

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

COLUMBUS, GA

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NOVEMBER 2016

The Gudz Family: *Keeping Busy for Christ*

George Gudz has a simple but profound motto for life – “As long as you stay busy doing things for the Lord, everything will be OK.”

And staying happily occupied “doing things for the Lord” is exactly what George and his wife, Stephanie, and their son, Christopher, are up to these days. George and Stephanie have been faithful parishioners of our parish since 1993, and have truly enjoyed their time at our parish, as well as the ministries to which they have been devoted.

“Being a cradle Catholic, I have always been involved in my faith in one way or another,” George says. “I think it is important for people to be involved in church. A large part of your faith is contributing to a community – your parish community.”



For the last two years, George has been working with the Hospice Ministry, which is something to which he gives his time and talent up to five days a week.

“I really enjoy this ministry, and I do it so that when the good Lord asks me some day, ‘Did you visit me?’ I can say, ‘Yes!’” George says. “When I visit those in hospice, I become friends with them all very

quickly. They teach me more than I teach them, and they comfort me even more than I comfort them. It is such a blessing to be with them in their last days.”

George also serves the Lord by being one of four facilitators of the RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults – program at our parish. As a facilitator, he conducts discussions and gives presentations to

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Questions & Answers About Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence — part of the rhythm of parish life at Holy Family. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year?

How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your Commitment Card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

Time Section: Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

Talent Section: You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

Treasure Section: Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving five percent of your income to Holy Family.

My age or physical limitations prevent me from being active in the parish. Should I still turn in a Commitment Card?

Yes! The first section of the card — Stewardship of Time — is the most important because it allows you to make commitments to prayer. Even if you can't join a ministry or make it to Mass on Sunday, you can still pray for our parish. Your spiritual support has tremendous value in the eyes of God.

One time I turned in a card, but no one ever called me when I signed up for a ministry.

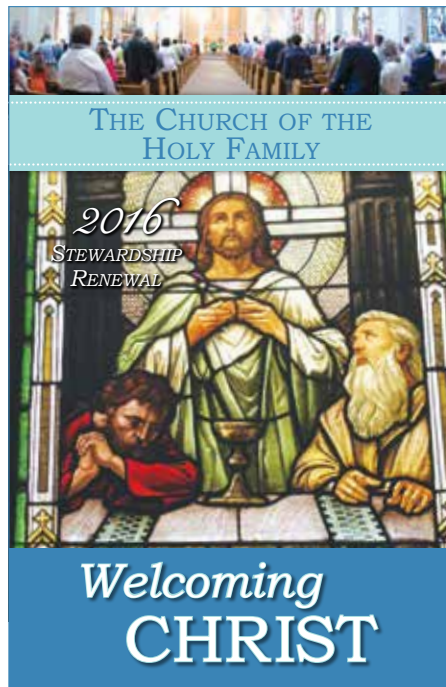
If this happened in the past, please forgive us! And don't give up on filling out your Commitment Card! We have a very good plan to call every person interested in joining a new ministry. If for some reason the ministry leader does not call you within four weeks of turning in your card, let the parish office know.

I don't even go to Mass very frequently. Why turn in a Commitment Card?

Because this is your chance to turn over a new leaf! Why not make a commitment to God to come to Mass every Sunday, and then write down that commitment? Even if that's the only commitment you make, take a step forward. Jesus Himself is waiting for you!

What happens if I don't return my Commitment Card?

We will mail you a reminder letter that includes an extra Commitment Card (in case you misplaced yours). Make every effort you can to participate. Our Stewardship Renewal is a very important annual event in the life of our parish. You and your family are part of what makes Holy Family a great community! Most importantly, your commitments are actually promises to Christ Himself. All of us are called to give back to God a portion of what He has given us.



Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Time

Dear Parishioners,

The next several weeks are certainly a busy time for us as Catholics, good stewards, good citizens, and faithful members of the Church and our parish. There are celebrations and commemorations both inside and outside the Church that are momentous in terms of faith, citizenship, and living as people of thanksgiving and gratitude.

We celebrate Veterans Day to honor and thank all those men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces in one capacity or another. Indicative of the importance of this day, every year at 11 a.m. Eastern, the President of the United States lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

On Sunday, Nov. 20, we culminate the Jubilee Year of Mercy on the Feast of Christ the King. In this Jubilee Year, our Holy Father Pope Francis has invited us to love, be kind, be generous, and to forgive boundlessly. How have we done? We all understand this is what we are supposed to be doing every day and every year, but this year reminds us of that, and hopefully renews us all in that reality and that hope.

We all understand that Americans celebrate a day of Thanksgiving on Nov. 24. What more can we say about this? It is a day that was faith-based from its very beginnings, and it is an indication of how much we have to thank God for in terms of the gifts we have received – our lives, our families, our Church, our Lord and Savior – everything we are and everything we have.

No sooner are Thanksgiving Day celebrations concluded, than we begin that glorious season called Advent on Sunday, Nov. 27. This prepares us for and leads to Christmas. Indeed, this is both a busy and extraordinary time of year! There is, of course, much more on which

we could focus and about which we could think, meditate and pray, but that is more than enough for us to consider and absorb.

From a stewardship perspective, I would like you to not only participate and focus on all the particular things that are about to happen, but also on one of our special gifts – the gift of time. The gift of time, which we

all receive from God in equal amount, is precious because it is a non-renewable resource. Although some of our time is committed because of family responsibilities, work responsibilities or simply personal needs, we have an element of freewill with how we spend a certain amount of it. We need to spend some of that time in prayer, in thanksgiving, in worship, and in works of mercy and ministry. Our time is perhaps more precious than any material gifts we receive from the Lord. How are we doing with that gift?



Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Dan O'Connell
Pastor



United Through Prayer *The Communion of Saints*

Each year, the solemn feasts of All Saints and All Souls Day usher in the month of November. During these special memorials, Catholics around the world remember all those who have gone before us in the pursuit of that final goal – heaven. Pope Francis described these feasts as “days of hope” saying, “There are difficult moments in life, but with hope you go forward and keep your eyes on what awaits us. Today [All Saints Day] is a day of hope – our brothers and sisters are in the presence of God, and we, too, will be there in the Lord’s arms if we follow the path of Jesus.”

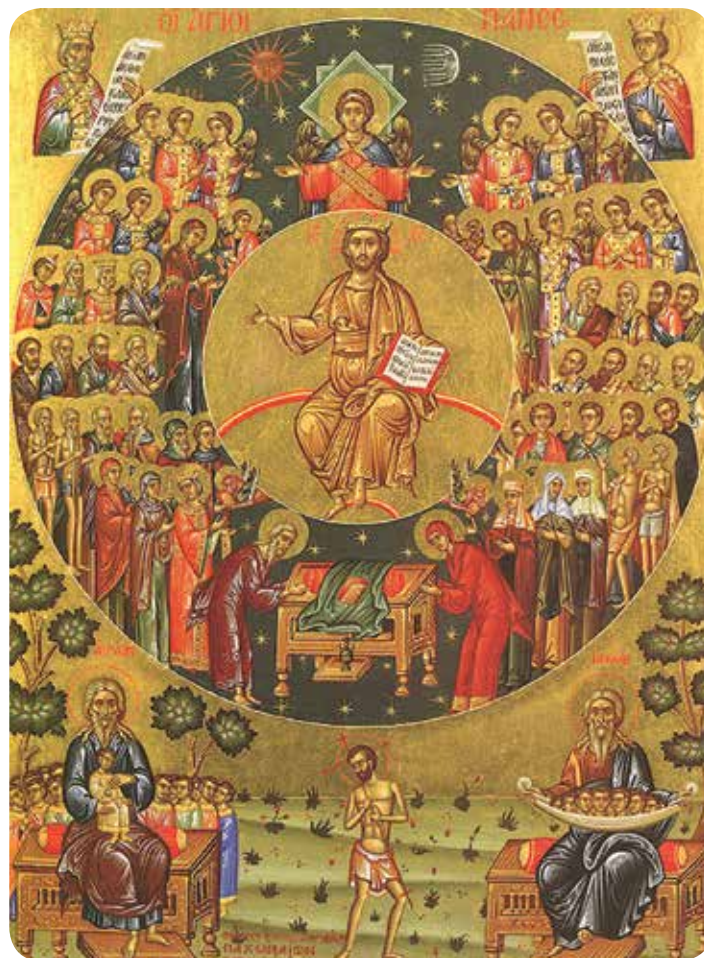
Yet, these moments of hope are not limited to the feasts of All Saints Day and All Souls alone. Here at Church of the Holy Family, parishioners have the ability to both remember deceased loved ones and seek out help through intercessory prayer every single liturgy through Mass Intentions. In this way, says Fr. Dan O’Connell, we are able to truly partake in the Communion of Saints.

“People regularly request that Masses be said for loved ones or that Special Intentions – such as for the healing of the sick or a person’s birthday – be read during liturgies,” Fr. Dan says. “I think it connects our spiritual life to everybody else’s. It reminds us that as a community of faith, we believe that the prayers of others – both living and deceased – help carry us in our day-to-day lives toward heaven.”

Deacon Arnold ‘Arnie’ Goodman personally witnessed the unitive power of this form of intercessory prayer during his previous parish assignment.

“I was in a little parish before I came to Georgia,” Deacon Arnie says. “There, almost everyone had a Mass said for their loved at one time or another, and it just brought the whole parish together. The love that everyone shared for the deceased was very touching.”

For Deacon Arnie, remembering our loved ones



through Masses – whether because they have passed on, or for happy occasions such as a birthday – is just another way to show our love for them and to celebrate the gift of their life. It’s a way to continue to support them on the journey toward heaven and to celebrate with them when that goal is attained.

“It reminds us of our final goal,” Deacon Arnie says. “Every single one of us has the capacity to become a saint – maybe not necessarily a canonized one, but to achieve eternal happiness. I think praying for our

Communion of Saints

loved ones, especially those who are deceased, is very important for our families as well as the Church. It reminds us that when we participate in the liturgy, we are celebrating with both the living and deceased members – it reminds us of how massive and powerful the Church really is.”

This, says Fr. Dan, is precisely why the Church holds the saints in such high regard, honoring them as both examples and advocates who help “strengthen us in our own journey” toward heaven.

“When we ask the saints to intercede for us, it is like asking any of our friends on earth to pray for us,” Fr. Dan says. “For, as part of the Communion of Saints, we are all united during the Mass, living and dead alike. This is why our prayers are able to help deceased loved ones on

with their journey toward unity with Christ, and why the saints are able to continue helping us here on Earth.”

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All parishioners are invited to partake in this powerful form of intercessory prayer by having Masses said for their own prayer intentions or in honor of loved ones. To do so, please contact either Belinda Johnson, Administrative Assistant, at 706-323-7865 or Janet Hammock, Office Manager, at 706-323-6908.

The Gudz Family *continued from front cover*

offer an accurate overview of Catholicism for those who are hoping to enter the Church.

“I wanted to be more actively involved in the parish, and I enjoy sharing my faith, so I thought being an RCIA facilitator would be a good fit,” he says. “In order to prepare to give presentations for RCIA, I need to do a lot of studying. I have learned a lot about my faith this way. I have all kinds of religious books around my house! Above all, I like talking about the Mass and the sacraments.”

George truly appreciates being able to share his faith life with Stephanie and Christopher, as well.

“We do a lot of faith activities together as a family, and go to Mass and pray with each other regularly,”

George says. “We like being able to do things for others. It is all part of stewardship. Our son, Christopher, finds that his faith is one of the greatest joys of his life. He is really into it. I believe that the Catholic atmosphere of our home has helped instilled this into him.”

Stephanie also helps out in the parish community in various ways, such as by being active in the Parish Choir and taking care of the altar linens. Christopher volunteers as an altar server every other Saturday night and fills in whenever needed.

In all, the Gudz family has sincerely found that, as long as they stay “busy doing things for the Lord, everything will be OK.”



The “Thanksgiving Spirit” Doesn’t Have to End at Thanksgiving

Giving thanks to God in gratitude for the gifts we have received isn’t an attitude we should save for this annual holiday alone. When we live lives of stewardship – sharing of our time, talents and treasure in thanks to God and at the service of others – we can sustain life in the Thanksgiving spirit throughout the year.

The origin of the first Thanksgiving feast is a matter of some debate among historians. But since 1863, Americans have annually set aside the fourth or fifth Thursday of November to give thanks to God for a bountiful harvest. The holiday became a matter of federal law in 1941, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a joint congressional resolution to observe Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday of November. Even as our society has become less agrarian, families continue to gather each November to give thanks to God for each other, and for the many blessings they have received throughout the year.

Most people associate this “spirit of Thanksgiving” with the fall holiday and its many recognizable symbols – brisk weather, cornucopias, family gatherings, and plenty of delicious food. But giving thanks to God in gratitude for the gifts we have received isn’t an attitude we should save for this annual holiday alone. When we live lives of stewardship – sharing of our time, talents and treasure in thanks to God and at the service of others – we can sustain life in the Thanksgiving spirit throughout the year.

The Church teaches that this daily response of gratitude is an important element of living the life of a Christian disciple. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Indeed, in the work of salvation, Christ

sets creation free from sin and death to consecrate it anew and make it return to the Father, for his glory. The thanksgiving of the members of the Body participates in that of their Head” (CCC, 2637).

And how can we express this spirit of thanks? We can serve others, living the virtue of charity by reaching out to our brothers and sisters in need through acts of kindness. We can give back to God from our “first fruits,” sharing of our treasure in thanksgiving and recognition of the need to return a portion of our gifts to God. We can utilize our unique talents to make our parish and local communities better places. And, as the *Catechism* also points out, we can even express thanks through prayerfully offering up our daily activities to God – “Every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving” (CCC, 2638).

This Thanksgiving, take a moment to think of ways that you can live in the “spirit of Thanksgiving” on the fourth Thursday of November, and every other day throughout the year. Living the stewardship way of life may not always involve a precisely carved turkey, decorations or a family viewing of *It’s a Wonderful Life* – but it will provide lifelong fulfillment and joy rooted in an attitude of perpetual thanksgiving.

Through Prayer, Pregnancy Resource Center Answers the Mission to End Abortion

Each week, 25 to 30 children are legally killed in our county. Just imagine, an entire kindergarten class no longer existing.

“At the end of the year, you have 1,500 children that are no longer a part of this community,” says Kelly Tolman, director and founder of Seneca Choices for Life, a local crisis pregnancy resource center.

Sound shocking? Well, that’s kind of the point. This past October, many people in the Columbus area took the time to pray onsite at a local abortion clinic during the 40 Days for Life initiative. This national effort seeks to show communities the impact that abortion has on their own neighborhood and encourages the faithful to take a stand through prayer, fasting and constant vigil.

As part of the 40 Days for Life, Seneca hosted their second annual 5K and Witness Walk on Oct. 15. In addition to raising funds to support the pregnancy resource clinic, Kelly says the walk was a tribute to the inherent value of life in all of its forms.

“We have a lot of young people involved in Seneca and they were pretty motivated to run,” she says. “We had black T-shirts for those who registered to run that read ‘#beawitness’ as a testament to the unborn.”

Kelly says taking a month out to honor the lives of the unborn is important because at its heart is the most crucial part of their mission – prayer.

“As Catholics, we’re always looking out to see how we can help others when it comes to missions,” Kelly says. “This is our mission field right here. It’s going on right up the street here at 3850 Rosemont Drive. We allow it go on because it’s an uncomfortable subject and we all just turn our heads, but we need to get comfortable with the fact that this is our mission field and we need to take ownership of it, and it starts with prayer.”



Born Sept. 19, baby Alexa Nicole is alive today thanks to the efforts of Seneca Choices for Life. Alexa’s mom was contemplating abortion when she was counseled by the volunteers at Seneca. Along with providing support for those facing a crisis pregnancy, Seneca staff and volunteers spend countless hours praying at a local abortion clinic hoping to change hearts and minds.

Now that the 40 Days of Life has ended, Kelly says Seneca still wants those in our diocese to know it doesn’t mean there aren’t ways to help.

“Just because the 40 Days is over doesn’t mean you can’t find a day to come out and pray,” she says. “Abby Johnson, who was the director of Planned Parenthood Dallas, left Planned Parenthood and has become a pro-life advocate. She said if Christians are onsite praying at



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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.

Pregnancy Resource Center Answers the Mission to End Abortion *continued from page 7*

a clinic, the no-show rate goes up by 70 percent. Waking up and having a cup of coffee and coming out to pray can save a life.”

Seneca also provides assistance to families and women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and up to two years after the child’s birth. The agency relies strictly on donations and time from volunteers.

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Parishioners who would like to help out – either by making a donation of money, baby items or time – may contact Kelly Tolman at support@SenecaCFL.org or by calling 706-593-2460.