

Saint Francis Solanus



JUNE 2020

PASTORAL COUNCIL

HELPS OUR PARISH FULFILL ITS MISSION



Monica Hinkamper is the new Chair of our Pastoral Council.

For years, St. Francis Solanus Parish has been blessed with wonderful pastors from the Franciscans of Sacred Heart Province. Next month, as we officially transition to a diocesan parish, we look forward to welcoming our new pastor. Our faith community is thankful for all of the pastors who have done such an incredible job nurturing our spiritual growth over the years. This gratitude extends to an invaluable group that has long worked behind the scenes to help our pastors make this parish such a special place to call home — the Pastoral Council.

Monica Hinkamper has served on the St. Francis Solanus Pastoral Council for almost four years and was appointed council Chairperson at the beginning of 2020.

"It's been a really great experience — and a good learning experience — being involved with such wonderful people on the Pastoral Council," she says. "The leadership of first Fr. Don, and now Fr. Bob, has been wonderful. I enjoy the leadership role of Chair, and I see it as a great opportunity going forward."

The Pastoral Council consists of about 10 parishioners who meet monthly — September through

continued on page 2



PASTORAL COUNCIL *continued from front cover*

*Are you interested in learning more about the St. Francis Solanus Pastoral Council?
Please contact Monica Hinkamper at 217-653-6400 for more information.*

May — with the Pastor, Parochial Vicar, Director of Religious Education and School Principal. Together, the group strives to help our parish fulfill its mission.

“We’re basically called to the parish to serve as an advisory body to the Pastor on things pertaining to the spiritual life, the education and the service of one another,” Monica says. “We oversee all of the councils — the Stewardship Council, the Finance Council, and the Community Assistance. We all try to communicate and know what’s going on with them and provide for them however we can. We provide advice, leadership, direction and resources throughout the church at the behest of our Pastor and Parochial Vicar.”

As a sounding board to the Pastor, the Pastoral Council is in many ways a ministry of listening. The ability to listen with empathy is one of the strengths Monica sees in this group of parishioners, and one that allows them to effectively create and implement plans of action in the parish.

Finding ways to support a stewardship way of life among our parishioners is also a top priority for the Pastoral Council.

“We encourage others to become involved in parish life and stewardship, and foster community in the parish,” Monica says. “The Pastoral and Stewardship Councils often go hand in hand. We share information and resources with one another and work very closely together.”

As our Franciscan priests prepare to move on to other adventures, Monica is grateful for the many Franciscans that have served our faith community so well over the last 160 years. Looking ahead, she is excited about the blessings that are sure to come to St. Francis Solanus as our Pastoral Council works alongside our new priests to continue making this parish a wonderful place to worship and grow in faith!

“These [departing] priests have touched our Pastoral Council so much and have been so inspiring to me,” Monica says. “At the same time, I’m a person who truly believes in God’s plan. Going forward, we are going to continue to be blessed by new priests, and we need to envelop them and love them as we have our numerous Franciscan leaders and priests.”

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— MONICA HINKAMPER



A Letter From Our Pastor

FAREWELL, AND THANK YOU

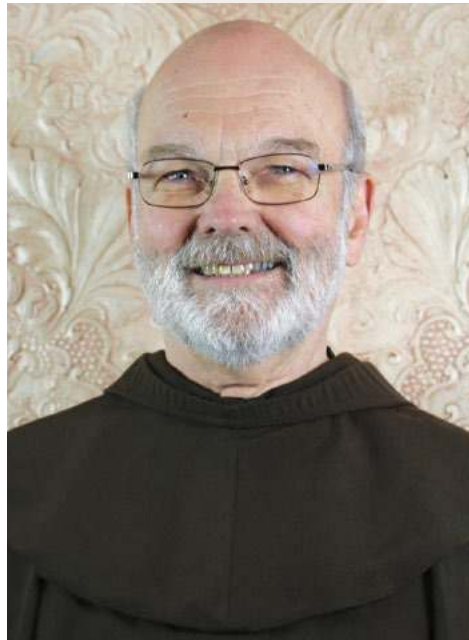
Dear Parishioners,

It is with a heavy heart that, as your pastor, I write this final letter to you. It has been an honor to serve you here at St. Francis Solanus since September 2009. And even more heavy is my heart with the dubious honor of being the last Franciscan pastor here since the founding of our parish in 1860. Truthfully, the withdrawing of the Franciscan friars from the care of this parish, due to the lack of manpower, weighs more heavily on me than my personal departure.

I hope and I believe that the Franciscan friars have served you and all the members of St. Francis very well. Years ago this was a “training ground” for the newly ordained priests of Sacred Heart Province. They spent a year here providing the opportunity for them to get their feet wet celebrating Mass, preaching homilies, visiting the sick and anointing them, blessing homes, teaching children in school, baptizing, officiating at weddings and funerals, and learning a hundred other things. They experienced both how to minister as a priest and learning how a parish operates. Which means that you, the people of St. Francis, and thousands of others before you, helped to form the Franciscans who have come through here.

Words cannot describe what this has meant for all the many friars who have called St. Francis Solanus home, and I’m sure what it has meant for you to come to know and love them. And I’m sure there have been those whom you struggled to love, and who tested your patience. God bless you for your patience and your openness in accepting their ministry, as poor as it might have been at times.

Fr. Bob and I are privileged to be the last two Franciscans to call St. Francis home, to celebrate the



sacraments with you, and to hold you in our arms (social distancing notwithstanding). Indeed, we are grateful to you for putting up with our foibles, and for offering so much of yourselves to us. Speaking for myself, I will always hold you in my heart, and I’m sure I can speak for Fr. Bob, who will do the same. I have a list of people I pray for every day, and I promise that you are on that list and will be there for the rest of my years.

I ask you to accept the two new priests who will have the care of this parish beginning on July 1. Please welcome them as warmly as you have welcomed all of us Franciscans. They have both expressed their desire to

promote the Franciscan spirit as best they can. So I believe we’re leaving you in good hands.

All I can say is thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have been for us. Let me conclude by offering you the blessing of St. Francis of Assisi:

The Lord bless you and keep you!

The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!

The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!

The Lord bless you!

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



ST. FRANCIS SOLANUS PREPARES LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH GRATEFULNESS

The atmosphere here at St. Francis Solanus is certainly a bittersweet one these days, as our parish prepares to transition its leadership from the Sacred Heart Province Franciscans to the Diocese of Springfield. Hand-in-hand with the natural sadness that accompanies the end of an era is a continued optimism for the future and abiding trust in the Lord's plans. Most of all, our parishioners are feeling a deep sense of gratitude for the hundreds of Franciscans who have shepherded our flock over the last 160 years.

German Franciscans founded St. Francis Solanus in 1860 as a result of two cultural phenomena coming together. An extended *kulturkampf*, or culture war, taking place in Germany at the time led to the persecution of the Catholic Church and the forced closures of churches, monasteries and friaries. At the same time, the German population in Illinois was on the rise, creating a need for German priests who could minister to immigrants in their native tongue. As these two circumstances converged, the Franciscans began sending their priests to

our area. In the span of one year — 1860 — the friars had established St. Francis Solanus Catholic Church, expanded and renamed St. Francis of Assisi Church in Teutopolis, and founded St. Francis Solanus College (now Quincy University).

As Fr. Don Blaeser reflects on the early days of our parish, he is astounded by the incredible foresight and optimism of our first priests.

"There was a different church built at our parish's founding, and the one we are in now was built in 1885," he says. "When this church was built, the town was near the river, and people wondered why they were building way out here 'on the prairie.' So some of the founders had a vision of the future of the city, and they were right! The other thing about their vision that amazes me is that this church seats about 820 people. I can't imagine that they needed anything like that at the time, but they were looking ahead."

Indeed, just as the city of Quincy has flourished over the last century, so, too, has St. Francis Solanus. Several

continued on page 5



S FOR LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

REAT GRATITUDE FOR THE PAST

years ago, some parishioners questioned the need for a larger parish center. And yet, just as the founders' vision for our church proved true, our recent leadership also foresaw just how much our faith community would continue to grow. Today, the parish center is bustling with activity as ministries, faith formation classes, and committee meetings bring the beautiful new gathering space to life.

As 20 Franciscan pastors and countless more Associate Pastors and friars have served at St. Francis Solanus, the spirit of community so cherished by their religious order has remained a hallmark of their leadership here.

"We Franciscans like to be close to our people," Fr. Don says. "We try to be active in the community, close to people, and have good, wholesome relationships with people. We try to live by that — we think it's what Jesus was all about. The whole purpose of the incarnation was to bring God close to us."

"We stand for justice and peace, and the integrity of creation," he adds. "The earth is sacred — it was created by God, and we need to care for it. We try to reach out to

the poor, and St. Francis Solanus has a community service ministry that reflects that. The whole idea behind friar life is to be with the people."

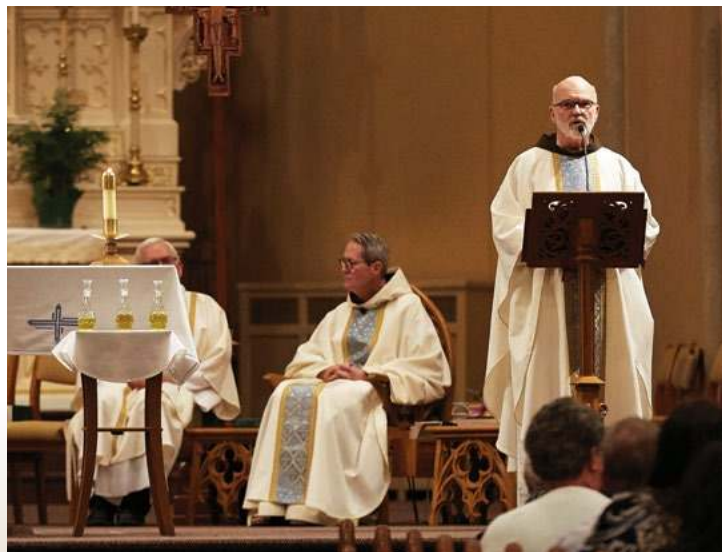
While Fr. Don is looking forward to moving closer to his family in Chicago and continuing to help parishes out on a less demanding schedule in his retirement, he will always be thankful for his 11 years at St. Francis Solanus.

"I will miss being with the people here," Fr. Don says. "I will always hold this parish and all these people in my heart. It has been wonderful. My wish for the parishioners is that they will embrace the diocesan priests the same way they have embraced us, give them a chance to do their ministry, and collaborate with them."

While our eyes turn to the future of the parish and the many exciting new opportunities to come, we also take this moment to look back at the Franciscan leadership that has nurtured an abiding faith here at St. Francis Solanus across three different centuries. For their steadfast and loving care — and the great faith they have nourished in our community — we truly thank them.

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— FR. DON BLAESER



An Update On ST. FRANCIS SOLANUS SCHOOL

St. Francis Solanus School began the 2019-20 school year by welcoming students with a beloved tradition — the Blessing of the Backpacks Prayer. As the year unfolded, the school community enjoyed participating in familiar annual events and programs such as the Trunk or Treat, Reconciliation, Winter Carnival, Catholic Schools Week, and Prayer Buddies. The new “Fire Up and Read Night” was also a huge success.

Just after students were dismissed for Spring Break on March 13, the school learned that their closure would be extended due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Faced with the uncertainty of this unprecedented crisis, faculty and staff got right to work on a new learning plan. After all, the religious theme for the school year was Philippians 4:13 — “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”

“After reality sunk in that our children were not allowed to come back to school, we then used our Spring Break to develop a plan for ways to keep our students engaged in the learning process,” says principal Lori Shepard. “Teachers

put in many, many hours developing online learning programs, putting packets together, and researching the newest and latest apps that would allow them to connect with their students in a meaningful way.”

“I am amazed and inspired by their dedication to their students and their profession,” she adds. “They never gave up, in spite of the difficult challenges they faced — nor did our students or parents. What a great team effort!”

While this school year may not have ended as planned, our faculty and staff look forward in faith to the continued blessings to come.

“Our faith stands firm,” says Ms. Shepard. “We are a family and we are stronger together. When we are allowed to return to normal and gather in groups, we will have a new appreciation for our community and our school families. We look forward to eventually coming back together as a school family in the halls of St. Francis Solanus School. We will then celebrate coming together and coming out stronger on the other side!”

ST. FRANCIS COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE STEPPING UP DURING CRISIS

Inspired by Gospel values, the St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry leads women and men to join together and grow spiritually by offering help to those in need. Services are provided to both parishioners and community members. One of the main services is providing groceries to those who are in need through the parish food pantry. Some of the other services provided to parishioners include visiting those in nursing homes, sending birthday cards to those 80 years and older, providing sympathy Mass cards when a parishioner has lost a family member in death, delivering poinsettias to parishioners who are 90 and older, providing

holiday food baskets/boxes to parishioners who are in need, and collecting bread from Panera to be shared with parishioners and food pantry recipients.

Clients are able to set up an order to be picked up at the St. Francis Parish Center on either Tuesday, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. or Thursday from 1 to 2 p.m.

St. Francis Food Pantry does still deliver to clients who are homebound, live alone and do not have transportation, or are disabled. Now that the pantry is located in the Parish Center, it is easier to pick up an order and provide fresh produce and other items to clients that may not be available when delivering an order.



SAINT FRANCIS
Community Assistance

The St. Francis Food Pantry is available to any parishioners or community members in need.

SFCA is grateful for parishioners continued generosity in keeping the pantry stocked. Call 217-430-1025 to schedule a pick-up time for your donations Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pick-up times are also on Tuesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., and on Thursdays from 1 to 2 p.m. at N. 17th St. and College Ave.

STEWARDSHIP AND FAITH DURING TOUGH TIMES

These are uncertain and frightening times. At press time of this newsletter, we are unable to come together for Mass and the sacraments, and we're wondering, "How can we be a church when we can't come to our churches to celebrate Mass?"

During this and any crisis, one thing that remains constant is the Catholic Church and the unwavering support the Church offers. Throughout history, Catholics have sustained their communities in their homes during countless seasons of persecution or hardship, and living through a modern crisis is no different.

Now, more than ever, we must remember our parish truly is a community. The physical building in which we worship and pray is not the Church. *We* are the Church.

During a crisis, prayer is more important than ever. Though we may be isolated, through prayer, we can embrace the unity of faith we all share as Catholics.

As faithful stewards, we must remember everything we have is a gift from God and, in turn, we must be grateful and offer all that we do back to Him. We may be physically distanced from others, but we still have an opportunity to spiritually unite each day. A simple prayer such as the Morning Offering — a prayer said by an individual at the start of the day in order to consecrate oneself to Christ — is a great way to unite daily with Catholics around the world and claim our homes and our daily living for Christ. What's more, as you devote more time to personal and family prayer, remember to lift up in prayer all of our civil and religious leaders



during this time, as well as our parishioners and community members.

There are other ways through which we can stay connected as a parish family. Call a friend from our parish community. Ask how they're doing, how they are living their faith during this time, and how they might need help. You can also keep in touch with each other and our pastor and parish leaders and staff on our various media platforms, including our parish website at www.stfrancissolanus.com, and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/StFrancisSolanusParish.

continued on back cover

MORNING OFFERING

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, for the salvation of souls, the reparation of sins, the reunion of all Christians, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father this month. AMEN.

St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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Stewardship and Faith During Tough Times

continued from page 7

Stewardship, at its roots, also teaches that we are not supposed to give God our leftovers. We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our first fruits — giving to God first and then using the rest for our other needs. This idea can be worrisome for many, especially during a crisis. Taking the correct steps toward good stewardship in every aspect of our lives boils down to trust and believing that God, who

takes care of all His creation, will take care of us.

Prayerfully consider continuing to give a portion of your treasure back to God and our parish by making your regular gift to the offertory, if you are able to do so. You can give at our online giving portal at www.stfrancissolanus.com/giving, or you can drop a check in the mail to the parish office. Our mailing address is:

St. Francis Solanus Parish
1721 College Avenue
Quincy, IL 62301

There will come a day, soon, when we will worship together again. Remain hopeful and pray unceasingly. As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, remember there is hope. Our God is a great God, and He will not abandon us.

Liturgy Schedule

*During these difficult times, our Mass Streaming times are
Daily at 3:00 p.m. and Sunday at 9:30 a.m.*

Masses can be streamed live on our website at www.stfrancissolanus.com