



St. ANNE'S CHURCH

130 Boston Turnpike • Shrewsbury, MA. 01545

Parish



Connection

Volume 6, Edition 3, November 2015

Our Mission: To inform and educate through our lived faith at St. Anne

This was not a year filled with great beginnings. With the death of my mother in January, the death of Father Lemire in March and finally with the passing of June St. Marie, who worked in the rectory for almost 30 years (not to mention one of the worst winters in recent memory), it had the earmarks of a very bad year. That was not the case, as once again your generosity of spirit, your personal concern, and your personal response to me and to the needs of the parish has made all the difference.



Thank you for your prayers, your concern, and your gracious response. It is this same spirit that has allowed St. Anne's to continue to flourish, to grow, and hopefully to be strong for many years to come. After six and a half years, I am no longer surprised by this, as I have seen this spirit time and time again. I know it will continue for years to come.

I am proud of our parish and all its people as it continues to be a wonderful example of what church should be: it is generous, faith-filled, and responsive to the needs of so many.

May God's love continue to grow in all our hearts.

In Thanksgiving,

Fr. John Foley



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service
First Congregational Church
Sunday, November 22 at 7:00 PM

Thanksgiving Day Mass at St. Anne
Thursday, November 26 at 9:00 AM

Solemn Vespers with
Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
St. Anne
Fridays during Advent at 7:00 PM

St. Mary's Holly Fair
Saturday, December 5 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Sunday, December 6 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

St. Mary's Christmas Carol Festival
Friday, December 11 at 6:30 PM

St. Anne's Children's Pageant
9:00 Mass on December 20 followed by Holiday Breakfast in
the Father Smith Center

St. Anne's Happy Birthday, Jesus/Breakfast with Santa
Sunday, December 6 after the 9:00 and 10:00 Masses

St. Anne Christmas and Solemnity of Mary
Mass Schedule

December 24 – 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM
December 25 – 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM
December 31 – 4:00 PM
January 1 – 10:00 AM

St. Anne's Church
130 Boston Turnpike
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

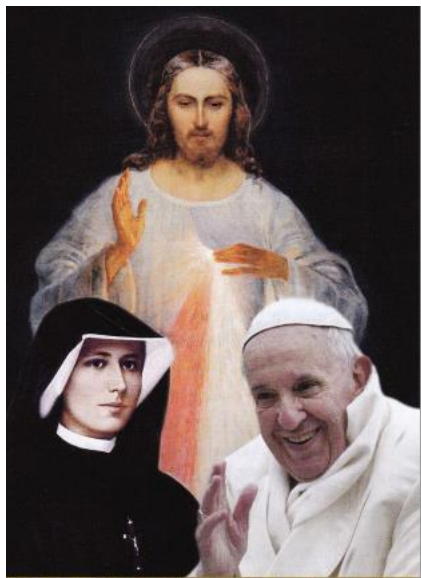
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Pope Francis Declares “Year of Mercy”

Once again, Pope Francis astounds the world by declaring an extraordinary Jubilee called a Year of Mercy. It will begin on December 8, The Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th year since the close of Vatican Council II. In this announcement, Pope Francis reminds us that mercy is the wellspring of joy, serenity and peace. It opens our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. As Catholics, we believe that God is the Father of mercy, Jesus is the face of the Father’s mercy, the Church is the community of mercy, Mary is the Mother of mercy, and we are called to the practice of mercy towards one another.



Recalling our days of religious education, we learned of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy:

Corporal: *Feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; shelter the homeless; visit the sick; visit the imprisoned; bury the dead*

Spiritual: *Admonish the sinner; instruct the ignorant; counsel the doubtful; comfort the sorrowful; bear wrongs patiently; forgive all injuries; pray for the living and the dead.*

It is these wonderful works of mercy that we try to teach our young people, especially the candidates for Confirmation. What a great world this would be if all people were to practice these works of mercy. How well do you and I perform these works?

Watch for any services and gatherings in our cluster and diocesan parishes over these next months to help us fulfill our Holy Father’s wish to be a people of mercy. God bless.

Fr. Paul O’Connell

Solemn Vespers with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament



A prayer tradition dating back to the early days of Christianity sanctified the hours of the day by offering worship to God. Individual Christians were known to devote themselves to prayer at fixed times throughout the day. We see this, for example, in the Acts of the Apostles when the apostles “*went up to the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour*” (10:9); “*Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour*” (3:1); and “*about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God*” (16:25).

With the influence of the early monastic communities, this prayer developed as a form of common prayer and gradually took the form of a set cycle of hours. This prayer is called the Liturgy of the Hours, or Divine Office, and it is principally a prayer of praise and

petition. In connection with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, it is declared to be the official prayer of the Church with Christ and to Christ. When we pray the Liturgy of the Hours, we sanctify the entire day to God and worship in communion with all others who are united with us in faith.

Vespers is the Latin word for “evening” and represents the prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours that is celebrated at sunset, or between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. During the Advent Season, we will be combining the Evening Prayer with Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, honoring an age-old tradition of prayer with Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Come join us on Friday evenings during Advent as we offer our praise and thanksgiving to God in communion with Christians across the world.

Deacon Bill Bilow

Where Are Our Young People and Families? A Response

In our last newsletter, there was an article entitled *Where are Our Young People and Families?* This is my response:

Over the past two months, I have posed this question to Protestants, Episcopalians, and Jews who are active in their respective places of worship. They all are experiencing the same problem in their churches and synagogues. Unless the youths in their congregations are involved in some church or synagogue activity, once they are Confirmed or have received bar or bat mitzvah, not much is seen of them on a regular basis until they get married. I believe that, for us in Massachusetts, this is also problem of the times. When Sundays were a day of rest and only one parent in most families worked, families came to church as a family. Worshiping God was a priority. Today it is not uncommon for both parents to be working, even on Sunday. Worshiping God is no longer a priority.

Worshipping God was once a priority. Is it still the priority it should be?

Some young people with whom I have spoken said that they follow the commandments, care about others, and don't hurt anyone. They don't see the need to attend church. I guess that they have forgotten the story about the rich man who asked Jesus what he had to do to be saved. He followed the law but when Jesus responded that he should give his wealth to the poor and follow Him, the rich man couldn't handle that. We are not asked to give everything we have to the poor, we are only asked to make worshiping our Creator a

priority. If someone owns an expensive automobile, perhaps a Maserati, how efficiently would it run without gas in the tank? Our hearts, minds and bodies are like that Maserati, needing nourishment to run efficiently. When we attend Sunday Mass, our hearts and minds are nourished by the Word and our bodies are rejuvenated by the Eucharist. Our non-church going young people and families may be leading good lives but coming to Church, hearing the Word, receiving the Body of Christ, and taking the time to thank Our God for all that we have will help them to lead better lives. We can't force people to attend Mass, but we certainly can pray that they will somehow be motivated to do so.

Ted Gullede, parishioner

Heavenly
Humor



Mallory shows us that you're never too young to serve the parish!

Camp Sunshine



Camp Sunshine is an experience everyone should have. On my first day at Camp Sunshine, I was initially overwhelmed by the energy and emotion given off by this special place. Living in a society that has grown so bleak and somber, I was relieved to find a place where people are so understanding, exuberant and most importantly empathetic. Camp Sunshine deserves to be applauded for the astonishing things it accomplishes!

I worked with the nine to twelve years old age group as a camp counselor. For months, I had imagined what Camp Sunshine would be like. I was told so many things, but Camp Sunshine exceeded my every expectation. I asked myself, *"Would this be like any other community service project?"* *"What will the other counselors be like?"* *"What will I learn from this experience?"* I have done plenty of community service, and I have never seen a more dedicated group of volunteers. There was no one looking to build a resume, no one looking for credit to say they've completed service hours, and no one who was not excited to be there participating. The volunteers of Camp Sunshine are the single greatest group of individuals I have ever met in my life.

The first thing that I learned at orientation was that it is not just community service, it is an addiction! Nearly everyone there had previously been a volunteer and could not get away from the magic that is experienced at Camp Sunshine. The joy and acceptance that characterizes it is something every human being needs.

The children I worked with struck a chord in my heart. The kids I met were braver than I think I will ever be. They are not unaware of the magnitude of the horrible disease with which they so undeservedly suffer, but this has not stopped them from being happy children. It's rare not to see a smile at Camp Sunshine. During the time there, no physical or mental disabilities matter. No disease or stress exists. It's how life should be for everyone. The best



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*To learn more about Camp Sunshine,
log on to www.campsunshine.org*



thing Camp Sunshine offered me was hope for humanity. The reason it's so great is because it is a time that people dedicate to recognizing what is important in life. People here forget about office work, sports, college, and politics. They focus on what it is that really makes a human being a human being, and that is the lives and love of others.

When kids enter the camp, they forget about their horrible, life-threatening diseases. They are allowed to enjoy the childhood that was taken from them while fighting cancer and other horrific illnesses. The families and parents are given the opportunity to relax and understand that their kids are having fun, and to converse with other families that have been through the same struggles and can relate. The volunteers are allowed to transcend society into a much more human world – a place where the greatest bonds can be formed, and where you can really feel complete, knowing that you are doing something wonderful for other people.

The only negative aspect of my Camp Sunshine experience was the reality of leaving to go home. It was tough to assimilate back into my normal life. Coming back is depressing, knowing you are returning to a place that isn't so happy all the time. I returned to a very insentient society, a society where people lose their minds if their coffee takes too long to be made, a society where a trip to the grocery store yields many dull, lifeless, angry faces, to people who are so lost that they have forgotten about the real problems other people face. The joy I felt at Camp Sunshine is completely unprecedented. I had only experienced almost that much joy at Disney World as a child!

I can fervently state that I am more excited to return to camp in February than I am to go to college next year!

*Dante Camacho
St. Anne's
Confirmation Class of 2015*

What's Up at Human Services?

As we approach the arrival of Christmas, we picture baby Jesus in His cradle surrounded by love. What better way to come into the world but cradled in loving arms? We find ourselves this year anticipating 11 new babies. Four little boys have been born already as well as one baby girl. The others will arrive by February. They will be among the children on our Giving Tree this year. Their parents are most grateful for the help we are giving them.

I sometimes try to think of a simple way to explain our work at Human Services. Every day, the people line up for fresh fruit, veggies, eggs when we have them, bread and other goodies. They don't all come every day; however, we average 25 families per day from Monday through Saturday. On the big distribution day (the third Monday of every month), they receive staples along with fresh items and meat. The count varies, but we currently have 367 families registered.

We will provide for all as the holidays approach. We are so blessed to see so many little miracles that occur. The items we need just materialize! God provides through all of us. He puts the desire and love in all of us to help those in need.

The people who volunteer are very special – they range in age from 11 to 88! Who are we? We are moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, high school and college students, CCD students, Confirmation students, probationers from local courts, community outreach men from Sheriff Evangelidis' correctional facility in

Boylston, local civic groups. There are so many angels who come forward to help!

My granddaughter once told me that we all have a guardian angel. I believe this. Last week, a gentleman came in with baby items at about 9:00 a.m. He had heard that we were in need, so he cleaned out his attic. We sorted the items, and an hour later, one of our clients came in to tell us that their baby boy had been born early. We were able to give him a Pack 'n Play, a carriage with removal car seat, and enough clothes to dress the baby for the next year! We even had enough left over from this man's generosity for another baby. It's no coincidence, but surely God's work.

Our present needs include winter coats for all ages, children's clothes, baby items – and as always gently used clothing and costume jewelry, unused cosmetics, lotions and household items. Drop off times are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Live in your heart as though every day is Christmas!

*Elaine LeBlanc
Volunteer Director
Human Services*



Congratulations



Nick Todisco (front left), Chris Rutigliano (front center), Arsenio Vargas (rear right)

“The Knights of Columbus has grown from several members in one council to more than 14,000 councils and 1.8 million members throughout the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Panama, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, Cuba, Guatemala, Guam and Spain.”

From Shrewsbury Knights of Columbus website

www.shrewsburykofc.com

Congratulations to Nick Todisco, Chris Rutigliano and Arsenio Vargas, three St. Anne’s parishioners who were among 105 men named Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus on Sunday, November 1, 2015. They attended Mass at St. Paul’s Cathedral in Worcester, which was concelebrated by Bishop Robert McManus, Bishop Emeritus Daniel Reilly, and Bishop Robert Hennessey, auxiliary bishop of Boston. They then processed from St. Paul’s to Mechanics Hall for the private exemplification, the ceremony where they became Fourth Degree Knights.



Nick and Sue Todisco (left)
Chris & Felecia Rutigliano (right)



Why do we pray in times of tragedy?

We pray in tragedy because we are human beings and we feel the human need to express ourselves to God. It is impossible to stand before the Creator and not feel the desire to pour out our hearts and give voice to our sadness, our frustration, our confusion, our anger, even our doubt and despair. Even Jesus on the Cross, feeling a sense of abandonment, cried out to the Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" We pray because we are human.

We pray in tragedy because God desires our honesty. God wants to be "nearer to me than I am to myself," as St. Augustine said. God wants to know what we are feeling, like any close friend would, and so we know that we can be honest with God. Think of Mary and Martha who rush from their house to see Jesus after their brother Lazarus has died, and cry out, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died!" They are being honest with someone they love.

We pray in tragedy because we know that God can "take it." God has been listening to prayers for as long as human beings have been conscious of the divine. The psalms are filled with expressions of joy, gratitude and wonder, but also

of sadness and anger and confusion. One entire category of psalms is the "lament psalms." "How long, O Lord?" begins Psalm 13. God can take it.

We pray in tragedy because we need help. We need help in knowing what to do, in trying to find a way forward, in seeking insight and wisdom. Or simply to continue living. We need God's grace, which the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner once defined as "God's self-communication." We need that.

And the Christian prays to someone, Jesus Christ, who fully understands our suffering because he lived it. To paraphrase St. Paul wrote, we do not have a God who is removed from our sufferings. We do not have a God who pities us, as some wealthy person may pass a homeless person on the street and say, "What a shame." No, we have a God who suffered as we do, in almost every way. And who suffered a violent death. So Jesus understands us not simply because of his divine nature. That is, not simply because he is all knowing, all loving and all compassionate. But because of his human nature as well. He understands us because he was one of us.

How does God answer our prayers in tragedy? For some, it comes in feelings of comfort and peace. For others, through insights and clarity. For others in more visible ways: a phone call from a friend, a note that consoles, a Gospel reading that

comforts. For others, in the relationship itself. That is, simply recalling that you are in relationship with God can be a comfort. In the case of great moral crimes, that is, suffering caused by human beings, like the killings in Paris (and elsewhere: Lebanon, Syria, and other places), we may be moved by God to act: to combat hatred, to work for peace, to lessen suffering. This is one way God moves in the world: by inspiring people to act for good. In other situations, like natural disasters and illnesses, that is, those events not caused by human beings, we may be moved to donate money for relief efforts, to comfort the victims personally, to be present to the one who suffers. In such ways are prayers answered.

Sometimes, though, it is very difficult to see how God is answering our prayers. And of course this is where faith comes in. I do not pretend to know how God answers prayers. Sometimes I don't understand things myself. Often it seems that my prayers aren't answered. But I don't need to understand God to believe in God.

The believer prays because he or she must. And the believer believes, and knows, and trusts, that God hears. And listens. And loves.

By: Fr. James Martin, S.J.