

JUNE/JULY 2013



Our Faith in Action

American Martyrs Catholic Community

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR *Reflecting on Father's Day*

Dear Parishioners,

In June we celebrated two significant calendar events. June is first of all the month in our Church dedicated to the Sacred Heart. As I look back on my family life, I thankfully remember that each night in my home we had a prayer consecrating our family to the Sacred Heart. To this day in our family room, there is a perpetual light before an image of the Sacred Heart. I remembered kneeling there with my parents and siblings as either my father or mother led us in that prayer. It reminded us that we were united in faith and prayer that our family would always be united in love for one another. Despite all that goes on in a normal family, we still are working with some success.

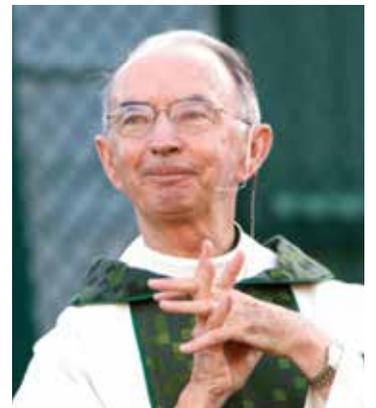
Under the image of the Sacred Heart there is a delicately hand carved heart where the light is placed. This object was given to my father (when he was a young man) as a thank you from a shut-in older gentleman who carved this with a pocket knife. He had nothing else to give, but he gave us a treasure. It speaks to us of the father we loved and cherished and his care for the poor and needy which he continued to demonstrate in his daily life. While he is dead for many years, we are blessed with the memory of a truly good man.

As we celebrated "Father's Day", I hope you took some time to remember and honor your father. If you are a Dad, did you renew your commitment to your family. Each day let them honor you because you honor yourself. Continue your effort to provide shoulders for your children where they may sit having a better perspective on life, on the world. As you walk the way, remember they have a right and you have the privilege of helping them to walk a good path.

I hope you all had a blessed Father's Day! Continue to be an example of love and devotion for your family and they too will remember you as a "good man".

In Christ,

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



A BIG YEAR FOR OUR PARISH SCHOOL



Catholic education is truly a gift. And here at American Martyrs, we don't take that gift for granted.

"We are so blessed to be in the faith filled community of American Martyrs," says Principal Camryn Connelly. "Without our parishioners, families, faculty and staff, we would not be able to accomplish all of the wonderful things we do for our parish children."

This has been a big year for American Martyrs School. Several new initiatives and developments were put in place this year to continue enriching our students' learning experience.

Over the last three years, the school has been increasing the number of classes per grade. Three years ago, each grade had two classes. This year, with the addition of a third class for the fifth grade, there are now three classes for each grade through fifth. This change has allowed the school to reduce class sizes, which in turn allows teachers to more effectively reach their students.

During the previous school year, an additional four classrooms and a new media lab were added to the junior high school, which opened up more possibilities during this school year.

"It's creating an environment that is much more hands on," Ms. Connelly says. "Our kids are probably going to have jobs that we've never heard of because of how rapidly technology is changing our world. We need to teach them to think critically and think outside

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of the box. Everything we're doing in expanding our technology is allowing them to do that."

At the beginning of the year, a new math program called *Everyday Mathematics* was added to the curriculum. This program uses a more interactive approach to teaching math.

"Many of the teachers have said that they know their students as math students in a way they've never known them before — meaning that they know their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to help them learn," Ms. Connelly says. "It's been very hands on. The teachers love it. I know from going in the different classrooms that seeing what the students can learn and apply is just incredible. It's teaching the students math in a way that they are able to apply it and not do just rote math problems."

The school also began an extensive strategic planning process this past year, due to the many changes that have taken shape over the last several years.

"We felt that it was time to stop and evaluate who we are, decide where we want to go, and put together a plan of how to get there," Ms. Connelly says. "We've been visiting other school sites and keeping up on current technologies and making sure that we are being a leader among schools on what we can provide for our students."

During the coming school year, American Martyrs School will begin writing their WCEA/WASC report for the accreditation process to prepare for the accreditation visit that will occur during the 2014-15 school year.



GROWING IN FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNITY THROUGH THE FATHER'S GUILD

Through the American Martyrs Father's Guild, all men of the parish are given the opportunity to get to know each other, share their faith, and serve others. Founded in 1987, the men of the Father's Guild are willing and able to help the parish community at any time.

Although the Father's Guild hosts and participates in several events over the course of the year, they do not have formal meetings, and instead communicate through a group email thread. This mode of communication makes it easier for the 180-plus members of the Father's Guild to remain in contact with each other.

"The guild serves as a very loose partnership with the men of the parish to help whenever necessary," says Ed Beltran, ministry leader. "It's really just a group of men who want to help when needed. We do a lot of legwork when we need some last minute muscle to get things done — for example, it could be putting up the stage for an outdoor Mass, or taking clothes and food to the homeless."

Although it is called the Father's Guild, the ministry is open to any and all men of the parish and school communities.

"We will take anybody — it's more a matter of being as inclusive as possible of all the men in the church," Ed says. "I met the guy who started it many years ago, and he was just trying to include dads who weren't a part of the school, or who hadn't participated before or weren't married, or anyone! It ended up being called the Father's Guild, but it's more like a men's guild."



The men of the Father's Guild often serve to address the various needs of our parish, and in the process build friendship and fellowship with one another.

The Father's Guild builds camaraderie between the members through activities such as twice-a-year golf outings at local Southern California courses. The group also hosts and assists with a number of parish events throughout the year — a pancake breakfast at the beginning of the school year, the Parish Fair in November, a 5K race in February, and a Lenten family dinner. Two years ago, the Father's Guild began participating in a Matthew 25 effort called "Hearts for the Hungry." Bringing our daughters and sons to serve was a very rewarding experience for all of us.

"When something needs to get done, [the church] will put a note out to the guild and we'll supply 10 warm bodies," Ed says. "The tasks are often either physical in nature or last minute — it's rewarding to know that you are able to help,

and to be a part of the parish community. It makes me feel that I am living a better life and helping others. It allows me to put action into place instead of just coming and sitting at Mass. It's an easy way to give back. You can contribute as much as you want and when you can — the men of the Father's Guild just want to be able to help out the parish when they need it."

Through serving their parish, these men have been able to grow in fellowship both with the parish community and with each other.

For more information, or to join the Father's Guild, please contact Ed Beltran at ed.beltran@xerox.com.

LECTORS PROCLAIM THE WORD OF GOD

Each liturgical ministry has an important and special role in the celebration of the Mass. Lectors, however, have the unique responsibility of transmitting the Word of God to the rest of the congregation. With careful preparation, lectors can convey in each reading the depth of the sacred Scriptures to the faithful at Mass.

American Martyrs' Lectors Ministry includes about 65 lectors, who each read about once a month. Two lectors are usually assigned to each Mass, and a third is assigned if a deacon is unavailable to read the General Intercessions. The ministry provides training, and lectors are given a workbook — the same one that is given to all lectors in every Catholic church — that specifies the readings for each day of the liturgical year.

The lectors are scheduled three months in advance according to availability, and other lectors are willing to help out if someone needs a substitute.

"We always have people that are willing to jump in to say they'll read for someone, or that they'll read more than once," says Toni Sweet, coordinator of the Lectors Ministry. "They are an incredibly cooperative, wonderful and loving group. I have served in three other parishes, and believe me, it was not the same! Martyrs is extremely unique in that regard — my job is so very easy because of the people involved."

Lectors are encouraged to begin preparing for their readings on Monday or Tuesday of the prior week.

"We give them pronunciation guides, encourage them to ask any questions, and have them read the



Members of the Lectors Ministry include, (Front row, from left) Terri Sabosky, Susan Dalton, Dana Denis, Avito Moniz, Grace Moniz, Liz Breen, Paul Craig, Cheryl Slocumb, Cicely Parco, Marilyn Steinberg, Sherry Peirce. (Back row, from left) Greg Smith, Pat Sain, Dave Harrington, Toni Sweet, Dan Manson, Barney Botiller, Jim Myrtle.

Gospel and the other readings to see how all three tie in," says Toni. "Depending on the readings, there are certain words and certain phrases that need emphasis. A reader may slow down, and emphasize certain important phrases or words, or maybe they'll change the voice inflection when it's supposed to be Jesus speaking as opposed to someone else. This way, these things can jump out at you and you can say, 'Wow, I never noticed that, I have to go back and read that again.'"

The lectors also learn and understand that visual cues and eye contact go a long way in conveying the Scriptures' message to fellow parishioners at Mass.

"We also try to get them to look at the congregation, to turn their eyes to the different parts of the church and engage the congregation," says Toni. "This way, they communicate with them — we just want to make sure that [the congregation is] part of what they're reading or projecting, and that the Word of the sacred Bible is a part of you. It's a real challenge for each one of us. We always say, 'If you touch one person in the entire church, you have done your job.'"

The ministry makes a point to note the distinction between simply speaking publicly and proclaiming the readings at Mass. Each lector is careful to imbue their readings with the underlying theology and spirituality present in each one.

"We try to emphasize the fact that this is not just a podium for speakers," Toni says. "We look for people that have the heart of God within, and have the faith that is going to carry them through. It's not a performance — it's proclaiming the Word of God. It's not just an announcement that we're making over the pulpit. Most of the people who come to church don't read the Bible, so the only exposure they're going to get is what is read on the ambo, and what is read by the priest or deacon in the Gospel. We try to make it as worthwhile as possible."

In the end, reading at Mass can be a spiritual and transformative experience not only for the congregation, but also for the lector.

"It has opened up a whole new avenue into the Bible for me," says Toni. "There is so much in the Bible that you just cannot get enough of it. It's the same words, but there is a difference in the way it's interpreted and what it means for you that day of the week. It has really intensified my prayer life, my spirituality, my everything. You just need to be able to deliver your message the way God wants you to. It does change your life, and I am very proud of the fact that this ministry has done that for so many people."

For more information, or to get involved, please contact Toni Sweet at lectorcoordinator@americanmartyrs.org.

AMERICAN MARTYRS YOUTH MINISTRY OFFERS FULL SLATE OF EXCITING SUMMER ACTIVITIES



The 2013 Confirmation Class.



American Martyrs teens gather for a bonfire on the beach.

Take the chance.

That is the message that American Martyrs Youth Ministry Director, Monica Leon, is sending the parish's high school youth this summer — step outside your comfort zone for one afternoon or one evening and take the chance that maybe our Youth Ministry program is exactly what you're looking for.

"The summer is a perfect opportunity for the youth to take a chance," Monica says. "Most of the time during the school year, they have so many commitments. But the summer is the time when they at least have a little break. So we invite them to take the chance and come and participate in our summer Youth Ministry events — we know that if they do they will recognize that this is a place that they want to be."

Throughout July and August, Monica and the American Martyrs Youth Ministry core team will host several social events at the parish, ranging from beach and bonfire nights to gatherings for ice cream and games.

"Our gatherings are full of fellowship, fun and prayer," Monica says. "It's all about making sure our teens are aware that they are called to be active members of this community and helping them to see that there is a place here for them. It's also a place for them to meet with peers who are in the same place — they're curious, they have questions. Our core team is passionate about our faith and is here to help guide them to answers."

In addition to the social events scheduled, from July 12 to 14 a few dozen of the parish youth will travel to Arizona for the Steubenville West Youth Conference.

"It sounds cliché, but Steubenville is life changing," Monica says. "When I was in high school, it was the one major event that really drew me in and made me realize that it is okay to be passionate about learning and living the faith. Our core members have gone as well, and so it's a really cool thing for us to be able to share something like

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this that we know is going to impact the teens' lives. With lots of singing, praising, learning and sharing the faith, it's something that the teens would never really imagine being as fun as it's going to be. We are pleased that so many are saying say 'yes' and taking the chance!"

Throughout the summer, Monica will also be accepting registrations for the parish's Confirmation program. A two-year commitment, the majority of the students begin the Confirmation program in their freshman year and conclude in their sophomore year, but sophomores and juniors are welcome to begin, as well.

After a summer full of great events, the Youth Ministry program will begin its new year in September. This year, there will be weekly Life Nights after the 5 p.m. Sunday Mass, as well as weekly Teen Tuesdays. All parish youth of high school age are invited to come at any time and participate.

For more information about upcoming events, please refer to the bulletin or the Youth Ministry's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/americanmartyrs.ym.

To register for either the Steubenville Conference or for the Confirmation program, please email Monica Leon at anym@americanmartyrs.org or call her at 310 546 4734.



Second year Confirmation candidates go to Pali Mountain for retreat.



American Martyrs Youth Ministry core members dress up for the Hunger Games Life Night.

Upcoming Schedule:

July 12 to 14 — Steubenville West in Tuscon, Ariz.

July 16 and 23 — Socials

Aug. 20 — Field Day

Aug. 27 — Coffee House featuring live music

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PARISH PRIESTS OFFER UNIQUE INSIGHTS INTO FATHER’S DAY

Like anyone we speak with regularly, we can forget the significance of calling our priests “Father.” But each year as Father’s Day comes and goes, our parish priests have occasion to reflect on their calling to spiritual fatherhood.

“Jesus said that “If you leave father and mother and wife and children and follow me, you will receive a hundredfold here and in heaven,” says Fr. Nick. “My parish family is my big family and everyone here is my son or daughter and my brother or sister.”

All three of our priests see their role as “father” parallel to that of the dads of our parish. “What inspires me as a priest every day is when I see the good fathers in my community, with whom I’m privileged to

walk side-by-side, says Msgr. Barry, who is delighted to also be known as Fr. John. “I see these men up before daybreak and out working for their families and then here with me praying late into the night – giving leadership to this parish. These men and their example of self-sacrifice are an unbelievably motivational example to me.”

“One of the most important roles of any father is that of mentoring their children, especially mentoring them in faith,” Fr. Joe says. “I think of St. Joseph – he doesn’t say a word in all of the New Testament, but he’s there in action, taking care of Jesus and the Blessed Mother. We’re all called to do that as a priest, a dad or other father figure.”



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.