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ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

“Give the Glory Back to God” *Frank and Vickie Arnold Reflect on Stewardship*

If you are an active parishioner at St. Anthony of Padua, there is a pretty good chance that you already know Frank and Vickie Arnold. The Arnolds actively serve our parish in many capacities, and they thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to stay connected to the church and build relationships with their fellow parishioners here.

Frank and Vickie are particularly thankful for all of the opportunities that stewardship has given them to stay active and enjoy the extra free time they have found in retirement.

“We don’t sit around a lot,” says Vickie, who has been a member of St. Anthony of Padua since her family moved to the area when she was just 2 years old. “We’ve had several friends say to us after we retired, ‘What do you do with all your free time?’ And we’ve never run out of things to do!”

“There are always things to be done in the [parish and] community,” Frank agrees. “And all of what we do is fun — the various things we do — it’s all a good time.”

As Frank notes, he and Vickie enjoy participating in many parish ministries together — preparing funeral dinners and working the fish fry dinners, chairing a picnic stand, helping with groundskeeping, and serving as Eucharistic Ministers, greeters and money counters. Frank also serves on the Parish Council and is a presenter for Protecting God’s

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Vickie and Frank Arnold

Got Talent? Bring It to the Spotlight!

Our interests and abilities are varied, and our volunteer options are endless, as we are called to give our talents back to God in loving service. Examine your heart and prayerfully discern your gifts, then direct those gifts towards serving the people of God.

The word “talent” often conjures up images of stage performers in the spotlight, captivating awestruck audiences with their impeccable musical or acting skills.

While these talented performers are certainly deserving of applause, the majority of the population sits hidden in the shadows, staring on in amazement while feeling over-looked — and perhaps wishing to possess such talents themselves. But even when we feel overlooked and untalented, God knows better. As Christians, we are all called to dig deep and trust that we are specially blessed with valuable talents and abilities, even if our talents aren’t so obvious or don’t garner applause and accolades.

Along with “time” and “treasure,” “talent” is one of the “three Ts” of stewardship. Exploring our natural inclinations and preferences, especially when guided by the intricacies of our unique personalities, can unearth God-given talents.

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit,” writes St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. “There are different forms of service, but the same Lord.”

Some people have the gift of working peacefully with children. Equipped with patience and gentleness, they are able to guide young souls to the Lord. Yet, others shudder at the thought of a classroom full of

5-year-olds, and instead seek the quiet solace of behind-the-scenes tasks — cleaning the church, sewing altar cloths or stuffing envelopes.

Our interests and abilities are varied, and our volunteer options are endless, as we are called to give our talents back to God in loving service. Examine your heart and prayer-fully discern your gifts, then direct those gifts towards serving the people of God.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr., author of *Life’s Little Instruction Book*, once said, “Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it is going to be forwards, backwards, or sideways.”

If our gifts of talent are not guided by the discipline of prayer, just like an octopus on roller skates, we will get nowhere fast! Yet, if we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven and serve the Lord with joyfulness, our efforts will produce a bountiful harvest. In the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.”

The next time you sit quietly in the shadows behind a glaring stage spotlight, rest assured that your talents are no less impressive in the eyes of God, and will always be “applauded” when directed to the service of His people.

ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Make Prayer and Hospitality Pillars of Your Lenten Journey

Dear Parishioners,

In the coming weeks, we will conclude our Lenten observance, experience Holy Week, and celebrate the joy of Easter. Of course, I hope that you have made some effort to make this Lenten season special and significant, but if you have not, it is never too late to accomplish that goal.

With thoughts of Lent, Easter and the Year of Mercy at the top of my mind, I offer a couple suggestions to help carry you to the end of your Lenten journey.

As you know, prayer is foundational to stewardship, as it is one of the Four Pillars of a stewardship parish — along with hospitality, formation and service. With this in mind, here are some suggestions on how you might make your prayers even more consequential.

Pick someone to pray for, perhaps even someone you don't get along with. Just pray for them. You do not have to tell them you are praying for them, but the exercise is good for you, and for them, as well. If possible, find a time this month to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, especially if this is something you do not normally do. Pray every morning shortly after you get up, and again each evening before you turn in. It does not have to be a long prayer, but it does need to be done consistently.

In terms of the pillar of hospitality, there is also much we can do in this area, both as a parish and as individuals and families. Here is a suggestion that involves hospitality



I thank you for all you do, for our parish, for the Church, for one another, and for me personally. I am blessed. Like most, I may not express it often enough. I pray for you, and I ask you to pray for me during this holy time.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Thomas Hagstrom".

Rev. Thomas Hagstrom, Pastor

— one that is also connected to gratitude and even the Year of Mercy. Many of us spend time at a computer. It is a way for us to stay connected to those who are close to us, and to the world around us. Why not begin and end each week emailing someone a note of thanksgiving? Again, it does not have to be lengthy, but when we think about it, each of our lives is filled with people to whom we should be grateful.

Just send that someone a note thanking them for something specifically, or in general. By starting and ending each week like that, our minds are in the right place for prayer and for having the attitude that Christ asks us to have.



Altar Servers Grow in Faith While Serving

“One of the things that I teach them is that they are doing a ministry of the church. Not only are they supporting Father and the deacon, they are also supporting the congregation and their worship. We try to impress upon them that this is a big deal, and that they play an important role. It also helps them to learn the Mass, and to learn more about the Mass.” – Deacon Harry Cramer

Are you looking for a way to involve your children in parish life, or to further open their eyes to the joy of the Mass? To do both, look no further – the Altar Servers Ministry is a great way for parish youth to serve God, serve others, grow in faith, and become Christian leaders.

“Our youth need to grow to understand that being a Catholic Christian means being a part of the parish – it’s not just the priests or the people who work here, it’s all of us,” says Director of Religious Education Bonnie Nytes. “We talk about this a lot in Religion class – we are all one body, and if one of us isn’t doing our job, the rest of the body hurts. God calls us to it, but it’s not just our responsibility – it’s our joy! We really need to engage our youth more, and this is a perfect way to get young people involved in the life of the Church.”

At St. Anthony of Padua, boys and girls are invited to become altar servers starting in third grade – and are able to continue serving through to adulthood. Although accommodations can be made for anyone who wants to get started in between training times, altar server training is typically held twice a year.

“For our kids who go to the parish school, St. Dominic’s, I usually go to the school and train the kids who have an interest in becoming servers,” Deacon Harry Cramer says. “It usually takes up one of their class periods, and we go to the church and basically go through the Mass. We start in the sacristy, talk about the various linens and garb. Then, we come out into the church, and walk through the whole Mass. So, it’s an introduction for them. I also give them a handout that they can go over on their own time to help them remember everything.

“Our PSR kids usually meet between the 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Masses on Sundays, so I’ll have those kids come in during their PSR time, and I give them the same training as the school kids,” he continues. “Since we have a bit more time, I usually have them walk through some of the things for practice. Once anyone starts serving, we usually pair them with an older server, so they have someone there to show them the ropes. The older kids are really good with helping the younger kids out – they know what is expected of them.”

While altar servers may be requested for weddings and funerals, they are typically responsible for serving at all



Ryan Huseman and Sierra Harvey serving together.

weekend Masses – adult servers have the option to serve at daily Mass during the week, as well. While they have a set schedule, all servers are always invited to help out at any Mass when needed.

“They are an important part of worship, and really important helpers for Father and the deacon,” Bonnie says. “For example, the servers help to set the altar for the sacrifice of the Mass, and are the primary ones to do it if the deacon isn’t there. They also aid in the preparation of the gifts and they hold the book for prayer for Father.”

“One of the things that I teach them is that they are doing a ministry of the church,” Deacon Harry says. “Not only are they supporting Father and the deacon, they are also supporting the congregation and their worship. We try to impress upon them that this is a big deal, and that they play an important role. It also helps them to learn the Mass, and to learn more about the Mass. I think it’s really neat for them to be exposed to Father, the deacon and all the other liturgical ministries, so they can become familiar with all the roles one can play in the parish. It helps to round out their Catholic education, and gets them thinking about what else they can do.”

ng God and the Parish Community

This experience seems to have had that very effect on eighth-grade student Connor Ehrhardt. Connor has been serving at the 6:30 p.m. Mass on Saturdays since he was in fourth grade, and often helps out at other weekend Masses. Through his service, he has been able to build a relationship with the clergy, grow closer to God, and learn more about the Mass.

“It’s been great to be involved because I think it brings you closer [to the priest and deacon and to God], and you learn a lot of new things,” he says. “I also think it’s just nice to be able to help out. You shouldn’t worry if you are nervous or shy about it at first. I know when I first started, I was like, ‘Wow, this is a big deal – there’s so much to learn!’ But when you get the hang of it, it’s pretty easy, and it’s a really cool experience.”

Connor hopes to continue serving in the future, and also hopes to grow into other ministries as he gets older.

“I plan to do it as long as they keep needing me, especially if someone is younger and needs help,” he says. “Maybe afterwards, when things slow down for me with altar serving, I can be a Eucharistic Minister or an usher.”

Altar servers like Connor can be positive examples to younger Catholics, encouraging them to truly value their role as the future of our Church.

“These kids serve as role models for other young people who could eventually someday serve,” Deacon Harry says. “It might also help someone to discover an interest in a vocation, especially as they get older.”

All parish youth, third grade and up, are welcomed to the Altar Server Ministry! For more information, or to get involved, please contact the parish office at 217-222-5996.



Server Abigail Knuffman holds the lectionary.



Longtime altar server Connor Ehrhardt holds the cross.

From the *Catechism*

What is Almsgiving?

“Giving alms to the poor is a witness to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God”
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2462).

During the seasons of Advent and Lent, it is not uncommon to hear about fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Most of us are familiar with at least two of the three penitential practices — prayer and fasting. We engage in prayer each day, while fasting becomes a regular part of our Lenten routines.

But what is almsgiving?

It is simply giving to those less fortunate than ourselves. This can be through donations of canned goods to the local food pantry, spare change to the Salvation Army during the Christmas season, or even through person-to-person contact with the poor.

This Lent, if your family has not regularly engaged in almsgiving, consider making a change. Search for opportunities to serve the poor and vulnerable, making their lives easier — even if in a small way.

Things to do with your family:

- Place a coffee can in a prominent place in your home, and commit to filling it with loose change throughout the week. Then, donate the money to a local charity.
- The next time you shop for groceries, buy a few extra canned goods and donate them to a food pantry or food bank.
- Research a charity that works with the poor, and make a commitment to regularly give to that organization.
- Resolve to never judge those who are less fortunate, and teach your children the same.

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday

March 24

6:30 p.m., St. Anthony Church

Good Friday

March 25

3 p.m., St. Anthony Church

Holy Saturday

March 26

8 p.m., St. Anthony Church

Easter Sunday

March 27

8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., St. Anthony Church

Did You Know...?

- ***Our previous church building was known as a “pure gothic brick” structure and was designed by a Franciscan brother.***
- ***Bricks for the original church were made on site.***



ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



Intercessory Prayer and Stewardship: Spending Time With Our Lord for Others

“It’s good for family members to know people are praying. It gives them a sense of closeness in the parish. There are so many times when a person wasn’t supposed to get better at all, and then they do. We attribute that to the power of prayer.” – Jan Barnard

One of the roles our Blessed Mother plays is that of pleading on our behalf to Her Son, Jesus Christ. This is why we often ask our Blessed Mother for Her intercession – when we do this, we are asking for her to present our prayers to God in the most pleasing way. Our Prayer Chain here St. Anthony of Padua imitates our Blessed Mother in this way – the people in the chain present prayers to God, our Father, on behalf of all those who have requests for their intercession.

“It’s comforting for people to know that there is a group of others praying for their benefit,” says parishioner Jan Barnard, who – along with Carmel Atkins and Bonnie Grist – heads the phone calls for all prayer requests.

All parishioners are invited to contact the parish office when they have a special prayer request. Requests can be as detailed as desired, and if there is a desire for anonymity, one’s request can be left without personal names attached. Once a request is received, the parish office will inform Jan, Carmel or Bonnie so they can contact their team leaders.

“It’s good for family members to know people are praying,” Jan says. “It gives them a sense of closeness in the parish. There are so many times when a person wasn’t supposed to get better at all, and then they do. We attribute that to the power of prayer.”

The Prayer Chain gives an opportunity to have a front seat, so to speak, in seeing how God answers prayers. Jan shares that each person in the Prayer Chain prays in their own particular way – so, it is also an opportunity to strengthen one’s own personal faith, as well.

As Jan says, “the more prayers, the better!” Of course, praying for others in our parish can be as simple as remembering them during one’s personal daily prayer time or at Mass.

The time spent with our Lord praying for others is a unique way to offer one’s time in stewardship for the community. While some may forget about the power of prayer, setting aside time to focus on praying for others allows us to remember that God is in control and has a special plan for each of us. It also allows us to remember that others in the community are our brothers and sisters in Christ.



If you have a special prayer request or you would like to begin praying for others as part of the St. Anthony of Padua Prayer Chain, please contact the parish office at 217-222-5996.

ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

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DAILY MASS: MON, TUE, & THU - 7:30 A.M.

SATURDAY: 4:00 P.M. & 6:30 P.M.

SUNDAY: 8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

CONFESSIONS: SATURDAY 5:15 - 6:15 P.M.

“Give the Glory Back to God” *continued from front cover*

Children. Vickie is a lector, a member of the Ladies’ Society, and helps with church cleaning and linen washing. Both are active volunteers in the local community, as well.

While the Arnolds certainly enjoy participating in parish life, they became even more devoted to stewardship following a recent health crisis. Several years ago, both Frank and Vickie were diagnosed with cancer within a year of one another. It was an experience that strengthened their faith and their desire to give back.

“We just feel like we’ve been really fortunate,” Vickie says. “We are both cancer survivors, and we feel that every day is special and try to make the best of it.”

“Ministries are a two-way street,” Frank adds. “God has given us some gifts — good health and talent — and it is up to us to use those gifts to give the glory back to God. We both

think we’ve been given the gift of time since we’ve both won the battle with cancer, and we should give some of that time.”

The Arnolds feel blessed to be part of a parish with such a strong sense of stewardship, and they are inspired by how many people at St. Anthony of Padua are dedicated to giving of their time, talent and treasure.

“There are people in the parish who do so much more than we do,” Frank says. “We have people in the parish who give of their time [and resources] to do incredible things for our parish. I’m not talking just one or two, but many — we are just a cog in the wheel.”

“And we would really like to have even more cogs!” Vickie laughs. “Giving of your time and talent is so important, and it is a way [everyone] can give to the parish and really help out.”

“Ministries are a two-way street. God has given us some gifts — good health and talent — and it is up to us to use those gifts to give the glory back to God. We both think we’ve been given the gift of time since we’ve both won the battle with cancer, and we should give some of that time.”

— Frank Arnold