

THE *Spirit* OF ST. FRANCIS NEWSLETTER



March
2014

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

Salt of the Earth, *Light* of the World:

The Westerman Family Ministry

By Charles T. Ramirez

Matt and Betsy Westerman have a secret. It is a secret formula to building a close family life and a strong relationship with God. Along with their daughters, Grace and Hope, Matt and Betsy volunteer one hour each Sunday to teach kindergartners in our elementary faith formation ministry. To serve together as a family is a unique rarity that the Westermans find incredibly beneficial for their relationship with each other and with Jesus Christ.

Matt testifies that their time teaching is unlike any other part of their week. "There is no way you can be thinking about work or thinking about something else for that hour," says Matt. "It's got nothing to do with my work or [my daughters'] school—it's a completely separate environment for an hour a week."

Betsy agrees that their time in ministry is more similar to a retreat than actual work. "Last week, we all had a crazy week," she begins. "We were so busy, and when we woke up on Sunday morning, there wasn't a happy person at our house. But we knew that we had to go teach and then, by the end of our class, we were just so refreshed and renewed."

Thirteen-year-old Hope agrees that this experience offers a revitalizing perspective on life. "It's fun," Hope says, "You get to know the kids, teach them, and learn with them. We get to learn from the kids how to be free-spirited and not so stressed."

In addition to the personal joy re-



Matt, Betsy, and Grace Westerman explain Christ's forgiveness to kindergartens.

ceived during their hour teaching, a communal, familial renewal also takes place. Fifteen-year-old Grace affirms the increase in family time together. "We definitely spend more time together," Grace says, "because when we don't have something that we all do together, then we will separate and all do different things."

Matt enjoys the further commonality shared with his daughters. "We will actually talk about what we think we should do with the class this weekend. And then after the class, we will talk about how we think it went, or how we could have done something differently," Matt says. "And so, it keeps us talking,

especially when opportunities like that are becoming fewer."

Betsy states that participating in

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Father Larry's *Reflection*



Lent is a special season of preparation, cleansing, and renewal for our lives of faith. It is a time of preparation as we accompany

those who are getting ready for baptism, confirmation, and communion in the Easter sacraments. It is a time of cleansing as we realize that we are in need of God's healing and mercy because of our sins. And it is a time of renewal as we are washed in God's generous mercy and love, offering that same mercy and love to others.

This year in our parish during the Lenten Season we want to focus on the spirituality of our Patron Saint, St. Francis of Assisi. He is a man who went through a profound conversion in his young adult life. Embracing simplicity of life, he set about rebuilding the

Church of Jesus Christ through humble service, a sense of wonder, a willingness to embrace those left out, offering himself as a peacemaker, being part of a community, a deep devotion to the Liturgy, and ultimately through a deep sense of union with the sufferings of Christ for the salvation of the world. Though he is certainly a great saint and a monumental personality, his way of life and the example he has given is a sign of the calling of every Christian!

Pope Francis has embraced this same sense of simplicity, service, love, peacemaking, and even of suffering for the salvation of the world. He chose the papal name, "Francis," precisely in order to point the Church in the direction of living the Christian life after the manner of St. Francis of Assisi. In our Lenten journey this year, let's utilize the example of the great St. Francis to help us grow closer to Christ and bring a joyful message of good news to the world!

Holy Week at St. Francis

April 13 - 20, 2014

Palm Sunday

Saturday 5:00 pm

Sunday 8:30 am, 11:15 am, 5:00 pm

Monday - Wednesday

6:30 am Liturgy of the Word
& Communion

8:30 am Mass, 6:30 pm Mass

Holy Thursday

7:00 pm Mass of the Last Supper

Good Friday

3:00 pm Living Stations of the Cross

7:00 pm Liturgy of the Word
& Communion

Holy Saturday

8:30 pm Easter Vigil Mass

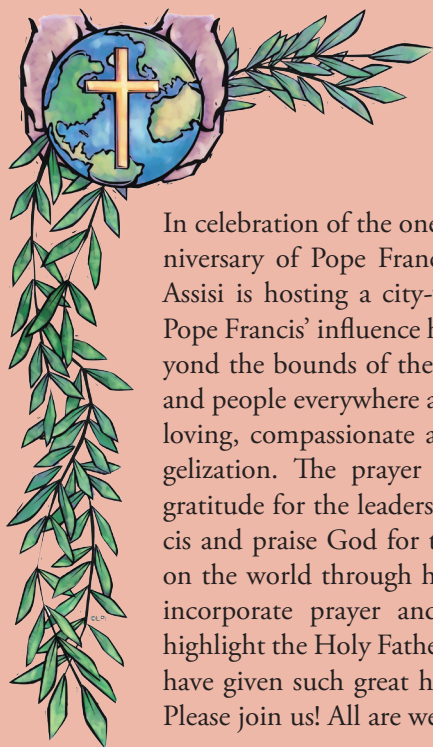
Easter Sunday

8:30 am Mass in Main Church

8:30 am Mass in Henke Hall

11:15 am Mass in Main Church

11:15 Mass in Henke Hall



Celebrating Pope Francis

In celebration of the one-year election anniversary of Pope Francis, St. Francis of Assisi is hosting a city-wide prayer vigil. Pope Francis' influence has reached far beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church and people everywhere are attracted to his loving, compassionate approach to evangelization. The prayer vigil will express gratitude for the leadership of Pope Francis and praise God for the gifts bestowed on the world through him. The vigil will incorporate prayer and song, and will highlight the Holy Father's reflections that have given such great hope to the world. Please join us! All are welcome!

What

Prayer Vigil Celebrating
the Election Anniversary of
Pope Francis

When

March 12, 2014
at 7:00 pm

Where

St. Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church

The *Spirit* of St. Francis NEWSLETTER

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



Where *Charity* and *Love* Prevail:



The Men's Club Annual Golf Tournament and Casino Night

By Charles T. Ramirez

The St. Francis of Assisi Men's Club eagerly gears up for two of their major annual spring fundraisers—the 3rd Annual Golf Tournament on April 26 and the 10th Annual Casino Night on May 3. These two events have become staples of the community, promoting unity and solidarity among attendees and beneficiaries alike.

Men's Club President Randy Heinz is excited for the upcoming events. Beginning the Golf Tournament three years ago, Randy encourages anyone who wants to join to sign up. "I'm trying to use the golf tournament as a kind of fellowship," says Randy, "just to get out and come together, go out to play and have some fun." The golf tournament's impact literally stretches into the future of the church because all funds raised go to college scholarships for active, involved teens of the parish. Since its inception, the golf tournament has awarded five \$1000 scholarships to parish teens.

Men's Club member and Building Committee President Ken Koch agrees that these two events strengthen the community. "The camaraderie we have is one thing, but the events really fulfill one of the three objectives of the Men's Club and that's outreach," says Ken. "We started Casino Night to see how we could help our sister parish, Immaculate Conception, and the youth ministry on their mission trip to Eagle Pass. Then we added Mobile Loaves and Fishes as



Parishioners enjoy the Golf Tournament and Casino Night every year.

Casino Night continued to grow." St. Francis of Assisi has also more recently added St. Timothy Catholic Church as a second sister parish who benefits from this event.

Rev. Bill Collins, pastor of Immaculate Conception, says the inter-parish partnership is a blessing from God. "The St. Francis of Assisi Casino Night is huge for us," says Father Bill. "After our own parish festival, the funds received from the St. Francis of Assisi Casino Night is our biggest income every year."

Rev. Mike DeGerolami, pastor of St. Timothy Catholic Church, says that the funds help in ways many people might not know. "We use the money for supplies in our religious education program to teach our youth, and also to literally feed the poor with our subsidized St. Vincent de Paul Society here at the parish," says Father Mike. "I value the finan-

"I value the financial help, but more importantly, I value the relationship building where your people get to know our people."

cial help, but more importantly, I value the relationship building where your people get to know our people and we bridge the gap between the two sides of San Antonio, so to speak."

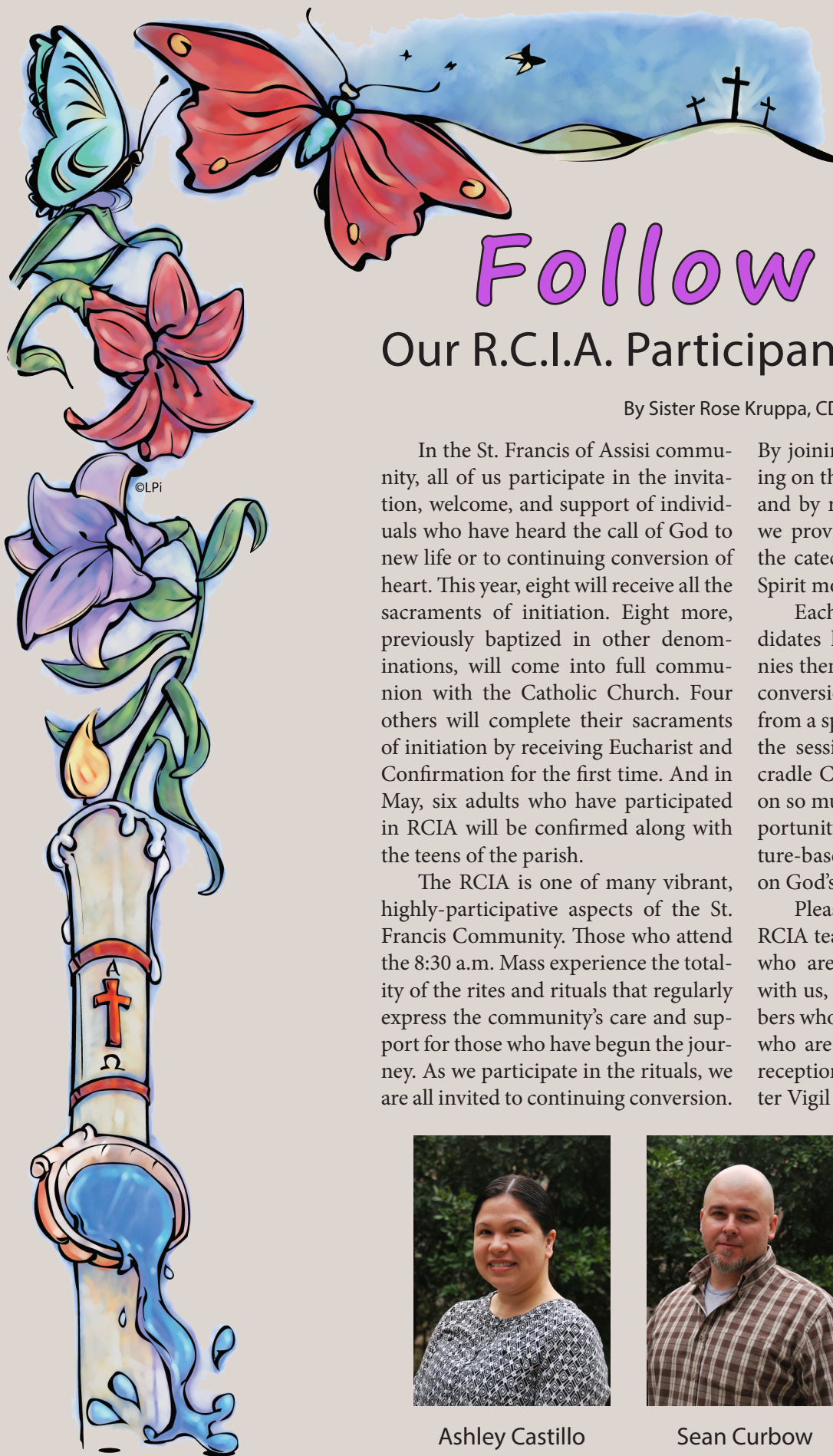
The charity involved with the Golf Tournament and Casino Night are the driving forces behind the Men's Club initiatives. "Even if you don't play golf, but you want to sponsor a hole," says Randy, "we will put your name or name of your business out there to show that you sponsor the parish."

Jerry Kinney, Master of Ceremonies for the post-tournament trophy presentation, says that golf offers a unique opportunity for people to come together. "Golf gives you a chance to meet people on a different level, in a different atmosphere," says Jerry. "There are probably a lot of people who don't join because

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From left to right: An attendee wins at a slot machine. The Golf Tournament attracts people of all ages. Randy Heinz presents a check to parishioners of St. Timothy Catholic Church.



Follow Me

Our R.C.I.A. Participants 2013-2014

By Sister Rose Kruppa, CDP

In the St. Francis of Assisi community, all of us participate in the invitation, welcome, and support of individuals who have heard the call of God to new life or to continuing conversion of heart. This year, eight will receive all the sacraments of initiation. Eight more, previously baptized in other denominations, will come into full communion with the Catholic Church. Four others will complete their sacraments of initiation by receiving Eucharist and Confirmation for the first time. And in May, six adults who have participated in RCIA will be confirmed along with the teens of the parish.

The RCIA is one of many vibrant, highly-participative aspects of the St. Francis Community. Those who attend the 8:30 a.m. Mass experience the totality of the rites and rituals that regularly express the community's care and support for those who have begun the journey. As we participate in the rituals, we are all invited to continuing conversion.

By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the Paschal Mystery and by renewing our own conversion, we provide an example that will help the catechumens to listen to the Holy Spirit more generously.

Each of the catechumens and candidates has a sponsor who accompanies them on their journey of faith and conversion. Many also receive support from a spouse or fiancé who also attend the sessions and often tell us that as cradle Catholics, they have missed out on so much and are grateful for the opportunity to learn to pray, to do Scripture-based faith sharing, and to reflect on God's numerous calls to serve.

Please join us in praying for our RCIA team of ten, the two seminarians who are doing their "apprenticeship" with us, the sponsors and family members who provide support, and all those who are wholeheartedly preparing for reception of the sacraments at the Easter Vigil on April 19.



Ashley Castillo
Catechumen



Sean Curbow
Catechumen



Evelyn Delgado
Catechumen



Emily Saldivar
Catechumen



Lauren George
Catechumen



Christin Boyd
Catechumen



Rachel Delgado
Catechumen



Hattie Delgado
Catechumen



Josie Carrizales
Candidate



Matthew Sanderson
Profession of Faith



Breanna Tewalt
Profession of Faith



Thomas Johnson
Profession of Faith



Lynda Lewis
Profession of Faith



Jodie Sands
Profession of Faith



Katrina Thompson
Profession of Faith



James Friend
Profession of Faith



Mark A. Caldera
Confirmation



Amanda Garcia
Confirmation



Doug Castillo
Confirmation



Denise Gomez
Confirmation



Ricky Hernandez
Confirmation



Adam Madrid
Confirmation

Not Pictured:
Sandra Teniente
Candidate
Gilma Castro
Candidate
Yolanda Ojeda
Candidate
Bill Watkins
Profession of Faith



From left: Grace, Betsy, and Hope review public safety guidelines with their class. Below: Matt helps children prepare for class. Betsy instructs the class on God's mercy.

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faith formation simultaneously grows her family more closely together while solidifying their knowledge of the Catholic faith. She also says that serving in ministry connects her more closely to the community and to the Gospel at Mass. "When we are just attending Mass," Betsy says, "we come, we attend Mass, we leave, and we are right back in the world. I find that with faith formation, [the family] is talking about the lesson, or talking about something cute a student did in class that will lead us back to the lesson."

Matt also sees this particular advantage of the ministry. "These lessons are very simple, obviously because they are

for kindergartens, but we don't pay attention to the simple things sometimes," Matt says. "I probably hadn't really talked about the Ten Commandments since I was in high school, and that was an interesting conversation to have with the family. It really keeps us talking."

Betsy says that she, Grace, and Hope volunteer to help with Vacation Bible School each year, and excitedly adds, "And because of working as a family together in faith formation, Matt is going to take a week off of work and come volunteer at VBS with us this year."

Matt recounts, "The three of them have been involved in VBS for about 7 or 8 years now. First with the girls at-

tending it, then with Betsy volunteering, and now with the girls working as crew leaders. I have always kind of missed out on that, so I am excited that this will be my first year."

Betsy jokingly adds, "And that's because he realizes that the kids aren't as scary now that he's done faith formation!"

It's not always easy to decide to volunteer your time to a ministry. However, Matt states that it must be a consciously-applied effort. "I know everybody is busy. We are busy, the girls are busy, but it is a valuable part of the week." Matt says. "You can easily justify why you don't have time to do this. I would have no problem getting somebody to believe that we don't have time to do this. But if you can carve a little bit of time out, maybe it's easier than you think. You just have to apply a little energy to it."

Though many might feel intimidated by the thought of teaching a class, thorough catechist training is provided. "And it's really not difficult," continues Betsy. "Maybe the first few weeks are uncomfortable because of the newness of the ministry, but that feeling quickly transforms into a great desire to be there every Sunday."

To participate in this dynamic ministry as a catechist, please contact Miriam Flores, Elementary Faith Formation Coordinator at 210. 492. 4600.



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they are not specifically asked. But if they just came out, they would be absolutely amazed at the other people they meet and might make some lasting experiences."

Randy attests that there is no pressure for newcomers to the game of golf. "I really don't want any pressure involved. I just want people to come out and enjoy the group," says Randy. "It's just a chance to share other treasures that you have. Maybe there can be a way to figure out how to use other talents and abilities toward other goals that the church may have."



Dealers prepare gaming cards.

Attendees of this year's Casino Night do not need to be professional card players to have a great time. "The dealers are very helpful and they tend to instruct you at each game," says Ken. "But there are many things to do there. Not everyone plays the game tables. There is a lot of socialization that goes on too, and we have a very active live and silent auction."

A \$45.00 ticket will get each individual \$1,000 in gaming chips, 2 adult beverages, and a plentiful variety of delectable, satisfying hors d'oeuvres. Attendees will enjoy the excitement of the environment. "I like seeing the people having fun at the gaming tables," says Randy. "I like seeing them relaxing and enjoying the night."

For more information on the Golf Tournament, Casino Night, or the Men's Club, contact Randy Heinz at randyheinz57@gmail.com.

Women's ACTS

Day of Renewal



By Charles T. Ramirez

As spring approaches and renews nature with life, our parish women prepare for a spiritual renewal of their own as the Women's ACTS Day of Renewal retreat approaches on April 5 for all women who have attended an ACTS retreat at our parish. For those interested in the upcoming Women's ACTS retreat, it will be on May 1 - 4.

Though the ACTS Retreat movement has animated parishes across the Archdiocese, many people still have yet to experience the joy and transformation that the retreat offers. This year's retreat director, Jan Knape, recalls her first retreat. "When I went on my first ACTS retreat," says Jan, "I knew no one. I was very anxious, very apprehensive; but it changed my life. The love of Jesus absolutely lit up my world and changed my relationship to my husband, my children, and my friends. It was an amazing experience that continues to touch my life."

Parishioner Laurie Phillips, who will be the presenter on the ACTS Day of Renewal, agrees with Jan and says women considering the next ACTS retreat need only attend with an open heart. "Go with no expectation except an open heart and listen to God speak to you," says Laurie, "and if you are doubting at all if you are worthy or loved, you will walk away knowing truly who you are as a beloved daughter of God."

Julia McCormick attests to the undeniable transformative energy upon returning from the retreat. "There is this fire that just burns inside of you," says Julia, "and after the retreat, you can't let it sit, you can't be complacent anymore. It is like the Holy Spirit is just too much!"

The ACTS Day of Renewal is a day meant to compliment the ACTS retreat. As both the initiator of this event and the speaker, Laurie is excited for the April 5th event. "The Day of Renewal takes women back to their first retreat and how they felt on Sunday when they returned," says Laurie. "So that when they come to this Day of Renewal, they leave with that fire lit again, the excitement, the joy that Jesus loves them. It rekindles the flame within the community."

Julia agrees that the Day of Renewal will speak to the hearts of all women who have experienced an ACTS Retreat. "The day incorporates some of the things that you experienced on your ACTS retreat and it's a reconnection with people that you've met or people you have never met, but you still have that commonality."

Laurie says that the connection between past retreatants is amazing. "When you have been on an ACTS retreat and you know someone else who has been on an ACTS retreat," says Laurie, "there is that immediate connection with that person. So when you put 300 women in a room that have had their personal experiences of that weekend, there is something inspiring that rekindles that flame to go forth."

Women interested in attending the Women's ACTS Retreat on May 1-4 or the ACTS Day of Renewal on April 5th can find registration forms online at www.sfasat.org under the organizations tab. For more information, please contact Laurie Phillips at laphillip47@yahoo.com or 210. 912. 6890.



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Save the Date

Mar 12 Pope Francis' Election Celebration

Mar 16-19 Lenten Parish Mission

Mar 19 Lenten Reconciliation Service

Mar 27-30 Teen ACTS Retreat

Apr. 5 Women's ACTS Day of Renewal

Apr. 19 RCIA Easter Vigil Retreat

Apr. 20 Easter Sunday

Apr. 26 Men's Club Golf Tournament

May 1-4 Women's ACTS Retreat

May 3 Casino Night

May 21 Sacrament of Confirmation

Jun. 1 Women's Council Ice Cream Social

Jun. 16-20 Vacation Bible School

Aug. 2 St. Francis of Assisi Parish Dance

Aug. 2-9 Living Water Mission Trip

Liturgy Schedule

Weekends

Saturday - 5:00 pm

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

Weekdays During Lent

Monday - Thursday

8:30 am | 6:30 pm

Friday 6:30 am | 8:30 am

Liturgy of the Word & Communion Service

Monday - Thursday 6:30 am

Reconciliation

Sat. | 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm