

AUGUST 2013



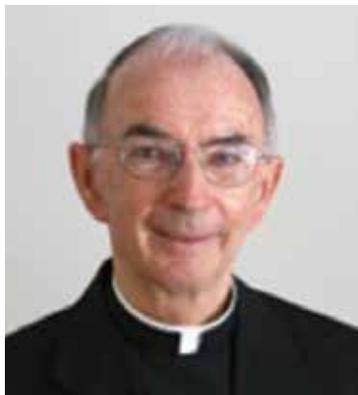
Our Faith in Action

American Martyrs Catholic Community

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR *Endings and Beginnings*

Dear Parishioners,

Summer is almost waving “goodbye,” and soon everything will be jumping with life around our parish. We will hear the happy voices of our AMS and SRE students around our campus. I always look forward to the sense of excitement as ministries regroup and new ideas are shared. This is a time to realize how fortunate we are to have such a great church. We have seen much evidence of this over the summer when we celebrated and mourned together in the funerals of Peggy Berkline, Molly Harrington, Dr. Lew Yocum, Amy Turner Adams, Bob Heutmaker, Marcia Wible and John Zivec. The feeling of support, prayer and love was palpable.



The Eucharist, once again, was at the center of our comforting and our hope.

We have many new dreams for this coming year. It is time for us to launch out further into the ocean of technology. We hope that as we cast the new net of ministry and evangelization — sharing the Gospel message and the teachings of our faith — we will have even more people who will celebrate with us. I pray, in particular, for our brothers and sisters who have “fallen away” from the regular practice of our faith. It is my prayer that each one of us may be the voice of love that reminds and the welcoming and encouraging hand to bring our missing friends home.

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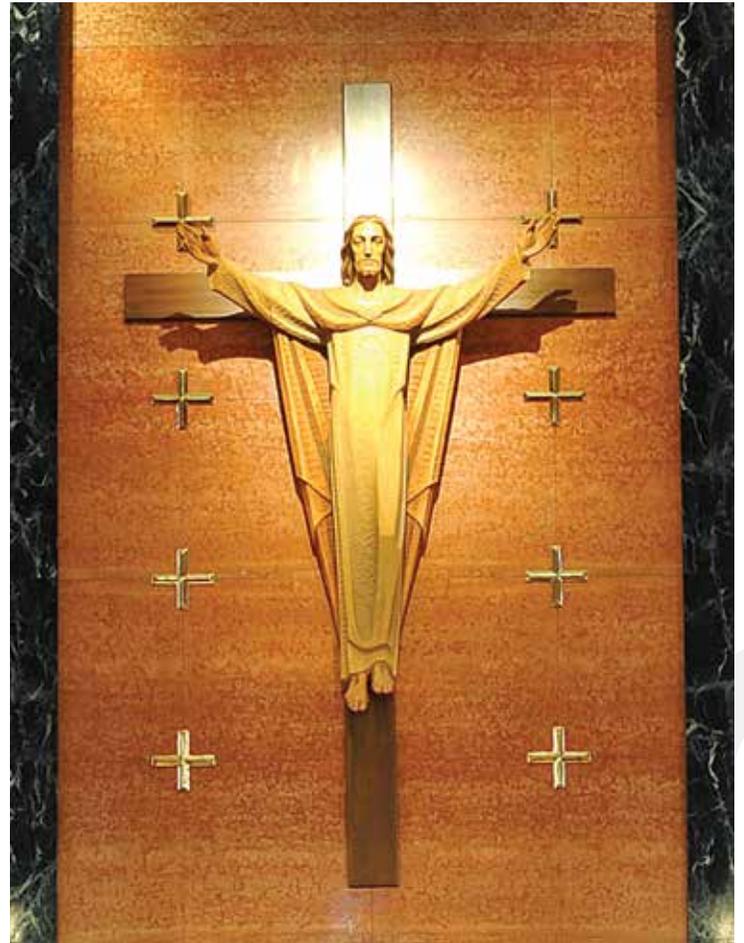
STEWARDSHIP'S "SUPREME TEACHER" *Following Christ's Example*

Former President and Five-Star General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "You don't lead by hitting people over the head — that's assault, not leadership." President Eisenhower's words are both blunt and humorous, but he makes a great point. Almost any successful endeavor in life requires the benefit of strong leadership. And a truly effective leader does not lead by simply telling others what to do, but by providing a strong example of how to carry oneself on a daily basis.

This is no different for us in our lives as Catholic Christians. As individuals who face a myriad of difficult choices every day, we require a leader who, through word and example, can show us the path to living according to God's will. For us, Jesus is the supreme teacher of every aspect of Christian life, and His life as documented in the Gospels is a model that we should strive to imitate in living as good Christians. And as we have learned, stewardship — the sharing of the gifts that God has given to us — is a big part of Christian life, and one for which Jesus left many examples of successful living.

Jesus' nature of selfless service, documented many times throughout the New Testament and culminating with His death for our sins, is an underlying aspect of living the stewardship way of life. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops points out in its pastoral document *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "In Jesus' teaching and life, self-emptying is fundamental. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, He is filled with the Father's will, and He is fulfilled in just this way" (20).

Jesus points out to Peter in Mark's Gospel that this "self-emptying" requires sacrifice, but ultimately leads to "eternal life in the age to come" (Mk 10:30). But the Christian steward's ultimate reward is not his or her only benefit from living the stewardship way of life. By sharing of our time, talents and



treasure and living in imitation of Christ, we can relate more closely to Him in sharing, in a small way, in His sacrifice. "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship*, 21).

The next time you are frustrated or unsure of how to best respond to God's gifts in stewardship, take a moment to open up the Bible. Jesus may not "hit us over the head" in His leadership, but He does provide numerous examples through His actions and teachings of how to live as one of His disciples.

CATECHISTS PREPARE FOR ANOTHER AMAZING YEAR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As the summer season winds down, our parish's Religious Education catechists are preparing for the new year of faith formation, which begins on Sept. 25. Patti Williams, our parish's director of Religious Education, is already looking forward to the new year and the chance to minister to the youngest members of our community.

"The children are the reason we're here!" she says. "The community of catechists is also such an inspiration to me, and I look forward to taking a leadership role in guiding parents of the families entrusted to our care."

Here at American Martyrs, faith formation is offered to children attending our school, as well as to those children who attend school elsewhere. Patti and her team of 125 catechists minister to both groups of students.

Indeed, there are a variety of options available to parents when it comes to the religious education of their young ones. Those whose children attend American Martyrs School, faith formation is included as a part of their daily curriculum. For those whose children do not attend the school, religious instruction takes place on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, from 3:45 to 4:45 p.m. for grades one through six. Grades seven and eight have religious instruction on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings from 7:15 to 8:30 p.m.

Patti reminds all parents that while the parish offers religious education as a resource, true faith formation always begins at home.

"Religious education will happen in the way we model our lives of faith at home," she says. "Like it or not, we are all catechists."

Speaking of catechists, Patti notes that she is in need of additional support this upcoming year.

"We are currently interviewing for 40 catechist openings," she says. "Any adult in the parish should feel free to ask about serving as a catechist. There are parameters we go by, but if God is calling you to explore this ministry, a conversation is well worth it."



A recent First Communion class poses for a photo with Msgr. Barry

SUNDAY PRESCHOOL

Capturing the Beauty of Childlike Faith



Sunday after Sunday, Preschool Director April Beuder has had her spirits lifted by the shining eyes of children as they learn about their Catholic Faith. By working with the Sunday Preschool Program, she has discovered the refreshing vision of childlike faith.

“This program gives us the opportunity to share God’s message of love and hope,” April says. “We have a wonderful sense of community at the Sunday Preschool Program, with teachers working, laughing, and praying together. This is my 20th year with the program. I enjoy working with our young families and volunteer teachers, and most of all, being around the young children. My husband and I have been married for 26 years and our three children are in high school and college, so Sunday Preschool gives me another opportunity to see the world through the eyes of a child again.”



The Sunday Preschool Program takes place during the 9:30 a.m. Mass from September through mid-May in various areas around our parish campus. Through prayer, song, stories, and sharing, Sunday preschoolers celebrate friendship, family, community, our natural resources, and the changing seasons. Each year, about 200 young students from ages 3 to 5 and between 40 and 45 dedicated volunteer catechists make this program a reality.



April’s position with the program is largely administrative and involves duties such as recruiting and training volunteer catechists, managing the budget, providing resources, and filling in for absent teachers. She works closely with Sr. Mary Irene Flanagan, who designed the curriculum and implemented it at American Martyrs decades ago. April and Sr. Mary Irene also work with Kristen Holleran, who handles most of the day-to-day responsibilities and arrives early every Sunday to open the classrooms, set up, and get supplies ready for the teachers. Kristen’s

daughter, Mia, often comes early to help her mother as well.

The Sunday Preschool program's curriculum is developmentally appropriate and designed to maintain the children's interest with every lesson.

"Although each teacher brings their own spirituality to each lesson, our curriculum remains very celebratory in nature, with prayer at the heart of each lesson," April says. "I will always be grateful to Sr. Mary Irene for creating this program. It has brought the gifts of faith and friendship to me, my family, and so many others."

The program is also jam-packed with creative ideas and interactive activities.

"One of my favorite lessons is called 'New Life,'" April says. "Each spring, we do a lesson on the butterfly life cycle with the 4-year olds. Each child gets a butterfly larvae to take home. We time the lesson so that the butterflies emerge around Easter Sunday. It is a concrete, visual way for the children to see that life changes — even though the chrysalis looks dead and lifeless, it is really transforming into a beautiful butterfly. I always look forward to this time of year because the children come back from Easter break full of excitement about their butterflies — sometimes the parents are more excited than the children!"

The Sunday Preschool program is always looking for more volunteers — no experience is necessary. Anyone feeling called to share God's message of love and hope through this ministry may contact April Beuder at abeuder@americanmartyrs.org. Classes have already starting forming for September, so parents should utilize the online registration form available on the parish website to register their children for Sunday Preschool. The first day of class is on Sept. 29, which is preceded by a New Parent Orientation on Sept. 8.



SACRISTANS' ESSENTIAL WORK TAKES PLACE BEHIND THE SCENES

There are many parish ministries in which one can serve. Indeed, each ministry is vital to the life and mission of the parish. Some of these ministries are well-known and visible to everyone in the parish community. But others, like the Sacristan Ministry, perform their duties behind the scenes. However, that does not mean that their work is any less significant or essential to parish life.

“As sacristans, we are charged with preparing the vessels, books, and other materials necessary for celebrating the Mass and other liturgies,” says Yvonne Amantea, who coordinates the Sacristan Ministry. “We work mostly behind the scenes, and we hope that we are good examples of dedicated ministers to our Lord and parish community.”

There are currently 28 sacristans who serve our parish. Twenty-three of them help with the weekend Masses, while eight cover the daily Mass rotations.

The primary duties of the sacristan are to help the priest and deacon prepare for Mass. They set out the bread and the wine for Communion and mark the lectionary, book of Gospels and the Roman Missal for the lectors, deacons and priests. They prepare the vestments and microphone for the presider and place microphones in the lectern and ambo. They keep the sacristy in an orderly and neat condition. They make sure that the assigned lectors, altar servers, and Eucharistic Ministers are accounted for. It is also the responsibility of the sacristans to find ministers to fill in where needed. That is just some of what is involved in their preparation.

“It is a privilege and honor to serve as a sacristan,” Yvonne says. “To be able to assist with preparation for the Liturgy is a blessing beyond compare. I am humbled each time I am given the privilege to enter into the sacristy and help prepare for the Liturgy.”



After Mass, the sacristan makes sure everything has been put away or, if there is another Mass, the sacristan makes sure that the vessels, books and vestments are staged and ready to go for the sacristan assigned to the next Mass.

Although the work of the Sacristans Ministry is largely behind the scenes, those who serve as sacristans often find themselves feeling more connected to the parish family and to the celebration of the Liturgy.

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— Yvonne Amantea

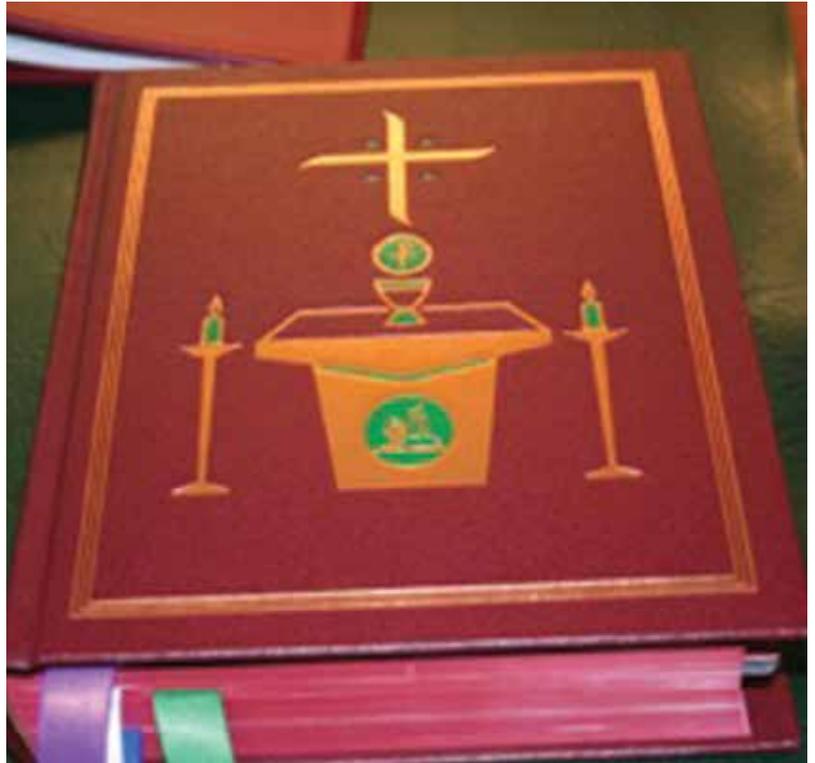
SACRISTANS *continued from page 6*

“Being a sacristan truly helped my understanding of community and the Mass,” Yvonne says. “To be so close to the Eucharist and to witness my own transformation each time I serve is beyond my own comprehension. Something happens to me, I feel the presence of the Lord deep within my being when I enter the sacred space of the Sanctuary. To be able to prepare for this celebration with and for our community is a privilege.”

The sacristans’ service is also a form of stewardship, and it is also a way of showing their gratitude to the parish.

“We hope we are helping our community experience the Liturgy in a prayerful and spirit-filled way by working behind the scenes to prepare and serve where needed,” Yvonne says.

For more information or to get involved, please call Yvonne Amantea at 310-613-7814, or email her at yamantea@americanmartyrs.org.



CATECHISTS PREPARE *continued from page 3*

While some adults may feel that they are not qualified to serve in this way, the truth of the matter is that the Gospel is often preached “without words.” This means that a gentle soul who works well with children could be an effective catechist, even if they do not possess prior knowledge.

“Remember, we have excellent guidebooks that help you prepare, and many of our catechists would be the first to tell you they learn right along with the children — I know I do,” Patti says.

And while a catechist can most certainly impact his or her students in a positive way, often the reverse is also true.

“Sharing your faith with young people will change you, so be prepared!” Patti says. “You will learn a great deal about yourself and your faith will deepen as you meet the challenge of putting our faith traditions into

the context of our youth. You will touch them in a remarkable and long-lasting way.”

While traditional classroom instruction is the primary method of catechesis for the youth of American Martyrs, new online materials are also available to further assist in ongoing formation. In addition, the Religious Education program is looking to offer more opportunities for social interactions between families, which will serve to build community in a powerful way. For our junior high students, YOUCAT — a youthful version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* — will be incorporated into the class sessions.

For more information about children’s religious education at American Martyrs, please contact Patti Williams at 310-546-4734.

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www.americanmartyrs.org

Endings and Beginnings *continued from front cover*

You will notice that some of our buildings have been repainted, or are currently in the process. This is just an external work, while all of us need to keep our hearts and souls in prime condition, always ready to receive and celebrate God's grace. We will have a number of new opportunities for updating and renewal as the year progresses. Please check regularly on our website for information. Build into your schedule some time for these enrichments.

Many new families have joined us. As you recognize new faces, please introduce yourself and make them feel welcome. A new batch of our young people is off to colleges throughout our area and country. Send them with your blessing and keep

them in your prayers that they will remember their faith and the values we have from the teachings of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Thank you for all you do to strengthen our faith family here at American Martyrs – you are indeed generous with your love and stewardship – and do enjoy these last days of summer.

In Christ,



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

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., 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.