



# Saint Monica Messenger

April 2017 Issue Forty One

Bringing the Good News of the Parish to You



*Easter Message*  
from Fr. Amar Nagothu MSFS

## Given a New Life

Easter lilies decorate our homes and churches during Easter. You know, they symbolize Christ's resurrection. All through the winter these flowers lay buried in the cold frozen earth; but with the spring sunshine, showers and breezes, these lilies come alive, break through the ground and bloom. Likewise, Jesus, buried under the earth, rose again to new life; no ground could hold him. It is a historical fact that the risen Jesus radiated his new life in all power and glory wherever he went and to whomsoever he appeared.

The disciples to whom he appeared were suddenly transformed from a band of despairing men into a brigade of daring missionaries. Everywhere they preached the Good news of Christ's resurrection, the power of Easter began to work in people's lives: despair began to give way to hope; darkness gave way to light; hatred began to give way to love and sorrow began to give way to joy.

But there is a question we must answer. If it is really true that Jesus rose from the dead, does it have any relevance for us today after 2000 years, in an age of science and sophisticated technology? Yes, it does. The relevance is that by raising Jesus from the dead God has confirmed that the way of Jesus is the way of life for all in all times. It is to realize that the celebration of Easter calls for a new life in Christ, a *metanoia*. In the words of St. Paul: "Our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The true sign of our sharing in the risen life

of Jesus is that our lives and our behavior must undergo a thorough change.

It is to realize that our baptism involves dying with Christ and rising with Him to new life. The dying with Christ involves letting go of many things that may have become so much a part of our lives, especially the bad habits, bad attitudes, selfishness and self-centeredness.

Easter is the celebration of an empty tomb! Gospel for Easter Mass does not present us with the risen Jesus. Instead, it presents us with the empty tomb! In the gospel an angel says: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen!" (Luke 24: 5-6). This empty tomb means that Jesus is risen and is living among us and we should not look for Him among the dead.

Unfortunately, we humans look for life in things that have no life in them. We turn to money, war, power and using things such as alcohol and drugs. We never find love, joy, peace in these things - instead we become spiritually empty tombs! Yet we continue trying these things in the hope that they will give comfort and peace.

Easter breaks that feverish human cycle of searching for life in things that are dead. Easter calls us to shed the old life and accept new life. Easter calls us to get out of the tomb of selfishness, greed, prejudice, addiction and hostility. Easter invites us to get out of pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony and lust, and to accept a new heart, new birth and a new person. You and I get a new life after each Easter. Try it for yourself this year. Believe in the "new life", shed the old. Start with yourself, now spread this joy to your family, to your friend, to your workplace and to the world. *May God bless you with a Holy and peace-filled Easter!*



**Respect Life 2017** began with the March for Life in St. Augustine on a beautiful hot day! The March started out with the Bishop at Holy Mass, hundreds of people waited in the foyer and outside, to receive Holy Communion. After the Mass we all congregated in front of the stage to hear the Bishop address the crowd and start the March. It was great to see St. Monica Parishioners along with our children from the Cathedral school come out to support the March. It was amazing to be with so many people who believe in Life. We stood strong with over 5000 people at the March 2017.



This year St. Monica started the Spiritual adoption program. We had 106 spiritually adopted babies that we will be praying for during the next 9 months, praying their mothers & fathers will give them the gift of life. When our babies are spiritually born in September, we will have a huge shower that will provide mothers in our community items they need for their babies. The parishioners here at St. Monica gave \$944.00 dollars to Respect life in January to support the Respect Life movement. Thank you St. Monica for your love and prayers for this movement, it is a joy to see it grow here at St. Monica. Thanking God for all your prayers, and for all of you.

Respect Life Coordinators : Nancy Tatum and Silvana Gallo

## Ladies Guild's Baby Shower for St. Gerard Campus

by Ladies Guild

On February 7<sup>th</sup> the Ladies Guild had a very special meeting when we held our annual baby shower for St. Gerard House in Saint Augustine. This meeting is one of the ladies favorites as we shop and plan for the shower by purchasing gifts for the mothers and their new babies. Just like any typical baby shower the tables were decorated, games were played and a delicious cake was shared.



Our special guest was Carolyn Wolff who is the founder and Director of Saint Gerard House. Carolyn gave a very informative talk about how she became inspired to begin the house for needy girls and how God has led her to fulfill the needs of the most vulnerable. Carolyn moved to Florida after many years of doing

missionary work so that she and her husband could become semi-retired. Carolyn visited the Mission of Nombre De Dios and prayed to Our Lady of La Leche for a job that would help to support them in their new home in Florida. Having been missionaries for many years they had no retirement savings but God answered her prayers. God led them to establish and direct this much needed home for young girls who were expecting and had no place to turn for help. Carolyn shared many heart -warming stories of the girls and the many babies that have been saved from abortion. Before Carolyn left we enjoyed filling her van with gifts of baby items to be used in her ministry.



## Les Moineaux Brought Paris to Palatka

St. Monica had the honor of hosting the French Boys Choir, **Les Moineaux** on February 10th during their United States Tour. The boys shared their beautiful musical talents in both French and English under the direction of Francois Olivier. The boys ages ranged from eight to seventeen and were all from Paris, but not from the same school.

We thank all of our families who opened their homes and their hearts to get to know and understand these young talented boys from across the Pond.



## Discernment of Life :

Through the RCIA process, people who are interested in becoming Catholic are able to learn more about the Catholic Church and ask questions that will help them discern if living the Catholic faith is right for them. This is called the inquiry period. If the inquirers decide that they do indeed want to join the Catholic Church, they enter the Catechumenate period where they prepare to receive the Sacraments of Initiation, or if they have already been baptized, they prepare to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church. During Lent, there is a period of Purification and Enlightenment, which is a time of intense prayer as the elect prepare themselves to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord at Easter and to receive the sacraments. Needless to say, the Easter Vigil becomes a very special time in their lives!



L-R: Julie Fazio, Sponsor; Eleanor Brennan, Sponsor; Okeyna and Joe Gibbs, Candidates; Bishop Felipe Estevez, Karen Lee, RCIA Coordinator, Terry Gilmore, Catechumen, Lillian Morgan, Godparent

## Inspiring Life: "Rise and Be Not Afraid"



Preparing us for Easter, Tom Edwards, Lay Evangelist, inspired us on our three nights Mission to "Rise and Be Not Afraid". He reminded us how much the Lord loves each one of us, by preparing a unique place for each of us in His spiritual church. Each of our spots are needed to keep the church strong just like each unique stone was chiseled for Solomon's Temple. And like the Temple's stones, we are still in the quarry being shaped and polished to perfectly fit in our unique spot. Do not compare ourselves to others but to accept how God is molding each of us.

The second night was a harder night. Tom stressed in order to achieve the Joy of the Lord we must strive on through our trials, just like Christ persevered and kept the Faith during His life and crucifixion, in order to achieve the glory of the resurrection.

In same, for us to fulfill God's Will, we too must keep the faith so that He may prepare us for and lead us to where He needs us to be to complete His purpose through us. The difficulty of achieving this Joy is that as humans we may fill inadequate or too weak to handle the turbulent seas our ship may have to sail. But it is in these times, that God is waiting for us to ask for His help. Tom shared the Joy of Christ he has experienced through his journey of evangelization in many parts of the world. Some places were not easy to get to, but once there he would find for whom the Lord had sent him.

The third night Tom explained the powerfulness of a gentle breeze from God. He took us through the old and new testament of how the Lord had spoken so profoundly to individuals with just a small wind in the air, a small whisper in an ear, a small breath upon them. Tom encouraged us to become calm and peaceful so we may listen and be aware of His messages to us; to accept His gifts not only in the big moments of the sacraments, but in the quiet moments too.

Before leaving us, Tom taught many of us the miraculous findings that both scientists and religious have witnessed in the tomb of our Lord. He explained the magnetic force that was present that disabled all the sophisticated equipment of the scientists and was the only energy that could have caused the impression on the shroud of Jesus without burning the fabric. He reported that the officials of the shroud allowed the team of specialists three days to investigate if that was truly our Lord whose impression was on the shroud. How interesting and ironic that sounded, to be given three days to prove Jesus existence.

Yet, Tom was not done sharing with us his love and passion for God, for he continued to prove to us that God loves everything and everything is beautiful. Everything big and small, even the most "useless" cockroach. For he explained that one species of cockroach gives live birth and therefore produces milk. It has been found that this milk from this small insignificant creature has the most protein and balanced milk of all animals, and is hoped by the scientific world that it will have the potential to cure many diseases. So Rise and Be Not Afraid of where God send you or for what purpose, for His Will is Love, Joy and Peace.

## Caring for Life: Angels of Mercy

The women of our Ladies Guild do many things to help both our parish and the people in our community. The Ladies Guild formed the Angels of Mercy, whose focus is the caring for life for those who are not able to have an active part of our parish any longer. The ladies in this group visit the sick in the hospital, those who are homebound, and those who are in our local nursing homes. They bring cheer and occasionally provide entertainment such as pet therapy, book reading, card playing, and manicures. Of course, news from our parish is always welcome. Greeting cards are sent to help them know that they are still remembered and prayed for. Do you know someone who needs an angel in their life?



Once again St. Monica Parish with our local community had a fabulous time at Mardi Gras this year.

There were wonderful decorations to enjoy, trivia games to play, festive names for all, a photo booth to be crazy, and a delicious meal featuring Joyce Miller's Jambalaya and of course all accompanied by Jazz Music played by Tommy Clay.

A vote was held from those who found the baby in the King cakes last year, for our 2017 King and Queen. Our 2016 King Frank Fraize crowned our 2017 Mardi Gras King Joe Iovino and 2016 Queen Lillian Morgan crowned our 2017 Queen Susan Walwik. Proceeds of \$944.09 went toward the restoration of altar.



St. Monica Capital Improvement Campaign began in December 2016, so we are almost half way to the end of the commitments. To date, 52% of our families are helping us to raise the needed funds to restore the historic back altar, place new flooring in the church and to paint and repair the exterior of the Parish Office. As normal, the current expenses are looking higher than expected for the projects.

Currently, the funds donated for each project are:



Altar:	\$20,399.31
Flooring:	\$10,341.97
Office Exterior:	\$ 7,154.72
Unspecified Donations:	<u>\$27,413.55</u>
Current Total:	\$65,309.55

Thank you so much for remembering this collection on the first of each month and using the envelope pictured above. We are all excited for the projects to begin.

### Dates to Remember

April 23 5:00 pm	Downtown Christian Churches Picnic
May 4 8:00 am	Mobile Food Pantry
May 4 4:00—7:00 pm	Chicken Dinner
May 13 8:00 am	Cemetery Clean Up
May 14 9:00 am	First Communion
May 19	Seminarian Visit
May 21 9:00 am	Mass for 2017 Graduates
June 4 9:00 am	Confirmation

St. Monica Presents:



June 13-16, 2017

9 am—Noon

Prek—5th grade

Volunteers need to call Cheryl Carr at 386-328-2900

**St. Monica is at Your Fingertips:** Please stay informed about what is going on at St. Monica by reading our bulletin, friending us on facebook, downloading the MyParish App or checking into our website. There is a google calendar of events of the parish posted on the website and the App. These are also great places to learn more about your faith, to be inspired or to reflect on the daily readings.

