



# *Our Faith in Action*

*American Martyrs Catholic Community*

## **A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR**

### *October Presents Opportunities to Affirm Our Reverence for Life*

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Dear Parishioners,

October has many meanings for all of us. Here at American Martyrs we think of October and the excitement, the energy, and the community expression as people prepare for and come to celebrate our annual Parish Fair. It is very appropriate that this major event in our community occurs during Respect Life Month. Look around and see the people who are celebrating life at the fair, whether it be the many wonderful volunteers, the chairpersons, or the children. Through the various activities of the Fair - everything that goes on in our gymnasium, out on our field and other areas of our parish campus - we see life. This celebration of the life we share is a wonderful jumping off point for us as we are called to reflect on the value of every human life from conception through natural death.

In Faith in Action this month, you will find featured an article on the international life services work of Laura Frederick, founder of eChange Endeavors, which calls our attention to how she supports life in different parts of the world and how we need to honor and reverence this gift that is so often taken for granted in our society. We look also at Natural Family Planning (NFP) and the wonderful ministry offered to help people look at the beauty of human procreation and how we can develop our understanding only in and with God's given way for us as human beings, and of course the whole underpinning of our Respect Life Ministry.

Continuing on, "friendship" is a word that has many connotations. When one unites it with "circle" especially in relationship to ministry, it becomes even more special. Circle of Friends offers support to some very beautiful and wonderful young people with particular needs to feel acceptance and love in our community. Let us affirm these young people and their leaders who formed this circle around many special young people in the community. That is honoring, respecting and reverencing human life in a very concrete, practical way that says to the world that there are no throwaway human beings. All of us have unique gifts to share and are also able to celebrate receiving gifts. So let us ponder the circle and let us expand it to include all who may be in need in our community.

We have Dr. David Arias, a graduate of American Martyrs School and son of David and Dottie Arias coming for three lectures on the dignity of the human person. I encourage all to take advantage of these lectures.

We have opportunities to support the Pregnancy Help Center. We have the energy of people, young families who want to proclaim through their lives how life is revered and respected. So celebrate October in your own family and in your own community. If you find you're not reverencing other persons, it is a time to step back and see how you reverence children, how

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The Annual Skechers Pier to Pier Friendship Walk – (from left) Roberto Dell’Oro, Sandy Dell’Oro, Michael Hadley, and Joanne and Bret Hadley



## **“People Who Have Special Needs are Welcome in Our Community”** **CIRCLE OF FRIENDS AT AMERICAN MARTYRS**

**H**ospitality, one of the four Pillars of Stewardship – the welcoming and including – lets each of us know the parish community values us. Circle of Friends seeks to include children with special needs as integral members of our parish community.

“Particularly because of my son who has a disability, I felt that it was important to involve people in his life and the lives of all people with disabilities,” says Regina Dell’Oro, the coordinator of Circle of Friends. “Here at American Martyrs, they have greeted the children with special needs with open arms.”

Through Circle of Friends, parents, teachers, friends, and supporters of children with special needs endeavor to make a positive impact on their lives. The ministry started shortly after Regina moved to the area in 2003 with her husband, Roberto, and their two sons, Marco and Sandy, who has autism. Regina met Arlene Platten, a fellow parishioner with a son who has Down syndrome.

“Arlene spoke about her interest in starting a ministry for children with special needs, visualized it, and the parish approved, but at that stage it was just an idea,” Regina says. “Then a series of happy coincidences occurred when my son, Marco, started to play with two neighborhood children with Down syndrome as part of a service project.”

Marco began a group joining children from American Martyrs and children with special needs in the community that met at Meadows Elementary, where Sandy attended school, to play together. The group was later adopted by South Bay’s chapter of Friendship Circle, a nonprofit organization devoted

to impacting the lives of children and young adults with special needs through mentoring and recreational programs.

“The amazing thing is that the Thursday Hang Out at Meadows Elementary took on a life of its own,” Regina says. “The middle school students from American Martyrs still meet there to play with the kids and sometimes have one-on-one play dates. Circle of Friends doesn’t work with the Thursday Hang Out, but it was the focal point that started the ministry.”

At American Martyrs, Circle of Friends is involved with three annual events geared towards including children with special needs in our community.

Each spring American Martyrs, Friendship Circle, and Manhattan Youth Basketball collaborate to bring children with special needs together for a basketball game followed by a pizza party sponsored by Friendship Circle. The game usually occurs on a Sunday afternoon and draws over 200 children.

“We are proud that American Martyrs provides the space for the entire South Bay to gather for a very well-organized youth basketball event,” Regina says. “This pizza party is a statement from our parish telling the entire community that people who have special needs are welcome in our community and that we love them.”

Once a year in April or November, Circle of Friends holds a car wash on the American Martyrs campus as a way for the children with special needs to give back to the community. The whole community gets involved to help the children with special needs. Confirmation students and other

## CIRCLE OF FRIENDS *continued from page 2*



*The Annual Skechers Pier to Pier Friendship Walk – (from left) Jeff Platten with his son, Joseph, and Sandy with his father, Roberto Dell’Oro*



*Sandy Dell’Oro and his father, Roberto Dell’Oro, serving at the American Martyrs Car Wash*



*The Community of American Martyrs and Friendship Circle serving at the Car Wash*



*A group of kids after the basketball game held at American Martyrs Gym*

parishioners volunteer using their gifts of time and talent to advertise the car wash and sell tickets.

“This is a full-circle activity – it is done by the special needs kids, but not for them,” Regina says. “This is an opportunity for them to do something for others. This past April, we sold 150 tickets for the car wash, so the kids were busy! The proceeds are given on behalf of American Martyrs to Fr. Greg Boyle and his work with Homeboy Industries.”

In October, Circle of Friends supports Friendship Circle with the annual Skechers Pier to Pier Friendship Walk. The walk from the Manhattan Beach Pier to the Hermosa Beach Pier and back supports Friendship Circle and other local educational foundations. Through donations, it has raised over \$1 million for these organizations.

In addition to these three events, Circle of Friends has recently begun a monthly prayer group including people with special needs.

“The prayer group is fashioned after a spirituality called Faith and Light, an international movement of Christians who bring people with special needs together for friendship and prayer,” Regina says. “It is made up of people with special needs, their

parents and families, and others called to work with people with special needs. We are still determining a time for the group.”

Through Circle of Friends, the community of American Martyrs embraces hospitality as a way of life and reaches out to include all members of our community in social, spiritual and service activities.

“American Martyrs provided an opportunity for people to step up to the plate with Circle of Friends, and they absolutely did, especially Janice Bardeau, Joanne Hadley, Beverly Busby, and Mary Coelho-Wood,” Regina says. “Parishioners are involved by volunteering to help with the events, by being part of the prayer group, or by buying a car wash ticket. Even seeing a child with special needs at church, by smiling at them to greet them, you are doing something amazing.”

For more information about Circle of Friends and opportunities to embrace children with special needs and their families, please contact Regina Dell’Oro at 424-200-7939 or at [circleoffriends@americanmartyrs.org](mailto:circleoffriends@americanmartyrs.org).

## LAURA FREDERICK

### “What Can I Do to Build the Body of the Church?”

A little over 800 years ago, St. Francis was passing by the church of San Damiano in Assisi, Italy when he felt inspired by the Holy Spirit to enter inside and pray. Kneeling before the crucifix, St. Francis heard a voice saying, “Francis, go and repair my house that, as you see, is falling into ruin.” Initially St. Francis thought God wanted him to literally rebuild the collapsing church building, but over time the Holy Spirit revealed that God was calling St. Francis to rebuild the spiritual, rather than the physical church. Those words spoken to St. Francis echoed the words Jesus spoke to Peter - “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church” (Mt 16:18) – and as parishioner Laura Frederick shows us, those words ring just as true today for each and every one of us.

“During my travels, and in all the places I’ve lived around the world, I have learned that the call of St. Francis to ‘build my Church’ was the same call Peter and the Apostles received, and it’s the same call for all of us today,” Laura says. “Once I realized this, I started asking myself what I can do to help build the body of the Church here on this earth.”

Of course, before one can build, one first needs a solid foundation – Laura credits her parents, John and Dawn Frederick, for giving her and her three siblings

the gift of faith. Her mother is a cradle Catholic who is the go-to person for any question regarding catechism, while her father is a convert who received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation right here at American Martyrs, and together they are both living as Oblates of St. Benedict – Third Order. Laura says her parents didn’t so much teach them the faith, as show them how to live it through example.

“Growing up, my parents had – and still have – a deep spirituality and commitment to the faith,” Laura says. “I think the biggest lesson they taught me was the importance of developing a personal relationship with God, that faith is much more than just going to church. When we were a little older, our parents introduced us to Matthew Kelly’s Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality – Confession, Daily Prayer, the Mass, the Bible, Spiritual Reading, Fasting, and the Rosary – which emphasized the tradition, ritual and catechism of our faith.”

Over the years, Laura’s formative experience would also come to include a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, Yugoslavia where she was actually present when Mary appeared to the visionaries and blessed the crowd; visiting Rome and attending a Papal Audience with Pope John Paul II; traveling to Krakow, Poland on Divine



*Laura Frederick (third from left) on a Holy Land Pilgrimage with her parents, John and Dawn, and her sister, Erika Frederick*

Mercy Sunday and participating in a Mass at the Shrine of St. Faustina; and witnessing 10,000 faithful pilgrims in Uganda who traveled for days to come celebrate a Mass at the shrine of the Ugandan Martyrs.

“All of these experiences were formative for my spiritual growth,” Laura says. “Being in Rome helped me understand the Church’s place in the world and added to my commitment of the Church. It’s all too easy to see the Church solely as an institution or organization, but it is directly and concretely the Body of Christ – Christ is the head, and we are part of the body. We stand on the shoulders of faith of those before us, and we are responsible to lead on so others can have that faith, too.”

With her degree in math and computer science from the University of San Diego, and inspired by the words of Pope Paul VI, who said that in order to

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## LAURA FREDERICK *continued from page 4*

obtain peace, you must first work for justice, Laura realized that she could best live stewardship by using her talents to work for economic justice – in other words, to help develop activities, training and resources to create more economic opportunities for the poor of the World.

“At the end of Mass, we are told to go forth in peace and love to serve one another,” Laura says. “Our Eucharistic gift is meant to be shared with others. As God gives to us, it is for us to pass on to others love, mercy, forgiveness and assistance. Charity is therefore something we do for ourselves to be more fully who God designed us to be, and stewardship offers us the specifics on how to do this – time, talent and treasure. We participate in God’s saving plan for the world when we seek to address the injustices we encounter in the world. Here at American Martyrs, people reach

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*– Laura Frederick*

out in numerous ways, such as with the Matthew 25 group, the Respect Life Ministry, the Sister School partnership in a poor area of Los Angeles, and most recently with a community in Uganda.”

And it is in Uganda where Laura has felt called to make a difference. During the first years she lived in the country, she worked in various capacities to help improve economic development. Then, ever mindful of God’s call to build His Church, Laura also began working with the Jesuits on two specific initiatives, the John Paul II Justice and Peace Center, which focuses on training, research and advocacy to empower people to work for justice and peace, and the Ocer Campion Jesuit College, a Jesuit secondary school that fills a desperate need for secondary education in war-ravaged northern Uganda. When she returned to the U.S. in 2011, Laura’s experiences in Uganda led her to establish eChange Endeavors (exchange-endeavors.org), a nonprofit organization designed to easily, legally and responsibly collect money in the U.S. and direct it to needy families and organizations in Uganda.

This December, Laura will receive her Master’s Degree in International and Development Economics, after which she hopes to find full-time work in Uganda. And she is looking forward to going back. She says she has learned many things from her work with the people of Uganda, valuable lessons such as gratitude, trusting

in God, and that living with less makes room for so much more.

“They have taught me that gratitude opens your heart to God, and we are more naturally willing to give if we give thanks to God for our blessings and graces,” Laura says. “They taught me to trust that things will work out in God’s time and in God’s way. Ultimately, what I’ve learned from my work is that in any area of the world that is economically poor, the people are spiritually rich. When you don’t have much, you tend to rely more on God. This is not to say that poverty automatically means dependence on God, because you still have a choice, but when you have less, you create more space for God.”

In the end, God’s words to St. Francis to build His church are still being spoken every day to each and every one of us. And when we are grounded in faith, prayer and spirituality, you are taking that first step in being good stewards of our gifts and answering God’s call to do His work.



*Laura Frederick at the launch of the Scholarship Fund for St. Henry's Primary School, Kampala, Uganda*

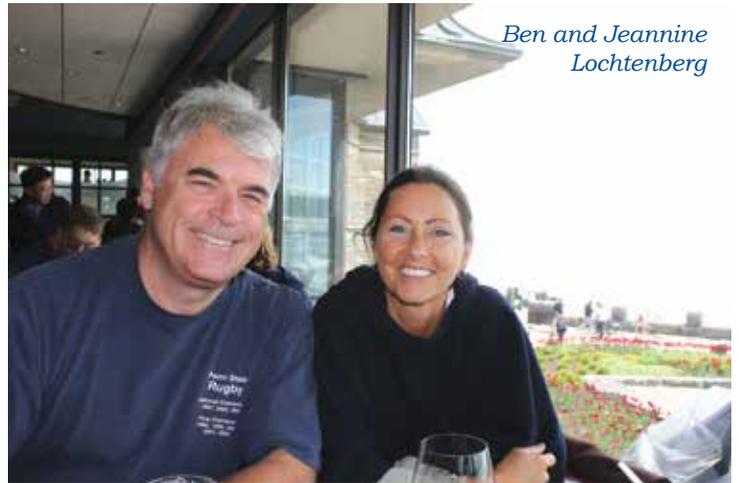
## NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING: *Building Trust and Communication*

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For many Catholic couples, Natural Family Planning, or NFP, is a way of life. NFP is an umbrella term that includes many different methods of natural family planning that can be used to both avoid or achieve pregnancy. The Catholic Church supports and endorses NFP as the only accepted means of family planning for Catholic couples worldwide.

Here at American Martyrs, NFP courses are offered four times a year. The courses include two classes held over a four-week period, with each class lasting two hours. Couples learn the basics of the Billings Method of NFP in the first class, then return for a refresher course and to deepen their knowledge of NFP after actively practicing its methods for a month in between. Ben and Jeannine Lochtenberg have been teaching NFP here at American Martyrs for 12 years, and have been married for 27 years. They began practicing NFP in their own marriage many years ago, and have used NFP both to successfully avoid pregnancy for many years, and then to successfully achieve a pregnancy.

“NFP is a way to regulate or to plan your family, according to God’s plan,” Jeannine says. “As you understand the way you’ve been made, and the signs that are there, you can learn to interpret them, and use them to either avoid or achieve a pregnancy. The thing that we like most about NFP is that it involves both the husband and the wife.



*Ben and Jeannine  
Lochtenberg*

They are both in this together, making choices, and really planning on and appreciating their intimacy. It brings you closer as a couple by building trust and communication.”

Ben and Jeannine made the decision to become certified Billings Method instructors in 2001. When the couple who taught NFP at our parish for many years retired, Ben and Jeannine along with Chris and Bridget Alario, saw a need in the parish and knew that they were being called to fill that need.

“We do this as a way to give back to the parish,” Jeannine says. “When the instructors at our parish retired, we answered the call to stewardship and decided to offer our time and talent to the parish as NFP instructors. NFP has been so good for our marriage, and we believe that it’s an important

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*– Jeannine Lochtenberg*

## NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

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ministry that needs to be easily available to couples. We felt that this was a need that should not go unmet, so we went and were trained in the Billings Method knowing NFP is so good for marriages.”

One thing that Ben and Jeannine emphasize is that in order for NFP to be fully affective and beneficial, couples need to learn the method from a certified NFP instructor. When used correctly, NFP can be used to successfully avoid pregnancy, but it can also be incredibly beneficial to couples who

are trying to conceive. NFP promotes an openness to life, and teaches couples to recognize both the love giving and life giving properties of marriage. Couples who practice NFP work together on a daily and monthly basis to make decisions through open communication.

For more information on the NFP courses offered here at American Martyrs, please email [nfp@americanmartyrs.org](mailto:nfp@americanmartyrs.org).

## CELEBRATE FAITH, FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT OUR ANNUAL PARISH FAIR

The American Martyrs community is invited to share in faith, family and friendship at our 44th Annual Parish Fair, which will be held over the weekend of Oct. 18-19. There will, of course, be plenty of great food, as well as entertainment, arts and crafts, games, a haunted house, a giant slide, wine tasting, a petting zoo, and silent and live auctions.

Festivities begin on Saturday, Oct. 18, lasting from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event continues on Sunday, Oct. 19, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, please call the parish office at 310-545-5651, or visit the parish website at [www.americanmartyrs.org](http://www.americanmartyrs.org)



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

## REVERENCE FOR LIFE *continued from front cover*

you reverence family, how you reverence the gift of life we celebrate in our faith community, and through our faith community how we proclaim that living gift for others to have in their own human experience.

I hope this gives you a little overview of what we want to celebrate during this month. So support our Parish Fair. Do everything you can to be a person of Life. Life Respect is much more than a bumper sticker. Life Respect is that deep core reverence that is supposed to permeate our soul, which then will express itself in our words, our actions — we are pro choice for God and God’s way. We choose life and we are totally caring and loving. This month is not a month to be unkind or unloving to people who may not grasp the meaning of the reverence for human life from conception to natural death. It time for us to witness through the

sensitivity of our own lives to bring others closer and closer to that reverence, which is the call for all of our human family

Last, please remember that October is the month of the Rosary. As we pray this beautiful prayer of our faith, we are invited to meditate on the life of our Divine Lord. If we pray the rosary, we certainly will more deeply appreciate the gift of life as Gods’ gift to us.

In Christ,



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

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

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### 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.