

Saint Francis Solanus



OCTOBER 2016

Understanding God's Plan, Even in Difficult Times

For Kim Knotts and her husband, Jason, having an understanding of God's plan for their lives was difficult. And looking back on their generosity in service, it might seem surprising that there was also hardship – struggles, doubt and even anger.

"We were never able to have children and there was a lot of pain and angst that came with that, and trying to figure out what are we supposed to do with our lives if we're a married couple who doesn't have children," Kim says. "I felt like, if I wasn't even good enough [to be a mother], what was I supposed to be?"

"You always keep it in the back of your mind that He's got a plan," Jason adds. "But it was really hard – it still can be."

It was keeping this plan – God's plan – in mind that brought Kim to an important realization.

"At some point, I realized being given the gift of children isn't a right – it's a privilege and gift from God," she says. "I tried as hard as I could to always keep the conversation going with God."

And that conversation was certainly rooted in the faith. Raised in a Catholic family, Kim became involved with the Teens Encounter Christ, or TEC, retreat ministry in high school.



Kim and Jason Knotts enjoy serving together.

Jason, who wasn't raised Catholic, stopped attending church in high school but was drawn to the faith when he met Kim. Between a love for Kim and music, Jason converted to Catholicism in January 2014 and began using his musical talents to serve at St. Francis as well as local youth ministry events.

Kim now serves as the coordinator for Great River TEC, which hosts retreats for middle and high school students in the local area. Kim also volunteers with the Hands and Feet of Christ, or HAFOC, youth ministry program, which serves the teens of Quincy Notre Dame. Jason plays guitar at the 11 a.m. Mass at St. Francis and also helps with music at TEC, HAFOC youth group and other youth ministry events.

Through their openness to the Lord, amidst their suffering, Kim and Jason came to realize that although God's plan was certainly not what they expected, there most certainly was a plan.

"About five or six years ago, it sort of hit me that with not having kids, we're *available*," Kim says. "That helps us to be able to minister to the kids and have a big part of what's going on with TEC in our area, and go every Wednesday night [HAFOC] without having to worry about who's going to babysit our kids so we can go do

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“Be Transformed by the Sacred Liturgy”

The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery

In a limited way, the liturgy can be compared to a story or a film – upon a first reading or viewing, we might understand the basic outline of the narrative, yet through every subsequent encounter, the story further unfolds before us, becoming richer and more complex.

Often, inquisitive children teach us about how to understand a story or the Mass. As a child inquires about the priest’s green vestments, the foregrounded wreath or the presence of palm branches, we might pause to recall the symbolism undergirding the rich rituals of the liturgy.

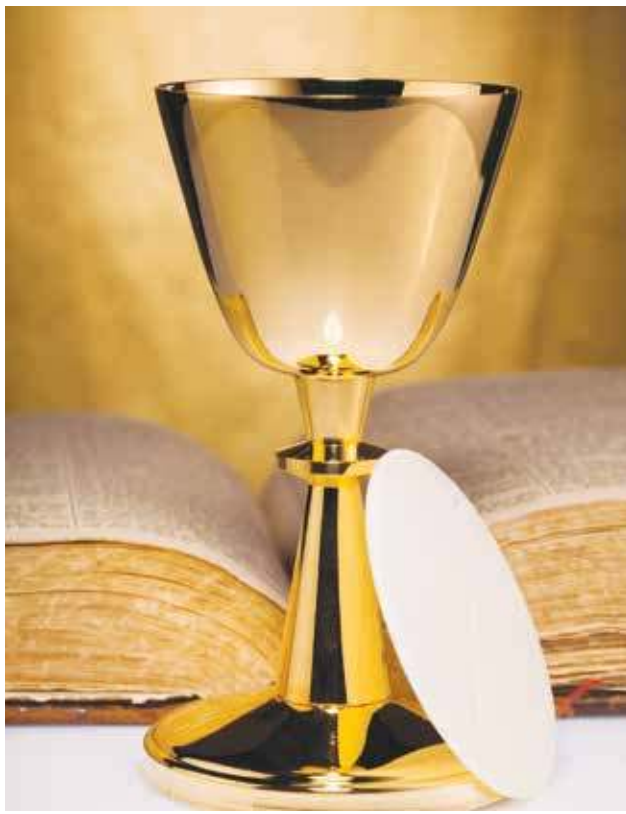
There is a sense of the sacred in the liturgy, but its rituals and ceremonies can appear as empty pantomimes when divorced from their meaning. Far from empty signs, the liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery, of Christ’s passion, death, resurrection and glorification by which He “accomplished the work of our salvation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1067).

From the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning public service or worship, liturgy in the Christian tradition refers to the communal participation of the people in the work of God, and God is always present and at work in the liturgy, acting in and with the Church through the sacraments.

Annually, the Church’s liturgical year is structured around the Paschal mystery, which we observe every Sunday. We begin each year with a season of anticipating Christ’s birth, and following a celebration of Christ’s Incarnation, we gradually enter a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum, for His passion, death and Resurrection. The year closes with a period of ordinary time – a time to grow in our faith and in living out the Gospel.

Daily, the Liturgy of the Hours unifies the Church Militant in prayers said by the clergy and increasingly by the laity. As the liturgical calendar structures our year, the Liturgy of the Hours structures our day, offering us an opportunity to consecrate each present moment to Christ.

Ultimately, the liturgical life of the Church “revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments” (CCC 1113), for we receive God’s grace to fortify us in our spiritual lives and as His disciples through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Mass.



The Mass nurtures us spiritually, inviting us to reflect on the Paschal mystery and to lift our hearts to God as individuals and a community through spoken and sung prayer.

The Mass moves us corporally, drawing us to sit as we listen to the Word, to stand as we unanimously profess our faith, and to kneel as the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass inspires us apostolically, sending us out to proclaim the Gospel and to share Christ with our brothers and sisters.

Though the “source and center” of all prayer, the liturgy and a sense of the sacred has, in some ways, become marginalized in the American Church. Once robust parishes are seeking to rebuild, but they frequently overlook the

connection between the empty pews and the decentralization of the liturgy, which was underscored by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

“I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is, to a large extent, due to the disintegration of the liturgy,” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his autobiography *Milestones*.

Something in the simplicity of the child’s experience of the liturgy teaches us to return to what we might call the basics of the faith – meaning a love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the rituals of the Church. Only through the liturgy are we nurtured on our stewardship journey and inspired to proclaim the Gospel.

As Archbishop Alexander Sample from the Diocese of Portland, Ore., writes, “If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture.”

A Letter From Our Pastor

Pray, Smile, and Make the World a Better Place

Dear Parishioners,

We often in the Church speak of “new beginnings.” Those two words can have almost endless meanings to us and to how we live our lives. Now that the fall season is in full swing, even though we tend to think more of spring as being a “new beginning,” now is equally so. Think of all the things in our lives and in those of our families that have begun or begun again in the past several weeks.

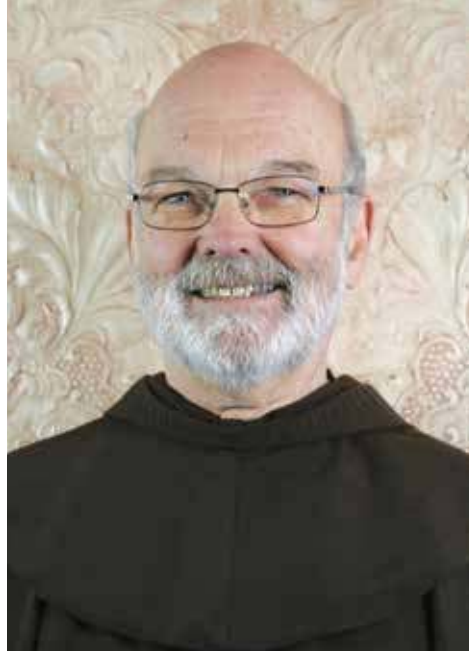
Two thoughts come to me as I ponder the significance of this time of year. It seems that there is never a time of year when starting over and renewing are not appropriate. We speak often of prayer – Jesus certainly provides for us both an example and encouragement to have rich prayer lives. Now would be a great time for a personal spiritual renewal, both for us individually and for our families, if appropriate.

There are prayer groups and spiritual studies beginning and ongoing at our parish. You might consider getting involved in one. No matter what you choose to do, it is always a good time to extend and formalize your prayer life. Schedule more time for personal prayer. Even better, if you have a family, try to formalize the prayer lives of your family as a group. That can enrich your life so much, and often it is something that stays with children forever.

My second thought goes back to the theme often stated by Jesus to “love one another.”

Were you aware that studies done by healthcare groups have shown that people who try to be kind to others have less pain, less depression, and less stress in their lives? That is exactly what the Lord tells us will happen if we do even small things to demonstrate our love for one another.

That can begin with something as simple as a smile. Smiles certainly make others feel better, and they tend to help us, as well. Another way to show kindness is to get involved in ministries and activities. By committing ourselves to ministry and to being volunteers in a variety of ways, we are actually making the idea of being



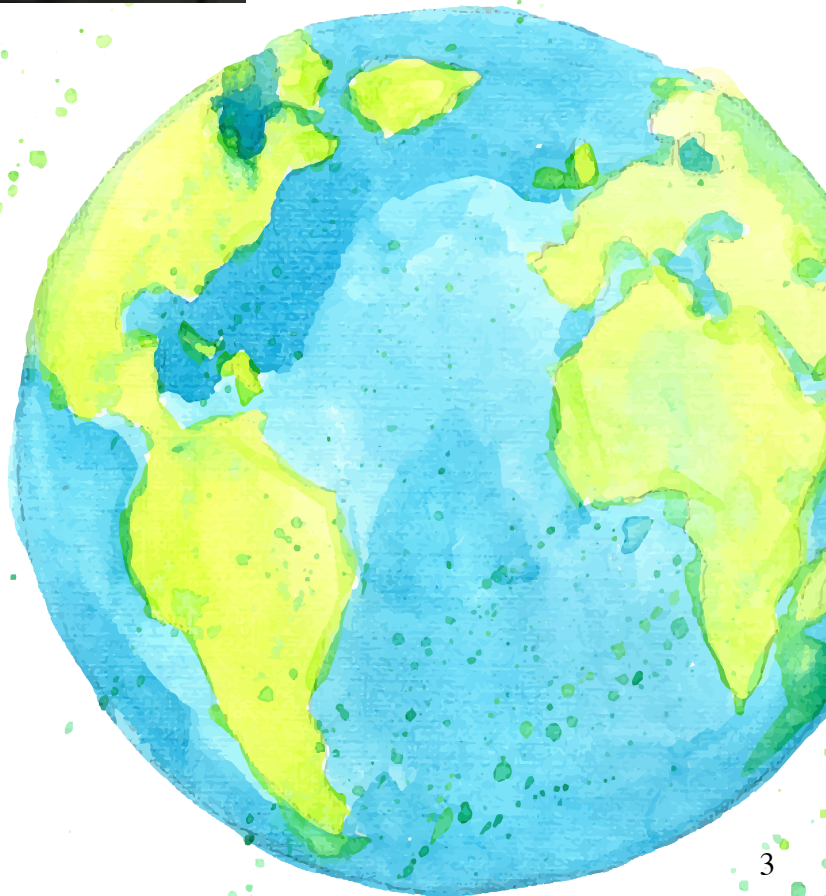
kind routine and normal. Look for ways you can do things that match and fulfill your talents and interests.

Those two thoughts, although seemingly small, can make a huge difference in our lives, not to mention the lives of those around us. First, pray more on a fixed schedule. Second, smile and be kind. It is amazing how those two aspects of our lives can be fulfilled and fulfilling.

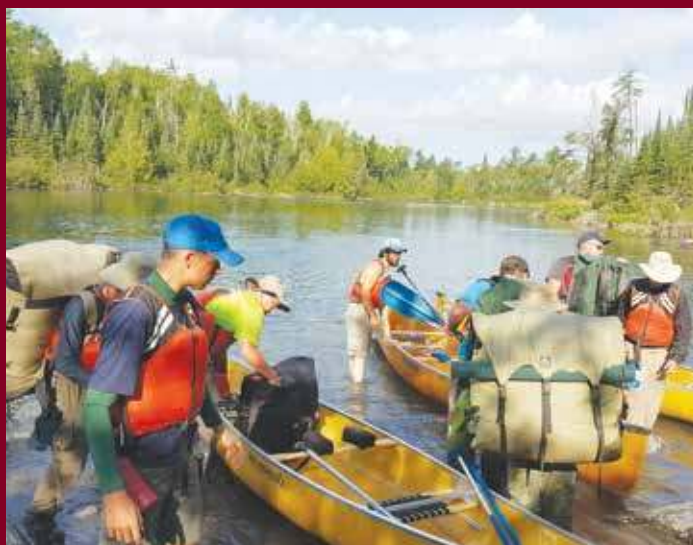
Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fr. Don, O.F.M." with a stylized flourish at the end.

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



“It Is Our St. Fr



The canoe trip in Minnesota and Canada was a thrill.



The boys meet and eat on a recent campout.



Outdoor cooking is taught to our scouts.

Within the context of the Scout Oath taken by all Boy Scouts is the key statement “...and to obey the Scout Law.” In turn, the Scout Law has 12 parts, each a concept or principle by which every Boy Scout is to live – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. In particular, “reverent” focuses on what is expected from the boy in relation to his faith.

According to the official Scout Handbook, “A Scout is reverent. A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.” Further, it declares that “As a Scout experiences the wonders of the outdoors, he experiences the work of God. We as humans need to play the role of steward rather than king – tending and caring for our world.” Living where we do, surrounded by many wonders of nature, we can appreciate this declaration.

For almost ninety years – since 1929 – Boy Scout Troop 22 has been an important part of our St. Francis Solanus community. Troop 22 currently boasts 30 boys ages 11 to 17.

“Over the past year, we have provided hundreds of hours of service to the parish and to our community,” says Ted Hea, Scoutmaster. “Our boys take their Catholic faith very seriously. For example, last year several boys received the Ad Altare Dei award.”

The Ad Altare Dei (Latin for “to the altar of God”) is a program by which Catholic Scouts develop a fully Christian way of life in the sacraments, which are primary toward spiritual growth. Scouts must be in the seventh grade or older to receive the award.

Although sponsored by the church, the troop is open to all young men of the Quincy area ages 11 through 17, regardless where they live or their church or school affiliation.

“We are a very active and involved troop,” Ted says. “My own sons are part of the troop. I have been privileged to be the leader since 2012, and prior to that I was the Cubmaster of the parish Cub Scout Pack. All programs that serve our young people are very important – all of them. However, to me Boy Scouts is unique, because the boys provide much of the leadership. We train them to be responsible, how to lead, and we build character in the process. It is more than just an outlet.”

More Than Just an Outlet"

Francis Solanus Boy Scout Troop 22

Three of the young men in the troop are approaching the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Boy Scouts, and during Ted's time as Scoutmaster, four others attained Eagle.

"We have been involved in so many service projects for the parish and for the Quincy community," he says. "People like to have the Scouts present and working because they know how careful and dedicated they are. One person at the parish said to me, 'Boy Scouts make things happen.'"

Among their activities in the past year, the troop held their annual Pancake and Sausage Breakfast for parishioners. They also organized their annual food drive for St. Vincent de Paul. Currently, one of the potential Eagles is developing a prayer site on the parish grounds with a statue of the Blessed Mother. In particular, Ted is most proud of one of their community service projects.

"There are four Catholic troops in Quincy," he says. "Each troop takes a three-month stretch at the Veterans' Home. During our months, our boys go regularly to be with the residents, to push wheelchairs, and especially on Sundays to assist them getting to church."

Of course, there are many outdoor experiences for the boys, as well. They go to summer camp every summer at Saukenauk Scout Reservation, about 25 miles north of Quincy. This past summer, they were part of a canoe trip in northern Minnesota and into Canada on the boundary waters. They have gone to National Jamborees and are always part of district and council – Mississippi Valley Council – events and activities.

"Scouting is wonderful for the boys, but it also involves their whole families," Ted says. "In addition to developing the boys, it is quite simply fun."

If you would like to learn more about Boy Scouts, or if you would more information about Troop 22, please contact Scoutmaster Ted Hea at 217-653-1178 or tedhea@yahoo.com.

Our Stewardship Renewal

Don't Forget to Return Your Commitment Card!

Your participation in our Stewardship Renewal is important!

Please be sure to return your completed Commitment Card at any Mass on the weekend of Oct. 22-23.

Saint Francis Solanus Roman Catholic Parish

Fulfilling the Mission of Mercy

2016 Commitment Card
My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

First & Last Name (Please read per family) _____
Street Address _____ State _____ ZIP _____
City _____ Telephone (Important) _____
Email _____

Please bring your completed card to Mass on Commitment Sunday, October 22/23, or mail to the parish office.

Time
Spending Time with God in Prayer

"Love your God with all your heart." To keep this commandment, we have time in prayer, talking to the Person next to you.

_____ the circle next to your commitments

_____ Mass every Sunday and Holy Day

_____ Mass at least once a week

_____ hour a week in Adoration of the Sacrament

_____ and or acquaintance to Mass

_____ with my family

_____ Catholic Faith with my children

_____ for a half hour a week

_____ at least once a week

_____ evening rosary in the

_____ at least every other month

_____ with my spouse each day

Talent
Using My Talents in Parish Ministries

"Love your neighbor as yourself." Love requires that we act in the best interests of others. How can you serve others by your involvement in parish programs?

☐ - Currently Involved ☐ - Interested in Joining

Please clearly write the first name of interested family member on the line.

Adult Formation

☐ Events with Engaged

☐ Fall Bazaar Volunteer

☐ RCIA - Sponsor

☐ RCIA - Team Member

Youth Formation

☐ Liturgy of the Word for Children - Leader

☐ PSR Catechist

☐ Vacation Bible School

☐ Adult or Teen Volunteer

Parish Life

☐ Couples Prayer Group

☐ Holy Name Society

☐ Parish Picnic Volunteer

☐ Quilters

☐ Boy Scouts

☐ Cub Scouts

☐ Girl Scouts

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Treasure
Making a Consistent Gift to the Offertory

"For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will... but first they gave themselves to the Lord" (2nd Cor. 8:3-5).

5% to Saint Francis Solanus,
1% to the diocese,
and 4% to other charities

My Gift to Saint Francis Solanus:
Please complete either a Weekly or Monthly offertory gift

Weekly gift \$ _____ x 52 = \$ _____ annually

or

Monthly gift \$ _____ x 12 = \$ _____ annually

Weekly giving based on proportion of income

At Saint Francis Solanus, each household is asked to work toward giving 5% of their income to the parish. Some families may have difficulty reaching this goal at first. If so, try increasing your weekly gift incrementally until you reach your goal.

Household Income	10%	5%	4%	1%
\$30,000	\$30	\$15	\$12	\$3
\$50,000	\$50	\$25	\$20	\$5
\$70,000	\$70	\$35	\$28	\$7
\$100,000	\$100	\$50	\$40	\$10

A Modern Model of Sainthood

St. Teresa of Calcutta

In the dark final years of the Cold War, a small woman — standing at barely five feet tall — offered a living counternarrative to the inhibiting fear undergirding our daily lives and our foreign affairs. Instead of living in fear, Mother Teresa acted out of love. Instead of withdrawing and isolating herself, she gave tirelessly to others.

Many of us harbor a personal connection to this saint, for we lived during the height of the media coverage of Mother Teresa's work and her friendships with Pope St. John Paul II and the beloved Princess Diana.

Long before she received the name Mother Teresa and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born on Aug. 26, 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia, the crossroads of the Balkans. The youngest of three children, Mother Teresa was raised predominately by her mother after her father's death, when she was about 8 years old. Dranfile (Drana) Bojaxhiu, Mother Teresa's mother, undoubtedly became a strong influence on her daughter's vocation, since Drana herself was a devout Catholic and known for her prayer life and her charity.

Agnes attended a Catholic primary school and, following the example of her mother, became active in their parish and sang in Sacred Heart's choir. As a young person, Agnes enjoyed reading the lives of the saints — while immersing herself in the stories of these holy men and women, Agnes first felt the stirring call to become a missionary.

At the age of 18, Agnes traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to join the Sisters of Loreto. She became Sr. Mary Teresa, named after St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and began to learn English. Within a few months of arriving in Ireland, she left for India.

In India, Sr. Mary Teresa lived at the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta, where she served as an educator and taught at St. Mary's School. After



her final profession, she became Mother Teresa and, a few years later, began serving as the school's principal.

On an ordinary day, Mother Teresa received an extraordinary call. While on a train ride to her annual retreat, Mother Teresa felt what she would describe as Jesus' thirst for souls. Soon, Jesus called her to found the Missionaries of Charity, an order devoted to serving the "poorest of the poor."

The order formally began on Oct. 7, 1950, and has grown from one woman tending the sick and dying in the streets of Calcutta to over 4,500 religious sisters helping the poor in over 130 countries around the world.

Additionally, the order grew to include the Missionaries of Charity Brothers, the Missionaries of Charity Fathers and the Lay Missionaries of Charity.

Though externally Mother Teresa joyfully and indefatigably served the poor for nearly 50 years, during the majority of this time, she experienced a "dark night of the soul," an extensive period of not feeling God's presence or hearing His voice. Other saints, notably St. John of the Cross, similarly experienced a dark night of the soul. Despite this spiritual struggle, Mother Teresa continued her work joyfully throughout her sickness and until her death on Sept. 5, 1997.

Pope St. John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa in 2003. Fittingly, this year, a pontiff who has underscored the importance of social justice celebrated her canonization. On Sept. 4, 2016, Pope Francis canonized Mother Teresa, the "Saint of the Gutters," at the Vatican.

St. Teresa of Calcutta offers us an example of ceaseless prayer and selfless service. She is a modern model of sainthood that we can emulate in our daily lives starting with how we serve and treat the other members of our family, our faith community and all those with whom we interact on a daily basis.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, Pray for Us!

St. Francis Solanus Church Financial Report to the Parish

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Operating Income/Expense

Income

Regular Church Support	1,001,172.43
*Other Sources of Revenue	113,918.97
Investment Income	12,875.17
Tuition Income	603,101.64
Registration Fees	57,286.72
Tech Fees	15,333.30
Annual School Fund	129,150.57
Hot Lunch Sales	66,284.32
Government Subsidies	27,639.56
Fees	451.56
Reimbursements	0.00
Insurance Claims	-1530.74

Total Income

2,025,683.50

Expenses

Payroll Expenses	1,616,399.87
Contractual Services	110,643.21
Utilities	70,376.29
Insurance –Property & Liability	37,965.00
Repairs and Maintenance	22,991.02
Equipment and Furniture	0.00
Supplies	179,098.48
Professional Fees	10,985.96
Hospitality Expense	3,201.92
Religious Education Expenses	10,296.47
Library Expense	3,637.80
*Other Expenses	194,663.31

Total Expenses

2,260,259.33

Net Loss From Operations

-234,575.83

Other Income/Expense

Other Income

Capital Campaign Collections	254,611.78
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Total Other Income

254,611.78

Other Expense

Architect	5,928.84
Parish Hall Expenditures	12,658.72
Construction Expenditures	243,009.01

Total Other Expenses

261,596.57

Net Other Income

-6,984.79

Net Loss

-241,560.62

***Other Sources of Revenue** (Funerals, Weddings, Bequests, Trusts, Rental, Farm, Fundraisers, Votive & Memorial Candles)

***Other Expenses** (Bank Fees, postage, printing, travel/auto expense, meetings/conventions, marketing/advertising, subscriptions, continuing education, dues/memberships, Pipe organ repairs, ASCA, Catholic times, interest, & tuition to other parishes, other misc. expenses)

St. Francis Solanus

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Understanding God's Plan, Even in Difficult Times

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that. In some aspects, not having our own children has let us help, so we can be there for kids in general."

Kim, who recalls a particular friend's parents becoming like "second parents" to her, hopes that she and Jason can share their love as "spiritual parents" with the young people they serve.

"I love [the teens] like they're my own kids," she says. "I just love being around them and being there to help them. Being a non-biased ear, just listening to what's going on in their life, seeing if I can help."

Kim and Jason have also found an "extended family" in the music ministry at St. Francis.

While their family may not have looked exactly how they had hoped, they found that, in each other and in their service, God did have a "family" for them.

"Sometimes you have to go into God's Word to find

the comfort that you need," Kim says. "Knowing that whatever God gives you is sufficient for whatever He wants you to do, that was very comforting."

Jason and Kim encourage other couples who may be experiencing similar struggles to continue to be open with each other, as well as the Lord, and to find ways to serve and get connected.

"Don't turn against each other – always keep your communication open with your spouse," Kim says. "You always have to be open to whatever God's plan is."

"Just open your heart to [God], He'll find a purpose for you," Jason adds. "You might not think so right off the bat, just keep your mind open and pray about it."

Thank you, Jason and Kim, for your willingness to serve and giving us an example of trusting and following God – even when His plans don't line up with your own!

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.