



06.2013

# Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## *Catholic Girls Grow in Faith and Friendship Through Fidelis*

Here at St. Paul, we have many opportunities to provide spiritual formation and fellowship for the younger members of our parish community. One of these opportunities comes in the form of Fidelis, our parish group for girls in grades six through 12. Through friendship and service, Fidelis aims to mentor the young women of the parish towards becoming great Catholic women.



Fidelis, which was originally called Sororitas until its name change last year, was originally modeled after St. Paul's group for boys, Fraternus. The group — whose new name means “faithful” — has been established at St. Paul for several years. It currently consists of about 25 girls who actively participate in the group.

“We meet every Sunday from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.,” says Annie Rawley, the Fidelis ministry leader. “Meetings are a time to come together to enjoy good friendships and explore different aspects of living our faith in our daily lives. And of course, we like to get together just to have fun.”

The group's meetings begin with a snack while the girls socialize and catch up with one another. The girls then play games organized by group leaders and helpers, after which they break into smaller groups for discussions about that week's Mass readings or human virtues.

“The games can be anything from Sardines to games that help them to get to know each other better, or games that tie into the purpose of the meeting,” Annie says. “We spend a lot of time doing that, which they love. Since we meet on Sundays, we also go over the readings and the Gospel from the Mass that day. We break into different groups which are all paired with different leaders, and they'll read it and go over discussion questions. This is to help them understand the readings, and also to get them to talk about how they can apply them to their daily lives as students, as friends, as daughters.”

Meetings may also include special presentations, and the girls are given an opportunity to take what they have learned that evening and apply it to their daily lives.

“Sometimes we'll watch video clips that talk about a particular virtue,” Annie says. “We also have a challenge for the week that they decide on as a small group, how they can live that virtue, and then we'll talk about it the next time we meet.”

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## Catholic Girls Grow in Faith *continued from front cover*

This is Annie's first year working with Fidelis after stepping up to the plate last summer.

"I'm currently the leader of the ministry, but couldn't do it without the help of Dee Toups and Debbie Ridder," she says. "Fr. Mike invited me to work in this ministry knowing that I'd worked with Catholic girls' clubs up north. It's been fun!"

Aside from attending weekly meetings, the girls of Fidelis participate in a number of different service projects in order to serve others throughout the local community. They have participated in Day of Charity outreach projects, and this past year they adopted the Alpha Center, a crisis pregnancy center that offers support to pregnant women in the Pensacola area. During the 2012 Christmas season, Fidelis helped to wrap over 200 gifts for Christmas baskets given to Alpha Center clients.



"The girls had a great time putting together Christmas gifts for the families in need," says Annie.

The girls also participate in activities that will help them grow in their spiritual lives. They often participate in parish events such as the Living Rosary, or attend Adoration on Holy Thursday. And this past year, the high school-aged members of the group had the opportunity to travel to Mobile, Ala., for an overnight retreat with the Sisters of the Little Flower.

Groups like Fidelis are an important resource for girls during their middle school and high school years, providing them with opportunities to grow their relationships both with God and with other girls their age who share their beliefs.

"First of all, it gives the girls a healthy place of friendship where they can meet other girls who share similar values," Annie says. "Second, it gives them the opportunity to take another look at the faith passed onto them by their families and make it their own. When they're in a girls' club like this, it's because they want to go. Everybody wants to be here, everyone wants to live their faith and just have fun. It's not a formal teaching setting, but at the same time, they're learning."

For more information or to get involved with Fidelis, please contact Annie Rawley at 952-607-9896.

## *St. Paul is turning 50!*

*Help us celebrate the past half-century by attending any and all of the upcoming anniversary events.*

**July 6**

**Adult Dinner-Dance**

*Enjoy delicious cuisine along with fun dance tunes guaranteed to get your feet tapping. Celebrate with friends at this fun event!*

**Date to be determined**

**Family Fun - Water Day Picnic in the Park**

*This event is sure to be fun for the whole family! Participate in our picnic complete with crazy water games that promise to get everyone wet!*

**September 15**

**50 Hours of Adoration**

*To wrap up our anniversary celebration, the parish will hold a special 50 hours of adoration beginning Sunday, Sept. 15 and ending the following Wednesday, Sept. 18 with a fellowship supper. All are invited to attend!*

*A Letter From Our Pastor*  
“Take, Eat, This is My Body...”

Dear Parishioners,

We are approaching that time of year in our parish when things seem to slow, even shut down in part. Our church calendar seems a bit more empty, and even the pews appear more unoccupied. Of course, everyone needs to rest at times, but is letting up as much as we do really a good thing to do from the perspective of stewardship?

Think about it. Do our spiritual needs cease for quarter of the year (summer)? How about our sense of community and our community needs? Are we not as anxious to see a light in the darkness, have a sense of hope, in summer as in the rest of the year? Stewardship is a year-round activity. It is a daily activity. It is not something that can take a vacation.

Our Church celebrations certainly do not cease during these months. Easter officially did not end until Pentecost on May 19. That is followed by Trinity Sunday (May 26) and then the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) on June 2. Corpus Christi is a more joyous recreation of the Last Supper we celebrated on Holy Thursday.

The center of our liturgical celebrations is, of course, the Eucharist. You are probably aware that the very name Eucharist comes from the Greek word, *eucharistia*, which means “thanksgiving.” The Feast of Corpus Christi was initiated by Pope Urban IV in 1264.

So, on the one hand, we can see that important aspects of our faith, of our Church, continue during these summer months. The fact that an important Church feast — Corpus Christi — launches this time is worth noting. More important though is this reminder that the Eucharist should be at the center of our Church lives. It is a relatively basic formula: the Eucharist is the center of our lives. Why? Because Christ should be the focus of our lives. The Eucharist is at the heart of our parish lives. The Eucharist is at the absolute core of our stewardship beliefs. Our parish mission is stated with many words, but it might just as easily be affirmed from a stewardship view by stating, “The stewardship way of life has its center and source of strength in the Eucharist.”

As we enter these summer months, this time when we may relax some, when some of our activities and ministries may have lighter schedules, let us never lose sight of what our principal focus should be — Christ through the Eucharist. Now is as good a time as any to rededicate ourselves to the Mass, as good stewards to emphasize, not de-emphasize our Catholic faith. We are reminded in the *Catechism of the*



Catholic Church how important this is: “At the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifices of His Body and Blood. He did this to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is received, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Two, 1323).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Doug Halsema". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Doug Halsema  
Pastor

# Active Phase of Capital Campaign Comes to a Close, but Still Not Too Late to Participate

As the active phase of our three-year “More Than We Can Imagine” capital campaign comes to a close, the parish is well pleased with its progress thus far.

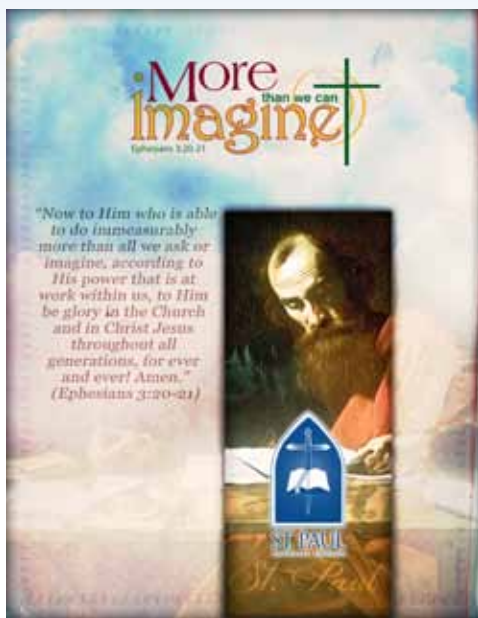
Thanks to large donations that came in the early phases of the campaign, it was already halfway to its goal even before the parish-wide mailings went out in April.

Practically speaking, giving through the “More Than We Can Imagine” capital campaign ensures that we are securing a strong footing for the future of our parish.

“A huge part of what we should always be about as Christians is leaving a legacy of faith,” Fr. Doug Halsema says. “That comes about through education, worship and having the facilities to be able to do those sorts of things. When most of us came to St. Paul, there were some facilities left to us as a legacy by those who came before us. Part of our mission is to leave that same legacy for those who are to come after us.”

Fr. Doug says that the various projects that the campaign will fund address the two biggest needs the parish faces moving forward — increased space and increased security across our parish campus.

“Looking at the work that needs to be done, we’re pretty desperate for it,” he says. “We continue to grow by leaps and bounds and are simply desperate for more space. Also, it’s an increasingly dangerous world that we live in, so we want to make sure that we’re protecting our children as best as we can. This campaign will help us to create the kind of place that can meet these needs both now and in the future — both for more space and for



better security.”

Thanks to wise planning, these twin needs of space and security will go hand-in-hand as the parish builds a couple of key new buildings.

“Our focus is on enhancing our community space so that we can come together as a community of God,” Fr. Doug says. “But by refocusing our community space, we will also increase our security. By building a new gym and new classrooms, we’ll be able to take those out of the community space and make those areas far more secure.”

The experts estimate that these projects will cost roughly \$2.5 million to complete. Thanks to the generous pledges of so many parishioners and other supporters of the parish in our community, we are already most of the way there. However, to meet our goal, we need the support of everyone who calls St. Paul home.

A collective, parish-wide effort in stewardship, Fr. Doug says that participating in the capital campaign is a beautiful way for each of us to echo

God’s generosity in our lives by giving back to Him through investing in His work at our parish.

“The Lord gives us the best He has to offer through the gift of His Son,” Fr. Doug says. “All that He asks of us is for us to give the best we have in return. When we respond to that invitation, it becomes a holy exchange of gifts. That is the sacrifice we offer to the Lord through our giving.”

It is never too late to contribute to the campaign or to make a pledge. There are pledge cards and building fund envelopes available in the pews and in the parish office. For more information, please contact the parish office at 850-434-2551.

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— Fr. Doug Halsema

# Members of the St. Augustine Circle Strengthen Faith Through Study and Discussion

We know St. Augustine as one of the great Doctors of the Church, who, after his conversion to the Christian faith, dedicated much of his life to the study of what we believe. Here at St. Paul, the 15 ladies of the St. Augustine Circle gather each month in each other's homes in order to continue to study different aspects of what they believe as Catholics.

The ministry, which was founded in 1993, has been a great way for its members to learn more about the faith and also to grow in friendship with the other members of the group. The St. Augustine Circle maintains its membership at 15 members in order to keep the meetings and discussions personal and close-knit.

"I like the camaraderie, the fact that we're with Catholic women who share the same values and beliefs," says Circle member Lois Guelpa. "I like that we go over things in the *Catechism* that we need [to know], and it's a good way to have a ministry going on that also informs us and also strengthens our faith. I think any time you're with a group of people of your same faith, discussing different things and sharing ideas helps to reinforce your faith."

The previous year, the Circle studied a book called *Faithful Dissenters*, by Robert McClory.

"It was about various people in the Church who dissented with something about the Church at the time, but nev-



Members of St. Augustine Circle. Pictured are: Sally Kennedy, Ruth Cary, Marianne Beckman, Shirley Lintz, Martha Quina, Mary Ellen Miller, Catherine Moore, Veronica Greskovich, Jane Rooks Rollins, and Martha Jo Matthews. Not pictured are Jeanne Geney, Lois Guelpa, Mary Williams and Ulda Cartaya. Photo taken by member Trish Kouns.

ertheless remained faithful — people like Galileo, or Thomas Aquinas," says Circle member Martha Quina. "It was very interesting. We really learned some Church history."

This June, the group will finish their studies of *Rekindling the Fires*, by Val J. Peter, which is an introduction to behavioral spirituality. For members of the Circle, studying varied topics — ranging from history to psychology to catechism — is a way for them to expand their worldviews.

"Different things appeal to different people," Martha says. "It's very good to read different things because it quite often makes you think of things you might not normally have thought of. We also

learn things we didn't know from each other, and that's nice."

After the Circle finishes *Rekindling the Fires*, a new book will be chosen for study when the group's meetings start up again in August.

"We appoint about two people to investigate what's available, and they present it to everyone and we vote on whether we'd like to do that or not," says Martha.

"We're always looking for something new," Lois says. "I'd like to see a little bit more of the catechism in the things we read, to reinforce the basic tenets of the Catholic faith. I think some of us need reinforcement of what we really believe."

*"Different things appeal to different people. It's very good to read different things because it quite often makes you think of things you might not normally have thought of. We also learn things we didn't know from each other, and that's nice."*

— Martha Quina

# Lou Gellner Retires After 37 Years of Service in Gift Shop



*After 37 years of service, Lou Gellner (second from left) is stepping down from her post as manager of our parish gift shop.*

After 37 years as manager of our parish's religious articles gift shop, parishioner Lou Gellner is nothing short of an expert when it comes to Catholic saints. In fact, Lou says she "enjoyed the hunt" whenever a parishioner or visitor would stop by the shop and ask her to find a medal or religious article for a particular saint.

"I never stopped learning," Lou says. "People would ask about saints I'd never heard of – and then the pope kept making new saints, so I had to learn those, too! I got the biggest thrill when a customer would come in and say, 'I've been looking for a medal of saint so-and-so for years – can you help me find it?' I loved the mystery, so I would say, 'I'll do my best!' And when I found it, I was often more excited about it than they were!"

Those who enjoy our parish's gift shop owe their thanks to Lou. When she joined the parish in 1973, Lou said it became apparent that the Pensacola area lacked a store where Catholics could buy rosaries, religious medals and other articles. And just like the famous saying, "If you build it, they will come," Lou says the response she received after opening the gift shop confirmed her decision to serve the Church in this way.

"We had people coming from all over," she says. "The need was there, and people were hungry for this."

Not only did Lou offer religious articles for sale after the Masses at St. Paul, but she says she "took her show on the road," and began setting up shop at various conventions, arts and crafts bazaars, and the Cordova Mall. She even set up a booth in a hotel lobby at one point.

"It became my personal mission," she says. "It was my life!"

And if you know Lou, it is apparent that while she may be passionate about religious articles, she's even more passionate about serving the needs of others.

"I've always liked serving – I've never really cared what it was, just that I could serve," she says. "Once you get into it, it becomes a labor of love. When you're doing something you really love, you don't need anyone to push you to do it. Truly, I

think the parish had to hold me back from doing more!"

The gift shop benefits our community in more ways than one. Thanks to Lou's deep appreciation for Catholic education, proceeds from the sale of religious articles are funneled into the Catholic Education Tuition Assistance Program, or CETAP, which has helped many alumni of St. Paul Catholic School further their Catholic education in high school. Profits from the gift shop have also been used to purchase religious items used during Mass, such as chalices, altar cloths, a monstrance, and more.

Just like the many precious religious articles stored in the glass showcases at the gift shop, Lou is a true gem. Her love for life and her energy are comparable to that of people 40 years her junior. Yet despite her vigor, Lou recently decided to give up her post at the shop. When speaking with her about her retirement from the shop, one can clearly hear the sadness she feels at being separated from a ministry she holds so dear.

"If I could do it again, I would!" she says.

Thank you, Lou, for your years of service to our parish and the community of Pensacola. We love you!

# The Allen Family

## Living With Intention



As a United States Air Force family, Neil and Debbe Jo Allen have seen the world. They've lived in England, Korea and Germany, and they have experienced various cultures. It's an exciting, but transient life — in fact, the Allens have moved 11 times in 22 years. But through all the upheaval of having to start over in a new place, their Catholic faith has been the one unchanging factor, enabling them to feel at home no matter where they are stationed in the world.

“Our children and our family are resilient because of our Catholic faith, and the Church is a constant we can all count on,” says Debbe Jo. “We have been members at St. Paul for 1 ½ years now, and we have been so blessed to incorporate our involvement at school with our parish. We felt welcomed at the first ‘hello.’”

A cradle Catholic, Debbe Jo not only credits her parents for instilling the faith, but she is also grateful for the Catholic education she received at Mount Sacred Heart in San Antonio, Texas.

However, it wasn't until years later,

while serving as Eucharistic Minister, that Debbe Jo truly realized the magnitude of her teachers' influence. It was while holding the Eucharist, and believing to her innermost being that this was the mind, body and soul of Christ, that Debbe Jo explored the origins of her deep conviction. It was then that a memory surfaced of Sr. Gerard teaching her to bow her head and pray the words, My Lord and My God when the Eucharist was raised during Mass.

“The nuns infused the faith in everything they taught,” says Debbe Jo. “The songs, the raffles to raise money for the needy, the veneration for the Eucharist — even the times we were allowed to help them with the altar linens was special. Their lessons were planted as seeds which didn't come to fruition until later, and something like my respect and adoration for the Eucharist was due, in large part, to the influence of Sr. Gerard and the faith example she set.”

Neil, on the other hand, had a different upbringing. Raised in a Lutheran family, Neil remembers his parents insisting on attending church and Sunday school every week. And while it wasn't a Catholic Mass, it did set an example of devoting Sunday to God. Later, when he met Debbe Jo at the University of Texas at Austin during a Texas Wrangler/Texas Sweetheart service mixer, the pathway to his conversion began.

“I married a cradle Catholic, raised our children in the Catho-

lic Church, but did not personally convert to Catholicism right away,” says Neil. “I decided to convert, via RCIA, 15 years after marrying Debbe Jo because I believed that being Catholic would bring me closer to Christ and that I would set a better example for my Catholic children.”

As parents, Neil and Debbe Jo try to share, teach, and exemplify the faith to their three children, Taylor, 21; Zachary, 18; and Hannah, 11. Like many families, they are busy — Neil is a colonel stationed at NAS Pensacola, Debbe Jo is a personal trainer and yoga instructor, and the children are involved with school and sports. Yet, the Allens work to weave their faith into home, work and parish life. They make it a priority to have dinner and family prayer time together every night, and they know the importance of giving back to church and community. As a family, Neil and Debbe Jo serve as lectors, while Hannah is an altar server during the 6 p.m. Mass on Sunday. Individually, Neil serves on the Stewardship Committee and is involved with the Ministry Leader Workshop,



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Address Service Requested

## *The Allen Family* continued from page 7

while Debbe Jo is on the Steering Team and coordinates the Prayer Tree program.

While their Catholic faith is the one constant in their lives as a USAF family, the Allens believe that the best way to incorporate stewardship into their lives is to own it. In fact, Debbe Jo and Neil have taken the concepts of time, talent and treasure and applied them to their own family motto.

“Our family sums this theme in three words, ‘living with intention,’” says Debbe Jo. “If we are certain of our purpose, we know that all we do (time), all we are (talent) and all we have (treasure) is already dedicated. It is up to us to be stewards of these gifts.”



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### *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.