

ST. CLARE of ASSISI PARISH

November/December 2015

Technology Quietly Keeping St. Clare and St. Victor School Online and Up-to-Date

Did you know that St. Isidore of Seville is the patron saint of technology and the Internet? A Doctor of the Church, he is credited with having a vast knowledge of many subjects. He was chosen in 1997 by Pope St. John Paul II as the patron saint of technology, which of course, helps us learn about subjects too numerous to mention.

You may also not know that one of the things that keeps St. Clare of Assisi run-

ning so smoothly is the technology that goes on in the background. Charged with keeping St. Victor School and our parish up-to-date with the latest tech improvements is Network Administrator Robert Hille. Robert recently discussed all the ways that St. Clare is keeping pace with the demands of a digital world.

"The biggest improvement that most people notice was the purchase of 20 computers for



Two boys enjoy working together on an iPad in St. Victor School's computer lab. Network Administrator Robert Hille says recent improvements to the parish and school's WiFi access points have made it possible for students and staff to move throughout the school while remaining connected.

the student's computer lab in 2012," Robert says. "Along with that, we also remodeled the computer lab. Most of the families know about that, but a few may not. They're Hewlett-Packard PCs, all laptops, so they can be portable within the lab, as well. It's for the entire school and the teachers all use it whenever they have technology training."

As time has progressed, the parish has been put on a replacement schedule to inte-

grate new computers in their offices, as well.

"We've replaced the parish's PCs and started them on replacement schedule," Robert says. "The plan is to get two new computers every year and replace the oldest two that are currently there."

Going forward, Robert says many of the most important improvements won't and shouldn't be noticed by most parishioners or staff members.

"We're in the process of preparing to migrate our server for both the school and

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Technology Quietly Keeping St. Clare and St. Victor School Online and Up-to-Date *continued from front cover*

the parish – they operate all as one network,” he explains. “Just last April, we put in new wireless access points for the iPads. Every teacher has an iPad, and then we also have 20 student iPads. With these new access points, they can travel throughout the building and then into each one of the classrooms.”

The storage system put in last year also increases the server’s storage capacity, and provides better reliability and performance at every level.

“Our old system would shut down when all 20 students would be trying to work at once, and this one doesn’t,” Robert says. “This also goes for the parish because they also store documents on that system.”

Robert notes that although much of this work goes unnoticed, it’s one of those things that makes life easier

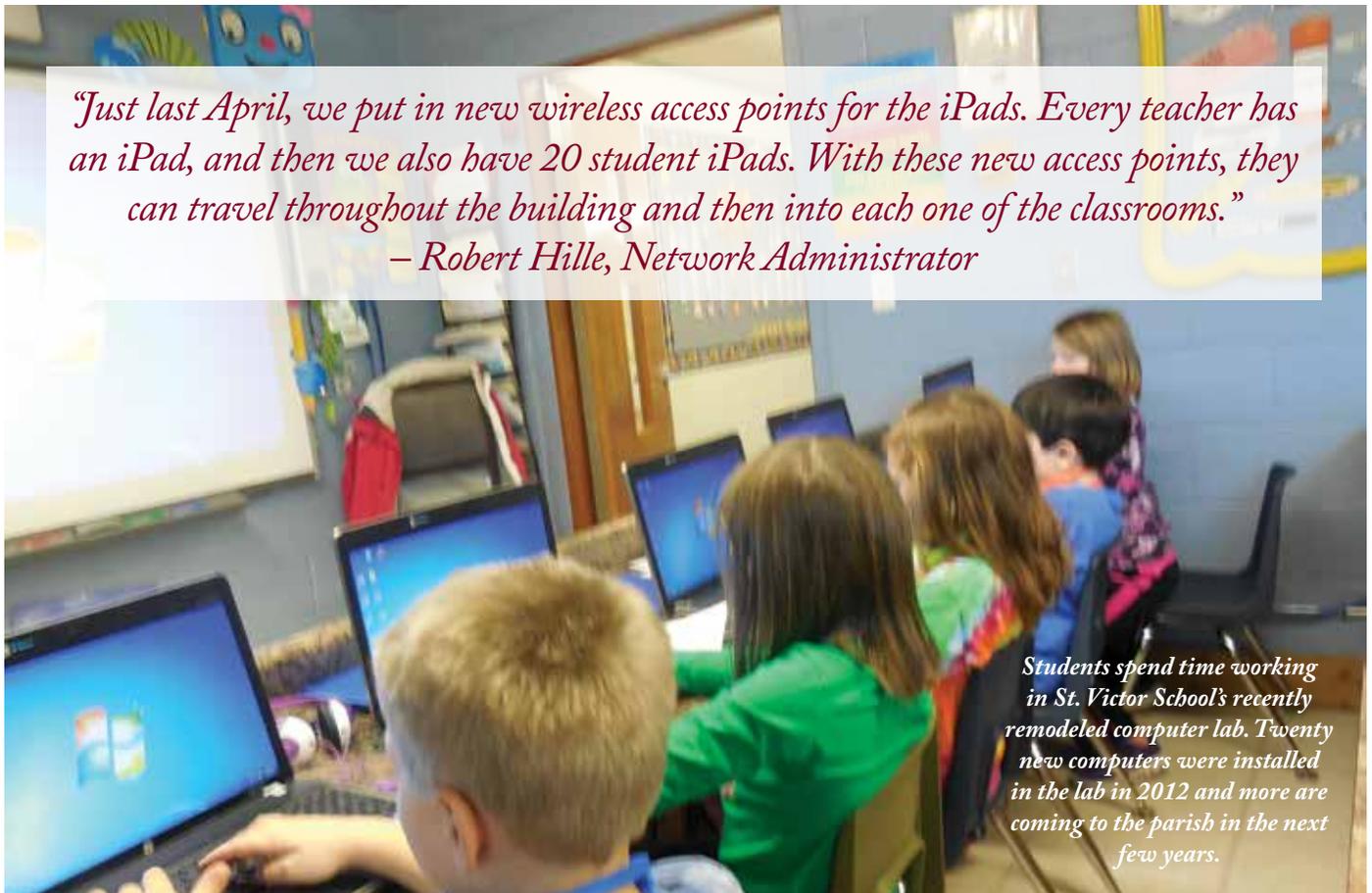
for students and the parish staff every time they log on – something that only serves to enhance life at St. Victor School and St. Clare.

“A lot of things are behind the scenes, and hopefully the users never notice,” he explains.

The technology budget for both the parish and school families is supplemented by generous donations from parishioners. Robert Hille says he is always open to suggestions from those in the St. Clare community, and encourages parishioners to call the parish office at 608-325-9506 with questions.

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– Robert Hille, Network Administrator



Students spend time working in St. Victor School’s recently remodeled computer lab. Twenty new computers were installed in the lab in 2012 and more are coming to the parish in the next few years.

A Letter From Our Pastor

November: Time to Be Grateful

Dear Parishioners,

I thank God every day for my priesthood; I thank God every day for each one of you; I thank God when I say the Mass; I thank God for each and every day. There are so many ways that the Lord has blessed me that I cannot really mention them all. That is a lot of gratitude, I know, but it is that kind of attitude of appreciation for God's presence in our lives, and His many gifts to us, that we need to concentrate on — not just this month when Thanksgiving is so much on our minds, but throughout the year.

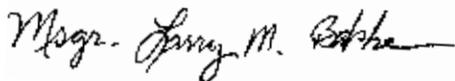
It has been said many times that people who are good stewards are grateful people and, as a result, are happy people. If we think about the good things in our lives — no matter how many challenges and sorrows there may be — and make them the center of our thoughts, it makes everything better.

As Catholics, we are thankful people by nature. We share the Eucharist regularly, and this is a gift from God on which we should always unite. You are probably aware that the word "Eucharist" itself comes from the Greek word *eucharistia*, which means, quite simply, "thanksgiving." As a faith family, we share this meal of "thanksgiving" often, and certainly at every Holy Mass.

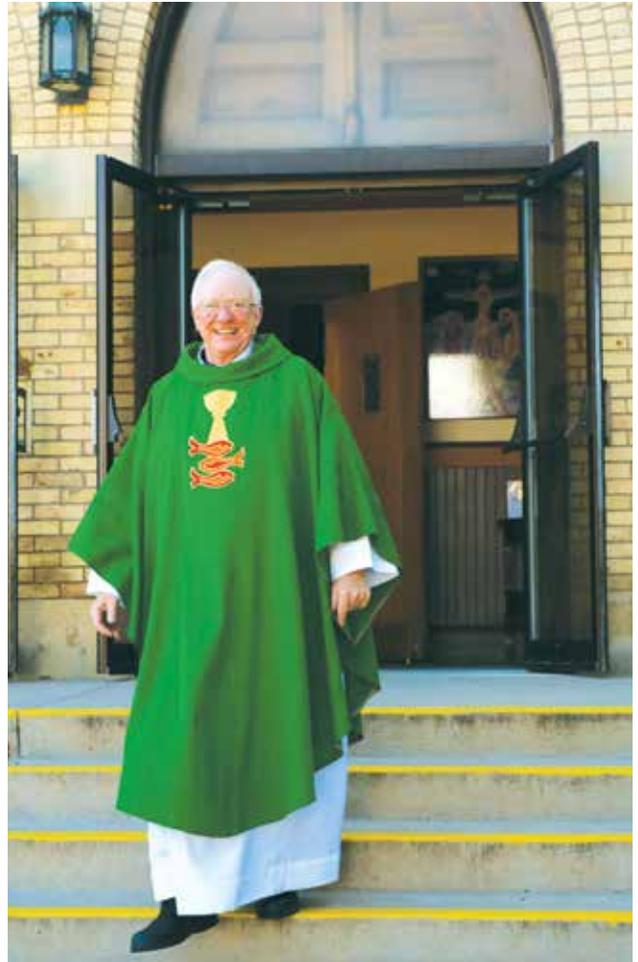
Thus, my thoughts of thanksgiving are not confined to one time of year, but every day of the year. That should be the goal for each of us. I heard someone say recently that our Thanksgiving holiday has Protestant roots, but there are Catholic roots to the tradition, as well. Were you aware that in 1565 — 56 years before the Pilgrims celebrated their first Thanksgiving — Spanish Catholic settlers and Native Americans celebrated a Thanksgiving at a Holy Mass in St. Augustine, Fla.?

Thanksgiving is a way of life for us. Every time we gather to celebrate Mass, to pray, or to just enjoy one another's company, it is a time for that eternal gratitude. Everything we have is a gift from God. It may be something basic like fresh air and clean water. It may be food. It is certainly family, friends and our very parish. Let us thank God not just at this time of year, but always. You and I are blessed.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Msgr. Larry M. Bakke
Pastor



Open Alcoholics An

Brothers Helping Brothers Ac

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIH), approximately seven percent or 16.6 million adults in the United States have a severe drinking program. Each of these men and women is suffering daily from a loss of freedom – chained to an addiction that they often feel helpless to break.

Fortunately, we have a God who is all-powerful and ever faithful. St. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians, “No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God does not leave us alone in our struggles – among many graces, He gives us one another to help us bear our burdens. For those suffering from alcoholism, one way this can happen is through the Open Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) Meetings offered every month at St. Victor Church. Open to anyone suffering from or interested in learning about the effects of alcoholism, these gatherings take place the first and third Saturday of every month in Nilles Hall from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

“It’s an open speaker meeting,” explains Michael, recovered alcoholic and parish contact for the meetings. “Meaning, we invite people from the meeting to share their story of strength and hope with regard to alcoholism. They share what it was

“Come to the open meeting,” Michael says. “And don’t be afraid to come to speak to someone afterward. You’ll hear a lot of laughter – we are not a glum people. Once you get help and become sober, life truly becomes much better. I can honestly say that any person who is part of the program would be happy to talk. We’re a resource out there if people need it.”

like while they were drinking and then what it’s like now that they’ve been in A.A. and have

practiced the principles that they’ve learned.”

The open speaker component is an essential part to the effectiveness of the program.

“A person who has walked the walked understands what you are going through and can better offer help and support,” Michael says.

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are designed for a twofold purpose – the first is to help an individual become sober, and the second is to help all members maintain their sobriety.

“If you attend the meeting and hear someone tell their story, it helps boost your own sobriety,” Michael says. “It helps me remember where I was at, what it was like, and where I don’t want to go again. It also helps me help another human being. Basically, it’s one alcoholic helping another alcoholic.”

The meetings at the church first began several years ago, when there was a real need for more A.A. gatherings within the area in order to ensure regular support for members.

“I was looking to start another meeting,” Michael says. “And a guy suggested an open speaker meeting. I mentioned it to Fr. Larry and he gave us his blessing.”

Anonymous Meetings Achieve and Maintain Sobriety

Speaking from his own experience, the A.A. meetings have been essential to Michael's journey toward sobriety.

"I'm a recovering alcoholic," Michael says. "I'm recovering every day by following the steps that I've learned through A.A. Sometimes a new person will come and, because we have open speakers, they may end up hearing exactly what they need. People come to A.A. not because they're happy, but because something has gone terribly wrong in their lives. I'm thankful to be able to go there and witness to them. When they can see other

people like us who have recovered and are practicing the principles, it shows them that they CAN get out of where they are with hard work and time."

Although A.A. is not affiliated with any denomination, Michael has seen his own faith life deepen as a result of his membership in the program.

"The principles that I practice through A.A. have brought me to a deeper understanding and appreciation of my Catholic faith," he says. "I can honestly say that I was not as involved or active in my faith before I was in A.A."

All are welcome to come to the meeting and see what the program is all about – brothers helping brothers overcome the chains of alcoholism.

"Come to the open meeting," Michael says. "And don't be afraid to come to speak to someone afterward. You'll hear a lot of laughter – we are not a glum people. Once you get help and become sober, life truly becomes much better. I can honestly say that any person who is part of the program would be happy to talk. We're a resource out there if people need it."

St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Parish
2016 Commitment Card
My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

First & Last Name (One card per family)
Street Address
City State ZIP
Telephone (Important)
Email

Talent
Using My Talents in Parish Ministries

You can read about each of the ministries listed below in the Ministry Catalog on the website. When you sign up, the ministry leader will call to explain how to get involved.

Currently Involved Interested in Joining
★ Drop-In Ministries, Participate When Offered

Please clearly write the first name of interested family member on the line.

Faith Formation

- Adult Scripture Study
- Catechists
- Confirmation Preparation I & II
- Faith Formation Aides
- Faith Formation Support Staff
- RCIA
- Sacramental Catechesis
- Summer Faith and Fun
- The Mime
- Youth Faith Formation (Grades 1-6)
- "EDGE" Middle School Formation
- "EDGE" Support
- Youth Ministry
- Youth Ministry Chaperones and Leaders

St. Victor School Services Ministry

- Brunch with Santa
- Educational Advisory Board
- Mardi Gras
- School Lunch Servers
- Scrap
- St. Victor Home and School

Treasure
Making a Consistent Gift to the Offertory

In thanksgiving for God's gifts, each household at St. Clare is asked to give a specific percentage of income based on the biblical tithe:

6% to St. Clare of Assisi Parish
1% to the Diocese, and 3% to other charities

My Gift to St. Clare:
Please complete either a Weekly or Monthly offertory gift

Weekly gift: \$ _____ x 52 = \$ _____ annually
Or
Monthly gift: \$ _____ x 12 = \$ _____ annually

I am interested in Electronic Giving

Weekly giving based on proportion of income.
At St. Clare of Assisi, each household is asked to work toward giving 6% of their income to the parish. Some families may have difficulty reaching this goal at first. If so, try increasing your weekly gift incrementally until you reach an amount that you know is right for you.

% of Hhld Income	10%	6%	4%	1%
Household Income	Amount of Weekly Gift			
\$30,000	\$30	\$18	\$12	\$3
\$50,000	\$50	\$30	\$20	\$5
\$70,000	\$70	\$42	\$28	\$7
\$100,000	\$100	\$60	\$40	\$10

Don't Forget to Return Your Commitment Card!

The 2015 Stewardship Renewal is happening now! Please remember to turn in your commitment cards to the parish as soon as possible. We appreciate your willingness to participate in this year's renewal. The more we grow to embrace and understand the stewardship way of life, the more our parish will flourish and grow!

A Look Back on Our Chicken Dinner

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Chicken Dinner on Sept. 20. It was a great evening of fun and fellowship!



“I Am Excited About Pope Francis’ Call to Look at Mercy”

Our Parish Plans for the Upcoming Year of Mercy

Mr. Joe Peters, Principal of St. Victor School, asks a truly profound question.

“Can there be anything better than focusing on mercy?” he says. “We have already instituted and begun our plans for the Year of Mercy, even though it does not officially begin until December.”

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we at St. Clare – along with Catholic churches and dioceses throughout the world – will officially institute a Year of Mercy. This Year of Mercy was proclaimed by Pope Francis as he announced an “Extraordinary Jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy to highlight the Catholic Church’s ‘mission to be a witness of mercy.’”

This is a ‘Jubilee’ – not just a year to commemorate something. Going all the way back to the Old Testament, a jubilee year was observed every 50 years. It was traditionally a time when people returned home, debts were forgiven, and slaves were set free. For the past 600 years, our Church has observed a Jubilee every 25 to 50 years – a special time of mercy and grace from God. Our last one was in the year 2000, the Great Jubilee.

St. Clare of Assisi is in the process of finalizing plans for parish-wide observance.



Students visit the Catholic Cemetery, with special lessons from Fr. Mike.

“From a parish perspective, we will begin at the Masses on Dec. 8, but in some ways we have also begun already,” says Mrs. Ann O’Leary, the Coordinator of Sacramental Preparation Ministries. “I am excited about Pope Francis’ call to look at mercy. It is important for me personally, but also for our St. Clare of Assisi Parish Catholic Community. We have already held a Mass of Healing and Anointing of the Sick, and another is planned for Thursday, April 14, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.”

Other plans for the year, according to Mrs. O’Leary, include a parish retreat for adults on Feb. 26-27, with a concentration on mercy. Also, a Parish Mission

will be conducted by Fr. John Meoska, OSB, beginning on the weekend of March 12-13, when Fr. Meoska will speak at all Masses, and continuing on the evenings of March 13, 14 and 15 with sessions led by Fr. Meoska. Again, the center of the mission will be mercy, and Reconciliation will be an important part of that. Mrs. O’Leary advises that people closely follow the parish bulletin for notification of events as they are planned and announced.

As previously mentioned, the school has already begun their efforts for the Year of Mercy. Mr. Peters says that the entire student body has been divided into what

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Our Parish Plans for the Upcoming Year of Mercy

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they term “faith families” – that is, groups of 15-18 students as a cross section of all grades. Under the supervision of teachers, each of these “families” will have projects and events relating to the Corporal Works of Mercy.

“We have divided the year into quarters,” Mr. Peters says. “In the first three quarters, we will concentrate on Corporal Works of Mercy, and then in the fourth quarter, we will plant and tend our gardens as we have in the past. The first quarter, which we are currently in, includes Bury the Dead and Clothe the Naked; the second quarter will have as focal points Shelter the Homeless and Feed the Hungry. The third quarter studies and evaluates Provide Drink to the Thirsty and Visit the Sick and Visit the Imprisoned.

“This fall, our students are visiting cemeteries to reflect upon and gain a greater understanding of Bury the Dead,” he continues. “Throughout the year, the students will be conducting food and clothing drives

and doing other projects which bring home to them the whole idea of mercy.”

This whole year allows our parish family and our school to examine and participate in the many important facets of God’s mercy.

“Faith formation is such an important part of what we all should be doing,” Mrs. O’Leary reminds us. “This is part of that.”

For more information on Year of Mercy activities, events, and opportunities, please contact Bill Van Wagner or Ann O’Leary at the parish office, 325-9506.