

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

COLUMBUS, GA

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Stewardship Don't Take a Vacation From Stewardship This Summer
- 3 Prayer – By Us and For Us
- 4 Altar Serving: *Forming the Future of Our Church*
- 6 *Keeping in Touch With the Holy Father: There's an App for That!*
- 7 Parish Nursery Provides Care for the Youngest Members of Our Parish

Preparing for Forever A Look At Marriage Preparation at Holy Family

The dress. The flowers. The menu. There are seemingly a million things to accomplish between “Will you marry me?” and “I do.” But for couples preparing to be married at Holy Family, the spiritual preparation for a lifelong marriage is even more important than the details of the big day.

Parishioners David and Linda Turner are high school sweethearts celebrating 48 years of marriage this year. They have been helping couples prepare for marriage for over 30 years, and they have a passion for walking alongside young couples as they prepare to begin their life together.

“We both agree that it renews us as a married couple when we work with these young people,” says Linda of why they’ve served in this way for so long.

For David and Linda, communication has always been a central aspect of their relationship and something they enjoy helping couples develop.

“I think everybody comes into engagement with a different set of eyes and I think marriage preparation opens everything up,” Linda says. “We touch on so many things, and sometimes, depending on their background or history, they might not have thought about it and it puts it out there so they can discuss it.”

The Marriage Preparation program includes a one-day retreat with other engaged couples, as well as the FOCCUS pre-marriage inventory, an assessment tool that each couple individually completes and discusses with David and Linda.



David and Linda Turner will celebrate 48 years of marriage this year, and have been serving in marriage preparation for over 30 years.



Stewardship

Don't Take a Vacation From Stewardship This Summer

Everyone deserves a vacation.

After nine grueling months of school, kids get to enjoy the summer to relax and regroup before beginning a new grade. Employees, after diligently working long hours and dealing with stressful situations, deserve time away from the office to enjoy their favorite getaway. And of course, holidays like Easter and Christmas offer us the opportunity to slow down, share time with family and friends, and celebrate our faith more fully.

No one would argue that we need to mentally refresh our minds and bodies from time to time so that we can come back rejuvenated and ready to do our best.

Taking a break from some things, however, is not a possibility.

Take stewardship, for example. Imagine saying to yourself, "Well, this month I think I will not pray, not share any of my talents with anyone in need, and I will hoard my treasure." What would doing this accomplish? You certainly wouldn't feel refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to be at your best. Instead, feelings of greed, selfishness and spiritual unrest may occur. Stepping back from being a good steward just doesn't make sense.

So, now that summer has arrived in full force and our leisure time each day has increased, how can we remain good stewards?

It is likely that the regimented opportunities available during the school year are no longer available. Youth ministry and parish religious education formation may also be on summer break.

So, where do you turn? How can you keep your faith alive?

First and foremost, don't stop praying. The slow-paced days of summer are a perfect time to quiet ourselves for a few moments and try to reconnect with God. Why not take a moment of your free time each day to read the Gospel or a spiritual reflection while lounging in a hammock?

Or, if you enjoy writing, keep a summer spiritual journal and write in it somewhere peaceful like in your backyard at dusk.

Maybe, if you like to read, you could brush up on your favorite saint while on a road trip.

Or, if you have never given it a chance, why not pick up a rosary and say one decade each day until it becomes natural to say the whole thing?

Next, try to participate in an outreach program over the summer. Think of the life of Christ – everything He did on Earth was an act of service. Now, think of the gifts God has bestowed on you. He wants you to share them with others like He did, and summer gives us the time to do just that.

If you like working with kids, you can volunteer at the Vacation Bible School by helping to decorate, organize or being a team leader for the younger children.

If you are handy with tools, you may call Habitat for Humanity to see how you can help build a home for a family in need.

Or, if you are musically inclined, you can share your singing or instrumental gifts with a local nursing home. Maybe you are good in the kitchen. If so, you could offer your culinary skills to a local soup kitchen or food bank.

If you are a strong student, you could offer tutoring services to neighborhood kids to help prepare them for the next school year.

No matter what gift God has given you, there is a way to share it.

Getting paid for volunteering sometimes happens. And, if you have a summer job while on break, you'll get a paycheck for sure. Have you ever taken an opportunity to think about sharing the first fruits of your check?

As a young adult, returning a portion of your paycheck to God is an important thing to consider. After all, without Him, you wouldn't even have the talent to accomplish the job in the first place. Giving a portion back to Him is a way to say "thanks." Remember, the collection basket is not just for parents.

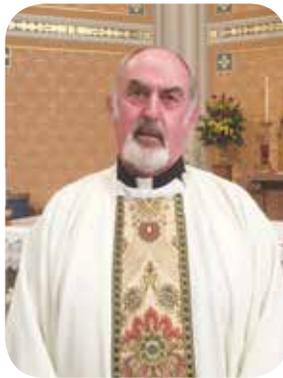
Whatever you do this summer, don't take a break from being a good steward. Remember that the time God gives you is a gift. What you do with it – whether on vacation or not – is meant to give Him glory. Why not use the extra time off to do just that?

A Letter From Our Pastor

PRAYER – *By Us and For Us*

Dear Parishioners,

Pope Francis has certainly had an impact on our Church, and maybe even on each of us individually. Do you recall his first words to the world and to us when he appeared on the balcony following his election as pope? He said quite simply, “Pray for me.” That is a feeling I share sometimes when I consider what needs to be done, and what I personally need to do. It may be a feeling each of us has – not just now and then, but relatively consistently.



of Stewardship – Hospitality, Formation and Service. You might say we pray to help us seek and find how to serve the Lord and others.

This is a time of year when we enjoy numerous opportunities to kick back and relax. One of the best ways to spend time is in prayer. In both our individual and communal prayer, we turn to God to perceive our gifts and talents – and then, as stewards, we need to place those gifts at the service of one another, and especially of the Lord.

Prayer – one of the four Pillars of Stewardship – is foundational to our faith and the practice of it. It is through prayer and the sacraments that we prepare ourselves to accept God’s plentiful gifts and blessings.

Each of us needs to develop a consistent prayer life. We should set time aside each day to pray. It is through prayer that we cultivate our personal relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We provide many opportunities for prayer as part of our parish life. This includes time for us to pray as individuals and time to pray as a community.

Our prayer lives culminate at Mass in the Eucharist. The Eucharist, prayer and stewardship are interconnected. In *Lumen Gentium*, we are reminded that the Eucharist is the “Source and Summit” of our Catholic faith. With the gift of the Eucharist and an active prayer life, we are better equipped to carry out the other three Pillars

You and I are on a journey together – a journey toward holiness. That journey involves an existence of daily conversion and an awareness of how grateful we need to be. Through prayer, we can better see ourselves as God sees us, and we can seek to find who God is calling us to be.

I want to assure you of my constant and daily prayers for you. Like the Holy Father, however, I also must admit that I need you to “pray for me.” I thank you for your prayers. I am blessed to be your pastor.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Dan O’Connell
Pastor





ALTAR SERVING:

Forming the Future



Parishioner Christopher Gudz isn't your typical altar server. Currently a sophomore at Columbus State University, he can't help but stand out next to the younger boys and girls upon the altar. Especially in today's day and age, it is unusual to see a young man continue his childhood ministry of altar serving. Yet, for Christopher, this is just his quiet way of becoming more involved in his faith.

"It really has made the liturgy come alive for me," Christopher says. "I think that altar serving draws me into a deeper understanding of what is actually going on within the Church as a whole, and of the liturgy itself."

Christopher began altar serving 10 years ago, when he was in the fifth grade. Back then, it was a way for him to do his part, transforming him from a mere onlooker at Mass to an active participant. Today, Christopher's love for altar serving has only grown, particularly because it allows him to become a witness to his faith and an example for the younger altar servers.

"It is a good opportunity for young people to get involved with their Church and to become a leader," Christopher says. "It's become a great opportunity to be an example to others, especially those younger than myself."

Through his service, Christopher demonstrates that altar serving is about much more than the various jobs completed during the liturgy – it is about assisting with the liturgy, ensuring that it is smooth and reverent for the Paschal Sacrifice, and it is about drawing our youth into activism, cultivating stewardship within them from a young age. Ultimately, it's about forming the future leaders of our Church.

"When I look at the altar servers, I see the future of the Church," says ministry coordinator Lindy Goodman.

As Lindy points out, altar serving enables young people to become active participants in the liturgy,

Life of Our Church

instead of compliant “bystanders.” Here at Holy Family, boys and girls are invited to begin altar serving once they have received their First Holy Communion. This is a role that they can continue fulfilling throughout grammar and high school, extending even to their college years if they choose. Performing a wide variety of tasks both before and during Mass, the altar servers’ purpose is to assist the priests and deacons, helping to ensure a smooth and reverent liturgy. In the process, they are given a means to live out their faith.

“I think altar serving is a great example of how young people are not only the future of the Church, but the present, as well,” Fr. Dan O’Connell says. “Being an altar server is an opportunity for our young people to serve the parish and God. It is a way for them to express their faith.”

Through their proximity to both the priest and our Eucharistic Lord, altar servers are given a unique opportunity to deepen their relationship with Christ. By witnessing up-close the priest’s service to God, young boys and girls are also given a deeper understanding of the consecrated life, helping them in their own vocation discernment.

“If they are working with the priest, they get to see what the priest does,” Lindy says. “They get a better understanding of what is happening in the Mass itself.”

And, importantly, through this type of service, altar servers may begin to discern a future vocation in the Church.

“Some girls might become more open to becoming nuns and boys may consider becoming priests and deacons,” Lindy says.

As parents and adults, it is our sacred responsibility to help our children encounter Christ. Only then will they be able to become the men and women they are called to be – future leaders of our faith community and Church. What better way is there for a child to meet Christ than with Him on the altar?

“It really has made the liturgy come alive for me. I think that altar serving draws me into a deeper understanding of what is actually going on within the Church as a whole, and of the liturgy itself.”
– Christopher Gudz

If you would like more information on the ministry of altar serving, or about upcoming training opportunities, please contact Lindy Goodman at 706-221-0088.



Keeping in Touch With the Holy Father: **There's an App for That!**

“Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.”

These words from Pope Francis weren't delivered during a homily in St. Peter's or in a speech from St. Peter's Square – nor were they written in a papal bull or apostolic letter. Rather, they were delivered in an instant to millions of Catholics around the world through the pope's very own Twitter account.

The technology of communication has perhaps changed more in the past century than in the previous 20 combined. And with these developments, the Catholic Church – led by our Holy Fathers from Pope St. John Paul II through Pope Francis – strongly encourages that the faithful adopt and adapt these resources for the all-important task of spreading the Gospel throughout the whole world.

Just as St. Paul used every convenience at his disposal to spread the Gospel throughout the far reaches of the Roman empire, today's evangelists are using every resource available to them. Examples of Catholic figures using the new media with great success abound.

Only a few months into his pontificate, Pope Francis took the Vatican's social media efforts to a whole new level. In spring 2013, the Vatican released The Pope App, which features a live webcam from the Vatican, along with quotes, news, images and videos of all the Holy Father's latest doings.

Following the pope's lead, bishops, priests and apologists are taking the technological gifts at their fingertips and utilizing them to spread the Gospel throughout the world in a variety of ways.

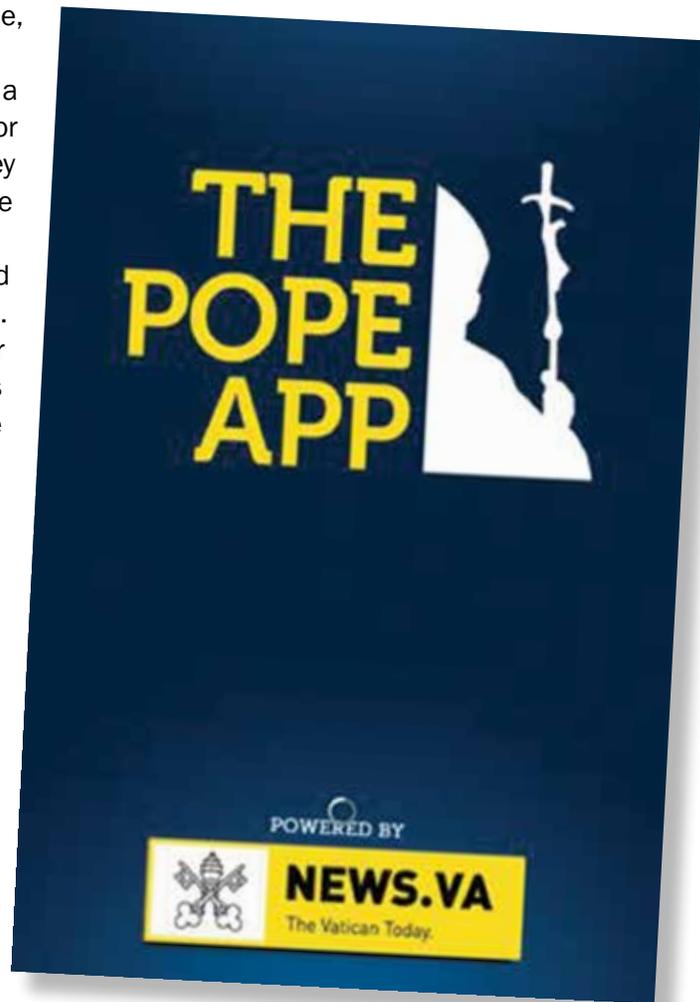
One great example is Bishop Robert Barron of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, whose Word On Fire Ministry has produced wildly popular YouTube videos discussing everything from controversial Church teachings to movie reviews from a Catholic perspective. His website also includes articles, interviews and his weekly homilies. Word On Fire also released the critically acclaimed Catholicism DVD documentary series.

Independent Catholic bloggers and Web-based media are also widely established and provide their audiences and readership with Catholic news and cultural commentary.

Here in America, parishes, Catholic schools, dioceses, and even the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are utilizing these tools as well, creating first-rate websites, maintaining Twitter and Facebook accounts, and more.

All of these resources are geared toward a wide variety of audiences, from the un-churched and fallen-away Catholics to active parishioners.

Being knowledgeable of the new media tools available to us as Catholics is a great way to be more effective in our universal call to evangelization. Take some time to see what media resources your parish, school and diocese are using, and be sure to pass them along to those in your sphere of influence!



Parish Nursery Provides Care for the Youngest Members of Our Parish

Children are, of course, always welcome at any Mass here at Holy Family – however, it can sometimes be helpful for parents to have a childcare system available to them. Through the Parish Nursery, parents can receive that assistance while children are cared for in a positive, social environment.

“This helps to give mom and dad a break so that they can really participate in Mass,” says Nancy Thomason, who has been in charge of the nursery for the past 12 years. “If they need that time, we are there every Sunday to give it to them!”

The parish nursery is open for every Sunday Mass – and when Christmas falls on a Sunday – throughout the entire year. The nursery always has two adults to care for the children – Nancy, who has a degree in childcare and has raised four children of her own, is assisted by parishioner Mary Brennan. Nancy’s daughter, Janice Thomason, will also help out often. All children under kindergarten age are welcome at the nursery, and are able to spend their time in a loosely structured environment.

“We usually accommodate up to 10 kids,” she adds. “They can play, color, have a snack. If they want to read stories, we have books – we are glad to read to them as well. We also have a TV and DVDs, which we don’t use all the time, but if they want to watch a DVD we have that available.”

Parents may bring their child however long and however often they chose.

“They don’t always come every week, which is just fine,” Nancy says. “Sometimes, they will bring them at the

beginning of Mass and then pick them up after Communion. Sometimes they’ll bring their child to church, and then bring them over to me later on in the Mass.”

Nancy encourages families who are apprehensive or unsure about leaving their child to visit the nursery and see what it’s all about.

“I would invite them to come over, meet Mary and me, and see what we do,” she says. “The children enjoy being there, and I feel like God has blessed me with the ability to be a loving, caring caretaker. I want parents to be able to trust me with their loved ones.”

Throughout her time in the Parish Nursery, Nancy has been able to see the fruits of her labor.

“We have kids who will come back and visit, or who will tell their peers that they used to come to the nursery,” she says. “They must have enjoyed it if they can come back and are excited to see that I’m still watching other kids! It’s really been a joy to see them grow up.”

Through her service, Nancy has also been able to grow spiritually and give of herself more and more.

“When [former CCD Coordinator] Frances Cummings and Fr. Patterson first asked me to do this, I really had to think about it – it’s a big commitment!” she says. “I’m really glad that I did it, though. It’s given me an opportunity to be less selfish, and to open up and help other people. I didn’t think I would do it for this many years, but I’m still in good health, so as long as I’m still here and can give back, I will keep doing it!”



“This helps to give mom and dad a break so that they can really participate in Mass. If they need that time, we are there every Sunday to give it to them!”
– Nancy Thomason

The Parish Nursery is open during all Sunday Mass times. For more information, please call Nancy Thomason at 706-323-6908, or stop by and give us a visit!



THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

320 12th Street
Columbus, GA 31901
706-323-6908

<http://holyfamilycolumbus.myownparish.com/>

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 58040
PERMIT NO. 3

Weekend Mass

Saturday Vigil

5:00 p.m. Mass

Sunday

8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Daily Mass

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

12:10 p.m. Mass

Reconciliation

Saturday

4:00 p.m.

Marriage Preparation *continued from front cover*

"[FOCCUS] is an instrument that looks at strengths and weaknesses within the relationship," Linda says. "It's just really interesting to see, 'Oh, I didn't think of that' or 'Oh, I wasn't aware of that.' It really just opens up communication, which is the key to everything."

The retreat also addresses topics such as communication, finances, sexuality, and the Sacrament of Marriage. According to Linda, not only is it an opportunity to discuss issues with your future spouse, but also to share with other couples facing the same things.

"A lot of them don't have a group of Catholic friends that they can discuss things with," Linda says of the value of meeting other couples through marriage preparation.

Above all, the emphasis on the spiritual side of the Sacrament of Marriage is what makes this program unique.

"We talk about the place of prayer within the relationship and spend a lot of time on the actual ceremony so they understand they're picking something that's meaningful," Linda says. "We encourage them to pray, to spend time,

even if it's just a quiet walk in the woods. They are entering into a sacrament that they will be sharing with each other, and it's hard work. You've got to do it every day. It's work – it's loving work, but it's hard work."

David and Linda hope that couples will come away from the Marriage Preparation program ready to embark on the adventure of a lifetime, and prepared to love and sacrifice for their spouse.

"Marriage goes through phases," Linda says. "You're in love with the idea of being married, and then you go through the hard times, and you have to refocus and fall in love again. You always have to give more than you receive. If you put more into it, in the end you get more out of it. The bottom line isn't what I'm going to get, but what can I do to make this marriage better."

Marriage preparation that sets you up for life beyond the big day is one of the first big things you can do to make your future marriage better from the very start!

**If you're engaged and would like to be married at Holy Family Parish,
please contact the parish office at 706-323-6908.**