

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

COLUMBUS, GA

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Giving to God First

“Enjoy the Company of People Who Share Your Faith” *Holy Family’s Fall Festival*

This is the season to enjoy the colorful autumnal glory that is God’s creation! Each year, Holy Family hosts its Fall Festival to do just that – to bring us together outdoors with our friends and families in a celebration of our faith community.

“We wanted families to come together and enjoy the company of fellow parishioners in the great outdoors,” Belinda Johnson says. “The Fall Festival is such a fun atmosphere and everyone really enjoys the activities and being around good friends.”

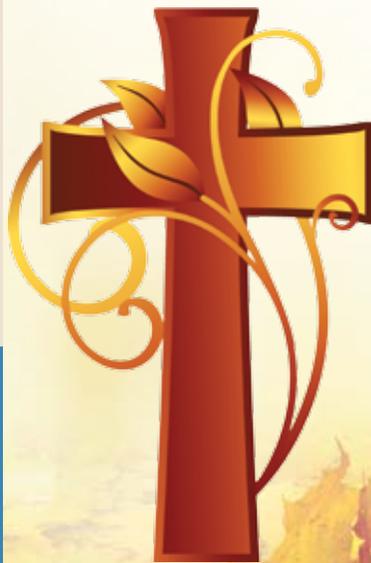
Holy Family’s Fall Festival has been a tradition for faith community members for over 15 years. A parishioner, Phillipa Brown, and several other ladies and members of Circle of Friends originally conceived of the idea of having a fair at a site other than the parish campus.

This year, the Fall Festival will take place at the Johnson Farm at 464 Old River Road in Fortson on Oct. 16, from 1 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

“All parishioners are welcome to attend,” Belinda says. “Some of the main events will include pony rides and hay rides, Molly the Clown, face painting, arts and crafts, a petting zoo, a blue grass band and lots of food and refreshments.”

Though we might all attend different liturgies each weekend, the Fall Festival is a wonderful opportunity to come together as a faith community, to meet other parishioners and to foster a spirit of hospitality.

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Making the Most of Every Sunday *Putting God First*

Many Americans set aside their Sundays to enjoy various leisure activities. Indeed, Sundays during the summer months may include cookouts, or perhaps afternoons spent at the swimming pool or baseball stadium. And when fall arrives, many fans will certainly be spending their Sundays in front of the television, as they become engrossed in the excitement of the National Football League's highly anticipated Sunday games.

Sunday is also the day when more than 18,000 Catholic parishes in the United States will be celebrating Masses. But if recent statistics are any indication, the percentage of the U.S. Catholic population attending Mass that day will stand in stark contrast to the percentage of the U.S. television audience watching Sunday football games.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey published in 2008, Catholics account for roughly 23.9 percent of the adult population in the United States. But of the 70 million-plus registered Catholics in the U.S., only 36 percent attend Mass once a week or more, according to Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. Only 12 percent of U.S. Catholics participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year, and a mere 17 percent of Catholic men say they have ever even slightly considered becoming a priest or religious brother.

God gives us leisure time to clear our heads and recover from what can often be a hectic daily life. But it is important that we glorify God in all that we do, and time away from work or school provides a great opportunity to regularly celebrate the sacraments. As Catholics, we are obligated to attend Mass on a weekly basis, barring illness or extenuating circumstances. But this is just the first step. Spending time in prayer, Eucharistic Adoration and Reconciliation provides us with the grace, healing



and the wisdom to live as disciples of Christ on a daily basis. And sharing our time, talent and treasure through ministry participation and charitable giving enables us to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ, thus ensuring that we are placing God at the top of our list of priorities.

Each Sunday presents an opportunity for us to foster our discipleship commitments to Christ. So, make the time and discern ways that you can put God first, on every Sunday throughout the year.

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A Letter From Our Pastor

Pray, Smile, and Make the World a Better Place

Dear Parishioners,

We often in the Church speak of “new beginnings.” Those two words can have almost endless meanings to us and to how we live our lives. Now that the fall season is in full swing, even though we tend to think more of spring as being a “new beginning,” now is equally so. Think of all the things in our lives and in those of our families that have begun or begun again in the past several weeks.

Two thoughts come to me as I ponder the significance of this time of year. It seems that there is never a time of year when starting over and renewing are not appropriate. We speak often of prayer – Jesus

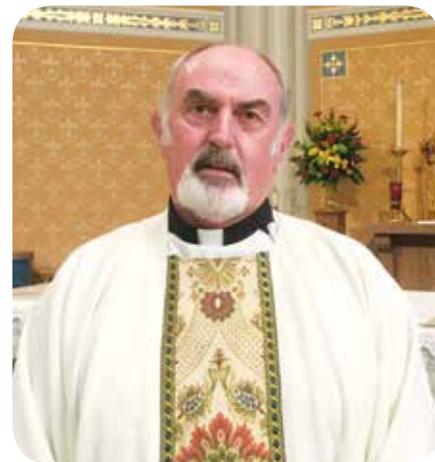
certainly provides for us both an example and encouragement to have rich prayer lives. Now would be a great time for a personal spiritual renewal, both for us individually and for our families, if appropriate.

There are prayer groups and spiritual studies beginning and ongoing at our parish. You might consider getting involved in one. No matter what you choose to do, it is always a good time to extend and formalize your prayer life. Schedule more time for personal prayer. Even better, if you have a family, try to formalize the prayer lives of your family as a group. That can enrich your life so much, and often it is something that stays with children forever.

My second thought goes back to the theme often stated by Jesus to “love one another.”

Were you aware that studies done by healthcare groups have shown that people who try to be kind to others have less pain, less depression, and less stress in their lives? That is exactly what the Lord tells us will happen if we do even small things to demonstrate our love for one another.

That can begin with something as simple as a smile. Smiles certainly make others feel better, and they tend to help us, as well. Another way to show kindness is to get



involved in ministries and activities. By committing ourselves to ministry and to being volunteers in a variety of ways, we are actually making the idea of being kind routine and normal. Look for ways you can do things that match and fulfill your talents and interests.

Those two thoughts, although seemingly small, can make a huge difference in our lives, not to mention the lives of those around us. First, pray more on a fixed schedule. Second, smile and be kind. It is amazing how those two aspects of our lives can be fulfilled and fulfilling.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Dan O'Connell
Pastor

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Social Apostolate Ministry Works

The needs are great, but our parish's Social Apostolate Ministry works year-round to meet the needs of the parishioners and those in the community.

G.G. Whaley-Wong coordinates the work of the ministry and sees the love of Christ in the work she provides through the outreach.

"We are loving our neighbors and helping them get through the rough times, and back on stable ground," G.G. says. "I have always had a great satisfaction in giving and helping others. I feel sharing is caring, and I show great love by giving as it is better to give than to receive.

"I am a strong believer in and live God's words that, 'Whatever you do for the least of my people, you do for me,'" she continues.

According to G.G., in addition to the sack lunch program that was covered in an earlier issue of the newsletter, the ministry provides a wide variety of other services.

Supermarket gift cards, gas cards, utility and emergency assistance is provided to parishioners on a case-by-case basis.

Utility assistance is provided to non-parishioners the first Tuesday of the month, during January - October. A small portion is paid toward a past-due utility bill once per calendar year to the first 50 applicants. Payments are made or mailed to the utility company the same day, in many cases to prevent disconnection.

An average of 130 toiletry bags consisting of a roll of toilet tissue, a bar of soap and a washcloth are distributed the last Friday of each month.

Two significant giveaways are conducted during the year. In the spring, as part of the Confirmation Retreat, the confirmandi and family volunteers participate in the giveaway by escorting recipients through the line and distributing a sack lunch, toiletry bag, new T-shirt, ball cap, socks, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush, bag of fruit and liquid supplements to those with feeding tubes. This is a great experience for students who have not been exposed to those who are less fortunate. It gives them an opportunity to actively participate and give true meaning to the Corporal Works of Mercy by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, and clothing the naked.

In the winter, volunteers and students home from college for the holidays fill St. Joseph's Hall to participate in the giveaway by escorting recipients through the line and distributing a sack lunch, toiletry bag, hoodie, knit cap, socks, gloves, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush, bag of fruit, and rosaries.

This year we added something new - school supplies! We filled 100 bags with school supplies and distributed them to an elementary school and nine children in the community.

As the holidays approach, the ministry will hold the canned good/non-perishable food drive. Due to the generosity of the parishioners, food baskets were presented to 15 families last year.

A Thanksgiving meal for the homeless will be served on Thanksgiving Day.



The work of our Social Apostolate Ministry would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. They pack lunches and perform a wide variety of other services.

Anyone wishing to volunteer with the Social Apostolate Ministry may contact G.G. Whaley-Wong at 706-322-0098 or 706-366-7634, or holyfamily6706@gmail.com

G.G. is waiting for 100 names of children whose parents are incarcerated from the Prison Ministry for the Angel Tree Program. Three angel tags will be prepared for each child and placed on the trees in the back of the church. Parishioners participate by choosing an angel from the tree, purchasing a gift, wrapping it and delivering it back to the church on or before the designated date. Volunteers separate and ready approximately 300 gifts for delivery, another volunteer maps, dividing the area into zones, and still other volunteers deliver gifts to the families. Families are always so gracious. In some cases, these are the only gifts the child receives for Christmas.

Mission work - count us in! The ministry collects small items from parishioners to fill shoes boxes for men, women, and children of migrant field and factory workers in Dothan, Ala. Last year, one parishioner donated 240 filled

shoebboxes. From items collected, we filled an additional 214 boxes and we were able to share them with other communities and victims who lost their homes due to fire.

Occasionally, tennis shoes and work boots are available if the budget permits. A small amount of used clothing is kept on hand for emergencies.

We ask for deodorant and toothpaste year-round for the giveaways and also need re-usable supermarket tote bags and plastic rosaries.

G.G. attributes the success of the ministry to the parishioners through the monthly collection the first weekend of each month, and dedicated and committed volunteers who so eagerly and generously give of their time, talent, and treasure!

"Thank you all for your support!" she says. "Believe me, I count on you! I cannot do this alone!"

TAKE A STAND FOR LIFE

**From Sept. 28 to Nov. 6,
our community will take part in 40 Days for Life,
a groundbreaking, coordinated international mobilization.**

*We pray that, with God's help, this will mark the beginning
of the end of abortion in our city – and beyond.*

**The vigil location is the public right-of-way outside
Columbus Women's Health, 3850 Rosemont Drive, Columbus, Ga.**

**Please visit
<https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/columbus-2/>
to sign up for vigil hours.**



The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

What makes being Catholic, well, “Catholic”?

Things like the Mass, the Rosary and the Seven Sacraments come to mind.

But there is also an element of Church teaching that’s often overlooked and sometimes misunderstood – Catholic Social Teaching.

Catholic Social Teaching guides Catholics on how to apply the faith to all aspects of life, and lays the framework for the Church’s teachings on the dignity and sacredness of human life.

Catholic Social Teaching can be explained with 10 key points. These 10 principles demonstrate the depth of the Church’s teaching on social justice, and they call Catholics to take an active role in shaping the world in which we live. Catholic Social Teaching, when taken to heart, can become the catalyst that causes positive change in a world that desperately needs it. Consider these principles and strive to apply them in your own life.

Human Dignity

Human dignity is the fundamental principle within the Church’s teaching on social justice. A firm understanding of this principle is required so that the rest of Catholic Social Teaching can be viewed from the appropriate perspective. God created us in His image and likeness, so we all are worthy of respect.

Respect for Human Life

Whether unborn or seconds away from death, no life deserves to be prematurely ended. The Church sees this principle as crucial to the health of any society.

Association

Association holds that social relationships must be developed so that all people may reach their fullest potential. The Church teaches that the family is the basic unit upon which all other elements of society rest. We must uphold the sacredness of the family, and foster the growth of other societal organizations that preserve the well-being of all people.

Participation

All people deserve the right to work and to participate in God’s creation. The joy of accomplishing a task and performing honest labor should be made available to all people.

Protection for the Poor and Vulnerable

Society exists in a balance between those with power, and those without it. The vulnerable – those with disabilities – and the poor must be protected from those with power who choose to wield it in an unjust manner.

Solidarity

“Love your neighbor as yourself” – this commandment extends beyond the boundaries of any town, state or country. The principle of solidarity encourages all people to reach out to their brothers and sisters in need and to help them, even if they live halfway around the world.

Stewardship

Everything we have – even our own lives – is a gift from God. Our talents, our time and our financial resources are not our own, but God’s. The same goes for the natural resources we so often take for granted.

Responsibilities and Limits of Government

Governments, while created for the common good, sometimes overstep their boundaries. The Church teaches that all governments should seek to operate at the lowest level of organization possible – striving to solve problems at the source, with those who understand them best, and not through oppressive force.

Human Equality

God made all humans equal, including those of different ethnicity and race, and in different stages of life. No one person is of more value than another.

Common Good

It is especially important in our society to promote the common good – the social well-being and development of the “human group.” If we consider the entire human race as one family, the common good urges us to support our brothers and sisters so that they may reach their full potential.



Stewardship of Treasure

Giving to God First

Have you ever wondered why no one really becomes uneasy when someone brings up the first two “Ts” of stewardship – giving of your time or talents – but when the third “T” comes up, many of us become uncomfortable?

That third “T” is treasure, and some people simply become so annoyed by the subject, they tune out the words from the pulpit.

Why is there seemingly such an adverse reaction?

Our finances are such a personal subject. Discussing money issues with others is not easy, and having someone tell us what to do with our finances is even worse. We earn the money, after all. So, shouldn't we decide what to do with it?

Of course, the answer is “yes” – we decide every day how to spend our hard-earned dollars. Indeed, the monetary choices we make will either keep our finances in check, or put us into the red. The average American family has about \$7,000 in credit card debt – so finances certainly represent a challenge to our current society. Tight budgets, trying to “keep up with the Joneses” or poor financial management may be to blame for our tight resources. Does this mean we do not have anything left over for God?

Stewardship, at its roots, teaches that we are not supposed to give God our “leftovers.” We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our “first fruits” – giving to God first and then using the rest for our other needs. God gave us our talents that help us earn a living, after all. He should come first.

This idea can be worrisome for many. If our finances are already strained, how will we ever find enough to give back to God? Or, if we do try to give God our “first fruits,” will there be enough left over to cover our required expenses?

Taking the correct financial steps toward good stewardship simply boils down to trust – believing that God, who takes care of all of His creation, will take care of us. Trust that in giving to God first, we are both acknowledging that our multitude of blessings come from Him, and that we are thankful He chose to give them to us. And finally, trust that if we give to Him first, that all else will fall into place – because He is in ultimate control.

The Parish Annual Financial Report was published in the Sept. 11, 2016 bulletin. If you would like to receive a copy, please stop by or call the parish office.





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.

Holy Family's Fall Festival *continued from front cover*

"Children and families can come together to enjoy each other's company in a relaxed and fun atmosphere," Belinda says. "Without this event, families may not have the opportunity to meet and socialize."

In the midst of another school season, the festival is an opportunity for not only the adults of our faith community, but also for its youngest members to come together and enjoy themselves outside. It is a tradition Belinda anticipates every year.

"I really enjoy being around all of the great families and children who attend Holy Family," she says. "I know it's something that I look forward to all year, and parishioners have come to expect a great time with great friends!"

All are welcome to come be a part of this growing Holy Family tradition. Come enjoy food, fellowship and God's creation at the Fall Festival, and let's celebrate our faith community together.

"Everyone should come to enjoy the beautiful fall day, fun activities and fellowship with parishioners," Belinda says. "It's a great time for you to meet new friends and enjoy the company of people who share your faith!"

"I really enjoy being around all of the great families and children who attend Holy Family," she says. "I know it's something that I look forward to all year, and parishioners have come to expect a great time with great friends!"
– Belinda Johnson

If you would like more information about Holy Family's Fall Festival, please contact Belinda Johnson at 706-323-7865 or belinda4johnson@yahoo.com.