



08.2014

# Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

BRINGING OUR CHILDREN INTO A BETTER  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE MASS

## *Children's Liturgy of the Word*

The St. Paul Children's Liturgy of the Word Ministry seeks to bring our children into a better understanding of the Mass by bringing the Mass to their level. It is a wonderful program that allows the children of our parish to learn about and participate in the Mass in a way that is easy for them to understand.

"The mission of this ministry is to provide the Liturgy of the Word on an elementary level to ensure that the children of St. Paul's are engaged and learning during Sunday Mass," says Blair Hodge, Children's Liturgy of the Word Ministry leader. "All of the lessons are age-appropriate and engaging for the children. We are able to talk about the message of the Gospel with examples that are applicable to their daily lives. The readings are read from a children's lectionary, so the wording is simpler and easier for them to follow. We encourage

the children to ask questions and be engaged with the lesson of the day."

The Children's Liturgy of the Word takes place on Sundays during the 9 a.m. Mass. After opening prayers, the priest calls the children forward, blesses them, then dismisses them. The children then head to the school's art room for the Liturgy of the Word, and return during the offertory.

Blair and the other ministry volunteers are hoping to expand the Children's Liturgy of the Word program to include a second Mass each Sunday.

"We would like to begin offering the Children's Liturgy of the Word at the 11 a.m. Mass on Sundays, and are currently looking for volunteers to begin building a team for that Mass," Blair says. "The Children's Liturgy team each week consists of one designated adult leader and at least two adult

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## *Children's Liturgy of the Word* continued from front cover

shepherds to assist in supervising the children. With enough volunteers, each volunteer serves one Sunday a month. A leader position requires the volunteer to prepare the lesson for the day, and resources are provided. Shepherds require no preparation – they just simply assist the day they are scheduled with moving the children to the art room, distributing materials, etc.”

As a mother to three young children herself, it is important to Blair that her children look forward to going to Mass each week, which is why she strives to offer the children of our parish an age-appropriate version of Mass, specifically the readings.

“My volunteers and I try to make the Children's Liturgy of the Word fun and engaging for the children, while still requiring a level of reverence and respect, as they are still technically in Mass,” Blair says. “Children are still required to do the appropriate motions and responses, as we want them to learn the proper actions during Mass. We spend time talking to them about why we sit during certain times, why we stand sometimes, the color the priest is wearing that week, etcetera. I want to emphasize how grateful I am to all of my volunteers. Without their commitment to this ministry, it would not be successful.”

For more information on the Children's Liturgy of the Word Ministry, or to find out how to volunteer, please contact the parish office at 850-434-2551.



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*– Blair Hodge, Children's Liturgy of the Word Ministry leader*



## *A Letter From Our Pastor*

# *The Mass is a Gift, to God and Our Parish Community*

Dear Parishioners,

It is hard to believe that August is upon us. It seems as if we were just looking forward to summer and all the pleasures associated with that time – and now, we are approaching the return to school, the completion of summer vacations, and the time when things here at our parish get busier again.

We call them vacations, but the British call them “holidays.” It does not take a genius to see that the words “holiday” and “holy day” share the same roots. You may anticipate where I am going with this train of thought. There was a time when the only “holidays” people experienced were indeed “holy days.” That included Sunday, to be sure, but the reason people had these “holy days” was to celebrate religious times and occasions.

An important facet of the concept of stewardship is our practice of the faith – our commitment to fulfill what the Church views as our duties related to our beliefs. Most of us, as Catholics, are very familiar with the term “Holy Day of Obligation.” In fact, there is one this month – Friday, Aug. 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A solemnity is a Feast Day of the highest rank in the Church. According to the Church’s *Code of Canon Law* (1247), “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.”

Note that what this actually says is that Sunday – just like the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, Christmas, Immaculate Conception and other holy days – is in fact a Holy Day of Obligation. Do we really think of our weekly attendance at Mass in that way? Certainly, our parents and grandparents (and many of us as well) understood



that we were supposed to go to Mass each Sunday, and there were other times during the Church year when we were expected to go to Mass — the Holy Days of Obligation.

Sometimes in our busy lives, we lose sight of how important this is. As I indicated earlier in this letter, these are holy days – these are days (yes, including every Sunday) when we need to make the effort and commitment to participate in the Mass. The *Code of Canon Law* continues as follows: “Moreover, they [that means you and me] are to abstain from those works and affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body” (1247).

“Rendered to God” means that our Mass attendance is a gift to God. Stewardship, of course, is how we take the gifts God has given us, use those gifts responsibly, and then return them and share them with the Lord and those around us. Although going to Mass is a gift to the Lord, it is also a gift to our

community and to ourselves as well. We need that time to step back from our daily worries and concerns, and to look deeper into the meaning of living and of the importance of our relationship with God.

I would like each of us to consider just how important it is to attend Mass. If we are really going to be committed to this concept of stewardship, we need to realize the significance of setting aside time each week, and on those other designated holy days (Aug. 15, for example) to be with the Lord and with our parish community at Mass. We must be committed to living out our Catholic faith properly and completely.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Doug Halsema  
Pastor



## *Looking Forward to the New School Year at St. Paul Catholic School*

The beginning of a new school year is a busy and exciting time. Each new year brings something different, and this year is no exception. One of the biggest changes for St. Paul Catholic School this year is our new principal, Lara Schuler.

"I'm new to this area in general, so I'm really excited to meet new people and make some new friends and to see the kids and their excitement," Mrs. Schuler says. "We're really working on a theme of hospitality in our parish and our school, and we're going to be using the metaphor of 'keeping everyone's buckets full' this year. A new principal is a big change in any school, and I want to Monopolize on that and make it as joyful and stress-free as possible."

Former principal Lorelei Darga retired this past summer, but she will always remember her time at St. Paul Catholic School.

"It's been a blessing to have been at St. Paul Catholic School," Ms. Darga says. "It's been a wonderful experience; one that I'm going to treasure."

The first day of the school year is on Thursday, Aug. 14, and there are a few events taking place around that time. The Parent Teacher Organization's Back to School Dinner will be held on the first day of school. On the Tuesday before the first day of classes, there will be an Orientation Day, when families come to the school to meet the teachers and set up their school supplies. There will also be a new family meeting that day.

"We have a lot of new families this year," Mrs. Schuler says. "We have over 50 new families and over 87 new students at the school this year. That in itself is exciting."

On Wednesday, Aug. 13, there will be a Mass and luncheon with the bishop at Sacred Heart Cathedral for all Catholic school teachers in the diocese.

The following week, there will be a Middle School Curriculum Night for sixth through eighth grades on Tuesday, Aug. 19, followed by a Curriculum Night for preschool through fifth grade on Thursday, Aug. 21. On Aug. 22, the school will have a big fundraiser called the Chef's Challenge, where 10 teams compete in a cooking competition, and the event will also feature a silent auction.





This school year also brings several other changes to the faculty and staff. Pamela Lupkowski is the new fourth-grade teacher, Sara Fox will be teaching fifth grade, and Pat Judd will teach PE. There are also new instructional assistants in second, third, fourth and fifth grades, as well as in middle school.

With all the upcoming events and changes taking place, this is certainly shaping up to be an exciting year at St. Paul Catholic School!

“I’m really anxious to work with people and get to know them and make the best decisions that benefit everybody,” Mrs. Schuler says. “I want them to be able to come to me and bring to me anything they would like to bring to me so we can work with each other.”

For more information about St. Paul Catholic School or the upcoming school year, please call the school office at 850-436-6435.



Our new principal, Lara Schuler

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*– Principal Lara Schuler*

# LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

## *Forming a Conscience and Moral Code*



As Christians, it is important to recognize the difference between right and wrong – both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward, in accordance with God's will.

So how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (CCC, 1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid fear, selfishness and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of continually

forming our own consciences, and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. As Bishop Donald W. Wuerl aptly states in *The Teaching of Christ*, "To conform to the mind of Christ is to conform to the mind of the Father" (p. 244). In other words, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teaching. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

# The Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima Has a Long History in the Parish

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Lillian Epley can recall the exact date and place that she began her mission to enable Our Lady of Fatima, by way of a pilgrim statue, to visit area homes so families could deepen their faith through her intercession.

"I started it on March 7, 1967," she says. "I purchased it at Our Lady Queen of Peace nursing home. I'd go each Monday or Tuesday and make rosaries. And the Lord told me that I needed to take Our Lady of Fatima to local homes."

When Lillian told Sr. Francis what she had been told to do, Lillian says she asked the nun if the facility had such a statue.

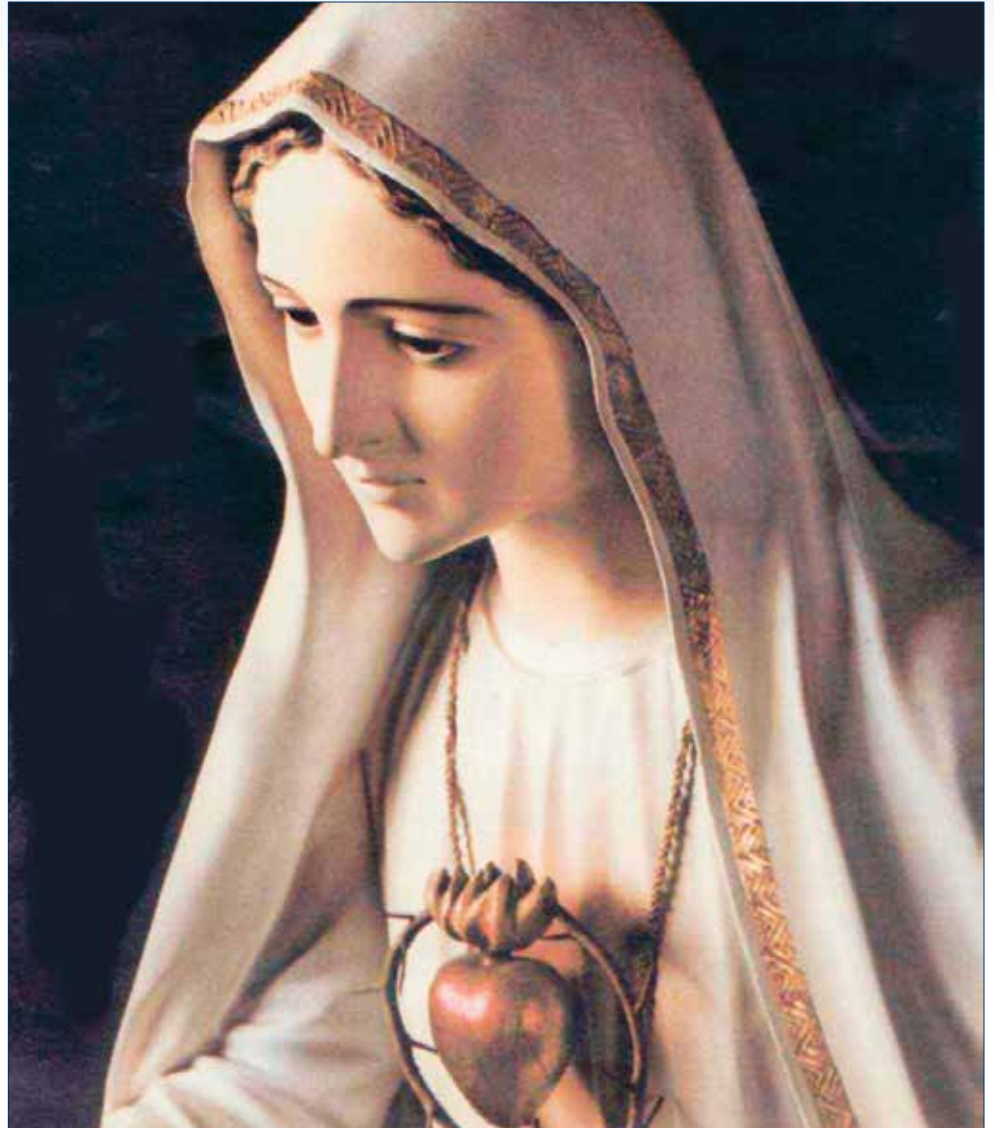
"She took me to a storage area and there were concrete statues," Lillian says. "I said, 'That's not it. The Lord said you have one.' Sister said, 'We do, but I can't give it away.' She took me to the second floor, and there in front of a large round window was the Lady of Fatima. I said, 'That's the one I need.' Sister said, 'I can't give it to you. The Knights of Columbus gave it to us and they bought it for \$100.' Now, I can't carry a concrete statue, so I offered to pay \$100 and I got donations. I bought the statue and I went ahead with the visits. I scheduled the Blessed Mother and it's been going ever since."

The statue has been taken to homes not only in the Pensacola area, but also to Mobile and Gulf Breeze, Lillian says. The pilgrim statue in use now is actually the second one.

"The first one I got from Sr. Francis – I wore her out," Lillian says. "It's here at home. But the new one is a little taller, 24 inches, and she goes to homes."

When a family requests the statue, it is taken on a Saturday and stays until the following Saturday.

"I suggest they do the Rosary, and



invite their family to pray," Lillian says. "I'm sure people feel a blessing and pray the Rosary while the Blessed Mother is with them."

Lillian says she transports the statue herself, but many times a family will take it to the next home.

"It's been very easy," Lillian says of her mission. "It is not a hardship. The main thing is it is important I keep going. People look forward to her visit."

Lillian schedules pilgrim visits beginning on the first of each year. And

there are no vacancies left for 2014, she says. The calendar for 2015 is already half-full. Her rule is that the statue can go to the same home only once in the year.

Whether there is divine intervention taking place when visits are scheduled, Lillian cannot say. But there are times when the statue is scheduled long before the significance of that date is known.

"I book the statue a year in advance," she says. "I have no idea when it's scheduled what meaning the date

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## *Pilgrim Statue of Fatima* continued from page 7

may have. The family may have a Baptism or wedding – she goes there. Only one time she was scheduled and I wouldn't take her to the home on the list. The Blessed Mother goes where she wants to go. If she's not respected, there will be an emergency for her to go someplace else.

"I've been very blessed in that I didn't have to go ask a lot of people at church for help to find a place for her to go," Lillian continues. "I've never had a problem with her schedule. People are very devoted and look forward to her. It's a huge blessing for the area we live in – our church and our families. I do promote the Rosary. I have a suitcase I carry with me that has prayer cards, CDs, rosaries, holy water. When the statue is in the home, the family can choose and use what is there. I have artificial roses and candles for the home. People don't really have to do anything other than want to pray the Rosary. I have all kinds of literature about what happened at Fatima, why she's crying tears of blood – because the people aren't listening."

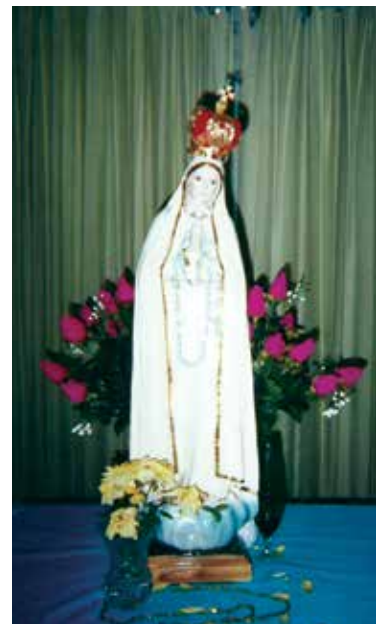
Lillian says the families who have hosted the statue say there is "a lot of peace, joy and happiness" when the statue is in their homes.

"It's not me, not the statue, but what the Lord and the Blessed Mother does," she says.

Lillian is awed by the fact that 2015 already is halfway booked.

"The Lord does the work, I don't," she says. "I'm just the instrument and I'm grateful for that."

Anyone wishing to schedule the Lady of Fatima statue for 2015 may call Lillian Epley at 850-477-6699.



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### *Liturgy Schedule*

**Saturday Vigil:** 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 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.,

most Sundays during 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Mass, 1st Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., and by appointment

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Thursday 9:00 a.m. until Friday 7:30 a.m.