



07.2013

Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

St. Paul's Newcomers Welcoming Ministry

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

For many Catholics — especially in a transient community such as Pensacola — moving to a new place and a new parish can be daunting. Fortunately, here at St. Paul, the Newcomers Welcoming Ministry works to help guide new parishioners through this time. By extending the hand of friendship and hospitality, providing resources to familiarize newcomers with the parish while helping them to get involved in parish life, the ministry strives to make those new to our community feel at home in no time.

"If you move to a new parish, most of the time you don't know the people there," says Alicia Hernandez, founding member of the Welcoming Ministry. "You're coming to church, and in Mass it's not really a place for you to talk to people. When you come out, if someone is there to greet and guide you, you can ask questions and then you start getting into all the different things we have here. It's a good thing to have someone there to talk to, just a friendly person to be there, and you can know that you can always go talk to this person."

The ministry has been active for around 10 years, and includes a leadership committee — whose members include Alicia, Kathy Cashman, and Debra Kummer. The Newcomers Welcoming Ministry's membership consists of 22 parishioners taking on two different kinds of volunteering roles — those who welcome new parishioners and those who serve as mentors.

"The welcoming volunteers receive the parishioner-to-be and give them the parish registration, and that is done usually after Mass," says Alicia. "There is a little table [in the narthex], we have a sign welcoming people, and if they happen to come at a time when there's no one there, there are some little cards they can take with them. They have the Web address for the parish on the back, where they can read about the parish. They can even register on the Internet."



Hospitality — an essential stewardship pillar — plays an important role within our parish community, and the Newcomers Welcoming Ministry takes care to ensure that all new parishioners feel welcome and at home here at St. Paul.



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Drawing from the Traditions of Spirituality in Our Catholic Church

If you knew that the person who loves you most in the world was longing to spend some time with you, would you want to meet with them? What if this person was also the only one capable of saving your soul for all eternity, not to mention blessing you abundantly on earth?

You'd be crazy to say “no” to getting to know them just a little better, right?

That being said, you may wonder how you can best go about getting to know this particular person. To do just that, as Catholics, it is important that we seek out and read things from our Catholic Christian tradition — immersing ourselves in the spiritual works of those who have found Christ in a very deep way in accordance with the Church. Indeed, there are many great saints who have flowered out of the community of believers, and we can turn to them to get to know God better.

Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has been profoundly touched, enriched and enlightened by spiritual masters whose works are powerful enough to convert souls. It is also important to recognize that the spiritual traditions in the Church express many of the same ideas but in different ways, bearing witness to the ineffable, mosaic-like beauty of Catholicism.

St. Benedict began the first formal monastic tradition in the western Catholic Church, basing it on the *Rule of St. Benedict*. To this day, Benedictine spirituality is centered around the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, simplicity and the appreciation of the Holy Eucharist.

The Franciscan spiritual tradition began with St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi. These saints brought about the Counter-Reformation that still marks the Church with splendor today. St. Francis is widely known for his Gospel-centered living, love of poverty, devotion to Christ Crucified, and mer-

cy for all men and creatures. *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi* by St. Bonaventure, as well as *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* both help one learn more about this magnificent saint.

Similar to St. Francis, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila also sparked a critical reformation within the Carmelite Order, which later influenced the entire Church in a positive way. Carmelite spirituality is a desert spirituality which bases itself on silence, deep contemplative prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, outstanding penance and various traditional Catholic devotions. *The Story of a Soul*, which is the autobiography of renowned Carmelite St. Therese of Lisieux, the *Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*, and the works of St. John of the Cross all capture the essence of Carmelite spirituality.

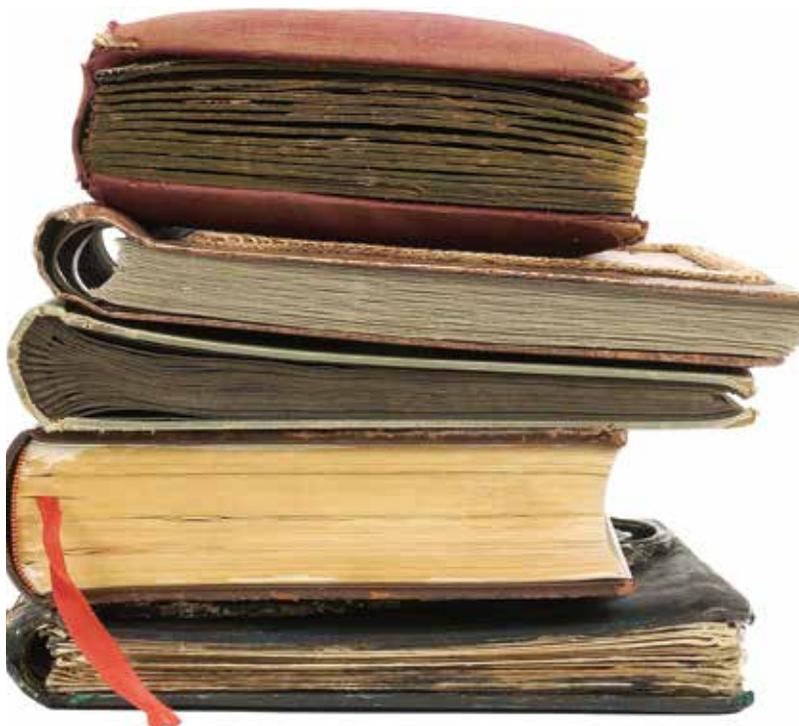
Salesian spirituality stems from the great life and work of St. Francis de Sales. *The Introduction to the Devout Life* is a fantastic primer for those desiring to enter more profoundly into a life of union with Christ.

Ignatian spirituality is known for educating people on the discernment of spirits. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, as well as *The Discernment of Spirits* by Fr. Tim Gallagher are excellent resources for learning more about this

powerful spiritual tradition.

Last but not least, *The Fulfillment of All Desire* by Ralph Martin is modern-day spiritual work that can help those who are seeking Christ to find Him.

The rich variety of spiritual traditions we have in the Catholic Church are an indication of how diverse our Church is. There are so many different ways of following Christ and praying — and to do so, we can draw from the spiritual “greats.” But of course, we must always pray in the way that God is leading us, in a way that we can truly encounter God in conversation.



A Letter From Our Pastor

Ordinary Time is Never Ordinary

Dear Parishioners,

Glancing at the liturgical calendar for July, I was surprised to see that each Sunday in July is a Sunday in Ordinary Time. Are you aware that the last time we had a month when all of the Sundays were in Ordinary Time was October 2012?

First of all, let me make it clear that there is nothing ordinary about Ordinary Time. If you are old enough, you may recall the term Ordinary Time did not exist until after Vatican II (actually in 1969). Prior to that, the Church called Sundays the 1st or 2nd or so on Sunday after Epiphany or after Pentecost. Thus, the seasons of the Church year were Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and then Advent again.

What difference does it all make?

First of all, we need to understand that Ordinary Time does not mean or imply that this time in the Church calendar is commonplace. You may have heard the expression that every Sunday is “Little Easter,” and that is absolutely true, even during so-called Ordinary Time.

In our mathematics lessons in school, we learned (at least some of us did) that there were cardinal numbers and ordinal numbers. That sounds almost Catholic. Cardinal numbers were one, two, three, while ordinal numbers were first, second, third. Our Catholic term Ordinary Time actually came from the Latin, *tempus per annum* (“time through the year”). What is important to us as Catholics, though, is that we need to understand that our sense of stewardship and our sense of discipleship do not lessen because we call this time of year “ordinary.”



Sometimes, our faith becomes too cerebral, too much of an intellectual pursuit. Surely you have heard the term “faith in action.” That is what stewardship really is; how we live out our faith by doing things. Reading Scripture, praying, Bible study, and trying to study our faith from a deeper perspective are very important. However, it is equally important that we do something specific to show that our perception of stewardship is alive and active.

We are not necessarily talking about preaching on street corners or praying in public places. It may be something as simple as looking in our closets and identifying things we no longer need nor use. Give them away. Ordinary Time should be an incentive for us to do extraordinary things.

It is worth noting that the color of liturgical garments (what we priests wear at Mass) during Ordinary Time is green. Green is the color of life. Green is the color of hope. Green is the color most of us associate with positives,

with planting and nurturing and with the rhythms of life.

It is with a smile that I note that my message for Ordinary Time is not too different from my message for Advent or Christmas or Lent or Easter. As Catholics, and as good stewards, every day is a challenge to live out our lives as disciples of Christ. Every day is a challenge to truly be a good steward. There are peaks and valleys and meadows and pastures. Perhaps this (Ordinary Time) is not a mountaintop (Christmas and Easter), but it is certainly a verdant field, and we are called to plant, nurture, and harvest now as much as any time.

May God bless you in your stewardship journeys.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Doug Halsema
Pastor

ACTS Retreats Inspire the



In our day-to-day lives, we can sometimes be so busy that we get caught up in the details and forget what is really important — the bigger picture. At St. Paul, the ACTS retreats for men and women give us a breather from the rest of the world, so that we can spend some time with God and grow in our relationship with Him.

The name “ACTS” stands for “Adoration, Community, Theology and Service,” and the retreat’s talks and activities revolve around these four themes. ACTS retreats began at St. Paul in 2010, when parishioner Bob Tortajada approached Fr. Doug about the program. He had attended an ACTS retreat previously in Denton, Texas, was excited about the movement, and wanted to bring it to our parish.

Parishioner Diane Wilkinson first learned about ACTS as a member of the Pastoral Council, when the idea was presented to the group by Fr. Doug.

“To show support from the Council, I somewhat reluctantly signed up for the first women’s ACTS retreat in December 2010,” Diane says. “I had never attended a retreat as an adult before and wasn’t sure what to expect, but I had a great experience on the retreat. Attending an ACTS retreat is a beautiful step on each person’s faith journey. Some people come with many questions about their faith, others are looking for a renewal. Wherever you are on your journey, the ACTS retreats will bring you into a new or deeper relationship with our Lord and with fellow parishioners.”

Diane went on to serve on the retreat team several times, and was the director for the March 2012 women’s retreat. She later became the facilitator of the ACTS Core Team, a group of 12 parishioners who oversee the ACTS experience at the parish.



St. Paul Parish Community

At St. Paul, retreats are held twice a year at Camp Baldwin in Elberta, Ala., with separate retreats for men and women in both the fall and spring. The retreat begins on Thursday evening and culminates at the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass, where participants celebrate with the rest of the parish community. Each retreat is led by a director, who appoints a retreat team of individuals who have attended an ACTS retreat in the past. The team organizes the retreat, leads the talks and activities, and ministers to the needs of the attendees over the weekend.

After attending an ACTS retreat, participants also have the opportunity to join or form a Small Christian Community, which usually meet once a week for prayer and fellowship.

“I have grown so much closer to Our God through the ACTS retreats — I have learned so much more about my faith,” Diane says. “I am a member of the Small Community, the Community of St. Bernadette. We have participated together in service projects for the parish as well for the community. Through ACTS, I have gotten to know so many parishioners on a much deeper level than before. They are now more than just faces I see sitting near me in church.”

Indeed, Diane hopes that the ACTS program will continue to grow and spread throughout our parish community.

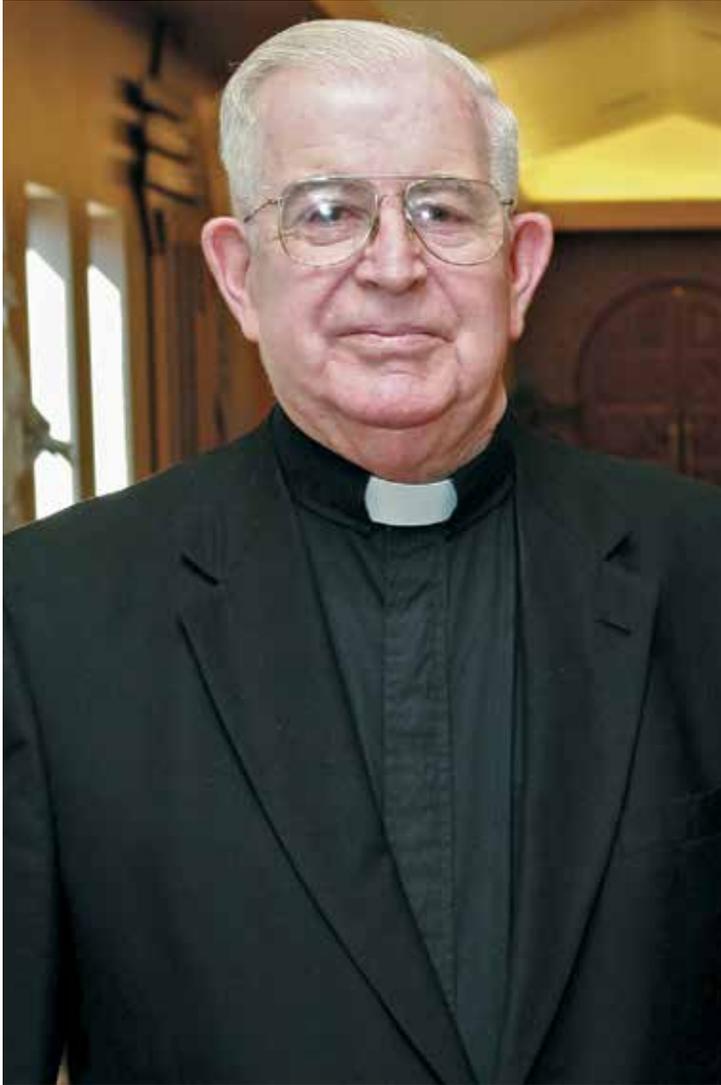
“Everyone comes to the retreat from a different point on their spiritual journey, and everyone moves forward in that journey,” she says. “Some take baby steps, some giant leaps. But I believe everyone who comes on a retreat leaves with a positive experience.”

For more, please visit the ACTS page on the parish website at stpaulcatholic.net/church/acts-retreat1.



A Life of Stewardship

Msgr. Thomas McGread



Most of the efforts and developments in stewardship as a way of life throughout the country can be traced directly back to Msgr. McGread and the work he started at his parish of St. Francis of Assisi in Wichita, Kan., in the 1960s.

This spring, we said goodbye to perhaps the most influential advocate for stewardship as a way of life. On Monday, April 1, 2013, Msgr. Thomas McGread died at the age of 84.

Msgr. McGread has been called the “Father of Stewardship,” and that title carries more than a little merit. Most of the efforts and developments in stewardship as a way of life throughout the country can be traced directly back to Msgr. McGread and the work he started at his parish of St. Francis of Assisi in Wichita, Kan., in the 1960s.

Msgr. McGread was born in Omagh, County Tyrone, Ireland on Dec. 5, 1928, and he was ordained a priest at All Hallows College in Dublin, Ireland on June 21, 1953. Later that year, he was assigned the position of associate pastor at St. Patrick Parish in Parsons, Kan. Over the next few years, he served as associate pastor for two other parishes, and as pastor of two more in the Diocese of Wichita before being named pastor of St. Francis of Assisi in 1968. He continued to serve as pastor at St. Francis of Assisi until retiring in 1999.

It was at this parish that Msgr. McGread’s vision of stewardship as a way of life began to thrive — from there, it spread through Catholic parishes and communities all over the country and throughout the world, as it continues to do today. This vision views stewardship as a spiritual, biblically based principle that begins with conversion of heart and translates into a lifestyle of service.

Msgr. McGread broke stewardship down into three equally important components — time, talent and treasure. Monsignor taught his parishioners the importance of using our personal gifts in each of these areas, as well as the importance of giving these gifts back to God.

St. Francis of Assisi became one of the most dynamic and vibrant parishes in the country, and Catholic parishes all over the U.S. have followed the example of Msgr. McGread and the parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi.

Msgr. McGread was also involved in the drafting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop’s pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, in 1992. He spoke about his message of stewardship at parishes and dioceses around the country.

Msgr. McGread’s concepts and teachings serve as the model for our stewardship efforts here at parish, and it is the same model that is successfully followed by Catholic parishes across the country and the world. Though we will truly miss this great visionary, Monsignor’s influence and legacy will live on as we continue to live the stewardship way of life.

A Look Back at the St. Paul Spartan Scramble

The St. Paul Spartan Scramble was held on Friday, May 31.

Thanks to all who participated in this fun event!





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Welcoming Ministry continued from cover

Following this easy registration process, the next steps take place.

“Once that is processed, we get notified from the office, and we then have our mentors give them a call,” Alicia says. “We try our best to communicate by giving them a phone call, because it makes it a lot more personal. This way we can show them what ministries we have, and what opportunities they have to serve and be served. We also offer to arrange a tour of the church, if they want. If they want their new home blessed, we can also arrange that with one of our priests.”

Along with getting new parishioners acquainted with St. Paul, the ministry also aims to introduce them to the myriad of ministries and activities in which they can get involved.

“Many times, as we’re doing the registration, they ask us questions about the different things you can do at the church,” Alicia says. “It really opens the door to the new

community. You can share your gifts, or if you need a program such as Christian doctrine or Bible studies, you can also benefit from that. This past March, we also gave new registered parishioner a coupon to come to one of our fellowship suppers. We tried to make it possible for the newcomers to sit together. That way, they can get to know each other, and also people from other ministries can stop by and let them know what’s going on. That worked out pretty well.”

Alicia encourages current parishioners to get involved with the committee as a way to reach out to the newest people at our parish.

“It’s just an opportunity to greet other people,” she says. “And it’s a way to show our hospitality!”

For more information, please contact Alicia Hernandez at 850-725-7371 or at carpediembeach@cox.net.

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. | **Daily Mass:** Monday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Confessions: Saturdays, 9:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m., 1st Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., and by appointment

Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday 9:00 a.m. until Friday 7:30 a.m.