



JANUARY 2015

# Our Faith in Action

American Martyrs Catholic Community

## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

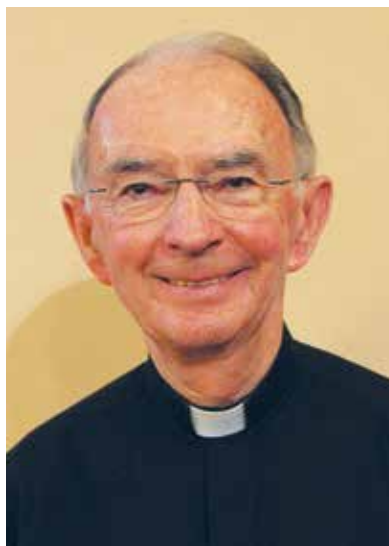
### *This New Year, Answering the Call to Give Back and Give Thanks*

Dear Parishioners,

The decorations are down, New Year's bells have rung out, and each day we get out of bed and begin the activities of our daily lives. What are your plans for the New Year? What do you think God's plans are for you? Do these plans work together?

As I look at 2015, I begin to see how I can make a difference in other people's lives. Are there ways, without neglecting *my* soul and spirituality, that I should use my gifts to be a better person, and in my vocation to be a better priest and pastor? Each one of us needs to say, "It is my watch, not someone else's," whatever my "day vocation" happens to be. Are you a spouse, a parent, a child, a senior, a single person, a teenager? Then, be the best you can be, and in that way change the lives of those around you for the better.

When you think of yourself as someone with unique gifts, do you think of how you use them to answer God's call to serve, to give back, to



give thanks? Thank all of you who are involved in one of our many ministries. You do make a difference!

Those of you who are homebound are, and must continue to be, our prayer force. You have a special power to strengthen the weak and the distracted through your prayers.

May I suggest that each of us become more aware of the gift of our faith and how each one of us has the responsibility to help others come to or return to faith? Could I be more conscientious about how I celebrate the Mass, and not look at

Mass so much as an obligation but as a privilege? The Second Vatican Council calls all of us to "full and active participation" as we celebrate Mass. So remember these two resolutions, and we will be a better living example of a Community of Faith gathered around Jesus as our Center, our Life.

I pray 2015 will be a year of peace in your hearts and homes, in your places of work and recreation.

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## LOOKING AT NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS *Through the Lens of Stewardship*

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Every January, we all step forward into the New Year with new ideas, goals, and resolutions. But after the initial sparkle of the New Year has faded, it can be easy to forget our once-fervent resolutions. However, we might find that it's a bit easier to keep our New Year's Resolutions if we look a bit beyond our physical selves, by also involving our spiritual lives, as well as the lives of others, we can add a lot more meaning to our resolutions.

"Matthew Kelly says, 'We're all trying to be better versions of ourselves,' and that's basically what any resolution anyone ever makes is about," says parishioner Dennis Labriola. "Stewardship is the same thing, if we believe in a stewardship way of life, we become better versions of ourselves. We can use our time and talent to improve things, whether it's our life, someone else's life or the parish's life. It all comes down to the basic point, if we acknowledge that everything we have is a gift from God, then we are supposed to be good stewards of those gifts, use them for the benefit of others, and return our talents tenfold to the Lord. When people understand that, their lives are so much more enriched."

Dennis, who is a member of the Stewardship Commission, writes a weekly stewardship article for the bulletin and heads up the Pre-Cana program with his wife, encourages us to do this by making two kinds

of resolutions: one at the beginning of the liturgical year, and one at the beginning of the calendar year.

"For the first one, we can think of it as New Year's for the Church — let's do a spiritual resolution on the first Sunday of Advent," Dennis says. "Then let's do some other resolutions for our health and well-being for the first part of the calendar year. We can look at it like an annual renewal of commitment, take those resolutions, write them down, maybe share them with someone. Once you've written it down and shared it, it becomes more of a real commitment."

Dennis also stresses the importance of both the physical and spiritual aspects of our resolutions.

"We are both physical and spiritual beings," he says. "Taking care of the physical side of things is good, but if we ignore the spiritual, what kind of progress are we really making? Even if you already pray, add five more minutes to it! Even if you read the Bible once a week, well, read it twice a week! We're not asking for giant steps here, not earth-shaking, cataclysmic kind of changes but little bits."

Making resolutions requires us to truly reflect on the areas that we'd like to improve in our lives, and making sure we have the right priorities. One way to make a good resolution is to consider joining or increasing



your involvement in one of the parish's prayer, faith formation or outreach ministries.

"I think something like the prayer and Bible study ministries would be great for that. They meet once a week for about an hour, and there's a variety of times to fit most people's schedules," Dennis says. "Also, in the service ministries, you have the opportunity to help others. You've got to feel good about something like making sandwiches for homeless people, or going to the women's shelter and helping out for the day."

Dennis urges American Martyrs' parish ministries to continue to be welcoming to any new members or volunteers, and encourages us to continue to make the commitment to improve our own lives or the well-being of others.

"I think if you get into the right group, where people are welcoming and the chemistry is there, you're happy to be a part of it. This helps you to stay involved," he says. "There is something out there for everyone!"

For more information about parish ministries, please email Jenny Attanasio at [jattanasio@americanmartyrs.org](mailto:jattanasio@americanmartyrs.org).

## A LOOK BACK ON THE ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASONS AT AMERICAN MARTYRS

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Our American Martyrs family shared in both preparation and celebration during the Advent and Christmas seasons. From the Altar Society Luncheon and Senior Christmas Dinner, to projects like the Family2Family collection and the coordination of the Annual Christmas Project, to sharing in Advent traditions and decorating our church — we enjoyed an active and joyous December as a parish community!



## GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT... *Through Media*

### The Minute Message via Facebook

The Scripture readings of the day, a reflection from Msgr. Barry, a parish event, or a Liturgical time of year — Monsignor's Minute Messages occur via Facebook and thousands are subscribed. View them and "like" them daily.

### "I don't have a Facebook account — so I guess I can't view them, huh?"

You don't need a Facebook account to view Monsignor's daily reflection. All you need is a computer, smartphone or tablet with internet capabilities. Go to [www.americanmartyrs.org](http://www.americanmartyrs.org) and click the box with Monsignor's photo. This will take you right to the American Martyrs Facebook page. Click on any of the daily images of Monsignor, next to the title The Minute Message followed by that day's date.



### "I don't have a lot of time to view things like this."

The Minute Message is just that — about one minute long. Similar to Monsignor's homilies, where he speaks to the Scripture and brings it to

light in our world today, in The Minute Message he takes one bit that speaks to him and offers it for reflection.

### Do people really view these?

Yes — real parishioners, Facebook visitors, and Facebook "friends" listen to The Minute Message DAILY! At the time of this article, he has 1,358 likes and 2,022 visits. Some have commented they start the day with their daily message from Monsignor — the messages are posted early every morning. Parishioners who have moved away tell us they stay connected via The Minute Message. Many, many others have commented:

"These daily minutes are life giving," Deborah says. "Thank you for taking the time to make them."

"A good way to start the day," Lynn says.

"I love reading your reflections, Fr. Barry!" Debra says. "I now live in Oregon! But this helps me stay connected to my Southern California roots! Have a blessed day."

### How did The Minute Messages come about?

Monsignor and Anne Riordan, Director of Communications, are continuously trying to enhance how we get our Catholic faith messages out to parishioners. Just about a year ago, Anne worked with Monsignor, who began writing Facebook posts trying to reach not just parishioners, but many others wanting to begin their day in reflection. Then just the right person came along willing to share her gifts and talents. Sherri Francois moved with her family to the South Bay. Upon meeting Monsignor, she mentioned seeing the posts, and as the conversation continued The Minute Message concept came to light.

"Given my background in video production," Sherri says, "I thought filming The Minute Message with Monsignor was a way to help spread the Good Word by giving our parishioners, and potentially people all over, a quick daily dose of spiritual inspiration. During filming and editing, it's amazing

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## GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT... *continued from page 5*

to watch how he can look at a Scripture passage and immediately give an impactful message. It just comes to him. I personally get so much out of his Minute Messages and feel blessed to be a part of it.”

Please check out The Minute Messages — some will speak to you just when you need it most.

### **Video to LiveStream**

Pamela and Patrick O’Mara of the Video Ministry have for many years coordinated and recorded Sunday Mass to be viewed by those in their homes via cable. They, with a few other parishioners having technical gifts and talents, felt that bringing the Mass to those in their homes who otherwise couldn’t be a part of the Liturgy was a crucial ministry here at American Martyrs.

With the ability to move from recording to LiveStreaming the Mass, Pamela, Patrick and their team of videographers, in collaboration with IT Director Vicki Terbovich, enhanced the Internet capabilities in the church, replaced equipment and retrained themselves to allow the Mass to be seen not just by those with cable, but anyone near and far who had Internet access.

As the creative wheels continued to turn and comments were heard from those who viewed the LiveStream, other uses for this media surfaced. Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, Jack Jezreel and SRE Director Patti Williams all have offered talks via LiveStream.

The Video Ministry piloted a LiveStream of Easter Sunday Mass into St. Kateri for those who wouldn’t fit comfortably in the church, and it worked fabulously! Mass was live, Eucharist was shared, and Easter and the Resurrection was brought to so many. The Outdoor Mass in September was LiveStreamed, and now with the enhanced technical infrastructure in the school, AMS has LiveStreamed two years of Christmas shows, Mustang Players, Morning Assemblies and more.

### **Why bother with LiveStream?**

Pamela and Patrick are very passionate about reaching those who can no longer attend Mass,

and Monsignor is extremely thankful for their dedication and service to our community.

“The Video Ministry was conceived on the notion of ‘community inclusion’, specifically identifying the homebound who could not get to weekly Mass,” Pamela says. “So the outgrowth of our original mission has only been enhanced and exponentially diversified with the addition of the LiveStream. [It makes it] so much easier now that parishioners, friends and family can intimately share events and Masses that normally would not work due to distance or health limitations. LiveStream allows ‘windows’ into the diversity that makes us so strong in our commission to reach out and invite others into our thriving American Martyrs Catholic Community so that, as Msgr. Barry says, ‘No one leaves a stranger.’”

An example of this sharing came from John Foster, an AMS Parent and active parishioner.

“I’m excited to have LiveStream for my mom in Ohio,” John says. “She has not been able to travel for several years and really loves to see the kids in their shows and various Masses. It’s so much easier than trying record video snippets and send them via Facebook, and she says it makes her feel closer to the kids being able to watch them live. It’s just a nice way that American Martyrs touches someone with love who is not even a parishioner.”

### **How do I view Mass or a LiveStreamed event?**

Go to [www.americanmartyrs.org](http://www.americanmartyrs.org) and click the box next to the image of the Resurrected Christ. Follow the images to the Mass, Homily or event you are looking to view.

Don’t feel well and can’t get to Mass? Watch via LiveStream.



## RETREATS PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED *Time and Space to Spend With God*

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**I**t can be very easy in our increasingly fast-paced world to get so caught up in our day-to-day activities that we miss out on spending much-needed time with God. Yes, busyness is a part of life. However, we are still called to prioritize our life and carve out time for our most important relationship — our relationship with Christ.

“Retreats are different in that we stop all of our normal activities and move away from the daily grind and distractions to create space and time to focus solely on our relationship with God,” says Fr. Rick Prindle, Associate Pastor. “It is important to do this because it is the most important relationship in our life, though we don’t pay attention to it all the time.”

American Martyrs has retreats for many different parishioner groups, including men, women, adults, youth, married couples, and certain ministries. It is important to provide retreats for different groups because

the needs and topics change depending on the audience. Therefore, retreats focusing on men’s, women’s or couple’s spirituality specifically can help develop the faith of those participants.

“I approach retreats by listening to the participants and responding to who they are and where they are, not just giving them a canned message,” says Fr. Rick, a trained retreat facilitator who has helped put on retreats for 35 years. “I try to meet people where they are in their spiritual journey and gently nudge them forward.”

The Men’s and Women’s Cornerstone Retreats are the first retreats scheduled each year and are great opportunities to grow in faith while forming relationships with other men or women of the parish. The retreat has been life-changing for many and has been quoted as a “game changer” and “the most important 26 hours of my life,” says Mike Wilk, Director of the Men’s Cornerstone

## RETREATS *continued from page 6*



retreat, who helped to first bring the retreat to American Martyrs 10 years ago.

“Men gather together and share their faith and life experiences at Cornerstone,” Mike says. “We typically have 80 to 90 men participate and are always filled to capacity. Going through Cornerstone is one of the greatest gifts I have received in my life — trust me, just go to it!”

Parishioners are encouraged to explore the different retreats planned for the year and attend those in which they feel called to participate — even if their schedule is busy.

“People always say their lives are busy,” Fr. Rick says. “Everyone is busy and they need to take time, stop all the activity and pay attention to God. That’s the only way you will grow.”

To learn more about the retreats and the dates and times offered, please check the bulletin or the parish website at [americanmartyrs.org](http://americanmartyrs.org).

### AMERICAN MARTYRS HAS THE FOLLOWING RETREATS PLANNED FOR 2015 (dates are tentative)

- The Men’s Cornerstone Retreat is scheduled for Jan. 30-31 (Super Bowl weekend).
- The Women’s Cornerstone Retreat is scheduled for the following weekend of Feb. 6-7.
- The Lenten Mission will be facilitated by Msgr. Michael O’Grady and is scheduled for Feb. 22-25.
- A group of parishioners are arranging for a trip to the Holy Land from Feb. 24 to March 7.
- The Altar Society day retreat, facilitated by Msgr. John Barry, is scheduled for March 19.
- The Youth Ministry is scheduled to have its spring LifeTeen retreat April 24-25. The fall LifeTeen retreat is tentatively scheduled for November.
- The Stewardship Retreat is tentatively scheduled for November.
- American Martyrs facilitates at least one married couples retreat where the guest speaker, Fr. Jim Clarke, Ph.D., offers his perspective on marriage as a covenant along with how men and women communicate in relationships. Date(s) for this retreat to be determined.

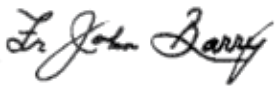
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## ANSWERING THE CALL *continued from front cover*

In these moments when you experience imperfection in yourself or others, I pray that you will not be discouraged, but quietly remember that God is in charge, no matter how many “coup attempts” we might make to dethrone the One and Only true God. Please pray for me that I may serve you well, and know that I pray for you each day and especially each night as I close my day with thanks in the Night Prayer of the Church.

In Christ,



Rev. Msgr. John F. Barry, P.A.  
Pastor

*When you think of yourself as someone with unique gifts, do you think of how you use them to answer God’s call to serve, to give back, to give thanks?*

*Our Faith in Action is provided by the American Martyrs Stewardship Commission*

### LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Saturday**, 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday**, 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.

**Monday/Wednesday/Friday**, 8:00 a.m., 12:10 p.m., 5:00 p.m.

**Tuesday/Thursday**, 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. | **Saturday**, 8:00 a.m.

**Holy Day**, 5:00 p.m. (Vigil), 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 12:10 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 7:30 p.m.