

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

CLEVELAND, OHIO

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Stewardship Hannah, the Good Steward
- 3 Reflections at the End of the Year
- 4 Parishioner Mark Suhajcik's Life is Impacted by Taking the Time to Listen
- 6 "Therefore Go and Make Disciples of All Nations" Evangelization, the Church, and Our Commitments as Stewards
- 7 Handbell Ensemble Inspiring Vibrant Worship

Servers Liturgical Robes Ministry

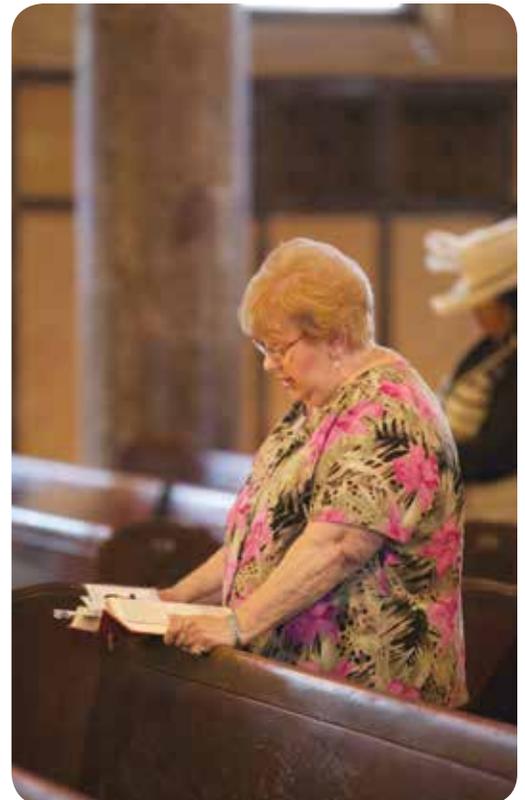
Working Behind the Scenes to Give Glory to God

From the more visible, well-known ministries to the smaller, behind-the-scenes groups, everyone here at St. Ignatius of Antioch plays a part. Those who care for the church's altar linens and altar server's robes are an important piece of the puzzle, and a wonderful example of stewardship in the simple and unseen things. By serving the parish by laundering the altar server's robes, Jean Charvat has been able to grow in her relationship with the Lord.

"I started in 2015 after signing up on a stewardship commitment card," she says. "I take pride in my laundry and so I really enjoy getting them cleaned and seeing the servers in nice clean robes. It's really helped me to grow in faith, and it makes me feel closer to God."

Jean launders the robes on Saturdays, and returns them on Sundays before Mass. She picks up any additional laundry on Sundays, as well. During the school year,

continued on page 5



Liturgical Robes Ministry leader Jean Charvat

Stewardship Hannah, the Good Steward

What should we do when our prayers are answered?

Is there anything left to do after we have sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we would probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do

for Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells us to “go and do likewise.” That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That is the definition of stewardship!

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most

poignant examples of stewardship in the entire Bible. The first chapter teaches us of an unhappy, barren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah’s elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart’s desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow, as Hannah kept her promise to God by taking Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The Book of Samuel tells us that once Samuel became Eli’s servant, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.

Indeed, Hannah knew that Samuel was truly a gift from God – an answered prayer. Hannah’s response is that of the Good Steward – with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet, through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an entire nation. Samuel would, in time, become one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of stewardship, while the results may just be impossible to miss! However, He asks that we continue to be faithful in either case. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us – at whatever the cost, we are to “go and do likewise.”



A Letter From Our Pastor

Reflections at the End of the Year

Dear Parishioners,

It seems as if we just finished Lent and Easter, and here we are at Advent and Christmas. To say this is a busy month for many is an understatement. Although December is a month of love, it can also be a difficult month for some. For those with families, it may be a month of travel as people rush to be united with loved ones, sometimes after a long period of separation.

There is no shortage of reminders as to what time of year this is. However, for us as Catholics, we may need to refocus to see where we are in our faith lives. Were you aware that for us, December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception? In that regard, we celebrate a Holy Day of Obligation on Friday, Dec. 8. Advent begins on Dec. 3, and you may notice that we begin to wear purple as a sign of Advent. That color changes to white or gold beginning at Christmas.

Of course, this is also the last month of the regular calendar year, which may add additional tasks to our own schedules as we finalize things for the end of the year. However, there are many opportunities for us during this month to share, to pray and to celebrate in a Christian way, and I would encourage you to make an effort to be part of these. Right here in our parish, much is happening



along those lines, and a careful reading of the bulletin will alert you to the “when, where and what” of these upcoming opportunities.

As I indicated earlier, this can also be a difficult time for some. In the midst of our own celebrations and joy, we need to be aware of that reality and of those living with it. This is a time to reach out, and it is a time to show love.

This December, let our minds be focused on Christ, Who will be born for us at Christmas, and for Whose coming we must always be prepared throughout the year. This is a time to thank God and to pray. It is a time to reach out to love and live peacefully with one another. We need to remember that life continues after December, in spite of everything we feel we need to get done.

My prayers and blessings go out to each of you and your families. May God continue to watch over you. May the year 2017 end well for all of us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Troha". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr. Michael Troha

Parishioner Mark Suhajcik's Life is In

It's hard to understand why suffering comes into our lives — why we are given certain problems or difficulties, or sometimes, why we're limited by illness. But for Mark Suhajcik, his suffering became an opportunity to be reminded of the fact that he was loved — both by God, and by his fellow parishioners.

"I was laid up and I couldn't do anything," Mark says. "I was laying in bed and I couldn't accept that God would do this to me. But I have a Bible that sits next to me in the bedroom, and I started grabbing that and reading it. And I started praying again, and I accepted, 'Okay, I'm hurt, I'm putting it in your hands.'"

Born and raised in the area, Mark grew up at Sts. Philip and James Parish. Following the example of his parents, who were very active in the parish, Mark began serving his community from a young age. From setting up for Bingo and being an altar server, to starting his parish youth group and hosting a number of retreats, stewardship has always been a part of Mark's life.

Mark became an active parishioner at St. Ignatius in 2010, when his home parish was closed. He began serving as a lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, and it wasn't long before he became a part of the Stewardship Committee and the Parish Council. He also currently serves as a table leader with the Alpha Program and leads the greeters and ushers at Mass.

But when injury slowed Mark down, it became an opportunity for him to be still and listen to God.

"This is the whole message that God tries to tell us," Mark says. "He says, 'I love you. Thank you for coming to Me and leaving your problems at My door. Now sit and listen as to how I will help you.' But we often don't take the time to listen."

Mark's injury also became a chance for him to receive the love and support of the community of which he had become a part. With his mother in a nursing home, and his father having passed away a number of years prior, Mark found that the parish community was quick to come help him.

"I had no income, because I was out of work, and St. Vincent de Paul helped with my recuperation,"

Mark says. "Some of them actually picked me up and took me up to church, wheeled me in the wheelchair and I greeted people in my wheelchair. [It made me feel] very humbled and very thankful for them."

Through this experience, Mark learned what it means to be part of the "family of God" at St. Ignatius.

"It's wonderful," Mark says. "When you're down and you've got problems, you can go and talk to somebody within your group [at church] and Father's always helpful too. Your fellow parishioners, they're always willing to help."

"I love the fact that you feel wanted," he adds. "You feel welcome."

Now, mostly recovered, Mark is back to serving, and finds that being involved is often a good remedy for dealing with your own struggles.



Mark Suhajcik (left) serves as the head of the greeters and ushers.

Impacted by Taking the Time to Listen

“There are days when I want to stay home,” he says. “There are days like that. But what’s that saying? ‘You help others, you help yourself.’ You could be down yourself and somebody comes up with a problem — sometimes by helping them, you help yourself.”

He encourages others who may be going through difficult times to continue to serve, even if their service looks different than they would’ve planned.

“I spent a lot of time praying for people in the parish that needed

prayers,” Mark says. “My mom is in the nursing home and she can’t do ministry anymore, but prayer is her ministry. When it’s commitment card time, that’s what she puts down, ‘Pray the Rosary,’ ‘Pray for the parishioners.’”

Mark reminds people to be faithful during difficult times, turning to God and their brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Just keep praying,” Mark says. “And if you need help, don’t be afraid to ask for it. That’s why we’re here.”



Mark (left) has been an active member of our parish for a number of years.

“There are days when I want to stay home. There are days like that. But what’s that saying? ‘You help others, you help yourself.’ You could be down yourself and somebody comes up with a problem — sometimes by helping them, you help yourself.” — Mark Suhajcik

Servers Liturgical Robes Ministry

continued from front cover

she launders the robes weekly. During summer break, laundry is less frequent.

By making sure the altar servers have clean robes to wear, Jean is able to help the servers take pride in their service.

“Sometimes, I see them when I’m sitting in church, and they hold their candles perfectly high,” she says. “They don’t want to drip on their robes!”

“It’s a role that everyone notices at the Mass, and it’s something that God sees, as well,” she adds. “Everyone should look their best for God!”

Every parishioner is an important part of St. Ignatius, and serving the parish is not only a great way to grow in faith – it’s also a way to grow in community.

Jean enjoys contributing her time to the parish through this ministry.

“I do feel like I’m more a part of the parish community,” she says. “It’s a small little job, but it’s my way of contributing to the Mass and giving glory and praise to God.”

For more information on ministries like this, or to get involved, please contact the parish office at 216-251-0300.

“Therefore Go and Make Disciples of All Nations” Evangelization, the Church, and Our Commitments as Stewards

According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus’ parting words to us before He ascended to heaven after His resurrection included these instructions: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

That is, quite frankly, a call to evangelization. Clearly, evangelization is not new to the Church – it is traced to that call from Jesus Christ, a call to His apostles and followers of that time, and that call continues today in relation to us and our lives as Catholics. “Evangelization” has become a bit of a “catchphrase” in today’s Church. Of course, it is not a new idea, nor is it a new call.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis’ absolute first publication – officially an apostolic exhortation – was titled *Evangelii Gaudium*, which means “The Joy of the Gospel.” In that document, the pope had much to say about evangelization, including this: “Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love” (120).

Nevertheless, the idea of evangelization is nothing new. Pope St. John Paul II issued an encyclical in December 1990 titled *Redemptoris Missio* – “The Mission of the Redeemer” – in which he called for the church to renew its efforts in evangelization. This has become known as the “new evangelization,” but within, what Pope St. John Paul II says is that the Church “must renew her missionary commitment.” He adds, “Faith is strengthened when it is shared and given to others” (2). Yet, it would seem that some Catholics resist this call to evangelization, perhaps recalling images of street preachers, television evangelists or door-to-door groups

saying “repent” or talking about the “wages of sin.” Or, we may feel that evangelization is the role of saints or missionaries or Catholic priests. The truth is that evangelization is born from a love of people and a desire that everyone comes to know the love of Christ and the blessings of living as part of His Kingdom.

Over a decade before Pope St. John Paul II addressed this issue, Pope Paul VI issued an apostolic exhortation in 1975 titled *Evangelii Nuntiandi* – “Evangelization in the Modern World” – in which the pope said, “We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing of all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church” (14).

So, what does this mean to us as faithful stewards? Obviously, each of us is called to be an evangelist. That does not mean we go door-to-door or stand on street corners proclaiming our faith. Our own mission statement has a strong flavor of evangelization, especially because of our effort to embrace stewardship as a way of life. In recent years, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued two pastoral letters – one called *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy of Catholic Evangelization*, and the other titled *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*. The connection between stewardship, evangelization and discipleship is obvious, it would seem.

Pope Francis also said in his first official statement *Evangelii Gaudium* the following: “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ” (10). That is who we are, or who we should be.



Handbell Ensemble

Inspiring Vibrant Worship

It goes without saying that our parish is special. One of the things that make it special is our talented Handbell Ensemble.

While many churches have handbell choirs who perform during special occasions, our parish is treated to beautiful music on an almost weekly basis. Jason Lewis, St. Ignatius of Antioch's Director of Music, says the ensemble adds an important element to our parish's Music Ministry.

"The group of ringers that is there now has been with the group since I became Director," Jason says, adding that the ensemble has been playing for at least 15 years. "There are some people that have been there since its beginning. It's very much something they enjoy."

Jason says that while the ensemble started by playing seasonally, it later transitioned to become a weekly fixture at Mass, something that can at once inspire both belief and action.

"I like what it adds to Sunday worship," he says. "I've always believed in vibrant Catholic worship, and liturgy should be the priority of any parish because every other



Members of the Handbell Ensemble gather in the choir loft. Director of Music Jason Lewis says the ensemble adds an inspirational element to the weekly liturgy.

ministry flows out of the Sunday Eucharistic table. If we don't have strong worship, then we won't have strong ministry. Something like a handbell ensemble or any of the other elements that come out of worship add a dimension that make a person want to go forth from the table and do what we've been commanded to do as far as living the Gospel."

The handbell as an instrument dates to the late 1600s/early 1700s. In Wiltshire, England, the Cor brothers, who had originally made bells for horse harnesses, began making bells with hinged clappers that moved as one and were tuned to create a single tone. Sets of these bells were then used for generations by tower bell

continued on back cover

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

10205 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44111
216-251-0300

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Cleveland OH
Permit #749

Check out our new website:
sioa.weconnect.com

Change Service Requested

Mass Schedule

Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

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

Handbell Ensemble Inspiring Vibrant Worship

continued from page 7

ringers, who would rehearse the complicated melodies that larger bell towers of the time would play on these smaller bells. Today, handbell choirs or ensembles are typically seen in a liturgical setting and most music that is arranged for the handbell is about four minutes in length.

For those who might be curious about playing becoming a ringer with the ensemble, Jason says a few key skills are essential.

"You definitely have to know how to read music," he says. "If you can read music, count, keep rhythm, and all of those other fun things, you're welcome to join us. We rehearse once a week on Tuesday evenings."

Parishioners who have questions or would like more information on the Handbell Ensemble may reach out to Jason Lewis at the parish office by calling 216-251-0300.

Advent and Christmas Schedule

Communal Penance Service

December 12, 7 p.m. at St Mel Parish

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 9 a.m. Mass

(there will not be an 11:00 a.m. Mass)

Christmas Eve

December 24, Mass at 5 p.m. and Midnight

Christmas Day

December 25, Mass at 11 a.m.

Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God

January 1, Mass at 11 a.m.