

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

CLEVELAND, OHIO

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Brian and Mary McGraw Reflect on Stewardship Way of Life *“If Not Us, Who?”*

When Brian and Mary McGraw became parishioners of St. Ignatius about five years ago, it was really a return to their roots in many ways. While the McGraws had previously been attending a church closer to their home, they had often visited St. Ignatius and eventually felt a call to make our parish their full-time faith community. For Mary – who was baptized here and whose parents and grandparents were married here – St. Ignatius was already an important part of her family’s faith tradition. And just recently, Brian learned that two of his great-grandparents were buried out of our church, giving him an unexpected connection to the parish, as well! In the years since, the McGraws have truly embraced St. Ignatius as their faith home, staying active in various ministries around the parish.

Mary is on the Parish Finance Council, participates on the committee



Brian and Mary McGraw with their children – (from left) Tom, Karen, Marie, and Brian

for our annual Founders’ Day Gala, and serves as a lector and Eucharistic Minister. She feels blessed to be able to serve the Church in these ways.

“Serving as a lector makes you feel more involved in the Mass, and it brings the Gospels alive to me as I prepare for the readings,” she says. “I find

The Importance of Family Prayer

“**T**he family that prays together stays together.” This famous slogan was coined in 1947 by writer Al Scalpone, and has been frequently referenced ever since. The phrase pinpoints the true power of prayer, and the importance of making family prayer a consistent practice in our lives.

As Christian disciples, we are striving to follow Jesus – to grow in our love of Him and to serve Him through the use of our time, talent, and treasure. If we desire to follow in His footsteps, we must first begin by getting to know Him. Spending time with the Lord in prayer forms a foundation on which we can build our lives as Christian disciples, much in the same way that spending time with a girlfriend or boyfriend forms the foundation of a strong relationship.

The Christian family is the first place where children learn to pray. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls the family unit “*Ecclesia domestica*,” or “the Domestic Church” (1656). Thus, parents have a responsibility to set an example by taking time for personal prayer every day, and making family prayer a regular practice. This not only sets an example for the children, but also provides them with a faith-filled foundation and brings them closer to the Lord – forming them as grateful stewards of their time.

There are many ways in which a family can pray together. One of the most important times for prayer is before meals, where we thank God for His blessings, and for the food on our family table. Families may also share in the formal prayers of the Church, or perhaps pray a Rosary together every night. We can also thank the Lord aloud, asking Him to answer our prayers and offering Him our daily petitions. One often-suggested method of family prayer is ACTS, where we offer Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Families may also go to their church and kneel together before the Blessed Sacrament, offering prayers in Christ’s Presence.

These are just several of the many opportunities for families to pray together. Of course, prayer will be influenced by each family’s dynamics and personalities. But no matter how we pray, it is important that we make the time to do so. This will deepen the family’s relationship with the Lord, our commitment as His disciples will be stronger, and we may continually renew and foster our families’ bonds.



PRAYER OF PARENTS:

God, our Father, I thank you for the gift of my children and for the privilege and responsibility of being a parent, for this is my way of holiness. May I regard each of my children as a sacred pledge of Your love and a beautiful sign of Your confidence in me. Help me to pass on to my children our greatest treasures - faith in Your truths, hope in Your goodness, love in Your name for all. I entrust my children to Your loving care. Banish from our home any bitterness or lack of forgiveness. Let us have time, deep concern, and a sense of sacrifice for one another. Teach us never to be ashamed that we are, in name and in fact, a Catholic family striving to live in the way of Jesus, Who is head of our home. Give us Your Holy Spirit to unite us throughout this life and let the circle of our family be unbroken in the Kingdom of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Save Room on Your Busy Schedules for Stewardship

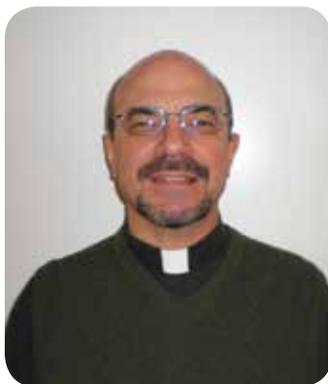
Dear Parishioners,

I don't know about you, but I still get a surge of adrenalin as the beginning of September approaches. Even though I'm no longer in school, I feel a sense of anticipation when I see the shelves filled with brand-new notebooks, composition books, and all the assorted items students use. I'm aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds.

Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the unofficial end of the summer vacation season, and our calendars may reflect that. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine — they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.

Nevertheless, I have a request for you as you fill up your fall schedules. First thing, please put in some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples — as stewards — we are called to return to God a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure He has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer Him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.

Make this September the month you make a commitment to sing in the choir, including attending rehearsals. Or begin working with our parish religious education in one way or another. Or decide to launder altar linens once a month. Or volunteer to help in the parish office one morning a week. Or help care for the parish grounds. Or join the Knights of Columbus. Or join a social service ministry. Or... well, you get the idea.



There are many ministries and groups within the parish where you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. Hardly anyone in the parish can't find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If **you** aren't involved, make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, some people say they don't have Time for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge any one of you to demonstrate to me that you can't pray at least one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be during the course of the day. That's at least a beginning.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Michael Troha

St. Vincent de Paul Conference Response

It truly is stewardship in action. When our St. Vincent de Paul Conference members stand at our church doors to collect money at the end of the month, we are generous in wanting to help our friends and neighbors in need.

“We don’t refer to the people we help as ‘clients,’” says James Vorell, Conference Captain. “We call them ‘friends and neighbors in need.’ ‘Client’ implies we can do something for them professionally. We’re not professionals – we’re individuals who include a lawyer, a nurse, a CPA, two concerned individuals, and others.”

The Conference is made up of eight members who meet about twice a month at the parish house to review requests for financial help. The Conference does not distribute clothing or food. In rare instances, the group will secure furniture. The area served is limited to the ZIP codes of 44101 and 44102.

“The aid we do is largely in overdue rent and utilities,” James says. “It’s not continuing aid – it is one time only for that particular problem. We evaluate the situation, and determine what is the possibility of continuing need. For example, we don’t do next month’s rent. We then direct the people to other social service agencies.”

When the Conference holds its collections on the last weekend of the month, the total can vary from \$300 to \$1,200. The cap for assistance is usually limited to \$500.



Members of the St. Vincent De Paul Conference meet to review funding requests. They are, from left: Jeffery Spiegler is a retired lawyer; James Vorell, conference captain, a retired engineer; and Jane Thill, a retirement home administrator. Not available for the photo were R.V. Threadgill a retired CPA; Gerry Walters, a retired factory worker; Denise Christian, a healthcare worker, and Dolly Vigneulle, a retired nurse.

A recent urgent request for help was caused by a bed bug infestation that forced families out of their apartments into another location. The Conference was asked to help in securing furniture, and was able to provide some help in this unusual circumstance.

“We prefer they come to us if they know they will be in need,” James says. “It’s much easier to find funds for that event rather than at the last minute.”

When the Conference receives a request for help, the members not only look at the request itself, but they also make a home visit.

Once the information is gathered, the request is put to a vote by the Conference.

“We like to say ‘yes,’” James says. “We don’t look for reasons to say ‘no.’”

The Conference members view their service in the ministry as part of their living in stewardship. James, like other members in the Conference, grew up in our parish, moved away, but has returned to taking part in the parish. Fr. Troha is very supportive of the Conference.

“I used to live here, and I respect Fr. Troha, and love the church itself,” James says. “I still donate what time

Responding to Important Community Needs

I can. I want the parish to survive, and I want to be a part of the parish.”

James looks not only at the St. Vincent de Paul Conference, but other parish ministries, such as the Legion of Mary and the Garden Club, as examples of the parish’s living in stewardship.

“We have a parish that lives with stewardship,” James says. “We take that seriously. We’re stewards of what gifts God has given us.”

Announcements about the Conference’s activities are posted in the weekly bulletins. The group also posts ‘thank you’s in the bulletin for the parish’s donations during the collections. Volunteers are always welcome to join.

“You have to be able to deal with people,” James says. “You have to be able to be compassionate in the cases. It’s rough when you have to tell people, ‘We can’t help you.’ The immediate desire is to help.”

If you are interested in volunteering with our St. Vincent de Paul Conference, please contact the parish office at 216-251-0300.

Brian and Mary McGraw *continued from front cover*

...serving as a Eucharistic Minister to be so meaningful, because it’s such an essential part of our worship and makes me feel like a part of the community. It’s such a moving experience. In some ways, it is the simplest way to serve, but it brings you closer to the Lord, and that’s why we’re all here.”

Brian, who had experience serving on the Parish Council at the couple’s previous church, was looking for ways to get involved here when S. Dianne Piunno suggested he bring his council experience to St. Ignatius – and as Brian points out with a laugh, when S. Dianne taps you on the shoulder to do something, you do it!

Brian, who has greatly enjoyed his involvement and service, is hoping to continue to find other ways to stay active in parish life.

“At our last parish, I taught seventh grade in the Parish School of Religion for many years, and I always felt like I got even more out of it than the kids did,” Brian says. “So, I hope to get more active with St.

Ignatius over the years. Mary and I are also always looking to bring more people to this church, too, and we’ve had some success with that.”

The McGraws recognize just how valuable St. Ignatius is to the life of the city as a beautiful, historic church serving a diverse congregation and elementary school. Their desire to stay active in parish life is also driven by their great affection and respect for Fr. Troha, S. Dianne, and all of the many people who make St. Ignatius such a wonderful place to call home.

Both Brian and Mary consider the opportunity to give of their time, talent and treasure to the Church to be a true blessing.

“I guess one of my thoughts is that we are the Church,” Mary explains. “The leaders are certainly important, but it’s up to the members of the Church to pitch in. The Church is more than a building, and we have an obligation to support the activities of this thing that is such an important part of our lives. I’m

Stewardship Council

Leading the Way to Discipleship in Action

For the past several years under the leadership of Fr. Michael Troha we have worked as a parish to form and carry out stewardship. As part of this effort, a Stewardship Council was established in 2014. The Council was charged with assisting the parish and our people to fully appreciate what stewardship is and to live it out in action.

Parishioner Mike Hoag, who serves as the current Chair says the main goal of the council is to inspire and lead parishioners to become involved in the life of the parish.

“We all need to come to an understanding and an appreciation of what it means to be a good steward,” Mike says. “If we are truly grateful to God for our many blessings, stewardship is something we should practice all the time, not just at certain times.”

The council was essentially founded at St. Ignatius three years ago after Mike and Fr. Troha attended the Msgr. McGread Stewardship Conference in Wichita, Kan.

“We heard presentations from other pastors and networked with people from parishes which had embraced stewardship as a way of life,” Mike says. “We decided and recommended that St. Ignatius pursue this way to help our parish and the people of the parish understand and adopt stewardship as a goal and a way of life. I guess it was a natural progression that I become the Chair of the Council we formed, which officially happened three years ago.

“Our Council currently consists of five lay people who meet with Father on a monthly basis,” Mike adds. “Our meetings are usually on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. We are responsible for the annual stewardship renewal, which occurs in the fall of the year. At our Council meetings we, of course, begin with prayer, followed by 45 minutes of reflection on our part on some aspect of stewardship. From my perspective stewardship is a very personal journey in discipleship and stewardship. I believe that each of us on the Stewardship Council pursues that personal journey through study, prayer, discussion, and



Stewardship Council and other parish leaders attend the 2016 Parish Leadership Retreat

faith sharing. As a result, I am a firm believer in stewardship as a way of life for us as Catholics and Christians.”

Mike continues, “After prayer and discussion we discuss or hear reports on updates on our parish schedule, new ideas and thoughts relating to stewardship, and plans in the relatively immediate future. I have been a parishioner at St. Ignatius for more than 15 years. I am proud to serve God and the parish and certainly encourage others to serve in similar ways, especially in our many ministries.”

St. Peter explained what the call to stewardship is when he said, “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another.” (1 Peter 4: 10) In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops stated, “What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means much more. As Christian stewards, we receive God’s gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.”

Those interested in the Stewardship Council should contact Mike Hoag at 216-661-0761 or e-mail him at mhoag@sbcglobal.net. If someone desires to become involved with the Council they should contact Mike or Fr. Michael Troha at the parish office, 216-251-0300.

Alpha Program

Bringing People Together in Faith

It is impossible to be a good steward without first becoming a true disciple of Christ. The two go hand in hand – one shaping who we are, while the other guides how we live our lives. Yet, Christ makes it clear in Scripture that discipleship isn't merely about our own personal belief in Jesus Christ. It's something that must be shared, spreading the Good News to others (Mark 16:15) through intentional evangelization.

“Pope Francis has called all of us to the new evangelization,” says parishioner Jim Madden. “Rather

than simply participating in our faith, he asks us to actively work to spread it. I think that Alpha is a really good tool to conduct that evangelization, because it takes the Christian faith and kind of boils it down into human terms.”

Designed specifically as an evangelization tool, Alpha generally consists of small-group gatherings that occur weekly over an 11-week period. Taking place in parishioners' homes, parish buildings or local restaurants, these gatherings are meant to help members explore

the Christian faith in an open and non-judgmental environment. Its purpose is to create a warm and welcoming environment where the “big questions” of life can be discussed. This is done through sharing a meal together, fellowship, and sharing in discussion based on a video presentation.

“It's a great opportunity for parishioners to invite others,” Jim says. “It doesn't necessarily have to be other parishioners, or even practicing Christians. It could be anyone. We'd like to bring people

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During Alpha gatherings, participants are able to enjoy food, fellowship and a faith-based discussion all designed to help people come to better know and understand Jesus Christ and His Church.

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.

Alpha Program *continued from page 7*

together from all different walks of life to the table in a non-judgmental environment and show them what Christianity is all about.”

Jim first got involved in Alpha last winter, when it was first offered through the parish. Invited to join by two gentlemen from the choir, Jim and his wife decided to give it a try and see what the program was all about. Not knowing what to expect beyond a meal and some form of presentation, the Maddens were quickly blown away by the material and overall spirit of Alpha.

“After that first session, we decided that we would continue going back each week,” says Jim. “Though I’m already a practicing Catholic and am very active in my church, I personally received a lot of fruits, in the sense that I learned so much more about my faith. I have a hunger to learn more about my faith, and I learned many things through this program that I had never heard before. It gave me a new perspective and an understanding of my faith that I hadn’t had previously. That’s why I’m so excited about participating this time as a team member.”

In light of the success of last year’s program, we are excited to make Alpha available once again to both parishioners and guests starting Monday, Sept. 11. Participants will gather together from 6-8 p.m. each subsequent Monday for 11 weeks in the parish cafeteria, enjoying food, fellowship and spiritual enrichment together. There is no cost to join and all are welcome. To register or learn more information, please email alpha.sioa@gmail.com.