



Living Our Faith... Sharing Our Blessings

SAINT ANNE - SAINT CATHERINE COLLABORATIVE

The Altar Guild

Providing a Simple, Yet Meaningful Service

Our church is so much more than a mere building or gathering space. It's a holy space — a place where our Eucharistic Lord remains present to us 24 hours a day, ever inviting us to a deeper relationship with Him. And here to help us maintain that reverent atmosphere is St. Anne's Altar Guild, otherwise dubbed "God's housekeepers." Each week, one or more of these dedicated ministry volunteers chooses a day and time to clean our place of worship, performing what parishioner Joan Castagneto describes as "light housework" to ensure that the church remains both tidy and inviting to parishioners and guests alike.

"Our work is really simple," Joan says. "Basically we clean the church, performing light housekeeping such as dusting, cleaning mirrors and doors, and refilling the holy water bowls."

"Our goal is to make the church a place where people want to come," adds ministry coordinator Jim Haug. "By providing a clean space, we're working in our own little way to help create an atmosphere where people want to come and spend their time in prayer and reflection."

Because Altar Guild members serve in a weekly rotation, ministry members are only called upon to serve roughly every four to six weeks. And because their work is done individually, they may choose the day and time that works best with their schedules. This makes the work easy to incorporate into the busy-



Members of St. Anne's Altar Guild — (from left) Gayann Barbella, Peter Barbella, Nancy Fillmore, Joan Castagneto, Jean Leonard, Pat Lyons, and Jim Haug. (Not pictured, Frances Faucher.)

ness of life, even allowing couples or whole families to serve together if they wish.

"You can really do it any time that you want, as long as the church is not occupied and the parish office is open, allowing you to get the key," Joan says. "This gives us a lot of freedom. And then basically, we clean whatever we see that needs to be cleaned. It really doesn't require much time at all. I'd say the regular routine takes around 45 minutes or so."

Seeking to do a bit more, there are some Altar Guild members who choose to perform additional tasks. Longtime member Pat Lyons, for example, has been joyfully cleaning and ironing the altar linens for

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STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Giving to God First

Have you ever wondered why no one really becomes uneasy when someone brings up the first two “Ts” of stewardship – giving of your time or talents – but when the third “T” comes up, many of us become uncomfortable?

That third “T” is treasure, and some people simply become so annoyed by the subject, they tune out the words from the pulpit.

Why is there seemingly such an adverse reaction?

Our finances are such a personal subject. Discussing money issues with others is not easy, and having someone tell us what to do with our finances is even worse. We earn the money, after all. So shouldn't we decide what to do with it?

Of course, the answer is “yes” – we decide every day how to spend our hard-earned dollars. Indeed, the monetary choices we make will either keep our finances in check, or put us into the red. The average American family has about \$7,000 in credit card debt – so finances certainly represent a challenge to our current society. Tight budgets, trying to “keep up with the Joneses” or poor financial management

may be to blame for our tight resources. Does this mean we do not have anything left over for God?

Stewardship, at its roots, teaches that we are not supposed to give God our “leftovers.” We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our “first fruits” – giving to God first and then using the rest for our other needs. God gave us our talents that help us earn a living, after all. He should come first.

This idea can be worrisome for many. If our finances are already strained, how will we ever find enough to give back to God? Or, if we do try to give God our “first fruits,” will there be enough left over to pay the bills?

Taking the correct financial steps toward good stewardship simply boils down to trust – believing that God, who takes care of all of His creation, will take care of us. Trust that in giving to God first, we are both acknowledging that our multitude of blessings come from Him, and that we are thankful He chose to give them to us. And finally, trust that if we give to Him first, that all else will fall into place – because He is in ultimate control.

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A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Preparing for Our Lenten Journey and Prioritizing the Gift of Time

My Parishioners,

Lent begins on Wednesday, Feb. 14, Ash Wednesday. Most of us are aware that Lent is a time of prayer, penance, fasting and giving alms. So, it would seem that Lent is a perfect time for stewardship. As we examine our lives and try to find ways to deepen our relationship with God, it is good to remember that whenever we give our time, talent, or treasure, we are living as better stewards.

For each of us, our relationship with God should be the first priority. God has given us the precious gift of time, so we need to thank Him for this gift by using it wisely. Stewardship of time is about how we spend every minute of every day. Most of us probably feel that we do not have enough time for all the things we hope to accomplish or achieve. However, each of us is given the same amount of time — 24 hours in a day, seven days in a week. So, how do we choose to use our time? We need to prioritize this gift of time, which means putting the most important things first.

If deepening our relationship with God is our first priority, then time spent in prayer, at Mass, in our personal lives through reading Holy Scriptures, and meditating on God's Holy Word should be paramount. Our second priority might be our relationship to our family. We need to spend time building a strong family unit filled with respect and love for life. And perhaps our third priority should be our



relationship with our parish and our community of faith. Finally, we must spend time supporting others in their faith journeys and ministering to those in need.

We must remember that first requirement for our Lenten journey — prayer. Our Catholic faith is full of prayer forms and traditions that are available to us all. Find a prayer form that works for you, and truly cultivate your prayer life in order to connect and build a real, personal relationship with the Lord. We all need to carve out time during Lent dedicated to prayer. Perhaps it is only 10 minutes each day for quiet reflection

on Holy Scripture. Or it may be something more substantial — perhaps a reflective weekend retreat.

We might consider Lent our own personal Stewardship Renewal season. Fasting, prayer and almsgiving should be what we try to do the entire year. But we must make an intentional effort to focus on these during the 40 days of Lent.

God bless you in all you do, and especially during this holy time of Lent.

God Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Peter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Peter Quinn, Pastor

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Parishioners Honor Mary and Grow Clo



Parishioners meet every Wednesday and Saturday to pray the Rosary together. (Front row, from left) Pat Holmes, Barbara Daly, Diane Otin and Marie Hermann; (back row, from left) Jo Baresch, Lorraine Ward, Tom Kelley and John Miller. (Not pictured — Cy and Marita Pipan, Judi Knox, Tony Jesensky and Nancy Merithew.)

Since the early 1990s, the Rosary Group has been praying for the needs of the parishes and of the whole world. Parishioner John Miller has been a part of the group for the last 23 years — in his life, the Rosary has been an important way for him both to honor Mary and to grow closer to God.

“Our Blessed Mother brings us to her Son — when you honor her, you honor Him,” he says. “He gave her to us to be our spiritual mother. He wants us to have a devotion to His Blessed Mother, and through the Rosary, we are carrying out that little task as best as we can. She has helped me and my family many times over. Ever since I started saying the Rosary, my life has gotten so much better.”

The weekly Rosary Groups meet twice a week, on Wednesday evening at 6:15, and Saturday morning at 8 a.m. at St. Catherine. In addition to the Rosary, the group also prays the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and they pray for the intentions of the Collaborative.

“We pray for all those on the Collaborative prayer chains” John says. “Sometimes, our members will have some special intentions, and we always pray for Pope Francis’ intentions and the Blessed Mother’s intentions. I always pray for the conversion of sinners and nonbelievers, and world peace. This is the request that our Blessed Mother asked for at Fatima in 1917. She also let the seers know that Jesus wanted to establish a devotion to His Blessed Mother.”

This past year, an additional meeting day was added to pray for those suffering from addiction and mental health issues, as well as their families. Started by Kathy McGourty and Lisa Beales, this Rosary takes place at noon on the last Friday of each month, and alternates between St. Anne and St. Catherine.

“There are a lot of people suffering from mental health issues, as well as their families,” Kathy says. “Mental health issues often play a role in addiction. I felt a prompting by the Holy Spirit to get together

closer to Jesus Through the Rosary Group

and pray the Rosary and lift our prayers up to Mary.”

For John, praying the Rosary on a weekly basis and meditating on the mysteries has helped him to get to know Jesus better.

“Through the Rosary, we’re praying the Gospels, and it brings me so much closer to Jesus,” he says. “This is the way we get to know Him, through those mysteries — especially in the sorrowful mysteries, why He did what He did.

“There is no better way to get to Jesus than through His mother,” he adds. “If you ask her for help, she will get the help from her Son — her Son

cannot say ‘no’ to her.”

Praying the Rosary has also helped give John a sense of peace and complete trust in God’s will, especially in his service to his fellow parishioners.

“I am an usher, and there are times when we are short on people,” John says. “Six years ago, a situation like that would make me panic, but I don’t worry about it anymore. It’s about completely trusting Him, and being His tool and letting Him guide me — and it always works out! If you really love someone, then you have to trust them. How can I love Jesus without trusting Him?”

If you would like to get involved the Rosary Group, simply show up on Wednesday evenings, Saturday mornings, and on the first Friday of each month. For more specific dates for the Rosary for Addiction and Mental Health, please keep an eye on the bulletin for updates.

The Altar Guild *continued from front cover*

over eight years. While this might seem a tedious and laborious task to some, Pat shares that she takes great pride in her work knowing that she is preparing linens that will be used during the consecration and distribution of our Eucharistic Lord.

“I see it as a real gift because I’m doing something that I get a real pleasure from,” Pat says. “I just feel like it’s something useful that I can do for the parish and I take pride in the fact that what I’m doing will be used on the altar for the Eucharist.”

Echoing Pat’s sentiments, both Joan and Jim feel that there is a tremendous amount of joy and

satisfaction that comes from performing their simple, hidden tasks — not only is the Altar Guild work done for the Lord, but it is also completed in His very presence. And by caring for our house of worship in this manner, they can’t help but take an even greater pride in our parish.

“It really makes you feel like the church is yours,” Joan says. “I think it gives you that personal feeling, that sense of truly belonging, because you’re no longer just in any church, but you’re in *your* church.”

“It just makes you feel good to know that you’re providing a needed service for God and others,” Jim adds.

Parishioners interested in joining the Altar Guild can contact Jim Haug at jghaug216@gmail.com or 978-486-0273. We also invite all parishioners both young and old to consider joining the ministry for an upcoming spring cleaning, helping to spruce up our church building before Easter. Please refer to the bulletin for more details.

Lent Schedule

Ash Wednesday – Feb. 14

8 a.m. Mass – St. Anne Parish

4:30 p.m. Liturgy of the Word/Prayer Service – both Parishes

7 p.m. Mass – both Parishes

Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross will take place every Friday at both St. Anne and St. Catherine Parishes throughout Lent at 7 p.m. – with the exception of March 2 and March 9, please see below:

Living Stations of the Cross – Friday, March 2

7 p.m. at St. Catherine (no Stations at St. Anne's that evening)

Family Stations of the Cross – Friday, March 9

7 p.m. at St. Anne Parish (no Stations at St. Catherine's that evening)

There will be a simple supper at 6 p.m. in the Parish Hall before Family Stations of the Cross. If you plan on attending the Simple Supper, please RSVP to Jackie at 978-320-4207 or jackieb@lwcatholic.org.

Lenten Reconciliation (Confessions)

Monday, March 26 – 6:30-8 p.m. at St. Anne

Tuesday, March 27 – 6:30-8 p.m. at St. Catherine

Saturdays – 3:00-3:45 p.m. at both Parishes (except on March 31)

Wrapped in God's Love

The Prayer Shawl Ministry

We know there is pain and hardship in our community, and throughout the world. But one ministry is striving to address such needs head-on, with great love and warmth.

"There are a lot of hurting people out there, and the prayer shawls are meant to be tangible evidence of God's love, or a 'hug from God' for people," says St. Catherine's parishioner Merlyn Cajolet, who founded the Prayer Shawl Ministry, nearly nine years ago.

Each month, women from both St. Catherine's and St. Anne's gather to knit and crochet shawls for those in need.

"I'm hoping that the shawl brings God's love, warmth, comfort and blessing," Merlyn says. "I hope they can sense God's love and caring for them, in what they're going through."

Since its beginnings, the Prayer Shawl Ministry has given shawls to people in various situations,

from illness and grief, to loss and other hardships.

"I stopped counting after we gave out 500 shawls," Merlyn says with a smile.

The group begins their gatherings by saying a prayer and lighting a candle to remind them to intercede for those who will receive the shawls, and they close their time together with a prayer and a blessing of the shawls with Holy Water. For them, this ministry is a way to be the hands of Christ, creating beautiful shawls, as a reminder of His love.

"I feel blessed to be an instrument of His, and it's a way for me to express my thanks to God," Merlyn says.

The group often receives notes from recipients, expressing their gratitude and letting them know the difference that the shawls made in their lives.

"I am warmed and comforted by the prayer shawl you sent to us," reads one note. "Your prayerful outreach reminds us that we are loved and cared



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— Merlyn Cajolet

Saint Anne - Saint Catherine Collaborative
75 King St. • Littleton, MA 01460
978-486-4100 (St. Anne) • 978-692-6353 (St. Catherine)
www.LittletonCatholic.org • www.StCatherineParish.org

MASS SCHEDULE:

St. Anne Parish:

75 King St., Littleton, MA 01460

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish:

107 North Main St., Westford, MA 01886

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

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

Collaborative Weekday Schedule:

PLEASE NOTE: Change in location of daily mass effective 2/19/18

Monday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Anne

Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Anne

Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. Prayer Service - St. Anne

Thursday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Catherine

Friday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Catherine

Confessions: Saturdays: 3:00-3:45 p.m. at both parishes (or as requested)

The Prayer Shawl Ministry *continued from page 7*

for all the days of our lives.”

“Last night, there was a meeting of St. Vincent de Paul, and the beautiful shawl your ministry fashioned was passed around the table,” reads another note “It was so beautiful and so soft, we are really touched. It absolutely expresses warmth and caring to a mother struggling after a terrible ordeal, it will always remind her of God’s caring and the goodness of our parish.”

Being part of the ministry has also helped Merlyn become more aware of those who are suffering around her and has inspired her to become involved in the parish and community in other ways, as well.

“Being involved with this ministry has opened up a whole new world of people in need. Its led me into helping at the local food pantry, working with St. Vincent de Paul, the Ministry of Hope, Ministry to the Homebound and with the local hospital chaplain, she says. It’s helped to realize there are so many more needs out there besides my own.”

Merlyn encourages others who like to knit or crochet, or want to learn, to come and see what the ministry is all about.

“The ladies are more than glad to share their knowledge,” Merlyn says. “Anybody who is interested is welcome to join!”

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets every first Friday, from 10 a.m. until noon, at St. Catherine’s. Those who are unable to attend the monthly meetings, but would like to participate in the ministry, are also welcome to work from home. For more information, or to become involved, please contact Merlyn Cajolet at mj.cajolet@comcast.net or 978-692-6632 or Susan Butterfield at srbstitch@comcast.net or 978-692-6521.