

Saint Francis Solanus



NOVEMBER 2016

Girls Changing the World

According to Jill Steinkamp, Girl Scouts is a “truly empowering group experience.”

“Through service and through leadership roles, Girl Scouts helps build the girls up to who they want to become, and who we want them to become,” she says. “This is building them for their future.”

Jill, who has been involved with the Girl Scouts at St. Francis Solanus School for the past five years, currently serves as a troop leader, and also works to coordinate the school-wide troop events. These events are an opportunity for all Girl Scouts at St. Francis Solanus, from kindergarten through eighth grade, to learn, serve and have fun together, in addition to their individual troop activities.

There is one Girl Scout troop for each grade at St. Francis Solanus, and each troop focuses on community building, as well as learning skills and earning badges, including some badges related to learning about and practicing the faith. The troops meet everywhere from weekly to monthly, depending on the individual troops’ needs.

Jill’s role is bringing all the troops together, to build a sense of unity among all the troops at the school.

“[School-wide Girl Scout events] bring them together and makes them a close-knit community within their Girl Scout troop and within all of the troops at St. Francis Solanus, so we feel like one larger family,” Jill says. “I think for the younger girls to see the older girls serving and being role models is to realize, ‘This



The Girl Scouts designed and planted a garden at Washington School.

could be me someday and there are many opportunities for me.’ For older girls, realizing they are the role models for younger people – to realize, ‘These people are looking up to me, I need to show them through my actions, I need to make sure I’m being the best leader and role model I can be.’”

Each year, the troops are invited to come together on several occasions to grow in different areas. The girls make crafts to be sold at our annual Kiddie Bazaar, a chance for children to purchase gifts for their loved ones. All proceeds are used to purchase gifts for our Advent Tree. The girls also gather for a Christmas movie night, and bring cookies and cards to a local nursing home. According to Jill, it’s a valuable experience of service, and works to foster the sense of

continued on page 5

Stewardship: Hannah, the Good Steward

What should we do when our prayers are answered?

Is there anything left to do after we have sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we would probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do for

Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells us to “go and do likewise.” That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That is the definition of stewardship!

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most

poignant examples of stewardship in the entire Bible. The first chapter teaches us of an unhappy, barren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah’s elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart’s desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow, as Hannah kept her promise to God by taking Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The Book of Samuel tells us that once Samuel became Eli’s servant, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.

Indeed, Hannah knew that Samuel was truly a gift from God – an answered prayer. Hannah’s response is that of the Good Steward – with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet, through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an entire nation. Samuel would, in time, become one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of stewardship, while the results may just be impossible to miss! However, He asks that we continue to be faithful in either case. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us – at whatever the cost, we are to “go and do likewise.”



A Letter From Our Pastor

Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Time

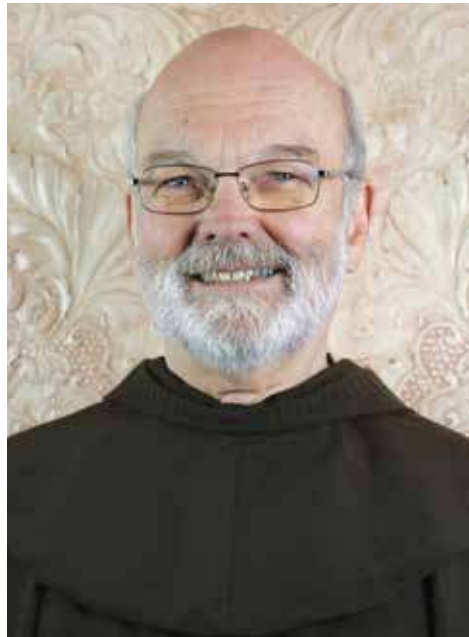
Dear Parishioners,

The next several weeks are certainly a busy time for us as Catholics, good stewards, good citizens, and faithful members of the Church and our parish. There are celebrations and commemorations both inside and outside the Church that are momentous in terms of faith, citizenship, and living as people of thanksgiving and gratitude.

We celebrate Veterans Day to honor and thank all those men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces in one capacity or another. Indicative of the importance of this day, every year at 11 a.m. Eastern, the President of the United States lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

On Sunday, Nov. 20, we culminate the Jubilee Year of Mercy on the Feast of Christ the King. In this Jubilee Year, our Holy Father Pope Francis has invited us to love, be kind, be generous, and to forgive boundlessly. How have we done? We all understand this is what we are supposed to be doing every day and every year, but this year reminds us of that, and hopefully renews us all in that reality and that hope.

We all understand that Americans celebrate a day of



Thanksgiving on Nov. 24. What more can we say about this? It is a day that was faith-based from its very beginnings, and it is an indication of how much we have to thank God for in terms of the gifts we have received — our lives, our families, our Church, our Lord and Savior — everything we are and everything we have.

No sooner are Thanksgiving Day celebrations concluded, than we begin that glorious season called Advent on Sunday, Nov. 27. This prepares us for and leads to Christmas. Indeed, this is both a busy and extraordinary time of year! There is, of course,

much more on which we could focus and about which we could think, meditate and pray, but that is more than enough for us to consider and absorb.

From a stewardship perspective, I would like you to not only participate and focus on all the particular things that are about to happen, but also on one of our special gifts — the gift of time. The gift of time, which we all receive from God in equal amount, is precious because it is a non-renewable resource. Although some of our time is committed because of family responsibilities, work responsibilities or simply personal needs, we have an element of freewill with how we spend a certain amount of it. We need to spend some of that time in prayer, in thanksgiving, in worship, and in works of mercy and ministry. Our time is perhaps more precious than any material gifts we receive from the Lord. How are we doing with that gift?

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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

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

Opening Our Hearts to Je



The Schlipman family

For parishioners Dave and Colleen Schlipman, Christ's words from Revelation 3:20 – "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" – have remained an important reminder of what the faith journey is all about; namely, opening our hearts to God each and every day.

"They've always been a good reminder for me that He is always there waiting," Colleen says. "We just have to take that first step and open the door."

Both born and raised in faith-filled, Catholic families, Dave and Colleen were privileged to grow up in environments that emphasized the importance of faith. As children, the Catholic faith was just part of who they were. Then, as a teenager, Colleen's faith became even more prevalent through her experience on a Teens Encounter Christ, or TEC, retreat.

"It was really there that I grasped that Jesus is our friend, and that I truly felt His presence on a deeper, more personal level," Colleen says. "Thankfully, I had received a good foundation growing up through my parents and parochial school, but looking back that was a kind of pivotal moment in my faith journey."

Strengthened by this encounter, Colleen was able to open her heart to Christ in a profound way, allowing

her to remain steadfast amidst the various pressures and temptations faced by young adults in modern-day society. This in turn allowed her to later evangelize to Dave, who – despite his good foundation – had fallen away from the faith during his college years.

The couple eventually married here at Colleen's home parish, where they have remained active parishioners ever since. Together, they have committed to put Christ at the center of their family life, striving to open their hearts anew each day.

"I know what it is like to not put God first and how terrible it is," Dave says. "When you start truly putting Him first, everything else falls in order. It's not that I do this every day, because I'm imperfect just like everyone else. It's a continuous struggle, but I'm called to keep on striving. To me, that's where the community ties in, because we are all sinners and we are called to help one another achieve holiness."

Describing stewardship as "giving of ourselves," Colleen and Dave have worked to give their time, talent, and treasure in a proper order. First, through setting aside individual prayer time with God; second, by prioritizing their marriage; thirdly, through their relationship with their children; and lastly, through their service to God's Church.

Jesus: A Continuous Journey

"Stewardship means mostly giving of ourselves to God, each other, our children, and our parish," Colleen says. "I don't feel like we do a ton here at St. Francis Solanus – there are many people who do so much more than us. But it is nice to be able to share my time, talent, and treasures with others the ways I can."

In Colleen's case, this has taken the form of singing regularly with the choir and continuing her involvement with the TEC program, working to help other young people encounter Christ like she did all those years ago.

"Helping with the TEC ministry has become just a part of who I am," Colleen says. "I also want to make sure it is still around when my children are that age, helping them encounter Christ just like it did for me."

As a working father, stewardship for Dave has taken the form more of supporting his wife in her ministries and working to grow in his role of spiritual head to his family.

"It has also always been very important to me that our children grow up surrounded by their faith – learning through our example to put Jesus first," Dave says. "If they grow up seeing how important the faith is to us, than hopefully someday they will follow that example."

St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, "Love begins at home – and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put into that action." By continually striving to open their hearts to Jesus, the Schlipman family continues to be that example of love in action to each other and to our parish family.

Girls Changing the World *continued from front cover*

stewardship in the Girl Scouts.

"As far as kids, they don't have a lot of treasure, but we have quite a bit of talent, and if we use our talent and our time, we can serve in many ways," she says. "So, even if they don't have the money, there's other ways they can serve and be a part of our church community and school. Through service, that's the way we're able to help, and do the most good and be the hands and feet of Jesus."

The troops also come together for various other social, service and learning opportunities throughout the year, and, in March, gather for Girl Scout Sunday. The girls join other troops for Mass and serve in many aspects of the liturgy, from music to the readings.

"When we have opportunities to have Mass together, we are able to be a larger family," Jill says.



"We can all come together and enjoy it as one family."

So why does Jill, a busy mother of six, make Girl Scouts such a priority?

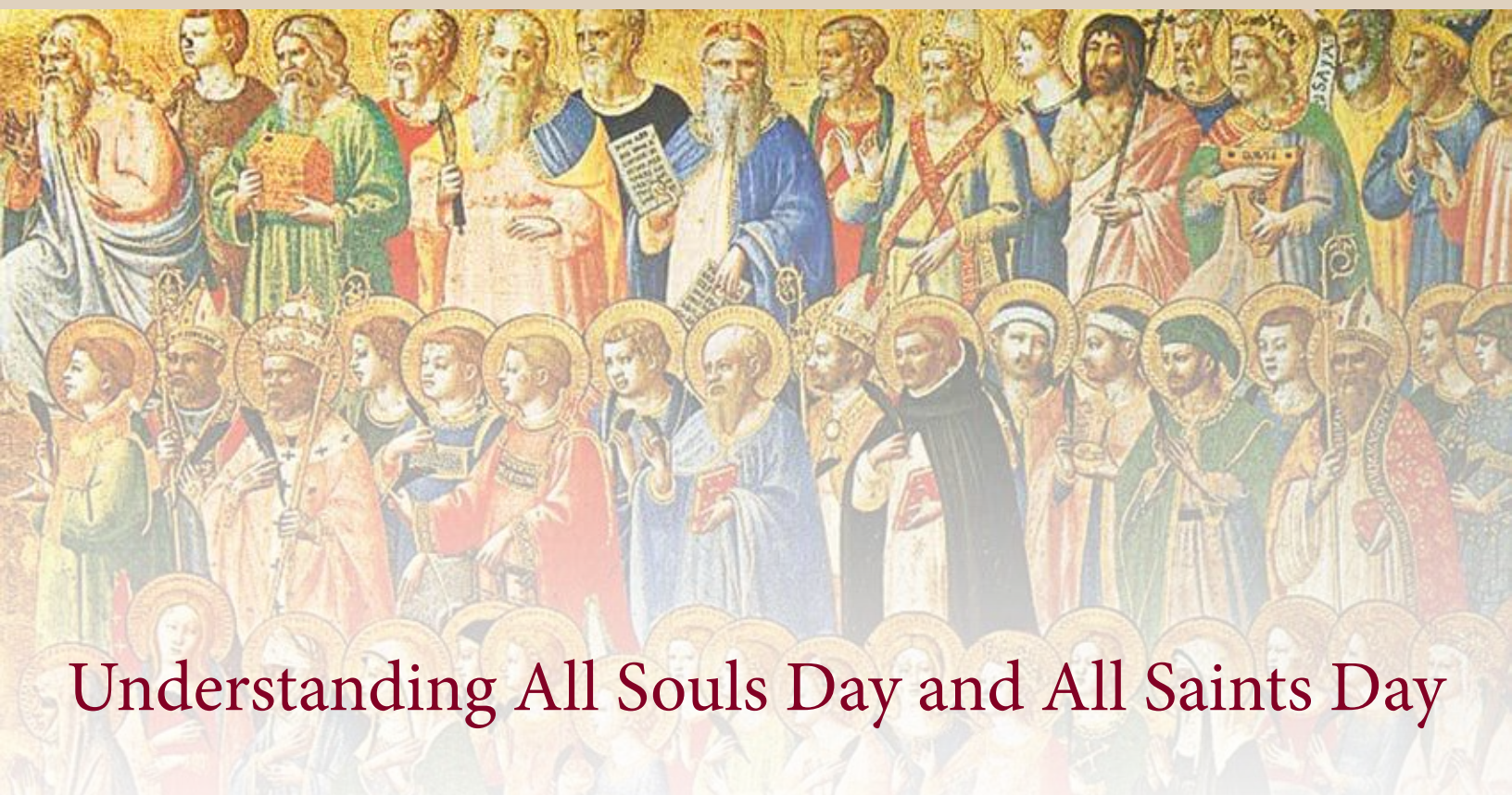
"It's giving them friendships and social skills to go out past our school, in high school or even college, to be able to go and make friends and feel comfortable and confident to make friends," Jill says.

She encourages other families to consider it for their daughters.

"I know it's hard to pick and choose what's important," Jill says. "But this is valuable and it's worth making time for."

"This is something that can be for everyone," she adds. "Within [Girl Scouts] we have girls who are so different, and it's something everybody can do – you don't have to be musically inclined or sports inclined, it's good for everybody."

For more information on how to become involved with Girl Scouts, please contact the school office at 217-222-4077.



Understanding All Souls Day and All Saints Day

All Souls Day and All Saints Day are two important days on our Catholic calendar, and both illustrate foundational elements of our faith.

On Nov. 1, as we honor the saints, we also honor God with our whole heart and soul. We need the example of the saints, who have carried Christ's cross before us, just as a newborn child needs the help and wisdom of its mother.

The saints have carried us inestimably far along the path of salvation. Many Catholics may never gain eternal life without the graces won by their red and white martyrdoms. Let us pay our saints due honor by decorating our houses and dressing up to celebrate their presence among us. Life is too short to ignore our most loyal friends!

On Nov. 2, All Souls Day, Catholics traditionally visit cemeteries to attend a solemn memorial Mass, arrange beautiful flowers on a loved one's grave, or pray the Holy Rosary for poor souls in purgatory.

Some of us may wonder, "What is purgatory? Why do we honor the dead and pray for them, anyway?"

"The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different than the punishment of the damned," (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1031). The Church formulated her doctrine on purgatory at the Councils of Florence and Trent, and in reference to Scriptural texts that speak of a "cleansing fire," such as 1 Cor 3:15 and 1 Peter 1:7.

Understanding that purgatory truly exists, we easily conclude that there are souls who are there right now. We then need to help these souls through this purification process – especially if they are our loved ones!

This is how the Old Testament character Judas Maccabeus felt: "Therefore (Judas) made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin," (2 Macc. 12:46).

The *Catechism* supports this clearly: "From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may obtain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead" (CCC 1032).

Let us hold the dead close to our hearts and not forget about them. They are helplessly waiting for us to have compassion on them and pray for them this All Souls Day, and every day.

Understanding that purgatory truly exists, we easily conclude that there are souls who are there right now. We then need to help these souls through this purification process – especially if they are our loved ones!

Respect and Care at Heart of Adult Funeral Mass Ministries

Whenever there is a funeral Mass at St. Francis Solanus, the men and women of our Adult Funeral Mass Ministries are there to make sure the deceased and the loved ones are respectfully cared for.

Jim Nauert, who coordinates the ministry, says that the members maintain the solemnity of the Mass and help the celebrant throughout the liturgy.

"It may be an odd way to put it, but we want it to be a 'good' experience for the family," he says. "Everything is done for the family as they experience the Mass for their loved ones."

Those who volunteer for the ministry do so willingly, knowing a funeral is something everyone must face.

"It is a day you can go to church and be with the families," he says. "And you know that someday you'll be in the same situation, and you will want someone praying for you."

Several of the members are Eucharistic Ministers who serve during the funeral Mass, although the lectors are usually from the deceased's family.

"However, if the family does not have someone to do the readings, we're there if needed to read," Jim says. "We're there to help Father do what he's supposed to be doing. Each priest is different, and we get accustomed to their wishes, so it all goes pretty smoothly."

There always is a need for ministry members.

"I'll train you to go through the Mass, and there's always two other servers with you at the funeral Mass," Jim says. "It's not a difficult thing. Most of our servers are retirees. A couple of the ladies aren't retired yet, but most are retired. But we retirees do a lot of things since we're retired, and some aren't always available at all times. There are many reasons – travel, some go south for the winter, a doctor's appointment. So, I have about 20 on my list and sometimes I'll call 15 before I get three. One must be a Eucharistic Minister – we always need one. But you don't have to be retired. And we do have funeral Masses on Saturday, so you can help if can do it only on Saturday, if you work during the week."

continued on back cover

"It may be an odd way to put it, but we want it to be a 'good' experience for the family. Everything is done for the family as they experience the Mass for their loved ones." – Jim Nauert



St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 58040
PERMIT NO. 3

Adult Funeral Mass Ministries *continued from page 7*

The ministry members serve only during the Masses at church. The group no longer goes to the cemetery for the interment.

"We must bury our dead, and each dead person needs to be buried properly and with honor," Jim says.

The ministry members all make sure they are dressed properly for the Mass.

"We try to wear our 'Sunday best' for the funeral," he says. "You wear your best to look very presentable for the family of the deceased person."

Jim notes that St. Francis Solanus has between 50 to 60 funerals a year, meaning that ministry members are asked to serve at between five or six Masses during the year.

"That takes 10 hours of your time in a whole year," he says. "It's not something each week."

If you are interested in joining the Adult Funeral Mass Ministries, please contact the church office at 217-222-2898, and Jim Nauert will be notified.

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.