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ALL SAINTS

A Stewardship Parish

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Our Parish Newsletter:

Spreading the news of Christ at work in our community.

A Letter from Our Pastoral Administrator

Answering the Call for Lent

Dear Saints,

This month, as we proceed on our Lenten journey to Easter, every one of us should ask ourselves, "What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ and how well am I living that out each day?"

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops addressed what it means to be a disciple when they wrote their pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. "Who is a Christian disciple?" the USCCB asked and, in turn, they also provided the answer, "One who responds to Christ's call, follows Jesus, and shapes his or her life in imitation of Christ's" (9). So, as disciples of Jesus Christ, it is essential that we consider the true meaning of that answer.

The first step in the Christian life is responding to Jesus' call. Jesus invites every person to develop a relationship with Him. But obviously, not every person is a Christian disciple. Some people are too busy to even hear that invitation or don't make the effort to recognize it. Others make a conscious decision to reject the call because it demands that they can no longer place themselves at the center of their lives.

On the other hand, for those of us who make an affirmative response to Christ's call, the most meaningful life possible awaits us, both now and into eternity. However, saying "yes" to Jesus has consequences that affect the rest of our lives.

The first consequence of becoming a disciple is that we now follow Jesus. The Gospel accounts record that when He called His disciples, they left what they were doing and followed Him. The same is true for us today. Becoming a Christian disciple does not necessarily mean that all of us will leave our present job, or enter into the consecrated life, or serve as a missionary in another country — although that might be where the journey leads you. But it does mean that we offer our work — whether as



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Empty Nesters' Ministry: Faith, Fellowship and Friendship

Thanks to faithful groups like the Empty Nesters' Ministry, All Saints isn't just a building — it's the warm, welcoming home of a parish family.

"This ministry is very helpful to the members of All Saints because our parish tends to be a transient community," says Helen Brennan, who volunteers with the Empty Nesters' Ministry along with her husband, Larry. "Many people move to our local area for various reasons, and they don't know anyone when they come here. The Empty Nesters' Ministry provides a great way for them to meet new friends, and to foster a connection with other parishioners. It gives people a strong sense of belonging to the parish community, and makes it feel more like a family to them."

The Empty Nesters' Ministry is a social group that fosters fellowship and friendship for married couples who have "empty nests" — that is, no children currently living at home. The ministry includes two different groups — an additional one is currently being organized as well — one group is led by Larry and Helen, and the other is co-chaired by two couples, Bob and Barbara Philippon, and Jerry and Sharon Behne.

The co-chair couples are responsible for assigning a host couple to take a month during which to plan an event for the group. Each event is aimed at giving a wholesome, refreshing social experience to all those involved. Some of the activities that have been planned include attending plays and ball games, enjoying Christmas parties, going bowling or playing miniature golf, and visiting the horse race track. The most common event planned is going out to a restaurant for dinner. In the past, Empty Nesters' groups have attended the Men's Group St. Patrick's Day Dinner, in order to support their efforts.

By enjoying life together, these "empty nesters" find they also enjoy God together, and naturally care for one another in good times and in bad.

"It is also a great support group for those who have an illness, or have had a death in the family," Helen says. "Larry and I have made such wonderful friends through this group,

people we have never met otherwise. It is so comforting to know we have such good Catholic friends who will be there for us."

The ministry is also a perfect way for men to have a social outlet and enjoy times with their brothers in Christ.

"The men get a lot out of this group, too," Helen says. "It is really good for them to be part of it, and they can find a great golfing buddy through it, too!"

In a simple, but meaningful way, the Empty Nesters' Ministry exemplifies the stewardship pillar of hospitality by making many feel welcomed, loved and included in our parish community. It also promotes the stewardship pillar of prayer.

"Recently, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the first the Empty Nesters' group at our parish," Barbara says. "It was started by Bob and Ginny Wierschem on Jan. 29, 1999.

Today, my husband Bob and I are so thankful to be part of the Empty Nesters' Ministry. We enjoy the social life, and like meeting new couples and going to the events. Everyone is so kind in our group, and we all really watch out for each other. We even have Masses said for people in our group who are in need, such as those who are sick."



A volunteer is needed to lead the third Empty Nesters' Group. For more information about this life-giving ministry of fellowship, please contact Barbara Philippon at 972-788-0298 or Helen Brennan at 972-866-8431.



All Saints to Provide Innovation Lab for Students

By Gabe Moreno, ASCS Director of Advancement and Mission

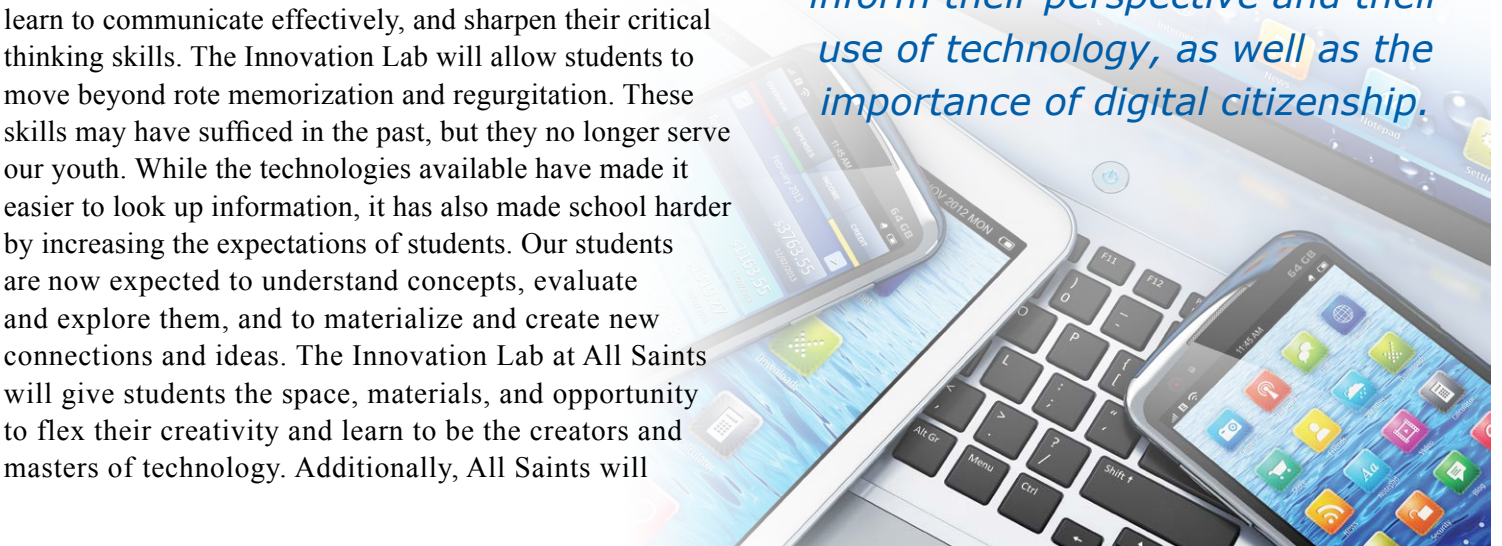
A few days ago, I had the opportunity to have a discussion with an old friend about the state of education today and the world our students are surrounded by. He lamented the “good old days” when things were simple and the key to doing well in school was knowing what the teacher told you to know. He went on to discuss the myriad of “distractions” our students face with the abundance of technology and how it has made things too easy for students. And the fact is, technology has made things “easy” for our students. It is absolutely easier than ever for our students to look up an answer they don’t know. A few simple taps of thumbs on a screen will bring up anything you want to know faster than pulling the *Encyclopedia Britannica* off the shelf! But isn’t that what technology does for us? It makes things easier. It allows us to use our brain power to do more. After a lengthy talk about technology, I finally ended the conversation by saying, “We cannot continue to prepare students for the world that we grew up in. We have to do our best to prepare them for the world they will live in.”

It is with this sentiment in mind that All Saints Catholic School will provide students with an Innovation Lab where they will have the ability to work together, be creative, learn to communicate effectively, and sharpen their critical thinking skills. The Innovation Lab will allow students to move beyond rote memorization and regurgitation. These skills may have sufficed in the past, but they no longer serve our youth. While the technologies available have made it easier to look up information, it has also made school harder by increasing the expectations of students. Our students are now expected to understand concepts, evaluate and explore them, and to materialize and create new connections and ideas. The Innovation Lab at All Saints will give students the space, materials, and opportunity to flex their creativity and learn to be the creators and masters of technology. Additionally, All Saints will

infuse all this technology with Catholic Social Teachings to inform their perspective and their use of technology, as well as the importance of digital citizenship.

It is human nature for us to consume information and immediately relate it to our own experience and worldview. The phrase “Well when I was your age, [fill in the blank]” comes to mind. The fact is that the world is different and our youth are presented with similar challenges but in different ways. And we must always remember and have hope in Jesus’s words, “To whom much is given, much will be expected.”

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The Sign of the Cross:

As Catholics, we are blessed to be part of a faith tradition that stretches back over 2,000 years to its founding by Jesus Christ. Along with the history of our faith come many customs and sacred rituals that become even more beautiful when we delve a little deeper into their origins and meanings. Certainly, such is the case with one of the most visible outward signs of our Catholic faith — the Sign of the Cross.

Since we say and make the Sign of the Cross so often, it may easily become a rote, perhaps even thoughtless, action. However, it is important to remember that the Sign of the Cross is much more than a simple gesture. Even in its most basic form, the Sign of the Cross — accompanied by the spoken or unspoken words “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” — is a prayer, a creed stating our belief in the Holy Trinity, the dual nature of Jesus Christ, and the dependence of our salvation on His crucifixion and resurrection.

In addition, making the Sign of the Cross is an indication of a willingness to take up our own cross and suffering for the sake of Christ. The prayer is considered one of the greatest weapons against Satan and all demons, and an added strength against the temptations of the flesh.

In the Roman Catholic Church today, the Sign of the Cross is typically made with either three fingers or an open hand touching first the forehead, then the chest, followed by the left shoulder and then the right (in the Eastern Church, the right shoulder is touched before the left). The concept of making a sign, or “setting a seal,” upon the forehead of those who place their faith in the Lord appears in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible — see Ezek. 9:4 and Rev. 7:3, 9:4, and 14:1.

Early versions of the Sign of the Cross were traced on just the forehead, using the thumb and forefinger held

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A Powerful Prayer Tradition in the Catholic Church

together in the shape of a tiny cross. We still see this version of the blessing performed during Baptisms (with the cross traced on the infant's forehead) and on Ash Wednesday (with the cross traced in ashes on the foreheads of the faithful). Similarly, when the Gospel is read during the Liturgy of the Word, the priest or deacon leads the congregation in forming this small cross on the forehead, mouth, and chest, indicating a willingness to keep the Word of the Lord in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

There is no doubt that our early Church fathers were strong believers in the sanctifying power of the Sign of the Cross. A second-century ecclesiastical scholar, Tertullian, and a third century saint, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, both wrote about the necessity of performing the Sign of the Cross at one's waking and one's lying down, at entering and leaving a room, at mealtimes, and more. St. Augustine also referenced the importance of marking the cross on the faithful's forehead during the administration of the sacraments.

It is likely that the sign transformed from the tiny cross on the forehead to the larger, full-body cross used today sometime in the fifth century, when heretics began questioning both the dual nature of Jesus Christ — fully human and fully divine — and the unity of the Holy Trinity. Believers in these crucial Church doctrines began forming the cross with three extended fingers (representing the Trinity), keeping the ring finger and little finger pressed down into the palm (representing Christ's dual nature), and tracing a cross on their entire upper body so there could be no mistaking the gesture.

Today, the Sign of the Cross still figures predominantly in our prayer life as Roman Catholics. We commonly perform it upon entering a church (with the holy water as a reminder of our Baptism); at the beginning and end of the Catholic Mass, a Benediction, or the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; when opening and closing our personal prayers; at mealtimes; and when passing by a Catholic Church (in recognition of

Christ, present in the tabernacle). As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, the frequent, intentional use of the Sign of the Cross can help the faithful dedicate each day to the glory of God and provide strength in the face of trial and temptation (2157).

Now, each time we cross ourselves and proclaim, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," let us do so with an increased awareness of the rich history of the Sign of the Cross and the abundant graces that come to us through this powerful prayer tradition!

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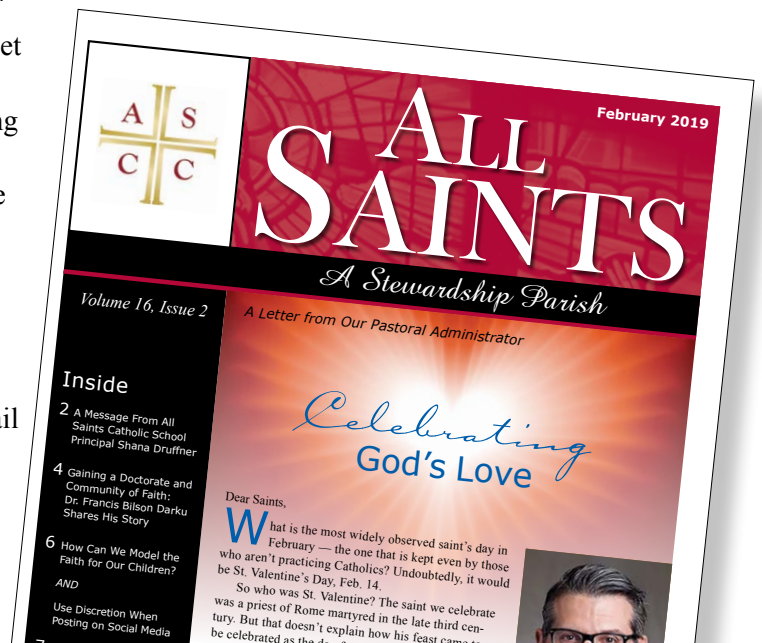
Reflecting Good Stewardship of Our Parish Resources Through Information and Communication

In an effort to be better stewards of our parish funds and resources, All Saints Catholic Community made some changes in this quarter as outlined below.

1. We provided parishioners with online access to their family data (including contributions) as recorded in our database. In addition to eliminating the cost of mailing, we have found most folks like having access to their personal information in our database when they want it. The information and instructions were in the bulletin and in the announcements just prior to Mass, as well as in email blasts during the month of January. We put forth great effort to inform everyone in plenty of time to access information for tax purposes. We knew there would be a few folks we would miss and more than likely, this is because we do not have a valid email address in our database. If you still do not have access to our database, please let us know.
2. We have refreshed the mailing list for those receiving the *Texas Catholic*, our diocesan newspaper. In this refresh, we eliminated multiple mailings to the same household, mailings to people who have moved out of state and those who have informed us that they moved out of our parish and/or are no longer active in our parish. This change will begin with Texas Catholic mailings starting in April.
3. In addition to being online and part of a regular email blast, our parish newsletter will now be available for pick-up at the church, on a monthly basis, much the same as our bulletin is available on a weekly basis. We anticipate the publish date to be the

second weekend of each month and we will focus on presenting timely and pertinent information for that timeframe, rather than having to factor in the two-week delay for bulk mailing. And like our bulletin, the printing for the newsletter is covered by bulletin advertisers and is not a parish expense. The monthly parish newsletter will be available in the welcome center off the Narthex and in the Kamel Life Center atrium beginning in April.

For parishioners who are homebound and/or have limited opportunity to get to church, we would certainly consider special arrangements, but it should be noted that the three small changes outlined above will save our parish more than \$13,000 in postage and processing fees over the course of the next 12 months.



Please make note of these changes and if you have questions or concerns about any of these initiatives, please contact Chris Diaz, our Director of Communications, at 972-778-0333 or cdiaz@allsaintsdallas.org.



Prayer: Becoming More Generous with Our Stewardship of Time

A professor stood in front of a class, and in his hand was a big glass jar. He put six big rocks in the jar, with the rocks up to the edge. He then asked his students, “Is the jar full?” And they replied, “Yes.”

The professor told the students, “No, it’s not.” Then, he pulled out gravel and put it in the jar. He then asked, “Now is it full?” The students once again replied, “Yes.” The professor responded, “No, it’s not.” He reached down and pulled out sand, which he poured into the jar with the same responses. Then, he reached down again for a pitcher of water, and poured water in, all the way to the brim. Then he asked, “Now is it full?” And the students replied, “Yes.”

The professor then asked, “Okay, what lesson do you learn from this?” The students responded, “No matter how many things you’ve got in the jar, there’s always room to put a little more in.” The professor told them, “No, that’s not the lesson. The lesson is, if I didn’t put the big rocks in first, they would have never fit!”

Most Catholics can appreciate this story — in particular, how it can apply to our own prayer lives. Essentially, every person has to decide what the “big rocks” are in his or her life. And, for us Catholics, prayer should be one of those big rocks in the jar.

As Catholics, we *know* that prayer is important, and we know that we can and should always pray more. Yet, connecting with God in this way often slips through the cracks of our busy lives.

The stewardship spirituality is about trying to become ever more generous with our Time, Talent, and Treasure. And there is a reason why “Time” is first in line. Time in a

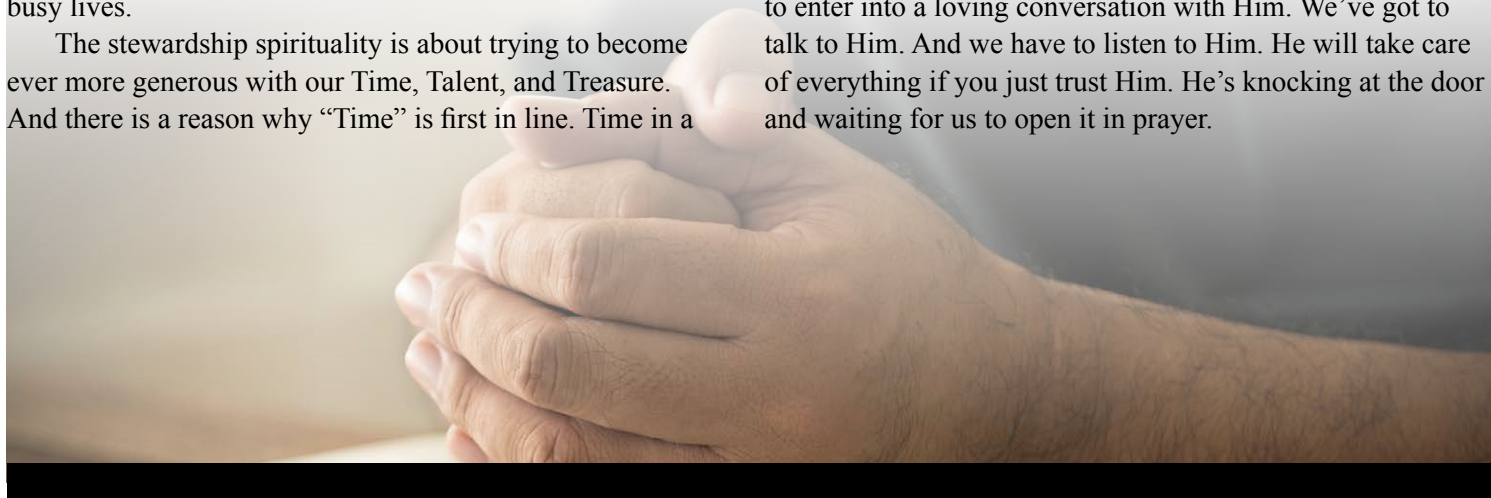
stewardship context refers to the time we spend with God in prayer. We need to take time to talk to God and take time to be quiet and seek to listen as He expresses His love for us and wants us to know His inspiration in our life.

There are many different forms of prayer — from weekly prayer, such as the Mass, to daily personal prayer. A daily Rosary is one of the most universal spiritual practices that can enrich the lives of Catholics around the world. Even if the decades are spread out throughout the day, or even if you pray just one decade a day, you will find yourself growing closer and closer to the Lord each time.

Morning and night prayer are also important disciplines to maintain. Set aside a comfortable place in your home where you can find silence. Maybe focus on a spiritual image and take time to center yourself with Scripture or some other kind of spiritual reading.

For many, spending large portions of the day in silent prayer may not always be possible. But make it a priority to find those moments of quiet throughout the day, and to find ways to incorporate prayer in the midst of your busy schedule. When you get into a vehicle, pray — before a meal, after a meal, if you’re faced with a tough decision. Just pray!

Ultimately, the bottom line is this — just as in any human relationship, communication is a central aspect of a vibrant relationship with God. Prayer is fostering this communion of love with God. He loved us into existence and He wants us to enter into a loving conversation with Him. We’ve got to talk to Him. And we have to listen to Him. He will take care of everything if you just trust Him. He’s knocking at the door and waiting for us to open it in prayer.





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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



Parish Lenten Mission

*The Foolishness
of the Cross*

Monday, March 18 - The Great Fall: Pride
Monday, March 25 - The Wood of Salvation
Monday, April 1 - The Way of the Cross

Presented by Fr. Jovita Okoli
In the Church from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Answering the Call for Lent *continued from front cover*

a doctor, homemaker, mechanic, farmer or teacher — to build up the Kingdom of God.

In following Jesus as His disciples, we should strive to more fully absorb His teaching and then apply it to our daily lives. As we do, we find that we attempt to imitate Him, treating others with the same welcoming and generous spirit. St. Peter was direct when he described how Jesus acted: “He went about doing good... for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). That’s the model for how we must live.

Discipleship leads naturally to stewardship as a way of life. The time we offer in prayer and worship will give us the strength and guidance for serving Christ. Using the skills and gifts we have to build the Kingdom will direct

our offering of talent. The support of all these endeavors with our treasure will ensure that our lives as disciples and stewards are genuine.

As a Christian steward this Lent, I encourage you to reflect on the changes you can make in growing as a disciple of Jesus.

Yours in Christ,



Fr. Alfonse Nazzaro
Pastoral Administrator

