

# 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

## Welcome To Our New Parish Newsletter

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Dear Parishioners,

This newsletter gives me a chance to write to you about what I've experienced thru God's presence and your compassion. I look forward to this monthly reflection and welcome your feedback.

**"The gift that you have been given, give as a gift."**

I rejoice and give thanks to God for all that is — God abundantly blessed me and you. Once I give up wanting it my way and dictating to God and others how it has to be and receiving the Gift — Grace — life is so much more, and it can be for us all.

Christ came to announce this new way of life and poured out His spirit so we might like that life. He calls us to live differently — to a change of life — to conversion.

Because of God's Spirit in us and our gratitude to God, the gift we have been given prompts us to share that gift — to see the world and our environment, families and friends, our job, and our profession as a blessing and react as we do to any gift. Cherish the gifts, honor

them, respect them, and treasure them. We are invited to give back; to offer the gift of ourselves so others might live.

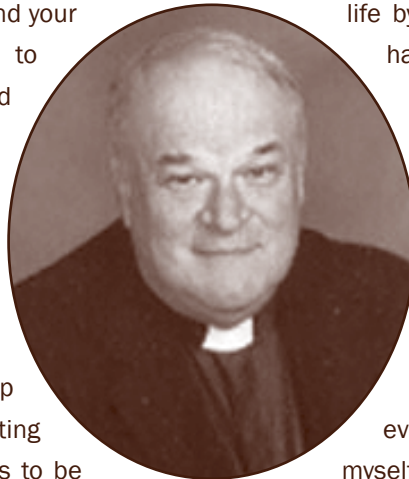
God calls us to witness to this new way of life by our lives and behavior. God has gifted us so that in God's name, we might be gift to another — to serve God's creation and to make a difference. As a disciple with a God given purpose, I will come to know who I am and what I'm about as I come and hear God's call, realize that everything is a gift and share myself to do God's will.

We have been given life to be a steward care taker "and to spend our life well". Because of this, not only is our life richer — our world, to others, seem richer too.

Sincerely In Christ,



Msgr. John Sandersfeld  
Pastor





## Parish Gift Shop

# Shopping With The Saints

Looking for a devotional book, a rosary, a crucifix, or a number of other Catholic articles? You may have spent time running around town or surfing the net in hopes of finding these before, but there is no need to do that anymore! In March, we opened the St. Francis Garden Gift Shop right on our parish grounds.

Located on the south side of the Memorial Garden, the shop offers a variety of religious articles, and we encourage you to stop in and check them out. You are sure to notice the entrance, clearly marked with the cheery sign painted by Richard Randazzo, featuring the parish symbol, a bright sunflower.

Opening the gift shop took much preparation and dedication. Many parishioners offered their time and talent to make what has been a dream of Msgr. John's a reality. Colleen Cortese, co-chair of the gift shop's board, can remember when Betsy Toole, who now serves as the other co-chair of the board, "used to take books and other religious articles around to various groups to sell at their meetings, but that was difficult." Thanks to the combined efforts of so many people, we now have books and other religious articles available to us all the time. And, as Colleen explains, "Having a permanent space is much better!"

We would like to thank everyone who had a hand in preparing the gift shop for its opening. "For example, Mel Bueno found the glass display cases discarded by the side of the road and picked them up, and then George Hurley restored and painted them. Rick Duplan contributed

cabinets and the flat-board to display goods on the walls. He even sent over a carpenter to install them. And the manager of the Cathedral Basilica gift shop gave us a lot of helpful advice. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to opening the store," Colleen explains.

We encourage everyone to visit the



gift shop. It is a great treasure, one that we are sure to benefit from for years to come. The shop is open after the Saturday Vigil Mass and after every Sunday Mass. It is also open on Wednesday from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. We accept Visa and MasterCard as well as cash and checks, and we are happy to special order any item that is not in stock. So, please stop by and see what we've got.

Presently, "Rose Agerter serves as our

part-time Gift Shop Coordinator, but we depend on volunteers to staff the shop when it is open," Colleen explains. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Colleen at [Colleen\\_Cortese@SBCGlobal.net](mailto:Colleen_Cortese@SBCGlobal.net) or call her at 238-8912

It's exciting for all of us to see so many religious items so readily available, and for that, all of us at St. Francis are extremely grateful. Yet that's not all the gift shop will be used for! In the future, "we hope to start a reading group that will meet three or

four times a year to discuss a book suggested by Msgr. John. We'd be able to order copies of the book to sell to parishioners who would like to participate," says Colleen. Look in future bulletins and newsletters for announcements of any activities sponsored by the gift shop, and take time to stop by today. We're sure to have a number of things to meet your needs!



*Parish Ministry*

# Susan Bega Brings A Servants Heart To Stephen's Ministry

Although Susan Bega has only been a registered member of the parish for a little over two months now, you've probably seen her around the parish quite a bit since she first started attending Mass here a year and a half ago. One thing is for sure, Susan certainly has not wasted time getting involved in parish life! Most recently, in addition to serving as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, she has been a founding member of the Stephen's Ministry, a brand new ministry here at St. Francis whose trained members offer Christian compassion, guidance, and a listening ear to those who are facing various challenges in their lives.

"About a year ago, shortly after I joined St. Francis parish, I realized that I wanted to do something more," Susan recalls. "I needed to find out how I could do my part to build the life of the parish – to find out how best to use the gifts God has given me." Originally from Millbrae, CA, Susan graduated from San Jose State and now works for the State of California as a Vocational Rehab Counselor, which has given her a heart for comforting and encouraging those in distress. When Susan decided she wanted to take an active,

spiritual role in the Church, she found the perfect fit in the Stephen's Ministry. "I needed to have a spiritual role in addition to going to church on Sundays. That just wasn't enough. Fr. John was a real inspiration to me,

helping me want to do more." Needless to say, Susan immediately jumped on board when she heard the possibility of starting the Stephen's Ministry at St. Francis.

And so, this past April, Fr. John, Susan, Joyce Harper, and Elaine Swyt attended the 50 hour, week-long training to be Stephen Ministers in St.

Louis, MO, where the ministry was started in 1975.

This ministry is named after St. Stephen, one of the first deacons in the early Church, who was commissioned by the apostles to care for the needs of people in the Christian community. There are currently over 6,000 congregations encompassing 80 different denominations that are enrolled worldwide. Fr. John realized that many of our own parishioners like Susan were looking for a meaningful



ministry to be involved in. By the same token, many parishioners were looking for a place to find wise counsel. He felt that the Stephen Ministry provided an unique way to utilize the gifts of our parishioners by allowing them to serve one another in love.

"Right now, we are at the stage of spreading awareness of this ministry throughout the parish," says Susan, who is excited to begin using her training and experience to benefit her brothers and sisters in Christ. She admits that it is a great blessing for her to serve as an Extraordinary Minister to the homebound. "I've been rewarded time and time again through bringing the Eucharist to my ladies and seeing the joy on their faces. The Stephen Ministry will be a wonderful part of that – bringing Jesus to others. I'm excited for others to have that same experience."

Susan encourages anyone interested in becoming a Stephen Minister to contact the parish office. Recruiting and gift assessment for the ministry will take place later on this summer, followed by training in November. Please consider following Susan's example and the example of St. Stephen, bringing the healing arm of Jesus to your fellow parishioners!





## Memorial Garden

# A Beautiful Place Of Rest

When someone passes away, it is a great loss for the ones left behind, but simultaneously, it is a time of rejoicing and prayer for the deceased loved-one. He or she now has the chance to enjoy perfect happiness with God for all eternity! The wake, funeral, burial, and any accompanying ceremonies are special opportunities for us to pay respect to our deceased loved ones and show them just how much we care.

As simple as it may seem, the decision of where you want yourself or your family members to be buried after death is a significant one. In 1999, St. Francis made it possible for parishioners to be laid to rest on the parish grounds by creating a beautiful memorial garden adjacent to the church. What a gift to be laid to rest so near the place that houses Our Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and so near the building that symbolizes the Universal Church, our Mother – there at the moment of our Baptism and there at the moment of our death!

The memorial garden is unique in that, unlike the standard cemetery, it is exclusively used for the placement of the cremated remains of the deceased. "The garden has 762 double niches available, and a number of people have made purchases already," says Jim Brennan, "mostly by those who are simply preparing for the future." So far, close to 200 niches have been purchased, but only about 50 inurements have taken place since the garden was opened in 1999. Jim notes that cremation has become more and more popular these days, "probably because it conserves space, and it is considerably less expensive," in addition to the fact that being laid to rest beside the church is very attractive – especially in the memorial garden's beautiful setting!

The style of the garden reflects that of California Mission grounds, with decomposed granite blanketing its floor. Grapevines adorn the walls of niches and a granite-columned pergola stands in the midst of the garden. Flowers and various shrubs and trees make the garden a beautiful resting place for the deceased. The lighted Way of the Cross pathway, which was added and dedicated last year, also makes the garden a wonderful environment for prayer and reflection.

For the past 8 years, Jim Brennan has dedicated his energies to helping our parish plan and care for the garden. Eight years ago, he was there at the beginning stages of its creation. Last April, he joined our parish staff as the part-time manager of the garden, which is no small task. His job includes preparing the niches for inurement, directing prayer services, and overseeing care of the garden. Unless they are unavailable, Jim and his wife, Camillia, are present and

directing every inurement at St. Francis, using their time and talent to honor and preserve the dignity of our deceased brothers and sisters. While it involves a lot of effort, Jim views his task as a privilege. "It is very fulfilling to help families during their time of loss and being there to help lay their loved ones to rest. It's a meaningful experience every time." Jim adds that the memorial garden is a departure from most resting places. "It is homier than the typical institutional cemetery, which makes the services very intimate."

Anyone interested in purchasing a niche in our memorial garden should simply call the parish office at 223-1562 and leave a message for Jim. Regardless, you are welcome to take a stroll through the garden after Mass and experience the beautiful setting for yourself!





# First Session Of Vacation Bible School

The first session of Davey & Goliath's Circus Spectacular vacation Bible school program is over and it was fantastic! We had 35 troupers attend as well as 16 teenage leaders doing various jobs. The activities included daily bible stories, games like learned to juggle, singing songs, making crafts, participating in a puppet theatre and fun snacks. We had lots of interaction with the seniors who attend Day Break. Together, they and the children worked on crafts and the troupers sang some songs that they learned for the seniors. It was a really neat experience to see. Another thing that happened is on Friday we collected food for the local food pantries. This time we also collected used but good toys and they were given to the family shelter. I am always impressed with how much is collected to help the less fortunate. These kids really care!

If you missed this first session, there is a repeat session on August 1st-5th. Please contact the parish office or Peggy Bariteau at 274-7477 for more information and registration forms. The cost of the camp is \$40 and is for children who have completed 1st grade through the 5th grade. Older children can attend at no cost and be a leader.



## "In Remembrance of ..."

- ✝ Remember your deceased by having inscribed on a special bronze plaque, the names of loved ones inured in the garden or buried elsewhere.
- ✝ Purchase an engraved paving stone to remember your living or deceased loved ones, or purchase one for yourself.

Contact the parish office for details, 223-1562





## Youth Profile

# Abbie Korman — A Young Woman Set Apart

Our young people live amidst a great irony these days. On the one hand, society tells them that it's "cool" to embrace their individuality and to refuse to conform to any set of values — to "be your own your person," as it were. And on the other hand, the culture puts tremendous pressure on them to fit into a very particular mold — to do the same things, wear the same things, watch the same things, things that are often harmful in the long run. Wait, where is the individuality here?

If young people are looking for the thrill of non-conformity, they're not going to find it in popular culture. Ironically, where they find it is in living a Christian life, not merely setting themselves apart, but going above and beyond the norms that society sets for them. Here at St. Francis, one young lady has already discovered the happiness found in living such a life. Her name is Abbie Korman. When she was in Junior High, she became a Catholic and part of our parish family. Now, she spends most of her time enjoying true friendships, and serving her school, the local community, and the Church. Indeed, she has set a Christ-like example for all of us here at St. Francis!

Born and raised only five minutes from our parish, Abbie's interest in the Catholic Faith began when she was in 7th grade. "I felt like there was something I wanted but I didn't know what it was," she recalls. "Having gone to school with many Catholics, I would watch as they grew and their Faith and lived it. I reached a point when I wanted to make the decision about what I really believed. I began going to St. Francis with family friends of mine, the

McComas." It didn't take long before Abbie came to understand the truth of the Catholic Faith and the happiness and fulfillment it brought her. She attended RCIA and was received into the Church at the Easter Vigil of her 8th grade year.

Even before she became Catholic, Abbie knew she wasn't going to be a passive one. "I wanted to get involved in serving the Church, so I used to sing with the teen choir at Mass with a friend while I was



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looking into becoming Catholic."

Since the Easter Vigil of 2001, Abbie has never looked back. Currently, she helps run the Junior High Youth Ministry, which includes planning regular meetings and retreats. She also volunteers on the Communications Team, where she assists with putting together the bulletin and parish flyers. She helped lead the annual Confirmation Retreat at St. Francis, and has helped lead the Confirmation Program for her fellow students at

Archbishop Mitty High School. Serving is essential to her Faith. "By serving the Junior High, I feel like I can help them deepen their relationships with God; working with those older than me on the Communications Committee, I learn a lot from their example. It goes both ways for me," she says.

Abbie allows her Faith to permeate other areas of her life, at school and in our local community. In addition to staying involved in many school activities as a Senior in High School, including soccer, the California Scholarship Program, the National Honors Society, and the Monarch Service Club, Abbie is a noted leader in our Safe Place Community Outreach. In fact, she was selected to give a presentation at the Outreach's National Convention in KY, where she was one of two youth in the Nation to win the Youth Volunteer Award for outstanding service to her community.

When asked what inspires her to hold her own and practice her Faith so passionately, Abbie says, "I know that when I serve, I'm truly living out my Faith more than I would just sitting at Mass on Sundays. It's a fuller experience of being Catholic. And besides, it's a lot more fun!" she laughs.

Abbie looks forward to attending the University of California, Santa Barbara in the fall and majoring in business or education. Needless to say, she plans on staying very active in the Church even at College. "I hear there's a good campus ministry down there, which I'm excited about getting involved in," she says.



## Stewardship

# What Is Stewardship At St. Francis Of Assisi?

What do you think of when you hear the word “stewardship?” Do you think it is another way to talk about money? Actually, stewardship is a concept that is scripturally based and absolutely vital to our life as Catholics. In the very first book of the Old Testament, Genesis 1: 28, Gods says, “Be fertile and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and all the living things that move on the earth.” What does that mean to us today? It simply means that God is telling us that “This is yours, take care of it.” One of the first things God tells us to do is to be good stewards of the gifts He has entrusted to us!

The Old Testament is not the only place where references to Stewardship are found. In fact, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, over half deal with time, talent, possessions or money. If Jesus spoke of stewardship that much, it should be a very important part of our lives!

As Catholics, we refer to the three facets of stewardship as Time, Talent and Treasure. Although these are three concrete ways to speak of and measure stewardship, the American Catholic Bishops have told us that stewardship is part of discipleship. Stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call in every aspect of our life.

One point cannot be over-emphasized: We are taught by the scriptures and Church traditions that stewardship is primarily based on our need to give in gratitude, not on the Church’s need to receive. Of course, the Church at-large

and our parish specifically will always need money. However, we are not asked to give simply to defray costs and fund charitable programs — instead, we are asked to remember our need to grateful-

involved in parish ministries and activities? What percentage of your income should you give back to God every week? What talents do you have that could be used to strengthen the parish family?



ly return a portion of our time, talent, and treasure to God in recognition of all that He has given to us.

It is important to remember that stewardship is a way of life, not a program. True Catholic stewardship involves an ongoing call to live as followers of Christ. It takes time to find and define personal goals. You can begin by examining your personal commitments to the parish. In what way do you live your faith in your daily life with your family and friends? How much time do you spend in daily prayer, going to Mass or being

In the coming months, we will be increasing and intensifying our education and communication on stewardship. We will be coming to a better understanding of how stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call to discipleship. With God’s help, changes will occur in each of our hearts as we devote ourselves to a stewardship renewal within our parish. Examine how you are currently responding to God’s call to stewardship. If God called you home tomorrow, would he proclaim “well done my good and faithful servant?”



**Mark Your Calendars!**

# **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.

More details are coming.



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