

# ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC CHURCH

A WELCOMING & INVITING PARISH • ALWAYS CHRIST-CENTERED AND WORD-BASED



## BLACK CATHOLIC GUILD

*Bringing Black History of Church to Forefront, Inspiring Faith*

Parishioner Barbara Smith knows that the Church has an extensive and turbulent history with the way that black people have been evangelized and treated. The Catholic Church is catholic because it is universal and is commissioned to draw everyone from all nations, backgrounds, and races into her fold. At times, the Church has been a fighting voice to uphold the dignity of black people and at other times she fell short of her values by failing to treat black people with the same respect as others.

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Black Catholic Guild is a group that is devoted to learning this history, preserving it, and celebrating it through its ups and downs. With 36 current members, the guild

pledges to support, promote and advance the mission of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, while learning about the past and present contributions of black Catholics.

The group meets once a month to discuss prominent black people and their achievements within the Church.

"We meet on the second Tuesday of the month from January through May, and September to December," Barbara says. "A typical meeting starts with refreshments at 1 p.m. and is then called to order at 1:30 p.m. We open with a prayer followed by a welcome to the members and guests. Then the program begins, which often includes guest speakers. We close the meeting with a prayer for racial healing."

*continued on back cover*



*"Learning about the faith and dedication to a church that at times neglected or ignored blacks has inspired me to teach others and to keep the faith," says Barbara Smith.*

# UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION

*Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the 2022 book, Stewardship Starts at Home: Using God's Gifts To Grow As Disciples Of Christ In Our Domestic Church, written by stewardship expert and retreat leader Lisa McArdle and published by Catholic Stewardship Consultants. This excerpt is reprinted with permission from CSC.*

There are Four Pillars of a Stewardship Parish — Prayer, Hospitality, Formation, and Service. The third pillar — Formation — teaches us to know and love our God and our faith.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005, #20), there are six tasks of faith formation that constitute a unified whole by which faith formation seeks to achieve its objective. This primary objective is the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.

The six tasks of formation promote knowledge of the faith, promote knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, promote moral formation in Jesus Christ, teach us how to pray, prepare one to live in community, and participate actively in the life of the Church, and promote a missionary spirit that prepares one to be present as Christians in society.

Take a moment to consider how fully you are currently formed. When is the last time you read a book about the Catholic faith? When is the last time you participated in a Bible study? When is the last time you read and reflected on the readings before Mass? Or looked up something in the Catechism?

Frequently, the last faith formation parishioners receive dates back to when they completed their Confirmation preparation or attended their last religious formation class as a middle or high school student.

This means decades may have gone by since parishioners and family members have experienced formation.

If that is the last time that you have formed yourself or that members of your families have formed themselves, don't panic. You are not alone.

This realization is an opportunity for growth. A chance to dip your toe back in the water of faith formation and even to learn alongside the members



of your family, including the youngest members who are also learning. Don't ever feel embarrassed that you don't know an answer to the faith questions asked to you by your children or grandchildren. Instead, learn together!

Remember, the more fully you are formed, the better you will understand God's calling for your family. Furthermore, the more you are formed in the faith the easier it will be to answer the call of discipleship.

Being properly formed in our faith and listening to God's call allows us to understand if we are on the right path or if we need to redirect. Being prayerful and well-formed are key to our following His plan for our lives instead of our own wishes and desires. Remember, as stewards, we strive to listen to God and use the gifts He has given us to serve those he places in our paths. Thankfully, it is easier now more than ever to form ourselves and our families.

There is no need to search for faith-formation opportunities. These options can be sent directly to our smartphones and tablets. Bishop Barron's *Word on Fire* ministry sends free daily readings along with a brief gospel reflection straight to our inboxes. Matthew Kelly's *Dynamic Catholic* offers Lenten and Advent opportunities with free, reflective videos that also arrive via email. *Blessed is She* even provides an endearing female faith formation perspective — perfect for women young and old. Plus, if you want to form yourself specifically in Scripture, you can also opt for the free podcast, *The Bible in a Year* featuring the entertaining Fr. Mike Schmitz, from *Ascension Presents*. Honestly, the possibilities are endless.

Formation is the fuel that keeps your family moving forward as stewards and in becoming all that Christ is calling you to be. Have confidence as you incorporate this ongoing learning into your daily routines.

To find out more about the *Stewardship Starts at Home* book, visit [www.stewardship-starts-at-home.company.site](http://www.stewardship-starts-at-home.company.site)

*A Letter From The Pastor*

## This Month, We Honor Our Blessed Mother on Her Birthday

Dear Parishioners,

**B**irthdays are always special occasions we all enjoy celebrating. We send cards, give gifts, gather with family and loved ones, sing “Happy Birthday,” and enjoy the traditional birthday cake. We make a big deal about birthdays because they remind us how special, precious, and wonderful is the gift of life given to us by God.

On the Church’s calendar, we celebrate three important birthdays. On Dec. 25, we celebrate the Birthday of Jesus; on June 24, we celebrate the Birthday of St. John the Baptist; and on Sept. 8, we celebrate the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Why do we celebrate Mary’s birthday on Sept. 8? The answer lies in another very important feast day of Our Lady, and that is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8. The Immaculate Conception is a dogma of the Church, which states that Mary was preserved free from all stain of Original Sin from the very first moment of her conception (this grace also preserved Mary from all sin throughout her life). This was a special gift from God and a wonderful privilege bestowed upon the Blessed Mother as she would become the pure, holy vessel to carry in her womb Christ, the Son of God. So, since



we celebrate Mary’s Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, we celebrate her birthday exactly nine months later on Sept. 8!

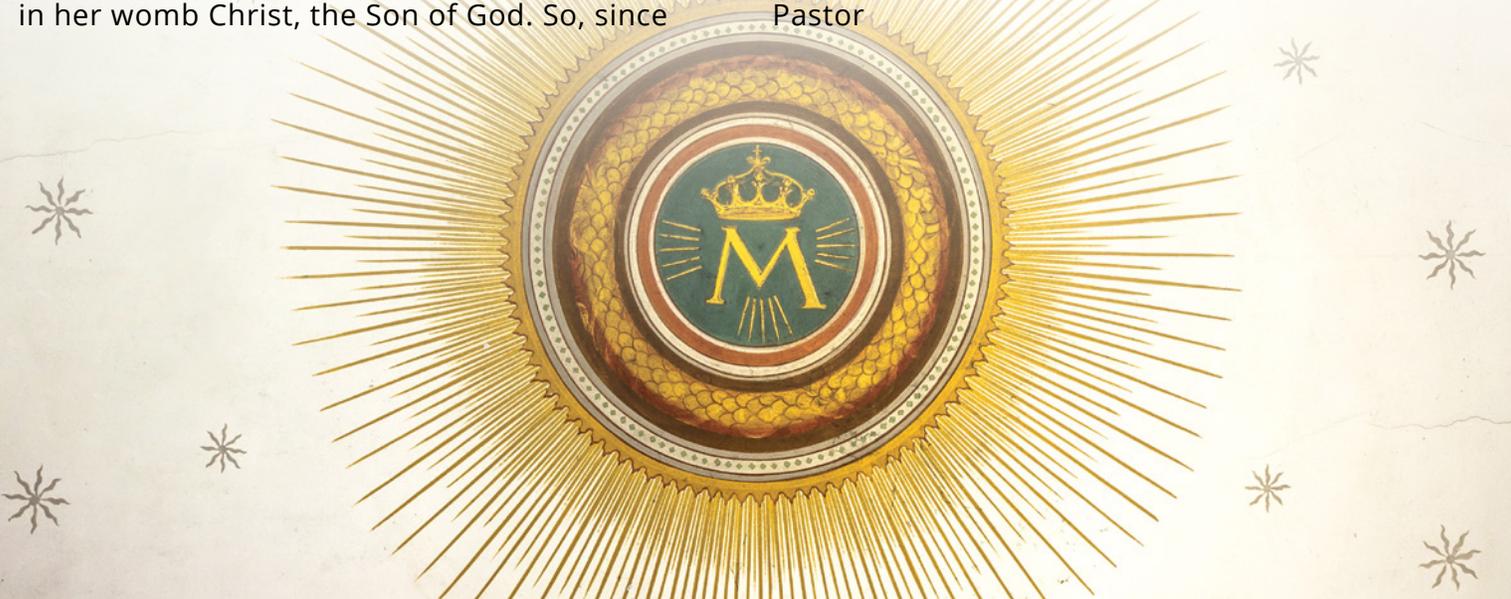
There are even some unique ways to celebrate Mary’s birthday. You can make a special birthday cake for Mary and have it as a family dessert one night this month — and even light a candle on the cake and sing “Happy Birthday” to Mary. Have your children or grandchildren make a birthday card for Mary — bring it to church and place it at the foot of Mary’s statue to show your love for the Mother of God. Decide to do a

good deed or act of kindness and make that your special gift to Mary for her birthday. If you really want to make our Blessed Mother happy, gather for some family prayer time and pray a family Rosary as your gift to Mary.

These are just some of the many ways we can honor our Blessed Mother and celebrate her birthday this month. Happy birthday, Blessed Mother Mary — we love you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Jose Panthaplamthottiyil, CMI  
Pastor



# Greeters Ministry: WELCOMING ALL

Now more than ever, it is important that churches provide a welcoming and friendly environment for parishioners and guests.

"Many parishioners have not returned to Mass after being quarantined," says Ron Cowles, member of the Greeters Ministry here at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. "With the Church's evangelization efforts, parishioners need to feel welcome when they return. Many new residents are moving to the area, and with a friendly welcoming, many register to become parishioners. Many snowbirds have commented that they wish their home parish would be as welcoming. Some of the snowbirds have moved here permanently."

Fr. Jose wants St. Elizabeth Ann Seton to be a "Welcoming and Inviting Parish." The Greeters Ministry is one way that the parish extends this hospitality. For Masses and special events, the greeter's main role is to greet people as they arrive. They will distribute bulletins and count the parishioners as they enter. Greeters are also responsible for setting up for the Mass. They set up chairs in the gathering space at the Saturday Mass, make sure bulletins are available, sweep the rugs if necessary, and take care of other small tasks to help prepare the space for Mass.

There are two greeters at each open door, so currently there are four per Mass. Greeters get to choose the Mass for which they will serve. The only time commitment is to arrive one hour before Mass, as this is when parishioners may start to arrive.

"The parish will not exist without volunteers," Ron says. "There is



Members of our Greeters Ministry include (back row) Bart Lore, Bob Sendelback, John Brailsford, Tom Brandt, Wayne Friday, Jim Boyd, Ron Cowles, Tom Snider, Pat Culverhouse; (middle row) Marie Seeley, Al Krier, Karen LiVecchi, Marina Medina, Jim Adrido, Mary Austin, Carole Weiss, Katherine Gribbin, Anna Sandelin; (front row) Pat Palumbo, Eileen Byrnes, Beverly McGowen, Nancy Costa, Sara Hammond, Maria Aguiar, Vivian Bartlett, Michele Petkewicz. Members not pictured are Jennifer Troy, Georgian Bothwell, Maria Steward, Madeline Montgomery, John Williams, Rosie Lewis, Michele Gregoire, and Elaina Smalley.

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Fr. Jose wants St. Elizabeth Ann Seton to be a "Welcoming



Members of our Spanish Greeters Ministry include (from left) Margarita Serrano and Marina Medina. Not pictured is Alba Dimas.

# TO OUR CHURCH AND CELEBRATION OF MASS

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“The parish will not exist without volunteers,” Ron says. “There is so much to do to support the parish, particularly a parish of this size. It is also very rewarding to volunteer.”

There are many different ways to get involved in parish life and to volunteer one’s time and talents. The Greeters Ministry is just one way to do this. For Ron, the Greeters Ministry has helped him get to know his parish better.

“I have met many, many new and existing parishioners, and have gotten to know better many more,” Ron says. “It has been a very rewarding experience for me.”

The Greeters Ministry is looking for more volunteers willing to act as substitutes for weekend Masses. Substitutes are needed for all weekend Mass times. They are also in need of volunteers who are willing to come sit at the Welcoming Desk during weekdays.



*Members of our Ushers Ministry include (back row) Paul Danier, Tom Brandt, Jamie Burns, Jim Boyd, Rene Fonesca, John Petkewicz, Henry Cabrera, Tom Snider, Mike Gyorkos, Pete Digeorgio; (middle row) Levi Moore, NEED NAME, Sal Dellaventur, John Brailsford, Bob Sendelback, Jim Adrido, Diane Snider, Pat Palumbo, Juan Nieto; (front row) Mary Austin, Beverly McGowen, Nancy Costa, Ann Moore, Sara Hammond, Al Krier, Sue Shierling, Rosie Passaro, Michelle Petkewicz. Not pictured are Joe and Bida Lethy, Charlie and Sue Salarano, Ann Homich, Alise McKinny, John Williams, Liz Fonte, Carlos Cadet, Flo McCarthy, George Speare, Endia Walton, Jose Vazquez, Domingo Pereira, Elaina Smalley, Georgian Bothwell, Mark & Debbie Crameans, Bob McMahon, Mary DeFoe, Ray Williams, and Carmen Bongiovanni.*



*Members of our Spanish Ushers Ministry include (left side) Eddie Velasquez, Jesus Roman, and Carmen Roman; (right side) Monserrate Teron, Rosendo Hernandez, and Marina Medina. Not pictured are Freddy Gomez and Vilma Merlos*

*For more info about the Greeters Ministry, or to sign up,  
contact Ron Cowles at 386-478-6133  
or [rwcowles@bellsouth.net](mailto:rwcowles@bellsouth.net).*

## Presentation of the Gifts at Mass

### *Significant Moment in Our Prayer*

Occasionally, you might hear someone jokingly refer to “halftime” during Mass — the interval following the Prayers of the Faithful, as the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. It can be easy, even tempting, to zone out as you sit, waiting for the collection basket to make its way to your pew.

But if you pay attention, you’ll have the opportunity to enter into something deeper — a significant moment in our prayer.

It’s mentioned by St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, when describing the Mass in the second century, “Bread is brought up and wine and water...”

This practice, of people bringing up the gifts, has been part of our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. Although we might think of this action as being merely practical, in reality, it serves a much deeper spiritual purpose.

Each Sunday Mass, someone is chosen, whether an usher, or another member of the parish, to bring forward “the gifts” — bread, wine and, in many cases, the collection of money that has been gathered moments before, from the generosity of the congregation. These gifts not only symbolize, but also in reality, are the work of human hands. The bread and wine are fruit of God’s creation, which, through the effort of human hands, are made into the gifts that we present to the Lord.

Certainly, the collection that is presented to the priest also serves to represent the work and sacrifices of the previous week. Sharing our monetary “treasures” is one of the ways that we embrace stewardship. It’s an opportunity to generously give

back to the Lord, from the fruit of our work.

In his book *What Happens At Mass*, Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB explains, “We should not think of the collection of money at this point as some sort of banal, dirty but necessary affair. Money is our work. Money is hours of our lives. And now we give it away, we sacrifice it, for the work of the Church.”

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul instructs Christians to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1).

The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives — our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the past week — as an offering and gift to God.

Those who bring forward the gifts each week have the privilege and responsibility of remembering what their action represents — that we are called to give generously of our time, talent and treasure to God, who gives us His very self, at Mass. And for those sitting in the pews, tempted to “check out” for a few minutes, seeing the gifts being brought forward should serve as a powerful reminder to offer our lives back to God, through serving and honoring Him.

So next week, don’t just sit back and wait for “halftime.” Come to Mass a few minutes early and approach an usher to ask if you and/or your family may bring up the gifts that week. Don’t be surprised if you start to notice a change in your heart and a desire to be even more generous with God in the coming week!

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## Parish School Fosters Academic Excellence and Faith Formation as New Year Gets Underway

The new school year is underway and the students and staff at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School can certainly look forward to an exciting year ahead. Students returned to school on Aug. 11 and the eighth-graders hosted the back-to-school Mass on Aug. 17. Catholic education forms students to take the Gospel out into the world while preparing them to be active and capable members of their communities. Principal Barbara Kavanagh knows that academic excellence and faith formation are critical for the young generation of Catholics.

"We tell our students that they are the pride of our school and the hope of the Church," Mrs. Kavanagh says. "A sign outside our school door reads, 'Through these doors walks the future of our Church.' It is not enough to educate the mind. We must also educate the heart, soul, and conscience."

Mrs. Kavanagh and the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton community know that strong faith formation and prayer will prepare our students to go out into the world as witnesses to Christ. Students at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton live out the liturgical year of the Church, celebrating feast days of the saints and the changing liturgical seasons. Students attend Mass, pray together, and are taught the faith in religion class and the example of the community.

"This year, I hope to bring our students to a deeper relationship with God and develop a renewed commitment to family Sunday Mass attendance," Mrs. Kavanagh says.

Students can look forward to many exciting new opportunities this year. All of the classrooms have been equipped with interactive Smart Boards to facilitate learning. Seventh and eighth-graders will benefit from a new math program while third through eighth grades will be able to participate in a new Lego STEAM program. The school grounds have been updated with new playground equipment, benches, and picnic tables. These additions and updates, among others, will ensure that the students have more opportunities for academic growth and involvement with the faith community.

"Catholic schools are necessary for the growth of the Church because they provide daily interactions with teachers and clergy who help shape students' understanding of our faith and its importance," Mrs. Kavanagh says.

The support and prayer of the parish is critical to the formation of our young people. As their faith deepens and they navigate the changing world, our parish community is a source of strength and support for them.

"Parishioner support lets the students know that they are valuable members of the community who will be assuming the leadership roles in the parish one day," Mrs. Kavanagh says. "They will be the lectors, servers, and ushers. We pray at every Mass for the parishioners who support our school both spiritually and financially. Their prayers and love sustain us, and their monetary support allows us to provide extra resources for our students."

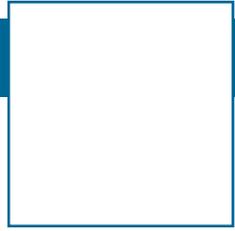


*If you would like to learn more about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School,  
please contact the school office at 386-445-2411.*



# ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Welcoming & Inviting Parish • Always Christ-Centered and Word-Based



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## Black Catholic Guild *continued from front cover*

The focus of the Black Catholic Guild is to bring to light the rich history that black people have contributed to within the Church. The group and its members maintain a sober and clear vision when diving into this history. They do not shy away from when people within the Church did not treat black people with dignity or as equals. But they also honor and celebrate the many black saints who have powerfully impacted the Church.



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“Learning about the faith and dedication to a church that at times neglected or ignored blacks has inspired me to teach others and to keep the faith,” Barbara says. “While it is depressing to learn that churchmen had to sell their slaves to keep Georgetown University afloat, it is encouraging to note that a black man was the first president of the school. It is also depressing to learn that the church did not allow blacks to join religious orders, but it is encouraging to learn that even though black men were not welcome to enter seminary in the U.S., the first black priest in America studied in Rome and is now a candidate for sainthood.”

The Black Catholic Guild is a light unto St. Elizabeth Ann Seton’s parish life. They are witnesses to the beautiful truth that God is compassionate and merciful. Even though the Church’s history may be marred by its members acting unjustly, the Guild remains steadfast in the faith.

*To join the Black Catholic Guild and learn more about black history within the Church, call the parish office at 386-445-2246 and someone from the guild will call you back with more info.*