

St. Francis Solanus

NEWSLETTER

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The Knights of Columbus *A Fraternity of Faithful and Generous Men*



The Knights of Columbus is a global fraternity of Catholic men who dedicate themselves to serving their parish and community. The brotherhood — united by the principles of charity, unity, and fraternity — was founded by Fr. Michael McGivney to take care of widows and the poor. Today, this mission continues through a network of local councils.

Council 583 calls Quincy home, with many members coming from St. Francis Solanus. It's a strong council with over 700 members, many of whom regularly participate in service projects and fundraisers. John Veith has been a member for over 50 years and is currently the Financial Secretary, helping lead the council to make sure that the group is accomplishing its mission of faith and service.

"Our mission is to empower Catholic men to be leaders in the faith within their families, the parish, and the community," John says.

The council is extremely active and blessed with a beautiful property that allows them to host many dinners and events throughout the year. Starting in September, the Knights offer a chicken dinner every Friday evening. People can order takeout and pull right up to the drive-thru window or dine in and enjoy a buffet-style meal.

During Lent, the Knights host fish fries and offer the same options of dining in or meals to-go. All dinners are open to the public and are a great way to get involved in the community and support the church and local charities. The proceeds of the dinners along with the Knight's famous summer BBQ are generously donated to the local parishes, Catholic schools,

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Strengthening Your Catholic Faith: *A Guide to Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation*

The journey of faith is a lifelong commitment, a continuous process of deepening our relationship with Christ and understanding the teachings of the Church. To improve your faith life and foster a closer connection with Christ, it's essential to engage in meaningful practices and explore Catholic literature that can provide spiritual nourishment. Here are some ideas to help you enhance your faith and some insightful Catholic-based books to read.

Daily Prayer and Reflection

Building a strong connection with God starts with prayer and reflection. Setting aside time each day for prayer, whether it's the Rosary, the *Liturgy of the Hours*, or simply speaking from the heart, allows you to commune with the Divine. To complement your daily prayer, consider reading *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, a classic work that guides Catholics in developing a deeper prayer life and drawing closer to Christ.

Attend Mass Regularly

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith. Regular attendance at Mass is crucial to growing closer to Christ. It's not just about fulfilling an obligation — it's an opportunity to receive the body and blood of our Lord and Savior. For a deeper understanding of the Mass, *The Lamb's Supper* by Scott Hahn offers insights into the biblical roots of the Eucharist and its significance.

Study the Bible

The Word of God is a rich source of spiritual growth. Dive into the Scriptures, attend Bible studies, or join a Catholic reading group to explore the teachings of the Church. *The Catholic Study Bible* with commentary is an excellent resource for gaining a deeper understanding of the Bible's teachings and how they relate to your faith. Utilize the United States Conference

of Catholic Bishops' New American Bible online at www.bible.usccb.org/bible.

Engage in Faith Formation Programs

Our parish offers faith formation programs, which can provide a structured way to learn about the teachings of the Church. These programs can include courses on Catholic theology, morality, and the history of the Church. Contact the parish office for information about available opportunities to deepen your faith and understanding.

Read Catholic Literature

Immersing yourself in Catholic literature is a powerful way to improve your faith formation. *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales is a classic that offers practical guidance for leading a life of holiness. *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis is a thought-provoking work that explores the Christian faith from a broader perspective.

Seek Spiritual Guidance

Having a spiritual director or mentor can be immensely beneficial in your faith journey. They can offer guidance, support, and insights that help you grow spiritually. Consider reading *Spiritual Direction: A Guide for Sharing the Father's Love* by Fr. Thomas Acklin and Fr. Boniface Hicks to understand the role of a spiritual director in your life.

Improving your faith life and growing closer to Christ is an ongoing process. By incorporating these practices and exploring Catholic literature, you can deepen your understanding of Church teachings and develop a more profound relationship with our Lord.

Remember that faith formation is a personal journey, and it is never too late to start or continue on the path to spiritual growth.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Listening to God's Word:

A Call to Hear and Act

Dear Parishioners,

As we settle into Ordinary Time, we find ourselves in a unique rhythm of the liturgical year. The Christmas season has concluded, and Lent is just around the corner. This year, Ash Wednesday falls in early March, giving us an extended period of Ordinary Time to reflect and prepare our hearts for the Lenten journey ahead.

The Gospel of John opens with these profound words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). As Catholics, we often speak of "the Word" in our faith and liturgy, but have we taken the time to truly ponder its meaning?

The first half of the Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word, and it is here that we encounter God speaking to us directly through Scripture. This part of the Mass includes the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm, the Second Reading, the Gospel, and the Homily. Together, they form a sacred dialogue between God and His people.

For us, these readings are not merely stories or lessons from the past — they are the living Word of God, meant to nourish, challenge, and inspire us. Each time we hear the Word proclaimed, we are invited to listen with open hearts and respond with faithful lives. But that requires us to be fully present. Are we truly listening to what God is saying to us? Are we allowing His Word to transform us?

The Word of God calls us to action. The Responsorial Psalm invites us to respond in prayer, the Homily helps us to apply God's message to our daily lives, and the Profession of Faith affirms our acceptance of His Word. Yet the question remains:



how do we carry this Word beyond the walls of the church?

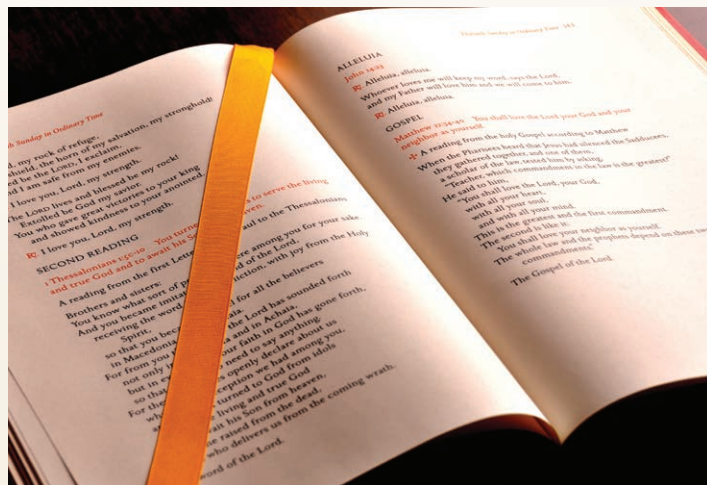
Hearing God's Word is only the beginning. To live as disciples and stewards, we must let His Word take root in our hearts and bear fruit in our lives. Does the Word lead us to deeper conversion, greater service, and a more intentional faith? These are questions we are called to ask ourselves daily.

Living out the Word is not always easy — it requires commitment, patience, and a willingness to grow. But when we respond faithfully, we bring God's light and love into the world. My prayer for each of us this year is that we not only hear the Word but also live it boldly and share it generously with others.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Steven Arisman".

Fr. Steven Arisman, Pastor



St. Francis Solanus

Angel Dusters

Bringing Joy and Re



Keeping a home clean is plenty of work for a family — keeping a church clean is a job for a whole crew. The Angel Dusters are the stewards who come in on a weekly basis to tackle so many behind-the-scenes tasks in order to keep our church clean and beautiful. Jan Smith leads this ministry of dedicated volunteers who not only love our parish and church, but love one another's company.

"Keeping the church clean is just as important as keeping your house clean," Jan says. "You don't want anyone coming in and noticing dirt. You want it to be presentable."

Jan and the 11 volunteers meet at 8 a.m. every Thursday. The ministry members know what needs to be done and they get to work right away with dry mopping around the pews. They dust the window sills and the Stations of the Cross and as much as they can reach around the statues and the altars. Since the church is so large, they Swiffer mop the floors gradually, working through a section each week.

Once a year, all of the pews get a thorough cleaning. The choir loft is



Reverence to Keeping Our Parish Tidy

refreshed before special Masses when it is used. Jan makes sure that the bathroom at the back of the church is clean. They also keep the chapel fresh and tidy.

Jan has been serving with the Angel Dusters for about 11 years. Although our current group of volunteers meets weekly to clean, in previous years this ministry had enough volunteers to have three different crews rotate through the cleaning. All the same, many hands make light work and Jan says they usually finish cleaning in about an hour unless they are doing one of their less-frequent tasks as well.

Jan grew up at St. Francis Solanus. When she moved back to the area after 32 years in Ohio, she knew that this parish was still her home.

"The parish has been part of my family since it was first built," Jan says. "My great-grandfather was the first head of the Men's Club and he was very instrumental in everything from the beginning. I feel at home every time I walk in there. I feel like it's an honor to do this and to help keep it clean."

The Angel Dusters is a great way for anyone with a little free time to give back to the parish. Volunteers are welcome to come

as they are able but are not obligated to work every week. Jan looks forward to her time with her fellow stewards.

"I enjoy the ladies that come

in, we all get along so well and we go to coffee together after we're done cleaning," she says. "We just enjoy each other's company."

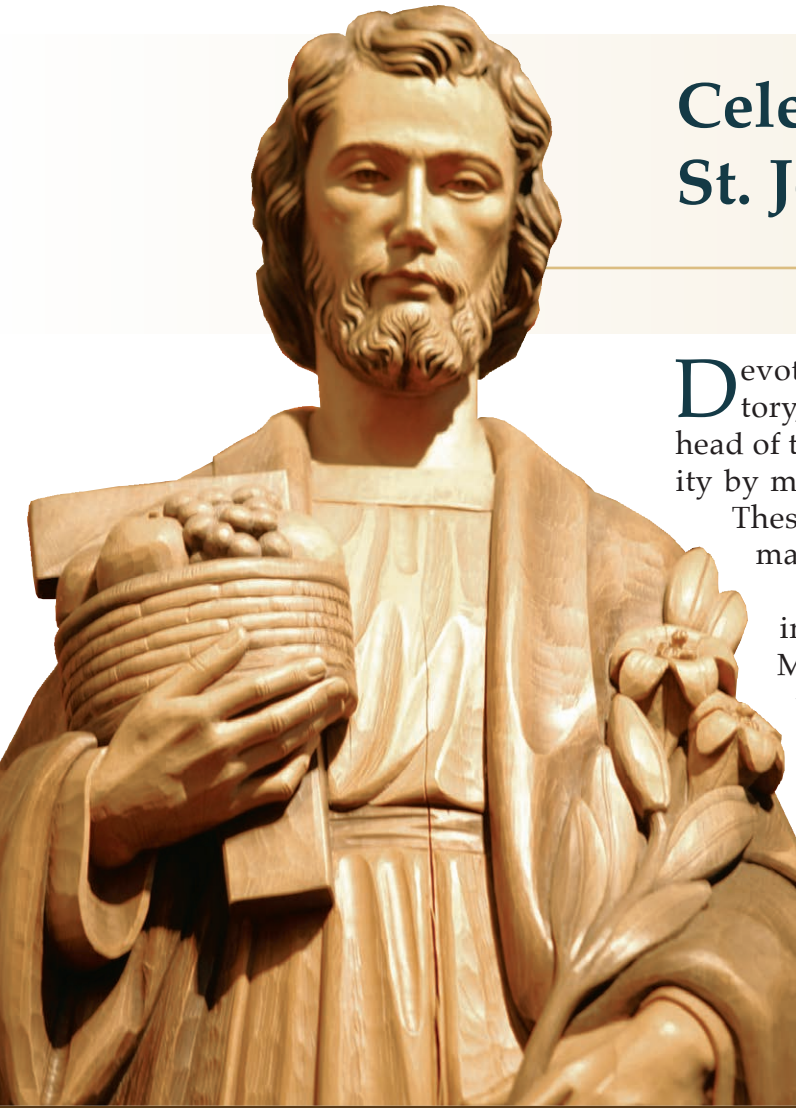
"Keeping the church clean is just as important as keeping your house clean. You don't want anyone coming in and noticing dirt. You want it to be presentable."

— JAN SMITH



Parishioners are welcome to join the crew on Thursday mornings at 8 a.m. Contact Jan Smith for more information at 217-440-6226.

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Celebrating the Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary: *March 19*

Devotion to St. Joseph began relatively late in Church history, primarily because his role of husband to Mary and head of the Holy Family was underplayed in early Christianity by many unauthenticated legends of Christ's childhood.

These legends almost always portrayed Joseph as an old man, a simple guardian of Mary and Jesus.

Modern theology places Joseph in a much more important position. Because of his valid marriage to Mary, Joseph shared in Mary's parenthood — Joseph was a father to Jesus in every way except biological. Joseph appeared publicly as the natural father of Jesus, thus shielding the virginity of Mary and the reputation of Jesus. Joseph's fatherly love, authority, and watchful service were all necessary circumstances in God's plan for the Incarnation.

Joseph was born in Judea or Galilee in the first century B.C. Little is stated in the Bible about the influence Joseph had on Jesus. History tells us that he brought Mary and Jesus to the temple each Passover and taught Jesus the carpentry trade. He seems to be the silent family man who shows his love for his family by providing them with security. The very safety of Mary and Jesus was guarded by Joseph when he took his family into Egypt to avoid the massacre of male babies ordered by King Herod.

In the history of the Church, Western veneration of Joseph began with the introduction of the Feast of St. Joseph in the late 15th century.

In 1870, at the end of the First Vatican Council, Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph to be the patron of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of carpenters, workers, fathers, and a happy death given that he died in the presence of Mary and Jesus. The title of Joseph's March 19 feast day is "Husband of Mary." Pope Pius XII later declared May 1 to be the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, to counteract the Communist May Day holiday.

A traditional prayer to St. Joseph

O Blessed St. Joseph, faithful guardian and protector of virgins, to whom God entrusted Jesus and Mary, I implore you by the love which you did bear them, to preserve me from every defilement of soul and body, that I may always serve them in holiness and purity of love. Amen.



Lenten Stewardship and Nurturing a Deeper Connection to Christ

As the sacred season of Lent continues this month as a time of reflection, repentance, and preparation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter, we strive to grow closer to Christ during this period through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. A frequently overlooked but deeply meaningful approach to enhancing one's Lenten spiritual journey is to embrace the stewardship way of life. How can stewardship help Catholics deepen their commitment to their Lenten spiritual journey and ultimately draw closer to Christ? Stewardship is a way of life rooted in the belief that everything we have – our time, talents, and treasure – is a gift from God. We are called to be good stewards of these gifts, using them to serve God and others. Stewardship goes beyond the idea of simply giving back to God; it's about recognizing that all we have is ultimately God's, and we are entrusted with these resources for a purpose. Here are some ideas on how stewardship can be integrated into one's Lenten journey:

Give Time in Service: Lent is a time for self-examination and a renewed focus on serving others. By volunteering your time for charitable organizations or within your parish, you can actively participate in almsgiving. Choose a cause that resonates with you, whether it's helping the less fortunate, visiting the elderly, or mentoring the youth. Stewardship reminds us that time is a valuable resource and dedicating it to others is a way to draw closer to Christ's selfless love.

Share Talents with the Community: Your unique talents and skills are gifts from God, and they can be used to serve your faith community during Lent. Whether you have musical talents, artistic abilities, or organizational skills, consider how you can contribute to your parish or church activities. Share your talents to enrich the liturgy, contribute to spiritual growth, or support your fellow parishioners in their Lenten journey.

A Lenten Sacrifice of Treasure: The concept of tithing is an essential aspect of stewardship. During

Lent, consider making a financial sacrifice as a way to live out almsgiving. This could involve increasing your regular giving to your parish or contributing to a special charity or mission project. The act of sacrificial giving not only helps those in need, but it also serves as a reminder of Christ's ultimate sacrifice for our salvation.

Cultivate a Prayerful Heart: Stewardship extends to our spiritual lives as well. A key aspect of stewardship is recognizing the importance of prayer and deepening our relationship with God. Use Lent as an opportunity to focus on prayer, both in personal reflection and communal worship. Pray for guidance in stewarding your time, talents, and treasure in a way that honors God and serves His people.

Self-Examination and Reflection: Lent is a season of self-examination, repentance, and turning towards God. Embrace the practice of regularly examining your stewardship in your daily life. Are you using your gifts and resources to their fullest potential in service to God and others? Consider making a commitment to reevaluate and adjust your stewardship practices as you journey through Lent.

Practice Gratitude: Stewardship is grounded in gratitude for the blessings we've received. Throughout Lent, consciously practice gratitude for the many gifts God has entrusted to you. Reflect on how these gifts can be used to serve others and draw closer to Christ.

Embracing stewardship during Lent can be a transformative experience as we seek a deeper connection to Christ in preparation for His resurrection at Easter. It reminds us that our time, talents, and treasure are gifts from God, and it challenges us to use these gifts to serve others and glorify God. By giving of ourselves in a spirit of stewardship, we can live out the core principles of Lent — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving — in a way that reflects Christ's love and sacrifice. Ultimately, this way of life can help us grow closer to Christ and become better disciples of His love.

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The Knights of Columbus *continued from front cover*

and charitable organizations.

"We provide scholarships to Catholic families who need help sending their children to Catholic school and have additional scholarships that we give to three students attending Quincy University," John says. "We donate to the food pantries and financially support Catholic Charities Quincy and Birthright."

Recently the Knights finished their Coats for Kids drive and donated over 75 coats this winter.

"It is good to see the kids smile as they walk out with their new coat," John says.

To organize all their activities and charitable donations, the Knights meet every second Tuesday of the

month at 7 p.m. at their clubhouse. The business meetings last about an hour and always begin and end in prayer. Once the business is taken care of, the Knights typically stick around for a time of fellowship.

Amid the activities and charitable work that the Knights do, the brotherhood is what really animates this group.

"The brotherhood is the best part about being a Knight," John says. "We spend a lot of time together and become good friends. The Knights for me are just like another family. It is super rewarding to be a Knight. They have helped me with my family life and inspired me to get more involved at Church."

All Catholic men over the age of 18 are welcome to join. Signing up is easy — simply go to www.kofc.org and follow the prompts to join Council 583.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. • **Sunday:** 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m.

Weekday Mass: Monday - Friday, 6:30 a.m. • Tuesday - Thursday, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, 8:35 a.m. *during the school year* • Saturday, 8:00 a.m.

Confessions: Wednesday, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. • Saturday, 8:30 a.m., 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.; **Exposition:** Wednesday, 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Holy Days of Obligation: Vigil 5:30 p.m.; **Holy Day:** 6:30 a.m., 8:35 a.m. on school days, 5:30 p.m.