



**St. Monica
Catholic
Church,**
a vibrant
Catholic
Community
along the
St. Johns River
since 1858

*“We are
called to
welcome and
assist all
to the
compassionate
love of Jesus
through the
Eucharist.”*

St. Monica Messenger

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO YOU
SPRING 2018 ISSUE FORTY FIVE

CALLED TO WELCOME & ASSIST ALL ...

Beloved of St. Monica’s Magnificent Parish Community (as Bishop Felipe calls us!),

Thank you for being a vibrant community along the St. Johns River and reaching out to Putnam county and beyond.

Our Pastor emeritus, Father Ignatius Plathanam, once shared a message on our Parish Mission. “...a description of the parish and mission of St. Monica as I saw it when I came as Pastor in 2006 is a loving and welcoming community reaching out to all in love and compassion.” Father Ignatius felt it was an appropriate time to evaluate our parish life experience and redefine our parish mission to set a goal of restructuring the parish for a comprehensive parish renewal that lasts.

Collaborating with the Parish Stewardship Council they came up with a redefined parish mission:

*“To be a Home of Small Christian Communities,
Helping each other to connect life and faith,
And Welcoming all to the compassionate love of Jesus.”*

This mission statement served this community beautifully for the past 12 years. What we in the various ministries in our church have discovered that the mission no longer reflects the whole parish. So we have discovered that we needed to modify our mission statement at the same time we needed to remain faithful to our rich historical and spiritual tradition handed onto us since our parish was established on the St. Johns River in 1858 (the same year of Our Lady of Lourdes). We invited the Pastoral Counsel and all parishioners to offer feedback.

Our mission statement needed to keep the basic tenants of our true mission based on our Catholic faith. “We are called” to bring about the love and compassion of Jesus by welcoming all others to this blessed call from Jesus. We knew we needed to be evangelistic. Prayerfully, we discovered that everything we do that touches every member of this community and those who one day may join us, is the EUCHARIST.

And so our Pastoral Council and I have accepted our mission with the invocation of the Holy Spirit to be:

*“We are called to welcome and assist all
to the compassionate love of Jesus through the Eucharist.”*

Jesus Christ and St. Monica Parish are counting on YOU!

He is Risen Alleluia!
Blessed Easter Season,

Father Ron Moses Camarda



Ansley Hall IV
Fr. Ron Camarda
David Apt
Daniel Fazio
Braden Foster

Sharing the Compassionate Love of Jesus

Jesus Loved the Children

It has been seen and noticed through out the years, that the Parish of St. Monica encourages all to serve the Lord to their best. This January such a tradition continued as Fr. Ron installed Ansley Hall, David Apt, Daniel Fazio and Braden Foster as Altar Servers. Many of parents over the years have been proud to watch their children grow and mature within our Parish as their children get up to read during Masses, lead the Parish in a decade of the rosary

and sing. The parishioners have enjoyed the blossoming talents of those who have sung beautiful solos and played instruments or been allowed to give back to St. Monica during Scouting Projects.

Ansley’s mother, Laura said,

“Thank you St. Monica’s for believing in Ansley, accepting Ansley, training, mentoring, and tutoring Ansley. This loving church even went so far as to purchase special programs for autistic individuals to get Ansley started on his Catholic Christian education and lifestyle. Dreams do come true. We have been blessed.

Thank you, St Monica’s”

Jesus Loved the Poor

St. Monica Parish has never had to look far to find those in need. Blessed are we so that we may bring the Lord’s compassion to them.

Currently those who are hungry can receive food from three different sources at three different times during the month. Bags of food are distributed every Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am to Noon, on the First Thursday of the Month

those in need receive fresh produce and staples from FarmShare and USDA at the Monthly Mobile Pantry and now on the third Wednesday of the month, Catholic Charities’ Back Roads Program brings bags of food for the poor. St. Monica also partners with Putnam Emergency Management to distribute needs for the homeless.

During this past year, mainly from just parishioners, St. Monica has kept the clothes closet full to the point that large scale clothing giveaways have happened monthly.



Every Tues and Thurs 10 am until Noon **St. Monica Pantry**

April 18, May 16, June 20 10am—11 am **Catholic Charities**

April 5, May 3, June 7 8am until the food is gone **Monthly Mobile Pantry**

Accepting the Compassionate Love of Jesus

My Path to Catholicism

By Harvest Mathes, Catechumen

I didn't grow up in a religious household. As a family we only went to church at Christmas and Easter and that was with my grandparents at their church, which felt like we had to go. I also went to church with my next door neighbor when I was younger, but when I got older I realize that the congregation was not very friendly. They were just not godly people in my mind. So at that point in my life I just stop going to church all together. When I was in high school and through college I tried going to different churches and different types of religion and never felt welcome or that I fit in. So I finally just stop going to church all together.

I met my husband Chad in 2003 we had been dating a while when his mom, Pam, talked me into going to church with her. I was a little unsure at first since I had never been to a Catholic Church before, I didn't know what to expect. It was amazing. Everyone at St. John was so nice and welcoming and Father Bob was awesome. I continue to go to church. Then I started thinking about becoming Catholic myself, but after a while I just stop going. After a while Pam ask me to go back stating that I would love Father Ron. So I went one Sunday with her and Fr. Ron was so full of energy and emotions it was the best Mass I had ever experienced. So that day I decide this is where I belong, so I decide to become Catholic. So then I started going to St. Monica for the RICA and everyone here is so nice and welcoming. They make me feel like family and like I belong. I am so excited about being a part of this parish and cannot wait to live my life for our Lord.

Welcome Harvest and Alice!



Harvest Mathes



Alice McInnis

By Stephanie Foster, Confirmandi

My Path Toward Full Faith and Communion in the Catholic Church has been a zig zaggy one. Growing up, I received the Sacrament of Baptism in the Church. Not long after receiving my First Holy Communion, my family left the Catholic Church. I have had the joys of children and the pain of a failed marriage, followed by the joy of my marriage to Todd, crowned by the blessing of our youngest son, Braden. But I kept feeling the nudge to get back to the roots of my faith. And even though I had been away from the Church, for way more years than I had been in it, there was a part of me that craved to return. Of course when I discovered all of the hoops I was going to have to go through to receive the Eucharist, I wasn't pleased. And I will admit that I often wished I could have been given some sort of an exception. I mean after all, I knew I loved Jesus and I knew that He knew this....wasn't this enough? I also admit that it was embarrassing, especially at first, when I returned to the Church and went up every Sunday receiving a blessing instead of the Eucharist. I figured the whole congregation knew I wasn't in good graces.

However, in retrospect, the waiting period and the annulment process itself was so vital to my inner healing. It also made me so much more appreciative of being able to receive legitimately. That doesn't mean I was "illegitimate" before in God's eyes. I know innately that He loves me with all of my foibles. But I came to understand that the Church did not implement the Annulment process just so that divorced parishioners had to experience consequences for their poor decisions. In my mind, it goes much beyond that. Among many things, the Annulment is there so that if you didn't have a full understanding of what the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony meant before, you were going to at least have a retrospective understanding. All those days during the almost one year of waiting for the Annulment to come through gave me much time for prayer. I came to know that God wasn't punishing me, per se, but that He did want me to move forward with my eyes wide open with regard to what He expected marriage to mean to me now.

As well, I had much time to ponder the meaning and full volume and effect of what receiving the Eucharist really means. In the beginning, I admit that I had a hard time grasping that it was Jesus' body and Jesus' blood being received. But as time went on, I learned more, and while there is no earthly comparison to the Eucharist, the closest analogy I can come up with is, it is like having a weekly or daily opportunity to fill up your gas tank with the most cleanest, most high octane fuel ever invented....and it is free! Every time you receive the Eucharist, you have the chance to refill your spiritual tank. And, pray tell, you never go too long without "fueling up", or you will be running on fumes. As this awareness set in on me, my craving for the Eucharist grew by the day. In the weeks toward the end of my annulment process, I could almost taste Him. I will never forget the day when Todd and I were first able to receive. Tears of joy poured down our faces. Looking back, I would have it no other way. This desert-time of waiting gave me the perspective, the understanding, and the appreciation of the true blessing of the Eucharist. Thank you, Dear Lord, and the Catholic Church, that you made me wait. It was worth it in the end. May I never take the blessing of your Body and Blood for granted!

Congratulations Stephanie, Clarence and Jim!



Stephanie Foster



Clarence Keiser



Jim Wigand

Stewardship: Our Covenant of Love Study, Piety and Action

Our Commitment:

This year began with recommitting ourselves to God and to St. Monica through love.

How do we react when a loved one asks us:

"Do you love me?"

"Can you stay and spend time with me?"

"Can you help me? I need you."

When answered out of love, we give without regret, without regard, without hesitation.

Study if we only understood..

St. Monica continues to study and connect the New and Old Testament but more importantly to our lives through 'In the Deep' with Fr. Ron.

Many of us over accepted the Christmas gift from the Parish and read and allowed Michael Kelly to remind us to be "Perfectly You".

Small Christian Communities have increased their knowledge of their faith by watching FORMED videos and study materials. And the children have enjoyed the adventures of Cat.Chat for Kids under FORMED.

Piety without God we can do nothing

So far this year, we gathered to reflect on "Gratitude" for everything comes from God. And we must stop and appreciate with all our senses the total gift in everything.

Our choir gave praise through song not only during our regular liturgies but joined together at the Eucharistic Congress to make a band of angels singing for our Lord.

Speaking of Angels, our Angels of Mercy do many things to help those who need a little help, even just a little phone call to pray together.



Action How we extend God's Kingdom

For our Community:

Under the inspiration and guidance of Joyce Miller, St. Monica invited the community to celebrate Mardi Gras. There was jazz music by Tommy Clay accompanied by Fr. Ron Camarda, indoor parade, Jambalaya and King's Cake. Of course we also had the 2018 Coronation of King George Crawford and Queen Linda Mitchell from our 2017 King Joe Iovino and Queen Susan Walwik.

For our Children:



Discovering God's Plan 4U = Jesus

June 18 -22, 2018

9 am—Noon PreK—5th Grade

Those who would like to share their talents with the children call Cheryl Carr 325-9777.

For our Youth :

We welcome Emma Gazdecki as new Youth Leader for St. Monica and St. John the Evangelist.



She is enthusiastic about leading our Youth. She has experience as a Peer Leader of Youth and Retreat Leader for Confirmation.



A big thank you to all who faithfully give from their heart and listens to the Lord with their stewardship of time, talent and treasures. The Lord's work in Palatka could not be done without you.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 8, 2018 5:30 pm
Devine Mercy Chaplet 5:30pm

May 13, 2018 9:00 am
First Holy Communion

May 26, 2018
11:00 am Rib Slab Sale for Youth

4:30 pm
Mass Honoring the Fallen Soldiers followed by Rib Dinner and Book Signing of "Tears in the Desert" all proceeds for a Fallen Soldier Cause

June 3, 2018 9:00 am
Mass Honoring 2018 Graduates

June 18-22, 2018 9:00 am -Noon
Vacation Bible School

June 20, 2018 7:00 pm
Confirmation