

# OUR LADY

## *Star of the Sea*

CATHOLIC CHURCH

### The Vocations Chalice: A Unique Opportunity for Prayer, Answering God's Call

#### INSIDE

- 2 The Eucharist and Stewardship as a Way of Life
- 3 Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?
- 4 A Team of Heavenly Cleaners Serving as "Housekeepers of the Lord"
- 6 A Significant Moment in Our Prayer  
*The Presentation of the Gifts*
- 7 A Look Back on This Year's Vacation Bible School

**A**s Alexis Finniss points out, the Eucharist is essential to our Catholic faith. And we can't celebrate the Eucharist if there isn't a priest!

"Celebrating the Mass and consecrating the Eucharist are fundamental to everything we believe," Alexis says. "We need our priests!"

Although the importance of praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life has always been emphasized, we're renewing these efforts at Our Lady Star of the Sea with the newly formed Vocations Committee. Along with Msgr. Brennan and Sr. Lucy Clynes, Alexis, her husband, Matt, and four other couples are working together to bring this need to the forefront of parishioners' minds and prayers.

One of the major projects of the Vocations Committee is the traveling Vocations Chalice. A chalice has been purchased for this purpose and people will have the opportunity to sign up to bring the chalice home for a week, after Mass, as a visual prompt to pray for vocations. Not only will people have the chalice visible in their homes as a reminder, but the chalice also comes with a notebook that explains the various vocations, tells the vocation stories of priests and religious who have served our community, and also includes suggestions for prayer.

"When you're sitting in the pew, they say, 'Pray for vocations,' and you pray, but then you go home and forget about it," says Alexis, a mother of four. "But if you have the chalice sitting out in your household, it's a visual reminder that we have to pray for vocations each day, whether it's when we sit down to dinner, or first thing in the morning, or as you pass by it throughout the day."

Alexis hopes that this emphasis on vocations within the context of everyday family life will encourage both young people as well as parents to be open and generous to God's call in this area.

"We all need to be praying for people to be open to hearing that call, and also parents being willing to encourage their children to answer that call," she says.





# The Eucharist and Stewardship as a Way of Life

More than 20 years ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a pastoral letter titled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. This document was an invitation to follow Christ Who gave of Himself for us. Each of us is called to serve our neighbors and to be stewards of God's creation and of all that has been entrusted to us. However, to truly understand stewardship, we must look to the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the total gift of our loving Savior to us. Stewardship is our response to that gift.

Even the word "Eucharist" implies stewardship. The word "Eucharist" finds its roots in the Latin word *eucharistia*, which in turn came from the Greek word *eukaristos*, which meant, quite simply, "gratitude" or "thanksgiving." How fitting that we, who are called to be a stewardship people, celebrate at the focal point of every Mass an act of thanksgiving and gratitude — namely, the reception of Jesus' gift to us — the Eucharist.

In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the bishops speak of the Eucharist in this way: "The Eucharist is the great sign and agent of this expansive communion of charity... we enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in Him, with one another. Here His love — indeed, His very Self — flows into us as disciples and, through us and our practice of stewardship to the entire human race."

When we receive Christ's Body in the Holy Eucharist, we hear the minister say, "The Body of Christ." To this, we respond, "Amen" — which means in Hebrew, "Yes; it is so." This is the essence of stewardship. We should enter the Church for Mass out of "gratitude." We recognize the presence of the Lord in Holy Communion, and then we truly receive the Lord. What is left for us to do is the fulfillment of stewardship — that is, sharing what we have received in love of God and neighbor. Our entire experience speaks to stewardship — we are grateful; we recognize the real presence of the



Lord; we receive the Lord; and then we share what we have received.

Christ's gift to us through the Eucharist is an invitation to us. We are called to give beyond what is convenient or what may be comfortable. We are called to forgive even when forgiveness may not be deserved; we are called to love even when that love is not returned. We are called to love as God loves us.

The Eucharist is stewardship celebrated. The Mass is more than a ritual. It is an actual encounter with God, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We need to respond to the Eucharist with our complete selves. What we experience in the Eucharist should, in turn, translate into our daily lives. We are committed to the Church, which is Christ's body. We show our love for His body by acts of charity and generosity. We spend time in prayer, expressing our gratitude and our love.

God's greatest gift to us is Christ's great love for us — this was shown when He was crucified on the Cross to pay the penalty for our sins and to give us eternal life. God's love for us is without limit, and He offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Stewardship is how we respond to that gift.

*"The Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life.' 'The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and the works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church.'"* — *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1324*



*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?

Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: “What is

mine and what is God's?” The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year



that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan  
Pastor



# A Team of Heavenly Cleaners Serv



*Some of our faithful sacristans – (from left) Coordinator Barbara Mulvey, Dolores Jamele, Janet Wells, Midge Barnborst, and Jenny D'Arienzo; not pictured, Norma Bell*



*Jenny D'Arienzo refilling the holy water bowls, ensuring the church is ready for upcoming liturgies.*

Have you ever sat in the pew for Sunday Mass and wondered to yourself who makes sure there are enough hosts and wine for each liturgical celebration? How are the altar linens always so clean, and what happens to the purificators after they are used to wipe the chalice during Mass? It's probably likely that most of us haven't given much thought to these small details of the Mass, but each one has been quietly performed by one of the parish sacristans.

Lovingly referred to as "housekeepers of the Lord," the sacristans' role, says ministry coordinator Barbara Mulvey, is to ensure that the church is always ready for the celebration of the Mass.

"It's our job to make sure that the church is always ready, meaning there has to be a good number of hosts for the consecration and enough wine," Barbara says. "We can never run out of any of those items, because if we didn't have them, then we couldn't have the Mass. In addition to that, our role is to ensure that everything on the altar – the linens and the corporal, for example – is always clean."

Here at Our Lady Star of the Sea, these behind-the-scenes tasks are performed by a small group of dedicated women who rotate in an eight-week schedule arranged by Barbara. These women devote countless hours throughout the year, washing, ironing, cataloging, and ordering supplies in order to ensure that our worship continues to

*"I love every minute of this ministry  
and the women I work with.  
Everything that I do is for the Lord,  
taking care of His house much like I  
do with my own home, only it's all for  
His glory. And you can truly just feel  
the Lord's presence in the Church."  
– Barbara Mulvey*

# ving as “Housekeepers of the Lord”

happen in a smooth and reverent manner. Yet, this service is done joyfully, for each sacristan knows they are serving the Lord through each housekeeping chore. An added blessing of the ministry is the beautiful friendships that have been formed between Barbara and the other sacristans, who work so faithfully and generously within our Church.

“I love every minute of this ministry and the women I work with,” Barbara says. “Everything that I do is for the Lord, taking care of His house much like I do with my own home, only it’s all for His glory, and as we work in the church the Lord is always present with us.”

Barbara herself has been a part of the ministry for about 13 years, and many of the other sacristans have been involved for even longer. For Barbara, this ministry remains a unique way to use her time in service for God and His Church, filling her days with a sense of purpose.

“I’m really in the perfect position to be able to give so many hours to the Church,” Barbara says. “It’s just my husband and myself now. All of my children are grown and don’t live in the house. So, I’m at a place in life where I have a lot of free time. And for me, it’s such a blessing to be able to use that time in service of the Lord. Without it, I think my life would be kind of empty. Thanks to my ministry, there is always something to be done in the Church. It allows me to channel my time and energy where it is needed the most – for God’s glory.”

*If you are interested in learning more about this team of heavenly cleaners, please contact Barbara Mulvey at either 904-280-8311 or [rfmulvey@comcast.net](mailto:rfmulvey@comcast.net).*



*The sacristans’ tasks are done joyfully, for they are often completed in the presence of our Lord.*



*Dolores Jamele carefully cleaning the chalice and ciborium following a recent Mass.*



# A Significant Moment in Our Prayer

## *The Presentation of the Gifts*

Occasionally, you might hear someone jokingly refer to “halftime” during Mass – the interval following the Prayers of the Faithful, as the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. It can be easy, even tempting, to zone out as you sit, waiting for the collection basket to make its way to your pew.

But if you pay attention, you’ll have the opportunity to enter into something deeper – a significant moment in our prayer.

It’s mentioned by St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, when describing the Mass in the second century, “Bread is brought up and wine and water...”

This practice, of people bringing up the gifts, has been part of our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. Although we might think of this action as being merely practical, in reality, it serves a much deeper spiritual purpose.

Each Sunday Mass, someone is chosen, whether an usher, or another member of the parish, to bring forward “the gifts” – bread, wine, and in many cases, the collection of money that has been gathered moments before, from the generosity of the congregation. These gifts not only symbolize, but also in reality, are the work of human hands. The bread and wine are fruit of God’s creation, which, through the effort of human hands, are made into the gifts that we present to the Lord.

Certainly, the collection that is presented to the priest also serves to represent the work and sacrifices of the previous week. Sharing our monetary “treasures” is one of the ways that we embrace stewardship. It’s an opportunity to generously give back to the Lord, from the fruit of our work.

In his book, *What Happens At Mass*, Jeremy Driscoll, OSB explains, “...We should not think of the collection of money at this point as some sort of banal, dirty but necessary affair. Money is our work. Money is hours of our lives. And now we give it away, we sacrifice it, for the work of the Church.”



In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul instructs Christians to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1).

The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the past week – as an offering and gift to God.

Those who bring forward the gifts each week have the privilege and responsibility of remembering what their action represents – that we are called to give generously of our time, talent and treasure to God, who gives us His very self, at Mass. And for those sitting in the pews, tempted to “check out” for a few minutes, seeing the gifts being brought forward should serve as a powerful reminder to offer our lives back to God, through serving and honoring Him.

So next week, don’t just sit back and wait for the “halftime show.” Come to Mass a few minutes early and approach an usher to ask if you and/or your family may bring up the gifts that week. Don’t be surprised if you start to notice a change in your heart and a desire to be even more generous with God in the coming week!

*The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the past week – as an offering and gift to God.*



# A Look Back on This Year's Vacation Bible School

*Vacation Bible School 2017 at Our Lady Star of the Sea was a resounding success! We thank all of the volunteers who gave their time during the program, and we thank all of the families and children who participated this summer!*





Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 24  
Ponte Vedra Bch., FL

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church  
545 A1A North | Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082  
(904) 285-2698 | [www.olsspvb.org](http://www.olsspvb.org)

## The Vocations Chalice *continued from front cover*

“You know you’re supposed to pray all the time, but having that visual reminder helps you not get caught up in the chaos of everyday, and helps you remember to take a moment.”

Opportunities to bring the Vocations Chalice home will begin around the start of the school year.

The Vocations Committee has also made prayer cards that will be available to the sick and homebound. Alexis states, “if they want to offer their suffering to pray for an increase in vocations.”

Alexis is hopeful that it won’t be long before our parish and diocese start seeing the benefits of our prayers. She shares the story of a parish on the east coast that, within 10

years of increasing their focus on praying for vocations, had 100 new priests and seminarians.

“Obviously, the power of prayer is incredible,” she says. “If we could have anything close to that, I’d be more than grateful!”

She reminds her fellow parishioners that everything we have is a gift, and we should be generous in giving of our time and our lives to serve where God calls us.

“All of these things we have in our lives, these are special gifts from God – we are so tremendously blessed,” Alexis says. “There are so many things we have to be grateful for.”

*Parishioners are encouraged to pray for vocations as individuals, as well as with our parish community. The 8:30 a.m. daily Mass on the first Friday of the month is dedicated to praying for vocations, along with the 9 p.m. hour of Nocturnal Adoration, also held on the first Friday of each month. Additional information will be provided in the weekly bulletin.*

### LITURGY SCHEDULE

*Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m. | Sunday - 7:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.*

*Daily (Monday to Saturday) - 8:30 a.m. | Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.*

*Sacrament of Reconciliation: Wednesdays from 6:00-6:45 p.m.*

*Saturdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m.*