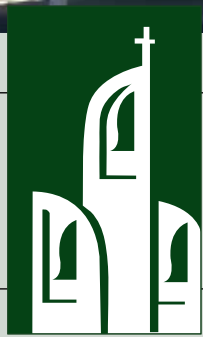


JANUARY 2016



ST. VINCENT FERRER PARISH

LIVING CHURCH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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"It is an Honor to Be Involved in Something Like This"

Our St. Vincent Ferrer Ministry at Arden Courts Memory Care Community

Eight separate times in the Bible, we are told to "love our neighbor." It is one of Jesus' most oft-repeated commands to us. Loving your neighbor is the opposite of selfishness and self-centeredness. When Jesus was asked who His neighbor was, the Lord responded by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. At the end of the story, Jesus told the listener – as well as each of us – to "go and do likewise."

Mary Apke, who is involved in more than one outreach parish ministry, understands Jesus' appeal to us, and she lives it out in her daily life. She is involved with preparing Communion Prayer Services for the people at Arden Courts Memory Care Center and bringing Communion to the people who live there.

"There are so many stewardship opportunities here at St. Vincent Ferrer," Mary says. "Jesus expects each of us to do something. For me being involved with this ministry is not just a way to share my faith, but also a way to affirm it."

Fr. George Kunkel says he is not sure how long this ministry has been active, but it was in place when he arrived at the parish nine years ago.



Cathy Tumbusch



Mary Apke

"As a faith community, we need to be showing love in ways like this," Father says. "When we visit and pray with the Alzheimer and dementia patients at Arden Courts, God offers us an opportunity to affirm that all people have great human dignity. We recognize the presence of Christ in every patient. When we respond to them with our prayers and our pastoral care, we

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STEWARDSHIP: *New Year's Resolutions*

The new year has arrived, and we have all been busy making – and trying to keep – our list of New Year's resolutions. Many of us choose resolutions geared toward health and fitness. After all, possessing good overall health is critical to our well-being. Others may try to avoid a particularly bad habit, such as smoking or swearing. Still, many of us plan things we have always wanted to do, but never get around to doing.

As the days of January continue onward, however, many of us find the inspiration of keeping our good-intentioned resolutions to be fading fast. By the end of the month, most of us have given in to our temptations and returned to our old ways. We are only human, right? Discouraged by this yearly failure, many of us don't even bother making New Year's resolutions anymore, especially if we feel like we won't succeed.

Maybe our failures lie in both how we make our resolutions and what resolutions we actually choose. What we need to understand is the "root" of our resolution. For example, if one resolves to eat less candy with the hopes of dropping those recently added holiday pounds, is the "root" of this resolution a selfish one – wanting to look better physically? Or, is the resolution genuinely focused on no longer giving in to each craving by practicing mortification – giving up of a personal pleasure to glorify God? If the "root" is a selfish one, only to benefit oneself, then it is often difficult to keep in the long run.

Tying our New Year's resolutions into the principles of stewardship – giving of your time, talent and treasure back to God – is a great way to ensure that the "root" of our resolution is right on track!



However, if we are trying to glorify God, our mission is much more important and worth keeping.

Tying our New Year's resolutions into the principles of stewardship – giving of our time, talent and treasure back to God – is a great way to ensure that the "root" of the resolution is right on track! For instance, resolving to pray each evening before going to bed glorifies God, brings peace before slumber, and allows one to grow in relationship with Christ. The "root" is pure. The desire to keep it will be stronger and make it easier to keep. In the same way, resolving to return one's talents to God by helping others in need is an excellent choice in creating a selfless resolution with the right "root." Furthermore, resolving to re-evaluate one's finances is also extremely important, and the beginning of a new year is a great time to do it. Are we giving back to God out of gratitude for all He has given us? Or are we merely dropping a dollar or two in the collection basket just to feel good about ourselves?

If one is not where he or she would like to be as a good steward – either with sharing one's time, talent or treasure – one can resolve to do better. The new year is a perfect opportunity to start anew and become the good steward that God desires each of us to become. And when we choose selfless things that build His kingdom instead of ours, we are sure to not only stay on track, but to succeed!

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Resolve to be *Merciful*

Dear Parishioners,

Most of you are aware that we launched a Holy Year of Mercy on Dec. 8, 2015, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. In his announcement proclaiming this jubilee year, the Pope Francis stated, “It is indeed my wish that the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective.”

If we do nothing else during this Holy Year, each of us must seek forgiveness from the Lord; and we also need to make an effort to forgive others. Mercy is, after all, a two-way street. We receive it, but we must as well show it. In fact, during this month when many make resolutions, let us each resolve to be merciful.

That, of course, is not always easy, and sometimes may not even be convenient. Being able to be merciful requires us to look beyond the emotional, past the self-centeredness that may lead us to be angry and unforgiving. The story is related that soon after becoming pope, an interviewer asked Francis to describe



himself – the pope immediately answered, “A sinner.” However, he quickly added, “Who has been looked upon by the face of mercy.”

Each of us can recall when we have been “looked upon by the face of mercy.” This needs to be our motivation for showing to others what we have received. Also, in his letter

announcing this Holy Year, the pope called us to have a “deep desire for true conversion.” This is what stewardship is all about – not being self-centered, but God-centered. It asks us to recognize, acknowledge, and share our many gifts. Nevertheless, to do that effectively requires a conversion on our part. That needs to be part of our purpose for this year, too.

Stewardship always seems to come back to the concept of “love for one another.” One of the misnomers – and a conclusion many have drawn from the Year of Mercy – is that God’s essential characteristic is mercy. The Lord’s fundamental attribute is love. Mercy is what love looks like when we show it.

Therefore, let us resolve to show mercy and love to all we meet, all we know, and all with whom we may work.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. George Kunkel". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. George Kunkel

If we do nothing else during this Holy Year, each of us must seek forgiveness from the Lord; and we also need to make an effort to forgive others. Mercy is, after all, a two-way street. We receive it, but we must as well show it.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Celebrating the Importance of Catholic Education



Well, the Christmas decorations have been put away, and we've celebrated the new year. Is there anything else we might look forward to as we proceed through winter? In fact, there is – our St. Vincent Ferrer School students are getting ready to celebrate something very special!

Each year in January, Catholic schools around the country join together to celebrate Catholic Schools Week. The National Catholic Education Association chooses a theme each year, and dedicates each day during the week to honoring an aspect of the Catholic School community. Here at St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic School, our students, faculty and staff look forward to Catholic Schools Week all year.

“What’s so great about Catholic Schools Week is that it’s an opportunity to sort of remind the students that we are blessed because we are a Catholic school,” says Amy Luebbering, our technology coordinator and computer teacher. “When you come to school every day, you’re immersed in it, so you may not notice the things that are special about coming to a Catholic school anymore. So, we want to help them remember that we are at a Catholic school, and recognize the ways in which we are different from a public school. This is what makes us special and unique. This is why

your parents want you to be here. Jesus is at the center of everything that we do. So, this is a great time to bring our students out of the norm, and help them focus on the fact that our faith is such an important part of life here at St. Vincent Ferrer.”

The theme for Catholic Schools Week, which runs from Sunday, Jan. 31 through Saturday, Feb. 6, is “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.” Each day is dedicated to honoring a facet of our school community, and events are planned throughout the week to help us focus on these daily themes:

- Sunday – *In Our Parish*
- Monday – *In Our Community*
- Tuesday – *In Our Students*
- Wednesday – *In Our Nation*
- Thursday – *In Our Vocations*
- Friday – *In Our Faculty, Staff and Volunteers*
- Saturday – *In Our Families*

“The week always begins with Mass on Sunday with the whole St. Vincent Ferrer School and Parish community, followed by our school’s open house on Sunday, from noon to 2 p.m.,” says Dea Rainey, Catholic Schools Week chairperson and PTO president. “The open house allows

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our St. Vincent Ferrer School students to celebrate their achievements with the parish and the St. Vincent Ferrer community, as well as welcome new families to see what St. Vincent Ferrer School has to offer. Monday, to celebrate *In Our Community*, some of the students will volunteer their services at Matthew 25 Ministries. For our teachers and staff we provide a faculty luncheon during the week, and the students usually celebrate their school through an all-school activity. Last year, we celebrated *In Our Nation* by contacting another St. Vincent Ferrer School in Florida, to share our appreciation of Catholic education across state lines.”

While many of the events throughout the week are purely for fun – like the student vs. teacher volleyball game or the faith-based entertainment the PTO bring in each year for the

“We are reinforcing how important Christian values are in every part of our lives. Catholic schools offer faith-filled education, as well as academic excellence. St. Vincent Ferrer students benefit all year long from the religious guidance, prayers and support that the faculty, parents and parish provide, fostering righteous individuals.”
– Dea Rainey, Catholic Schools Week Chairperson and PTO President

students – the real focus of all Catholic Schools Week activities is to reinforce the importance of Catholic education.

“Through the events we have during the week, we are able to focus on the value Catholic education provides to students and its contributions to our Church, our communities and our nation,” Dea says. “Each daily theme allows the students to see Christ and His love in action, whether in each other, the faculty, the parish, or the community. We are reinforcing how important Christian values are in every part of our lives. Catholic schools offer faith-filled education, as well as academic excellence. St. Vincent Ferrer students benefit all year long from the religious guidance, prayers and support that the faculty, parents and parish provide, fostering righteous individuals.”

Catholic Schools Week is also an opportunity for St. Vincent Ferrer School’s faculty, staff and students to show their gratitude for the whole St. Vincent Ferrer community, who work together in countless ways to offer support for our school throughout the entire year.

“We are so grateful for our parishioners, and all of their support,” Ms. Luebbering shares. “We wouldn’t exist without our parishioners. This week is a time to celebrate that, which we do every day, but we use this week to really bring it to the forefront. We are very grateful to the parishioners and we talk about that a lot with the students. It’s the parishioners who keep us going and support us in everything that we do.”



For more information on Catholic Schools Week at our school, or to find out how you can get involved, please contact the St. Vincent Ferrer School office at 513-791-6320.



LIVING CHURCH

Introducing the Bible: *In the Beginning Was the Word*

A new adult faith formation class begins this month at SVF. Starting with the very basics of Scripture study, this class is intended for any adult seeking to explore the Bible through a contemporary Catholic lens. Content will include authorship, types of literature, and ways of studying and praying with the Bible. Beth Himes will teach this class on five **Thursday evenings, Jan. 7 through Feb. 4, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.** Come to one or come to all sessions at no charge! Call the Faith Formation Office at 513-791-6321 for more information, or simply drop in.

Save the Date – *It's the PTO Annual Spaghetti Dinner!*

Mark your calendars and tell your friends! The SVF PTO Annual Spaghetti Dinner will be held on **Friday, Feb. 5, from 5 to 8 p.m.** This family-friendly community event offers something for everyone. The delicious dinner features homemade sauce, pasta and bread from our Grand Sponsor Ferrari's Little Italy, and homemade desserts that will please even the most discriminating palate. Specially selected Italian wine and beer will be available for purchase. Back by popular demand will be our stuffed meatball raffle, a basket raffle and a Palermo Pasta Palooza Raffle featuring the two-time award-winning sauce of Beth Palermo. Face painting, "sandy candy," and a balloon artist will entertain the children, while adults enjoy the musical stylings of guitarist Kevin Fox.

Consider entering your pasta sauce in the fifth annual sauce contest, judged by local celebrities, past winner Beth Palermo and Fr. George. Details and entry forms will be available soon in the parish bulletin.

YEAR OF MERCY 2016 *Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy*

Since Medieval times, the Church has named 14 ways in which mercy can be demonstrated. Seven are corporal, meaning they affect the body in some way. The other seven are spiritual. These affect the religious, intellectual, or psychological aspects of persons. Each month we will focus on one of these ways of practicing mercy, in our local church and in our homes.

SHELTER THE HOMELESS

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati, through its Catholic Charities division, hosts and supports refugees to the United States. Guatemalans, Bhutanese, and Burundians have been resettled in our diocese, and provided with training and resources to establish themselves as permanent residents of Cincinnati. Refugees from the conflict in Syria are just beginning to arrive. Catholic Charities needs parish hosts, tutors, donors, and material goods to help secure the futures of these homeless and nationless people.

Young adults often find it difficult to keep up with rent payments and mortgages. When they can no longer maintain their homes, they often move back in with mom and dad. When we allow our friends and relatives to move in with us, we are sheltering the homeless.

St. Vincent Ferrer parishioners are actively engaged in home-building through Habitat for Humanity. Additionally, over \$5000 in cash was donated this year to support the building costs. Providing better housing for families is sheltering the homeless.

Denny and Marguerite Connor *The Gift of Faith*

When parishioners Denny and Marguerite Connor met, choirs were singing. Literally. It was during a production of the musical, *Showboat*, where Marguerite (a senior at Regina High School) was the singing and dancing star and Denny (a college freshman) was a member of the chorus. Although they parted ways after the production ended, they reconnected six years later and eventually married. And today, having been married 44 years, Denny and Marguerite can look back and see how God, family and community – when rooted in faith and stewardship – is a gift that keeps on giving.



Parishioners Denny and Marguerite Connor have been married 44 years.

Of course, faith has to begin somewhere, and for both Denny and Marguerite it began in the heart of the family. Denny grew up in a large family with five brothers and two sisters. Marguerite's family was small in comparison, but she also enjoyed a large family atmosphere through her brother's family, since he was 18 years older and had eight children. Both Denny and Marguerite credit their parents with giving them a strong sense of their Catholic identity of which Catholic education played an important role. Marguerite, who says her mother taught the faith by example, attended St. John the Evangelist School and Regina High School. And Denny, who graduated from St. Vincent Ferrer School and Moeller High School, has strong ties to the parish.

"My parents were one of the founding families and helped build the parish," Denny says. "I remember my father laying tiles in the school building. I was very fortunate to receive my Catholic education from the Dominican nuns at SVF and the Marianist brothers and priests at Moeller. St. Vincent Ferrer has been such a huge part of my life, and I feel tremendous loyalty to the parish."

That commitment and loyalty continues today. Like their parents, Denny and Marguerite passed on the gift of a Catholic education to their own three children, all of whom graduated from SVF and attended Catholic high schools (Mt. Notre Dame, Moeller, and Ursuline Academy). And because stewardship is the means to put faith into action, over the years Denny and Marguerite have found ways to live stewardship by becoming involved in activities that reflect their personalities and talents. Denny, who is more outgoing, says that he likes to practice his faith by serving on committees, by attending and supporting as many parish functions as he can, and by continuing his financial commitment to SVF. He is also a lector and Eucharistic Minister, and serves on the Building and Finance Commission.

"It's very impressive to see the passion and dedication of the people who choose to become involved in stewardship programs," Denny says. "They are demonstrating their faith, and that encourages me to do the same. We need to pitch in – whether it's with time, talent or treasure – if we want our parish to continue to be a vital resource to its members. The more people are involved, the more we can provide as a parish."

Marguerite, on the other hand, is quieter and has found other ways to give of her time and talents. Just like her mother, Marguerite prays the rosary daily. She also participates in weekly Eucharistic Adoration, sings in the church choir, and

is a member of the parish prayer chain. But because she is committed to the parish, and because she knows involvement means sharing ideas and learning from one another, Marguerite also participates in things that call for her to come out of her comfort zone.

"There is satisfaction in being involved in something besides your interests or your work," Marguerite says. "And while it's important to get involved in things that interest you, it's also important to extend your comfort zone and try different things. Stewardship teaches unconditional acceptance – that is, accepting and seeing your fellow parishioners the way Jesus would see them."

Today, Denny and Marguerite have been married 44 years and have three grown children – Erin Connor Olivieri, John Connor, and Anne Connor Stanforth – as well as two grandsons. Denny owns his own video production company, Connor Communications, which he founded in 2002 after having previously worked in a variety of communications companies – including WKRC-TV Channel 12 in Cincinnati and KBTU in Denver. He also serves as a trustee on the Sycamore Township Board. Marguerite is a dental hygienist in the Hyde Park area and enjoys gardening, reading, and hanging out with their dog, Charlie.

Ultimately, for stewardship to be spiritually meaningful it has to be firmly rooted in faith, and both Denny and Marguerite have taken the faith of their childhood and made it a central part of their day-to-day life. And in the process, stewardship becomes a gift for future generations so that, by word and example, it is a gift that keeps on giving. God, family, community – all anchored in faith. It's as simple as that.



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MASSES

SATURDAY VIGIL: 5:00 P.M.

SUNDAY: 9:00 A.M. AND 11:00 A.M.

CHAPEL (PARISH CENTER):

MON-FRI: 8:30 A.M.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

SATURDAY: 3:30-4:30 P.M.

Ministry at Arden Courts Memory Care Community *continued from front cover*

affirm God's constant tender love. Our mere presence is a gift to them."

As Mary notes, the ministry is made up of two parts – those who pray the rosary with the patients, and those of who facilitate the Communion service.

"On Tuesday at 11 a.m., the activities director at the care center gathers interested Catholic patients in the meeting room and representatives from St. Vincent Ferrer conduct a rosary prayer service," she says. "Then, on Thursdays at 11 a.m., the same thing occurs, but we do the Communion service and Communion is distributed. What greater gift can we give than the Eucharist?"

"It is an honor to be involved in something like this," adds Cathy Tumbusch, who works with the rosary portion of the ministry. "The people to whom we minister are so sweet

and precious. I get a good feeling about being with them and about what we do with and for them. I love the rosary, personally. Although the people are at different levels of understanding, they always seem appreciative. When they thank me, I can sense the sincerity in their voices."

Cathy, Mary and Father all see this ministry as an important stewardship effort.

"My faith is such an important part of my life, but I understand that I need to do more than just worship," Cathy says. "I need to share my gifts – and prayer is one of them – and this is a way to share that."

"These are people who were raised in the faith and who lived the faith," Fr. George adds. "Praying the rosary and receiving Holy Communion serves as a memory jogger to reconnect that person to the faith and to a faithful God."

For more information on the Arden Courts Ministry, please contact Fr. George Kunkel at 513-791-9030, Mary Apke at 513-207-0764, or Cathy Tumbusch at 513-891-7071.