

# St. Francis of Assisi

Catholic Community

A Disciple's Response: Serving God and Neighbor with our Time, Talent and Treasure

## A Letter From Our Pastor

### Following Christ- The Way, The Truth & The Light

#### Inside:

2 Giving In Gratitude

4 A Young Faithful Steward

6 A Testimony Of Service

7 Hannah The Good Steward

“Christ is the way, truth and life.” He calls us to live as a community of disciples and as members of His church.

We are disciples in prayer. Each of us stays in touch with Christ through daily contact with our God. As God accompanies us every moment of our day, we stay open to God’s spirit. We call on God and talk with our God about the daily incidents and events of the day, seeking God’s help, recalling God’s word, the Scripture. We can dedicate to God twenty minutes a day, praying the rosary, reading scripture passages, listening to a tape reflectively, or reflecting and praying on a couple of passages from a spiritual book.

A daily time for prayer (10-20 minutes) and a practice of reflection throughout the day will lead us to be open to God’s presence. God will

not let us down. Our response for all the gifts given by God is the celebration of the Eucharist. We offer more and more of our selves to the Father through thoughtfulness and practice. Our lives become the gift of thanksgiving and praise.

God has gifted us for a purpose – to be God’s disciple that others might meet God through us. “We are growing in our understanding of being a disciple of Jesus and are responding to that challenge in our daily lives, acting in conjunction with our God” (U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on stewardship, A Disciple’s Response).

This newsletter is meant to deepen our response to Christ and to help us grow as disciples that Christ is our way. Discipleship becomes a way of life for us all.





## Parishioner Profile - Jim Castle

# Giving In Gratitude

For Jim Castle, serving the Church is a regular part of everyday life. In fact, when asked why he serves as the facility chair of the Ecclesial Community that meets at the Grange, Jim simply responds, "I saw a need and stepped in to help." This is not because Jim takes his responsibilities lightly. On the contrary, service has so enveloped him that it has become as if a second nature. He serves without being asked. So quickly does he step in to take care of almost any need, one day we'll notice a need, and the next day, before we have time to ask someone to step in, Jim has done so!

Jim has been a faithful servant all his life. He grew up in New York, and "as a teenager," Jim remembers, "I didn't have any money to tithe, but I knew I could offer my service to the Church. That was my way to give back." We are all so very blessed, and we all ought to recognize our many blessings and thank God for them in whatever way we can. Jim understood this deeply-rooted human condition at a very young age, and he has offered God thanksgiving with his love and service from the beginning.

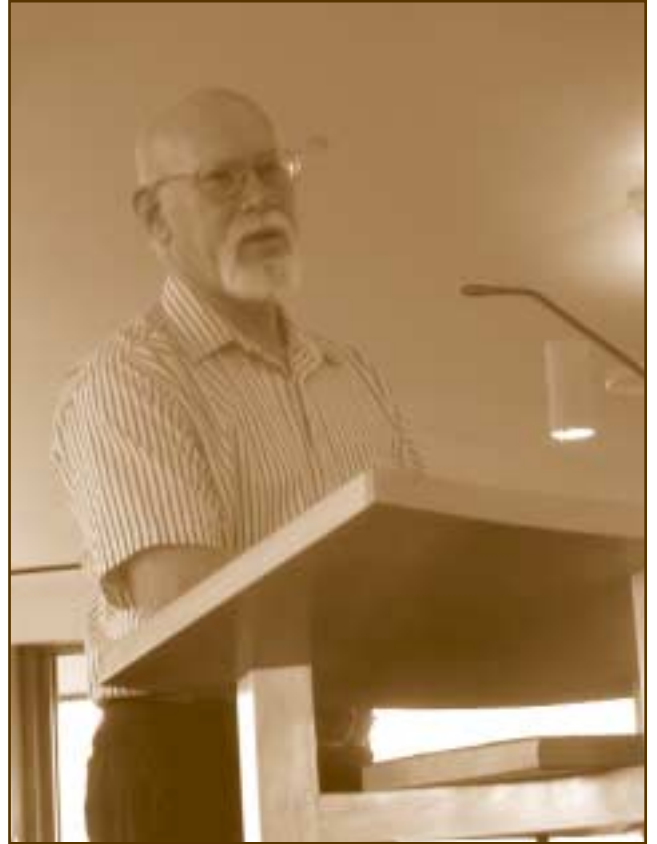
When Jim moved to San Jose, he joined Most Holy Trinity. First things first, Jim wanted to find a way to serve. That's when he noticed a need within the Ecclesial Communities. "I started out as a member of the crew," he explains, "and then I was handed the keys to the Grange and so became the coordinator of that facility. Then, ten years ago, when St. Francis was established as a separate parish, Jim would continue to offer his service to our parish community. It's all about serving God. That's how Jim sees

it, as should we all. Serving the parish community is but one way that we can give our lives to God in thanksgiving for all He's given us. So, from town to town, from parish to parish, Jim continues to serve.

And it is not a necessary burden to Jim. He sees his service as a beautiful responsibility, a gift in itself. Jim loves having the ability to give God glory through his service. As well, Jim humbly gives others due recognition. While he serves as the facility coordinator "I don't do it alone," he says, eager to recognize others. "I have a great crew to work with.

There are three others who regularly serve and three or four more whom we can call if we need their help." And then again, he simplifies the great responsibility he has taken, explaining, "it doesn't take much time. It only takes about half an hour to set up before Mass and only about fifteen to twenty minutes after Mass to take everything down." Yet, as we all know, Jim's service is more than the physical strength he offers setting up and taking down from Mass. Jim's humble heart of service offers all of us a tremendous example of faithful stewardship while strengthening the life of our parish.

Many of us know the great benefits we receive through the Ecclesial Communities—they enable us to become



closer as a parish community, gathering together in small groups, and they offer many of us a way to grow closer to Christ with the deep support of close friendships. It is through Jim's service and the service of others like him that our Ecclesial Communities are possible. And yet when you thank Jim for all that he does he replies with great gratitude. "I get a great sense of enjoyment out of giving back to the parish. I receive so much from parish life, and serving is one thing I can do to show my appreciation."

Well, let us all offer you our sincere appreciation, Jim. You are a shining example of a true Christian disciple. God calls us all to open our hearts and serve His Church. Thank you for setting such a strong example!



# Looking Ahead To Our Stewardship Renewal

## October 8/9 – Introduction to Stewardship Renewal

At all Masses, the celebrant will briefly tell the congregation about the Stewardship Packet they will receive in the mail, and give an introductory overview of the Stewardship Renewal.

## October 10-15 – Receive Stewardship Packet

All parishioners will receive a special packet in the mail that includes a Stewardship Commitment Card. You may use this card to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving—or what we call “time, talent, and treasure.”

## October 15/16 – Lay Witness Talk & Ministry Fair

At all Masses, parishioners will share what Stewardship means to them, and how their lives have been enriched by being active in our parish. After Mass, we will hold a “Ministry Fair” in which representatives of all our parish ministries will be available to speak to parishioners about their ministry.

## October 22/23 - Commitment Weekend

This is the day in which we offer to the Lord our time, talent, and treasure. Please bring your commitment card to Mass with you. If you forget, extras will be available to fill out in the pew.

# SFOA’s 10th Anniversary Golf Tournament



**Thursday, September 29th**  
**At the Villages Golf Course**  
**Tee time is 12:30 pm.**

We can field 144 golfers at \$150 per golfer. Join us for dinner following the golf tournament at 6:30 p.m. for \$35.00



## Parishioner Highlight

# A Young Faithful Steward

"Growing up, my family wasn't very active in the Church," Denisa Randzzaro remembers. "We were sort of lukewarm Catholics." That is, until the Holy Spirit broke in with a bang! While they didn't necessarily attend Mass every Sunday, Denisa and her brother were sent to religious education classes in preparation to receive the sacraments. But no one was prepared for what would happen when the Holy Spirit worked in their lives through the graces of the sacraments. "After I was confirmed, I wanted to get involved in the Church," she says, "but I couldn't." However, when her brother was confirmed Denisa felt the tug from God again. "Then I really wanted to get involved, and I was going to somehow." It's amazing just how powerful the Holy Spirit's presence in the sacraments really is.

Since then, Denisa has become very involved in the Church, particularly in the youth programs, and her brother and the rest of her family have gotten involved as well. "We are all very active now!" Denisa finds great fulfillment in serving the youth of our parish. She knows what it's like to be away from the Church as a young person, and her passion is now to ensure that others don't experience any sort of alienation from the Church. She serves our Confirmation program, helping our high school students understand the reality behind the beautiful sacrament they prepare to receive (and who better to do so!). As well, she serves our Young Adult Ministry, our Youth Ministry, and our JustFaith Ministry. What an amazing resume for such a young Catholic with such a short history of activity in the Church! "It's fun," Denisa remarks, adding that she finds great peace knowing that she is helping other young people grow in their faith. "It's nice to know that you are helping them get involved in the Church, and they aren't out on the

streets or being rebellious," she remarks, "and it's amazing how their faith impacts me."

In the first place, it wasn't quite clear to Denisa how she could best serve the Church. She knew she wanted to serve, and serving young people seemed only natural, given her

young age, but finding the perfect fit took a little bit of testing. "After serving as the coordinator of the Young Adult Ministry, I stepped back for a year. I got involved in ministries that would serve me, but that wasn't enough." Denisa found that truly "helping her" would mean her helping others. So she began to serve the Confirmation class, and as the Holy Spirit's workings would indicate, it seems this is just where God wants her! Denisa now coordinates our Confirmation class, and while she prepares our young people for Confirmation, she explains, they all

truly grow in faith together. "I love listening to the kids. They have different views on faith, being that they are so young, and when they ask some of their questions, they often open my eyes to new ideas, new views. They offer me a renewed sense of faith."

Denisa has found that serving the Church offers her a new way to express her faith. Through service she is able to show God just how devoted she is to Him. As well, she explains with sheer confidence, "It is our Christian duty to serve others. And when we respond to God's grace and serve as Christian disciples, we get a lot more out of it than we give." She encourages all of us to give of ourselves as well. It is no secret that great joy comes from the Lord, and to Him who has given us so much, in joy we must give back! Thank you for your wonderful example of Christian service, Denisa. May we all follow Jesus' call as faithfully as you have!

**"It is our Christian duty to serve others. And when we respond to God's grace and serve as Christian disciples, we get a lot more out of it than we give."**



*Catholic Beliefs and Practices*

# *Dismissal - Being Sent Forth As Christ's Disciples*

Did you know that at the end of every Mass you receive very direct evangelization instructions? "Mass has ended. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord," proclaims either the priest or the deacon. Do you usually stick around long enough to hear these words?

This closing dismissal is an important part of our Eucharistic celebration. These closing words remind us that our Catholic life does not end with our Sunday celebration, in fact, it just begins. We need the Mass to equip us for our responsibilities during the week. We are taught during the Liturgy of the Word about God's saving plan for His people, and we are nourished by Christ's own Body and Blood. Then, we are dismissed to put our faith into action as we share with others the good news we have so intimately experienced within the context of the Mass. We are being dismissed to go forth and evangelize others.

We have probably all, at one time or another, left Mass before the dismissal. And some of us have made a habit out of taking communion and then splitting, assuming that we've received what we came for. But if this is our attitude, then we have missed the point of Mass. The entire Eucharistic celebration is a community event that joins us in communion



“MASS HAS ENDED, LET US GO IN PEACE TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LORD.”

with God and with one another. We sing, sit, kneel, stand, exchange the sign of peace and receive Communion as a cohesive group.

Our dismissal as a community is another important sign of this common bond. For it is as a community, not just as individuals, that we are sent into the world to shine Christ's light. We are reminded that we are

not alone on this mission, but we are joined together with our family of faith. So the next time you are at Mass and you hear "Mass has ended, let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord," allow your voice to join with your community of faith as you proclaim "Thanks be to God" and prepare to take Christ out into your world.



## Parishioner Highlight-Joyce Harper A Testimony Of Service

"As a parishioner at St. Francis, you're almost compelled to get involved simply because so many are setting the example of service for you," says Joyce Harper, a member of our parish since 1999. It is this aspect of the parish, among others, that first attracted her to get involved herself. "I was so impressed by Father John's and my fellow parishioners' examples, it was impossible for me not to get involved. Father's words

Francis Parish that she was brought back! "I had been away from the Church for a long time when I found out about a program called 'Take another Look at the Catholic Church.' I signed up for the program, and it was absolutely fantastic!" Joyce relates. "The program was so wonderful that it brought me back—and brought me back with a vengeance!" she adds laughing. Joyce goes on to explain that what she means is her experience

with St. Francis parish, particularly through the witness of Fr. John and parishioners, not only attracted her to come home to the Catholic Faith, but it inspired her to take an active role in serving within the Church.

For the past three years, Joyce has assisted with our liturgies by serving as Worship Coordinator for the 8:30 a.m. Masses here at St. Francis, which involves making sure the lectors, extraordinary ministers, and sac-

my time and energy to the new Stephen Ministry, which I am very excited about."

"As soon as I heard about the Stephen Ministry, I immediately wanted to get involved," Joyce relates. "I first heard about it through a friend of mine who was a Stephen Minister for the Lutheran Church. I was so pleased that the Catholic Church offered the ministry as well." Having had experience working in the professional world with a wide variety of people, Joyce knew the Stephen Ministry would be a natural fit for her, particularly working with people one-on-one.

This personal, one-on-one aspect is what characterizes the Stephen Ministry and gives it its strength. "It's all about listening to the person in distress, and walking side by side with them," Joyce explains. "We don't fix their problems; we're not psychiatrists, although we are trained to determine whether the person we work with should move on to professional help," she says. But very often, people go through hardships that they can fix themselves, and just need support and a compassionate ear. "Stephen Ministers help people think through those difficulties, and encourage and support them in overcoming their hardships," says Joyce. Joyce is confident that with clearly defined goals, strategies, and devoted parishioners, the Stephen Ministry will bring about a lot of healing to members of the parish community.

Joyce and her husband, Jack, have two sons and two grandsons. When she's not working, Joyce's favorite pastimes are spending time with her family, particularly her grandchildren, and playing golf with her friends.



are so real and applicable to everyday life for me, and here I see parishioners daily living out their faith."

Joyce has lived in San Jose for many years. But only recently did the Faith become a major part of her life, when she returned to the Catholic Church after a long absence. Amazingly, it was by the grace of the Holy Spirit acting through St.

ristans for each Mass have been scheduled and contacted. Recently, much to Joyce's delight, two parishioners have stepped up to take her position as coordinator. "Of course I enjoyed serving as coordinator," Joyce assures, but explains that it gives her joy to see that others are getting a chance to lead too. "Besides," she adds, "It has allowed me to devote all



## Stewardship

# Hannah The Good Steward

**W**hat should we do when our prayers are answered? Is there anything left to do after we've sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we'd probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do for Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells us to "go and do likewise." That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That's Stewardship!

*For Hannah, Samuel was truly a gift from God - an answered prayer. Hannah's response is that of the Good Steward: with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God.*

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most poignant examples of stewardship in the entire Bible. In the first chapter we learn of an unhappy, barren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a

son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah's elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart's desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow as Hannah kept her promise to God by bringing Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The book of Samuel tells us that after that, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.

For Hannah, Samuel was truly a gift from God — an answered prayer. Hannah's response is that of the Good Steward: with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an entire nation. In time, Samuel became one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of Stewardship. Sometimes the results are impossible to miss! Yet in both instances, God asks that we continue to be faithful. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us; at whatever the cost, we are to "go and do likewise."



### Stewardship Lesson

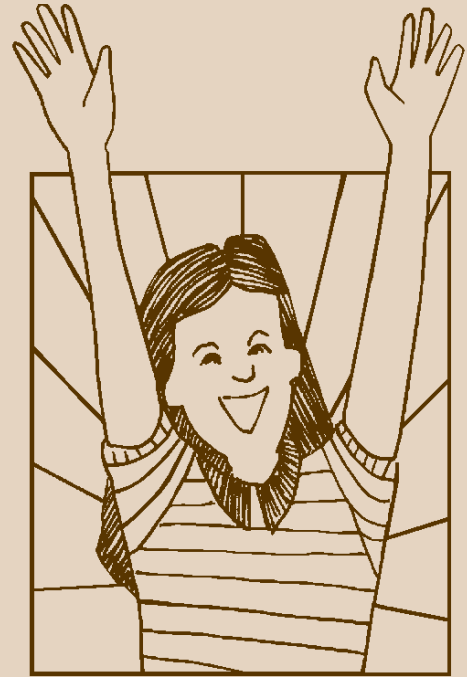
*But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do for Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells us to "go and do likewise." That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That's Stewardship!*



## Raising The Roof To God

**O**n Saturday July 9, hundreds of youth and young adults from throughout our diocese gathered to raise the roof with loud and vibrant praise to God! At the 2005 Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Day, many of us joined together at St. Julie Church for a day of music, fellowship, and fun. We celebrated our Catholic Faith while making friends and praising God in song. The church was set up like a street fair, with numerous booths offering a wide variety of crafts and other items, and local Catholic bands played their music. It was an amazing time for everyone—a day to truly rejuvenate us all! In fact, everyone was blessed to enjoy the talents of our own parish young adult band. They did an amazing job! To round out the day's excitement, Bishop McGrath celebrated a Mass at 5:00 p.m. And, true to the spirit of Catholic stewardship, we did not let the day's faith-filled excitement end at dusk. Rather, we extended the love and service of Christ to all. The proceeds from the day's activities were donated to benefit local and global needs. What a truly beautiful witness!

The youth of the Church are filled with excitement, and this day served to rejuvenate us all. We are passionate about our faith, and ready to share that with the world!



*St. Francis of Assisi*  
*Catholic Community*

5111 San Felipe Rd.

San Jose, CA 95135

Phone: 408-223-1562

Fax: 408-223-1759

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 2035  
San Jose, CA