILLO



Participants gather at Pam Frerick's Group Reunion — one of several here at St. Francis Solanus.



Participants gather at one of the all-male Group Reunions.

God is real. He loves us and lives among us. This simple, yet profound message is at the heart of Cursillo, a lay movement that has had a great impact on the Quincy area over the past 40 years. Not “magic” or “manipulative” in any way, says parishioner Marcia Steinkamp, this four-day weekend is designed to help kickstart a deepening journey with Christ — to help individuals come to know the living God in a more intimate way, leading them into more active discipleship.

“Are we really aware of our spiritual journey with Jesus Christ as a friend each day?” Marcia asks. “As

Catholics, we need to mature and always grow to know Christ better, and it’s a lifelong adventure. Cursillo just helps you do this and understand how the Holy Spirit is working within you.”

Marcia and her husband, Dennis, became involved in Cursillo back in 1982, thanks to the invitation of fellow St. Francis Solanus parishioners Marvin and Ann (deceased) Knuffman. At the time, the Steinkamps were young parents and didn’t see how they could fit Cursillo weekends into their already busy schedules. Yet, something about it attracted them, and they agreed to give it a try.

continued on page 2



Cursillo *continued from front cover*

"I think Dennis and I both thought, 'Hey, we've got two young children, we're just too busy, we don't need this,'" Marcia says. "We just ended up talking about it, though, and somehow ended up deciding that Dennis would attend one and that I would follow him the next month."

A Cursillo weekend consists of Mass, adoration, confession, presentations on the faith, and plenty of individual time for prayer. Typically starting on a Thursday evening and lasting until Sunday, attendees have ample opportunities to take a step back from their busy lives in order to truly encounter Christ.

"It begins on Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m.," Dennis says. "Then there is a little social until 8:30, and then afterward the team and candidates transition into the actual retreat. From then on, individuals are called to reflect on their own spiritual lives. There are a series of talks rotating from lay people to a priest or religious, all of which are all geared toward helping a person figure out where their relationship with Jesus Christ is and how it can improve."

Recognizing that the Christian life is lived best within community, attendees are then encouraged to become part of a Group Reunion following their Cursillo Weekend. Formed by their mutual desire for holiness, this small group setting allows parishioners to support and become part of one another's faith journey. Group Reunions meet weekly and can consist of couples or be exclusively male or female. For Marcia and Dennis, this

has been one of the most powerful aspects of Cursillo, providing them with lifelong friendships.

"Through the Group Reunions you are challenged to continue growing in the faith — to continuously ask yourself, 'How am I becoming a leader in my community? How am I making the Church stronger?'" Dennis says.

"After our Cursillo weekends, the Knuffmans invited us to join a Group Reunion with them and that is the same prayer group that we are part of today," Marcia says. "We've shared our lives with those couples for all these years and it is truly such a comfort. Any time one of us has any health issues, problems or any form of tragedy in our lives, that community is there to lift us up in prayer and to truly be there for us."

The end result of these experiences is an overall greater sense of stewardship, Dennis says — an increasing understanding of discipleship and our calling to

servant leadership.

"Through that growing relationship with Christ, you begin to see more and more that what He is calling us to do is to become servants to one another," Dennis says.

"I know that neither Dennis nor I would be nearly as involved in our parish, giving of our time and efforts, if we had not first had that experience which made us truly understand our role as Christians — to understand that we are called to serve and love one another," Marcia adds. "It made all the difference in the world, especially when it came to raising our four children.

"Are we really aware of our spiritual journey with Jesus Christ as a friend each day? As Catholics, we need to mature and always grow to know Christ better, and it's a lifelong adventure. Cursillo just helps you do this and understand how the Holy Spirit is working within you."

— Marcia Steinkamp

We invite all parishioners to consider experiencing a Cursillo weekend. The next male Cursillo for the Quincy area is scheduled for Jan. 24-27, and the next women's gathering is scheduled for Feb. 21-24. Weekends take place at the Franciscan Retreat Center and cost \$150. To sign up or for more information, please contact either Dennis and Marcia Steinkamp at 217-224-5665, or area representatives Larry and Rita Frese at 217-936-2740.

A Letter From Our Pastor

November:

A Time of Faithful Celebration and Sharing in Thanks

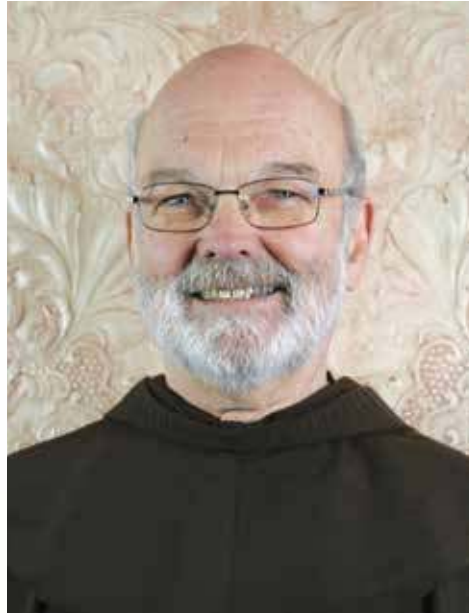
Dear Parishioners,

As I look over the calendar for November, my mind is filled with thoughts of thanksgiving. These aren't just thoughts about Thanksgiving Day, although I look toward it with happy anticipation — more than that, they are thoughts filled with a variety of reasons for why we should be thankful.

The month begins with a great celebration that should be a day of thanksgiving for all of us — All Saints' Day. This is a great feast celebrating the great company of Christians now in heaven — a company we shall eventually join, whether or not we're formally canonized, if we remain faithful to Christ.

And the communion of saints — the sharing of spiritual goods by those in heaven with us who are still in our pilgrimage — is a great cause for thanksgiving. We read the lives of the saints to be encouraged and inspired by their examples. Plus, we are strengthened by their fellowship in the Body of Christ, and we are aided by their prayers.

And then, the very next day, we celebrate All Souls' Day. Although this day commemorates all the faithful departed who are being



purified in Purgatory, it is natural for us to concentrate on the members of our own family and our friends who have died. While we pray for them, that they may soon experience the joys of heaven, at the same time we also are thankful for the love they gave us and for the faith they passed on to us.

Then, later in the month comes Thanksgiving Day, the national holiday celebrating all the things for which we are thankful. The fact that it comes toward the end of autumn

reminds us that it was originally a harvest festival. For Christians today, it's a wholesome reminder that we should thank God for everything we receive, especially the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Why not participate in the Church's Great Thanksgiving, the Holy Eucharist, on Thanksgiving Day? It's the ultimate way to give thanks.

A reminder — while much of our attention this month may be drawn to the often contentious goings-on in our country, we need to remember that God is in charge of the universe, even though He has given us free will. If we trust in His loving care, demonstrated by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has entrusted to us, we can withstand the troubles of life. It's a good principle to follow in this month of thanksgiving.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Don, O.F.M." The signature is written in a cursive style.

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

St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry

SERVING OUR NEIGHBORS



Seminarian Ryan Kehoe (left) works with ministry volunteers.



St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry volunteers spread Christmas cheer while serving parishioners and clients.



St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry has a site visit from the Diocese of Springfield — Seminarian Ryan Kehoe (second from left) represents the Campaign for Justice and Hope Grant the ministry received.

One of the most powerful and beautiful aspects of our Catholic faith is that we can be inspired by the many examples of discipleship lived out by the members of our own parish community. And for Mary Beth McGee, Rose Gott provided such inspiration.

Rose, who is legally blind, was the former Ministry Leader for St. Francis Community Assistance. She cared meticulously for all the details of the ministry and gave with great compassion.

For this reason, when Rose called Mary Beth and asked her to discern leading the ministry, Mary Beth felt hesitant but eventually realized this was her calling.

"It has become clear to me that God led me to this place," Mary Beth says. "I believe that I have become more benevolent than I was before and have been able to listen better to what God really wants me to do here on earth."

The St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry serves our brothers and sisters in need here in Quincy,

calling us to expand our hearts and be Christ to our fellow neighbors.

Mary Beth and her husband were originally drawn to St. Francis because of the Franciscan charism of joyfully serving others through programs such as this one.

"About 12 years ago, we joined St. Francis when our parish closed," says Mary Beth, who co-leads the ministry along with Carla Eling. "We knew some of the friars and were impressed with their kindness and philosophy of helping others."

The main service the St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry provides is a Food Pantry that serves approximately 40 to 45 households each week. An envelope is placed in the Parish Giving Packets quarterly to donate to the pantry, and donations are used to purchase groceries at a discounted price.

"Over 800 households have been served by the St. Francis Food Pantry in the last year," Mary Beth says. "Containers for the Food Pantry are located at each

Assistance Ministry VOLUNTEERS IN NEED



Ministry volunteers during the May Postal Workers Food Drive sort donated items and stock the pantry.



Ministry volunteers staff serving clients.



Ministry volunteers staff serving clients.

If you would like more information about the St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry, please reach out to Mary Beth McGee at ambmcgee1416@gmail.com or 217-430-1533. The Food Pantry may be contacted at 217-430-1025. And please follow the ministry on Facebook.

*“Our volunteers are amazing! They are organized and hardworking, but even more importantly, they are really fun. Giving to others together can be rewarding and fun.”
— Mary Beth McGee*

of the church’s entries with grocery bags and lists of needed items. Parishioners are invited to bring donated items when they come to church”

Since 2017, the ministry has also helped on the last Tuesday of each month at the Horizons Soup Kitchen to prepare the meal, serve and clean up afterwards.

There is also a new pantry in the parish center that allows for more storage and for clients to pick up groceries at the 17th Street entrance.

“We do still deliver to about 12 percent of our clients who are disabled and homebound, but the pick-up service allows us to serve many more households,” Mary Beth says.

Any parishioner interested in serving with the St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry is welcome. The ministry meets quarterly and works with volunteers to find the right fit for them, depending on their physical abilities and time availability.

“I encourage people to come to one of the times we

are stocking, bagging or receiving a delivery,” Mary Beth says. “People can also do things like delivering groceries or bringing donations down to the pantry.”

One way that all parishioners can serve our neighbors in need is through the care packets for the homeless that the ministry provides for \$5 at the parish office.

“The packets contain a washcloth, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, Chapstick, Kleenex and items for a small meal,” Mary Beth says. “A prayer is included too, and a few dollars may be added. The packet can be kept in a car and given out when encountering a homeless individual.”

Over the years, many volunteers have given unselfishly to this ministry. Mary Beth is incredibly grateful for the more than 130 volunteers who give of their time to care for our brothers and sisters in need here in Quincy.

“Our volunteers are amazing!” Mary Beth says. “They are organized and hardworking, but even more importantly, they are really fun. Giving to others together can be rewarding and fun.”

Living Out Gratitude and Stewardship, During Thanksgiving and Beyond

Every November, as the holiday season fast approaches, we are filled with a deep sense of sentimentality and gratefulness for all the goodness of the past year. At the same time, we encounter many wonderful ways to give — to cheerfully share our own gifts — during this time of Thanksgiving.

It is with this spirit of gratitude that we can truly live out the stewardship way of life. This Thanksgiving, there are plenty of opportunities to do this in a direct way. Is there a new neighbor you haven't met, or someone who might be spending the holiday alone? Invite them over for Thanksgiving dinner. Perhaps you may volunteer at a soup kitchen, or you might donate a Thanksgiving meal to a family in need who wouldn't otherwise have one.

If you go shopping on Black Friday, make it a point the next day to donate old clothes that you or your family members no longer need. And as the winter draws closer, you might participate in — or even organize — a coat drive, and then gather a small group to go out into the community to give the coats away to homeless shelters and those in need during the winter months. There are countless such opportunities to live in gratitude and thanksgiving — opportunities that go beyond just having a meal with family and friends on the fourth Thursday of November.

Of course, we must remember that this spirit of thanksgiving does not end after Thanksgiving, nor does it end following Advent and

Christmas. We must always consider how to give, even as the sentimental glow of the holiday season fades after the New Year. In January, if there is space at your table, fill it. In February, if there is abundance in your closet, give away from that abundance. In March, if there are volunteers needed at the soup kitchen, rally a team and give of your time. We need a renewed spirit of stewardship and thanksgiving that lasts the whole year so that our giving becomes habitual, and not just seasonal.

This Thanksgiving, ask the Holy Spirit where He is calling you to give. And may the joy of the Thanksgiving season flow into our lives as good stewards, every day and throughout the entire year.

The spirit of thanksgiving does not end after Thanksgiving, nor does it end following Advent and Christmas. We must always consider how to give, even as the sentimental glow of the holiday season fades after the New Year. In January, if there is space at your table, fill it. In February, if there is abundance in your closet, give away from that abundance. In March, if there are volunteers needed at the soup kitchen, rally a team and give of your time. We need a renewed spirit of stewardship and thanksgiving that lasts the whole year, so that our giving becomes habitual, and not just seasonal.

Cub Scouts Promote Character and Leadership Development

If you have ever been a Cub Scout or a Boy Scout, you are familiar with the Scout Oath: “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and to my country, and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.” Of course, the Scout Oath could be a statement of stewardship, as it represents how we recognize and use our gifts to serve God and others.

For many years, our parish has sponsored Cub Scout Pack 22. Parishioner Jim Schuetz serves as Cubmaster, bringing a strong history and experience in scouting to his leadership role. A scout himself growing up, Jim achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts. In addition, his oldest son is a Boy Scout and his youngest son is a Cub Scout.

“There is something special about being a Cub Scout,” Jim says. “There is so much you can learn about your faith, about life, about our country and about yourself. We teach what it means to be a good citizen as well as a good person — Cub Scouts learn self-responsibility and self-reliance.

“I think scouting is a unique opportunity to learn about different things in a fun way,” he adds. “I know for me, it really helped me mature and learn what it meant to be a leader and a responsible person. Much of what I learned I have been able to carry and use into my adult life.”

Cub Scout Pack 22 is part of the Mississippi Valley Council. Pack meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The pack is divided into smaller groups called dens. Each den usually contains from seven to 10 boys or girls normally of the same age and grade. Dens meet at varying times and days dependent upon the schedules of the children and the adult leaders, but they meet at least two times a month in addition to the pack meetings. There are 40 scouts in Pack 22 at this time, and it is now open to girls as well.

Jim points out some of the activities in which the boys and girls participate each year.

“Camping is important to us, and we do that on a regular basis,” he says. “Two of the more enjoyable events we have each year are our Rain Gutter Regatta in the fall and our Pinewood Derby in the spring.”

The Rain Gutter Regatta is a racing event that is the sailboat equivalent of the Pinewood Derby. Each scout receives a sailboat kit consisting of a seven-inch long balsa wood hull, a 6½ inch mast, plastic sail, plastic rudder and metal keel. Within the basic design rules, scouts are free to paint and decorate their sailboats as they choose. The boats are raced in a standard rain gutter that is 10 feet long, placed on a table or saw horses, and



continued on back cover

St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

1721 College Avenue
Quincy, IL 62301
(217) 222-2898
stfrancissolanus.com



Cub Scouts *continued from page 7*

filled to the top with water. The boats are propelled by blowing on the sail, either directly or through a drinking straw — the boat cannot be touched with hands or the straw. The first boat to reach the end of the gutter is the winner. The overall winner is determined by an elimination system.

The Pinewood Derby is also a racing event for unpowered, unmanned miniature cars. With the help of adults, scouts build their own cars from wood, usually from kits containing a block of pine wood, plastic wheels and metal axles.

“There are so many activities which keep the boys and girls interested and involved, but I want to emphasize again that at its foundation it is fun to be a scout,” Jim says. “We registered new scouts earlier in the fall, but it is never too late to join. While having a good time, the boys and girls gain practical knowledge and skills which are not taught in school or elsewhere. Because of our affiliation with St. Francis, we promote our Catholic scouts pursuing religious awards, in particular the Life of Christ award and the Parvuli Dei [Children of God] award.”

Cub Scouts is open to boys and girls in kindergarten through fifth grade. Any child interested in Cub Scouts or any adult interested in being involved with Pack 22 can contact Cubmaster Jim Schuetz at 217-440-6780 or via email at jsschuetz@gmail.com.

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.