



# ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

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## Children Grow on Their Faith Journey at Vacation Bible School

**A**t St. Anthony of Padua's annual Vacation Bible School, children have the chance to have fun with their peers while also getting to know Jesus Christ and His boundless love for us.

"It's a great way to introduce the Bible to the younger generations," says VBS volunteer Victoria Campen. "If you make it fun, it will click with them. I remember the lessons I learned when I attended VBS because they taught it in a fun way. It's great for the children to be able to learn about their faith and have fun."

Our VBS program is from children in preschool through fifth grade. Each year of VBS focuses on a different theme, which is expressed through various activities, crafts, stories and songs.

This year's program is Maker Fun Factory, which focuses on Psalm 139 — "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

"It is very creative, all about our creator God and how we were created for a very specific purpose," says Director of Religious Education Bonnie Nytes.

"While I was volunteering last year, I could see how much the children really enjoyed it. Their attention was there," Victoria says. "They were able to pull what was meant to be learned from the activity, and it was really cool to see them get to the faith at the root of it all."

Victoria fondly recalls just how much her own daughter enjoyed her first year of VBS last summer.

"When it was over she was upset that she couldn't go back!" she says. "She enjoyed it and definitely learned a lot. On the drive home, she would sing the songs that she learned, and she is still singing them! On the way home, we'd also



# SERVICE

## *The Fourth Pillar of Parish Stewardship*

Throughout Sacred Scripture, there are numerous references to service. There is the parable of the vigilant and faithful servants who await their master's return from a wedding, "ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks" (Lk 12:35-40). There is the story of the good Samaritan who was moved with compassion to help the victim of a violent robbery (Lk 10:25-37). And there are several examples of Christ serving those around Him – feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, and even turning water into wine at a wedding banquet.

Why is service a running theme throughout the Gospels? Because service is at the root of living in imitation of Christ. Christ served others throughout His life on Earth, and His death on the cross was the ultimate act of service to mankind. And when we serve others, we are not only following in Christ's footsteps, we are also serving Christ Himself: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

As a stewardship parish, service must be at the heart of everything we do. The parish community is the bastion of service within the Catholic Church, as we serve one another and are also served by our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the Diocese of Wichita's document, *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*, states, "Like a blood family, the parish family stands ready and eager collectively to wrap their arms around their brothers and sisters when they suffer in trial and/or celebrate special events in their lives."

It is good to recognize the parish community as a place where service is appreciated and can be utilized for the good of the Church. However, it is not enough for us to simply serve other members of our parish family. As disciples of Christ, it is our obligation to serve people in need everywhere they exist – in our families, our greater community, our country, and throughout the world. This can be a challenging concept, as it is often much more comfortable and convenient to serve those who are close to us than it is to reach out to "outsiders." But, as *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* eloquently points out, "Failure to have this understanding leads to a selfish parochialism, which is life draining to a parish stewardship way of life."

Think of ways that you can serve others around you, both within our parish family and in the greater community. Our many parish ministries offer a great place to begin offering your time and talents, but the opportunities for service don't end there. There are many civic and nonprofit organizations that do an immense amount to serve others across the globe and are always looking for volunteers.

Once you serve, you will find that you will reap numerous rewards in return, much like the faithful servants who doubled the talents their master had entrusted to them: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy" (Mt 25:21).

# SERVICE

# ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

## The Month of Mary: A Time for Celebration and Joy

Dear Parishioners,

In the Catholic Church, we designate a particular devotion for each month — and May is when we honor our Blessed Mother Mary. Thus, this is a good time for us to think about and concentrate on our devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps we can add a few more Marian prayers to our daily routine. Praying the Rosary might be even more important. Of course, that assumes that daily prayer is part of our daily routine — which it should be.

Our Blessed Mother is important to our faith and to our Church. Her willingness to serve in a way that allowed the Lord to take human form really made our salvation a possibility. Because of her complete trust in God, she lived her life free from sin, and after her life, she was assumed into heaven by the power of God and crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

She is, of course, not divine. We worship only our Lord Jesus Christ, but we honor Mary as a saint and in many other ways. We honor God when we remember the role of Mary in our salvation. Devotion to Mary always leads to Jesus Christ Himself.

Mary was joyous when she said “yes” to God. That is the kind of joy we need to seek — and we, too, must say

“yes” to the Lord. Let us be grateful to Mary for bringing us her Son. This is why we crown her on our Catholic version of Mother’s Day. Through Mary, we are given an invitation into the Catholic fold. Her feminine presence and the safety of her motherhood may help us grow.

For most of us, this time of year is a month of growth in relation to nature. It is difficult not to have May as one of our favorite months for so many reasons. May is a beautiful time. We are called to make it even more beautiful, and we can do that as we serve and love one another.

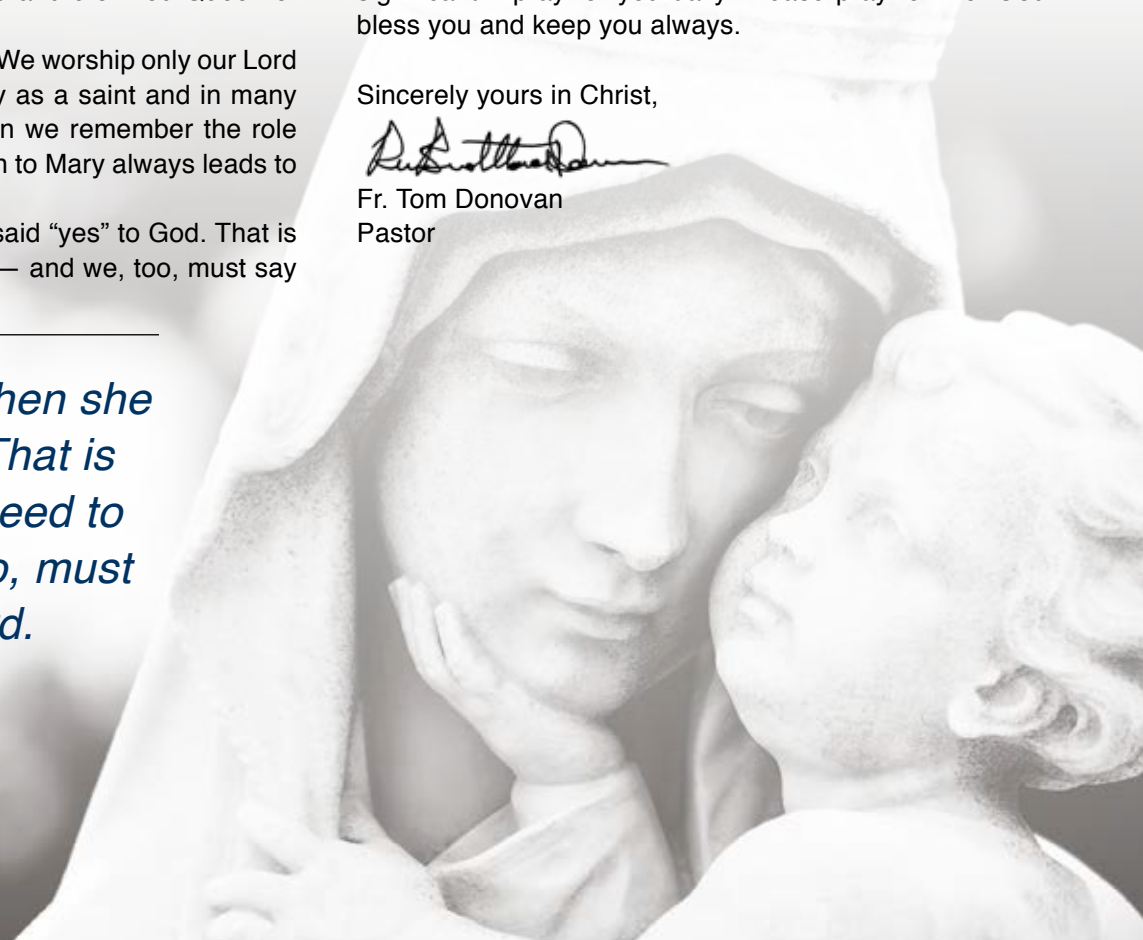
I am deeply blessed to be your pastor. I may say that often, but it is true. My priesthood has been a blessing, and serving you all has made that blessing even more significant. I pray for you daily. Please pray for me. God bless you and keep you always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Tom Donovan  
Pastor

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*Mary was joyous when she said “yes” to God. That is the kind of joy we need to seek — and we, too, must say “yes” to the Lord.*



# St. Anthony's Craig and Joan Kroeter

*"We need to create new activities for these younger families and to welcome new people and talk with them. If young people get involved in church, it will continue generation after generation." — Craig Kroeter*

*Grateful for*

After 40 years of marriage, Craig Kroeter still describes his wife Joan as his "calm in the storm."

"One of the main reasons I decided to become Catholic was because how Joan was when we faced difficulties," Craig says. "I also knew how much it meant to her and that we wanted our children to grow up with a strong faith background."

A mutual friend introduced Craig and Joan — at the time, Craig was Lutheran, and she was Catholic. The Christian faith had always been important in their lives and upbringings. In fact, Craig comes from a family of three generations of Lutheran ministers.

But they were attending different churches and discerning how to raise their children. That's when Craig began RCIA at St. Francis with Joan as his sponsor. Joan's family attended that Easter Vigil Mass, but they had no idea that Craig was about to be confirmed into the Church.

"We shocked both our families that Easter!" Joan says. "After

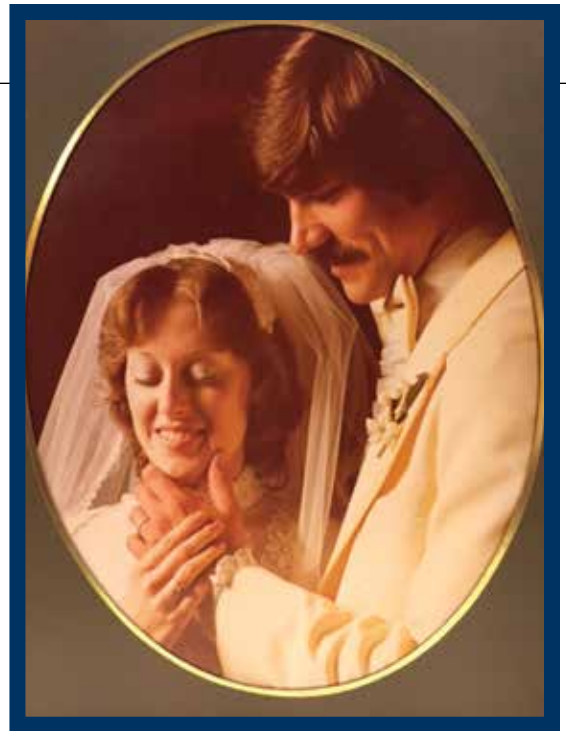
Craig joined the Church, we started praying together at night and going to Mass together. It strengthened our faith life and our marriage."

Craig and Joan became members of St. Dominic in 1994, and both of their children — Brian and Katie — attended the school. They continued their membership with St. Anthony after the parishes combined, though much of their involvement with the faith community began with the school.

"My wife is very good at volunteering me for things!" Craig says. "We both served at St. Dominic's June Fest, which was their big fundraiser. We were very active with the kids at their school and on lots of committees. It is always more fun to be involved."

Being asked to be involved also helped Craig and Joan continue taking their first stewardship steps. Craig served on the Parish Council and was the representative from St. Dominic's School to the Quincy Notre Dame School Board.

"We've also both attended Cursillo, and we attended Marriage Encounter together," Joan says. "Sometimes, your marriage needs



*Craig and Joan Kroeter's wedding, April 15, 1978*



*The Kroeter family*

# ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



## *“a Great Faith Foundation”*

that little boost, and it's always important to find other ways to bring Christ into your lives.”

Craig served as an usher and a Eucharistic Minister when the kids were little. Though he hesitated at first and wasn't certain if he would be comfortable in this liturgical ministry, Craig found that the training session put his mind at rest.

“I really feel privileged to be able to distribute Communion,” Craig says. “It means a lot to me, and it shows others you're not afraid to get involved. Lead by example.”

When Joan retired from teaching at public schools, she discovered that there was an opening for a fourth-grade teacher in the middle of the year at St. Dominic. Now she can directly bring her Catholic values into the classroom.

“Being a fourth-grade teacher at St. Dominic is part of stewardship for me,” Joan says. “It's good for the kids from school to see their teachers at Mass. It brings school and church together for them.”

Craig and Joan, who welcomed their first grandchildren this past April, believe that getting young families and young adults involved in the Church is essential.

“We need to create new activities for these younger families and to welcome new people and talk with them,” Craig says. “If young people get involved in church, it will continue generation after generation.”

In the Quincy area, we have such a faith-filled community within which to raise our families. As Craig points out, Quincy is one of the few cities in the United States where someone can receive a Catholic education in grade school, high school and college and then actually complete a graduate degree from a Catholic institution all in the same town.

“This town has such a great faith foundation,” Craig says. “There is absolutely no reason for someone to feel left out in this town when it comes to your faith.”



*Joan Kroeter and her fourth-grade class*

# A Significant Moment in Our Prayer

## *The Presentation of the Gifts*

*The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the past week – as an offering and gift to God.*

Occasionally, you might hear someone jokingly refer to “halftime” during Mass – the interval following the Prayers of the Faithful, as the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. It can be easy, even tempting, to zone out as you sit, waiting for the collection basket to make its way to your pew.

But if you pay attention, you’ll have the opportunity to enter into something deeper – a significant moment in our prayer.

It’s mentioned by St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, when describing the Mass in the second century, “Bread is brought up and wine and water...”

This practice, of people bringing up the gifts, has been part of our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. Although we might think of this action as being merely practical, in reality, it serves a much deeper spiritual purpose.

Each Sunday Mass, someone is chosen, whether an usher, or another member of the parish, to bring forward “the gifts” – bread, wine, and in many cases, the collection of money that has been gathered moments before, from the generosity of the congregation. These gifts not only symbolize, but also in reality, are the work of human hands. The bread and wine are fruit of God’s creation, which, through the effort of human hands, are made into the gifts that we present to the Lord.

Certainly, the collection that is presented to the priest also serves to represent the work and sacrifices of the previous week. Sharing our monetary “treasures” is one of the ways that we embrace stewardship. It’s an opportunity



to generously give back to the Lord, from the fruit of our work.

In his book *What Happens At Mass*, Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB explains, “...We should not think of the collection of money at this point as some sort of banal, dirty but necessary affair. Money is our work. Money is hours of our lives. And now we give it away, we sacrifice it, for the work of the Church.”

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul instructs Christians to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1).

The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the

past week – as an offering and gift to God.

Those who bring forward the gifts each week have the privilege and responsibility of remembering what their action represents – that we are called to give generously of our time, talent and treasure to God, who gives us His very self, at Mass. And for those sitting in the pews, tempted to “check out” for a few minutes, seeing the gifts being brought forward should serve as a powerful reminder to offer our lives back to God, through serving and honoring Him.

So next week, don’t just sit back and wait for the “halftime show.” Come to Mass a few minutes early and approach an usher to ask if you and/or your family may bring up the gifts that week. Don’t be surprised if you start to notice a change in your heart and a desire to be even more generous with God in the coming week!

# ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



## Junefest Big Raffle Offering Big Prizes, Big Benefits for St. Dominic School

There is just one month to go! Mark your calendar now for Junefest, set for June 16 on the grounds of St. Dominic School. You won't want to miss the new Big Prize Raffle, music, games, great food — and the famous hand-cut onion rings!

The fun starts up at 5 p.m. and won't stop until midnight.

"One hundred percent of the proceeds will go to support the school," says Jackie Raleigh, Junefest Chair. "We've always been a family-friendly event, but for our volunteers who are donating their time and money there will be provisions so they don't have to pay again, for example, for meals, at Junefest."

Another new addition this year is the use of SignUpGenius for Junefest volunteers.

"They've all been able to sign up online, and they'll get reminder emails," Jackie says.

The major change this year is the Big Prize Raffle that is offering oodles of chances to win some very nice prizes.

First prize is the choice of either a 2018 Chevy Trax or a 2018 Kia Optima. Second prize is a premium Walt Disney World vacation valued at \$10,000. Third prize takes home \$5,000 in cash; fourth, \$2,500 cash; fifth, \$1,000 cash; sixth through 10th, \$500 cash; 11th through 20th wins a \$250 certificate for the Gene Grawe Fund; 21st through 50th wins \$100 Gene Grawe Fund certificates.

Tickets are \$50 each and there are only 2,000 to be sold. Tickets are being sent home to school and church families.

Although the winners don't have to be present to win, who wouldn't want to be at Junefest for the fun and excitement? You don't want to miss it!

And did we mention that all proceeds benefit St. Dominic School?

There will be entertainment by singer Tim Smith from 5-7 p.m., and Blacktop South will take the stage from 7:30-11:30 p.m.

There will be more games in Kiddieland that will be open from 5-9:30 p.m. — and, of course, Bingo.

"It's a good family event with something for everyone," Jackie says. "There's good food, good music, and you're supporting a good cause."



*Crafts are one of the many fun activities at Junefest.*



*Musicians provide live entertainment at Junefest.*



*Having fun at Junefest is also a way to support a great cause!*



*Ready for a fun day at Junefest!*



*Junefest is a family event with something for everyone.*



*There are plenty of fun games to enjoy at Junefest!*

*Raffle tickets can also be purchased by calling the church office at 217-222-5996, or the school office at 217-224-0041.*

# 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.

## Children Grow on Their Faith Journey at Vacation Bible School *continued from front cover*

talk about what she learned that day, and it was awesome to hear a 5-year-old talk to you about religion and how cool it is.”

“I have seen seeds planted at VBS that last a lifetime,” Bonnie says. “You never know how God is going to use your ministry!”

VBS also allows children to spend time with other kids their age who are also members of their faith community.

“It creates a sense of family for them,” Victoria says. “They can talk about Jesus and God and not feel like they’ll be judged, because they all believe the same thing. I also think it gives them the confidence to talk to other kids who maybe don’t have religion in their lives, and to share it with them.”

The positive environment of VBS is rounded out by the enthusiasm of its adult volunteers and teen volunteers in middle school and high school.

“They are just as excited to be there as the kids are,” Victoria says. “Children learn from what they see. If they see people around them being positive and working to build a better world, they are going to learn from that. It gives them something to strive for.”

“We often feel we are doing two ministries at once!” Bonnie adds. “We usually have around 60 little ones and around 20 teens who help. They are also investing and learning from the program, so that’s another really exciting part of it.”

*Vacation Bible  
School dates  
are June 25, 26  
and 27, from  
6:30-8:30 p.m.  
We hope to  
see you there!  
Please contact  
the parish  
office for more  
information.*

To learn more about stewardship at St. Anthony of Padua, please contact  
the Stewardship Committee at [stanthonystewardship2015@gmail.com](mailto:stanthonystewardship2015@gmail.com).