



St. Anne

Catholic Church

May 2016

Encouraging Our Young Parishioners to Take Ownership of Their Faith

While many adult “cradle Catholics” can look back on their childhood with fond memories of a CCD teacher who shared the faith with them, unfortunately, that isn’t always the case for everyone.

“I hated religious education as a child,” says Faith Formation Coordinator Brianna Noonan, with a laugh.

However, far from having a negative long-term impact, Brianna’s experience has only fueled her passion for sharing the faith with young people in an exciting and relevant way.

“[My experience] allows me to really want to engage the kids and to constantly ask, ‘What can we do better?’” she says. “I don’t want kids to be bored with their faith.”

She hopes that other adults, regardless of their experience in faith formation, will join her in this important mission of passing on the faith to the youth of the parish, as faith formation catechists.

“If kids are engaged and learning, it’s not just going to be the faith of their parents, but they’re going to take ownership of it,” Brianna says of the catechists’ role. “If we can excite them about their faith and arm them, then we’re preparing them for a life with Christ.

“When a catechist reaches out and creates a relationship with these kids, we’re showing them that they’re important, that they have value – ‘I’m going to give up my time each



Gillian Jenkins is a third-grade teacher, helping the kids learn how to find Scripture verses during a Bible Scavenger Hunt.

week to come and spend with you,” she continues. “And whether they get that now or they get that years from now, at some point, they’re going to realize that our faith is important enough that somebody came and wanted to spend time with them.”

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Brianna is looking for catechists and assistants to serve on Sunday mornings for second through fifth grades, and in middle and high school faith formation on Wednesday evenings. The program for the elementary grades is classroom-style, incorporating art, music, games and other projects. The middle and high school program is looking for adults willing to lead small group discussions, with questions provided by the faith formation staff.

"[Middle and high school] is when kids are starting to have questions about their faith and really it's about relationships for them," Brianna says. "If they can find people they connect with here, they're going to keep coming back because of those relationships. Each time they come back we get the chance to teach them something and help them grow."

Brianna is looking for people who enjoy being around kids, are excited about their faith and want to share it with others.

"[A catechist] is someone who wants to dive deeper in their faith, and wants to pass it along, somebody who's ready wanting to go on mission, like Christ calls us to," Brianna says.

Do you have to be an expert in the faith in order to serve as a catechist? Not according to Brianna.

"As long as they have the desire to learn, the desire to grow, and to come into a deeper relationship, both in knowledge and in love [of God], then they're a perfect fit for the job of catechist," she says.

Although they set out wanting to serve, in many cases, catechists also



Judy Ewing teaches the first-grade formation class.

find their faith growing and deepening as a result of sharing it with others.

"It's empowering to see kids excited about different aspects of the faith – it's a beautiful reminder and example of that childlike faith that Jesus tells us about," Brianna says. "They get excited to learn new things and they find joy in being taught. Our faith grows as we help their faith grow."

Brianna encourages parishioners to consider serving the parish as a catechist.

"If you have even the smallest in-

klings to say, 'Maybe I could do this,' then call me," she says. "That inkling is from God. Don't let doubts like 'I wouldn't be good enough,' 'I don't have the time' creep in. Just go with that first instinct of, 'Maybe I could do this,' and we can take it from there."

For parents who would like to volunteer in a classroom, there is also a nursery provided for younger children. A half-day training will take place July 30 for those who would like to serve as catechists in the 2016-2017 school year.

For more information please contact Brianna Noonan at:

918-251-4000 or bnoonan@stanneba.org.

We Are All Ministers of Hospitality

Dear Parishioners,

This is a time of many celebrations in the Church. The list is almost endless at this time of year – First Communion, Confirmations, graduations, and weddings. There are so many events that bring people who are not from the parish, or even members of the Church, into our parish.

You may recall that we speak of the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. I want to particularly speak of that pillar of Hospitality this month. It is important every day of every year and at everything we do as a parish community. However, at this time of year, when there may be strangers and newcomers in our midst, it becomes even more important.

Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith. In Matthew 25:35, the Lord speaks to us in terms of expectations when He says, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." He makes it clear to us that whenever we welcome any of His brothers and sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. Sometimes, we may think that this concept of hospitality is the responsibility of a committee, ministry or group of people assigned that task – but the truth is that we are all part of the parish hospitality effort.

If we are going to be a stewardship parish, and if each of us is going to be a good steward, we need to be aware that we need to seek and find Christ in everyone around us, everyone we meet, and certainly everyone who enters our church or other parish facilities.

Hospitality is a parish priority that each of us must take to heart. It is not so challenging to greet someone, smile at them and welcome them – yet, it may require a little extra effort on our part. That means we must have an awareness of those near us, of those who may appear to be alone or new. We may not always think of Christ in this way, but if we carefully listen to Holy Scripture, we must realize that He was a caring, welcoming and friendly person. If we are to be His disciples, we need to be the same.

As stated, Jesus assures us that when we welcome others, we are welcoming Him, as well. St. Paul once said that people who are hospitable sometimes enter-



tain angels. For us, parish hospitality is not an option. It is our way to model the Kingdom of God right here and right now.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Gary Kastl
Pastor





Service and Participation Are Hallmarks of Broken Arrow



We are blessed in our St. Anne Catholic Church to have Knights of Columbus Council #6606. The council serves both St. Anne and St. Benedict with almost 300 members from the two parishes. Our K of C Council is one of more than 15,000 Councils with almost 2 million members located throughout the world. Fraternity and charity are the two key marks of the Knights, who in the past decade alone have donated \$1.475 billion to charity and given as good stewards almost 700 million hours of volunteer service.

All the good works done by the Knights of Columbus are based upon their four core principles – Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. Our local council is an excellent example of what it means to give and to be good stewards.

“Once we became members of the parish, I felt like I needed to be more involved in St. Anne than just attending Mass on the weekend,” says parishioner Matt Coburn, who serves as the liaison for our parish to the council and has been a member for two years. “The Knights of Columbus was a perfect match for me, as it allowed me to get involved not just in the parish, but in a lot of charity work for the poor and many more.”

The Knights do much to serve both parishes. One of their major events – which will occur this year on Saturday, June 4 – is the Annual Horseshoe Tournament. The tournament was established 15 years ago, and was chaired for many years by Knight Paul Gorniak and his wife, Dianna. The Gorniaks are heading it up again this year. Paul speaks of the tournament in glowing terms.

“Since its inception, we have raised and donated more than \$100,000 to charity,” he says. “For the 2016 tournament, we are giving all the proceeds to the local Food Banks overseen by St. Anne and St. Benedict. It is a wonderful event for the whole family, even if they are not participating. We have games and activities for the kids, good food, and the whole day has a family atmosphere.”

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marks of the Knights of Columbus Council #6606

Participation is open to everyone, regardless whether they are members of the parishes.

"The tournament is a double elimination format with teams of two," Paul says. "Through the years, we have had husband-wife, father-daughter, grandfather-grandson, brother-brother, and more combinations than you can imagine, including just friends. Registration is \$30 per team. We begin rain or shine at 9 a.m. and participation is limited to 48 teams. With a full complement of teams, the tournament takes about eight hours to complete. Because of the generosity of sponsors, all of our prizes and expenses are covered even before people register. We have a raffle as well, which this year includes a 58" television, a large double gas grill, several cases of meat, and family packets with tickets to parks and events and more. We have our sponsors already, but we need participants."

Matt is quick to point out that the Knights are involved in numerous aspects of parish community life.

"It is difficult to even remember or reiterate all the ways we are involved in the two parishes," he says. "We volunteer as cooks for many events – including cooking burgers at the annual Feast Day celebration. Throughout the year, we sponsor so many activities, like the annual Easter egg hunt, the soccer and free throw challenges, our Super Bowl Meat Cook, the March for Life, and



we are very involved in the Outdoor Stations of the Cross."

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, recognizes the valuable contribution the Knights make to the life of the Church. Speaking to a group of Knights recently, the pope said, "On this occasion I also wish to express my gratitude for the unfailing support which your Order has always given to the works of the Holy See." Founded by Fr. Michael McGivney at St. Mary Church in New Haven, Conn., the Knights have existed and grown for more than 130 years. Catholic men were drawn to the

Knights because of the order's emphasis on service with virtue to the Church, to communities, to families and to our United States.

The Knights of Columbus is not just a fraternity in name. It is a brotherhood of Catholic men who each play a part in improving the world around them. They stand together in faith, dedicated to upholding the principles they cherish. Matt says that they would like to have more men who are interested in service and in being active in the parish and the community through the Knights.

Catholic men ages 18 and above are eligible for membership. If you would like more information about our Knights of Columbus Council #6606, or if you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Matt Coburn at 918-210-2882 or mco.burn@outlook.com. If you would like to participate in this year's Horseshoe Tournament, please contact Paul Gorniak at 918-810-0897.



Celebrate the Feast of the Visitation: May 31

At first glance, the Visitation seems a simple enough event — Mary went to Judah, where she visited her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth.

And, yet, the reality behind the events that took place on this fateful day is so profound that we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation every year on May 31.

Imagine being 12 years old again. For most of us, that brings back memories of playing in the park, riding our bikes, watching TV, playing baseball, and so forth. Now, imagine that at the young age of 12, you find out that you are expecting a child — and, even more daunting, that this child is the Lord.

As unimaginable as that situation is for all of us, it is the reality that 12-year-old Mary knew. What a weight to bear!

Yet, it is clear that God knows what He is doing, because Mary's reaction to this reality was much different than most of ours would be. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord," she responded to the angel. "Be it done unto me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38).

Then, she set out to the town of Judah to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, whom she just learned was also expecting a child.

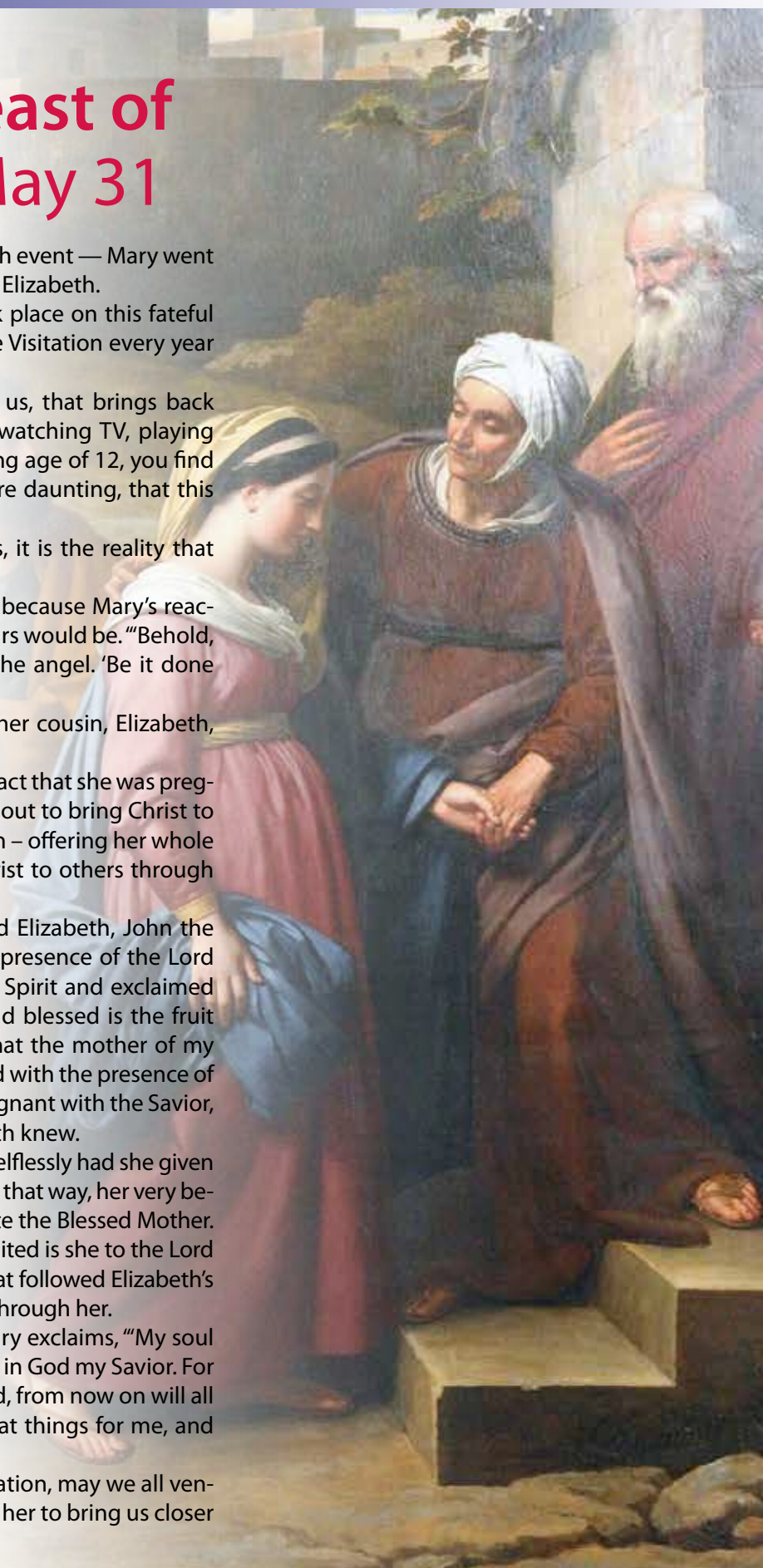
Instead of keeping to herself and processing the fact that she was pregnant with her Lord and Savior, Mary immediately set out to bring Christ to others. She was indeed the first steward of the Church — offering her whole life to the Lord as His "handmaid," and revealing Christ to others through her service.

As soon as Mary entered the house and greeted Elizabeth, John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb, rejoicing at the presence of the Lord within Mary. "And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'" (Lk. 1:41-43). Mary radiated with the presence of Christ. Elizabeth had not been told that Mary was pregnant with the Savior, and yet, no sooner did Mary enter her home, Elizabeth knew.

No doubt, Mary is the steward of all stewards. So selflessly had she given herself to the Lord that she became His mother, and, in that way, her very being radiates Christ. It is for that reason that we venerate the Blessed Mother. Everything about who she is as a person, so closely united is she to the Lord and His will, brings us to her Son. And in her words that followed Elizabeth's joyful greeting, we see exactly that. Christ is glorified through her.

In response to Elizabeth's veneration of Mary, Mary exclaims, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has looked upon His handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name" (Lk. 1:46-49).

This month, as we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation, may we all venerate the Blessed Mother for her selflessness, and ask her to bring us closer to her Son.



Catholic Education: Forming the Leaders of Today

"A place where every child uses their special gifts from God to be the best they can be." Parishioner David Canfield can attest to the truth of All Saints Catholic School's slogan, having witnessed it firsthand in his own two children, Loysha and Rita. The Canfield children first began attending our regional school when they were entering the fourth grade.

"My wife actually attended All Saints School back when it was St. Anne's," David says. "We really liked that there were small classes, as well as the Catholic environment. It was more disciplined and it looked like it was going to be a good fit for us."

Since then, David has witnessed his children blossom, benefiting from a personalized education that "takes the time to meet the needs of each individual student." Because of this, David notes that his children's attitude toward school – and life in general – has also been transformed.

"They have more compassion for people in need and they understand that a good education is important for life," David says. "My children are also definitely more religious thanks to their religious education classes. The school really pushes our children to become active members in their faith life and community."

With its mission of providing children with a total educational experience, All Saints centers its instruction upon the three pillars of academics, spiritual formation and community involvement. In so doing, the students are better prepared to become leaders of both society and our Church.

Looking back on their time at All Saints, Loysha and Rita both feel that their educational experience has helped make their faith come alive.

"The thing that I loved most about All Saints was the religious education, and learning about Jesus and how He died for our sins," Loysha says. "It really helped me deepen my faith."

"It's helped develop my relationship with God because I have learned so much more about what He is really like," Rita says. "I know that I can always pray to Him and ask Him for help with anything. It's also helped me understand what is really going on in church. Instead of just going to church because I



Loysha and Rita Canfield assist Bishop Slattery and Fr. Kastl during an All Saints Catholic School Mass.

have to, now I go to really learn about the faith."

Loysha has particularly enjoyed altar serving during Friday school Masses, describing it as the thing he will miss most about All Saints. Rita, on the other hand, says she will miss her teachers most of all, who each took the time to help her thrive on an individual level.

"The teachers have truly helped me with all my classes," Rita says. "If I ever struggled, they were always there to help me get through it."

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Catholic Education: Forming the Leaders of Today *continued from page 7*

Like his daughter, David has also been deeply impressed by All Saints' teachers and staff, describing the school as a "true partnership between parents and teachers." In this way, the school is able to seamlessly build upon the faith formation being done at home, working together to form the new generation of leaders.

Following their graduation on May 12, Loysha and Rita plan on attending Bishop Kelly High School this fall. In this way, the Canfields will continue to benefit from a Catholic education that is focused on forming them individually into true disciples of Christ.

"If you want your child to be academically challenged and formed in the faith, All Saints is the school for you," Loysha says. "It has really helped broaden my faith, helping me become the person that I am today."

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