



# *Our Faith in Action*

*American Martyrs Catholic Community*

## **A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR**

### *Carelessness: The Subtle Operator*

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Dear Parishioners,

**H**ave you ever thought about the impact of the word “carelessness” in our lives? I never gave it much thought until I was recently reflecting on how that word has impacted my own life. Then it came to me how it can invade every aspect of our days. We see carelessness on the freeways and people die. We see people walking against a red light and for the most part it is just carelessness. Think about the carelessness of money that has its consequences; failing to pay a bill on time or forgetting altogether has penalties.



All of this is true and important but carelessness also invades our lives on much deeper levels. It invades many relationships. How easy it is to become careless about how we relate to spouses, to parents, siblings and even children. Ask yourself, “Am I careless, taking risks in my marriage?” Brokenness and divorce knock at the door and pain is left in the hearts of loved ones. What protections do we have in place lest the thief break in and steal what is most sacred. Carelessness is a subtle operator. It begins very small and grows if unchecked. Flirtations with life’s values end up in places we’ve

never wanted and “carelessness” is once again victorious. Too late to pick up the pieces! Another family destroyed.

An even deeper level of the destructive power of carelessness is in our life of faith. It breaks my heart to see how many lose their faith without even recognizing how the power of “carelessness” quietly, yet, very effectively made its move. Carelessness about prayer, morality, participating fully in the Mass – slowly missing Sunday Mass here and there – the creeping tendrils begin

to take over until we are choked and before we realize it we stop attending. Carelessness takes many forms and can adjust itself to any circumstance of life; it is the perfect chameleon – the king of adaptation.

How do we conquer and avoid letting this evil take as much out of our lives as it does? Think of some good people and their example and try to imitate them. Be more vigilant about those seemingly innocent acts of carelessness and check yourself. Getting too close to the edge of the cliff for a look is a temptation but how many fall over to destruction?

In the month of November we have two great feast days. Nov. 1, we celebrate the every day saints all of us

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## THE ST. FRANCIS ANIMAL MINISTRY

### *A Deep Respect for the Integrity of All Creation*

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Once upon a time, there were two dogs named Roscoe. It may sound improbable, but the fact that two dogs shared the same name was the reason two complete strangers — Lorraine Watkins and Sharon Trucker — met and discovered that not only were they next door neighbors and belonged to the same parish, but that they both had a passion for animals.

“One day, we were both outside calling our dogs, only to discover we each had a dog named Roscoe,” says Sharon. “The memory still makes me laugh because there we were, both calling for Roscoe, and both of us wondering why this other person was calling our dog.”

It was a chance meeting, but the two quickly became friends. When Lorraine’s Roscoe died and her other dog was grieving, Sharon suggested a visit to the Carson Animal Shelter to find it a companion. The visit opened their eyes to the shelter’s conditions and they realized they had to do something. They began volunteering at the shelter, and by word-of-mouth managed to find others to volunteer with them. Then one day, they decided to approach Msgr. Barry to see if they could involve



*Volunteer Blanche Campain and Basil.*

parishioners by forming an animal ministry. A plan was presented to the Pastoral Council, and with the Council’s approval the St. Francis Animal Ministry was founded in our parish.

There are presently over 50 parishioners who are members of this ministry, each helping out in various ways – providing financial support, making donations of blankets, food and grooming supplies, or helping host the Coffee and

Donuts twice each year. Within the ministry is a core group of parishioners who also volunteer at the shelter cleaning out cages, grooming, fostering, adopting, and socializing with the animals – and they could use help.

“What many teens may not realize is that if they are at least 16 years old, they can earn service hours by volunteering at the shelter,” says Sharon. “One young man even earned his Eagle Scout badge by building a lean-to so the animals wouldn’t have to stand in the sun while waiting for their admittance to be processed.”

Lorraine explains that the goal of the ministry is to help the animals get adopted, which can be difficult when they arrive dirty and unkempt. This

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*“[I] rejoice when I see people open their hearts to adopt or foster an animal, bathe a dog so that it looks more adoptable, or even give animals one hour of happiness by socializing with them. Animals can’t advocate for themselves, so to see people care re-affirms for me that humanity is so good.”*

*— Lorraine Watkins*

## THE ST. FRANCIS ANIMAL MINISTRY

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*Parishioner Sharon Trucker with a mom and her kitten. Sharon co-founded the St. Francis Animal Ministry with Lorraine Watkins.*



*Volunteer Vanessa Andrade with a Rottweiler. Volunteers can help by fostering, adopting, grooming, or simply playing with the animals.*



*Volunteer Ashley Andrade with Carly. Many of the volunteers work to make an animal's life pleasant, even if it's just for an hour.*

is why bathing and grooming a dog or cat can go a long way in making an animal more adoptable. Socialization is also important, and volunteers will write notes stating if an animal is friendly, likes to play with a ball, or works well with a leash. Of course, not every animal is adopted, but even those animals need attention and love.

“Working at the shelter can be sad,” says Lorraine. “But I also rejoice when I see people open their hearts to adopt or foster an animal, bathe a dog so that it looks more adoptable, or even give animals one hour of happiness by socializing with them. Animals can’t advocate for themselves, so to see people care re-affirms for me that humanity is good.”

Within our faith there is a spiritual element connecting humanity and God’s creatures. Almost 800 years ago, St. Francis of Assisi wrote *The Canticle of Creatures* — also known as *The Canticle of Brother Sun* — which was considered by Pope John Paul II to be a beautiful reminder that everything from God bears significance. In fact, during a public address commemorating World Day of Peace in 1990, he gave a speech encouraging Catholics to follow the example of St. Francis by embracing all creatures as members of a single family.

“It is my hope that the inspiration of St. Francis will help us to keep ever alive a sense of ‘fraternity’ with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created,” said

Pope John Paul II. “And may he remind us of our serious obligation to respect and watch over them with care, in light of that greater and higher fraternity that exists within the human family.”

And because of two dogs named Roscoe, the St. Francis Animal Ministry is following in the footsteps of St. Francis in having a deep respect for the integrity of all creation.

The St. Francis Animal Ministry is always looking for donations of blankets, canned dog food, grooming supplies and flea spray. If you would like more information on volunteer opportunities, please call ministry coordinators Lorraine Watkins at 310-977-9009, Sharon Trucker at 310-545-5080, or the parish office at 310-545-5651.

## YOUNG STEWARDS SERVE COMMUNITY THROUGH RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING PROJECT



*(From left) Lauren Torii, Msgr. Barry and Annemarie Dapoz smile at the Pancake Breakfast, where the girls worked to launch a composting pilot program to reduce waste.*



*Lauren and Annemarie demonstrate how to utilize the composting bins. The girls also made signs to clearly show users where to properly dispose of waste.*



*The newly purchased bins are colorful and clearly labeled in order to facilitate easier use. "If everyone does the little things, it makes a difference," Annemarie says.*

In the very first chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, God creates the earth and all the living creatures, then creates man and woman. He then entrusts man with caring for all of these things. Responding to that biblical call are two 13-year-old American Martyrs parishioners, Annemarie Dapoz and Lauren Torii.

"It's our earth," says Annemarie, an eighth-grader. "We should really take care of it. God made it and we need to help it survive."

So when Annemarie needed to complete a project for her Girl Scouts Silver Award, she immediately thought of a topic that she is passionate about — recycling — and brought her passion for preservation to American Martyrs School and Parish.

"I wanted to help reduce waste at American Martyrs," says Annemarie. "The recycling was already there, but some people would just throw things in the closest bin. Plus, now we're composting at the Pancake Breakfast."

To make the project even more exciting, Annemarie teamed up with her close friend, Lauren. Together, these students are revolutionizing the ways in which we deal with waste at American Martyrs. New recycling bins have been ordered for meeting areas, and the girls worked with Waste Management to participate in a composting pilot program, which was launched in September at the Pancake Breakfast.

"Five-hundred people ate at the Pancake Breakfast and we had less than a bin of trash," says Lauren. "The challenging part was informing people. We went around to the tables, telling people where stuff goes, and a lot of people were composting. When we separated it all out, we ended up with less than a bag of trash. Utensils, plates, food, napkins and cups can all go in the compost."

Indeed, Annemarie and Lauren found a project that they were both passionate about and that would have a lasting effect and the Recycling and Composting Project fit the bill. The reception from the parish, school, and the volunteers at the Pancake Breakfast has been overwhelmingly positive and supportive.

"As a parent, I couldn't ask for anything more in terms of the support they've gotten from the community," says Lora Dapoz, Annemarie's mother. "It's so nice to see a project supported wholeheartedly."

"People have been really receptive to the composting," says Annemarie. "It's our responsibility to take care of the world because we're the one's living in it and it's our job. If everyone does the little things, it makes a difference."

When you see the newly placed and brightly colored recycling bins or attend a Pancake Breakfast, take a moment to consider where you place your waste. When each member of our community pitches in, together we can make a big difference in our community and in our world!

## MINISTRY PROVIDES ESSENTIAL SERVICE DURING TIMES OF NEED

In His Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Mt 5:4). The members of the Adult Altar Servers Ministry here at American Martyrs Church have been reaching out to offer this comfort to fellow parishioners at a time of great need, volunteering as altar servers during funeral Masses.

“We as altar servers feel privileged to serve at these Masses,” says Angie Babick, who schedules the servers for funerals and arranges training for new servers. “We are not only helping to serve at the table of the Lord, but we are partaking as a community of faith in celebrating the life of a loved one.”

The Adult Altar Servers form part of the multi-faceted Bereavement Ministries, which also includes Funeral Planners who help carry out the families’ wishes for the funeral Mass, as well as the Bereavement Telecare team that offers support to those experiencing a loss.

“[The role of the Adult Altar Servers is] to lend dignity and solemnity to the ritual of the funeral Mass,” says Angie. “We become a compassionate support system helping to ease the process for those grieving at this extremely difficult time.”

This ministry has been active at our parish since 1999. There are currently 21 volunteers — most, though not all, are retirees. The ministry first began when there was a reluctance to have school children miss class to serve at a funeral Mass. The Adult Altar Server Ministry fills that need.

“Sometimes people outside of our parish are surprised to see us older folks as servers, but the feedback has been good,” Angie says. “Those in our parish are used to seeing us serve. We, as adults, can be more attentive and reverent at these Masses.”

The Adult Altar Servers Ministry also plays an



*Parishioner Angie Babick serves on the Adult Altar Server Ministry at American Martyrs.*

important role in the parish as a whole.

“We assist the priest during the Mass, but also aid in the preparation for the Mass,” says Angie. “We prepare the gifts, ready the vestments for the presider and concelebrants, mark the missal, place and light the Baptismal candle and pall, ready the incense and holy water, and assist the funeral planners if needed.”

Those newly volunteering in this ministry are personally trained by either Rita Hanretty or Linda Smith-Jones. New servers assume responsibilities gradually as they feel comfortable.

Angie says she has found great fulfillment in serving the parish

through the Adult Altar Servers Ministry.

“Besides the celebration of the Eucharist, my favorite part of these Masses is the remarks of remembrance made either by the presider, a family member or friend,” she says. “We listen to stories of a life well-lived and loved, we laugh at funny stories told, we cry, and we grieve. Sometimes the love among those attending is so beautiful and strong, you can almost touch it. No matter what the faiths are of those attending, we come together as one body in God’s house to honor a life.”

Those who would like to become involved in the Adult Altar Servers Ministry are encouraged to contact Angie Babick at 310-532-7953 or Yvonne Amantea at 310-545-3312.

“Being an adult altar server has given me a much better understanding of the Mass,” says Angie. “I enjoy the camaraderie and the dedication of those in this ministry. I thought being a server would be my gift but instead I have received more gifts of this very rewarding ministry.”

## A LOOK BACK AT OUR PARISH'S OUTDOOR MASS

On Sunday, Sept. 15, the American Martyrs Catholic Community gathered on our athletic field to share in the celebration of the Mass and take part in our community and ministry celebration. Thank you to all who participated in this wonderful day as we visibly witnessed to our faith as stewards and disciples of Jesus Christ.



## THE BEREAVEMENT TELECARE MINISTRY

### *Reaching Out to Grieving Parishioners*

Carol Anderson is well-versed in the processes of grief. Until 1999, she worked in hospice care. Then, she lost her sister to breast cancer.

“The first year is the hardest,” says Carol. “It’s the hardest year because it is a year of firsts without the loved one – first Christmas, first birthday, first anniversary.”

Drawing from her work in hospice and her experience with loss, Carol started the Bereavement Telecare Ministry to reach out to grieving parishioners here at American Martyrs.

“The idea for this ministry came from hospice,” says Carol. “Part of the hospice training was that we called the family of the loved one every three months for a year after the loss. At the parish, we follow up with the survivor — husband, wife, sister, brother, or significant other — we call them every month for a year after their loss.”

After a loss in the parish community, the members of the Bereavement Telecare Ministry are contacted with the family’s information. The members wait a month before reaching out to the survivor. Sometimes the conversation lasts a few minutes, and sometimes it lasts hours depending upon the individual person’s needs.

“You speak to people in all different stages of grief,” says Carol. “Maybe they aren’t ready to talk yet, but at least they know we are there and praying for them. You make a connection. I called one woman and left voicemails for 13 months. When I left the last voicemail, she called me back to thank me for being there.”

In the past, training for the Bereavement Telecare Ministry occurred with the diocese. Now, Carol leads a training program specifically tailored to the nature of the ministry. Recently, Carol led a four-night training session.

“This is the first training we’ve done at the parish,” says Carol. “And it will really help people see if they



*The members of the American Martyrs Bereavement Telecare Ministry provide support to parishioners who are experiencing loss.*

can do this ministry. We start with sharing our grief histories, and each minister explains their connection to death and how they grieved. Then, we discuss the grief process and the factors that impact the process.”

The Bereavement Telecare Ministry members meet as a group at 7:30 p.m. on the last Wednesday of every month to support each other. As a rule, everything that is discussed

with a grieving parishioner is confidential. In their meetings, the ministers lift up the grieving parishioners in prayer, share positive stories about their work, and ask for advice from each other.

On average, the trained minister usually connects with five to seven parishioners each month. The contact involves praying, listening and offering ideas to help the grieving process.

“We tell them that grief work is hard, and they need to take time for themselves,” says Carol. “We suggest that they write a letter or a journal because sometimes people don’t get a chance to say ‘goodbye.’ Exercise, write poetry, read, put on music, take a bath, allow yourself to feel the pain. One woman made a memorial. Some people are mad at God, and we try to explain that it’s OK. God has broad shoulders.”

The call to serve on the Bereavement Telecare Ministry is a special calling that necessitates an experience with grief.

“It is hard work,” says Carol. “For me, I’ve always known that I should work with people who have experienced death. I felt a calling. I think that all the ministers would say they have a specific calling to this work.”

If you would like more information about the Bereavement Telecare Ministry, please contact Carol Anderson at 310-374-7976 or [bereavementtelecare@americanmartyrs.org](mailto:bereavementtelecare@americanmartyrs.org).

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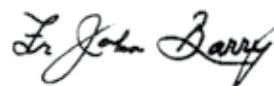
## CARELESSNESS: THE SUBTLE OPERATOR *continued from front cover*

have known. They too had to deal with the challenges of following a seemingly easy pathway of carelessness and they chose to stay the watchful course. Then Nov. 2, is the Feast of All Souls, a day set aside to pray for the dead, that they may be numbered among the saints. This is another area where we have to watch for carelessness. We may be careless about remembering our deceased loved ones. The first few years after their death we remember them, then unless we are careful, our remembering and praying for them becomes less and less and finally we forget to pray for them altogether.

Later in the month, we celebrate Thanksgiving, our great National holiday when we stand together lest we forget who we are as One Nation Under God giving thanks for the many gifts we have received. Carelessness met an obstacle when this one day was set aside so we could pause together. It is a day to renew the

bonds of family and friendship and to avoid anything that could lead us to forget the "Giver of All." It is a day to remember equality and respect. On this day churches across our nation have services of Thanksgiving. Here at American Martyrs we gather at 9:30 a.m. for a Mass of Thanksgiving followed by our shared potluck breakfast. If you haven't participated in this Mass up to now, this is your year! I wish all of you a "carelessness" free and Happy Thanksgiving and thank God for you each day.

God bless you,



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.