

OUR LADY *Star of the Sea* CATHOLIC CHURCH

Parishioners Serve Our Community Through Meals on Wheels

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Even before she was a parishioner at Our Lady Star of the Sea, Karen Perry greatly enjoyed serving her local community through Meals on Wheels.

"I had been a Meals on Wheels driver in the Atlanta suburbs, where we lived before my husband, Tom, and I moved here," she says. "When we moved, I thought I'd jump in here. But our parish didn't participate in a program at the time, so I started our parish's participation 20 years ago."

Karen found a group of women from 12 local churches – Church Women United, or CWU – that rotated meal delivery on a weekly basis, and got a group from Our Lady Star of the Sea involved. Currently, volunteers from the parish deliver hot noontime meals once a quarter, for one week, Monday through Friday. As of February 2015, each meal costs CWU \$4.15, or about \$84 per month. While CWU pays for the meal, donations help to supplement the cost and allow the program to continue. The meals are provided for the homebound in the area, first based on need, then income.

"People receiving lunches are asked to pay for some or all of the cost, but the meals are free to them if that's not an option," Karen says.

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Volunteers George Huchting, Greg Thompson, Kathryn Thompson and Anna Thompson prepare to deliver meals.



Meals are delivered to the Senior Center, where volunteers pick them up and distribute to residents.



Good for the Giver

A simple riddle: If you don't give it away, you can't keep it. But if you give it away, it will increase.

The best answer to this riddle, if you haven't already guessed, is *love*. But the beauty of this paradox is that there can be a number of different answers. Another response might be *artistic talent*. Ask any artist, and they'll tell you that their skill for drawing or painting diminishes after a few weeks or months of inactivity. But the more they paint, the more their talent grows.

We also see this truth illustrated in nature. The Sea of Galilee, teeming with fish and other wildlife, is one example. All of the water in this beautiful reservoir is constantly being drained through the Jordan River, which stretches for about 60 miles, providing the only fresh water for all of Israel. It finally drains into the Dead Sea, which has no outlet. It is consequently stagnant and totally lifeless, continually evaporating into thin air.

The point, in a nutshell, is that the good steward takes care of his or her gifts by giving them away. As a result, you won't have less left over, but will instead have more!

There is a story about St. Teresa of Calcutta and her visit to one of the hundreds of convents she had founded. The Superior of the convent told her, "Moth-

er, we don't have enough time to do our work with the poor; there's just not enough hours in the day." St. Teresa responded, "Then you need to pray more." When the convent added another full hour of prayer each day, they somehow found that they had enough time to do even *more* for the poor in that city.

The difficulty with this idea – that by giving we receive – is that it is still a struggle to give. When we arrive at the moment of giving, it appears on the surface that we will have less left over. This is especially true regarding money. When writing a check to a charity or to the parish, you mathematically end up with less money to spend on other things. And yet, the immaterial value of our sacrifice is immeasurable. This is why Jesus speaks so frequently in the Gospels about the spiritual benefits of giving to others. We *do* have more after we give, but it is simply more of something else – and something better.

When we emphasize stewardship, it is not primarily to increase "volunteerism" or to swell our budget. Indeed, our first aim is always the "good of the giver." It is not because the parish has needs, *but because we have a need to give*. We recognize that the model Steward is Jesus, who gave *all*, even His very life, so that we may have everything.

Stewardship in Nature

The Sea of Galilee stays fresh and healthy because it "gives away" all its water through the Jordan River. When all that water is finally drained into the Dead Sea, it stays there, becoming stagnant and lifeless. Human beings are the same way. Giving of ourselves is one of the main ways we stay spiritually healthy.



A Letter from Our Pastor

Save Room on Your Busy Schedules for Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

I don't know about you, but I still get a surge of adrenalin as the beginning of school approaches. Even though I'm no longer in school, I feel a sense of anticipation when I see the shelves filled with brand-new notebooks, composition books, and all the assorted items students use. I'm aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds.

Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the unofficial end of the summer vacation season, and our calendars may reflect that. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine — they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.

Nevertheless, I have a request for you as you fill up your fall schedules. First thing, please put in some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples — as stewards — we are called to

return to God a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure He has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer Him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.

Make this September the month you make a commitment to sing in the choir, including attending rehearsals. Or begin working with our parish faith formation in one way or another. Or decide to launder altar linens once a month. Or volunteer to help in the parish office one morning a week. Or join a social service ministry. Or... well, you get the idea.

There are many ministries and groups within the parish where you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. Hardly anyone in the parish can't find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If **you** aren't involved, make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, some people say they don't have Time for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge any one of you to



demonstrate to me that you can't pray at least one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be during the course of the day. That's at least a beginning.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor



Sr. Lucy Clynes: Spending

It's hard to believe that it's been 50 years since Sr. Lucy Clynes, DW, first entered religious life. Fifty remarkable years of charitable service to the Church. Fifty years of happily sacrificing her life for the sake of the Gospel. Fifty years of the joy of *just loving Jesus*.

On Aug. 20, our parish family held a meaningful celebration in honor of Sr. Lucy's Jubilee, including a Mass, and a reception in our Cultural Center. A celebration for all of the religious sisters in her province was also held in August on Long Island.

And it all began when Sr. Lucy felt a call to help those in need.

"When I was young, I taught Religious Education to inner-city children, and I enjoyed it, so I

decided I wanted to be a social worker," she says. "I was in high school during the '60s, when Pope John XXIII and President John F. Kennedy were both in, and we young people thought we could change the world and use our energy for the greater good."

Ultimately, paying attention to this little tug on her heart bore beautiful fruit for God's Kingdom.

"When I found out that getting a degree in social work would take a long time, while if I became a religious sister, I could do social work a lot sooner, I chose to enter religious life," Sr. Lucy says. "I never intended to be a religious sister, and I didn't become one for the reason I still am one now. I have remained a sister because I have been blessed

to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Throughout her 50 years as a sister in the Daughters of Wisdom, Sr. Lucy has "put her hands to the plow" and used her talents for God's glory in numerous capacities. She taught religion and social studies at a Catholic school in Connecticut, and was principal of a parish grammar school in New York for eight years. She also served as Vocation Director for her congregation for seven years. For 23 years, she served as the Diocesan Director of Christian Formation in the Diocese of St. Augustine. Since she has been in our parish community, she has worked as Coordinator of Ministries, supported the Pastoral Council with



Sr. Lucy and Bishop Estévez at the Diocesan Jubilee Mass



Sr. Lucy with leaders of the M.O.M.S. group



g Her Life Joyfully for Jesus

stewardship efforts, implemented the Council of Catholic Women, and served on our Vocations Committee and Stewardship Council.

“What I most love about being a sister is assisting people on their journey towards God,” she says. “My parents always told me they just wanted me to be happy, and I am so

happy to be in the lifestyle I’m living. I have really enjoyed being at our parish. The parishioners are very welcoming and friendly, and I have appreciated the opportunity to support the parents in our parish as they educate their children in the faith.”

When asked what advice she has for those discerning a religious

vocation, she says, “I encourage them to be open, and come and see what religious life is. God works through our human experiences and our formation to show us His will.”

Let us all continue to keep Sr. Lucy in our prayers, as she lives her life for Christ and others by following the charitable desires of her heart.

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Parishioners Serve Our Community Through Meals on Wheels

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During our week to serve, volunteers pick up the packaged meals at the Jacksonville Beach Senior Center. Volunteers divide into teams of two and deliver meals on two different routes.

“I have a group of volunteers who have been faithful, who have done it with me every time, and will even take on more than one day during our week,” Karen says. “It’s also a great way for people to meet others and make friends, or something good to do with a family member, spouse or friend.”

Participating in Meals on Wheels also allows volunteers to perform Corporal Works of Mercy as they reach out to the homebound.

“A lot of the time, we’re the only ones that these people will see, so I always encourage my people to feel free to stay

and talk for a little while, and give them the opportunity for human contact,” Karen says. “For example, there’s one gentleman who builds model ships, and he’s fascinating to talk to. He has all kinds of stories.

“In Atlanta, when I volunteered every week, I got to know some people well,” she adds. “One man at the end of my route was so nice and talkative – he was so social, and I was his only visitor. He used to tell me stories about the town when it only had one blinking light, and stories from when he was raised on a farm. When I moved here, I’d still have family back there, so I’d often go back and visit him. He was just lovely, and when he passed away it was like losing a family member. So, with Meals on Wheels, you really get a mix of people to visit with, and it’s just nice to be a friendly face to represent your church.”

If you would like more information about Meals on Wheels, or to get involved, please contact Karen Perry at 904-280-0645, 904-704-4825, or iluvpopcrn@aol.com.



A Modern Model of Sainthood

St. Teresa of Calcutta

In the dark final years of the Cold War, a small woman — standing at barely five feet tall — offered a living counternarrative to the inhibiting fear undergirding our daily lives and our foreign affairs. Instead of living in fear, Mother Teresa acted out of love. Instead of withdrawing and isolating herself, she gave tirelessly to others.

Many of us harbor a personal connection to this saint, for we lived during the height of the media coverage of Mother Teresa's work and her friendships with Pope St. John Paul II and the beloved Princess Diana.

Long before she received the name Mother Teresa and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born on Aug. 26, 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia, the crossroads of the Balkans. The youngest of three children, Mother Teresa was raised predominately by her mother after her father's death, when she was about 8 years old. Dranfile (Drana) Bojaxhiu, Mother Teresa's mother, undoubtedly became a strong influence on her daughter's vocation, since Drana herself was a devout Catholic and known for her prayer life and her charity.

Agnes attended a Catholic primary school and, following the example of her mother, became active in their parish and sang in Sacred Heart's choir. As a young person, Agnes enjoyed reading the lives of the saints — while immersing herself in the stories of these holy men and women, Agnes first felt the stirring call to become a missionary.

At the age of 18, Agnes traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to join the Sisters of Loreto. She became Sr. Mary Teresa, named after St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and began to learn English. Within a few months of arriving in Ireland, she left for India.

In India, Sr. Mary Teresa lived at the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta, where she served as an educator and taught at St. Mary's School. After her final profession,



she became Mother Teresa and, a few years later, began serving as the school's principal.

On an ordinary day, Mother Teresa received an extraordinary call. While on a train ride to her annual retreat, Mother Teresa felt what she would describe as Jesus' thirst for souls. Soon, Jesus called her to found the Missionaries of Charity, an order devoted to serving the "poorest of the poor."

The order formally began on Oct. 7, 1950, and has grown from one woman tending the sick and dying in the streets of Calcutta to over 4,500 religious sisters helping the

poor in over 130 countries around the world. Additionally, the order grew to include the Missionaries of Charity Brothers, the Missionaries of Charity Fathers and the Lay Missionaries of Charity.

Though externally Mother Teresa joyfully and indefatigably served the poor for nearly 50 years, during the majority of this time, she experienced a "dark night of the soul," an extensive period of not feeling God's presence or hearing His voice. Other saints, notably St. John of the Cross, similarly experienced a dark night of the soul. Despite this spiritual struggle, Mother Teresa continued her work joyfully throughout her sickness and until her death on Sept. 5, 1997.

Pope St. John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa in 2003. Fittingly, a pontiff who has underscored the importance of social justice celebrated her canonization. On Sept. 4, 2016, Pope Francis canonized Mother Teresa, the "Saint of the Gutters," at the Vatican.

St. Teresa of Calcutta offers us an example of ceaseless prayer and selfless service. She is a modern model of sainthood that we can emulate in our daily lives starting with how we serve and treat the other members of our family, our faith community and all those with whom we interact on a daily basis.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, Pray for Us!



Ushers and Ministers of Hospitality Serve Important Roles in the Liturgy

The characteristics of a stewardship parish involve the parish being structured on a foundation of the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. And since Our Lady Star of the Sea has established a goal of being a stewardship parish, we are all sharing in the effort to develop each of those four pillars.

Of the stewardship pillars, Hospitality is something on which we need to focus in particular. The Lord reminded us in Matthew 25:35, “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” A stewardship parish is a welcoming parish, and we must seek to see the face of Christ in one another, as well as seek out and welcome new members to the parish family. One of the key groups who fulfill these hospitality efforts is our Ministry of Hospitality, which includes our ushers and greeters.

For the past 15 years Dr. Frank Cervone, DMD, a local dentist, has both served as an usher and coordinated our ushers ministry.

“Growing up, my father was an usher, and my uncle was an usher,” he says. “From the time I was about 6

years old, I helped my dad in his tasks as an usher. I think that is probably why I am an usher today. I felt so much a part of the Mass and the liturgy that it inspired me to continue.”

Of course, there is much more involved than just a history of serving as an usher for Dr. Cervone.

“I feel blessed to be able to do this,” he says. “It is so fulfilling to do it. It is a way of giving back on my part. I have a wonderful spiritual feeling in performing the tasks involved with being an usher and a minister of hospitality. We are all called to give back a portion of our time and talent to God and to the parish. This is a perfect way for me to do that.”

Although Dr. Cervone coordinates the entire ushers ministry, he has lots of help.

“Don Bozich and I really share the duties and the responsibilities involved,” he says. “We try to have two teams of ushers – six people on each team, assigned to each weekend Mass. There is a person designated as ‘captain’ at each Mass. We ask that our ushers be there

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Ushers and Ministers of Hospitality Serve Important Roles in the Liturgy *continued from page 7*

20 minutes before the beginning of Mass to welcome and greet and assure that all is in order for that liturgy. They clean up if anything requires that. After Mass, we stay a similar amount of time to assure that all is order for the next Mass. I think we basically try to do whatever the priest asks us to do. Currently we are blessed in that almost half of our ushers are women and half men.”

This Pillar of Hospitality leads to a sense of ownership among parishioners. This ownership and personal involvement fosters a sense of “belonging.” When people experience a warm and sincere welcome, they in turn become open to give themselves to others. The most vibrant stewardship parishes are those in which people feel they are welcomed. That is what Dr. Cervone and our Ministry of Hospitality are trying to accomplish!

If you might be interested in becoming involved in our Ministry of Hospitality, please contact the parish office at 904-285-2698, Dr. Frank Cervone at 904-285-6429, or Don Bozich at 904-273-7063.

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.