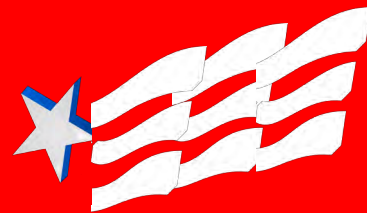




Saint Monica

Messenger

A Home of Small Christian Communities



July 2016, Issue Thirty-Eight

Bringing the Good News of the Parish to You

How Do I Best Repay My Debt to My Faith Community?

By Lee Mullenax

Sometimes you're called to do a particular thing. Sometimes you're not. It can be hard to tell the difference.

Certainly this was true for me when I began my search for a ministry. Diane Mutchie had said that I should consider the different ministries in a prayerful manner; with that in mind, I left for church one morning in June with my friend, Lilian.

"Which door do you want to go in?" asks Lilian. We have just arrived for Wednesday morning Mass. "Um, whichever," I equivocate. Lilian decides that we should go in through the north entrance. This will put us on a path that passes directly by the bread which will become the Host. We each stop and take a piece out for ourselves. Lilian is now an Extraordinary Minister of the Holy Communion. It's one of her ways of giving back.

Giving back to the community that supports and nurtures you is not only an obligation, but an opportunity to be an image of Christ's love. To live Christ's love is our ultimate calling, regardless of how we particularly express it. I see Christ's love in all of us, and I am grateful for the contributions of all who, in no small part, make possible the continued existence of our shared faith community.

Lilian and I take our seats. I look upon the visage of Christ. The visage of Mary. Hues of green and gold, rose and blue. The sanctuary is accented here and there with floral expressions of praise, love, mercy, and compassion. Cris David's eye for color is a gift from God, as she, herself, is a gift from God, a gift that she repays invariably with graciousness and servitude.

How do I best repay my debt to my faith community? I realize that I will never be able to fully do so; giving back is an unending process.

Cleaning is an unending process, also; I've learned that from the time I've spent working in restaurants. The plates, pots, and pans are dirtied; the plates, pots, and pans are cleaned. It's all part of the circle of life in a restaurant, and I'm grateful to be a part of it.

Such is the circle of life in a church. The regular upkeep and maintenance of the church is a constant and ceaseless task, yet one that rewards the participant with the opportunity to be part of a process of change and renewal. As I seek out these things in my life – participation, change, and renewal, I turn to the beautification ministry as a means to aid me in my search and as a way to give back to the community which has given me so much.

There are many doors, many paths, and many ministries that can lead us to a closer relationship with God. Regardless of the one that we are called to, let us never forsake the opportunity to engage with and participate in the circle of life that is our parish community.

Opportunities for You to Give Gifts to God :

Liturgical Ministries:

Readers
Ushers
Greeters
Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion
Altar Server

Faith Formation Ministries:

CCF Catechist
RCIA Team
Youth Team
Vacation Bible School Team

Service Ministries:

Beautification, Bereavement, Food Pantry / Mobile Pantry, Hospitality, Knights of Columbus, Ladies Guild, Music, Prison, Respect Life, Rosary Leaders.
Call the Parish Office for the Ministry Leader.

Follow us on Facebook:

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St. Monica Honors Our Graduates



Fr. Amar Nagothu honors our 2016 Graduates during the Mass on June 5th.

The Graduates were:

Molly Williams (Palatka High), Stephen White (guest graduate from Interlachen High), Taylor Downey (Palatka High), Allyson Laibl (St. Joseph Academy) and Katrina Rogers (St. Joseph Academy) and Diana DeJuk (St. Joseph Academy not pictured).

In the picture above, Fr. Amar awarded Katrina Rogers with the Altar Server Appreciation Award. We will miss Katrina and her dedication in serving the Celebrant during Mass.

What Has Growing Up In St. Monica Parish Meant to Me?

Allyson: "It has meant being a part of a big family and making relationships to last a lifetime."

Katrina: "It has meant being surrounded by a faith family that has helped me to grow in my own faith."

Molly: "The close environment of the parishioners and my excellent CCF teachers and youth group leaders have led me closer to God. St. Monica's is like my second family and I wouldn't hesitate to ask any one for help here because I know they would take the best possible care of me."

Taylor: "St. Monica is my family. We all love and support each other. We never judge each other. St. Monica is the true example of faith and hope."

St. Monica Cares for Students



**St. Monica's
Jubilee
Memorial
Scholarship**

Molly Williams
\$1,000.00

Stephen White
\$500.00

St. Monica Parish has always been concerned for the education of the children in Putnam County. In the 19th and 20th Centuries St. Monica supported local Catholic schools. Later in the 20th and 21st Centuries St. Monica has supported those students attending the Catholic schools in St. Augustine, Cathedral Parish School (k-8th grade) and St. Joseph Academy (9th-12th grades). In 2009 St. Monica gave the 1st \$1,000 Memorial Scholarship.

2016 Scholarship Recipients:

Molly Williams graduated from Palatka High School with a 4.67 gpa, scored top 10% in ACT, 215 volunteer hours including involvement with St. Monica Youth group and Captain of the PHS swim team.

"I would like to thank the scholarship committee for presenting me with this opportunity. I am truly blessed to be given this award and I intend to use it to its full advantage. I would like to thank my youth group leaders for keeping me on the right track, Father Amar, my parents, and all the parishioners of St. Monica's for guiding and shaping me into the person that I am today. I will put this scholarship to good use as I continue my education at the University of Florida and pursue my bachelor's degree in Microbiology and Cell Science. After that I plan to attend medical school where I will become a pediatrician. I am excited to see what God has in store for my life and strengthen my relationship with Him as I start this new journey."
Molly Williams

Stephen White graduated from Interlachen High School with a 4.5 gpa, scored in the top 10% nationally on his college entrance test, served 171 volunteer hours and was active in his church. Stephen is pursuing a degree in Space Engineering at the University of Florida.

Pencils, Papers and Prayers



St. Monica Parish will begin collecting school supplies to give to classrooms in need at Mellon Elementary. There will be collection boxes at the back of church and in the Parish Enrichment Center. We will be praying for the success for these and all the students of Putnam County.

TOTALLY CATHOLIC VBS
**cave
 QUEST**
 FOLLOWING JESUS
 THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

June 20th– 24th



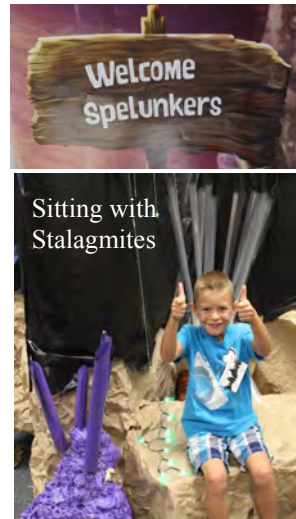
Even Bishop Estévez explored our caves



The Lord is the Light of the World



Dancing under the Stalactites



Sitting with Stalagmites



Letting the Lord in our lives makes our lives exciting

A heartfelt thanks to Cheryl Carr and her team for a spectacular week of vacation bible school. They did an amazing job transforming the Parish Enrichment Library, hall and classrooms into a cave to be remembered and blending the daily snacks, activities into the theme and God's lessons. When the children do not want to leave, you know that the week was successful!!!



St. Monica's Small Christian Communities Received National Attention

During the 2016 National Catechetical Conference, Sr. Theresa Rickard O.P., President of Renew International, gave out the **national article about the Small Christian Communities at St. Monica's Parish in Palatka, FL. among her materials. This was a great honor that our Parish is still used as an example for the building of community through faith sharing within small groups who pray and reflect together. Our SCC do not stop with just prayers, but they put their call into action.**

One example of this was when they offered a warm welcome to the southern US team of Bike and Build as the team traveled across the country in May. The delight and surprise in the eyes of the cyclists, as they arrived from their long ride from St. Augustine with wonderful refreshments and drinks awaiting them. And they were especially enjoyed the cold watermelon.

After the Bike and Build team got settled and rested up, they joined the Parish of St. Monica at the annual Downtown Christian Churches Picnic on the riverfront. Everyone enjoyed the company of the young riders and the fellowship of relaxing with those Christian neighbors who we work along side of throughout the year with different community projects, especially the Monthly Mobile Food Pantry.

The next morning, the Bike and Build Team continued their "Pedaling for Affordable Housing" across the country. Before they left for that day's destination, Lake City, they were filled with a delicious breakfast by the Knights of Columbus #5756.



Pastors in the foreground:
 Rev. Vernon Harkey, First Baptist Church
 Rev. Bob Marsh, St. Marks Episcopal Church
 Fr. Amar Nagothu, St. Monica Catholic Church
 Rev. Don Hanna, St James Methodist pictured by the grill.

Pilgrimages to Holy Doors During the Year of Mercy

On May 3rd, the Ladies Guild brought their year to a close with a pilgrimage to the Holy Door at the Shrine Our Lady of La Leche in St. Augustine. The ladies enjoyed their time at the shrine and in the museum.

In preparation for the Feast of St. Monica, all are invited on a pilgrimage to the Santa Fe Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche at St. Madeleine Catholic Church, High Springs, FL on August 20, the third Day of the Novena to St. Monica. We have made arrangements to travel by bus for those who would like to ride along.

We will leave in the morning to arrive for Mass in the Shrine followed by private prayer time to explore their walking trail, outdoor stations in their memorial garden. At Noon we will have lunch before returning to Palatka. All those interested need to make reservations with the Parish Office.

Baptism, an Outpouring of God's Gifts By Tyler and Eryn Harris

Throughout this Jubilee Year of Mercy Pope Francis invites us to embrace God's Mercy by showing love, kindness, and generosity. Through our Baptism we receive an outpouring of these gifts from God, and it is our duty as Christians to share these gifts with others including our own children. Baptism is the "sacrament of regeneration" in which God's Mercy is shown to us. The importance of baptizing children is shown in this Mercy because from Mercy flows grace. The grace of God is given to us so that we may be reborn as children of God, freed from original sin, and begin to live our lives in the fullness of Christ. God's Mercy frees us from our sin through the sacrament of Baptism. His Mercy also gives parents the grace of raising their children in the Church and in the image of Christ.

Baptism is only the beginning of our life with Jesus. With it comes the responsibility to follow Jesus and is the solid foundation on which we can build our Christian faith. From Baptism on we are called to grow in goodness. The Catechism calls this our "flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth". As parents it is our calling to aid in this growth of our children, to raise them to love God, and to provide nourishment for spiritual growth. We are humbled by this incredible opportunity to be parents to a child of God and strive to raise our own children in God's merciful image beginning with baptism.