



# QUARTERLY BLESSINGS

ST STEPHEN CATHOLIC CHURCH

FALL 2018

## *Passing on the Gift of Faith*

*Seek out the Lord and his might;  
constantly seek His face. Psalm 105:4*



# Passing on the Gift of Faith

**T**he child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him (Luke 2:40).

To be a follower of Jesus Christ is not just a matter of emotion; it involves the will and the use of our intellect. As Catholics we believe faith that has been handed down to us through the teachings of the Church and helps us to become more Christ-like in our lives, are based on reason and our correct use of this gift.

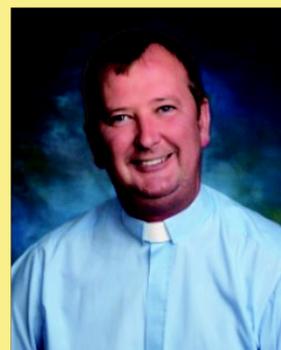
To educate is to pass wisdom from one generation to the next. It is one of the most beautiful inheritances that we receive. As children, we were always told that once you have knowledge it cannot be taken away from you by others, while most all other things can.

The education in our faith starts at a very early age, from mom or dad teaching us how to bless ourselves with holy water, to the catechist showing us those special prayer hands we use in church. Then most of us learned as we got a little older that it's not just prayer that makes us Christ-like but rather our service to those most in need.

It is from the daily living together as family that we learn the most about the world around us and the God who loves us. The family traditions that we have been educated in, are what unite us and bring us into a unique relation that binds us together.

What have you been taught as a child that you still regularly do? Every time I genuflect, I say the prayer of St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God" because that is what my dad told us he did.

Now I ask a simple question, "Why did God make us?" If you responded "God made us to show forth His goodness and to share with us His everlasting happiness in heaven.", then I know you were educated with the Baltimore Catechism.



The education that we receive enriches us for our whole lives. Educate your children and your grandchildren in the ways of the Lord, so that they too will continue to be filled with wisdom and may the favor of Lord be upon them.

Enjoy this edition of our Quarterly Blessing, and I hope and pray that you can learn something new from it.

Peace and Joy,  
*Fr. Dermot Dunne*

Fr. Dermot Dunne  
Pastor

# Happy in His Role

By Nicki Gallagher

When I sat down to talk with Father Tim for the Quarterly Blessings, I started by asking him how others would describe him. It did not take long for me to understand why “friendly”, and “people person” were at the top of the list. I feel instantly comfortable with Father Tim, who smiles most of the time as he speaks in a soft voice. Father Tim is happy and at peace with his role and his surroundings. His contagious good nature is uplifting and welcome at a time when indifference in the world seems to be the norm. Authentic is one of the words Father Tim uses when asked to describe himself, and after our conversation, I agree that the real deal has arrived at St. Stephen.

Father Tim clearly stated he views his role as a priest is primarily to, “*Teach the Word of God.*” However, it is the work of Evangelization that seemed to spark a special passion. He spoke of reaching out to people whose faith is dead, commenting that “*God is real and we need people to feel and believe it.*” When asked how this could be accomplished, he referred to Pope Francis. He explained that Pope Francis understands the struggles of the average person and speaks directly to them. Frequently referring to Pope Francis’s, *The Joy of the Gospel*, it was apparent Father was a Pope Francis-type priest. Father Tim recognizes the challenges that this Pope presents to priests. Reaching those trying to find their faith requires finding a gentle way to speak your message, addressing the needs of those struggling to believe, those with doubts.

With appreciation for the inspiration he receives from the Pope, Father Tim briefly reflected on Confession. He believes some Catholics who are considering coming back to their faith were fearful of going to confession. Father referred to how Pope Francis spoke about confession, “*It should not be torture.*” Further commenting that Catholics should feel a burden has been lifted after they receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Our conversation regarding evangelization reminded Father of one of his priest friends from Nigeria, whose sermons often include the question “*What do we do?*” Father Tim said the answer is to mold our hearts and minds to accept change. This will allow us to better understand how we can reach those that need help with their faith. And there is the power of prayer. All things are possible through Our Lord. As Catholics, Father believes we need to be aware of those who we come in contact with, who are in need of our love and prayers. Remaining relevant in how we evangelize and reaching out to others is vital for the success of the crusade. Father reminded me how personal and special it is when someone says they will pray for you. Prayer is a gift you can give someone that is truly priceless!



There was a sparkle in Father’s eye as he spoke about a gift God has given him. Some may boast about playing the piano, pipe organ, guitar and being a good singer, but Father Tim talks about his talents in the context of enjoying participation in the Church Band when he was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and then onto the Music Ministry. He was the Music Minister from 2003 until now for the Light of Christ in Clearwater. Father Jacob Monteleone from the Light of Christ Parish has been his friend and mentor for most of his life. He speaks lovingly of how Father Monteleone continues to inspire him.

When I told Father about how I witnessed his connection with the children at a recent 9:30 Sunday Mass, Father jumped at the opportunity to talk about how he is looking forward to the coming school year. His jovial mannerism and up-beat spirit will soon be enjoyed by the students of St Stephen and the parish. Father hinted at his desire to sing a song with the children at a future school event. I look forward to watching his infectious positivity bear fruit throughout our parish community. ✚

*Nicki Gallagher is the Development Coordinator at St. Stephen Catholic School.*

# Lessons with Little Voices

By Nicki Gallagher

Adults learn from children every day without realizing it. Children have taught us that you can smile and be happy for no reason, that it is good to always be busy doing something, and that we can demand what we want when we believe we deserve it. The best lessons are those that come unexpectedly and are so meaningful that we remember them for years to come. When asking the SSCS (St. Stephen Catholic School) Office Staff and Teachers about the lessons they have learned from children or about an experience that reminded them of what is important in life, their replies were well worth sharing:

*“A number of years ago I ran into a former student who had already graduated from college. I taught her in middle school during the early years of St. Stephen. We talked about all her successes, and she thanked me for giving her a tool she used all through high school and college. She was forever grateful for being taught the art of the Interactive Notebook. She described how all through college she painstakingly glued everything into her notebook and always kept her table of contents up to date and that this tool helped her to maintain her high GPA. Teachers always wonder if the lessons and skills they share with their students impact their future successes. We often do not see the fruits of our labors, but we do make a difference and sometimes students tell us how.”* –Linda

*“While I was teaching in Phoenix, I had a student who didn't like my class. One day I asked this student in front of the class why his homework was missing. He didn't answer my question, and it did not feel right. After class that day, I apologized to him for not being more discrete and helped him finish the missing work. I could see that my time, attention, and respect for him changed his outlook on my class. From that day on, he was a different student: attentive, hard-working, and engaged. I learned admitting a mistake and taking time to solve that problem can make all the difference.”* –Charles

*“Children were asked to dress in clothes that represented the person or job to which they aspired once they were adults. An eighth-grade student dressed in black slacks and a ladies blouse. When asked who she was, the student gave my name. The lesson I learned was that children are always watching adults and imitating them. Adults need to always be at their best so children can see them as role models.”* –Karen

*“A ‘military child’ taught me that although you cannot be with your father or mother, you can still feel their love in your heart. When you feel that love in your heart, it is an echo of God’s love for you.”* –Maria

*“As a preschool teacher I consider myself very fortunate that I am able to watch our children blossom and grow through the years during their education here at St. Stephen. The greatest blessing I receive is when a former student comes back to visit and tells me that they remember preschool, how much fun they had learning, how they felt important and loved.”* –Elaine

*“I have been reminded to have patience and be understanding when responding to children. Each child is unique and their needs may differ from other children.”* –Carol

My mother was a “worker” and often said “time was money”. Another favorite line I remember her always saying was “silence is golden”. She was also a “peacemaker”. There were many other lines she often spoke that I dearly remember. I am reminded of her speaking and teaching me both in her words as well as her actions. There was no difference. Her teachings were a reflection of who she was, what she said and how she acted.

Unfortunately, I did not fully realize this lesson of life until after she was gone. The lesson has become so much clearer as I have aged. †

*Nicki Gallagher is an avid baseball fan who enjoys spending time with her son, her grandsons, and her fur babies.*

# Camp Covecrest

By Catherine Caldwell

Early one Monday morning in June, thirty teens and chaperones gathered at our church parking lot to begin our long drive to Tiger, Georgia. We spent the week on retreat at Life Teen's Camp Covecrest during which we grew in community through fun activities like white-water rafting and challenge courses; learned about our faith through inspiring talks and small group discussions; and encountered God through Mass, reconciliation, adoration, and silent prayer.



*be happy. It is our mission to choose happiness, to choose joy! I also realized not just to choose joy but to live joyfully and to love those around me no matter what. God calls us to love all of our days and that is how I am going to live my life!"*

One of the biggest takeaways from the trip was that God loves each of us, individually and uniquely. The theme of camp this year was Relentless Father, and we learned about how God relentlessly pursues and loves us through all things – in successes and trials, in joy and in suffer-



At the end of each night we would gather as a parish to share what we experienced that day. For some teens, this was their third or fourth time at camp. They stepped up as leaders on the trip and helped others grow in their faith. For others it was their first time being away from home for a week, but they were able to feel at home with the new friends they made on the trip.

Here's a testimony from one of our teens at camp:

*"My name is Caleb Malec. This was my fourth time attending a Life Teen summer camp, in particularly Covecrest. Every year, something amazing happens and you will experience something that will change you for the better. This year I came to the realization that we are loved. We are loved by God! He wants us to be happy and gives us the option to*



ing. To continue experiencing this love, our teens have committed to developing their prayer life by going to daily Mass, reading Scripture, and spending time to listen to God in silence. Please pray for our teens so that we may continue to cultivate the fruits of our week at summer camp.

On a personal note, I've learned from our teens that this parish is truly a family. As we loaded the bus for the trip, I met some of them for the first time and they welcomed me into their community. By the end of the trip, I truly felt like part of St. Stephen parish even though I've only been here for a few weeks! It's a blessing to know this community and be a part of it. ✚

*Catherine Caldwell is Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Ministry at St. Stephen Catholic Church.*

# A Thirty Year Journey

By Joe Liguori

It might come as a surprise to you, but our new, beautiful church is actually the fourth location of St. Stephen. Since we are original parishioners, I'd like to share some of our experiences through these four campuses and five pastors.

Before the storefront, the first Mass sanctioned as St. Stephen was at Al and Mary Devney's house with our first Pastor, Fr. Jim Johnson as the presider. And yes, after thirty years, Al and Mary are still parishioners at St. Stephen, so if you know them, ask them about it. Maybe I can interest them in planting a plaque in their front yard saying, "Original home of St. Stephen." Wouldn't that make their neighbors, their Home Owners Association, and various passers-by wonder how a church was instituted in their corner of the subdivision.

Fr. Jim was already living on the undeveloped property on Bell Shoals in what would be called the ROC Center.

Shortly after, the church moved into its second location. I guess most of you already know the story about the church at Beef O'Brady's. When that shopping strip was built, the diocese rented the empty pod that is now Beefs. Metal chairs, a cement floor, and a make-shift altar made up our church. Mary Grable played an upright portable organ, while Shirley Wilson, who went on to become our Music Director, played the guitar. I'm sure we made the walls tremble as we

sang our hearts out. I guess anybody looking in the window could see us singing praises to the Lord. The screeching of those chairs whenever anybody moved, was like chalk on a slate board during Mass, but we soldiered through for a about thirteen months while our third campus was being built.

In September 1988, we settled into our third location with a true brick and mortar foundation, the Bell Shoals facility. During this time, Fr. Jim would offer various snippets about his life in the Rectory (our ROC Center) including how

drafty it was, the field mice that would scurry under the front door, and some of the other inconveniences he faced while building this new church "in the country." One of Fr. Jim's annual highlights was when he told the parishioners how collections were

being spent and how he was eating at the rectory on \$1.20 per day. (He got an ovation for that).

Fr. Jim was replaced as Pastor by Father Patrick Irwin, a true lad from Ireland, wee brogue and all. As some of you newer

old timers will recall, that building was actually erected as multi-purpose: that meant a more permanent structure for a church was envisioned down the road.

That purpose changed when the Boyette property was donated to St. Stephen (hence the diocese). After much soul searching, Bishop Lynch decided to build a school and that took priority over a new church structure. We continued with the much-loved multi-purpose church on the Bell Shoals property.



1st Location - Home of Al & Mary Devney August 1987



2nd Location - August 1987  
Now Beef 'O' Brady's.



3rd Location - Bell Shoals, September 1988

Inside the building, the “*sliding wall*” that cut the building in half when closed was in fact mostly closed all the time during the first five years, even for Sunday Mass. After that it was always a decision for Fr. Pat whether to open it up for Sunday Mass or not. Then a few more years went by and Fr. Pat made the decision to keep it open all the time for all Sunday Masses. The “*cheap seats*,” as some of us called them, were set up behind the open wall, and after the final Mass on Sunday, the wall was closed, the chairs removed, and the multi-purpose room was used for a myriad of special events and activities.

The family count continued to grow as did the area and St. Stephen was no longer a “*country church*.” During this growth spurt, Fr. Pat was re-assigned and Father William Swengros became our third pastor. Fortunately, Fr. Bill was an excellent administrator and saw the need to recruit a Parish Manager. Eventually SSCC (St. Stephen Catholic Church) welcomed Tom Doyle, and he has been a mainstay ever since.

Remember the tent for Easter and Christmas? Thank Fr. Bill and Tom for reacting to the need and the few times the large crowd was subjected to inclement weather. Extra prayers were definitely said for the presence of the tent.

With the school up and running, SSCC had finally outgrown the Bell Shoals property (a combination of family growth and costly maintenance

required). We embarked on another fundraiser to assist with building a new church on Boyette Road. Fr. Bill led us in the campaign, but after eight years as pastor, he was re-assigned.

Our fourth pastor, Father Robert Schneider arrived in July of 2013 and took over the issue of funding and building our new church and our Family Life Center (FLC) simultaneously. By July of 2017, the FLC was already in operation. Bishop Lynch presided at the dedication of our new church building and we welcomed our fifth pastor, Father Dermot Dunne, who as of this writing will be celebrating the completion of his first year at the new home of St. Stephen Catholic Church, school, and Family Life Center.

Looking back on this thirty-year journey through five pastors and four campuses, I can say it has been

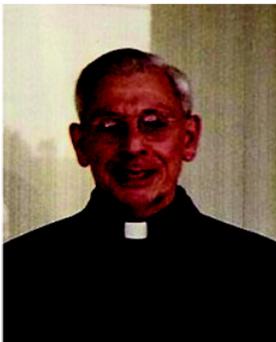
a wonderfully, spiritual experience. May God bless St. Stephen and all of our wonderful parishioners! †



*Joe and Pam Liguori moved here from Katy, Texas 32 years ago. They are among the handful of original parishioners of St. Stephen Catholic Church.*

*1st Pastor*

*Fr. James Johnson, July 1987*



*3rd Pastor*

*Fr. William Swengros, July 2005*



*5th Pastor*

*Fr. Dermot Dunne, July 2017*



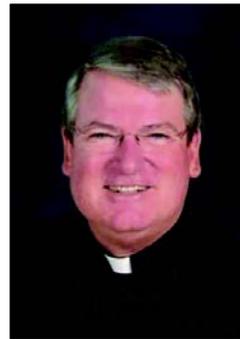
*2nd Pastor*

*Fr. Patrick Irwin, January 1992*



*4th Pastor*

*Fr. Robert Schneider, July 2013*



# His Continuous Call

By Greg Vista

**L**isten, O my son, to the teachings of your master, and turn to them with the ear of your heart. (Pro RB) This is the first line in the Rule of St. Benedict. For those that do not know me, I am Gregory Visca, and I have been a parishioner of St. Stephen for the past three years and have been working as a Facility Staff member for the past two years.

Currently I am discerning a call to the monastic way of life by living out the Rule of St. Benedict. St. Benedict was a monk in the sixth century and is considered the father of western monasticism. For those that do not know, a monk is one that takes vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience just like every other religious order. The main difference is that they live in community at a monastery/abbey/priory, unlike friars (like Dominicans or Franciscans) who are sent out among the people to carry out their particular charism. A charism is a special calling for a particular mission in the Church, and for Benedictine Monks it is living in community, praying constantly, and offering up our work to God. The motto of St. Benedict is Ora et Labora which means prayer and work. So the life of a monk consists of praying five times a day as a community, along with personal prayer and working in one of the many jobs that the monastery has, such as being a professor in the college.

I first started discerning the call when I was in high school, where I would visit St. Leo Abbey (in our diocese) almost on a weekly basis. However, at that time I felt a greater pull towards diocesan priesthood, like Fr. Curtis. Actually Fr. Curtis and I entered seminary together, but after six years, I discerned that the life of a diocesan priest was not for me. I took time off and worked as a pro-life and chastity missionary speaking to tens of thousands of high school students and young adults throughout the country. I bounced around with several jobs as a director of religious education, faith formation director, youth minister, and substitute teacher. Nothing really satisfied my heart and I wanted more



out of life. Fr. Curtis asked me to help out with maintenance at the parish and it was truly a profound blessing in my life. I have grown so much here, met wonderful people, and it was here that I felt the call once more to discern a vocation to the religious life and priesthood. I will forever be in tremendous debt to the people I have encountered here, and especially to those who have prayed for me and encouraged me in my discernment.

I enter into the novitiate or novice year at St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania on July 1. It is a year primarily dedicated to discernment; whether this is truly the life that a new monk might be called to. “Novice” means “new man”, and at the monastery, that is exactly what I will be. I will receive a black habit (robes like a priest) and a new name from the Archabbot. I will no longer be Gregory Visca, but Brother Sebastian Viscar. It is something challenging, exciting, and radical. I can't wait to enter, as this has been something on my heart for many months now! Once I complete the novitiate years, there is a three-year period where I will be a Junior Monk who makes temporary vows. Upon my fifth year at the monastery, I will make solemn or perpetual vows and be considered a Senior Monk. It is also at this time where, God-willing, I will be ordained to the diaconate and priesthood. I would appreciate your prayers; and my dear brothers and sisters in Christ be assured of my prayers for you and the entirety of St. Stephen Parish. I will not have a cell phone or access to email or anything of the sort while I am a novice. I am able to receive letters, and for those that have been asking, I can receive the occasional gift. For those that want to remain in contact, my address is: St. Vincent Archabbey, 300 Fraser Purchase Rd, Latrobe, PA 15650. Feel free to approach me and ask whatever questions you may have, and I will be ecstatic to answer them. Until we meet again, I will see you in the Eucharist and I humbly remain  
Your servant in Christ. ✚

# Growing Up With Love

By Cindee Mace

I grew up in the Green Bay, Wisconsin area with my nine brothers and sisters. Dad would kid about the expression “cheaper by the dozen” with a good, hearty laugh.

We had a wonderful childhood and mom and dad took their Catholic faith very seriously. God came first in our house – we participated in all of the traditional Catholic activities throughout the year and I don’t ever remember us missing Mass on Sunday. I do remember all the fuss and bother about getting us all ready and packed in the car. There are five boys and five girls, and the boys had to wear ties – they complained all the way to church, which thankfully wasn’t very far.

Mom never waived, even as we became teenagers, you went to Mass or else! We said the rosary as a family pretty often and we thought that was dreadful, especially having to kneel on the hard floor for 20 minutes...but the discipline we learned was invaluable.

Our parents were old-school; they taught us to pray before meals, kneel beside our bed and say our night prayers, and respect our elders (although that sounds funny now since the oldest is 71 and the youngest 55). We were taught to be cheerful and

thankful for all that God provided for our large family. One other lesson we learned was that we weren’t allowed to stay mad at each other when those sibling rivalry issues surfaced. We would have to make-up, dry our tears and go out and play. To this day, seven of us live in this area and three up in the Green Bay area, and we still love getting together. We now have reached 123 direct descendants from our parents who passed away within five months of each other back in 2000.



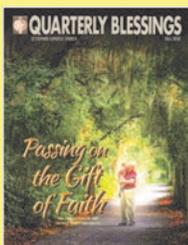
Although not all my siblings continued with the Catholic Church, they are all wonderful Christian people and are raising their children and grandchildren with the love and respect of God that was instilled in us as we grew up.

Mom and dad’s legacy continues on. They taught us that the most valuable lessons are to love one another, forgiveness, not judging, have a heart for others and put God in the center of your lives and everything will work out in harmony.

I thank my parents for their dedication and commitment to Catholicism and all of its core values. †

*Cindee and Mike Mace have been members of St. Stephen for seven years. Cindee is a member of the adult choir and the Divine Mercy Ministry. Mike handles the soundboard when the choir sings during Mass.*

*“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” 2 Timothy 3:14-17.*



## About The Cover

*St. Stephen Parishioner Roger Moretuzzo and his grandson Nolan, grace our 2018 Fall cover. His love for his grandson is the bridge where his faith in God will be passed on. Also, the hidden face of Christ over them is a reminder that He is always with us, though we may not be aware of His presence in our lives. –Rick Tauceda*

# Divine Mercy Pilgrimage

By Jan Goldonowicz

Along with thirty-four others, I joined our former pastor Fr. Bill Swengros this spring on the Divine Mercy Pilgrimage to Poland and Lithuania. My purpose in going was two-fold. First, I hoped to deepen my understanding God's mercy and my faith in it, especially by learning more about St. Maria Faustina. Secondly, with Lithuanian and Polish heritage, I looked forward to visiting the countries my ancestors had called home. I was not disappointed.

Preparing for any trip is important, and my pilgrimage experience began months earlier attending movie nights with fellow pilgrims and reading *The Life of Faustina Kowalska* by Sister Sophia Michalenko.



Prior to reading her biography, I knew of St. Faustina as a Polish saint. Yes, she was born Helena Kowalska in the farming village of Glogowiec in central Poland on August 25, 1905. There, she led a simple and prayerful life, until one evening while attending a dance with her sister, she experienced Jesus standing next to her, stripped of His clothing and covered with wounds. He said to her, "How long shall I put up with you and how long will you keep putting Me off?" (Diary 9). She had received her calling. Due largely to her family's poverty, it took almost a year for

her to be accepted into the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Krakow, just before her twentieth birthday.

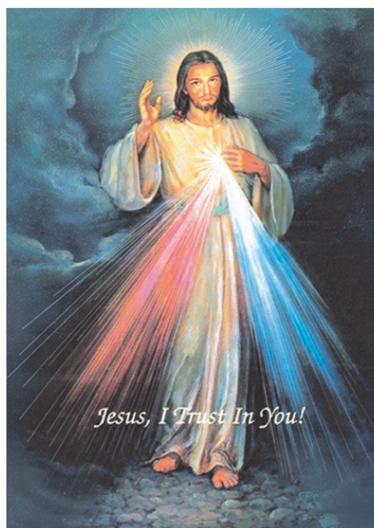
Throughout her years of formation, Sr. Faustina experienced frequent conversations with Jesus. On February 22, 1931, Jesus appeared to her dressed in white with one hand raised in the gesture of a blessing and the other touching His garment at the breast. From that part of His garment, two large rays emanated – one red, the other pale. After a while, Jesus told her, "Paint an Image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I Trust in You. I desire that this Image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the entire world. I promise that the soul that that will venerate this Image will not perish." (Diary 47,48). As you might imagine, when she shared this news with the other sisters, she was doubted and even humiliated.

On May 1, 1933, Sr. Faustina made her perpetual vows and was assigned to a small convent in Vilnius, Lithuania. There she met Fr. Michael Sopocko who became her confessor, spiritual director and advocate. During her three years there, Fr. Sopocko encouraged Sr. Faustina to keep a diary of her encounters with Jesus.

It was Fr. Sopocko who found the artist, Eugeniusz Kazimirowski to paint the first Divine Mercy image, which was initially displayed in April 1935 at the Gate of Dawn where Sr. Faustina regularly attended Mass.

In September that year, Jesus dictated the Chaplet of Divine Mercy to her while she prayed at the convent chapel.

Being in Lithuania enabled us to visit the Gate of Dawn, venerate the original image of Divine Mercy now hanging nearby in the Shrine of Divine Mercy and even spend time at the Vilnius



convent where St. Faustina wrote her diary! That stop, not even on our original itinerary, was one of the most profound places to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet!

As the priest now raises the Precious Blood at Mass during consecration, praying “Jesus, I trust in you” has taken on a much deeper meaning to me! I am so grateful that through reading, films and travel my Catholic faith continues to grow. How about you? †



Jan Goldonowicz has been with St. Stephen parish since 1988, currently serving as Catechist, Head Sacristan, and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

### **Courageously Living the Gospel Prayer**

*Almighty, ever-living God, by our baptism, we have been called to live as missionary disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ.*

*Grant that we, your people of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, will fulfill our purpose by proclaiming the Good News and inviting all people to experience the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.*

*Deepen our trust in you, O Lord, and help us to remain steadfast in our commitment to Courageously Living the Gospel in our homes, neighborhoods, parish communities, and wherever you may lead us.*

*Together, with the intercession of our Blessed Mother and all the saints who have gone before us, we humbly ask for the courage to live as your disciples standing firm in our Catholic faith, through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.*



**Sowing Seeds at Saint Stephen** –5” x 8.75” Walnut Ink in pen and brush

*The Sower moves in time from our former building to our new St. Stephen Church, a place of growing faith and spiritual expansion. As a dynamic people we are accomplishing extraordinary work for God in a perpetual springtime of planting and growing. Praying our seed falls on fertile ground, we work for spiritual edification to show the glory and love of our Lord through our example. We are full of gratitude for our religious men and women and for our Mother Church. –Christopher Klein*

# Saint Sidebar

By Megan Glogowski

**B**lazing Paths in Education, Blessed Marie Rose Durocher, born Eulalie Durocher in Québec, Canada, has a lasting legacy that has influenced Catholic education in the Tampa Bay area for over one hundred years. Born on October 6, 1811, Blessed Marie Rose grew up with multiple experiences in Christian education and religious service. She attended boarding school with the Sisters of Notre Dame in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu, Canada as a young girl as well as attending classes with her mother who studied with the Ursuline Sisters in Quebec City. Her dedication to a Christian lifestyle existed from a very early age as it did for many of her family members.



Blessed Marie Rose was the youngest of ten children, and one brother, Théophile, also dedicated his life to Christ by becoming a priest in the parish of St. Matthew where Eulalie and their father resided following the death of their mother. During this time, Blessed Marie Rose invested her time in assisting the community by visiting the sick and less fortunate. Together with her friends, they taught the Catechism to young children and parishioners, thus beginning her legacy of Christian education. Blessed Marie Rose began her focus on education for the poor and young girls, those who were often kept from receiving proper schooling. In 1841, Eulalie joined the efforts of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Canada, focusing on evangelization and caring for young children.

After being unsuccessful in bringing the religious Sisters from Marseille to her region, Eulalie, under the mentorship of Bishop Ignace Bourget, created a new religious order. In October of 1843, she formed the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Eulalie and friend Mélodie Dufresne joined other Christian educators in Longueuil, another city in the Québec province, to begin the groundwork for a new educational project. Despite facing multiple difficulties and opposition, now named Mother Marie Rose, she dedicated her efforts to giving each child a

strong education spiritually, academically, artistically, and socially.

In her works to educate girls, Mother Marie Rose also took it upon herself to teach young women new pedagogical approaches to develop more teachers and religious educators. In her lifetime, four convent houses existed throughout Canada, which acted as boarding schools for girls. Unfortunately, due to poor health throughout her life, Mother Marie Rose passed away in 1849, but her legacy lives on through the institute she founded, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM), and all the lives the order has touched.

Some may recognize this Blessed one's name and legacy as Tampa Bay's very own Academy of the Holy Names (AHN) which derives from this order she founded. Her dedication to the religious and academic education of girls led to the creation of eight schools for girls throughout North America. The Tampa division of the SNJM legacy opened their school on Zack Street in 1881, making it the oldest school in Tampa Bay. The school eventually moved to its current location on Bayshore Boulevard, and throughout the years has transformed to include a co-ed primary school and the all-girls college-preparatory high school.

In 1982, Mother Marie Rose Durocher was beatified by Pope John Paul II to become Blessed Marie Rose. Her feast day is celebrated on her birth and death day of October 6. Blessed Marie Rose's legacy has impacted thousands of students, myself included, in their studies throughout North America. Her dedication to the Catholic religious life, serving the community, and prompting access to education for girls has paved a pathway for many people to follow and learn from. †



*Megan Glogowski is an alumna of AHN and Florida State University and currently is living her dream in London, England. She is working for FSU International Programs assisting students and staff in their international endeavors at their London Study Centre.*

# Called to Serve

By Jill Ragans

I have been visiting the homebound, those who are confined to their home typically due to illness or old age, for over a year. Although being confined to one's home can lead to loneliness and isolation, these amazing parishioners have not let confinement dampen their spirits. On the contrary, they have inspired me with their courage, faithfulness, and joy and to apply them to my life.

***“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”*** (English Standard Version, Romans 12:2).

One the many lessons that I have learned from my visits is how many homebound have learned to put Jesus first. They have realized that by putting God first they are able to handle the unknown with confidence that Jesus will be there guiding them along their way. I am inspired to call upon Jesus throughout my day and keep Him close when my walk gets tough.

***“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:”*** (King James Version, Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Many homebound have accepted illness as something that happens, not to be feared, but to learn from confinement. They seem to accept the trials as just another day, another season in life. It would be easy to be resentful for the time spent in the physician's office or for the inability to do for oneself, but these joyful Christians are handling these challenges and inconveniences with grace.

The homebound inspire me to accept my challenges as another season to be enjoyed because it is another of God's many gifts.

***“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”*** (New International Version, Jeremiah 29:11).

Many homebound realize that God has a plan to guide them through their storms and that good will emerge from adversity. If those who have endured illness for years and those who have encountered life-altering conditions can trust in God's plan, I am reminded to trust in the Lord as I carry my own cross.

Visiting the homebound has been truly an enriching experience which has inspired me to explore ways to be more Christ-centered, courageous, and more joyful daily. I have cherished getting to know each and each has amazed me with their personal story. I could never have imagined learning so much from them. I encourage you to get involved in one of our ministries of mercy.

***“For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me”*** (ESV, Matthew 25:35-36). ✠

*Jill Ragans and her children have been parishioners since 2005. She has been involved in many ministries through the years including Religious Education. Jill has been a Pastoral Assistant at St. Stephen Catholic Church since 2017.*

## An Invitation to Serve

Each week, more than 90 people participate in the Sunday liturgies, by assisting our Priests and Deacons with the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ, during Mass. In addition, 25-30 people minister to those who are homebound, in Brandon hospital or at daily Mass. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion represent our parish community at all ages from teens to mature adults. Please consider this invitation to deepen your involvement in the Liturgy. Formation and training for this ministry will be provided on Saturday, September 22, 2018 beginning with 8:30am in the chapel.

***We invite you to pray about becoming an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at St. Stephen. Please answer Our Lord's call. Your assistance is needed and the blessings are many!***

For more information, please contact Marty Diebold at 813-672-2254 or email [mdfl3303@yahoo.com](mailto:mdfl3303@yahoo.com)



# Curious Minds

By Doug Stempson

I was raised a Lutheran in a small town in North Dakota which had a large Lutheran church and a large Catholic church. I dated a Catholic girl in high school for a long time, but we never went to church together. I am a lifelong Lutheran, always will be and my grandmother would turn-over in her grave if I changed. This is what I told myself until I met a ninety-eight year old beauty from Iowa named Florence.

My wife, Brenda and I were friends with Liz McLaughlin (Florence's daughter) for three years before we met her. Florence was mostly a quiet gal but loved watching golf with me, asking very good questions about the game and the players because she had a curious mind. When Florence turned one hundred she asked my wife and I to go to Mass with her at St. Stephen Catholic Church. After trying the Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in Brandon and not regularly attending any, we thought, “*Why not? What’s one more? We might learn something new.*” We have curious minds, also.

After attending St. Stephen regularly for three years, Brenda went to all of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) classes at St. Stephen for a year and became a Catholic, and Florence was her sponsor. She was raised Baptist, baptized a Methodist and, of course, married me in a Lutheran Church which is proof she has a curious mind. Along the way I realized I actually enjoyed going to St. Stephen and, when we traveled, we attended other Catholic churches. I finally attended that large Catholic church in my home town in North Dakota.

In 2011, one year after Brenda, I also became a Catholic, and I am positive my grandmother did not turn over in her grave; I am sure I would have heard her. Florence was my sponsor, also. She did not hear or see well, so every week when we went to church with her, we had to sit in the front row. To this day, thanks to Florence, we still sit in the front row.

We went to Midnight Mass with Florence, which was the last Midnight Mass she attended. She died three years after that final Midnight Mass at one hundred and six years old.

Florence went to Mass every day until she was no longer able to drive. She then attended every week and every “*Holy Day of Opportunity*” with her daughter. Florence found it necessary to keep asking God her favorite question, “*If only the good die*

*young, what does that say about me?*” Although we never asked her specifically, I believe Florence found her answer when she made sure, in her quiet and curious way, that Brenda and I became Catholics. She also enjoyed teasing me when we hugged and said, “*Peace be with you*” and concluded with “*you old Lutheran.*”



Florence Geurink and Doug Stempson, Christmas 2010.

I have learned a lot from the priests, especially the ones who like to “*teach*” you about God and Jesus and Catholic beliefs, instead of “*preach*” to you about God and Jesus and Catholic beliefs. Just as in playing golf, in life you have to keep asking yourself, “*How can I get better at this?*” That is my favorite question for God, Jesus, and the Catholic Church. What is yours? †

*Doug & Brenda Stempson joined St. Stephen in 2010. Doug is ex-military and a retired prison warden, who is all about golf. Brenda is a Lector who loves to cook, and walk their dog, Oliver.*

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.”*  
*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. —Ephesians 6:1-4*

# Challenges of Faith

By Mike Lopez

**B**orn to Catholic parents, I received a Roman Catholic education at St. Malachy Catholic School in Brooklyn and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy in Queens, NYC. I graduated high school in 1987 and enlisted in the US Army in November of that same year. Admittedly, after I joined the military my religious practice suffered. As a young man, I didn't truly understand my faith and that made it easy for me to allow my spiritual practice to take a back seat to my career. The military is demanding of its members in many ways, particularly in terms of time, and it can feel almost necessary to sacrifice one's own needs for those of the greater good.

Oddly enough, I found that times of deployment made it much easier for me to practice my faith and grow closer to God. The deployed environment is very austere and free from a lot of the modern-day distractions. My deployments were to locations where Christians are openly persecuted for their faith. Somehow being able to practice while I was there felt like I was able to practice for those who could not.

During my 30-year military career, I deployed a total of 11 times. Every one of those deployments was life changing for me and shaped the person I was becoming as the years passed by. There are things that I both witnessed and experienced that I will never be able to forget. Atrocities beyond my ability to comprehend, particularly where women and children are concerned, that has managed to keep a hold on me to this day. Perhaps because I have four daughters of my own, both grown women and small girls, and I would see their faces in those I encountered while deployed.

In 2009, I participated in hero ceremonies for more than 200 fallen service men and women in

they were accompanied home to their families and their final resting place. Some were friends, some were people I had never even met but all were family. My spiritual practice and quite honestly my ability to connect with God were challenged.

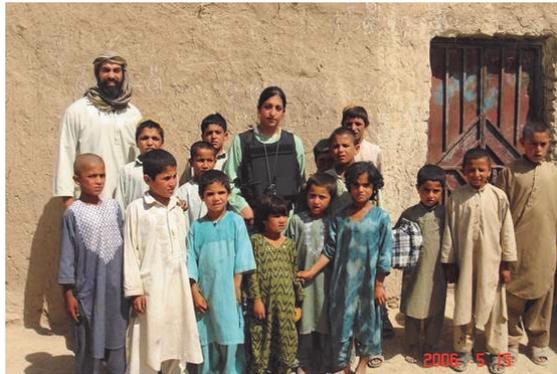
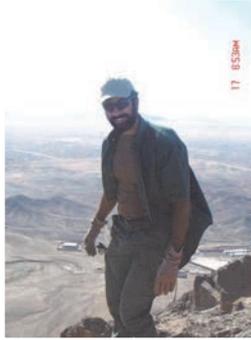
The military sharpened my internal talents to make wise decisions under stressful conditions, however, how to remain faithful through it all was not stressed. Family and friends who know my experiences have told me that "God watched over me", "It's a miracle you're alive" or "God has a plan for you." My response has always been the same, my survival was not a miracle; I've never seen divine

intervention. God has blessed me with all the tools needed, but it was up to me to decide how I would leverage them. I say that, but the one tool that seemed to escape me was how to find my way back to God. How to find HIM in my day-to-day in the new world that I

found myself in once I returned home and prepared to hang up my uniform.

In 2015, I was admitted to the James A. Haley VA Hospital's Post Deployment & Rehabilitation and Evaluation Program for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury treatment. It's been a long journey full of doctors' appointments, evaluations, testing and TALKING!!! Through it all, I've learned something valuable and that is despite how lost I felt and how far away God seemed, HE was always with me, enveloping me in HIS love. I still struggle, but my faith is in knowing that God is there to greet me just as I am and loves me unconditionally. ✚

*Michael Lopez and his wife Lisa joined St. Stephen parish in 2012. They have four daughters and together are finding their way to a deeper relationship with God.*



# Maturing In Faith

By Brianna Doyle

**A**s a recent graduate of Florida State University, I was asked to write an article about what I learned about my faith through my college years. We are called to evangelize and continually grow in our faith; it is a lifelong process. But I'll share what I have learned so far.

College is an exciting time! A new environment, new freedoms, and many new opportunities greeted me the day I moved onto campus. I was excited to get involved and one of my first priorities was to find a spiritual home to grow in my faith. I firmly believe that finding a community is important for maintaining and growing deeper so I got involved with the Catholic Student Union (CSU). Through attending daily Mass and going to weekly CSU events, I found a group of students who were also trying to grow closer to Jesus. In addition to offering many ways to learn and evangelize, this community also introduced me to my future roommates and best friends. Taking advantages of opportunities such as spring break service trips and retreats every semester, I was given the chance to take time away from my studies and the bustle of college life to focus on my relationship with my heavenly Father and, of course, bond with my community. Some of the most impactful moments of my undergraduate years occurred because of this campus ministry.

In my junior year, I was a CSU Respect Life Committee Co-Chair and we organized a trip to take fifty students from Tallahassee, FL to Washington, DC for the March for Life. This trip helped to strengthen my faith in ways I never could have expected. The power of the Holy Spirit was so evident to me throughout our journey; from unintentionally getting to the right hotel, to the people I met who inspired me with a call to action. That summer, I ventured out of my comfort zone to live in a

Christian community, serve those in need, and minister to youth in inner city Trenton, NJ. I continued to learn more about my faith through serving joyfully and evangelizing.

When I returned to Florida State, I began graduate school, student teaching, work, and other various commitments. I was very busy, to say the least. CSU is blessed to have three Franciscan Sisters T.O.R on our campus, one of them being Sister Della Marie, who reminded me to follow what brings me joy in service to others. Through

her guidance and prayer, I explored various opportunities to serve after graduation and I discovered the MissionCorps program at Maggie's Place. Maggie's Place provides houses of hospitality for pregnant and parenting women in need and the MissionCorps members live

alongside the moms, in community, serving them and their babies in the homes. I was given the opportunity to visit Maggie's Place and the joy of the current MissionCorps, the extraordinary support from volunteers and staff, and of course the adorable babies, helped me make my decision.

Reflecting on my time in college, I am grateful for the community that CSU provided and the countless opportunities to mature in my faith, evangelize, and grow in a deeper relationship with Jesus. I look forward to continuing to serve others through my time at Maggie's Place. My faith journey is ongoing and I am excited to see where my adventure with Christ leads me! †

*Brianna Doyle graduated from Florida State University in May with her Masters in Special Education and is currently serving at Maggie's Place in Phoenix, Arizona.*



# Charting My Growth

By Gretchen Robens

**H**ave I been growing in my faith? The marks on the door jamb show how tall my son has grown, something a lot of us have done to chart the growth of loved ones. It's actually pretty hard to believe that the lowest mark, representing such a small thing, is now a lawyer. We can, and should find ways to chart the growth of our spiritual lives, as well.



The way our family has grown alongside our faith family over the years has been pretty phenomenal. My family registered in the parish more than 20 years ago, because so many things were happening here and there were so many welcoming people who asked us to get involved. St. Stephen is not a place to just “warm the pew”!

The growth of our faith family was tremendous, both in numbers and in personal growth through service. What made, and keeps St. Stephen such a wonderful place to grow, is there are so many needs to be filled.

The growth fuels the need, and the person.

Can you help visit the homebound, was a question asked early on. Can you help with the weekend liturgy, as a Lector, Usher or Greeter? By the way, they said, we also need a Eucharistic Minister or several. “Why not?” was the answer from me and Bob and the whole of the St. Stephen faithful. How about facilitate a Bible Study or help with a retreat weekend? Any catechists who are willing to share their faith with so many children in our growing parish? These were the questions we were asked when we were registering even then – and the response to these questions is what makes all of our parish family rich – the generosity of time and talent that is the “Yes!” we answer. We have been blessed in greater measure than we have given. The beauty is that each of these needs remains, and in increasing measure.

My husband and I were some of the many parishioners who also responded to the invitation to invest time, study and prayer in the LPMI program of the Diocese, which stands for Lay Pastoral Ministry Institute. The ministry begins with a “year of discernment” and then, after a formal application, begins a 3-year academic and theological reflection schedule toward commissioning as lay ministers of the diocese.

The LPMI prepared us to see a bigger picture of the Church, as well as grow in our own faith tremendously with others in our class. Our church needs many such ministers who can be relied upon to serve as Bereavement Support, Communications, Catechetical leaders, and Pastoral Council members, to name a few areas our pastors direct us for our practicum of the Institute. I even had the opportunity to continue on in the program and facilitate several groups of adults in the Theological Reflection part of the program, which was very enriching for all of us! I know that what I learned helped me daily in serving the parish administration for eight years, as well.

When we grow in faith, we can invite others to share our faith with confidence, to courageously live the Gospel, to raise our families better, and to learn so much more about the Catholic Faith we have been blessed with. So whenever you are tapped on the shoulder and invited to “come in deeper” – by all means say, “Yes!” and begin a new journey. You’ll never look back! †

*Have I been  
growing  
in my faith?*



*Gretchen Robens recently retired, after eight years, from her position in the parish office. She and husband, Bob are enjoying their time with each other and their grandchildren.*

# Guest of the Quarter

By **Brandon Avery**

As she prepared for college, Catherine Caldwell's Catholic faith was not at the forefront of her life plan. She had earned admission to the University of Florida, was planning to pursue a pre-medical track, and was distant from the Church.

*"I had fallen away during high school through some difficult life struggles and core friendships and relationships that had pulled me away,"* Caldwell shared.

As she entered the summer before college, she visited a LifeTeen summer camp. There, through the sacrament of Reconciliation, the college-bound teen *"encountered God's mercy in a very profound way"*.

*"Going into college I knew that I was Catholic,"* she said.

*"I knew that this was true and this is how I wanted to live."*

Looking to find a new group of friends, Catherine joined student organizations such as Catholic Gators and an interdenominational Christian sorority. While these all enriched her experience, it was one particular commitment that truly nourished the freshman.

*"When I first started college, I didn't know how to pray. I didn't know what it meant to have prayer life because my family isn't religious,"* she explained. *"I committed to going to daily Mass. I probably only missed a handful of times. But I knew that going to Mass was a way to pray, so I figured if I went to Mass each day that it was a half an hour of prayer."*

Supplementing her journey in Gainesville, she returned to the LifeTeen camps that had led her back to the Church. Each summer, as a LifeTeen missionary, she developed as an evangelizer and leader. These experiences not only altered her vocational life, but her school life. Early on she had switched focus from pre-med to Sustainability and

International Relations, as she, *"basically wanted to save the world."*

However, she found that her passion lied in saving the world via interpersonal relationships. Upon asking the best course of study for a career in youth ministry, her high school youth minister explained that most people would have attended a Catholic university and studied Theology or Catechetics. Neither of these were an option at UF (University of Florida).

*"I had a knot in my stomach. I was like, 'Oh my gosh! I'm not studying that. I'm studying Sustainability,'"* she recalled.

*"I began to pray about if I should consider youth ministry as a potential career,"* she continued. *"I knew that I loved sharing the faith, I loved leading others into a relationship*

*with Christ, and I loved working with teenagers. That Fall, as a sophomore, I switched my major to World Religions because it was the closest you could get to Catholic theology at the University of Florida."*

This major helped her gain a love for the history of the Judeo-Christian faith, as well as apologetics – defending religious doctrines and practices through reasoned arguments. Apologetics became necessary as she moved up the ranks in her sorority. With many members being Protestants, some members



felt she was going to impose her religious philosophy on the group, leading some members to disaffiliate, as she became president.

*“It was very hard to see the false beliefs that people still have about the Catholic Church. The wounds that they have, the hatred and the animosity that has developed because of that,”* she said.

However, the upside was very rewarding. One of Caldwell’s sorority mentors, who was impressed by her commitment to daily Mass eventually converted to Catholicism. Another sorority sister, who had been raised Atheist before being baptized in college, encountered Christ while at Adoration with Caldwell and joined the Church the next spring, she said.

Caldwell is now prepared to take all she has experienced and share it with the St. Stephen community. She considers herself *“blessed”* to be coming into a strong youth ministry and does not anticipate major changes. Instead, she just wants to continue to develop the *“spirit of prayer and community.”*

She has already committed to consistent prayer for the teens at St. Stephen. She also looks forward to helping lead and engage Core Team members in

developing this discipline. Her goal is that through prayer Life Teen will have meaningful weekly meetings. These weekly meetings will then be the base from which retreats and summer trips come.



*“Retreats and trips only matters if we are getting people to know Christ, and you can’t introduce someone to a person you don’t know,”* she explained. *“So I have to make sure that I know Christ, and that my Core members know Christ, so that we can tell others about him.”*

Catherine’s ultimate goal is that the prayer then leads to an even closer community among the teens, their families, and those who interact with the ministry.

*“I want to help this be a family,”* she said. *“A place where teens can come in, even if they don’t know anyone, and make a friend by the end of the night. I want teens to know this is a place where they are known and they are loved by the Core Team, myself, and most importantly by Christ.”* †

*Brandon Avery is a parishioner of St. Stephen parish, and member of the Quarterly blessings team. He is a lifelong Catholic who enjoys looking at the practical applications of our Catholic teachings in everyday life.*

## **Blessings From Our Readers**

*I want to say that “A Mother's Love” (summer issue) is a Spiritual Wonder. –Christopher Klein*

*It was gratifying to have an entire issue dedicated to Mother Mary. –Kathie Huff*

*I particularly liked the pictures of all the beautiful statues of Mary in home gardens. It has inspired me to create one of my own. –Mary Devney*

*I had seen pictures of the image of Mary in the window, but I really enjoyed reading the story behind it in the Quarterly Blessings. –Liz Fox*

### **Have you taken a look at [formed.org](http://formed.org)?**

Read/listen to talks by Dr. Scott Hahn, Matthew Leonard, Fr. Timothy Gallagher, to name a few. Watch movies about Mary, Mother Teresa, Saint Barbara or dozens of other saints. Or check out the many study aids available in the app. With all the wonderful books, movies, talks and more, it is an opportunity to grow in our faith; don’t miss out on this fabulous and FREE resource!

Register with parish code: VMZPPF

**St. Stephen Catholic Church**

10118 Saint Stephen Circle  
Riverview, FL 33569

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Lakeland, FL  
Permit No. 1

**QUARTERLY BLESSINGS**

**O**ur mission is met each quarter, when one person reading the *Quarterly Blessings*, who is not actively involved in the church, becomes inspired to participate in any one of the many wonderful spiritual and fellowship activities happening at St. Stephen. Comments, suggestions and contributions for this publication are encouraged and always welcome. Please email us at [QB@ststephencatholic.org](mailto:QB@ststephencatholic.org). Any photos submitted to the *Quarterly Blessings* will gladly be returned upon request.

**Quarterly Blessings Advisor:**

Fr. Dermot Dunne

**(813) 689-4900**

**Quarterly Blessings Board Members:**

Brandon Avery      Liz McLaughlin  
Nicki Gallagher    Gretchen Robens  
Jeanne Glogowski   Gloria St. Amant  
Heike House        Janet Swilley  
Cindee Mace

**Additional Editorial Team Members:**

Peter Konowicz

Logo design created by Rick Tauceda.

Cover by Rick Tauceda.

Subscribe for electronic delivery of the *Quarterly Blessings* online at [www.ststephencatholic.org](http://www.ststephencatholic.org).

Printing of the *Quarterly Blessings* is provided by:

**Messner Publications**  
3250 Dundee Rd.  
Winter Haven, FL 33884  
(866) 651-2111

*Guests of the Quarter*

Meet Catherine Caldwell!

It takes many individuals within our parish to help make it flourish, though they may often go without notice.

Learn more inside!

Do you have a story to share, or a suggestion for the Guest of the Quarter?

Please send it to  
[QB@ststephencatholic.org](mailto:QB@ststephencatholic.org)

We love your feedback!

