



July/August  
2015

# Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## *Praying Alongside the Mother of Our Lord With the Spanish Rosary Group*

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*“The Rosary is the weapon for our times.” - St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*

In the early 1980s, Alicia Teed and Lilia Hoag felt a “tug” of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, and they didn’t ignore it. Because of their beautiful openness to God’s will, countless gifts of grace have been showered upon the world around them.

“We had read an article in the *Catholic Digest* about having a ‘block Rosary group,’ and we thought about trying to have one ourselves,” Alicia says. “So we decided to start one, and it is still going on today! There are still some of us that have been in the group since the beginning.”

The Spanish Rosary group meets every Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the Giri Room at our parish. It is still coordinated by Alicia Teed, along with Alicia Hernandez. Together, in the serene presence of the Blessed Mother, group members pray the Rosary in Spanish. They also offer various

prayer intentions, such as for their own families, for the sick, and for our nation.

Over the years, more and more Spanish-speaking people have become part of the group. There are now about 15 members, many of whom are originally from Peru, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and other Latin American countries. However, the group is still open to, and occasionally attended by, people who only speak English.

Group meetings also include occasional book studies, charitable events and fellowship opportunities. There is usually a light lunch or potluck after the meetings. This year, members enjoyed diving into the beautiful mystery of Pentecost by studying a book on the Holy Spirit. This spring, they held a potluck after one of their meetings,

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# “The Apostle of Peru and Argentina”

## .....*St. Francis Solanus*.....

Today, St. Francis Solanus is remembered as the “Wonder Worker of the New World,” and we occupiers of a digital age might feel distanced from this fearless missionary and healer.

Yet, his story shares details of his humanity. He fostered a talent for music. He learned languages to nurture hospitality. He was close to his mother. He desired to bring Christ and be Christ for others each day.

As we look again at his narrative, St. Francis Solanus and the virtues and habits of his daily life seem clearly relevant to us today, over 400 years later.

In 1549, individuals of local nobility and renowned piety, Mateo Sanchez Solano and Anna Ximenes, welcomed their son into their home in Montilla near Cordoba, Spain. One story shares that his mother consecrated her son to St. Francis of Assisi while still in her womb.

This consecration might account for St. Francis’ proclivity to the Franciscan spirituality, for he entered the Franciscan order at Montilla and then studied in seminary at Seville. He spent the first 40 years of his life living and working locally in Andalucía, a region of Southern Spain. St. Francis first felt drawn to North Africa, desiring to achieve martyrdom there. But his vision would shift to the American missions.

During his years in Spain, St. Francis first gained the reputation of a wonder-worker and healer, a reputation later fortified by hundreds of witnesses who gave testimony to his works. While many accounts exist of his tending the sick and even nursing victims of the plague, St. Francis also found time to return to his hometown and quietly care for his mother after the passing of his father.

In 1589, St. Francis sailed from Spain to the New World aboard a slave ship. Several accounts tell of the devastating hurricane this 16<sup>th</sup> century ship encountered. The storm would eventually split the ship in two! Yet, while the captain and the crew abandoned the frigate, St. Francis selflessly gave up his place in the lifeboat and stayed with the slaves to baptize and comfort them until their rescue.



Upon beginning his work in South America, St. Francis braved hitherto nearly unexplored savage regions of present day Argentina and Paraguay. When he had studied philosophy and theology in seminary, St. Francis also pursued music and now played the violin for the native people. He also diligently learned multiple challenging native languages and dialects to communicate with others in their own language.

St. Francis predicted his own death, which occurred in 1610 in Lima, Peru. In that same year, while preaching in Trujillo, Peru, he foretold the calamities that would occur in that city, which was nearly destroyed by an earthquake nine years later.

Pope Benedict XIII canonized the “Apostle of Peru and Argentina” in 1726. St. Francis’ feast is kept throughout the Franciscan Order on July 24 and in the United States on July 14. He is the Patron of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Peru.

Our vocations might not bring us across unexplored shores, but let us endeavor to model St. Francis’ strength, selflessness and devotion to the Gospel as we pursue our own paths to sainthood in our current age.

“O powerful St. Francis Solanus, you who explored and evangelized in the wilds of South America, please assist me in the wilds of this world and obtain for me, through our Lord Jesus Christ, the grace I ask of thee. Amen.”

*Offer up your petition and say one Hail Mary in honor of St. Francis Solanus.*

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

*We Provide the Gifts,  
God Performs the Miracles*

Dear Parishioners,

It is human nature to try to neatly place things into categories. If we categorize the miracles performed by Christ, the two largest groupings might fall under the headings “Healing” and “Feeding.”

This is exactly what we are about here at St. Paul. At the base of all our liturgies is the Eucharist, when we come together in communion with the Lord and with one another to be both fed and healed. Even one of Christ’s most famous miracles – the Feeding of the Multitude – involved both healing and feeding from a spiritual and a literal perspective.

The reason the large crowd gathered was because Jesus’ reputation as a healer had spread and grown. He felt compassion for that crowd, which is another way of saying He loved them and felt sorry that they were hungry due to their willingness to sit and be with Him for so long. Recognizing it was late in the day and that many of them had not eaten, Jesus literally fed them – but that day, He didn’t stop with physical nourishment. He also fed them spiritually with His words, and simultaneously, healed their wounded hearts by preaching a message of hope and forgiveness in the midst of a dark and hardened world.

The narrative of Christ taking a small amount of food and using it to feed thousands is familiar to all of us. It is reported in all four Gospels. However, I would like to highlight



one aspect of that miracle. It all started with one boy who was willing to share what little he had. Because the boy made the gift of his fishes and loaves, the Lord took it and multiplied it many times over, nourishing so many more people than what that little bit initially could.

Isn’t that what we as a parish are called to do? We make gifts of our time, our talent, and our treasure as good stewards – but nevertheless, it is God who takes those gifts and performs miracles with them. Our goal is to give what we have so that Christ might use it, multiplying it to feed, to heal and draw a multitude of people closer to Him.

The reality is that without the gifts, there can be no miracles, and without miracles, we are a hungry and broken people. Christ has come to renew, nourish, fulfill, and restore – and that, brothers and sisters, is what Christianity is all about.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Doug Halsema". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Doug Halsema  
Pastor

# “Loving One Another... Something Both Can

## ..... St. Paul’s C

When Jeremy and Jennifer Creech were first married, it was difficult to agree on a church home. Jennifer had been raised attending a small Baptist church in Oklahoma, while Jeremy was an alumnus of St. Paul Catholic School and raised in the Catholic tradition.

“When the boys were little, we tried to attend Mass with Jeremy’s grandmother, but I was unable to appreciate it at that time,” Jennifer says. “I was too worried about the boys disturbing others to fully take in what was around me. We tried a Baptist church, but it was not the right fit either. I didn’t feel the closeness of the church community I was used to and looking for.”

Then their boys began attending St. Paul Catholic School in January of 2013. That same year, all three Creech children – Tanner, 11; Tucker, 9; and Addie, 6 – were baptized at Easter.

“Shortly after the boys started school, I started looking into RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults),” Jennifer says. “I wanted a deeper look into the faith and the ability to talk to the boys about the new experiences they were having at a Catholic school.”

As Jennifer attended weekly RCIA classes over a period of a few months, she was amazed to learn more about the rich traditions of the Church and the Mass.

“I couldn’t believe the background and incredible history that I was hearing – it was fascinating!” Jennifer says. “I

*“I want to thank the parish community for such open arms and being so supportive. It is a blessing to be able to be fully integrated and for our family flourish in our faith.”*



Jennifer and Tucker Creech at the Great Pumpkin Run at Sacred Heart



The Creech family – Jeremy and Jennifer with (from left) Addie, Tucker and Tanner

# Catholics and Non-Catholics Should Strive For” *Creech Family* .....

*community for welcoming us with supportive of our family. It is a true involved in a church and have our faith!” – Jennifer Creech*

felt like this was what I had been looking for. After a few months of classes, I was brought into full communion with the Church.”

The first step for the Creech family to get involved began with a relatively new family tradition – they started attending Mass regularly together. Many members of our faith community reached out to them and made them feel completely at home.

“It became clear that it was the perfect fit for our family,” Jennifer says. “Our youngest two enjoy attending the Children’s Liturgy during Mass. They feel involved and the leaders do a wonderful job each week.”

Since becoming more involved with the community, Jeremy has enjoyed reconnecting with former schoolmates and their families. Jennifer was recently elected to the Pastoral Council and looks forward to learning more about all the different aspects of the parish. She also finished her second year of working at the school and will begin a position as the Fifth Grade Instructional Assistant this fall.

“I love being involved in the day-to-day happenings of my children’s school,” Jennifer says. “It is such a blessing to be able to pray together and have classroom visits from Fr. Doug and Fr. Kevin. The students always have great questions, and Fr. Kevin and I have some great discussions in car line!”

For Jennifer, “living stewardship” means quite simply “treating people the way you want to be treated and loving one another.”

“That is something both Catholics and non-Catholics should strive for in everyday life,” Jennifer says. “We have found that the more we give back, the more blessings we receive as a family.”

Jennifer has found that being involved both at the church and the school makes her family’s connection to the community even more rewarding. Now when Jennifer, Jeremy and their children attend Mass, they are surrounded by students, teachers and other welcoming members of the community.

The Creech family has found their “fit” – their church home.

“I want to thank the parish community for welcoming us with such open arms and being so supportive of our family,” Jennifer says. “It is a true blessing to be able to be fully involved in a church and have our family flourish in our faith!”



*The Creech children – (from left) Tanner, Addie and Tucker*



*Jeremy and Jennifer Creech*

# A Look at Our Recent Stewardship Renewal

Our parish leadership at St. Paul recently conducted the 2014-2015 Stewardship Renewal. The results certainly demonstrate that commitments to prayer, ministry and the Catholic faith are of continually increasing importance to our parish community.

As of press time of this newsletter, 42 percent of active households took part in the Stewardship Renewal by filling out and returning a commitment card.

Several of the notable results from the 2014 Stewardship Renewal include the following:

- A total of 2,092 Prayer Commitments — or commitments to Stewardship of Time — was made by 480 households who returned commitment cards.
- The top five “Time” commitments were:
  - “Attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days,” 463 commitments
  - “Spend 15 minutes a day in personal prayer,” 404 commitments
  - “Pray together with my loved ones,” 253 commitments
  - “Pray the Rosary at least weekly,” 253 commitments
  - “Read the Bible for one hour a week,” 178 commitments
- A total of 993 Ministry Commitments — or commitments to Stewardship of Talent — was made during the Stewardship Renewal, with 329 of these being new “interested in joining” commitments and 664 being re-commitments. There were 365 commitment cards with talent commitments.
- The top five “Talent” commitments were:
  - Fellowship Supper Volunteer, 105 commitments
  - Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, 87 commitments
  - Eucharistic Adoration, 79 commitments
  - Altar Servers, 54 commitments
  - Knights of Columbus, 53 commitments
- A total of 464 households made “Stewardship of Treasure” commitments. The average annual pledge was \$2,414.
- There were 252 weekly offertory pledges.
- There were 190 monthly offertory pledges.

Indeed, these statistics point to an increasingly active commitment to stewardship here within our St. Paul parish community. And while the spiritual benefits of stewardship can never be quantified, this annual commitment on behalf of our parishioners helps to ensure that St. Paul remains a vital and faith-filled parish community. We thank all who participate in the life of our parish!



*a place  
to belong*

ST. PAUL

**St. Paul Catholic Church**  
**2014-2015 Stewardship Renewal  
Commitment Card**

First & Last Name (One card per family) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Important) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# The Alpha Course

## *For All Who Have Questions*

Evangelization is often a difficult part of our faith. How do you get people interested? How does one even start some kind of dialogue on faith? Will others get upset if we bring up certain tenets of our faith? These are only a few questions that somebody might ask when tasked with the responsibility of evangelization.

Alpha is a 10-week course that helps people with these kinds of questions. The course is low-key, friendly and fun.

“It’s not only a program for people who used to go to church, or even for those who don’t know who Jesus Christ, but also for people who already attend Mass but want a closer relationship with Christ,” says Diane Wilkinson.

The goal of the program is to begin with the proclamation of the Gospel message in order to familiarize people with Christ Himself. In that way, they have a relationship with Christ to build their faith upon.

“We’re just starting Alpha,” Diane says. “It’s brand new to the parish. The first Alpha course starts Aug. 26 and continues for 10 weeks on Wednesday evenings.”

The parish hopes to have an Alpha course presentation in the parish two to three times a year as a way to bring people into the church.

● *“We really want to encourage parishioners to come to a course so that they can see what it’s about and to help us grow. This is fulfilling part of what our mission statement is at St. Paul’s, ‘Love God, Serve Others, Make Disciples.’”*

— Diane Wilkinson



“The usual format for the weekly sessions starts by everyone coming together for a meal,” Diane says. “We serve dinner, and there will be a talk presented.

The talks come from the Alpha organization, and after the talks, we break into small groups to discuss and share opinions.”

Diane also recommends visiting [ALPHAUSA.org](http://ALPHAUSA.org), which has a video introduction that explains the format of the course. An excerpt from the video concisely sums up why Alpha takes the approach that it does.

“We know by experience that trying to give people catechesis who have not come to know Christ in a personal way is like trying to plant seeds in concrete,” says a priest in the video. “It just doesn’t work.”

Diane also notes how the Alpha courses directly address Bishop Gregory Parkes’ “Fully Alive” initiative, which includes three priorities – forming disciples, inviting others to the faith, and being disciples in action.

“We really want to encourage parishioners to come to a course so that they can see what it’s about and to help us grow,” Diane concludes. “This is fulfilling part of what our mission statement is at St. Paul’s, ‘Love God, Serve Others, Make Disciples.’”

Interested in signing up for the next Alpha course? Register online at [www.stpaulcatholic.net/church/events/alpha](http://www.stpaulcatholic.net/church/events/alpha). You may also contact Diane Wilkinson at 850-516-0924 or [babydocmom@gmail.com](mailto:babydocmom@gmail.com), or Becky Siegel at 850-516-9890 or [bssiegel@att.net](mailto:bssiegel@att.net).

[Alphausa.org](http://Alphausa.org)



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## *Spanish Rosary Group* continued from front cover

to which members each brought a dish from their native country. They also celebrated Fr. Kevin’s birthday during the meal, as well. Each year on Christmas and Thanksgiving, group members buy groceries for a couple families suggested to them by Catholic Charities. Furthermore, the Spanish Rosary Group holds an annual garage sale to raise proceeds for the Alpha Center, an outreach that provides pro-life help and counseling for pregnant women considering abortion. This year, the sale raised more than \$2,000!

“Our group is not only about prayer, but it is also about community life,” Alicia says. “We are a support group of fellowship and faith. We cry together, we laugh together – we are like sisters! It is also very helpful because it gives Hispanic parishioners a chance to have fellowship. Praying the Rosary is so important, especially in this day and age. It is a devotion that is very close to our hearts because it is a longtime Catholic tradition and a great meditation on the life of Our Lord. The Blessed Mother, the Mother of

Our Lord, appeared at Fatima and said it is critical to pray the Rosary.”

Everyone is invited to bring his or her most heartfelt prayer needs to the Spanish Rosary Group. For more information, please contact Alicia Teed at 850-476-4352.



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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.