

THE *Spirit* OF ST. FRANCIS NEWSLETTER



Fall
2014

Your Official News Source for St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, San Antonio, Texas

LET'S FESTIVAL! A CELEBRATION OF FAITH AND COMMUNITY

Ready? Set? Let's festival! Our community stirs with energy as October 5th approaches, a day that promises to be the best parish festival yet! We join together annually on the first Sunday in October to celebrate our patron, St. Francis of Assisi, and to renew ourselves as a community of disciples through sharing and participation.

Festival chairpersons Irma and Tony Flores are excited for the annual event.

"I love seeing the community come together and enjoy themselves on a Sunday afternoon," Irma said. "It's a great opportunity for parishioners to get together and have fun. I look forward to seeing all the happy faces and the kids running around. It's like they just can't get enough of the fun!"

Parishioner Joanie Meaney has attended the festival for years and said she looks forward to it all year.

"It's so much fun to have the whole community come together and play," said Joanie. "It's the community, the kids, it's the blessing of the animals, it's the food, the drinks, the music, the cake walk! Just everything about it is such a riot and I love it! It's just a wonderful celebration!"

Parishioner Bob Bonner has volunteered his time for years to the preparation and the successful completion of the festival and he has seen the improvements made each year.

"The biggest improvement of the festival this year is that it is designed more for the kids," said Bob. "The kids are always doing something and they can hang around all day. You got kids with ice cream or on the pony ride, you got dad buying a beer, and mom at the cake walk. You really have something for everyone in the family!"

Parishioner Karla Clarady has attended the festival with her children for a few years and attests to the amount of fun they have.

"My kids love the pony rides and the petting zoo! They have a great time," Karla said. "And, I know this might sound corny, but I really just look forward to hanging out with all my friends and seeing everyone having fun."

While the festival provides fun and entertainment for the entire family, many don't know that the festival gives the parish the greatest financial boost all year. The highest profit margin for the parish festival always comes from the raffle ticket sales.

Parishioner Marilyn Murphy has volunteered for the festival in the past and said that the festival is the main fundraiser for the year whose proceeds all go to the parish itself.

"What continues to interest me is that, as much as we do for many different organizations throughout the year

See **FESTIVAL** on page 4



Faith, fun, and balloon hats! Get your own hat and a cold drink on Oct. 5th.

In this Issue

- 02 | Pastor's Fall Letter
- 03 | Our Parish Experience
- 04 | Parish Festival Continued
- 06 | Catechesis Today

The Season of Welcome

AN INVITATION TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS



The thought of autumn is a wonderful thought as we still deal with the heat of August and September in South Texas! Cooler days and many activities are ahead. The family vacations of summer, the longer days, and the memories of the past spring begin to fade and a new energy comes into us as school begins and life at St. Francis takes on many more dimensions. In a very real way this is our new year! Our programs and activities pick up the pace and we look forward with new founded hope.

Our Archbishop Gustavo has declared this fall to be a Season of Welcome throughout the Archdiocese of San Antonio. What he means is that

it's time to invite people to come and join us in our faith journey by coming to Mass with us and experiencing our liturgy and prayer. At St. Francis of Assisi, we started this on the weekend of September 13 and 14 with a Welcome Sunday. My hope is that this is just the beginning of continuing the tradition of St. Francis of Assisi Church as a place of welcome for all who are seeking in their personal and spiritual lives.

Maybe you know someone — a friend, colleague, neighbor, or family member — who is a seeker. Maybe they haven't gone to church in a long time. Maybe they're not sure how to begin with faith in their lives. Maybe there is an old hurt or old doubt that plagues them. People have a lot of reasons why they don't go to church. But that doesn't mean they don't need church in their lives! We all yearn for

a deeper connection in life. We are all looking to be peacefully at home with our God at the end of the day.

So I ask you to invite someone to come with you on a Sunday sometime this fall. No hard sell! No making people feel uncomfortable to do things they don't want to do. Just the simple invitation that Jesus used when He called people: "Come and see." Ask them simply to come with you. They don't have to be alone. Take them to breakfast or lunch afterwards. Don't judge why they aren't coming to church more regularly. Simply invite them, and let the Holy Spirit touch them. They just might surprise you and say yes!

May God be with you and your families as we begin a new chapter of hope for all who seek to belong in our St. Francis of Assisi Community.

- Fr. Larry



A PRAYER TO ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

O beloved St. Francis,
gentle and poor, your obedience to
God and your simple, deep love for all
God's creatures led you to the heights
of heavenly perfection and turned
many hearts to follow God's will.
Now, in our day, pray also for us, in
our ministry to the many who come
here searching for peace and intercede
for us as we come before the Lord
with our special requests. Amen.

The *Spirit* of St. Francis NEWSLETTER

Very Rev. Larry Christian

Pastor

Rose Kruppa, CDP

Chief Editor and Staff Writer

Charles T. Ramirez

Layout Designer and Writer

Cedar Joiner

Chief Publication Consultant

Please send comments, questions, and creative ideas for future publications to Charles at cramirez@sfasat.org.

Our Parish Experience

H O N E S T W O R D S F R O M O U R P A R I S H I O N E R S

“The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.”

- Pope Francis

“Everyone here is so welcoming. The smiles I am greeted with, the choice of music and the singing by the people in the pews, the great preaching that motivates me to want to ACT on what the readings suggest to me, and the experience of receiving the Eucharist make this the BEST Sunday experience I could possibly have.”

“My family WANTS to come to church each Sunday. We look forward to seeing our friends and to making new friends. Hardly a Sunday goes by when we don’t see a new family that we’d like to get to know.”

“When the kids are more active than I can handle, I am so grateful for the nursery! The women there are so good with the children!”

These quotes are from real people, describing a real experience of church. This is what the Season of Welcome is all about. How can we keep from inviting others to be a part of our community experience of God’s abundant and profound love? All that’s left is for us to ACT in extending the invitation. Who do you know that is just waiting for that *invitation*?



“There is such attention to every detail, on the part of all who serve or lead in the Sunday liturgy. The times of silence, the way the lectors proclaim the Word, the joy in the faces of those who are Communion ministers, the reverence—everything draws me to pray more deeply. Usually the last song is one that I seem to sing all week.”

“Social Sunday and Pancake Breakfast are two of our favorite Sunday’s of the month! We are always happy to have a place to go to visit and to spend some family time with other families.”





FESTIVAL from page 1

as a parish community, the festival is really the only major fundraiser that we do for the parish itself,” Marilyn said. “We have a very generous community that do a lot of things for Mobile Loaves and Fishes, Living Water International, Habitat for Humanity; but this is the one time where we can actually have fun raising money for the parish itself to continue the variety of programs that we offer.”

Parish council member, Bill Thorpe, said that the festival gives visitors a great chance to meet parishioners outside of Mass.

“The festival is a relaxed opportunity to bring in other friends and folks who might not feel comfortable, at least initially, attending a Mass or some other event,” said Bill. “The festival allows them to come and meet others in



the parish in a more social setting to build a comfort level and maybe get involved in something that is more worship-based.”

The festival is a chance for parishioners to exemplify the friendly, welcoming spirit of the community. Parishioner Mary Alice Ezzell said that parishioners should always be ready to welcome the stranger.

“You never know if the person that I’ve just met is new to the church, not feeling a part of the parish, not feeling at home,” said Mary Alice, “and if I can help make them feel just a little more part of community, then my job is done. If I can bring warmth and acceptance and love to one person because I am so comfortable there, then that’s what it’s all about.”

Story by Charles T. Ramirez





Go and Make Disciples of All Nations

CATECHESIS IN TODAY'S WORLD

By Charles T. Ramirez

"The catechist is one who guards the memory of God and who knows how to awaken it in others." Pope Francis said these profound words to catechists from around the world at the International Congress on Catechesis in Vatican City.

As the new academic year begins, catechists are back in their classrooms at St. Francis of Assisi, excited to form the youngest of our parishioners in their faith. But what exactly does this word *catechesis* mean today? How does it transcend our youth who prepare for sacraments, to our adults on different stages of their faith journey?

Derived from the Greek word *katechesis*, catechesis literally means "oral instruction." Strictly speak-

ing, modern usage of the word refers to the religious instruction given to a person in preparation for Christian sacraments of initiation. However, when one understands the nature of catechesis, it is evident that formation does not stop after the sacrament of confirmation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts catechesis in perspective when it says that "at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth...and to catechize is to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person" (CCC 426).

Our parish catechists understand this basic foundation of their ministry

and realize that Christ is the center of all their instruction, curriculum, and activities. Children desire to meet, befriend, and model after Jesus Christ, a yearning that catechists fill through the retelling of stories about Jesus in scripture. They learn who He is as the Son of God and Son of Man.

Pope Francis told catechists of the world that they won't see the results of their work immediately, but the seeds of faith will have been planted. "Catechesis is a pillar for education in faith," Pope Francis said. "Even though at times it may be difficult, it is necessary to work hard and make efforts for which you don't always see the results you hoped for. Educating in faith is good! It is per-



haps the best legacy we can give!”

With an acute understanding of catechesis, it becomes clear that faith formation is a life-long process, an organic relationship with Jesus Christ that transforms with us as we grow older and mature spiritually. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that the “catechesis of children, young people, *and* adults aims at teaching them to meditate on the Word of God in personal prayer, practicing it in liturgical prayer, and internalizing it at all times in order to bear fruit in a new life” (CCC 2688).

As a microcosm of the universal Church, St. Francis of Assisi offers faith formation opportunities for people of all ages in different stages of their voyage of faith. From pre-kindergarten through high school, and into adulthood, faith formation is the parish’s priority—to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ more each day.

Christ calls all His disciples to be catechists. He calls some to the classroom to teach children about His love and mercy, to give them a

strong foundation on which to continue their journey of faith in the world; He calls some to guide their peers, to lead adult spiritual groups, like bible studies, Men’s Spirituality, or Women in the Spirit; and He calls some to participate in these and other faith formation opportunities, like the ACTS retreats and Theology Café, in order to model the true nature of catechesis as ongoing. Pope Francis affirms that catechesis is a vocation.

“Catechesis is a vocation: ‘being’ a catechist, this is the vocation, not ‘working’ as a catechist,” Pope Francis said. “Be careful: I have not said to do the work of a catechist, but rather to *be* one, because it involves all your life. It means guiding towards the encounter with Jesus with words and with life, with your witness. I like to recall the words of St. Francis of Assisi to his friars: ‘Always preach the Gospel, and if necessary, use words,’ so that people may see the Gospel in your lives. We must begin with Christ and this love He gives us.”





St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

4201 De Zavala Road
San Antonio, TX 78249
(210) 492-4600 | www.sfasat.org

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

SAN ANTONIO, TX
PERMIT NO. 775



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

Save the Date

- Oct. 3 Festival Dance
- Oct. 5 Parish Festival
- Oct. 6 Grieving with Hope
(Continues Oct. 13, 20, 27)
- Oct. 11 Life Beyond Divorce
(Continues Oct. 18, 25, Nov. 1)
- Oct. 16-19 Women's ACTS Retreat
- Oct. 25 UTSA Football Game
- Nov. 1-2 Holiday Bazaar
- Dec. 5 Taize Prayer Service
- Dec. 6 Christmas in Assisi
Dinner Dance
- Dec. 10 Advent Penance Service
- Dec. 17 Advent Christmas Concert

Photo: A young parishioner dribbles the soccer ball at CYO practice on the St. Francis of Assisi field. Photo by Charles Ramirez.