

Saint Monica Messenger

October 2017 Issue Forty Three

Bringing the Good News of the Parish to You

Stewardship teaches us to be generous by law.

Then we become generous by love.



Message from
Fr. Ron Camarda

St. Monica is a beautiful vineyard. God has planted this little church in Palatka, Florida. God blesses this community with so many blessings. If we are good and faithful stewards of this vineyard,

we will produce abundant fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, self-control and faithfulness.

We, baptized and confirmed Christians, are the tenants of this incredible gift of a vineyard. If we **produce abundant fruit, we shall become God's sons and daughters** (tenants of Heaven). We make a huge **mistake when we believe that we don't make enough money to give our first fruits to God.** Jesus gave us his poverty and nakedness.

The Holy Spirit will not let us off so easily. We all have something to give back to God. St. Therese of Lisieux was known to have said, "You can never have too much confidence in our good God!" Living in communion with the heart of Jesus helps us to "taste and see the goodness of the Lord". Therese didn't have any money at all. But she offered more than any billionaire could match. She said she could add her little "zero". She said, "Then, nearly ecstatic with the supreme joy in my soul, I proclaimed: O Jesus, my love, at last I have found my calling: my call is love. Certainly I have found my proper place in the Church, and you gave me that very place, my God. In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love, and thus I will be all things, as my desire finds its direction."

Imagine our statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the front of St. Monica's. The image may help us "see" a place where giving and receiving are

inseparably united. We receive a vineyard that God prepares for each of us that is watered/nurtured by the gift our Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. We give back just 10% of our abundance and love of God.

The heart of Jesus is beautifully described by **St. Paul in his Letter to the Philippians, "Who though he was in the form of God, did not deem equality with God, something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness... he humbled himself becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross."** The Heart of Jesus receives everything from the Father in the power of the Spirit. The poverty of Jesus is the eternal blessing that makes us truly rich. In and through the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we experience **the outpouring of the Father's love and care for us.** In and through the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we are called to return our gifts to the Father for the sake of our brothers and sisters.

As your administrator, I merely invite you to be faithful to the teachings of Sacred Scripture and the Church. *Have no anxiety, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.* We give God 10% and get to keep 90% of what God gives to us! Stewardship teaches us to be generous by law. Then we become generous by love, joy and peace.

Eucharist means "Thanks-Giving" which is two words. We give something very insignificant to God, and God, who cannot be outdone in generosity, blesses us with 10 times the amount we give him. This requires great faith at first.

(Fr. Ron's testimony on back page)

“Receive What You Are and

You, Me and Us.

That is what makes up the world, our country and our community, our faith family of St. Monica, You, Me and Us. We have all heard, that we must know ourselves the way God made us. That is what St. Augustine stressed in the above quote, *“Receive what you are...”*. We are all different because that is what the Lord knew the world needs. Our responsibility is to recognize our best skill, our special skill and share it as God intended, to *“become what we received.”* Through Baptism, we accepted we are God’s Children and since our First Communion we must become more like Christ as we receive Him.

Recently, We were all given the Gift of Time

The Lord gave all of us a gift this summer, an opportunity to examine our gifts. Many of us were without electricity for days and some weeks. The Lord offered us this time without tv, internet and video games so we could better connect with Him, our neighbors, family, and our Parish family.

On the evening of Saturday Sept. 9th after Monday’s strike of Irma, Hoyt Muir was seen clearing the yard of a parishioners’ house who needed help. So when Fr. Ron, along with Joe and Mary Iovino were on their way to dinner, they too stopped and rolled up their sleeves to help.

The following Saturday morning, Sept. 23rd, sixteen parishioners came out to the St. Monica Cemetery where the ground was covered with moss and many large branches not to mention the tall grass. Their time and efforts restored the sacredness and beauty of the resting place of those who have returned to the arms of Jesus before us.



The timing of our Lord is always perfect. He provided St. Monica Parish with a blessing of abundant clothing donations right before the storm. So on Sept. 21st, during our regular hours of St Monica Pantry’s food distribution we also were able to give away the blessing we had received. Karen Lee, the Clothes Coordinator, shared that it was so beautiful to see hope in the recipients’ eyes as they picked out clothes that they were in need of.

Our own Catherine Webb took time to be filmed for the Diocesan Bishop Appeal. She stepped out of her comfort zone to remind all of us how much a priest sacrifices for us. He gives all his time, talents, his all so that we may receive the Eucharist. Catherine shared her understanding that we are not alive with God, without our priests.



Inform, Invite and Evangelize

We are blessed to have our Catechists who commit their time every week to inform and invite our children how to become closer to God. Thank you for sharing our Faith to strengthen the future of our Church. Some of those



pictured above are RCIA Catechists who reach out to adults who wish to become Catholic, return to the Church or need Adult Confirmation. If you, or know of someone, who has been inquiring about our Faith, please direct them to Karen Lee at 386-972-0316.

A little rain did not stop these parishioners from giving of their time to come to the 1st Bartram Trail Frolic on Sept 30 to share their love for their faith and for St. Monica Catholic Church.



Become What You Receive.”

St. Monica's Son, St. Augustine of Hippo

FORMED A Great Way to Spend Time with the Lord

What an opportunity Fr. Ron has given us to learn and spend time with the Lord and the Catholic Faith right at our finger tips on our phones or computers. This Parish Evangelization Program offers something for everyone.

Some of our Small Christian Communities, along with individuals, have been using “Opening the Word” to prepare for the upcoming Sunday Mass. Others have expressed enjoyment using the “Wild Geese” Series which explains how the Holy Spirit works in your life. While yet others have liked learning about the different saints by watching the featured films, especially the “Restless Heart” about the lives of St. Augustine and St. Monica or other films on the Popes. For those who either like to read or listen to books, Formed has those available too. Formed also has great videos for Sacrament preparation with testimonials and theology explanations. In October, Formed will be showing for a limited time, “The Bible and the Sacraments” where Matthew Leonard presents the deep mysteries and truth of the sacraments come alive in a new way.

Our code for Formed by Augustine Institute is R87GP3 at Formed.org.

Catholic Foundation Answered Prayers for our Families

Families of our Catholic School children received a wonderful gift from the Catholic Foundation. This gift was granting St. Monica Church \$10,000 for the Riding on Angels Wings program. This program allowed all the families who receive assistance in tuition to also receive 65% of this year's fees for the bus transportation to the Catholic schools. Families have responded with “This is such a blessing when a family is on a tight budget.”

Capital Campaign Due to your stewardship, the Parish Office Building is no longer “Big Blue” as some so fondly called her, but beautifully blends in with the church and the Parish Enrichment Building. The Finance Council is still discussing the options for the new church flooring and the altar renovation.



As of October 2017: \$95,173 has been collected of which \$18,375 was spent on painting the office, leaving \$76,798. November, is the last envelope for the Campaign.

This is how we sustain our “vineyard” for the next “tenants”.

We “Survived” our St. Monica Feast Day Celebration



We were honored to have Bishop Estévez celebrate Mass with us on this special day. He reminded us how special we are to have as our Parton Saint, St. Monica, the mother

of St. Augustine, the Patron Saint of our whole diocese. He stressed her survival through life was only by prayer, and oh how the Lord heard her prayers. So each of us mothers, and fathers too, should never give up on our children and always pray for them, so they will know whose they are and to become what God intended.

Following Mass we entered into “Survivor Island” where there were challenges and rewards. Many talents were shared this day as the creativity and organizational skills shown beautifully and gave a fun afternoon for all.





The 7th Annual St. Monica Youth Benefit Golf Classic was played on October 7th. Only by the blessings of the Lord was this day a success, for rain had been forecasted for weeks, but did not rain a drop. We are thankful for all who supported our youth by either sponsoring a hole, donating gifts or playing in the tournament raising \$2,179.20. The Captain's Choice competition was tough and was won by a stroke by Kyle Coleman, John Garrett and Jimmy Santos with a score of 49.

Dates to Remember:

- Sun Oct 22 9 am World Mission Mass with World Rosary followed by International Lunch, all are invited to share a taste from their homeland or favorite place.
- Sun Oct 29 3-5 pm Halloween Party, all children are welcome
- Wed Nov 1 8am/7pm All Saints' Masses**
6:30 pm Youth Dinner/Meeting
- Thur Nov 2 7:45 am Mobile Pantry distributing food to the hungry
5 pm All Souls' Mass at St. Monica Cemetery
- Fri Nov 3 4-7 pm First Friday Fish Dinner
- Sat Nov 4 9am Level 1 Catechist Training Part 1 a
- Sat Nov 18 6 pm Parish Thanksgiving Dinner
Hosted by the Knights of Columbus. Help them feed the hungry by bringing a canned good.
- Thu Nov 23 10 am Thanksgiving Mass
Collection will be canned goods for St. Monica Pantry
- Fri Nov 24 5 pm Parish Float in Christmas Parade
see Cindy Gilmore for details
- Fri Dec 1 4-7 pm First Friday Fish/Shrimp Dinner
- Sun Dec 3 1 pm Parish Christmas Party/ Auction
See Stephanie Gilmore for details
- Sat Dec 9 3 pm Revitalize Historic Palatka Church Tour
- Tues Dec 12 7 pm Advent Penance Service
- Sun Dec 24 4 pm Family Christmas Vigil
9 pm Christmas Vigil
- Mon Dec 25 9 am Christmas Mass

Fr. Ron's Stewardship Testimony

I started tithing 10% of my paycheck to the church when I was 21 years old, just after a homily that Father Mort Danaher gave about tithing with an overhead projector. I thought it was silly, but I thought he was a priest I could trust. I **didn't even have a car yet and I was not taught** to do this. My father let me borrow his car that got five gallons to a mile. Feeling quite worried, I wrote the check the next week for \$100, but when the collection basket came around, I balked. I tore up the check and put in a \$20 bill. However, I felt so guilty that I returned for the evening Mass and dropped the full 10% in the basket.

The following week, one of the local car dealers had an overstock of new cars from a company that went out of business. The \$1000 discount was the only way I was able to buy that essential first car.

Stewardship is more than money. Sometimes I had no money when I was at the seminary. 10% of zero is zero! But I did give of my education, knowledge, blessed family, citizenship, sports, eyesight and coaching skills to the high school. God owns everything and does not need our money. But he does love a cheerful giver who **gives "thanks-giving"!**

I want to take this opportunity to thank Fr. Pablo Fuentes for sharing his gifts of trust, humility and gratitude. And to Diane Mutchie for her skilled stewardship in putting together the St. Monica Messenger over the years.

"Stewardship is a way of life that fans the fire of love dwelling in us from the day of our baptism, into flame, a life-changing process that helps us understand and embrace our true dignity. The Eucharist is the source and summit of this incredible human adventure that leads us to a greater conformity with Jesus Christ and his Gospel." Bishop Felipe Estévez, *"One Faith, One Family"* Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

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 our faith, to be inspired or to reflect on the daily readings. Be sure to like us on facebook to see all of our posts.

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