

Saint Francis Solanus



JULY 2020

The St. Francis Solanus Community Welcomes Our New Pastor, Fr. Steven Arisman!

After a springtime full of changes for St. Francis Solanus, this month marks the beginning of a new chapter for our parish as we welcome our first diocesan pastor, Fr. Steven Arisman. Fr. Arisman, who began his pastoral assignment here on July 1, is thrilled to be a part of our parish and school community!

Knowing that this summer will be a great time of change for St. Francis Solanus as it transitions from a Franciscan parish to a diocesan parish, Fr. Arisman says we are all in this together, and he greatly looks forward to serving God's people here.

"I trust in God that He knows where we're going," Fr. Arisman says. "Where He is leading us, we go hand in hand learning how to do this together. I'm thrilled about the parish — it's a beautiful church and has such a community that is well known and respected, and it has the grade school. I'm just over the moon — it's so exciting. I knew being a priest was going to be good, but it's just been better than



We welcome Fr. Steven Arisman to St. Francis Solanus.

I ever expected. It's just so spectacular. Six years — it's been a wild ride, but it's been an awesome one."

A native of Springfield, Fr. Arisman grew up the youngest of four children in an active Catholic family. For the first eight years of his life, the local Catholic community worshiped in the Catholic school gym as they built a new church. Both of his parents were greatly engaged in both school and parish activities, so both church and school felt like home from early on.

Fr. Arisman first began talking about the priesthood at a very young age. He loved to "play Mass" at home, and when his kindergarten teacher asked her students what they wanted

to be when they grew up, he didn't hesitate before telling her he would someday be a priest. Fr. Arisman's beloved childhood pastor, Msgr. Patrick Wright, further inspired his vocation.

Despite an early call to the priesthood, God's plans for Fr. Arisman would take him on many

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other adventures before his ordination day. When his initial inquiries to the office of the vocations director during his senior year of high school went unanswered, he decided to pursue a music education degree at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville while also serving in the prestigious leadership position of Boy Scout Order of the Arrow section chief. Later, a new vocations director reached out to him, and Fr. Arisman began seminarian studies in St. Louis at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. For various reasons, he decided to leave seminary the next year. He then spent two years teaching band in Catholic grade schools and another year working in a video store before accepting a clerical job at St. John's Hospital.

After three years working the night shift in the St. John's Emergency Room, Fr. Arisman received a surprising phone call that would redirect his path one more time.

"I had been at the hospital three years and I thought, 'Okay, God, obviously You don't want me to be a priest, so I'll go into Emergency Medicine,'" Fr. Arisman says. "And then it was just insane that night — we had 17 traumas in a eight-hour period and 22 transfers coming in from other hospitals. We

were swamped, and I was losing my mind trying to keep up and find places for everybody.

"At one point, five [transfer] helicopters arrived at the same time and they called me out there to help them land," he continues. "I got a call from the vocations director. I thought it had to be a joke — it was 2 o'clock in the morning. While trying to yell over the helicopters, I told him I was interested but couldn't talk then, so the next morning I called him back. I prayed a lot, and finally decided that if God calls in that blunt of a way, then you have to go!"

After studying at Conception Seminary College in Missouri and then Mundelein Seminary in Illinois, Fr. Arisman was ordained on May 24, 2014. Reflecting on the winding path that brought him to the priesthood, he can clearly see how God was preparing him for his vocation all along.

"Those life experiences have helped me in so many ways," he says. "From the [Boy Scout] section chief job when I had to do a lot of speaking and running budgets, to working at the video store and knowing that people have to do what they have to do to pay the bills — then teaching in seven different Catholic schools and learning how seven different priests and principals run a school.

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Fr. Steven Arisman celebrates with his parents and siblings after his first Mass



Fr. Steven Arisman (center) is the scouting chaplain for our diocese. Here, he is pictured at the National Order of the Arrow Conference — he served as Catholic chaplain for the event.

A Letter From Our Pastor

"Summer" on the Mount

Dear Parishioners,

The story is told of a university student who came home for the summer. Meeting with his pastor, he announced, "I don't need the Church any more. All I need to live a good life is to follow the Sermon on the Mount."

In case you don't remember, the Sermon on the Mount can be found in Matthew 5-7, and it contains some pretty startling utterances by Jesus:

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me... But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil... But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you... So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect... If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions... You cannot serve God and mammon... Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself... Stop judging, that you may not be judged... Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.

These statements are so familiar, they may have lost some of their punch. But, when we really pay attention to them, we can't help but realize this is strong stuff.

That student's goals were probably to shock the priest and justify why he didn't bother coming to Mass. Certainly, he expected some sort of rejoinder on why he shouldn't give up on the Church.

Instead, he received a surprise when his priest exclaimed, "Great! I'm thrilled you're living by the Sermon on the Mount. How are you doing with that?"

That question — "How are you doing with the Sermon on the Mount?" — kept reverberating in the



student's mind. Eventually, it pulled him back to the Church.

Being honest with himself, he discovered that he couldn't live a good life on his own. The weight of human weakness and sin pulled him down, so he needed the Sacrament of Penance to provide God's forgiveness. And he needed the grace he received from Holy Communion to give him strength to live a Christian life. He found that hearing the Scriptures at Mass and discussed in a small group helped him understand what God wants from us. And that group support encouraged him when he was

tempted to give up.

But it's also true that we can't be part of the Church only to receive graces and support. To have a healthy spiritual life, we must also give. Jesus Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

That's why we stress stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. If everyone just took from the Church without giving anything back, the Church would soon disappear. But when we make commitments to give our time in worship and prayer, our talent in service, and our treasure to extend God's kingdom, we find that we are actually enriched.

This summer, reflect on how you're doing with the Sermon on the Mount. Then, reflect on how participating in Church life strengthens your life. You'll be amazed!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Rev. Steven Arisman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Fr. Steven Arisman
Pastor

St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry

It may just be a box of groceries — but it is really much, much more. The donations from parishioners and the work of the volunteers of the St. Francis Community Assistance Ministry combine to embody the love of Christ put into action for those in need in our parish, and for the entire community.

Mary Beth McGee and Carla Eling are the Co-Chairs for the ministry that operates our food pantry and serves meals at Horizons.

The food pantry is located in the basement of our Parish Center. As the volunteers have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, its restrictions have not affected how the food is delivered.

“People tell us how many there are in the family and we give them a set order,” Mary Beth says. “So, they aren’t ‘shopping’ in the pantry. Normally our volunteers would take the order to the cars, but we are asking recipients to put the items in their car.”

Ministry members also make deliveries only to the homebound or disabled.

“When we talk to them, they share what they can use,” Mary Beth says.

As the pandemic continued, the food pantry began to experience shortages.

“But our parishioners have been taking up the

slack,” Mary Beth says. “We leave a container out, and they restocked us with toilet paper. Bread was short, and we got bread from our parishioners. The parish has been great! Now we’re asking for help with shampoo and dish washing soap. That’s been a challenge, making sure we can serve people with hygiene and food products.”

Help also has come from the community. The Farm Bureau called with the news that there was meat available for the pantry, and an American Dairy representative called with the news there was cheese available.

“We try to cover the needs,” Carla says. “If there is a family or person who needs food, they call to the food pantry and we take their information, and we get them on the schedule. There are no questions and no qualifying needed. If you need food, we’ll give it to you. The only requirement is that you can only come every eight weeks. But there is no judgement. If you need it, we’re here to help.”

At Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, the food pantry assembles meal boxes for about 20 parish families who use the pantry.

“We make up a real nice meal box with all that they need,” Carla says.

Some of the ministry members also send out cards to parishioners in area nursing homes, and another group



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— MARY BETH MCGEE

Ministry Putting Faith into Action

presents poinsettias for those over 80 years of age. Still, others volunteer serving a meal once a month at the Horizons agency.

"This is all part of our community assistance," Carla says.

As the ministry members go about their work, the impact of what they are doing has an effect on them spiritually.

"It is very humbling, to help others in need," Mary Beth says. "I'm in awe of our volunteers who show up every week. They teach me to be more like Jesus, helping those in the most need. I'm humbled by those who serve by being our volunteers. They are extraordinary."

The ministry's work also is an act of living in stewardship, as well.

"Oh, absolutely," Mary Beth says. "We feel strongly that we are asked to do not just the pantry but going to Horizons. We have felt that outreach is really important. It's part of stewardship to serve outside our church."

While embracing the spiritual aspect of serving, the ministry members have also become friends.

"We are a fun ministry," Mary Beth says. "We like being together. We enjoy each other. When the volunteers are working, there is a lot of joy and happiness. They are joyful in their giving."

For Carla, she has always felt called to serve, and when the new location of the food pantry was announced for the Parish Center, she received a very strong calling.

"It struck a chord with me," Carla says. "I find when we serve, feeding the hungry, we serve others and therefore we serve Christ. This is a good fit for what I was called to do."

Carla believes very strongly in the ministry's outreach to the community.

"With serving others, we're doing what Christ said, that 'when you do unto my brothers, you do unto Me,'" she says. "When you have enough, you have the responsibility to help others and serve."

Anyone interested in joining the ministry may call Mary Beth McGee at 217-430-1533.

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"Then the great experience of the Emergency Room — you can handle a lot of stressful situations, life and death," he adds. "There is an old saying that a priest can experience in a day what most people experience in a lifetime, and in the ER, I could experience in a shift what some people do in a lifetime. It's fascinating the experiences my life has given me for the priesthood."

Fr. Arisman joins us after serving as the pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Spirit in Mount Zion and St. Isidore in Bethany while also serving as chaplain of St. Teresa High School, assistant chaplain at Millikin Newman Group, and co-coordinator of Totus Tuus.

"I love working with kids and I love working with youth," he says. "I'm still involved with scouting as the scouting chaplain for the diocese. I'm so excited

to have a school here. I find the energy of the youth contagious — they are so uplifting and encouraging."

Fr. Arisman is excited to be here in Quincy, where the venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, for whom he feels a great affinity, received his formation from the Franciscans.

"I love Franciscans," Fr. Arisman says. "I have a very close relationship with Franciscan sisters in Alton, Ill., and with the hospital sisters in Riverton, Ill. as I worked in a Franciscan hospital. I love the message of St. Francis of Assisi. I love his story and what he did — I love his zeal. I love animals and I have a dog — a dachshund named Bella. And with my scouting background, I have a great love for nature, so although I'm not a Franciscan, in many ways, I'm a Franciscan at heart."

Feast of St. James: July 25

Calling Us to Holiness

The beauty of St. James the Great's character lies in his undivided heart — a heart that treasured its Lord from its very depths.

The Gospel story (Luke 5:1-11) recounts that, after laborious fishing efforts, James and his brother, John, had caught nothing. Jesus accompanied them and caught an astonishing bundle of fish. At the sight of this miraculous catch of fish, they began to understand that Jesus was not someone to merely pass by — that He must be divine. He called them to “leave all and follow” Him.

From this moment forward, St. James had a relentless resolve to follow his newfound Messiah.

Christ made James one of the Twelve Apostles, giving him the mission to proclaim the Good News.

Jesus also allowed him some special privileges.

For instance, when Jairus' daughter was raised, James, along with John and Peter, were the only ones Jesus allowed to accompany Him. When Christ sought God's presence in an intimate way through prayer from a mountaintop, He brought along with Him only James, John and Peter. There, they witnessed the glorious transfiguration of Jesus. He also chose these three to be at His side during His excruciating Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Clearly, he was one of Christ's most beloved followers.

This brave saint was also one of the first martyrs of the Church. King Herod Agrippa killed him with a sword in an early Church persecution. “Confidence in God arms us... with that supernatural courage which causes us to dread nothing in our struggle for the kingdom of God: that conquering intrepidity which has animated the martyrs,” wrote Dietrich von Hildebrand in *Transformation in Christ*. St. James certainly had this “conquering intrepidity.”

St. James is the patron saint of laborers and rheumatoid sufferers.

Let us not allow such a saint to pass by unnoticed. Let us emulate his dedication to God in our daily lives. We are called to be as holy as we can be — just as holy as St. James — today, not tomorrow.

Alleluia, truly, He is coming soon!





Divorce and Beyond Program Offers Healing and Support Through Difficult Times Group to Commence Gatherings this Fall

Going through a divorce can be a lonely and sad time. The Divorce and Beyond program offers comfort and a support system for others who are going through or have gone through a divorce.

"I see healing with my own eyes in those going through the program," says Julie Erwin, Divorce and Beyond program coordinator. "My prayer is that the spirit of those involved and their families is uplifted and healed, as well."

The group meets for about nine weeks, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., on Mondays each fall. Although they meet at our parish, the program is open to anyone in the community.

"We encourage and welcome anyone who is divorced and welcome all faiths to participate in the healing provided through this ministry," Julie says.

Julie says the goal of the program is to let people know they are not alone in their feelings and struggles. This program is conducted in a confidential

environment that allows participants to be open and honest with their emotions.

"It is cathartic to address your fears, frustrations and questions in a setting involving people who have experienced the same situations," Julie says.

Having gone through a divorce herself, Julie knows there is often shame that results. She wants people to know that God is there for them in the suffering. He wants nothing more than to have us turn back to Him.

"Although Jesus calls His disciples to follow Him to perfection, He never ceased to love them in their imperfect humanity," Julie says. "He called them to strive for wholeness, but did not turn His back on them when they failed or were afraid."

A program participant who wishes to remain anonymous says that before they joined the program, they hadn't talked to anyone about their divorce. This

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"The best therapy for grief is to find people who will listen to your story over and over. We need the comfort and insight that can only be found in people experiencing similar pain and suffering." — JULIE ERWIN

St. Francis Solanus

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group helped take away their shame.

"Prior to joining the group, I readily admit I blindly struggled with the emotional rollercoaster of feeling guilty, and shame," says the participant. "Had I joined the group earlier, I have no doubt my journey through that part of my life would have been less difficult and stressful, and that I wouldn't have lived a life of fear and uncertainty."

Julie welcomes anyone who has gone through a divorce to join the program and experience God's love and healing.

"The best therapy for grief is to find people who will listen to your story over and over," she says. "We need the comfort and insight that can only be found in people experiencing similar pain and suffering."

Meetings will begin this fall on Sept. 14, taking place on Mondays, 6:30-8 p.m. for eight to 10 weeks — however, this is subject to change depending on COVID-19 guidelines.

If you would like to register and learn more about Divorce and Beyond, please contact Julie Erwin at Julie.gunn@comcast.net or at 217-257-5313.

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.