

ST. CLARE *of* ASSISI PARISH

October 2014

A TRADITIONAL MARIAN DEVOTION

The St. Clare Rosary Ministry

For over 30 years, members of our parish have gathered before daily Mass to pray the Rosary for the intentions of our community.

“There are several of us who are there almost every day,” says Eva Didier, who has coordinated the ministry for the past year. “Everyone take turns leading the decades, and we pray for all the parish, the sick, and those having surgery.”

On Monday through Friday, approximately a half hour before Mass begins, the group says a five-decade Rosary according to the Mysteries of the Rosary appropriate for the day of the week. The Joyful Mysteries are prayed on Mondays and Saturdays; the Sorrowful Mysteries on Tuesdays and Fridays; the Glorious Mysteries on Wednesdays and Sundays; and the Luminous Mysteries on Thursdays.

While the core group remains the same, different parishioners frequently join in saying the Rosary and the other accompanying prayers.

“We pray for the parish and pray to St. Michael the Archangel to end abortion,” Eva says. “We also say a prayer for protection of religious freedom.”

On Wednesdays, when Mass takes place at St. Rose of Lima in Brodhead, the Rosary group gathers there.

“That’s one of the interesting things about it,” says Lucille Kelly, a regular member of the Rosary Ministry. “In Brodhead, the church was closed because of the shortage of priests, but Fr. Larry is so generous that he goes there to say Mass on Wednesday, so we go for the Rosary before Mass just like we do at St. Clare.”

In May and October, the Rosary Ministry leads the singing of “Immaculate Mary” after Mass. Occasionally in October, the group joins the parish in praying the Rosary at the courthouse downtown — a ritual that has occurred when legislation regarding abortion is on the table.

Eva believes that fostering a relationship with Mary through prayer is an important devotion to maintain on a daily basis.



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Good Stewardship of Our **Social** **Media**

When we are talking about the idea of stewardship and how we care for the tools and gifts we have been given, it is not often that we stop to have a conversation about how we are caring for and using the gift of social media to positively spread Gospel values. However, this is an appropriate topic for us to consider when we are talking about our young people, as well as adults. Recent media statistics from the Pew Research center in 2013 show that 71 percent of all online adults use Facebook, as do about 71 percent of all youth. In addition, Twitter remains an ever-popular social media platform, while both Pinterest and Instagram continue to grow in use among youth and adults.

Therefore, with most of our youth and adults gathering “online” on such a frequent basis, it is important for us to think about how we are using the amazing gift of technology that has exploded in the last decade.

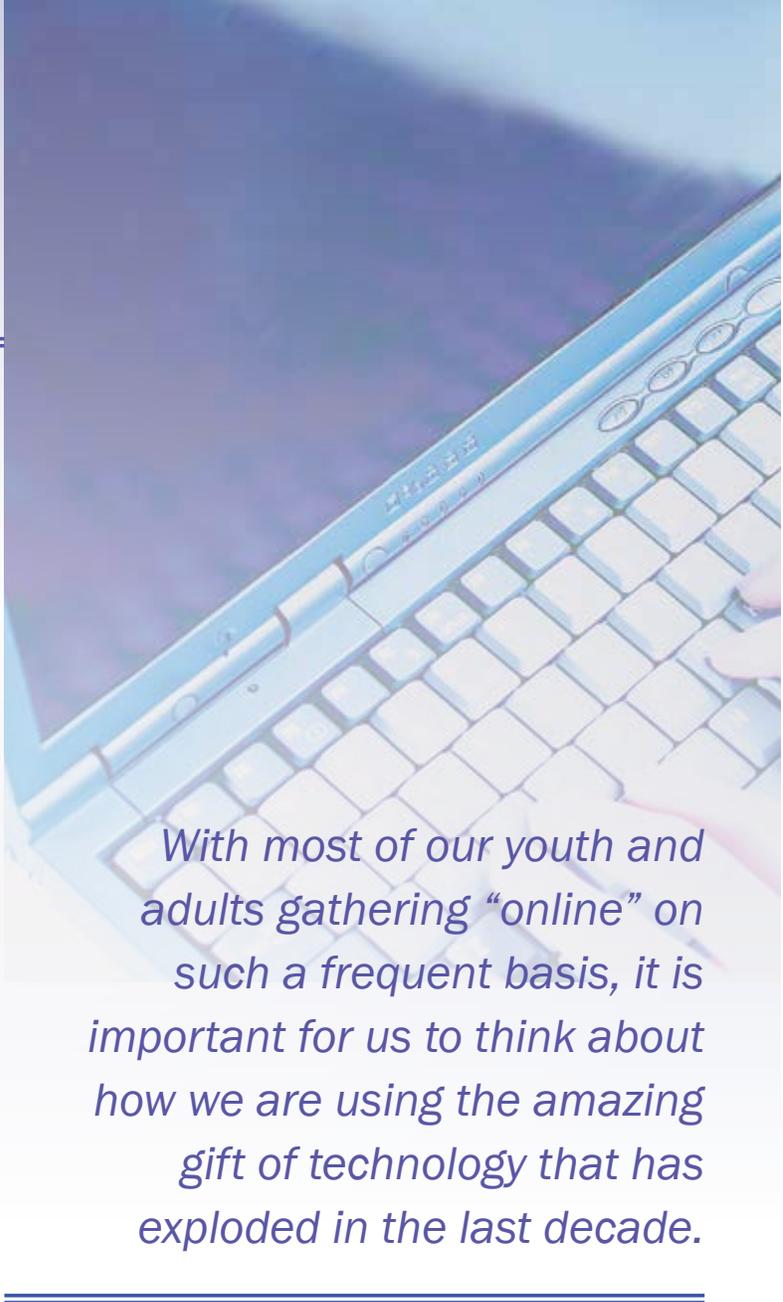
If you are frequently online — especially on Pinterest — there is popular acronym that some of you may have already come across. While it is used in many different contexts, it seems very appropriate to follow as we find ourselves posting statuses and pictures on various social media sites. The acronym is T.H.I.N.K., and it invites us to consider what we are saying and sharing, and whether or not it should be said!

Is what we are posting:

TRUE? Are we sharing factual information or a rumor that we heard, and if we think our information is factual, what is our source? Is it trustworthy?

HELPFUL? Is the information we are sharing something that can be useful to another person? We don’t need to over-examine all of our content to consider its “educational factor,” but is the content we are posting going to help someone learn about us, learn about a place or an activity, think about the world, reflect on life, engage us in laughter, and so forth?

INSPIRATIONAL? There is certainly no requirement to be a poet or an artist, but social media has become a wonderful outlet for positive self-expression. “Positive” is the key word – are we posting to inspire others about the good in our world, or are we posting to cut someone down or to simply rant?



With most of our youth and adults gathering “online” on such a frequent basis, it is important for us to think about how we are using the amazing gift of technology that has exploded in the last decade.

NICE? Have we considered others’ feelings when we include them in a status or post a picture of them? Will they be embarrassed? Are we using social media to humiliate and intimidate others, or are we using it to try to better the world and the lives of others?

KIND? What a great tool to compliment, show gratitude, and build the self-esteem of those you care about!

People often speak of social media in a negative way because of the content they see posted. T.H.I.N.K. is a great way for us to remind ourselves that we can be good stewards of our own social media use. Remember that there are many ways to share the Gospel without writing out its words. Gospel living has to do with the positive way we approach this life and bring God’s light and love to others – and it couldn’t be easier than sharing an uplifting status on Facebook, a Tweet of gratitude to a friend, or a beautiful image of God’s inspiring creation on Instagram. What a great way to build the Kingdom of God!

A Letter From Our Pastor

Make October a Spiritually Fulfilling Month

Dear Parishioners,

Through the centuries, the Church has developed and established a theme and devotion for each month of the year. Officially, October is the month of the Rosary, highlighted by the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on Oct. 7.

The Rosary and its importance to our prayer lives is a fixture of our Catholic faith. It is satisfying and affirming for me to see people with rosaries at church. However, this is not as prevalent today as it was one generation ago.

A family praying the Rosary together was once the norm. Since October is the month we highlight this devotion, there is no better time to bring it back to the forefront of our faith lives.

So, this month, I invite you to do two things. First, find your rosary. If you don't have one, ask your friends in the parish who might have one you can use, or you can also check the local Catholic shop or find one online for purchase. And, second, make a concerted effort to pray the Rosary this month — either individually, or more importantly, with your family.

Families and family life are under attack from secular society. Last year, Pope Francis announced an Extraordinary Synod of Bishops to occur this month from October 5-19. The topic of discussion will be the "Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization." Participants will include the presidents of national bishops' conferences (our president is Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville), the heads of the Eastern Catholic Churches, and the leaders of major Vatican offices. It will be interesting to see what comes out of this significant meeting.



The pope has consistently emphasized the importance of the family to our Church. One of his comments contained "food for thought" for each of us in relation to our own families. He said, "People should take Sundays off so they can be with their families." Of course, we all understand this can be difficult given the busy and complex world in which we live. The Holy Father added, "Turn off the television during family meals and set aside time to play with or to talk with your children." In addition to praying the Rosary, I would recommend that our families make an effort to heed Pope Francis' words.

Finally, I would like to suggest a couple of words and one phrase that would make our relationships to one another stronger and more comfortable, whether in our families, or right here in our faith family. The words are "please" and "sorry," and the phrase is "thank you." It is amazing what these words might mean to someone. I do not think we can say them enough. As we approach our busy fall season with all the joy it brings, let us keep in mind how the Lord has gifted us, and respond with the heart of a generous steward.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Larry M. Bakke
Pastor

Questions & Answers About Our

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently "renewed" by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence — part of the rhythm of parish life at St. Clare of Assisi. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year?

WE
are CALLED

ST. CLARE OF ASSISI
PARISH

2014 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARD

First & Last Name (one card per family)

Street Address

City State ZIP

Telephone (Important)

Email Address

Commitment
Weekend is
Oct. 25/26.
Don't forget
to bring your
Commitment
Card to Mass!

How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your commitment card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

Time Section: Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

Talent Section: You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

Treasure Section: Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving six percent of your income to St. Clare of Assisi.

My age or physical limitations prevent me from being active in the parish. Should I still turn in a commitment card?

Yes! The first section of the card — Stewardship of Time — is the most important because it allows you to make commitments to prayer. Even if you can't join a ministry or make it to Mass on Sunday, you can still pray for our parish. Your spiritual support has tremendous value in the eyes of God.

One time I turned in a card, but no one ever called me when I signed up for a ministry.

If this happened in the past, please forgive us! And don't give up on filling out your commitment card! We have a very good plan to call every person interested in joining a new ministry. If for some reason the ministry leader does not call you within four weeks of turning in your card, let the parish office know.

How much should I give?

Your gift is entirely dependent on how much God has given you. At St. Clare of Assisi, we ask that you give six percent to our parish, one percent to the diocese, and three

CALLED

Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

percent to other charities. Why a percentage of income? First, because the tithe (10 percent) is a scriptural benchmark that the Church has honored for centuries (see Malachi 3:10). Secondly, we give a percentage of income because it is a common-sense standard by which everyone can equitably support the parish. Most of all, we give because we believe God comes first in everything, even finances.

What if I can't fulfill my financial pledge?

While our pledge is not a "contract," we should all make a good-faith effort to fulfill it. Of course, if your financial circumstances change — if you lose your job, for instance — then the amount of money you give the Church will change, too. Likewise if you get a raise or bonus. The biggest reason many people don't fulfill their pledge is that they attend Mass at another parish when they go on vacation, attend a wedding, etc. If you're out of town, just make up for the missed Sunday when you write your next check to the parish. Using your envelopes is a good way to see which Sundays you missed.

I don't even go to Mass very frequently. Why turn in a Commitment Card?

Because this is your chance to turn over a new leaf! Why not make a commitment to God to come to Mass every Sunday, and then write down that commitment? Even if that's the only commitment you make, take a step forward. Jesus Himself is waiting for you!

What happens if I don't return my Commitment Card?

We will mail you a reminder letter that includes an extra Commitment Card (in case you misplaced yours). Make every effort you can to participate. Our Stewardship Renewal is a very important annual event in the life of our parish. You and your family are part of what makes St. Clare of Assisi a great community! Most importantly, your commitments are actually promises to Christ Himself. All of us are called to give back to God a portion of what He has given us.

WE
are CALLED

"ACT JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY, WALK HUMBLY"
MICAH 6:8



ST. CLARE OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PARISH
2014 STEWARDSHIP HANDBOOK

Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your commitment card.

Prime Rib Dinner Serving Up a Great Meal and Parish Fellowship

There is still time to make reservations for the Second Annual St. Clare Prime Rib Dinner, set for 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 18, in the St. Victor School gymnasium.

Cindy Fager, dinner coordinator, says that last year's dinner was the first, having been planned to celebrate the completion of the newly remodeled school kitchen.

And the menu featuring prime rib?

"It was just to try something new," Cindy says. "It was something different we never tried before."

The planning for the dinner began in September with all the details put in place throughout the month. Cindy brings together a group of volunteers to help serve, while Greg Rufenacht will reprise his role as prime rib cook. Those interested in volunteering may still do so by contacting Cindy at the parish office.

"We're only accepting reservations for 200 persons, and reservations are required," Cindy says. "The ticket for the dinner is \$25 each, and the deadline for reservations is Oct. 10. There is an order form in the church bulletin or parishioners can pick one up at the parish office. But the RSVP order form is required."

The menu, once again, is impressive – Certified Angus prime rib, selections from a salad bar, baked potato, vegetable, dinner roll, freshly prepared dessert, and a choice of wine or beer. Children up to age 6 can have a free meal of a hot dog with macaroni and cheese.

The Second Annual Euchre Tournament will also be held at the dinner, so start organizing your teams!

While the dinner is an opportunity to enjoy delicious food, the event is a unique chance to enjoy fellowship with other parishioners. We hope to see you there!



Ushers Ministry Fosters Parish Hospitality

Every Catholic parish should be a picture of hospitality. It is extremely important for parishes to be welcoming to visitors, new members and longtime parishioners alike. Here at St. Clare of Assisi, our Ushers Ministry works to make sure our parish liturgies are warm and welcoming for all who attend.

“The purpose is to be hospitality ministers,” says Linda Faessler, administrative assistant and usher at St. Clare of Assisi. “You greet people when they come to Mass, direct them to their seats, try to answer any questions they may have, and generally be hospitality ministers at the parish.”

Linda serves as an usher with her husband, Pat. The members of this ministry play several roles in the liturgy of the Mass, working with the greeters to make people feel welcome.

The services these volunteers provide includes welcoming parishioners as they arrive to Mass, helping them find seats, directing people to the restrooms, and simply being there to meet any needs that may arise. They arrive before Mass to make sure they are there to welcome people coming in, and stay afterwards to hand out bulletins, put things back in their places, and make sure everything is ready for the next scheduled Mass. These volunteers perform all these duties while also taking part in the liturgy.

“A very important part is for the ushers to participate in the Mass,” Linda says. “They’re encouraged very much to participate even though they remain in the back of the church.”

But the real service provided by this ministry is the way it encourages hospitality and a sense of community in the parish.

“You get to know more people, just by having general conversations,” Linda says. “Even if you don’t remember their names, the faces are familiar time and time again.”

These ministers of hospitality are also living out a form of stewardship.

“It’s a ministry, so you’re giving a service to God and to your community,” Linda says. “It makes you want to do more for the Church. It makes your faith stronger because you feel like you’re a part of the community. You’re not on the outside looking in – you’re participating in it. And it’s a form of prayer by participating.”

The Hospitality Ministry doesn’t only make visitors and new members feel welcome, but it also does the same for the members of the ministry itself. And like all volunteer service, the hospitality ministers are blessed through their efforts.

“I love people,” Linda says. “I love being with people and meeting people, and sometimes that might be the only friendly face they see. It’s great to see people smile and to have a genuine interaction. And I like to make people feel welcome, because all are welcome.”

For more information about the Ushers Ministry or to get involved, please call Randy Symanitz at the parish office at 608-325-9506.





ST. CLARE of ASSISI PARISH

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The St. Clare Rosary Ministry *continued from front cover*

"I have had a special closeness to the Blessed Virgin," Eva says. "Every morning and evening, I say three Hail Marys and ask her to bless me and keep me from mortal sin. Can we ever pray too much?"

For Lucille, the Rosary is not only an opportunity to lift up the intentions of the parish, but also to join in a traditional devotion that has flourished in recent Church history.

"(St.) Pope John Paul's devotion to the Rosary and the Fatima message really started this fervor," Lucille says. "We have a list of people that we pray for every time, and I know they've prayed for me."



If you have time to offer in prayer before daily Mass at St. Clare or at St. Rose of Lima on Wednesdays, join the Rosary Ministry as they lift up the intentions of the parish, foster their relationship with Mary, and maintain a beautiful Church tradition.

"Everyone is welcome," Eva says. "What a wonderful way to start the day with daily Mass and the Rosary!"

For more information about the St. Clare Rosary Ministry, please contact Eva Didier at 608-329-7848 and watch the bulletin for any upcoming Rosary Ministry events in October, the Month of the Holy Rosary.