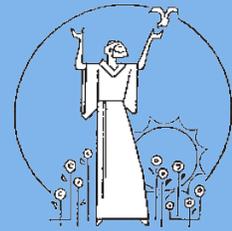


THE *Spirit* OF ST. FRANCIS

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church | San Antonio, Texas



Winter 2015

35 Years of Discipleship

1980 – 2015



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Rebuild My Church!



Happy New Year to you all as we begin the new calendar year of 2015! For us, at the St. Francis of Assisi Parish Community, 2015 begins the celebration of our parish's 35th anniversary of foundation! And our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has declared this year as a special celebration for the Consecrated Life of Religious Brothers and Sisters, like our religious sisters Rose and Linda Marie here in our own community.

When Francesco Bernadone, later known to us as St. Francis of Assisi, was a young adult rediscovering his faith, he heard the words of Christ from the crucifix in the chapel of San Damiano speak to him, "Rebuild my Church." Young Francesco could only wonder, at first, what this meant. The chapel had been falling into disrepair for some time, and so Francis initially thought that the Lord wanted the physical chapel to be restored. He set about this task, and some

of his earliest followers began to help him. But as he meditated on the words of Christ, he began to realize that the Lord did not mean simply to rebuild the physical chapel. Jesus really meant that Francesco should rebuild the Church in its spirit and mission! And we know that Francis was so radical in his following of the Lord that his example and spirit have endured right into our own moment of history.

What can this mean for us at St. Francis of Assisi Parish? This church community was founded with some very specific goals in mind, with a particular spirit and way of living out the faith. The original families, many of whom are still with us, have remained faithful to that first "Franciscan culture" promoted here. But most of us have come in later years, and many have come to St. Francis more recently. We recognize something special about this community in its spirit of welcome and in its commitment to the service of the poor and needy. And we like it! But how can we keep that spirit alive in our time?

This year, at St. Francis of Assisi, our general theme for the year is "Rebuild My Church!" And no, we're not going to build a new church building! Rather, we will focus on the renewal of our own community in that founding spirit! In January and February, we will "Reconnect" by completing a major review of our membership and information. In Lent, we will "Remember Our Baptism" by recalling to mind the meaning of our baptism and the emphasis on baptism asked for by the Second Vatican Council. In the Easter Season, we will focus on "Renewal in the Spirit" as we focus on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how they manifest in our lives as individuals and as a community. Over the summer, we will "Refresh" as we see how God's Holy Spirit calls us to listen to the Lord, be remade as disciples, and continue on our mission.

"Rebuild My Church!" Words spoken to Francesco Bernadone, and words spoken to us today.

- Fr. Larry

Reconnect. Remember. Renew. Refresh.

St. Francis Seminarians



Brian Garcia
Theology III



Paul Melgarejo
Pre-Theology II



Jonathan George
Pre-Theology I



Are You Next?
Answer the Call.

We celebrate these three parishioners in priestly formation at Assumption Seminary. Please keep them in your daily prayers. Their call to the priesthood was fostered in the vibrant, rich liturgical life of our parish. Thank God for our spiritual home! May more answer God's call to the priesthood and religious life!
Photos Courtesy of Assumption Seminary

The *Spirit* of St. Francis

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35 Years of *Discipleship*

We Celebrate Our Parish Founders, Mission, and Values

By Sister Rose Kruppa, CDP

A few months ago, many of the founding members of our St. Francis of Assisi Parish Community gathered at the 5 pm Saturday Mass to reminisce and to share a blessing. Not all could be present, but those who came could not hide their joy at being together again. And those of us who were present were filled with gratitude to them for all that we inherited from their risk-taking and their willingness to start something new. Thirty-five years later, we are vibrant and strong and ready to celebrate our very rich parish history.

The 35 year history of St. Francis is truly blessed. We celebrate three generations of family members who found a home in this faith community and passed on many of the values and traditions that make St. Francis a unique parish. We celebrate lay leadership in every area of parish life—in sacramental preparation, in formation for marriage, in enrichment of sacramental marriage, in liturgical ministries, in service and outreach projects that are prompted by Catholic Social Teaching, in faith formation during all stages of our lives, and in responsiveness to the needs of our members.

Knowing that we have been richly



Photos: Parish founders gather for a group photo at a Mass in their honor (above). Photo by Eileen Kleffner. Cantor Mike Duggan leads the congregation in the Responsorial Psalm during Mass (below). Photo by Charles Ramirez.

blessed, we want to celebrate 35 years of building the welcoming community at St. Francis. The goals of our observance include: to celebrate our rich history, to use our strengths as a faith community to create our future, focus on our parish mission, spirit, and values with an emphasis on the words St. Francis heard at San Damiano, “Rebuild my Church,” and to communicate the parish culture (beliefs, values, customs, ways of doing things) to newcomers and the next generation of parishioners.

Although we have some ideas about how we could celebrate this year, we are open to suggestions from all of you!

We’d like to collect the 35 most memorable experiences in the history of St. Francis. Stories will be great. We’d also like to create a mobile Welcome Booth for the Gathering Space that will continue to enlarge our “Welcome experience” for visitors and new members. In the spirit of our patron, St. Francis, we plan to revive our efforts in care for all creation, especially in our recycling efforts and care of our gardens. We’ll have some gatherings of parish members of all ages to talk about what we imagine for our future. And we’ve already scheduled a dance with Cactus Country for August 1, 2015 to celebrate our families!

What ideas do you have? We’re eager to hear from you. Contact me, Sister Rose, in the office.

“We want to celebrate 35 years of building the welcoming community at St. Francis...”





A Journey to the Waters of Baptism

We Remember Our Call to Discipleship

By Charles Ramirez

The season of Lent quickly approaches and the Church around the world stirs. As a time of prayer, penance, and fasting to prepare for the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection, Lent at St. Francis of Assisi offers many dynamic, engaging opportunities during these special 40 days, all focused around the season's theme, "Remember Your Baptism."

To orient parishioners to the spirit of this theme, the church will gift each registered family with a copy of Pope Francis' first apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*. Families will have the opportunity to reflect on their reading through weekly reflection questions written by our pastor, Fr. Larry Christian, and published in the bulletin and on the parish website.

Our Lenten Mission offers 3-4 consecutive evenings of focused reflection

intended to encourage and challenge families to draw closer to the Lord. The mission will begin during all the Masses on the weekend of February 28-March 1, 2015 and will continue on the evenings of March 2-3, ending with a penance service on the evening of March 4. Fr. Jonathan Felux will lead the mission, speaking on *The Joy of the Gospel*, a topic with which families will have already become familiar. By refreshing the faithful, encouraging the struggling, and reaching out to the non-believing, the mission leads those present into a response of faith and a relationship of love.

Each water drop to the right represents a step on our Lenten journey. These are ways we can deepen our relationship with Jesus while remembering our baptism.

Photo Above: Parishioners stand to begin the liturgical procession. Photo by Charles Ramirez. Below: A family prays together during Mass. Photo by Oscar McAnally.



Ash Wednesday
February 18
 6:30 am Mass
 8:30 am Mass
 12 pm Liturgy of the Word
 5 pm Liturgy of the Word
 7 pm Mass

40 Cans for Lent Drive
Feb. 18-Apr. 5
 Bring in
 canned goods
 for the poor.

Mardi Gras Party
February 17
 6:30 pm
 Henke Hall



Lenten Mission

Feb. 28–Mar. 4

Feb. 28/Mar. 1

Mar. 2 | 7 pm

Mar. 3 | 7 pm

Mar. 4 | 7 pm

Stations of the Cross

All Fridays of Lent

7 pm Prayer Service

The Joy of the Gospel

By Pope Francis

Book Gift to Parish Families

Taize Prayer

February 27

7 pm | Church

Pope Francis A Lenten Message

“ Dear brothers and sisters, may this Lenten season find the whole Church ready to bear witness to all those who live in material, moral and spiritual destitution the Gospel message of the merciful love of God our Father, who is ready to embrace everyone in Christ. We can do this to the extent that we imitate Christ who became poor and enriched us by his poverty. Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt.

May the Holy Spirit, through whom we are “as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything” (2 Cor 6:10), sustain us in our resolutions and increase our concern and responsibility for human destitution, so that we can become merciful and act with mercy. In expressing this hope, I likewise pray that each individual member of the faithful and every Church community will undertake a fruitful Lenten journey. I ask all of you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you safe.

- Given in Rome, Lent 2014



Photos (Clockwise): Lent decor on the ambo; A family listens to the Gospel (By Oscar McNally); A youth proclaims the Word; Deacon Gene anoints a woman with ashes; A table is prepared with ashes for distribution. Photos and design by Charles Ramirez.



Wake Up the World!

The Year of Consecrated Life 2015

On the last Friday in January of 2014, Pope Francis stated that the next liturgical year will be dedicated to those who live in religious communities: professed brothers and sisters. It will be a Year for Consecrated Life. The theme of this year is, "Wake Up the World!" The church celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican Council II in these next three years. Each of the three years, major documents were released by the Council Fathers. The year 2015 will mark the anniversary of the release of the document entitled "Lumen Gentium," which literally means "Light of the World." The document contains an entire section on the life of consecrated men and women.

Through baptism, we are all called to a life of holiness. Each of us has a vocation. Each year the Church celebrates and honors men and women in religious communities with the World Day for Consecrated Life, and in a special way in this Year of Consecrated Life called for

by Pope Francis. On this day, we give thanks for the women and men who have committed their lives to living and working in and through a religious community. They do so much good in the world. As the Holy Father has said, "the consecrated life appears to us just as it really is: a gift of God!"

Each of us, most likely, has had acquaintances that were religious sisters or brothers. They might have been a grade school teacher or someone who has shared the faith with us in a special way. This coming year, take time to ask a young person if he or she has thought about a vocation as a professed sister or a professed brother. Often that is how a vocation in church ministry begins, by someone inviting and asking.

We take this coming year to personally thank Sr. Rose, Sr. Linda Marie, and all consecrated religious for their years of faithful service to the church and to invite others to answer the call.

A Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life

O God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to pursue lives of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you thanks for these courageous witnesses of Faith and models of inspiration. Their pursuit of holy lives teaches us to make a more perfect offering of ourselves to you. Continue to enrich your Church by calling forth sons and daughters who, having found the pearl of great price, treasure the Kingdom of Heaven above all things.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Congratulations

St. Francis of Assisi Community *35 Years of Discipleship*



Happy anniversary and congratulations to all our parish families!

May the Lord bless us and keep us!
May his face shine upon us!
May we rejoice with the Lord in his unfathomable gifts to us all the days of our lives!

We entrust our next 35 years into the loving hands of our patron, St. Francis of Assisi. Amen.

What Spiritual *Direction* Are You On?

An Interview with Spiritual Director Jim LoPresti

By Charles Ramirez

St. Francis parishioners: Do you know how blessed you are? Many parishes do not offer spiritual direction as we do at St. Francis of Assisi. During our 35th Anniversary year, we want to introduce and highlight Spiritual Direction. We hope you will utilize this resource on your journey to build a closer relationship with God. I sat down with our Spiritual Director, Jim LoPresti as he described what spiritual direction means.

Thanks for meeting with me, Jim. Spiritual Direction is an integral part of our Catholic Tradition, but many parishioners do not even know what we are referring to when we use these words. Let's start with a basic question: What is spiritual direction?

I like to describe spiritual direction as the process of one person walking with another on his or her spiritual journey to grow in intimacy with God. The spiritual director serves as a friend who prays, listens, shares, and supports the directee as he or she explores their relationship with God. We are all on this spiritual journey to grow deeper in faith and respond to God's call to better love and serve others.

Quick Bit: Sharing your spiritual journey with a companion who will help you build a closer relationship with God.

Many Christians may feel called to this companionship on their spiritual journey. Who is a candidate to receive spiritual direction?

Some reasons why people seek spiritual direction arise from a sense that they would like to have a closer relationship with God. It could be someone who has experienced the loss of a loved one or perhaps it is someone who feels a restlessness in their life or is conflicted. Some have come to spiritual direction because they want to know more about the mystical side of their faith. A trained spiritual director can walk with them, listen for the movement of the Holy Spirit, and hold them accountable for exercising the disciplines and practices of the spiritual life.

Quick Bit: People seek spiritual direction for numerous reasons, yet all want to deepen their relationship with God.

Many different types of people exist, all with different spiritualities. How does one find a spiritual director? What is the process?

Finding a spiritual director is a very personal and spiritual quest. I recommend that a person who seeks a spiritual director consider the names of several candidates to interview. You can obtain names from priests, sisters, friends, the-



ology schools, institutes, retreat centers, St. Peter Upon the Water, the Archdiocese of San Antonio, or parish offices.

Quick Bit: Consider several names of spiritual directors to interview before making a decision.

Many parishes do not have spiritual direction offered as we do at St. Francis of Assisi. How does spiritual direction contribute to the parish mission of discipleship?

When one has a more intimate relationship with God, a strong prayer life, a clearer sense of what God is calling you to do and be, they become more aware of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. They then desire to do God's will in their lives and part of that is serving as Christ commanded. In serving, then, we build community and follow Jesus' commandment, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (John 14: 34).

Quick Bit: A more intimate relationship with God leads one to identify as a disciple of Jesus Christ in service.

Jim's Recommendations

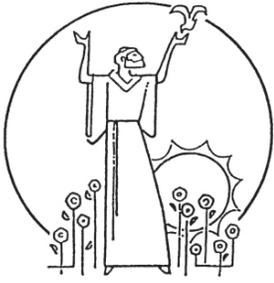
Want to learn more? Jim recommends these books to deepen your knowledge of spiritual direction.

Spiritual Direction by Henri Nouwen

The Practice of Spiritual Direction
William A. Barry & William J. Connolly

The Holy Longing by Ronald Rolheiser





St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

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Liturgy Schedule

Weekends

Saturday | 5:00 pm
Sunday | 8:30 am | 11:15 am
5:00 pm

Weekdays

Mon | Tue | Thur | 8:30 am
Wed | 6:00 pm
Fri | 6:30 am

Liturgy of the Word & Communion Service

Monday - Thursday | 6:30 am

Reconciliation

Sat. | 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm
and by appointment.

Save the Date

- Feb. 17 Mardi Gras Party
- Feb. 18 Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 21–22 Archbishop's Appeal Weekend
- Feb. 27 Taize Prayer Service
- Feb. 28–Mar. 1 Lenten Mission Begins
- Mar. 4 Lenten Penance Service
- Mar. 8 Adult Confirmation Class Begins
- Apr. 5 Easter Sunday
- Apr. 11 Women's Council Style Show
- Apr. 18 Men's Club Golf Tournament
- Apr. 30–May 1 Women's ACTS Retreat
- May 9 Casino Night
- May 31 Summer Family Ice Cream Social

Photo: Deacon Jim Hewson baptizes a child during Mass, a distinct tradition of the parish that allows the community to witness and welcome new members of our faith.

Photo by Charles Ramirez.