



February 2019

ALL SAINTS

A Stewardship Parish

Volume 16, Issue 2

A Letter from Our Pastoral Administrator

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Our Parish Newsletter:

Spreading the news of Christ at work in our community.

Celebrating God's Love

Dear Saints,

What is the most widely observed saint's day in February — the one that is kept even by those who aren't practicing Catholics? Undoubtedly, it would be St. Valentine's Day, Feb. 14.

So who was St. Valentine? The saint we celebrate was a priest of Rome martyred in the late third century. But that doesn't explain how his feast came to be celebrated as the day for sending letters, cards and presents as expressions of romantic love.

The truth is that the custom of sending tokens of love comes not from any direct connection with St. Valentine, but from the ancient belief that birds begin to pair off on Feb. 14. And if courtship in the natural world occurred then, it must be appropriate for humans, as well. The association between St. Valentine and love notes is a later development.

Nevertheless, it's not wrong to connect the two. Love has many aspects, and our conception of it is richer if we keep more than one of them in mind. Martyrdom is the result of loving God more than our earthly life. St. Valentine was a martyr because of his love — his love for Jesus Christ and the Church. If he had not loved God so much, he could have repudiated his Lord and saved his life. We, in turn, express our love by sending cards and gifts on St. Valentine's Day.

But isn't that what stewardship as a way of life is, a little martyrdom? Not to push the image too far, but when we are faithful stewards, we give up a little portion

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A Message From All Saints Catholic School Principal Shana Druffner

Dear Parishioners of All Saints Catholic Community,

Thank you for your consistent support of All Saints Catholic School. I am honored to serve as the Principal of our school in our 20th anniversary year.

I am pleased to report that the state of All Saints Catholic School is strong. Since we began our journey together in June of 2018, we have exceeded our goals on every front. We could not have achieved these goals without the hard work of our dedicated faculty and staff, our dedicated parents and volunteers, and, of course, our dedicated students.

We remain committed to excellence in faith, academics, character and service. Below are the highlights of what we have accomplished year to date and our plans for the immediate future.

Faith

Catholic identity is at the forefront of all we do. Students are given many opportunities to develop a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is through this encounter that they will develop into the young men and women God intended them to be.

- Installation of the Saint Gallery in the atrium of the school
- All students read and discuss the daily Gospel in religion class
- Celebration of the diversity and universality of our faith with monthly Spanish Mass
- Celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with live mariachis from the Cathedral Guadalupe
- Our seventh and eighth-grade students learn how to share and explain their faith in a weekly apologetics class led by our parish youth ministers
- Middle School students are invited to lunchtime Bible studies with our youth ministers
- Quarterly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for Grades 1-8

- Mother/Daughter and Father/Son Day of Reflection led by our School Advisory Council (SAC) Faith Committee
- In 2019-2020, we will be adding a “Patron Saint Party” on the feast day of each class’s patron saint so that each class learns more about their chosen patron saint each year.

Academics

Our passionate and dedicated teachers work with each student to help them be the best they can be.

- New Honors Math and Literature Curriculum for Grades 4-8
- New Summer Reading Program in Summer 2018
- English, Language Arts and Reading teachers in grades 4-8 focus on developing strong writing skills
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills/Cogat Large-Scale Assessment
- Significant growth of each class in every grade in all areas
- Grades 3-8 met or exceeded Blue Ribbon goals for English and Language Arts Total
- Addition of Mandarin once per week for all PreK-5 students
- Mandarin Elective open to all Middle School students
- Coding Class twice per week for Intermediate students
- All Saints Speech Team won several awards at Diocesan Speech League tournaments
- In 2019-20, all students in PreK-8 will have a class in Coding/Robotics twice per week

Character

We want our students to be young men and women of integrity. As such, we cultivate virtue and emphasize discipline that is virtue-based. When a student is well-disciplined, they can allow their talents to be fully utilized for the glory of God.

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A Message From All Saints Catholic School

Principal Shana Druffner *continued from page 2*

- Study of the Virtues in Practice program during Guidance time
- PreK, Elementary, Intermediate, and Middle School learned the same Virtue of the Month while learning about a different saint and how that saint exemplified that given virtue
- Ambassador Program for students in grades 6-8
- Leadership Opportunities in Student Council, Respect Life, Theater Club, and Beta Club
- Implementation of virtue-based discipline program where students in grades 3-8 do behavior reflections during lunch detention and morning detention
- Eighth-grade students learn about the challenging social issues they will encounter in high school from a Catholic perspective in a monthly seminar class
- Organizational and Study Skills Elective for Middle School students
- Student-led Theatre Club production of Scrooge with live student musicians
- Strong sports program, including three Middle School boys that were part of the championship football team in the diocese

Service

The aim of the Christian life is service. Our students and their families abound in generosity.

- \$93,000 awarded in financial aid
- Thanksgiving collection of groceries for Vision Food Share
- Fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth grades collected individual Christmas gifts through our "Christmas for Everyone" program that touched 10 individual families through Catholic Charities
- PreK through third grade collected toys, toiletries and household items through our "Christmas for Everyone" program that touched parish families through Vision Food Share

- Sixth grade collected coats, hats and gloves through our "Christmas for Everyone" program that touched people experiencing homelessness throughout the metroplex.
- School-wide day of service on Feb. 1 (Friday during Catholic Schools Week) where students in grades 4-8 will pack food for Feed My Starving Children.

Facilities

We are committed to providing and maintaining state-of-the-art facilities in which to educate your student(s).

- Upgrades completed in the atrium due to the generosity of the Home and School Association
- Cafeteria was repainted and decorated
- A giant map of the United States was painted in the playground area
- In February, several raised bed gardens were installed in conjunction with Texas A&M AgriLife Center

Enrollment

Our admissions team has welcomed many new students this year. Our current enrollment is at 296 students. We will be starting waiting lists in several grades, so it is imperative that everyone who would like to be a part of our school should apply as soon as possible.

As you can see, it is a very exciting time to be part of the All Saints family. On behalf of the faculty and staff, thank you for everything you do to make All Saints an exceptional place of learning. With Christ at the helm, we are excited and confident about our future.

Yours in Christ,

Shana Druffner





Gaining a Doctorate and Community of Faith: Dr. Francis Bilson Darku Shares His Story

Dr. Francis Bilson Darku is always proud to be a Catholic, for it is one and universal.

“I believe that any Catholic Church will be the same, and I believe I’ll be welcomed,” he says. “I don’t expect people to come and welcome me. People often go to parishes and they want people to come to them and ask ‘How are you?’ But I’m a bit different. I believe I can also talk to people. When I came to Dallas, I had that idea of making sure I was an active member of All Saints. I’d rather reach out to people, than wait for them to reach out to me.”



Dr. Francis Bilson Darku



With Alpha Series organizers and Fr. Alfonse at All Saints, Dec. 2017

Born and raised in Ghana, Francis grew up in a Catholic family and was active in ministry from a young age. Beginning as a lector and then joining the Jr. Knights and Ladies of Marshall — a group similar to the Knights of Columbus, including children and youth, in Ghana — and the Legion of Mary, being involved in his faith and parish life came naturally to Francis, the youngest of five children.

“In high school, I did things like clean the chapel, water the flowers, and wash the priest’s car,” Francis says. “In college, I was assigned to share the Word with students in the residential halls on the college campus. [In the Legion of Mary] we did prayer group and we did active work, which could be anything from helping in the community to sharing the Gospel. My two favorite things were getting the chance to pray the Rosary once a week and that I got to do something to serve God throughout the week.”

After graduating from college and hoping to pursue higher education, Francis applied to a number of master’s programs in Canada and the U.S. — and one doctoral program, at the University of Texas, at Dallas.

“I didn’t get admission to any of the master’s programs, but I had admission to UTD to study for PhD, with full funding, which I find very miraculous,” Francis says.

Francis made the move to the States in 2013.

Upon his arrival at UTD, Francis’ first order of business was to find the closest Catholic Church.

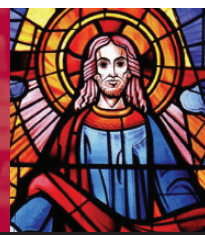
“When I got there, I realized the closest church was 40 minutes away by foot, but I thought, ‘That is fine, I’m going to walk to church every Sunday, rain or shine,’” he says. “That’s how I got to All Saints.”

It wasn’t long before Francis began making friends and finding himself part of the community at the parish. Through his involvement in starting the Alpha program for young people at All Saints, serving in various capacities with the Catholic Newman Center at UTD, and just showing up to Mass each with week a friendly smile, Francis quickly found his “home away from home.”

“I didn’t know anybody when I came, but gladly, I met a lot of people,” Francis says. “I met one Nigerian family who welcomed me into their house and another person who gave me a car because they saw me walking to Mass every Sunday. When I got the car, I felt that there may be other people who need to go to Mass — so, I started reaching out to any person I saw at the Newman Center and I’d ask, ‘How do you get to Mass? Do you have a ride?’ That’s how I started to build up a community.”

Despite being a busy student, Francis chose to make service and involvement in the parish a priority and encourages others to do the same.

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Gaining a Doctorate and Community of Faith: Dr. Francis Bilson Darku Shares His Story *continued from page 4*

“I’ve had a lot of experiences of God in my life and I live by some principles, such as, ‘In everything, put God first,’” he says. “I believe that if I put God first, God will satisfy my needs. I believe that who I am and where I am up to this day is by God’s grace and I have to give Him what is due Him. I shouldn’t deny Him my time.

“I admonish people with what St. James said — ‘Faith without works is dead,’” he adds. “If we want to grow in our faith, we have to put our faith to work. It doesn’t need to be any huge work — it could be saying ‘hi!’ to someone after Mass. When it comes to my day-to-day activities, I live by the principle that by my actions, people should be drawn closer to Christ.”

Francis graduated with his doctorate in Statistics from UTD last summer and is currently working as a visiting assistant professor at Mendoza College of Business, at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana), teaching Statistical Inference to undergraduate students.

This past Christmas, he returned home to Ghana as Dr. Bilson Darku to marry his fiancé, Joanna Agyapomaa Aduhene, who also lived in Dallas for a time and was a member of the All Saints’ St. Raphael Choir.

Francis is grateful for the time he spent at All Saints and encourages parishioners to invest in the community that was such a blessing in his life.

“All Saints is a wonderful community and I commend them for that,” he says. “I encourage parishioners to enjoy the time you have together after Mass with coffee and donuts. That was a great time to socialize with the parish.”

Francis also asks that parishioners continue to keep him and his wife in their prayers in this next phase of their adventure, as they seek to pursue a visa so she can join him in Indiana.

“Pray that she joins me quickly here and we have a wonderful marriage, and that we are able to become active here and continue to share the love of God with all the people we encounter,” he says.



Francis with his wife, Joanna, and Fr. Alfonse, Aug. 2018



Doctorate graduation, Aug. 2018



Gathering with international students who live off UTD campus, but got to know All Saints Parish through Francis’ carpooling, 2018 Easter Vigil Mass



With members of the UTD Newman Catholic Ministry, May 2016



ALL SAINTS

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How Can We Model the Faith for Our Children?

The Church has made it clear that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual and cognitive development of their children in matters of the faith. As the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, states, “Husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children” (Chapter 4, Section 35). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* further emphasizes this vocation, by pointing out that the moral education and spiritual formation of children is not only the right, but the responsibility, of their parents: “The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable... Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children” (CCC 2221, 2223).

But how can we as parents create an environment in the home conducive to spiritual and moral development? As busy adults, how are we to disseminate the knowledge and understanding of the tenets of the faith to our children in the way that a trained and experienced catechist can? Furthermore, how do we strike a balance between teaching our children in the home and not interfering with the faith formation and sacramental preparation they are currently receiving through their parish school or religious education program?

The answer to all of these questions is stewardship.

Indeed, it is important that we reinforce the lessons that our children learn in school and at religious education classes by talking to them about the faith, reading Sacred Scripture with



them, and spending time in family prayer. And there are several authoritative resources online that can help parents in this task, including Catholic Parents OnLine – www.catholicparents.org – which links parents to numerous websites and documents that can help them in talking to their children about the faith.

But the best way that we can teach our children is by serving as a living example to them of how to live as disciples of Christ. If we want our children to grow up as strong Catholics and to display a lifelong commitment to their faith, then it is important that we ourselves live a committed faith life. This includes an ongoing commitment to our own faith formation as adults and active participation in the sacraments. It also includes the giving back of our time, talent, and treasure in service of our community in thanksgiving for the gifts that God has given us.

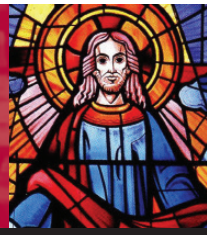
Parenting can be a tough vocation, and children deal with many influences in their lives that exist in stark contrast to the values that their parents often hope to instill within them. Fortunately for parents, the stewardship way of life provides a simple and effective model for teaching our children in matters of the faith. By living as stewards of God’s gifts and reaping the spiritual rewards that accompany this lifestyle, we are tangibly showing our children that sharing of our gifts and talents leads to a life of happiness and spiritual fulfillment. In doing this, we give them a good opportunity to follow in our footsteps and make their faith a top priority for the rest of their lives.

Use Discretion When Posting on Social Media

"Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity." — Colossians 4:5

When participating on social media, be sure to use sound judgment and common sense. Don’t forget that anything published on a personal website is no different from making such information available in any public forum. Use discretion when posting about sensitive topics and events. — *Diocese of Dallas Social Media Policy*.

Please see the Diocese of Dallas Social Media Policy — found at www.cathdal.org/Social_Media_Policy.pdf — for more information on safe social media use.



Changing Lives for the Better through the Hispanic Prayer Group

Sometimes, the Lord puts a real game-changer in our lives — something that moves our hearts profoundly, enlightens our spirits, and inspires our souls to soar to greater heights. For Humberto Gonzalez, this is just what the Hispanic Prayer Group has done.

“Going to the prayer group has completely changed me, and has helped improve my spiritual life,” he says. “Before I joined this group, I would only come to Sunday Mass once in a while — only when I felt like it. Now I like to go to Mass every Sunday and on every other Holy Day of Obligation. When I used to go to Mass, I didn’t even pay attention to it. I just went because I thought I had to go. Now I enjoy the homilies and I feel I understand them. Spending one hour at Mass feels like nothing to me anymore. Now I go to charismatic retreats for a whole weekend!”

Humberto’s renewed faith has helped him live out his vocation with deeper dedication. He currently serves as the Coordinator of the Hispanic Prayer Group, which meets every Friday from 7 to 9 p.m. (except on First Fridays) in the St. Teresa Room at All Saints. The meetings take place in Spanish and are open to people of all ages, including children and whole families. At the meetings, participants experience God’s awe-inspiring presence as they pray the Rosary, read the Word of God, and enjoy powerful worship music performed by a choir.

“I have much more peace and joy in my life than I ever did before, and I am a better husband and father,” he says. “I see things from a new perspective. When bad things happen around me, I can see them in a better light. It has brought about a great change for me and my family.”

Humberto first started coming to the Hispanic Prayer Group after his wife, Victoria, encouraged him to do so. Now he is grateful that it is an experience his family can enjoy together, and a couple of their grown children come as well.

The members of the Hispanic Prayer Group find that it gives them a beautiful way to express their stewardship commitment to prayer, which is one of the Four Pillars of Parish Stewardship. It also fosters fellowship and an authentic sense of Christian unity. As St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “If we pray, we will believe; if we believe, we will love; if we love, we will serve.”

“We support one another and pray for one another,” Humberto says. “We are like a spiritual family. I would encourage others to come to our meetings as well, because prayer is so important in our lives. When you pray, you talk directly to Jesus, and the closer you get to Him, the stronger you become in your faith. You feel that He is with you as your friend, and that you are not alone.”



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— Humberto Gonzalez

If you would like more information on the Hispanic Prayer Group, please contact Humberto Gonzalez at 214-707-3688.



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Weekend Liturgy:

Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

*Sunday, 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,
11:00 a.m.*

Teen Mass, 5:00 p.m.

Weekday Liturgy:

Monday - Friday, 6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, 9:00 a.m.

Address Service Requested

Celebrating God's Love *continued from front cover*

of our lives out of our own love for Christ. Most Christians will not be called on to be martyrs, in the sense of forfeiting our physical lives for God. But we are called to give up some of our comforts, indulgences and riches because of our love for Him.

So then, as you prepare to celebrate and share your love with your valentine this month, remember St. Valentine and his love for Christ. As well, keep in mind that God loves us, and return that love with your own toward Him. Loving God will be reflected in how you prioritize your use of the time, talent and treasure God

has entrusted to you. As St. John wrote (1 Jn 4:19), "We love because he first loved us."

Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Alfonse Nazzaro
Pastoral Administrator

*Loving God will be reflected in how
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