

AMERICAN MARTYRS CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Fighting to Protect the Dignity of All Human Life
Respect Life Ministry
- 4 Single Seniors Offers Respect, Welcome
- 5 “God Is Always With Us, Even in the Tough Times”
Our American Martyrs Video Ministry
- 6 American Martyrs Starts the School Year Off Right, With Plenty of Exciting Activities Ahead

A Letter From Our Pastor

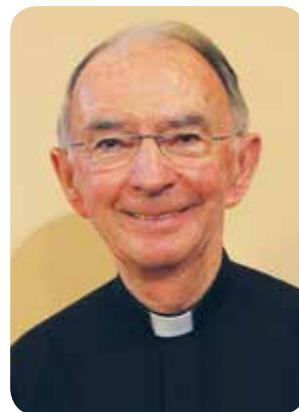
October: Helping to Feed Spiritual Hunger

Dear Parishioners,

It almost seems foolish to be speaking about Fall when as I write this the only sign of Fall is our question, “Where is it?” Yet, having said that, we have so much to be grateful for. I love this time of year when everything around the parish is in a start-up mode. We can almost hear the engines of the various ministries purring with their wonderful volunteers—stewards with great ideas.

Let’s focus the warmth of October, designated as Respect Life Month as another opportunity for us to remember that we take our direction from God, not from politicians who forget the “under God” in our Pledge. It seems that reflecting on our own mortality leads to “we can do what we like.” Let us pray for strength to hold the high road of respect for all human life as God’s gift. Thank you to the outstanding people who work so hard in this ministry. Even one life saved is a profound success.

As students get into the academic year, we see so much life around our school with our AMS and SRE students. All forms of faith formation are in full swing including the faith and fellowship activities of our Single Seniors. Lifelong learning about our faith is so important.



continued on back cover

Fighting to Protect the Dignity of All Human Life Respect Life Ministry

In today's culture, respect for human life and human dignity is at an all-time low. From abortion to assisted suicide and the death penalty, the culture of death has penetrated nearly every aspect of our society. That is why, as Catholics, we have an immense responsibility to fight for respect for every human life, from conception to natural death, and give a voice to all those who suffer in silence. Here at American Martyrs, the Respect Life Ministry is fighting that fight every day through prayer, education, and service.

"Our Respect Life Ministry is really dedicated to promoting and protecting human life from conception all the way to natural death, and everything in between," says Steven Perry, who co-chairs the Respect Life Ministry with his wife, Jessica. "Our mission is to accomplish a couple things – to educate our community on the importance of human life and human dignity, because we firmly believe that if you have a respect for life and human dignity at your core, than everything else falls into place. We then realize that everybody has an intrinsic right to life and dignity. That spreads out to all parts of ministry. If you respect life from the smallest most vulnerable form, that would mean that you also respect the homeless person on the street, or the elderly person, and everyone in between. Once you take away that respect, we cease to be a loving society. We bring awareness of these things to combat the culture and to promote a cultural of life at American Martyrs and beyond."



Beyond education, the Respect Life Ministry's goal is to promote life through service to the community.

"The other purpose is really to provide help for those who need it," Steven says. "We help at Pregnancy Help Center, which is the only pro-life pregnancy clinic in the area. They are very small so a lot of our focus is on them. They help those with crisis pregnancies and provide ultrasound services for those seeking abortions, which has changed a lot of minds – women see the ultrasounds and have a change of hear. We help runaways at Covenant House, since many times they can be targets for trafficking and sold into slavery and prostitution. We also visit those in elder care facilities and are open to other efforts."

continued on page 3



Respect Life Ministry

continued from page 2

For Steven and Jessica, venturing out into the community to raise awareness and offer support to those in need has been life changing.

“I’ve always known I was pro-life, but to actually talk with those who have been in a tough situation and to see how happy they are because they chose life, and to actually be there for someone who really needs us has change me and made me stronger,” Steven says. “To actually go out into the community to see and help those who need our help is really something. It’s a true labor of love, because you can’t really love unless you’ve

loved the most vulnerable, smallest life out there. Those who are struggling — for example, the women who go to the Pregnancy Help Center need support to help them choose life — we can offer them help so that they don’t choose to have an abortion. We can help runaways who are at risk of losing their human dignity and who don’t have a voice. And there’s spending time with those who are shut-ins or alone, those who don’t get visitors and are lost in the fray. Giving a voice to anyone who doesn’t have one is so important.”

Saturday, Oct. 24, and Sunday, Oct. 25

Turn in your baby bottles filled with your donations for the Pregnancy Help Center.

Sunday, Oct. 25

6:30 p.m. in the St. Brigid and Brendan Room — Covenant House
Come learn about Covenant House’s important work with runaway youth and how you can fight human trafficking in our community.

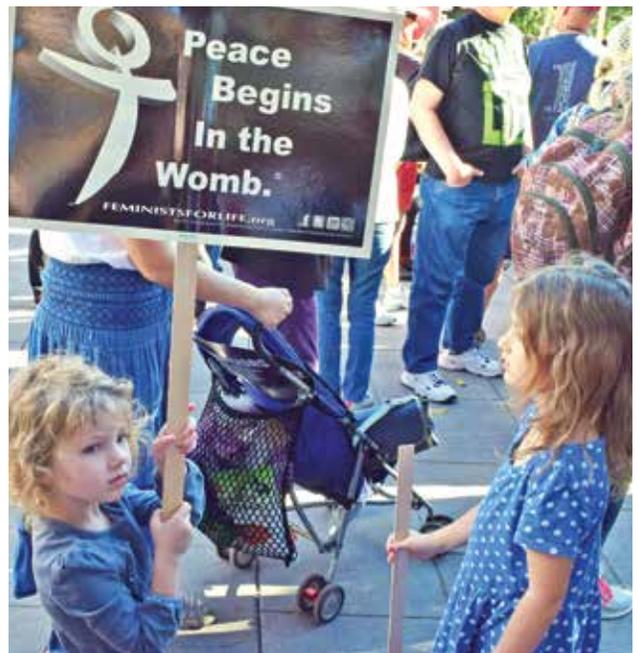
Thursday, Oct. 29

Pregnancy Help Center – Third Annual Fundraising Banquet.
Join other defenders of life in the community at this inspiring dinner.

www.supportphctorrance.org/october29fundraisingbanquet/

Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016

SAVE THE DATE! One Life LA in Downtown Los Angeles –
<http://onelifela.org>



October is Respect Life Month, so be sure to check the bulletin for information on all the special Respect Life Ministry events this month. For more information or to find out how you can help, please contact Steven and Jessica Perry via email at respectlife@americanmartyrs.org

Single Seniors Offers Respect, Welcome

An atmosphere of fellowship and openness, true respect for each other, and sharing a love of God – these are the welcoming attributes you will find with the Single Seniors at American Martyrs Parish.

Single Seniors is led by Magda Collantes, who says that the group has been part of the parish for 16 years.

“We have a meeting once a month and we have brunch once a month,” she says.

The members are mostly in their 60s and 70s, with some being widowed and others never married. Members can join at age 50 and above, and there are no dues.

“We enjoy playing cards and games,” Magda says of the meetings. “Everybody brings something to eat and everyone enjoys the company of everybody else. Everyone enjoys being together and time to go out.”

There currently are 15 members who meet at 1 p.m. every second Tuesday at the church. In

addition, the group meets at 1 p.m. on the last Sunday of each month for brunch.

“We go to a different restaurant and I place information in the weekly bulletin about the location,” Magda says. “People call me if they can come. Some members are still working and don’t come to the Tuesday meetings, but they come to the brunch.”

While most of the members are Catholics, several are not.

“But we all go to church and we all know about God,” Magda says. “That is what we have in common.”

And it’s that knowledge of God and His love that is the foundation for their coming together in good faith and with respect for one another.

“Everyone respects everyone else,” Magda says. “We can talk to everyone. There is a feeling of fellowship and openness. That’s why they join the club. Everyone is happy to be part of the club. It provides a social outlet for people.”

Anyone who is interested in joining the Single Seniors is encouraged to call Magda Collantes at 323-447-0565.

*“Everyone respects everyone else. We can talk to everyone. There is a feeling of fellowship and openness. That’s why they join the club. Everyone is happy to be part of the club. It provides a social outlet for people.”
– Magda Collantes*



“God Is Always With Us, Even in the Tough Times” Our American Martyrs Video Ministry

Those familiar with stewardship are aware that it is a way of life that calls us to use our gifts to serve, to benefit God and the Church. Pamela and Patrick O’Mara, who coordinate our Video Ministry, provide perfect examples of this way of life. Active members of our American Martyrs Community for more than 30 years, the O’Maras are gifted with skills and knowledge, which they have put to use for our faith community for nearly 20 years.

“We both come from the film industry – Patrick as a Director of Photography and myself a Producer and Assistant Director,” Pamela says. “This ministry, the Video Ministry, came to life out of an awareness that our parish community had a large senior population who had always centered their lives here in Manhattan Beach around our church. However, they were starting to slow down because of health and they wanted to stay connected through, at a minimum, Sunday Mass said by THEIR OWN pastor. It started as outreach to homebound parishioners.”

At first, technology and the Church may seem an odd combination – but even Pope Francis recognizes the importance and benefits of using technology to advance the faith. In his recent encyclical, the Pope said, “We are the beneficiaries of two centuries of enormous waves of change, from steam engines to electricity to airplanes to modern medicine...information technology and more recently the digital revolution. It is right to rejoice in these advances and to be excited about the immense possibilities which they continue to offer us. Science and technology are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity.”

Patrick and Pamela have witnessed and experienced firsthand the leaps and bounds of our technology in relation to the Video Ministry.

“These days we use a digital camera – it is the fourth camera we have utilized since we began,” Patrick says. “In the beginning, we reached out to local cable through public access time slots. We were able to connect with large areas, but public access went away, so the parish purchased time buys for the Mass – it was seen from 4 to 5 p.m. on Sunday afternoons. We also began to do Holy Day services. That was what we did until we went to live streaming a few years ago.”



“We began to record general parish activities and events and ‘trailers’ for parish activities like our Parish Fair, our St. Patrick’s Dinner, and more,” Pamela adds. “We also made training videos, Mass tutorials, and documentaries about various parish ministries.”

The ministry has continued to evolve, and now includes other contributors with professional skills in the communications area. The people involved in the Video Ministry truly are good stewards who give so much of their time and talents to serve the parish and the people of the parish.

“The people we work with are the best,” Pamela says. “They always seem to be available when needed. They sometimes provide last-minute operating at weddings or funerals, or anything else at American Martyrs which occurs at the last minute. We try to accommodate all requests, but sometimes ‘life gets in the way’. It is not always easy or convenient. God is always with us, even in tough times. We are blessed with faith.”

We who are members of the American Martyrs Catholic Community are deeply appreciative of what the O’Maras and those who work with them have done and continue to do!

For more information about the Video Ministry at American Martyrs, please email Pamela and Patrick O’Mara at videoministry@americanmartyrs.org or call 310-545-0136.

American Martyrs Starts the School Year Off Right, With Plenty of Exciting Activities Ahead

Time sure flies when you're busy – and it's almost November!

Yes, it's been three months since American Martyrs School kicked off the year with many fun and faith-filled traditions and activities, and our students, faculty and staff have been busy learning and growing. This is sure to be our best year yet!

"We spent the last academic year doing a lot of pilots and investigations throughout our school to find what best met the needs of our students," says school principal Camryn Friel. "This academic year, we are implementing many initiatives that have proved to be successful."

One of the most important changes this school year has been the integration of technology in the classrooms. While these are valuable tools, it is also important for students and teachers to be able use them properly. Parents with a student in sixth through eighth grades attended a workshop that covered proper care, online



safety concerns, Google account log-ins, and much more. In addition, a technology integration specialist from the Planet Bravo education service has been on campus for three days a week.

"This specialist provides one-on-one and small group professional development, specifically focused on the most effective way to integrate technology in the classroom to best meet students' needs," Mrs. Friel says.

Among these technological additions, the new STEM lab has been one of the most exciting. The lab has been a great way for students to develop 21st-century skills.

"All children will require these skills to thrive in a rapidly changing, technology-driven future," says STEM teacher Simon Cote. "These skills include observing/noticing/discovering, problem solving, ability to learn new things, grit, and flexibility. We also have 4 'Cs' in STEM – collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking."

"Mr. Cote hosted two parent meetings to speak to the vision of the STEM lab," Mrs. Friel adds. "In STEM class, students strive to be innovative, persistent, resourceful,

continued on page 7



"The Jubilee Year begins the first week of Advent, and Pope Francis has declared it a Jubilee Year of Mercy. In our classrooms, we will talk about how we live the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, and how they help us to understand God's merciful love in our lives." – Mrs. Camryn Friel, Principal

courageous, visionary, creative, and determined. Students are encouraged to try things and know that it is okay to make mistakes.”

In late September, the school followed and celebrated Pope Francis’ long-anticipated visit to the U.S. The school assemblies featured “Pope Updates” from the student council, as well as prayers of anticipation in the preceding weeks.

“We reflected on the three messages Pope Francis wanted to share with us – asking for forgiveness and forgiving others, being a friend of God, and taking caring of the poor,” Mrs. Friel says. “Individual classrooms also commemorated the pope’s visit through different activities, such as creating their own coat of arms – like the Papal Coat of Arms – following his tour on a map of the USA, and, in fourth grade, celebrating the canonization of Junipero Serra, founder of the California missions. This was an important source of study in their social studies curriculum.”

The holidays are also an exciting time at American Martyrs. The school will celebrate Thanksgiving together with a school Mass on Nov. 20, which will be led by the seventh grade. This holiday season will also bring our first grade-level Mass on Nov. 22, where the fifth-graders will join the parish’s liturgical ministers to help with the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. During Advent, the school will reflect on the focus of the Church’s 2016 Jubilee Year.

“The Jubilee Year begins the first week of Advent, and Pope Francis has declared it a Jubilee Year of Mercy,” Mrs. Friel says. “In our classrooms, we will talk about how we live the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, and how they help us to understand God’s merciful love in our lives.”

Everyone at the school is excited about what we’ve done so far, and can’t wait for the good things to come.

“I am looking forward to a year of celebrating all our successes,” Mrs. Friel says. “We have much to be proud of here at AMS!”



For more information on activities and events taking place this year at American Martyrs Catholic School, please call the school office at 310-545-8559.

AMERICAN MARTYRS CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

624 15th Street :: Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
(310) 545-5651 :: www.americanmartyrs.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Torrance, CA
Permit # 234

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., 12:10 p.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.

October: Helping to Feed Spiritual Hunger

continued from front cover

We are still relishing the visit of our Holy Father. In his warm way, he challenged us to love as Christ loved. He asks us to open our hearts and minds to the comfort and challenge of the Gospels. His actions speak to the pain in our broken world – those hurting and wounded in our human family. He asks us to pray for the true success of the Synod on the Family as we seek a way to bring that infinite Mercy of God to touch our wounds.

I love this simple poem written by the late Mattie J. T. Stepanek, a young boy who died from Muscular Dystrophy.

“We need to stop.
Just stop.
Stop for a moment...
Before anybody
Says or does anything
That may hurt anyone else.
We need to be silent.
Just silent.”

This is good advice for all of us as we acknowledge the work of our fabulous video ministry in capturing moments and experiences. All of us are “video presentations of our Faith” and people watch it!

God bless you.



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