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ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

Updates and Renovations: Fostering a Greater Spirit of Hospitality within Our Parish

Though vital to stewardship, we often don't appreciate the feeling of being welcome at our parish until that sense of hospitality is absent. Without even thinking about it, we expect to be acknowledged when we enter the church building, and to experience the love of Christ from our priests, staff and fellow parishioners. When that welcome is lacking, says Pastor Fr. Tom Donovan, our disappointment and frustration are acute.

"Hospitality is one of those things that we have a tendency take for granted," Fr. Tom says. "People expect to be able to get in touch with us, to have someone available to answer their questions and help plug them in whenever possible, have their phone calls and inquiries acknowledged and welcomed."

This is why Fr. Tom and his staff have worked hard over the past year to help improve our parish office's accessibility and efficiency. Thanks to donations from a local organization, they were able to recently install office cubicles within the parish office. This has allowed Fr. Tom, our parish deacons, office staff and parish volunteers to have designated work spaces, allowing them to communicate with parishioners and work on projects in a more organized and productive manner.

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Recent updates have included the installation of a new Internet Protocol phone system, which has provided a better method of communication for the parish.

Updates and Renovations *continued from front cover*

“It has allowed us to reconfigure our entire space, giving everyone designated spots for things,” Fr. Tom says. “There’s now a specific space for completing things like the bulletin. And though we’re still working on organizing and sorting things, I hope this will help us become more efficient in how we work within the office.”

Fr. Tom has also begun restructuring parish and school finances, working closely with parishioner and CPA Kevin Schrecke. This includes the upcoming launch of FACTS, an online payment system for St. Dominic School that will help make financials more secure and accessible to parishioners.

“We’re working to become even better stewards of our financial resources,” Fr. Tom says. “We’re doing a lot of restructuring on how we do things, bringing everything together on a single sheet. I’m excited, too, about the

importantly, it will allow parishioners to reach Fr. Tom easily in emergency situations when a priest is needed.

“What we’ve been doing is producing or updating the hub of parish operations so that we are more accessible to people,” Fr. Tom says. “People are mad when they can’t reach their priest in the case of an emergency. This is a good solution where the essential functions of the parish are being facilitated. We’re trying to be good stewards of the resources we have so as to better serve our parishioners.”

By centralizing and increasing accessibility at the parish, Fr. Tom hopes to better foster a spirit of hospitality here at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, in turn ensuring that each person feels welcome within our faith community and that they always have someone to go to when in need of answers or assistance.

“We say we have failed at hospitality if someone comes in the door and doesn’t feel welcomed or if they go all through the Mass and don’t feel like they exist. But we’re also failing at hospitality if someone tries to reach out to us and can’t get in touch with the needed staff member, if we’re not getting important information out such as when Holy Days are to parishioners and guests. Though it isn’t glamorous, these are the nuts and bolts needed to really foster a spirit of hospitality and to create a thriving community here.” — Fr. Tom Donovan

school’s upcoming online payment system which will allow us to, hopefully, go cashless at the school in a few years. This will increase security and availability for our parents.”

Fr. Tom has also been working in recent months with parish volunteers to install a completely new Internet Protocol phone system. This will allow parish priests and deacons, staff members, and ministries to set up voicemails through the parish office, providing better methods of communication for the parish. Even more

“We say we have failed at hospitality if someone comes in the door and doesn’t feel welcomed or if they go all through the Mass and don’t feel like they exist,” Fr. Tom says. “But we’re also failing at hospitality if someone tries to reach out to us and can’t get in touch with the needed staff member, if we’re not getting important information out such as when Holy Days are to parishioners and guests. Though it isn’t glamorous, these are the nuts and bolts needed to really foster a spirit of hospitality and to create a thriving community here.”

Please refer to the parish bulletin for information on new parish phone numbers, or come visit us at the office and see some of our recent updates for yourself!

ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Stewardship Possibilities are Endless at Christmas

Dear Parishioners,

When I think of December, the first thing that comes to mind is Christmas. While that may seem to be the obvious topic, there really are a number of other possibilities. I could think of *Advent*, a season of preparation. I could think of the *Immaculate Conception*, as we celebrate God's gift to the world in Mary. I could think of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, whose popularity has spread far beyond the Hispanic community. Of course, December also holds the first day of *winter*. And because December marks the end of the civil year, I might be developing my resolutions for the New Year!

But instead, I think about Christmas. It is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Babe in the manger in Bethlehem, who is the eternal Son of God made man.

The basic truth of Christmas — celebrating the birth of Jesus the Messiah, God Incarnate — is plenty of reason for us all to rejoice and worship. But we've piled such an additional load onto our Christmas observance that worship may be lost in the shuffle.

Think about what weight Christmas has to bear. We have to put up the decorations, or make travel plans to visit relatives. There is also the Christmas dinner to plan and cook. And then, we still have Christmas presents to buy. No wonder the Christ Mass becomes an afterthought!

Yet, we still have a wonderful opportunity this season — an opportunity to combine our Christmas activities with our stewardship commitments. Treasure,

although challenging, is the simplest. Shouldn't the most expensive Christmas present we give be the one to Jesus, Whose birthday we're celebrating? Risen and glorified, He needs nothing we have. But His Body, the Church, continues Jesus' mission here on earth and always needs additional resources.

Time and Talent may be a little more complicated, but can't we spend a little more of our time in worship and prayer? Maybe you can attend Mass each day of the Christmas Octave. Have your family gather for prayers together in the morning or at dinner, in preparation for Christmas Day and through the Christmas season.

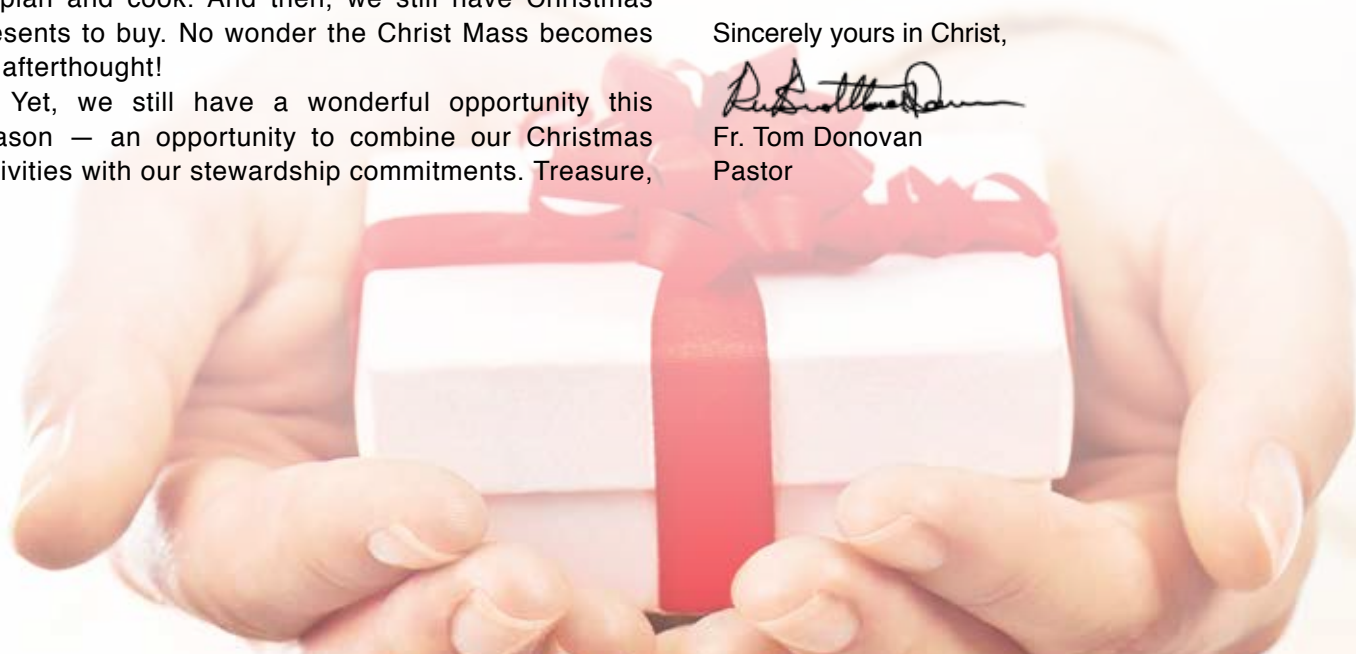
And there are so many opportunities to share our Talent! Sing in the choir for the Christmas Masses. Help decorate the Church. Cook or bake for someone who is shut-in. Invite someone who will be alone to share Christmas dinner with your family. Offer to work in a soup kitchen. The possibilities are endless.

With a little planning, we can make this hectic time one of real blessing both for ourselves and others. Pray for me that I can keep Christmas properly, and I'll pray for you. And by the way, have a merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Tom Donovan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Tom Donovan
Pastor



Meet Todd Klauser

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY AND

It's a fond memory for lifelong parishioner Todd Klauser — his father, an electrician, would wire up the lights for the St. Anthony picnics. And young Todd would accompany his father as the project was underway.

"So, every year when it came time for set-up, me and my brother would be hanging out, while the adults were setting up," Todd says. "You'd have kids doing little jobs to hang out with their dads.

"Quite honestly, it amounted to us getting to drink soda while Dad hung the lights and we were there to hand him stuff," Todd adds with a smile. "And then as you get older, they start asking you to do more and more."

Now, years later, Todd has served in a number of different ways, from being a Eucharistic Minister and usher at Mass, to working at fish fries and parish picnics. He's also been on the School Board and currently serves as a member of the Pastoral Council.

As he has become more involved, Todd has found his mindset shifting.

"It used to be, when I would get a phone call, initially I'd try to think of any excuse to say 'no,'" he says. "But now, I've changed my mindset to where, if somebody asks me for something service or faith-related, the default is 'yes,' unless I can't possibly do it."



Drew (19), Kelly, Todd, Aiden (13), and Noah (17) Klauser enjoy serving the parish together.

Todd has found that both his faith and his relationship with others in the parish have grown as he's become more involved in service.

"Any time you're on a committee or doing an kind of a task, there's always a social aspect to it, because you're talking and interacting with those people," Todd says. "You get to know people in the parish. It gives you

a better sense of belonging because you're not just two strangers at Mass who happen to go to the same church — you actually get to know them on a personal level. It makes going to Mass more enjoyable when you look around and you know most of the people there by name.

"I think my faith has gotten a lot stronger," he adds.

ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



D STRIVING TO SET A STRONG EXAMPLE FOR HIS FAMILY

And just as Todd learned the importance of service from his father, the legacy continues with his three sons. The two oldest, Drew and Noah, have been involved in many different ways, especially during their time at Quincy Notre Dame High School, as well as being Cub Scouts and serving at fish fries and picnics. Aiden, the youngest, sometimes joins his dad as an usher at Mass.

According to Todd, leading by example is the best way to pass the faith on to children, and it's something he and his wife, Kelly, make a priority in their family.

"Kids learn so much better from what they see their parents doing than from what we tell them to do," Todd says. "Take your kids with you. If you're working at the picnic, pick a job that is kid-friendly. Instead of frying chicken, work the baseball toss."

Todd has also found his faith growing to keep up with his sons.

"As their faith grew, it kind of forced me to want to grow as well," he says. "As a parent, you want to model the right things. So during the Lenten season, both of my older boys would go to Mass or a prayer service every single day. I was used to going to Mass on Sundays, but then I thought, 'Am I being a good father if they're going to Mass more often than I am?' Then I started going more."

Todd encourages his fellow parishioners of the blessings he's found in service and hopes others will consider finding ways to give back to the parish community.

"If you look at the people around you who are truly happy, it tends to be the people who are strong in their faith," Todd says. "If you think about the people in your life who, no matter what happens, have that positive attitude and then ask yourself, 'What do those people have in common?'

It's their faith. You have to start doing what those people do. You'll see those are the people who are volunteering the most, those are the people who are always there when somebody's in need.

"I have found opportunities to explore my faith, to share, to give back," he adds. "When you start looking at it as opportunities for yourself and not just responsibilities or obligations, it becomes a lot easier to say 'yes' and you enjoy it a lot more."

"Any time you're on a committee or doing an kind of a task, there's always a social aspect to it, because you're talking and interacting with those people. You get to know people in the parish. It gives you a better sense of belonging because you're not just two strangers at Mass who happen to go to the same church — you actually get to know them on a personal level. It makes going to Mass more enjoyable when you look around and you know most of the people there by name." — Todd Klauser



LET US FIND THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE AND ENCOUNTER CHRIST THIS SEASON

We all know classic stories of Christmas spirit instilling new life and bringing about a deeper sense of joy and gratitude — Dr. Seuss’ Grinch, whose heart grows three times its size; or Buddy the elf, who brings Christmas cheer by singing loud for all to hear; or even the cold and greedy Ebenezer Scrooge, who awoke on Christmas morning a changed man, sharing in joy and treating all with kindness. We enjoy certainly hearing these stories every year. But sometimes, even as Christians, it is so easy to forget the source of these lessons — the birth of Christ, the first Christmas itself. And there are so many characters from this ancient story that remind us how to embrace this season as Catholic stewards.

Let’s start with the innkeeper, the first character Mary and Joseph encounter before Jesus even enters the world. He does what he can — there is no room, just a stable. He has little, but what little he has he gives away freely. And unknowingly, the Christ Child enters into this world in the midst of one man’s humble offering. What a beautiful example of stewardship! Is there some small thing into which you could invite Jesus? Perhaps there is a new parishioner you could invite over for dinner, or a new mom for whom you could prepare a meal. In whatever way you might reach out, be sure to make a place at the table for your new guest and allow yourself to encounter Christ in them.

Next in this story, we meet the shepherds — the first people to meet Jesus, to see their Savior face to

face. Even in their poverty, they simply bring Jesus their very selves, this gift of their presence and eagerness to encounter Him. Consider visiting a nursing home to be with those who might not have company during this Christmas season. Or have a neighbor over who you haven’t seen in a while. Sometimes, we forget that just taking time to be present to another person can be a gift of self.

And then there are the Wise Men. Though they are better off perhaps than the shepherds or the innkeeper with their offerings, they still chose to give their very best gifts, not out of excess or what was left over. Though such finery would not usually be seen in Bethlehem, the Wise Men went out from the comfort of their homes to encounter the newborn King. Consider starting a coat or sock drive in your parish to give to those in need in the community. Spend time serving in the local soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Go where the giving is not glamorous.

No one of these characters is better than the other — in fact, without even one, the story of the birth of Christ would not be the same at all. In turn, we all have something to offer, a way that we can allow the Lord to enter into our lives during this season, or to bring Him to others that we encounter. However we may choose to give this season, let us give with the same generous spirit as those who welcomed the Christ Child on that first Christmas.



Sacristans Work to Ensure Worshipful Mass

The work our Sacristans Ministry does is largely done “behind the scenes,” but it is work that makes sure we can have an orderly and worshipful celebration of the Eucharist.

The ministry, coordinated by Rita Goerlich, has between 15 to 20 members.

Sacristans’ duties, as laid out by the Church — and with variations from parish to parish — call for them to arrange the liturgical books and vestments. All the items used to celebrate Mass, such as the cruets for water and wine, chalices, ciboria, linens, and oils, are to be prepared. They also must make sure there is a supply of fresh hosts and wine. Here at St. Anthony, the sacristans are responsible for unlocking the church doors when they arrive. They also must make sure the tabernacle is open.

Jackie Dreyer and her husband, Junior, have been serving as Sacristans for about five years. Each decided to volunteer during a stewardship commitment event.

“When we serve as sacristans, we are able to put the parishioners’ minds at ease,” Jackie says. “It lets them know that the church is ready for worship at Mass time. They don’t have to worry about the doors being open.”

Serving as a sacristan also helps Jackie more deeply feel that she is part of the parish.

“It makes me feel like I’m part of the parish family,” she says. “It gives me a sense of, ‘I belong.’”

She volunteered to serve because she wanted to be more involved in parish life.

“I didn’t have to take time from my family at home,” she says. “I felt I was doing something for the parish.”

Junior shares many of the same feelings Jackie holds toward the ministry.

“It’s what you can do for the parish, instead of what the parish can do for you,” he says.

Besides serving as a sacristan, Junior also serves as an usher and greeter, as well as through

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A Sacristan’s Prayer

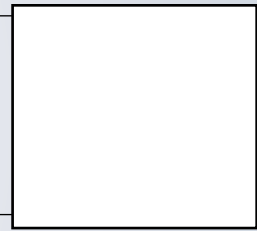
Heavenly Father, please pour Your blessings on my ministry today. It is an honor and privilege to serve the Lord at His table.

Please guide my hands and my steps, that I may fulfill my duties with grace and devotion.

I ask this in the name of Jesus, Whom I serve with Joy.

Amen.

ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



2223 St. Anthony Rd.
Quincy, IL 62305
217-222-5996

Return Service Requested

WWW.STANTHONYPADUA.ORG

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.

Sacristans Work to Ensure Worshipful Mass *continued from page 7*

parish lawn maintenance. When the couple's children grew up and left home, he found he had more time on his hands.

"I decided to devote that to God," he says. "I like helping and the parish members are good people. It puts a good feeling in your heart."

For Rita Goerlich, serving as a sacristan is one way of living in stewardship — a giving of one's time and talent.

"You have to take the time, give your 100 percent, and be interested in helping other people," she says. "You become more aware that you are doing it to help the church, and by doing [this service] you can get other people interested in doing more for the church."

*If you are interested in serving as a sacristan,
please call the parish office at 217-222-5996.*

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S MASS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE
4:00 P.M. AND 6:30 P.M.

CHRISTMAS DAY
MIDNIGHT AND 9:00 A.M.

NEW YEARS EVE
(MARY, MOTHER OF GOD)
4:00 P.M.

NEW YEARS DAY
9:00 A.M.

To learn more about stewardship at St. Anthony of Padua, please contact
the Stewardship Committee at stewardship@stanthonypadua.org.