

# ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

CLEVELAND, OHIO

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Stewardship of Time  
*Following the Example of St. Damien*
- 3 Parishioner Ed Kostyo  
*Anchored in the Eucharist*
- 4 Answering the Call to  
Serve the Hungry and  
Those in Need  
*The Food Pantry*
- 6 The Assumption  
of Mary: *A Time to Celebrate!*
- 7 An Important Work  
of Mercy  
*Ministry to the Incarcerated*

### *A Letter From Our Pastor*

## The Mass is a Gift, to God and Our Parish Community

Dear Parishioners,

It is hard to believe that August is upon us. It seems as if we were just looking forward to summer and all the pleasures associated with that time – and now, we are approaching the returns to school, the completion of summer vacations, and the time when things here at our parish get busier again.

We call them vacations, but the British call them “holidays.” It does not take a genius to see that the words “holiday” and “holy day” share the same roots. You may anticipate where I am going with this train of thought. There was a time when the only “holidays” people experienced were indeed “holy days.” That included Sunday, to be sure, but the reason people had these “holy days” was to celebrate religious times and occasions.

An important facet of the concept of stewardship is our practice of the faith –

our commitment to fulfill what the Church views as our duties related to our beliefs. Most of us, as Catholics, are very familiar with the term “Holy Day of Obligation.” In fact, there is one this month – Friday, Aug. 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A solemnity is a Feast Day of the highest rank in the Church. According to the Church’s *Code of Canon Law* (1247), “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.”

Note that what this actually says is that Sunday – just like the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, Christmas, Immaculate Conception and other holy days – is in fact



## Stewardship of Time

### *Following the Example of St. Damien*

**H**ave you heard of St. Damien? This Belgian farm boy, shortly after being ordained a priest, volunteered to serve a colony of lepers on the isolated island of Molokai, Hawaii. From May 1873, until his death in 1889 at the age of 49, St. Damien worked to restore within the lepers a sense of personal worth and dignity.

Leprosy is a hideous disease. St. Damien wrote in his journal: "Many a time, in fulfilling my priestly duties at the lepers' homes, I have been obliged, not only to close my nostrils, but to remain outside to breathe fresh air." Their appearance was horrid, their smell putrid. Yet, St. Damien chose to remain.

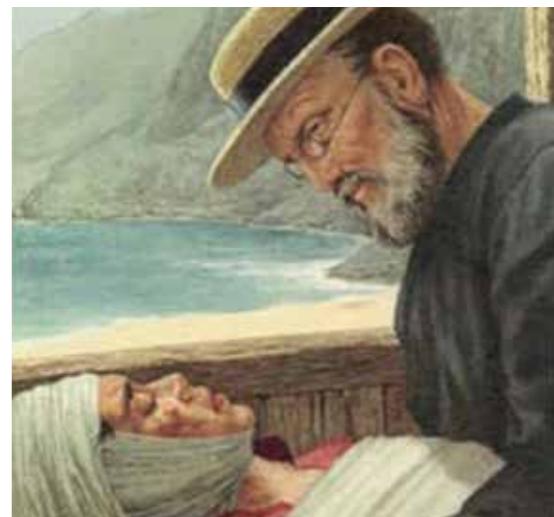
Although St. Damien first took precautions to ensure that he did not contract leprosy, he knew that physical touch was necessary to communicate his love and concern. He embraced the lepers, dined with them, cared for them and anointed them in the sacraments. Demonstrating great humility and sacrifice, St. Damien offered his own life in order to save the lives of others.

What was the source of his strength, and of his inspiration? "Were it not for the constant presence

of our divine Master in our humble chapel, I would not have found it possible to persevere in sharing the lot of the lepers in Molokai," St. Damien wrote. "The Eucharist is the bread that gives strength ... It is at once the most eloquent proof of His love and the most powerful means of fostering His love in us. He gives Himself every day so that our hearts as burning coals may set afire the hearts of the faithful."

St. Damien found his strength in the Mass, the greatest prayer of the Church. Prayer was the impetus behind the generosity of this faithful servant of God, and is the fuel that ignites every heart to flame in love. If we are not dedicated to prayer, or the grace that flows from the sacraments, we are then incapable of leading lives of service and responding to God's call!

How much time do you dedicate to prayer each day? One hour? Fifteen minutes? None at all? When pondering the three Ts of stewardship – time, talent and treasure – the component of time holds the position of greatest importance. Time serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom. Only by spending time in prayer each day and receiving the sacraments,



are we able to consistently and generously donate our talent and treasure to the Church.

Have you considered joining a parish ministry or volunteering your talents in service? Wonderful! But before you make a commitment, be sure that prayer is your foundation. Develop a manageable prayer schedule. This may entail arising 20 minutes early each day to offer your work to the Lord, or attending daily Mass once a week. Every prayer commitment is unique and personal. Yet, no matter what, the offering of our time and our dedication to prayer are the keys to serving the Lord with faithfulness, generosity and joy.

*Time serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom. Only by spending time in prayer each day and receiving the sacraments, are we able to consistently and generously donate our talent and treasure to the Church.*

*Parishioner Ed Kostyo  
(in front) with fellow  
members of the Garden  
Club, Mary Yablonsky  
and Steve Hanigosky*



## Parishioner Ed Kostyo *Anchored in the Eucharist*

**I**n the hectic pace of our day-to-day lives, it is hard to find those moments to stop and quiet our thoughts. But when we do work those quiet moments into our day, when we make a point to pray, reflect and meditate, then the tone for the entire day changes – situations aren't as daunting or annoying, and it becomes easier to see the good. Where, though, can we find that time? Sometimes, as we can learn from parishioner Ed Kostyo, it's a matter of establishing a routine, acknowledging what is important, and recognizing that 30 minutes can make all the difference in the world.

"My faith is extremely important to me, so I have learned to prioritize my time," Ed says. "And for me, my morning routine begins with Mass. Really, it only takes half an hour, but receiving the Eucharist enables me to further commit myself to living a life consistent with God's teachings."

Of course, faith has to begin somewhere, and Ed credits his parents for showing him how the Church should be a focal point in our lives. Born and raised on the east side of Cleveland, Ed was a member of Our Lady of Peace Parish, and attended both Benedictine High School and John Carroll University. He and his older brother grew up with a strong sense of their Catholic identity, and Ed remembers how his mother would bring faith traditions into the home.

"Every May, my mother would set up an altar in honor of Our Lady," Ed says. "She would bring out a small table, place a small box on top, and then cover everything with a sheet. On top would be a statue of Mary, and the base would be decorated with flowers. For the entire month, that altar was a visual reminder not only of Mary, but of our Catholic faith."

The faith of his childhood stayed with Ed into adulthood, as well as throughout his career as a treatment specialist for University Hospitals of Cleveland, working in the psychiatric unit in Hanna Pavilion, in nursing management services, the

personnel department, and with children diagnosed with various behavioral problems. Since he mainly worked in the mental health field, Ed witnessed firsthand the pain and anguish mental health patients endure and how their illness affects entire families. In fact, he says that while it is sometimes very difficult, he has learned to not be judgmental and to accept people as they are.

Today, Ed is recently retired, and enjoys walking, biking, reading, and gardening. In the 27 years he has been a member of our parish, he has found ways to become actively involved. He participates in the Music Ministry, where he shares his talents as a bass singer. In addition, he helps count money every other week, serves as a Eucharistic Minister, and because he has a passion for gardening, he is one of the four members of the newly established Garden Club organized by fellow parishioner Steve Hanigosky.

"St. Ignatius is a beautiful structure and we hope to enhance its beauty with flowers in front of the church," Ed says. "The four of us involved in this ministry have a good working relationship and enjoy what we do. Eventually, we hope more parishioners will become members so we can include other areas on campus."

Ultimately, Ed believes that parish involvement is a wonderful cycle of giving, feeling connected with others, and living the Gospel while working together in community. And when that involvement finds strength and purpose in the Eucharist, the process can be life-changing.

"The Mass helps me stay committed," Ed says. "Throughout the day, the gifts given to us are expressed by what we say and do, so by being involved I find myself more connected to God – that is, I notice a change in my interactions with others. I find myself more willing to help others, particularly those who may be suffering. It makes me more conscious of others, and helps me feel connected to the community. At the end of the day, I often reflect on the Gospel, and I thank God for the gift of faith."

# ANSWERING THE CALL to Serve the Hungry and Those in Need THE FOOD



*A surplus of food – a blessing to those in need*

*“It truly is ministry. This work has had a fantastic impact on my faith life. There is a lot of satisfaction in literally giving food to hungry people right before us. My favorite aspect of this work is mingling and visiting with our clients. I’ve also enjoyed the friendships that have developed among the people I serve with.” – Ed Leszynski*

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35). Volunteers in the Food Pantry Ministry here at St. Ignatius are taking up this Gospel call in a literal sense. Ed Leszynski, president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Ladislav Parish, coordinates the Food Pantry, which is a joint mission of the St. Ladislav and St. Ignatius Parishes.

On the second Tuesday of each month, the cafeteria at St. Ignatius is converted into a marketplace with the help of several volunteers. From 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., clients are welcome to come by and select food needed to help feed their families.

“People come rain or shine,” Ed says. “Last winter, we had some days with wind chills below zero, and folks were still lined up outside waiting for us to open. Things like that and seeing the smiles we put on people’s faces really motivates us to keep going.”

The Food Pantry is subsidized by the Cleveland Food Bank. In order to be eligible, clients must live within certain zip codes and have an annual income of no more than twice the current Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Food Pantry typically serves a diverse clientele of about 220 families each month, young and old.

“We’re seeing more and more families with young kids,” Ed says.

A wonderful team of about 65 volunteers works to make this happen each month. Some help with set-up of the cafeteria and distribution of the food, while others are trained to assist clients with enrolling in the program. Still more help with the

# Need FOOD PANTRY

pickup of the daily food donations, making the rounds at Cleveland Food Bank, Trader Joe's and Giant Eagle 364 days a year. An additional weekly pickup is made to Pepperidge Farms Bakery, which provides 600 to 700 loaves of bread. Some of this food is stored for the Food Pantry or the twice-monthly meals also offered at St. Ignatius. Volunteers distribute the remaining food to various other parishes throughout the city.

For Ed and the others who work to make this possible each month, it is far more than just a volunteer opportunity.

"It truly is ministry," Ed says. "This work has had a fantastic impact on my faith life. There is a lot of satisfaction in literally giving food to hungry people right before us. My favorite aspect of this work is mingling and visiting with our clients. I've also enjoyed the friendships that have developed among the people I serve with."

For more information about this soul-satisfying work, please contact the parish office at 216-251-0300, or email Ed Leszynski at [edleszynski@yahoo.com](mailto:edleszynski@yahoo.com).



*Food items loaded and ready for delivery*



*Items ready for the Food Pantry*



*Volunteers prepared to greet clients of our Food Pantry*

# The Assumption of Mary: *A Time to Celebrate!*

**C**an a pile of bones really be that exciting?

Every year, tens of thousands of pilgrims visit St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, eager to glimpse the spot in which the alleged bones of St. Peter, our first pope, remain to this day.

The relics of saints have been venerated throughout the ages in every corner of the world – yet, the bones of the very first Christian, the Mystical Rose, are nowhere to be found. Where are the remains of the Queen of all Saints?

When it comes to the day, manner, or year of the Blessed Virgin Mary's death, nothing is certain. No account is given in Scripture. The Church turns instead to Tradition for an answer.

Since the birth of the Church, no Marian relics have ever been venerated – nor can they ever be – because her body was assumed, or taken up, into heaven. There exist, therefore, no remains of the Blessed Virgin's body on this earth. She lives, right now, body and soul, in heavenly glory.

Although the particular dogma of the Assumption cannot be found in the writings of Scripture, if we look at many other writings by the early Christians, it is clear that the Church has always held this dogma to be true. Even more, though there is no statement of fact in the Bible itself that Mary was assumed body and soul, the truths that we do know about Mary from Scripture simply serve to back up the reality that she was assumed into heaven. She gave herself wholly to the Lord and followed His will for her life, perfectly, to the end.

The Assumption of Mary reveals that the promises of the Lord – including the resurrection of the body – were fulfilled in Mary. She shared most intimately in the life, death, and resurrection of her son, and was free from original sin and its effects – including corruption of the body at death.

It was no surprise, therefore, in 1950 when Pope Pius XII declared infallibly the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a dogma of the Catholic faith with these words: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heaven."

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is observed on the liturgical calendar as a solemnity – of higher importance than a feast. On Aug. 15, this wonderful celebration is accompanied by great hope in the resurrection of the body and everlasting union with God in heaven.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI during his homily Mass on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary in 2006: "Mary is 'blessed' because – totally, in body and soul and forever – she became the Lord's dwelling place. If this is true, Mary does not merely invite our admiration and veneration, but she guides us, shows us the way of life, shows us how we can become blessed, how to find the path of happiness."

Alongside Catholics throughout the country, be sure to celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption on Aug. 15. This is a declared Holy Day of Obligation in the Church and a great liturgical feast. Mark your calendars!



## AN IMPORTANT WORK OF MERCY

# Ministry to the Incarcerated

The seven Corporal Works of Mercy have been an important part of Jim Metrisin's life, ever since the Sisters of St. Dominic at Our Lady of Carmel School in Wickliffe instilled them in him and his fellow students:

*To feed the hungry  
To give drink to the thirsty  
To clothe the naked  
To shelter the homeless  
To care for the sick  
To bury the dead  
To visit the imprisoned*

Jim notes that, as the Sisters at Our Lady of Carmel taught him and his fellow students, we as Catholics are all directed to perform these works.

It wasn't until Jim had become a hospice volunteer for 12 years to mostly World War II veterans – visiting with them as they were dying, and then attending their funerals – that, as he puts it, “God closed a door and opened a window.” The window is his volunteer service in the Parish Ministry for the Diocesan Ministry to the Incarcerated.

In May 2007, Jim was listening to a broadcast on National Public Radio that featured an interview with students at St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland and their Joseph of Arimathea Club.

When notified by a funeral director, the students serve as pallbearers and visitors for those who have died without relatives or friends available. The students stay with the deceased through his or her burial.

“The Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy comes up,” Jim says. “And this young high school student lists them all. I thought, ‘I’ve done all those, caring for

the sick, burying the dead, then they mentioned visiting the imprisoned. I realized, there’s this. As Catholics, a vast majority do all these, but the one left is visiting the imprisoned.”

Jim contacted Sr. Dianne Piunno SND, pastoral associate, and told her how he wanted to serve. She contacted her colleague, Sr. Rita Mary Harwood SND, who talked with Jim and arranged for him to attend the retreat for the jail and prison ministry in the Diocese. There, he met Deacon Marty Thiel and Fr. Neil Walters.

Jim realized this was a ministry he wanted to follow. He underwent a period of discernment in October and completely embraced this calling. By December, he had begun his visits.

Since then, for seven years and 30 to 35 times per year on Fridays,

Jim has been visiting prisoners in the Cuyahoga County Jail, at which prisoners usually are in transition between the jail and a federal or state prison. A few men are serving county-level sentences or are awaiting trial. A number of men are “regulars,” who are in and out of the facility. Deacon Marty and Fr. Neil are Jim’s directors in the ministry.

When they visit the men, the normal routine is to conduct a prayer service or a prayer service with Communion for Catholics.

“We don’t minister only to Catholics,” Jim says. “We minister to all faiths, and we also serve the corrections officers, wardens, deputies and medical staff. We don’t close the door to anyone.”

Sometimes Jim will sit and talk with the men, especially when there is a “one-on-one” request. The complete visiting session can last most of the day.

Despite the challenges this ministry presents, Jim says it is the most rewarding to his faith.

“I always feel the presence of Christ,” Jim continues. “Every man I look at I try to see the face of Christ, dragging the cross of Christ behind him. Each time I go in, that cross gets lighter for me to carry, and I hope this cross gets lighter for them to carry, too.”

Donations to the ministry are welcome, and will help cover the costs of paper and stamped envelopes the prisoners may have. Cash is accepted, as are paperback books of any type – secular or religious – as well as magazines. To donate, please call the chaplain’s office at 216-443-6182.



*Jim Metrisin*

# ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

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## Mass Schedule

Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

## Our Mass is a Gift *continued from front cover*

a Holy Day of Obligation. Do we really think of our weekly attendance at Mass in that way? Certainly, our parents and grandparents (and many of us as well) understood that we were supposed to go to Mass each Sunday, and there were other times during the Church year when we were expected to go to Mass – the Holy Days of Obligation.

Sometimes in our busy lives, we lose sight of how important this is. As I indicated earlier in this letter, these are holy days – these are days (yes, including every Sunday) when we need to make the effort and commitment to participate in the Mass. The *Code of Canon Law* that I quoted earlier continues as follows: “Moreover, they [that means you and me] are to abstain from those works and affairs that hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body” (1247).

“Rendered to God” means that our Mass attendance is a gift to God. Stewardship, of course, is how we take the gifts God has given us, use those gifts responsibly, and then

return them and share them with the Lord and those around us. Although going to Mass is a gift to the Lord, it is also a gift to our community and to ourselves as well. We need that time to step back from our daily worries and concerns, and to look deeper into the meaning of living and of the importance of our relationship with God.

I would like each of us to consider just how important it is to attend Mass. If we are really going to be committed to this concept of stewardship, we need to realize the significance of setting aside time each week, and on those other designated holy days (Aug. 15, for example) to be with the Lord and with our parish community at Mass. We must be committed to living out our Catholic faith properly and completely.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Michael Troha