

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

COLUMBUS, GA

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Sometimes, all it takes to set the tone for the day is one simple interaction. Positive or negative, we have all experienced how the simple actions of those we encounter in public can affect us. One ministry wants to make sure the first interaction you experience at Holy Family is a happy and positive one.

The Greeter Ministry is new to our parish. Inspired by the recent Stewardship Renewal program, a group of 14 parishioners has been busy since January making sure every guest at Holy Family feels welcome and at home.

“The idea came from the stewardship program by asking what we could do to make people feel more welcome and more at home,” says Greeter Coordinator Kelly Johnson. “It sprang up out of that and we immediately had people who were interested.”

Kelly and his wife, Lizi, had both previously served as ushers and wanted to see a welcoming presence outside of the church, as well as inside. After discussing it with the Parish Council, the Greeter Ministry grew out of a desire to supplement what the ushers were already doing within the church.



Members of the Holy Family Greeter Ministry – (from left) Jack Kasych, Lorrie Kasych, Jeff Kelly, Ethan Johnson, Emma Johnson, Richard Battersby, Roberta Battersby, Julie Lisi, Lizi Johnson, and Kelly Johnson

“Fr. Dan and Deacon Arnie have been really supportive,” Kelly says. “It’s nice to

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The Traits of the Christian Steward

Each day, we strive to live stewardship in our lives, recognizing our roles as “God’s co-workers” in His creative, redemptive and sanctifying work. But in our quest to live as disciples of Christ, many obstacles often arise.

One of the most prevalent roadblocks in living stewardship is understanding the traits that make up a good Christian steward. Surely, it would be much more convenient if we had some sort of “stewardship profiler” who could lay out the necessary steps to becoming a good steward, like on one of those television crime dramas. Unfortunately, it more often feels like living stewardship is a lifelong journey that we will never fully comprehend.

Fortunately, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, gives some insight into the characteristics that make up a good Christian steward. It may not have the powers of a stewardship “profiler” or “mentalist,” but it certainly gives us some tangible things to think about.

The Christian steward should display some of the following traits:

INSIGHT

Before the disciples could live what we know as the stewardship way of life, they needed a flash of insight, or a certain way of viewing the world and their relationship to it in a fresh light. This “divine grandeur,” more than anything else, is often what sets people on the path to Christian stewardship (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 39).

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

Stewards are fully conscious of their accountability in sharing of their time, talent and treasure. As caretakers of the gifts that God has given them, they have the opportunity and responsibility to use them to their fullest potential to spread God’s Kingdom on Earth (40).

GENEROSITY

Christian stewards are generous out of love as well as duty. They should display a desire to share with and care for others based on the sacramental graces they have received. And they are also cognizant of the many warnings that the New Testament presents to those who fail in charity and authentic love (40).

JOY

Christian stewards are often presented with difficult obstacles, but they should remain joyful in the face of challenges to their lives of stewardship. Like Paul, the good steward is able to say, “I am filled with encouragement, I am overflowing with joy all the more because of all our affliction” (2 Cor. 7:4). Only by serving with a joyful spirit will stewards fully reap the rewards of their service, both in this life and the next.

Indeed, living as a Christian steward is a lifelong journey with many ups and downs along the way. But if we strive to consciously incorporate each of these characteristics into our giving of time, talent and treasure, we will find that the profile of a good Christian steward will become much clearer with each experience of service.

A Letter From Our Pastor

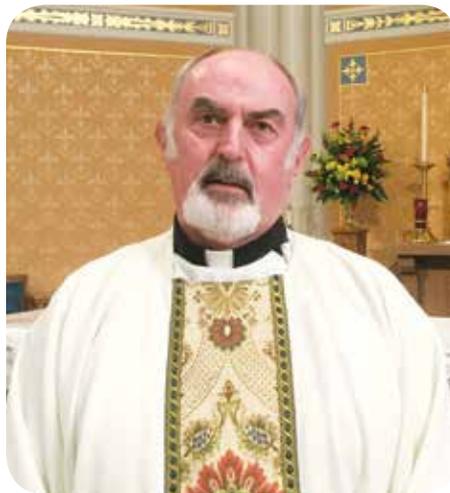
Stewardship and Discipleship Begin With Love

Dear Parishioners,

In John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” So many times, the Lord calls us to love one another. This was one of the Gospel readings back in April. On that particular Sunday, Pope Francis gathered with a large group of teenagers, and the whole theme of his homily was built around that message. It is a message that is equally appropriate for all of us, young and old.

Pope Francis is well aware of modern technology and modern communication, especially with how it is so prevalent among today’s youth. He also said in that April homily, “Happiness cannot be bought; it is not an app that you can download on your phones, nor will the latest update bring you freedom and grandeur in love.”

The pope explained that “Love is the Christian’s identity card, the only truly valid ‘document’ which identifies us as followers and disciples of Christ.” Nevertheless, we must work to constantly renew this card, because if it ever expires, we cease being witnesses of the faith. If we are really followers of Christ, then genuine love needs to shine forth in our lives. As Pope Francis said, “Before all else, love is beautiful, and it is the path to happiness.”



Who among us does not want to be happy? We all strive for that, and the Lord gives us a formula for achieving it. It may seem simple on the surface, but we all know how difficult it can be. Love – the kind of love to which we are called by Jesus – is work. Lots of work. It takes effort, renewal, conversion, and persistence.

During his homily, Pope Francis completely captured the essence of stewardship, and of love. He declared, “Look to the Lord, who is never outdone in generosity. We receive so many gifts from Him, and every day we should thank Him... Let me ask you something. Do you thank the Lord every day? Even if we forget to do so, He never forgets, each day, to give us some special gift. It is not something material and tangible that we can use, but something even

greater, a lifelong gift. He offers us His faithful friendship, which He will never take back.”

Gratitude is, of course, at the very basis of stewardship. It is this thankfulness that should inspire us whenever we run up against one of life’s many roadblocks – those things that make it hard for us to love as we should. If we rely on the Lord, we can accomplish this love. As the pope said in closing on that day in April, “Loving in this way, you will be recognized as disciples of Jesus. And your joy will be complete.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Dan O’Connell
Pastor





Parish Renovations Seeing Completion

It's been a long, complicated – and at times, frustrating process – but the renovations on our parish campus have been completed. And no one is more grateful for the parish help and support in this work than Roy Waters, volunteer project coordinator.

From the grotto, the church sign, the church heating and air conditioning systems, to St. Mary Social hall, and St. Joseph Hall – the projects started in September have been completed and paid for, all within budget.

“This isn't me,” Roy says. “It was many people. All the church staff – full and part-time – have taken on responsibilities above and beyond in their normal duties to help me get it done. Without their help – it was more than I could have hoped. No one person could have done this in one year.”

The major issue looming over the entire project was the age of the campus itself. The church building is on the National Register of Historic Places, and that fact alone required a number of lengthy steps to obtain permits for the work.

Roy credits those taking care of the church in the past with doing all they could to keep the property maintained.

“People have done a good job – those in the past before me, they have done their part, but age is taking over,” he says. “Had they not done what they did, it would be much worse.”

Roy also credits Paul Nott, the diocese's representative for capital projects, with providing invaluable guidance in getting the projects completed.

While some of the projects completed were not visible to the casual observer, others are in the public eye.

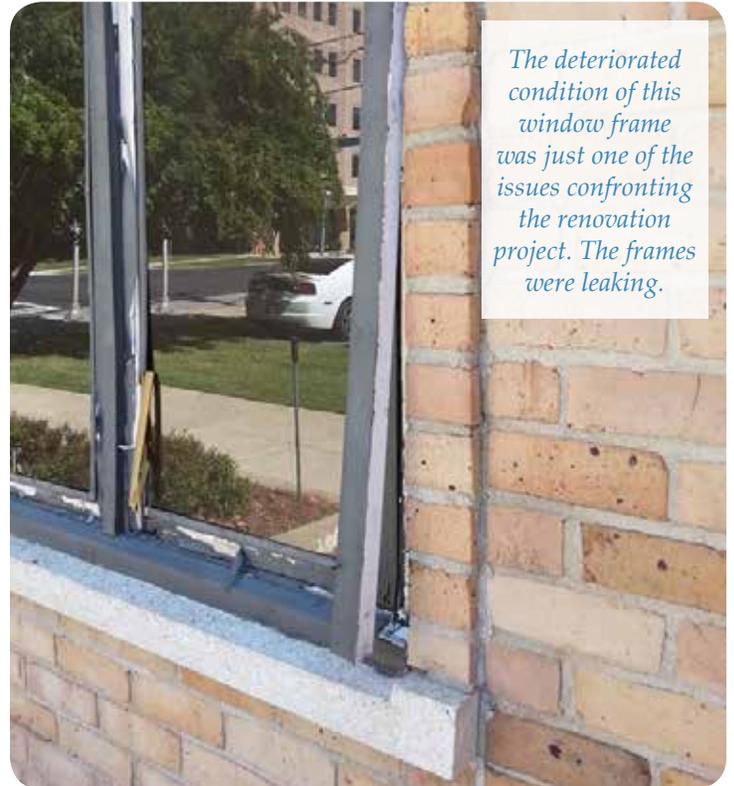
The grotto area has been completely renovated.

“This was the first major project we did,” Roy says. “It was huge. It had drainage problems, and security and sanitation problems. It was not just aesthetic. The waterfall has a blue light now, and it looks really nice.”

The church sign was replaced next and is now lighted.

Next in line for work was St. Mary Social Hall.

“The roof had been leaking for a number of years,” Roy says. “The condition of the roof was deplorable. We removed the roof and a new one was installed. Each window was leaking. It took me about five months to end the window leaks. This was started in November and it



The deteriorated condition of this window frame was just one of the issues confronting the renovation project. The frames were leaking.

was done [in April]. All the ceilings were replaced, the flooring was taken out and new floors were installed, and the building has been painted. The plumbing was mostly all replaced, and is up to code. We had to deal with mold. That has been a major undertaking. It was a project that required for the building to be open seven days a week with someone there from the church so the contractor could work. We haven't had an open house yet, but the parishioners will be pleased with it.”

Another key undertaking was the removal of asbestos from the church basement, a cleaning of the church basement, and the installation of a new heating and air conditioning system.

“With the new HVAC system, the parishioners can have a comfortable place to worship,” Roy says. “The past year, it has been miserable in church, as the system was not working.”

An additional major project was the installation of new windows in St. Joseph Hall that Roy called “a major, major project. The windows had to be custom-made.”

Other projects in the renovation include:

- Upgrades to the Sanctuary sound system
- Major electrical repairs and upgrades in the church basement
- Major repairs and upgrades to the underground irrigation system
- Plumbing upgrades to the Sacristy and Flower rooms
- Outside security lighting upgraded and changed to LED for all buildings to include Georgia Power Company upgrades to their security lighting for our buildings
- Handicap Access ramps for both sides of the crosswalk in front of our church
- Water supply lines from the main to the meter for St. Joseph's Hall and St. Mary's Hall replaced by the Columbus Water Works. The church had tried for years to get this taken care of. Water samples tested by the Columbus Water Works indicate our water is safe to drink.



Drainage, security and sanitation issues were a problem in our grotto area before the space was renovated. The waterfall has new lighting, and the space is now more visible to visitors.



As for the financial aspect of the projects, Roy says the roof replacement at St. Mary Hall was in the budget for several years, but had not been done. The work was completed significantly under budget. The St. Joseph Hall window project also was in the budget for a number of years also is coming in under budget.

The HVAC replacement and asbestos removal were not in the church budget, however.

“Fortunately, the Finance Council and Parish Council work well together, and they were able to identify funding so it could be done,” Roy says.

The grotto work also was taken care of.

“The church is blessed to have an endowment,” Roy says. “This was used for the church sign and grotto area.”

The interior work at St. Mary Hall – the doors, flooring and plumbing – was also made possible through the efforts of the Finance Council and Parish Council to identify funds for the project.

With the new fiscal year starting July 1, Roy says the next project will be replacing the incandescent lighting in the church with LED lights.

“The ones we have now are creating a hazard, and have to be replaced,” he says. “We’ll work on those very, very soon.”

The roofs on the church, rectory and St. Joseph Hall also are up for replacement, Roy says.

Fr. Don praised Roy’s dedication and the Parish Council’s role in making the work possible.

“Roy worked tirelessly to wrap it up to fruition,” he says. “The Parish are really appreciative to his dedication to his parish, and the sacrifices he made for it.”

Father noted that the work at St. Mary’s Hall was especially important because it is our main gathering place for parish functions. He also cited the importance of having the HVAC system in the church working properly, considering our hot summers.

Roy encourages anyone with questions about the projects to contact him, and he will take them around the grounds to show them what has been done.



Our sign was in very bad shape before the renovation work was done. Now it offers a welcome greeting to our church.

If you have any questions regarding these projects, please contact Roy Waters at 706-718-7914.



Gracelyn Jones

The Face of Young Catholics Today

In 2013, just a few months after he was elected, Pope Francis addressed a crowd of over 3 million people who had come to celebrate World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The theme for the worldwide event – *Go and make disciples of all nations* – recognized the importance today’s young Catholics have for the future of our Catholic faith. It’s a theme Pope Francis returns to again and again, calling our young people to evangelize, serve, and be examples of Christ’s message. And they are heeding his call. But just what is the typical young Catholic like in today’s world? Well, let’s meet parishioner Gracelyn Jones, a student at the University of Georgia who balances the rigors of academic life while living and practicing stewardship on both the campus and out in the community.

Of course, faith and stewardship have to begin somewhere, and for Gracelyn those first lessons came from the home. Both her mother and grandmother were very involved in the Catholic Church and

greatly influenced Gracelyn’s inner conviction that it’s important to put her faith into action through service.

“I think we have a natural instinct to serve others,” Gracelyn says. “Growing up, my mother always went out of her way to help others, and she has instilled that in me. She also showed me the benefits of service, mainly how it gives you a sense of purpose and fulfillment in the sense that your actions are making a difference in the lives of others. If you can do anything to help, you should be doing it.”

Once she graduated from Columbus High and arrived on the UGA campus, it would have been all too easy for Gracelyn to slide into the rhythms of college life with homework, football games, parties, and all-night study sessions. But that all changed when Americorp Vista visited Gracelyn’s class and gave a presentation on Campus Kitchens at UGA – CKUGA – a student-powered hunger relief organization that recovers unwanted food from local grocery stores and repurposes it into nutritious meals that are delivered weekly to food-insecure seniors in Athens. Gracelyn was immediately intrigued, and as is often in the case when trying to live stewardship, one thing led to another.

“After hearing the presentation, I decided to volunteer,” Gracelyn says. “Then, after volunteering for a while I decided to apply for shift leader. After that, I became the Food Collections shift leader, which basically means that I drove a van with volunteers to



Gracelyn Jones at the Food Waste and Hunger Summit, at which she was awarded Volunteer of the Year.

Trader Joe’s and Fresh Market to pick up donations and then take them back to our industrial cooler to sort out what can be used. The donations are used to prepare meals, which we then deliver to the homes.”

It’s a daunting job. Because CKUGA uses only raw materials such as meats, vegetables, pasta, and rice to prepare meals, the donated food items have to be sorted so that anything they cannot use – such as prepared salads, sandwiches or cooked entrees – are donated further to other organizations around town. Last year alone, 424 volunteers at CKUGA recovered 51,900 pounds of unwanted food and prepared 17,700 meals. Furthermore, Gracelyn was the sole organizer of the Campus Kitchen’s Turkeypalooza in which she brought together 26 organizations

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Some vegetable donations collected by Campus Kitchen volunteers

Gracelyn Jones *continued from page 6*

to donate 1,800 pounds of goods in order to distribute 1,370 meals to over 300 senior clients.

This past April, after serving as both shift leader and as co-president since the fall of 2014, and after two years – and one summer – of dedicating every Sunday morning to coordinating grocery store food recovery, Gracelyn received the Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2016 Food Waste & Hunger Summit where Campus Kitchens from around the country gathered to celebrate their accomplishments over the past year. Eight individuals from around the country were recognized.

“I had no idea I had been nominated for the award,” Gracelyn says. “One of my duties as co-president is to write nominations for such awards, and I actually wrote one for our Campus Kitchen and our ‘expand the movement’ endeavors. As it turns out, my co-president decided to write a different nomination and decided to submit that one instead, all without telling me. I was completely shocked when my name was announced as the winner for the award.”

In her young years, Gracelyn has learned an important lesson when it comes to sharing our talents – that when that talent comes from a place of passion, when it drives us to do and be more, then we discover untapped sources that come forth so that even more can be accomplished. And in this one area, Gracelyn feels strongly that she can make a difference.



Gracelyn Jones (far left) in the new kitchen space at UGA

“I am especially drawn to the issue of food insecurity because it is something that can be solved with public awareness,” Gracelyn says. “Don’t get me wrong, food insecurity is a huge problem, but I genuinely believe if we change our food system, this problem could be alleviated. About 40 percent of food produced in the U.S. is wasted, yet millions of people are food insecure.”

Admittedly, being a young person today is not easy, and the world offers so many distractions. But Pope Francis has repeatedly recognized the special energies, opportunities and responsibilities that our Catholic young men and women offer the world, believing wholeheartedly

that they are the face of the future – much like Gracelyn, who believes in God, stands on a foundation of faith, and recognizes the importance of putting her faith into action.



Gracelyn Jones (foreground) during the Turkeypalooza, a fundraiser she organized to prepare holiday meals for the elderly



THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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Weekend Mass

Saturday Vigil

5:00 p.m. Mass

Sunday

8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Daily Mass

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

12:10 p.m. Mass

Reconciliation

Saturday

4:00 p.m.

New Ministry Helping Parishioners Feel Welcome

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see people coming in, either those who are new or have been coming for years. It's nice to greet people with a smile and an open door, which is the whole purpose of what we're doing. I think people have really enjoyed having someone there to greet them."

As greeters post themselves at each door, they're able not only to make sure each person gets a friendly "hello," but also to answer questions and help point visitors in the right direction.

"I personally wanted to get more involved with the Church of the Holy Family community and to get to know more of my 'family' members there – what a great way to do just that by being a part of the Greeter Ministry," says greeter Julie Lisi. "By opening and extending my hand to those who come to worship is, in a way, opening and extending the arms of the Church to those entering the

House of God. Those who come to the church for Mass or for any other reason should feel comfortable and welcome, and, for those reasons and more, I am proud to wear my Greeter name tag that says 'WELCOME!'"

As the year goes on, Kelly says the greeters would like to see more parishioners lend their time to ministry.

"We're looking for more people, and the more we've got the better for coverage," he says. "Especially during holy days and Lent and Advent when we have more Masses, it would be nice to have more folks to cover. Everyone has been great stepping up to help."

Those who would like to become greeters must first have completed VIRTUS training. If you would like to learn more, please email the ministry at holyfamilygreeters@gmail.com.

"By opening and extending my hand to those who come to worship is, in a way, opening and extending the arms of the Church to those entering the House of God. Those who come to the church for Mass or for any other reason should feel comfortable and welcome." – Julie Lisi