



St. Monica Messenger

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO YOU

DECEMBER 2017

ISSUE FORTY FOUR

2017

NEEDS IN ACTION

Registration:
Families: 256
Members: 512

Catholic Schools :
18% of our children attend

Mass Attendance:
has increased 9%

Homebound:
22 Parish members receive visits weekly

Food Distribution:
Mobile Food Drop:
176 Households with 410 members receive monthly

St. Monica Pantry:
150 Households receive weekly

Sharing the Joy and Compassion

A Christmas Message from Fr. Ron

Wow! I am on my sixth month of being here at St. Monica's. I have truly enjoyed my morning walks by the river just a few steps from the church and rectory. Jesus, you have entered by my bruised but open door. You alone brought me to this city.

The wonderful St. Ambrose inspired me the morning I wrote this:

"The word of God moves swiftly; he is not won by the lukewarm, nor held fast by the negligent. Let your soul be attentive to his Word; follow carefully the path God tells you to take, for he is swift in his passing."

When I look out at Mass I

see the lights are on. You are thirsting for God's joy and compassion. You wrestle with Jesus' apparent absence.

What does his bride say? I sought him, and did not find him; I called him, and he did not hear me. Do not imagine that you are displeasing to him although you have called him, asked him, opened the door to him, and that this is the reason why he has gone so quickly; no, for he allows us to be constantly tested. When the crowds press him to stay, what does He say in the Gospel? I must preach the word of God to other cities, because I was sent for that. But even if it seems to you that he has left you, go out and seek him once more."

The best gift ever for God is to seek the One who seeks you! O my.

Love, joy, peace and Merry Christmas!

Father Ron +



Sharing our Past and Present

On Saturday, December 9th, 2017 St. Monica Catholic Church was honored to share our history with the community during the "Candlelight Tour of Palatka's Historic Houses of Worship" hosted by Revitalize Historic

Palatka. Our church being 159 years old and the third oldest in the Diocese of St. Augustine, was one of eight historic churches in Palatka that opened their doors for tours. Parishioners Rosemary Flinn, Tommy

Dobbs, and Larry Beaton welcomed visitors touring the church and shared some of our rich history with them.

Visitors commented about the beauty of our windows and the altar depicting the Last Supper.

Continued on back

By Larry Beaton

Sharing the Word: Into the Deep with Fr. Ron



This Fall, Fr. Ron led us to lower our nets and go into the deep with him into the Bible. He began, as expected, with the Book of Genesis but then took us on a very unexpected journey. We have read verses together interpretatively and slowly. Fr. Ron really has brought the Word to Life. He has put us in the moment of the stories and reminded us that every great story has to have hope.

During this journey, we have

understood that the Pentateuch is who we are. We have had Hebrew and Greek language lessons so that we could comprehend how our world and the biblical world are connected. Fr. Ron has also connected the Alpha and the Omega, for after we explored through the book of Exodus, Fr. Ron took us right into the book of Revelations to show us how the beginning and the end of the Bible are connected. He reassured us that the Book of Revelations is not to be

feared. But that we should listen to the Lord in our lives. Especially if the Lord calls your name twice in a row. For only seven times in the Bible is it told that the Lord was this persistent and He really meant business. The lucky seven people in the whole Bible were: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Saul, Martha and the Father as the Son of God called out "My God, My God".

Classes will be resuming on Tuesday evenings beginning on January 9th.

Sharing Their Life as a Sacrifice



Having Fr. Ron with us has made us see things in a different light. One example of this is because he, like many, offered to serve in our nation's military. This is always asking for the great sacrifice of leaving all loved ones behind to protect others in service to our country. Many of us know of this sacrifice personally by

also serving, or by a family member serving. Not having them with you and your family, having them away during life's special moments, having them live without luxuries and sometimes even the basics,

On this past Veterans' Day weekend, Fr. Ron and Gerald Donnelly, VFW Commander

invited all those who are or who have served to come in uniform (or the part that still fits) so that we could honor them.

It was amazing to see the percent of men and women from our church who have given up years of their lives for our country.

Thank you for your service and may God continue to protect you from harm.

Sharing Their Faith



Stephanie Gilmore

Our faith has continued through the history of the church by those who have taught our children and others.

Here at St. Monica we appreciate all of our Catechists who help the parents with their duty to teach the next generation the Truth and the Way. Teaching ways to discern and

decide actions based on the will of God and to speak with compassion and mercy to all.

We especially thank our CCF Coordinator for six years, Catherine Webb and Stephanie Gilmore for shadowing Catherine this year. Stephanie, you have our trust and support in your leadership by what you have

already shown by your commitment and energy to our CCF Program this year.

When we look in our pews we see so many of our Parish who have come through RCIA. We are so thankful that Karen Lee heard and heeded the calling to direct our RCIA program for so many years.

Sharing What We Have Joyfully

We all have received gifts from God. It is not until we recognize these gifts that we can share them and do His will through His gifts.

Some of us have the gift of cooking and baking and oh how you have shared. Not only have we enjoyed receiving your gift of food during various events: St. Monica Family Picnic, the Parish Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinner but especially World Mission Sunday with food from around the world, Others have also enjoyed your gift: The Top Teachers of Putnam County for their Award Breakfast, the residents at Barry Manor for their Thanksgiving Dinner, our Homebound with your sweet cookies, the Seminarians and the French Boys Choir enjoyed all the meals while they were on tour, You have even made sad days lighter by sharing your gift with our bereaved and their families and friends, and the whole community who have made First Friday Fish Fry a dinner date.

Some of us have the gift of time. Some give this gift on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the St. Monica Food Pantry while others give Monthly at the Mobile Food Drop to distribute food to the hungry families in Putnam County over the years. Yet others give the gift of time on Saturdays as they visit those who are homebound or in nursing homes.

Some of our ladies have the gift of crafting, and they shared that gift during their Holiday Craft Sale. The cover

shows just a few pieces of their talents. The "Chatty Catholic Crafters" were able to raise \$5,000.00 from their crafts which they gave toward the Ladies Guild's church and community projects. Our children also have the gift of art, for our Christmas Card was drawn by Daniel Fazio, age 9.

Some have the gift of music and we enjoy their songs of joy to heaven every weekend along with the talented musicians from piano, drums and guitar. The choir also shared their talents with San Anastasia's Cecilia Sing as they celebrated the Feast Day of the Patroness of Musicians.

Yet others share their gift of "enough", so they give gifts to the poor. Being in the Parish Office I have seen the generosity of our parishioners as they brought in toys for the children in Putnam County who needed a little Angel at Christmas. They told me, "we have enough, but those children do not." Over the years, so many wonderful toys and bikes have been given to children who only wish to play outside and have new clothes to wear.

Speaking of clothing, St. Monica clothes giveaway has had to add more Clothing Give Away Days due to the overflowing donations of gently used clothes. On the

announced day, those in need came into the Parish Enrichment Center and were given a bag to fill at no cost. The donations have varied from children to adult, from casual attire to suits. One recipient told us that these clothes were chosen for a job interview.

As with every family, St. Monica Parish is grateful for the gifts we received, so we joyfully shared.

From the wonderful stewardship of our family, we have been able to share our gifts this year with:

- Poor and Hungry of Putnam County
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Faith and Share Retreat
- Camp I am Special
- Veterans of America
- Catholic Charities in India
- Hurricane Relief to Texas, Florida
- Medical Supplies to Puerto Rico
- Religious articles and materials to Africa
- Paper, Pencils and Prayers to Mellon Elementary
- Weekend Backpack Program

Along with supporting the Diocese of St. Augustine and Non Parochial Causes

Sharing the Greatest Gift— Jesus



As tradition has it, Palatka 108th Christmas Parade was on the evening of the Friday after Thanksgiving. This year the theme was "Christmas". The Coordinator Sam Deputy stated that "this year was the third year in a row that all 221 spots of the parade were filled." The excitement and anticipation of the parade as not faded over the years, since this year the largest crowd

came out to watch the parade.

St. Monica Catholic Church float reminded all in attendance that no matter what gifts you may find under your tree on Christmas, the greatest gift is Jesus.

Due to the many floats it was said, many floats "upped their game", the 2017 winner of the Church Float was Trinity Methodist with a live Nativity float.

Sharing the Joy of Fellowship

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 1, 2018 9:00 am

Solemnity of Blessed Mother

January 6, 2018

Adult Confirmation at Queen of Peace, Gainesville

January 7, 2018 10:30 am

CCF Classes resume

January 9, 2018 6:00 pm

Into the Deep Bible Study resumes every Tuesday night

January 13 9:00– Noon

Day of Reflection: Gratitude

January 28, 2018

Covenant Sunday

February 9 & 10, 2019 8am

Ladies Guild Flea Market

February 10, 2018

Bishop Stewardship Appeal

February 14, 8am, 7 pm

Ash Wednesday

February 25, 2018

Rite of Election

March 16 & 17 2018

Eucharistic Congress

April 1, 2018

Easter Sunday

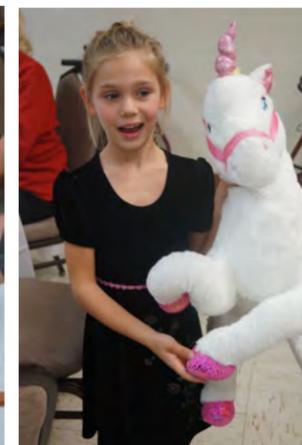


What a fabulous afternoon it was gathering as a family with laughing, singing and of course eating all the favorite Christmas foods.

As seen in the pictures all ages enjoyed visiting with Santa and sharing their wishes with him.

But the most excitement came during the auction of the seventy six wonderful donations. There were toys for children, tools, art décor, stain glass items, camping items, even a Coach purse, and many more. There were so many winners, below Braden was very enthusiastic about winning the Nintendo 2Ds and Melissa with her unicorn.

Thank you to our parents for hosting so much fun and raising almost \$1,500.00 for the children activities.



Historic Tour continued

Tommy Dobbs, a fourth generation, and Larry Beaton, a fifth generation parishioner shared personal stories about their families' involvement in the parish,

One highlight of the evening was a request by one couple to ring the church bell. Tommy

escorted them to the choir loft and they were allowed to pull the rope a few times!

We are proud of our past. We stand strong in the present not only from our experiences from Palatka but from all the Catholics all over the world sharing the love and peace that our Savior gave to us through his teachings,

death, resurrection and his body and blood.

May the Lord be pleased with our works we do in His name.

