

Saint Francis Solanus



SEPTEMBER 2019

Catholic Athletes for Christ

Connecting Faith and Sports for Quincy Notre Dame Students

The National Federation of State High School Associations says that nearly eight million high school students play a sport. Often, these sports involve families, as well. And for our athletes and their families, Catholic Athletes for Christ, or CAC, is a great way to learn about the intersection of faith and sports.

“Sports are such a big part of families lives, so trying to tie sports and faith together is a great way to evangelize to not only our students but parents as well,” says Nathan Koettters, Director of Quincy Catholic Athletes for Christ.

According to the CAC website, their goal is “to provide an integrated network of sports-oriented clergy and lay people to serve Catholic athletes, coaches, and staff in the practice of their faith and to utilize the unique platform given to them to reach the world for Jesus Christ and His Church.”

The Quincy Notre Dame chapter meets before school about twice per month to discuss faith and sports. Nathan hopes that, in the future, the group can volunteer for Special Olympics and in the community, like they had in past years.

“We kick off each sports season with a Mass,”



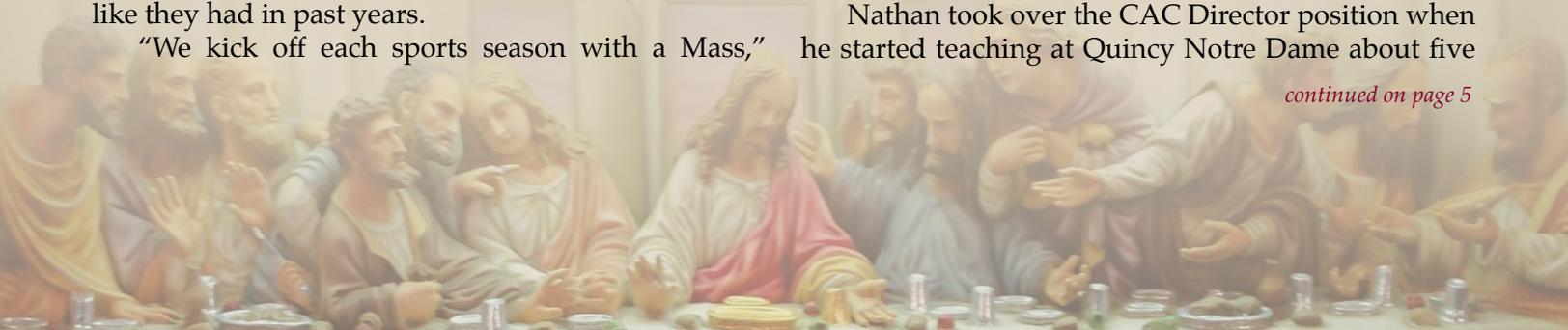
Catholic Athletes for Christ students exchange the sign of peace at the fall season kickoff Mass at St. Francis.

Nathan says. “Fall season Mass is at St. Francis, winter season is at Blessed Sacrament and spring season is at St. Anthony’s. Everyone is welcome at these Masses.”

The group also raises funds in the spring with a “Flapjack Fundraiser.” Last year, they also went to a Cardinals baseball game.

Nathan took over the CAC Director position when he started teaching at Quincy Notre Dame about five

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Praying Together, Staying Together: The Importance of Family Prayer

“The family that prays together stays together.” This famous slogan was coined in 1947 by writer Al Scalpone, and has been frequently referenced ever since. The phrase pinpoints the true power of prayer, and the importance of making family prayer a consistent practice in our lives.

As Christian disciples, we are striving to follow Jesus — to grow in our love of Him and to serve Him through the use of our time, talent and treasure. If we desire to follow in His footsteps, we must first begin by getting to know Him. Spending time with the Lord in prayer forms a foundation on which we can build our lives as Christian disciples, much in the same way that spending time with a girlfriend or boyfriend forms the foundation of a strong relationship.

The Christian family is the first place where children learn to pray. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls the family unit “*Ecclesia domestica*,” or “the Domestic Church” (1656). Thus, parents have a responsibility to set an example by taking time for personal prayer every day, and making family prayer a regular practice. This not only sets an example for the children, but also provides them with a faith-filled foundation and brings them closer to the Lord — forming them as grateful stewards of their time.

There are many ways in which a family can pray together. One of the most important times for prayer is before meals, where we thank God for His blessings, and for the food on our family table. Families may also share in the formal prayers of the Church, or perhaps pray a Rosary together every night. We can also thank the Lord aloud, asking Him to answer our prayers and offering Him our daily petitions. One often-suggested method of family prayer is ACTS, where we offer Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Supplication. Families may also go to their church and kneel together before the Blessed Sacrament, offering prayers in Christ’s Presence.

These are just several of the many opportunities

for families to pray together. Of course, prayer will be influenced by each family’s dynamics and personalities. But no matter how we pray, it is important that we make the time to do so. This will deepen the family’s relationship with the Lord, our commitment as His disciples will be stronger, and we may continually renew and foster our families’ bonds.

Prayer Of Parents:

God, our Father, I thank You for the gift of my children and for the privilege and responsibility of being a parent, for this is my way of holiness.

May I regard each of my children as a sacred pledge of Your love and a beautiful sign of Your confidence in me. Help me to pass on to my children our greatest treasures — faith in Your truths, hope in Your goodness, love in Your name for all.

I entrust my children to Your loving care. Banish from our home any bitterness or lack of forgiveness. Let us have time, deep concern, and a sense of sacrifice for one another.

Teach us never to be ashamed that we are, in name and in fact, a Catholic family striving to live in the way of Jesus, Who is head of our home.

Give us Your Holy Spirit to unite us throughout this life and let the circle of our family be unbroken in the Kingdom of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Getting Our *Priorities* in Order

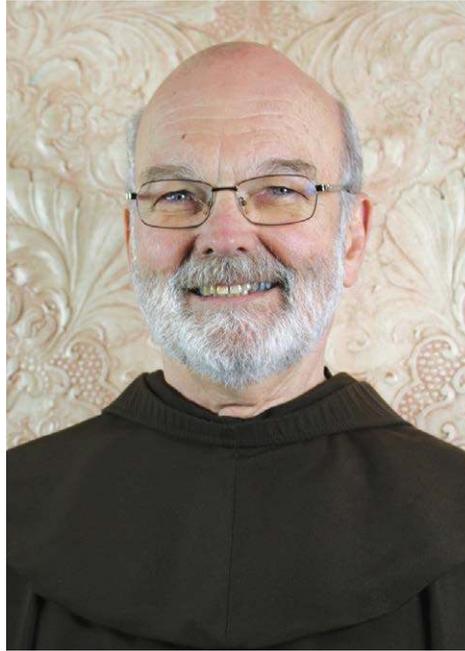
Dear Parishioners,

I know that many people are not on a school year calendar. But for many of us, September brings a livelier rhythm to our schedules. Life just seems to get busier after Labor Day. Therefore, this month seems to be a good time to think about our priorities and to pray for God's guidance.

It has been said that the truly important is often pushed aside by the merely urgent. So, as you review your priorities, please make sure that you include what's really important!

First of all, be sure to include time for God, as well as for job, family and recreation. Of prime importance, make sure that Mass on Sundays is a top priority — that's the most important event of the week. In addition, reserve some time for personal Scripture study, as well as prayer with your family or a prayer group — then incorporate that into your daily and weekly routine.

There are many forces pulling at us as we decide where to use our talents. For most of us, our jobs claim the lion's share of our efforts and sometimes threaten to engulf our whole lives. We also have responsibilities to our families and legitimate calls for service to the community — that obviously includes the Church. We have lots of areas for service right here in our own parish — religious education, music, serving as an usher, or any one of the many ministries in which you may use



your talents to grow closer to God.

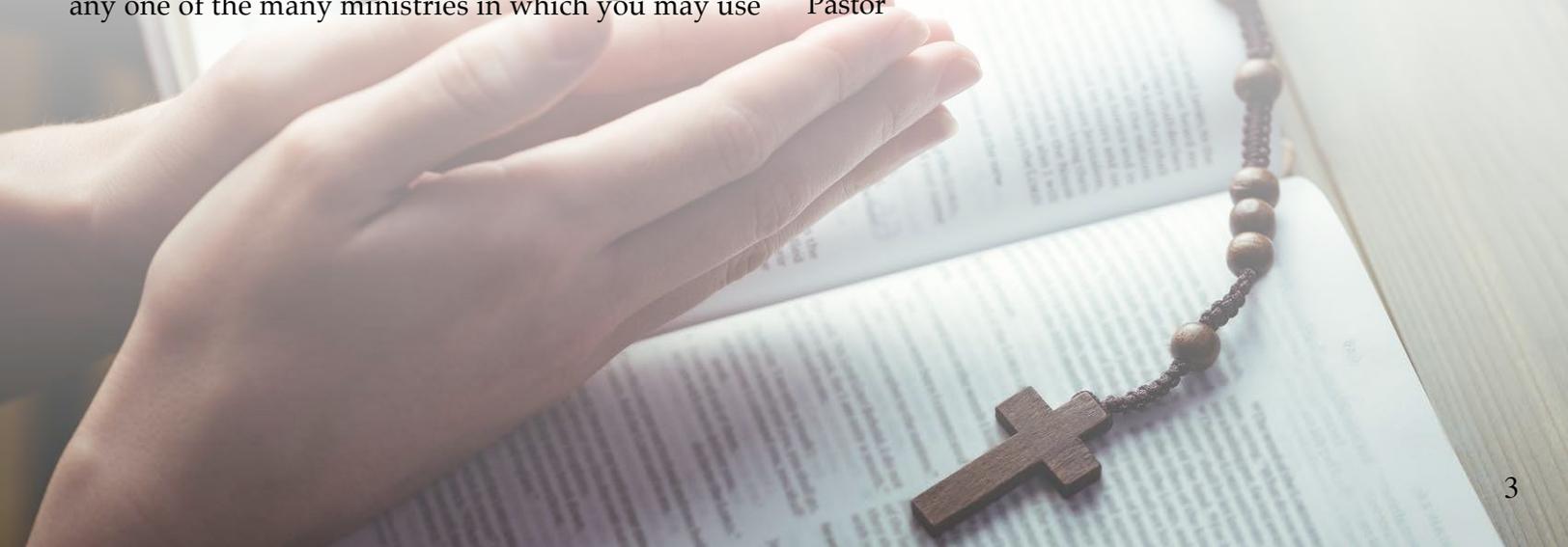
Finally, we have to set priorities for using our money. As Christians, we are responsible to God for the use of the financial resources He has entrusted to us — no matter if it's a lot or a little — and to make a return to God in thanksgiving. In this regard, Scripture gives us the tithe as a goal. Working toward a tithe may mean some changes in your priorities, but I can tell you from personal experience that those who have adopted this as their standard of giving experience a joy rooted in the spiritual growth that occurs as we continually live out the "three Ts" of stewardship — time, talent and treasure.

Priorities are certainly a part of life. As you review your own priorities, especially now that many regular routines are starting up again, ask yourself how you will use the time, talent and treasure entrusted to you by God.

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



Required Training Offers Important Insights

Child abuse — child sexual abuse, in particular — sadly, is too often in the news. We read and hear these accounts and ask, “What can be done to stop this? How can I help?”

Here at St. Francis Solanus Parish, the answer is the training from Protecting God’s Children/VIRTUS program that is offered every three weeks, or more often if needed.

Nancy Venegoni, Linda Rull and Jan Zeidler, all former educators, are certified facilitators for the three-hour training session that is required in our parish for anyone 18 years of age or older who will be working in any capacity with children. The requirement comes from the Diocese of Springfield.

“Our diocese chose the program to help people understand what child abuse looks like, how one can determine if something might be occurring, and what to do to help the victim,” Nancy says.

“It is training on sexual abuse, and we require it of all parish employees, all ministry leaders, all volunteers, teachers, school staff, and so on,” Linda says.

The teaching behind the training is grounded in Matthew 18:1-5 — “At that time the disciples approached Jesus and said, ‘Who is the greatest in



the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, ‘Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me.’”

The training is made up of two DVDs, *A Time to Protect God’s Children* and *A Plan to Protect God’s Children*. The DVDs are updated to keep them relevant.

“The DVDs are very effective,” Linda says. “They show actual victims, those who’ve been abused,

and includes interviews with some of the abusers, sexual predators, who give insights on how they were able to go about it.”

“Having been an educator, I can tell you, people are frightened of reporting [abuse],” Nancy says. “I make it clear, that’s the most important thing you can do for a child. This is very relevant for today. Sexual predators are there online and they even have websites that teach them how and when to prey on their victims. People who have gone through the training say it’s good information for any adult to be aware of.”

The training explains how

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“There’s a lot we don’t hear about. It may be in our parish, and it may be something in their personal life. The good thing is we have people involved in this, taking classes all the way from those 18 to senior citizens. The broader perspective is that it is parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, older teens getting that long-term awareness.”

— Nancy Venegoni

g on Sexual Abuse ights and Awareness

predators can access children, and points out that the time when predators are most active online is in the hours right after school. The lessons speak to adults becoming savvy to behaviors, as well as training one's own children to be savvy.

In addition to receiving the VIRTUS training, anyone applying to serve in any capacity with children in the parish must first fill out a form that gives the parish permission to conduct a background check. If there is a "red flag," that is noted and all background checks are recorded in the diocesan office. The diocese also has records of who has taken the training.

While Nancy, Linda and Jan are the trainers here at St. Francis, anyone who can't attend the training here may go to other parishes in the diocese. Conversely, Nancy, Linda and Jan train persons who drive here from other parishes.

The results of the program have been that our trainers know that those they trained have left the sessions with

personal and professional awareness of the traits of sexual abuse. In turn, the training can provide essential help should a unexpected and difficult situation come to pass.

"There's a lot we don't hear about," Nancy says. "It may be in our parish, and it may be something in their personal life. The good thing is we have people involved in this, taking classes all the way from those 18 to senior citizens. The broader perspective is that it is parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, older teens getting that long-term awareness."

If you would like more information about this program, please call the parish office at 217-222-2898.

Catholic Athletes for Christ *continued from front cover*

years ago. He enjoys getting to work with the CAC students after they leave his classes in ninth grade.

"Just like being a coach, it's a great way to get to know your students, besides just being students," he says. "It's also very rewarding to see their growth and maturity into young adults."

Nathan recommends all athletes participate, as CAC is a way to learn more about how faith plays into sports.

"I know a lot of students, especially at the high school age, are timid about their faith and maybe not interested in some of the other religious programs that we offer at Quincy Notre Dame," Nathan says. "CAC is more laid back. We get to talk about sports, and if we can get you thinking about your faith, all the better."



Catholic Athletes for Christ students pray during the fall season kickoff Mass at St. Francis.

To learn more about the Quincy Catholic Athletes for Christ, you can like, follow or message the group on Facebook.

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT: *Laboring for the Kingdom of God*

Sept. 3 is the feast day of St. Gregory the Great. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Feast of St. Gregory also falls around the time when Americans make our national observance of Labor Day. While a shining example of Christian virtue, St. Gregory the Great also sheds light on the fuller value and purpose of labor and human work.

St. Gregory was born in Rome around 540 to a wealthy family, with several family members noted for holiness of life. He was raised and educated during times of great trial, both for the Church in general, and for Rome, a city besieged by several waves of barbarians.

Gregory was made prefect of Rome at a young age. He struggled with the call to give all in following Christ, but finally chose a monastic life, donating his estates to the founding of monasteries. His three years of monastic seclusion were some of the most enjoyable of his life.

Once Gregory was ordained as a deacon, he was sent to the Court of Byzantium as ambassador, where he struggled greatly with the court's worldly atmosphere. Having provided, with some difficulty, six years of faithful service to the court, he was joyfully recalled to Rome. Gregory was appointed abbot of St. Andrew's Monastery, which under his leadership, produced many monks who were later renowned for holiness of life. He was later chosen to be a missionary to England. This demonstrates how highly regarded Gregory must have been by this time, for after he was sent away, an uprising immediately arose among the populace of Rome. A team of messengers was then dispatched to bring him back, which they successfully did.

The death of Pope Pelagius II in 590 led to Gregory being immediately chosen by the clergy and people of Rome as the pope's successor. Some sources suggest that Gregory was dragged from his bed, while others maintain that he fled from the city and hid for three days.

Despite his initial unwillingness to accept the burden of the papacy, Gregory spent the final 14 years of his life devoting all of his energy towards his work as pope.

Gregory's life produced fruit that would continue to mature for centuries to come — guidance for the care of souls, reformation of the liturgy, sending missionaries to spread faith abroad, and much more. He is arguably one of the greatest foundational supports of medieval Europe, and thus, of our own society today.



Americans celebrate Labor Day, the yearly tribute given to our country's workers. The day's purpose is to remind us of the real social and economic contributions made through the early Labor Movement, up to workers in the present day.

As Catholics, we can also celebrate Labor Day with a deeper Christian understanding of its purpose.

Jesus spoke often about "the Kingdom of God," and He taught us that it is already here — however, not in its perfect, final form. Christians receive the Kingdom at baptism, and they also build it inside themselves through the varied ways of working to grow in personal holiness. They also work to build the kingdom, just as Gregory did, by offering Christ-like service in all areas of their lives. Thus, in our own Christian lives, we continue the same work that St. Gregory performed, and to which all of us are called, in the building of the Kingdom of God.

Brevity is the Soul of the Outdoor Church Sign Ministry

The Outdoor Church Sign Ministry is a one-person ministry of sorts and Robert (Bob) Haas has been that one person since October 2006. He makes sure our lighted sign at 18th and College streets is accurate with up-to-date information.

In brief, he has to be brief!

Bob took over the ministry work when Paul Schullian, the previous manager, was moving away.

"He asked me if I'd take it over," Bob says. "He showed me how to do it, and I've been doing it ever since then."

Bob changes up the signs for the weekend Masses usually on Friday or Saturday, depending on the Scripture readings for Sunday.

The sign is an older type, four-by-eight feet with four and a half-inch clip-on aluminum characters. There are five lines for the messages.

"Sometimes I leave up the posting for Rosary for Peace on one line and a line for our two local Catholic FM radio repeaters, and then special events," he says. "I've learned to be really short and brief. I'll post our picnic, Christmas Masses, or a special mission, Catholic Schools Week, Mother's and Father's Days."

If he tries to crowd too much in the sign, passersby cannot read it.

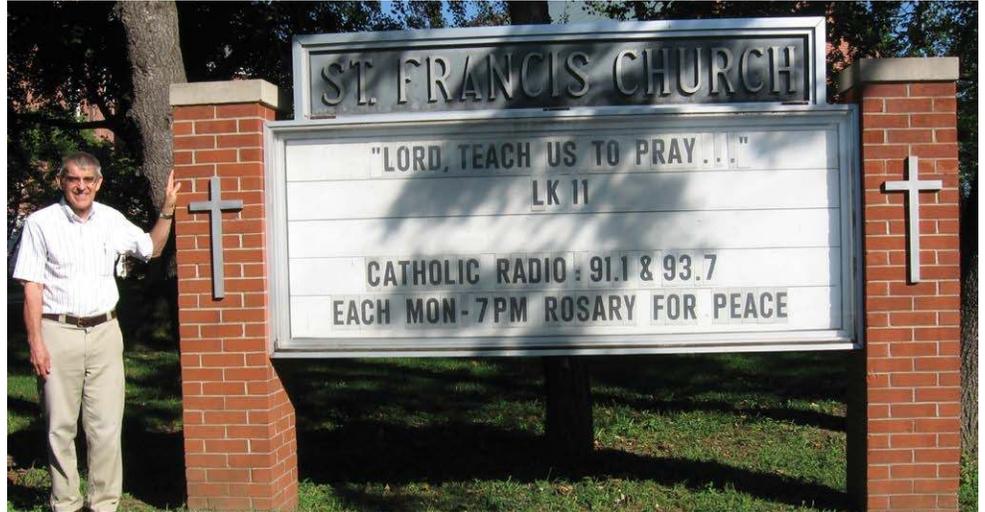
"It takes three seconds to be able to read when people drive by," Bob says. "And they can't drive by again."

There was discussion among the Parish Council about erecting an electric digital sign with changing messages. But when it was determined that such a sign could be a distraction for drivers moving through the school zone nearby, that idea was dropped in favor of the "low-tech" version.

Bob keeps a notebook that enables him to keep track of what Scripture verses he has posted, or other information. If he will be out of town when the change is due, he will change it earlier.

"I don't want to repeat the messages," he says.

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Robert (Bob) Haas has been keeping our church sign current with events at St. Francis Solanus since 2006.



Bob Haas places the aluminum letters and numbers in the five lines provided in the church sign. He found he has to be brief and concise in his wording.

St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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



Outdoor Church Sign Ministry *continued from page 7*

"I want something pertinent and fresh each week. I try to keep it that way."

The very fact that he reads through the Gospels has brought him to knowing more about our faith as he strengthens his own.

"I use *The Word Among Us* a lot of times," Bob says. "I try to study the Scriptures for a good phrase. The bulletin cover also has a reflection. I think about and pray about it to find a way to keep it short. Sometimes the first line of Scripture says enough — 'Lord,

teach us to pray.'"

Each message change takes about 15 minutes, depending on the wind speed and direction. Higher winds tend to blow the letters around. Winter is also a challenge, when the locks on the sign freeze — but Bob carries some WD-40 to thaw them out.

Although there is no one in training right now to take over, when Bob is ready to step down, he'll make sure someone is prepared.

"When I can't do it, I'll pass it on," he says.

"I use The Word Among Us a lot of times. I try to study the Scriptures for a good phrase. The bulletin cover also has a reflection. I think about and pray about it to find a way to keep it short. Sometimes the first line of Scripture says enough — 'Lord, teach us to pray.'" — Robert (Bob) Haas

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.